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President

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H.E. Mahinda Percy Rajapaksa
President, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Presidential Secretariat
Colombo 01.
Sri Lanka

Mr. President:

The American Bar Association (ABA) is gravely concerned about the independence of the judiciary in Sri Lanka, particularly as concerns the impeachment proceedings against the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka found by that court to be unconstitutional, the removal of the Chief Justice from office despite the unconstitutionality of the proceedings and her replacement by an Executive Branch official.

The ABA is an independent, non-governmental organization representing more than 413,000 members worldwide. It regards the rule of law as the cornerstone of a free and fair society. It has a longstanding commitment to supporting the rule of law in the United States and abroad.

Numerous international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, hold judicial independence and human rights indispensable to the just rule of law.

Without an impartial judiciary, governmental claims of commitment to democracy and the rule of law ring hollow. The ABA therefore respectfully urges you to restore judicial independence in Sri Lanka, to heed the rulings of the Supreme Court and other judicial authorities and respect the essential role of the judiciary in a democratic society.

Sincerely,



Laurel G. Bellows

cc: Hon. Hillary Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State
Hon. Michele J. Sison, U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka
Hon. Jaliya Wickramasuriya, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United States
Mr. Lalith Weeratunga, Secretary to H.E. the President
Professor Gamini Lakshman Peiris, Minister of External Affairs
Emily Fleckner, Sri Lanka Country Desk Office