



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

***CHARGES AGAINST MLADIĆ AND MUNYAGISHARI MUST ACKNOWLEDGE CRIMES
OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE***

(29 May 2011)

I welcome this week's news that Ratko Mladić and Bernard Munyagishari have been apprehended. Ratko Mladić is General Colonel and former Commander of the Main Staff of the army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is charged with 15 counts that include the murder of close to 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica. In the indictment, sexual abuse or sexual violence is mentioned five times (under individual criminal responsibility, complicity in genocide – twice, and crime against humanity – twice). Bernard Munyagishari is former head of the Interahamwe Hutu militia for the city of Gisenyi in western Rwanda. He is charged with five counts that include genocide, and rape as a crime against humanity.

The indictments of Mladić and Munyagishari show that the fight against impunity for crimes of conflict-related sexual violence continues to yield results. In most media reports on their respective apprehension, however, sexual violence used as a tactic or weapon of war is repeatedly neglected from being mentioned. It is crucial that the terrible acts of sexual violence they both stand accused of are exposed in the legal process currently under way. Only by explicitly bringing these horrible deeds into the open can we help to break history's greatest silence.

I want to congratulate the Government of Serbia for its role in the apprehension of Ratko Mladić, and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for its role in the capture of Bernard Munyagishari. I also want to congratulate both courts involved, the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), respectively.

I expect the victims of sexual violence in former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda to see justice done. It is now imperative that the remaining perpetrators are found and brought to justice.

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

For additional information, please contact:

Mattias Sundholm, Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict,
at +1 917 628 3531 or sundholm@un.org.