

# James Packer and Sri Lanka: No country for a new casino

By *Victoria Martin-Iverson*

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**Human rights campaigner and refugee advocate [Victoria Martin-Iverson](#) has very publicly challenged Crown Casinos boss James Packer about his decision to go into business with the brutal and murderous Rajapaksa regime.**

IT IS ALWAYS A CHALLENGE for those of us concerned with human rights to get some issues onto the mainstream agenda — such as businesses dealing with the worst human rights abusing nations.

Standard protests are not even on their radar, however there are the occasional opportunities to challenge business leaders and corporations, which we usually try to grasp with both hands.

Last week, I took advantage of just such an opportunity. I attended [the AGM](#) of [Crown Resorts Limited](#) — the gambling fun palace consortium owned by the [Packer family](#) plus thousands of Mum and Dad investors.

I was there ostensibly to vote as a proxy for a

chap who couldn't attend, who had asked me to vote in his place. Company head [James Packer](#) chaired the proceedings.

There I sat in a room full of shareholders and a few business journalists, watching flashy commercial videos of happy beautiful people having “fun” at the various resorts and listened and took notes while Mr Packer presented the books and [romanced “the brand”](#) and talked about expansion, corporate governance and being a

“... model corporate citizen.”

James Packer says ‘punters are killing us’ - astonishing comment, I thought the house always wins [@jessigardner](#) <http://t.co/zPqPmvUjb2>

— Larry Schlesinger (@larryschles) [October 16, 2014](#)

And the A governing the “board” section of the microphones

crimes against humanity Mr Packer

I was greeted by the

when I began to

director shun the

their representative

Buddhist

“... be the

the bombing of

Mr Packer called

his address was

suggested the

business was



the film maker, who was just [nominated for an Emmy](#) for the film, which was produced for [Channel Four](#). He has been asked to write a letter to Mr Packer about the film and the ethics of a commercial deal with one of the world's more brutal regimes.

I wonder how one sells the image of fun in the sun in a nation riven by, not just a bloody conflict, but ongoing human rights abuses and a deliberate program of ethnic cleansing. I can imagine parodies of any commercials that might be created. Swimming pools full of blood, perhaps?

Mr Packer [has publically written](#) about the deal as creating employment opportunities for

*'... Sri Lanka's youth from around the country...'*

Will he insist that any deal must include employment for Tamils?

Will he watch the film? Well we are going to try to hold him to his public commitment.

Film maker Callum McRae has tweeted that he was

*'... looking forward to hearing James Packer's reaction to the watching No Fire Zone.'*

Looking forward to hearing [#JamesPacker](#)'s reaction to watching [@NoFireZone Movie](#) <https://t.co/eVlPh8bYX4>  
Report here <https://t.co/6kEuyogXrh>

— Callum Macrae (@Callum\_Macrae)  
[October 18, 2014](#)