



INTERNATIONAL  
COMMISSION  
OF JURISTS

# ICJ AUSTRALIA

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## PRESS RELEASE

### INVESTIGATION OF SRI LANKAN WAR CRIMES

“Those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity at the end of the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009 must not be allowed to go unpunished”, said John Dowd AO QC, the President of The International Commission of Jurists, Australia (ICJA). “The expert committee established by the United Nations Secretary-General found credible allegations of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The Expert Panel called on the Sri Lankan Government to immediately commence genuine investigations into such allegations. This has not happened”, said John Dowd.

“In continuing violation of international human rights law, there are thousands of former combatants and civilians in Sri Lankan detention camps still not identified or accounted for”, said Mr. Dowd.

“The International Commission of Jurists, Australia has furnished the Australian Federal Police with a brief of evidence that corroborates and substantiates the findings of the UN Secretary-General’s Expert Panel. Since October 2009, such evidence has been taken from witnesses in Australia and overseas”, said John Dowd. “It is clear that Australia has an obligation to investigate and, where appropriate, to prosecute those responsible”, said Mr. Dowd. “Australia owes this much to the Australian citizens and residents who are victims of the Sri Lankan civil war.”

“In 2009 the ICJA together with New South Wales Young Lawyers established the Sri Lanka Evidence Project, an evidence-gathering project to take statements to be used in an independent war crimes tribunal”, said Mr. Dowd. “Under Commonwealth law, there is ample possibility to prosecute these most serious offences here, where Australia has custody of a person and where immunity does not apply.” Mr. Dowd noted that “more than two years after the end of hostilities in Sri Lanka, no one on either side of the Sri Lankan civil war has been charged or prosecuted.”

**A press conference will be held at 11:00am at the Parliamentary Press Conference room at NSW Parliament House.**

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