



STOP RAPE NOW
UN ACTION AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Margot Wallström

VERDICTS BY DRC COURTS SEND

STRONG SIGNAL TO ALL PERPETRATORS

(New York, 9 March 2011)

I welcome today's verdict by the military tribunal of South Kivu in Kalehe in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). All eleven members of the Congolese army (FARDC) accused of rape, pillaging, destruction of schools, abduction of children and other violations of physical integrity, were found guilty.

I commend the fact that as many as 21 of the 24 raped women were brave enough to testify in court. It is now crucial that the victims of and witnesses to instances of sexual violence are protected, as well as their families.

I also welcome the completion of legal proceedings in Kampene two weeks ago by the military tribunal in the Maniema province.

This sends a strong signal to all perpetrators of acts of sexual violence that no military commander is beyond the law, including members of a national army. It also shows that the focus on ending impunity for this type of crimes continues to render concrete results.

I would like to thank all involved in the successful outcome of these legal proceedings. I commend the Government of the DRC for their swift action in both of these cases and for keeping the momentum in the ongoing fight against sexual violence. It is now imperative that the eight members of the FARDC sentenced in absentia are apprehended as soon as possible.

We continue to monitor this and other incidents of alleged sexual violence in conflict, wherever they occur.

Additional information:

The rapes of a total of 24 women took place in Katasomwa (approximately 25 km south-west of Kalehe) 26– 29 September 2010. The eleven members of the FARDC found guilty include the commander of the 68th Battalion based in Katasomwa in Kalehe, Lieutenant-Colonel Balumisa aka *Dix mille*, who was sentenced to life imprisonment. Also the second in command, Major Elia, was sentenced to life imprisonment. Captain Makanyaka, aka *Makanaki*, in charge of military intelligence, was sentenced to 20 years in prison. The remaining eight, which comprise one Major, three Captains, two Lieutenants and two Second Lieutenants, are still at large and were sentenced in absentia.

The trial, which took place in Kalehe (approximately 100 km north of Bukavu), was organised with logistical and material support from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and *Avocats Sans Frontières* (ASF).

The outcome of the legal proceedings in a mobile court in Kampene (approximately 180 km from Kindu) on 24–25 February led to the accused policeman being sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for rape, extortion, and beatings. Another police officer was sentenced to five months in prison for having helped a suspected rapist escape from prison. The American Bar Association (ABA) assisted with the mobile court.