

## **UN wants Lanka accountability mechanism before September**

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**Geneva:** The UN yesterday hoped that Sri Lanka will put in place mechanisms for accountability and reconciliation ahead of its September session when the long-awaited report on alleged human rights violations in the country will be issued.

The UN will remain very engaged in discussions with Lankan authorities on the need for transparent and inclusive processes to develop credible mechanisms for accountability and reconciliation ahead of its September report, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said.

Speaking on the opening day of the 29th session of the Human Rights Council here, Al Hussein also welcomed the new Lankan government for passing the 19th constitutional amendment.

“If implemented appropriately, it will bring renewed hope for democracy and the rule of law,” he said. “The 19th amendment to the Constitution was adopted by Lankan parliament in April this year with overwhelming majority. The legislation envisages the dilution of many powers of executive Presidency.

The UNHRC had showed goodwill towards the new Maithripala Sirisena government when in March it deferred the presentation of its long-awaited report on alleged human rights violations in Sri Lanka during the LTTE conflict to September.

The reprieve of six months came as the new government began to constructively engage the UN and the international community after what was seen as the intransigence approach of the former Mahinda Rajapaksa regime.

Commenting on the UN rights chief's comments the deputy foreign minister Ajith P Perera said the government would uphold the UN's faith.

“We will set up a comprehensive local mechanism as anticipated by the UN High Commissioner by September. It will safeguard our soldiers and uphold the sovereignty of our country,” Perera said.

The UNHRC in terms of their March 2014 resolution had advocated an international mechanism to investigate alleged war crimes committed by both government troops and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) during the final phase of the nearly three-decade-long military conflict which ended in 2009.

The Rajapaksa government had refused to cooperate with the international investigation, calling it an attack on the country's sovereignty.