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Building Reconciliation in Sri Lanka; An analysis of Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission

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Sri Lanka is struggling with the aftermath of a brutal 26 year civil war that cost tens of thousands of lives. It ended in 2009 when the government forces advanced behind heavy bombardments into the strongholds of separatist extremists fighting for an independent Tamil homeland in the north of the country. In the wake of the war, the rift dividing the two major national communities has remained wide. To build that gap among civilians, so many initiatives for reconciliation are happening through various branches of government as well as non- government. Lessons Learnt Reconciliation Commission is one of the initiatives introduced by previous government and though there are lots of arguments against Lessons Learnt Reconciliation Commission, it is still in the operation. So this research is focused on analysing the recommendations and the actions that the Lessons Learnt Reconciliation Commission has taken with reference to reconciliation.

Whether the recommendations provided by Lessons Learnt Reconciliation Commission could be used to build reconciliation in Sri Lanka is the research problem and the major objective of this research is to analyse the recommendations and the actions of the Lessons Learnt Reconciliation Commission with reference to reconciliation. This research is a qualitative content analysis and has used both primary and secondary data, and interviews were used to gather primary data. Secondary data was collected using books, magazines and websites. Data was analysed qualitatively.

According to the findings of the research, the Sri Lankan Government has introduced two commissions to investigate alleged crimes against humanity, violations of international law, and related harms. The first, the Group of Eminent Persons, concluded its work without issuing a report and the Department of State welcomed the establishment of the second body, the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission. This report notes several aspects of its constitution and mandate that are of concern. The Commission has examined the progression of the conflict that afflicted Sri Lanka as well as looked ahead towards an era of healing and reconciliation in the country. It endeavoured to analyse submissions as well as other published reports, both local and international, relevant to its mandate in order to draw lessons, and made recommendations based on an analysis of the course of the conflict and its causes with a view to redressing grievances while taking the country forward to an era of reconciliation and peace building

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