**On Sri Lanka, ICG Calls for Investigation of UN Inaction, Ban Panel Still Delayed**

By Matthew Russell Lee

May 16, 2010

The Inner City Press

*http://www.innercitypress.com/sri6unfollow051610.html*

UNITED NATIONS, May 16 -- At the one year anniversary of Sri Lanka's bloodbath on the beach, the UN which pulled out of Kilinochchi before the slaughter, then funded internment camps for Tamils after Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's "victory tour," has come under questioning.

 Inner City Press on May 14 asked UN spokesman Martin Nesirky when Ban would follow through on his intention, announced on March 5, to name a panel of experts to advise him on the issue, and whether Ban's delay was now related to Sri Lanka's belated unveiling of its own "mechanism."

 Nesirky called the mechanism -- dismissed by a slew of human rights groups -- an "interesting development," but said that Ban is independent.

 Now, the International Crisis Group is calling for an inquiry into the UN's own behavior, for an inquiry into "the conduct of the UN during the last year of the conflict, examining the UN’s September 2008 withdrawal from Kilinochchi through to its ineffectual attempts to push for a ceasefire and its involvement in Sri Lankan government internment camps."

 This is from an early copy of ICG's report to be released on May 17. [Full disclosure - the ICG report has a citation to Inner City Press.] ICG's President Louise Arbour said, "The scale of civilian deaths and suffering demands a response. Future generations will demand to know what happened, and future peace in Sri Lanka re-quires some measure of justice." Amnesty International has damning findings, though unlike ICG, under embargo until May 17.

UN's Ban, his HRC, Arbour and HR in background even then

 Meanwhile Sri Lanka's Mission to the UN attacks Inner City Press -- click here for coverage in Sri Lanka of the first leter of new Deputy Permanent Representative Bandula Jayasekera -- as Perm Rep Palitha Kohona lounged around in the General Assembly on May 14 waiting to speak about Somalia piracy. THe air was of impunity, as both Ban and GA President Ali Treki offer assurances of inaction to Kohona and the Rajapaksa administration. One can ask the UN to investigate Sri Lanka -- but who will investigate the UN?

From the UN's May 14 transcript

Inner City Press: A week ago, you’d said that the wheels were, are turning and fully, well-oiled for this visit by Mr. Pascoe to Sri Lanka. Has there been any progress on that? Because the most recent reporting from Colombo is that he won’t be going until June, and there seems to be a controversy of whether now Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General, will now await to see how this mechanism, late announced mechanism by the Rajapaksa Administration, how that works out before he moves forward and names his own panel. Is that, that seems to be inconsistent with this idea of no delay. Can you say if there is any relation between the mechanism announced last week by the Rajapaksa Administration and the Secretary-General’s 5 March stated goal to name his own panel?

Spokesperson Martin Nesirky: The Secretary-General remains committed to the panel of experts and setting it up without delay. That remains the case. And as for Mr. Pascoe’s visit, that’s being worked on. I can’t say exactly when it will be, because that’s still being worked on. But it’s in the works.

Inner City Press: And [inaudible] without delay is not changed by this announced mechanism? It’s not that it will be delayed until the mechanism is established?

Spokesperson Neskirky: Obviously, that is an interesting development. But it doesn’t impinge on the Secretary-General’s own stated aim of setting up a panel of experts which would report to him. It’s a separate matter. But, obviously, it’s an interesting development, the news that we’ve heard from Sri Lanka in the last few days on this separate internal, if you like, domestic undertaking. But the Secretary-General’s is a separate matter, as we have said.

We'll see. Watch this site.