

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1263
ANSWERED ON:21.03.2012
PLIGHT OF TAMILS IN SRI LANKA
Lingam Shri P.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the miserable plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the international community got shocked seeing the evidences about war crimes gathered by the UN Advisory Panel;
- (d) if so, whether the Government has raised the issue with the UNHRC meeting recently held in Geneva;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to end the miseries of Sri Lankan Tamils?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SMT. PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) Since the end of conflict in Sri Lanka, the focus of Government has been on the welfare and well being of the Tamils citizens of Sri Lanka. Their resettlement and rehabilitation have been of the highest and most immediate priority. Government has implemented and continues to implement a wide range of projects covering assistance projects for IDPs in the areas of housing, demining, education, connectivity, livelihood restoration, economic revival, etc. It may be noted that due to our engagement with the Government of Sri Lanka on reconstruction and other issues, a modicum of normalcy is returning to the Tamil areas in Sri Lanka.

(c) to (f) Government has taken note of the Report of the United Nations Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka. It may be recalled that the Panel was set up by the UN Secretary General with the objective of advising him on developments in Sri Lanka in the last stages of the conflict. It is, however, the responsibility of the Sri Lankan Government, in the first instance to investigate and inquire into the findings of the Report through a transparent process.

The issue of human rights allegations against Sri Lanka is yet to come up for formal discussion at the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva. Government has, however, emphasised to the Government of Sri Lanka the importance of a genuine process of reconciliation to address the grievances of the Tamil community through various constructive measures, to heal the wounds of the conflict and to foster a process of lasting peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Government has also called upon the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that an independent and credible mechanism is put in place to investigate in a time-bound manner allegations of human rights violations brought out by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) set up by the Government of Sri Lanka. Government's objectives, as always, continue to remain the achievement of a future for the Tamil community in Sri Lanka that is marked by equality, dignity, justice and self-respect.