**As Sri Lanka Says No Visas, UN Says No Need to Visit or Talk to Witnesses**

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UNITED NATIONS, June 24 -- The government of Sri Lanka has said it will deny visas to members of the UN panel of experts to advise Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on alleged war crimes in the final stage of that country's civil war. Inner City Press asked Mr. Ban's spokesman Martin Nesirky for Ban's response to being thus rebuffed. Video here, from Minute 19:42.

“It's not a question of speaking to witness,” Nesirky said, emphasizing twice that it is “not an investigation, not an inquiry, not a probe.” The obvious question is, why not? More than a year after thousands of civilians were killed, the UN is only now convening three individuals to advise Ban on what he might do.

Inner City Press is told that the panel will have staff, to be based in New York. Meanwhile in Sri Lanka, the government is said to be setting up some protests to be held in front of the UN in Colombo. If Sudan were to do this, the UN would denounce it. But here?

Russia has chimed in, as it did during the conflict, calling the slaughter entirely an “internal matter.” As one wag put it, “They should know.”

Footnotes: The "no visas" announcement was made by External Affairs minister GL Peiris, who twice rebuffed the Press while in the US lobbying against the UN panel. Then, Hillary Clinton stood by Peiris. And now?

The Sri Lankan Mission to the UN put out the foreign ministry's statement, a day late and in an unwieldy format. The Permanent Representative Palitha Kohona is still apparently not back in New York. Sri Lanka has thumbed its nose at GSP Plus as well. What will happen with the IMF? Watch this site.