

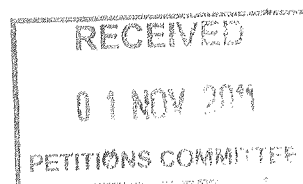


THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

25 OCT 2011



Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 29 August 2011 regarding the petition relating to the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on Sri Lanka, the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) and Australia's development assistance to Sri Lanka.

The view of the Australian Government is that Sri Lanka needs to address the issue of accountability as a crucial part of dialogue and reconciliation. I, along with my predecessor the Hon Stephen Smith MP, have consistently called on the Sri Lankan Government, having won the war, to now "win the peace".

The Australian Government regards the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Panel report as a substantive contribution. All allegations of human rights and humanitarian law violations assessed as credible by the report need to be tested and, if they are proven accurate, action needs to be taken. The Government continues to urge Sri Lanka to respond to the report's findings through the work of the LLRC. It is in Sri Lanka's interest that the LLRC report be substantive, credible and consistent with international standards. Australia and the international community will closely scrutinise the report before deciding on whether any other form of inquiry is warranted.

Australia's long term goal is to assist Sri Lanka to become a stable and economically resilient nation. Our aid program in Sri Lanka focuses on the rehabilitation of conflict affected areas in the North and East, including through demining, resettlement of displaced persons and infrastructure reconstruction. Australia's development assistance program for 2011-12 is forecast at \$43.5 million.

Thank you for bringing the concerns of the petitioners to my attention. I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Rudd