



**UN Special Representatives on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Children and Armed Conflict and Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide urge the Government of South Sudan to ensure accountability for sexual violence against women and girls in Bentiu**

*Press Release: For Immediate Release*

**New York, 3 December 2018:** UN Special Representatives on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, and the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng strongly condemn reports of 150 women and girls having been brutally raped during a ten-day period (19-29 November) while making their way to collect food for their families near Bentiu, South Sudan. The violations took place in a Government-controlled area, reportedly carried out by young men in civilian clothing or military uniforms.

We reiterate the messages of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for South Sudan, David Shearer and call on the Government of South Sudan to urgently denounce these abhorrent acts, swiftly launch investigations and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and held accountable.

Accountability is critical to obtain lasting peace and reconciliation among the communities in South Sudan we therefore call on the Government to take all appropriate measures to end the chronic impunity prevailing in the country. We also call on the Government to uphold its primary responsibility for protecting and ensuring the safety of its population, irrespective of their ethnic or political affiliation. We further urge the Government to ensure that all victims receive essential medical, psychosocial and legal support necessary for their recovery.

It is very disturbing that sexual violence remains rampant in the country. This year, in particular, has been marked by an alarming increase in the number of rape cases perpetrated on vulnerable women and girls, despite the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement in September 2018.

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