

Office on Missing Persons

Mr. President,

-As part of Truth Seeking, in August 2016, the Parliament enacted legislation for the establishment of an independent and permanent Office on Missing Persons (OMP), which was operationalized on 15 September 2017.

-On 20 October 2017, as per the provisions of the Act, the Constitutional Council advertised, in all three languages, calling for applications for the posts of 7 Commissioners. Applications closed on 6 November 2017.

-The Constitutional Council will now process applications and nominate members to the President for appointment.

-The budgetary allocation proposed for 2018, for the OMP, in the Budget that was presented to Parliament last week, is Rupees 1.4 billion.

-The Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation has initiated the process of receiving complaints of missing through the respective district secretariats. Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Vavuniya have already sent the complaints received to the Ministry.

-The OMP is an independent and permanent Office. The Commissions make their own regulations for its operation. The Secretariat for Reconciliation Mechanisms which coordinates the setting up of transitional justice mechanisms has been working with experts including the ICRC to work on plans for organizational structure, identifying training needs and requirements etc., so that the Commissioners, once appointed, have some ground work that has already been done for them to build upon.

-It is expected that the Commissioners, once appointed, will look at existing data bases and reports of the numerous commissions in the past as well, to examine recommendations, and establish its own data base.

-The Office is an independent entity, and there is no restriction to obtaining technical expertise and advice and support from the international community.