

Looking to Geneva and beyond to settle Sri Lanka strife The Boston Globe

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IN YOUR Oct. 22 editorial "[Asia's unending war](#)" you called attention to the US government's interest in easing the Sri Lankan conflict as a means to improving Asian security. An important step toward obtaining security would be the establishment of an international human rights monitoring operation in Sri Lanka.

In recent months, neither the Sri Lankan government nor the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam have been taking adequate measures to protect the civilian population. In an effort to stem the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation, both parties to the conflict should cooperate fully with such a monitoring presence.

Your point that justice is a "building block" to security is a sound one. There is a prevailing climate of impunity in Sri Lanka that must be addressed. Investigation and prosecution for recent violations, such as abductions, enforced disappearances, and unlawful killings would be an important step in the delivery of justice and may help reduce future abuses.

Without adequate support and pressure from the United States and the international community, these human rights problems will persist. Peace talks between the government and the LTTE this weekend in Geneva present the perfect opportunity to offer a solution.

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[YOUR EDITORIAL](#) refers to the need for a political solution, which Sri Lanka completely endorses. The All Party Conference summoned by President Mahinda Rajapaksa to evolve consensus among democratic parties in parliament, the decision to return to Geneva this weekend to resume negotiations, and the Oct. 23 signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the main constituent party of government and the main opposition party in parliament all bear witness to the government's commitment to a negotiated settlement.

However, your editorial makes no mention of the role of the LTTE, a ruthless terrorist organization responsible for killing many civilians and moderate Tamil leaders who supported a political solution. The LTTE systematically eliminates all dissension.

Sri Lanka has attempted to engage the LTTE in peace talks five times since 1985. Each time they

walked away from negotiations to wage war.

Geneva talks will be an opportunity to demonstrate good faith, build confidence, and focus on substantive issues leading to a settlement. The LTTE avoided focusing on core issues consistently during the six rounds of negotiations after signing the 2002 cease-fire agreement. This time the international community needs to ensure that the LTTE stays on course and negotiates in good faith.

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