Sri Lanka outraged at UN over barring of war general - Tehran Times

World Desk

24 February 2012 15:48 -

Sri Lanka on Friday expressed outrage over the barring of one its army generals from a UN peacekeeping committee following allegations that he killed civilians during the island's civil war.

Major General Shavendra Silva, who is accused but not formally charged of war crimes during the final phase of Sri Lanka's war in May 2009, was barred from the peacekeeping advisory panel to UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday.

"To seek to exclude him from a position in the UN is unfair and contrary to the principles of the United Nations," the Sri Lankan government said in a statement issued in New York.

It added that the action amounted to a "public lynching without trial".

Silva headed the army's 58th division in the final months of the battle against Tiger rebels. The military claimed victory in May 2009, but it also sparked allegations that up to 40,000 civilians were killed by troops.

UN human rights chief Navi Pillay said she was "deeply concerned at the impact" of Silva's nomination on the credibility of UN peace-keeping, in a letter sent to Ban Ki-moon and other UN leaders, which was obtained by AFP.

Pillay said in the letter there was "a reasonable conclusion that there is, at the very least,

the appearance of a case of international crimes to answer by Mr. Silva".

Louise Frechette, a Canadian official who chaired the special advisory group on peacekeeping said that Silva's presence was "not appropriate or helpful", though the diplomat attended the first meeting.

"The approach of Madame Frechette... was outrageous and high handed given that the United Nations is an organization of member-states governed by hallowed rules, regulations and etiquette," Sri Lanka's statement said.

(Source: AFP)