

**55th Session of the UN Human Rights Council**  
**Item 2: General Debate**  
**4 March 2024**

*Delivered by H.E. Malcolm Ranjith*  
*Archbishop of Colombo*

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Mr. President,

We commend the oral update of the High Commissioner on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka, in particular with regard to reconciliation and accountability. We remain concerned about the failure of a transparent, independent accountability process for victims, including the victims of the Easter Sunday Attacks and atrocities in North and East Sri Lanka.

This 21st of April marks five years since the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks, carried out in 3 churches and three hotels, killing 273 people and injuring more than 500. The governments that ruled the country since then conducted several investigations, which fell far short of going into all the details of the case. New evidence has been brushed aside. Requests and pleas made by us for a transparent, independent, and fair investigation continue to be denied by the government of Sri Lanka.

This situation has become worse with the government making dictatorial and undemocratic moves to introduce laws curtailing media freedom, with subjective definitions of terrorism in a way that can lead to arbitrary arrest, extended jail terms for those clamoring for justice in the country or those calling for transparent investigations into all kinds of murders, disappearances and excesses in the past.

Hence, we appeal to every right-thinking nation represented in the UNHRC to insist on a transparent investigation into all these matters.

Thank you.