

JOINT COMMUNIQUE
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA
AND THE UNITED NATIONS

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict visited Angola from 10 to 14 March 2011 to look into alleged sexual violence in the context of expulsions of Congolese nationals from Angola. The mission was facilitated by the Government of Angola and included meetings with high-level Government officials and visit to areas of concern in Lunda Norte province on the border with the Democratic Republic of The Congo. The objectives of the visit were to ascertain first hand the circumstances in areas of concern; to gain the perspective of Angolan authorities on the situation; to better understand the actions taken to address the problem; and, to determine support that the United Nations may offer to the Governments of Angola and the Democratic Republic of The Congo.

It is understood that effective prevention depends on reliable information about the situation. There is still insufficient information to determine the magnitude of the problem. However, constructive engagement between the Governments of Angola and the Democratic Republic of The Congo represents an opportunity to put in place prevention measures.

The Government of Angola stresses the importance of constructive dialogue and cooperation with the Congolese authorities in the framework of the previously established Mixed Commission. The Mixed Commission should function at both national and provincial levels and should meet at an appropriate level of seniority to facilitate coordination. The Mixed Commission should take into consideration and seek to mitigate the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls.

The Government of Angola has undertaken a number of measures, including the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Commission to address cross-border concerns. The Commission is convened by the Minister of External Affairs, with participation of the Minister of Interior. In regard to the issue of sexual violence, the Government has also undertaken a criminal investigation in the case of a police officer accused of rape.

The Government has previously invited the International Organization for Migration to participate in the Inter-Ministerial arrangement, and proposes that the United Nations regularly participates to further enhance cooperation. This arrangement may serve as a forum for exchange of information and ensuring a common understanding of the problem and a harmonized response.

Furthermore, as a signal of commitment, the Government is prepared to undertake a number of practical measures such as:

- Reiterating through the respective chains of command existing Army and Police Command Orders prohibiting sexual abuse; and, re-enforcing the commitment for "zero-tolerance" of such violations in Army and Police Codes of Conduct. Sending a clear signal that impunity will not be tolerated by undertaking investigations of alleged violations on the basis of credible information, and ensuring punishment of perpetrators.
- Facilitating, as appropriate, the assessment missions of the United Nations and International Organization for Migration to areas of concern, and granting United Nations protection actors regular access to detention/holding centers or similar locations.
- Facilitating the participation of the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration as an observer in the organized expulsions being carried out by Angolan authorities.

The United Nations is fully committed to supporting the Governments of Angola and the Democratic Republic of The Congo in their efforts to put in place prevention measures. In this regard, the United Nations is prepared to participate as appropriate in the work of the Angola-DRC Mixed Commission.

The United Nations will enhance its monitoring and reporting in areas of concern to ensure accurate and reliable information as a basis for collective action. The United Nations will ensure that information from the United Nations sources is regularly shared with the authorities in Angola and the Democratic Republic of The Congo. The United Nations is also prepared to offer support in training for Army and Police on best practices in preventing sexual violence. Such training could be undertaken in the context of on-going collaborations in training and capacity-building.

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