



**Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on
Sexual Violence in Conflict Margot Wallström**

RAPISTS – NOT REPORTERS – MUST FACE CRIMINAL CHARGES IN THE SUDAN

(3 August 2011)

Last week, a Sudanese court sentenced Amal Habani, a journalist from the independent daily Al-Jarida, covering the case of alleged rape of an activist by security forces following an anti-government protest earlier this year. The sentence imposed on Ms. Habani is the second ruling since state prosecutors launched charges of defamation against several Sudanese journalists for writing about the alleged rape. A female colleague also working at Al-Jarida, Ms. Fatima Ghazali, was given the same sentence earlier this month.

I am very concerned about these judgments, as they do not only infringe on the freedom of speech and of the media, but also stifle sexual violence survivors and those who support them from speaking publicly about these crimes. Regardless of the facts of the case, Sudanese journalists have a right to report on rape and other forms of sexual violence. Rapists – not reporters – must face criminal charges in the Sudan. Only by addressing sexual violence openly can we have any chance of breaking what has been called history's greatest silence and, ultimately, rooting it out.

I condemn in the strongest terms the employment of sexual violence as a means to political ends. We continue to monitor the situation in the Sudan and anywhere else where sexual violence may occur.

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