

Statement by Ms. Margot Wallström, the SRSR on Sexual Violence in Conflict

24 August 2010

I am shocked to learn of the horrific rapes, verified by a UN joint protection team on site from 13 – 17 August, who confirmed that beginning 30 July until 2 August, rebel Rwandan FDLR fighters and Congolese Mai-Mai elements had raped at least 154 persons in the village of Bunangiri in North Kivu, and attacked and looted 15 villages along a stretch of 21 km. Initial information indicates that the victims include women, children, and some men. The perpetrators apparently blocked access and communications.

I condemn in the strongest possible terms these rapes. It should be noted that this incident represents a very extreme case in terms of its scale and the level of organization of the attacks. This terrible incident confirms my general findings during my recent visit to the DRC of the widespread and systematic nature of rape and other human rights violations. Similar information is also being confirmed on a regular basis by UN, NGO, and civil society sources, stressing the fact that Congo remains one of the grave situations of concern that requires priority attention and response of the international community.

The UN is trying to ensure a more rigorous monitoring of sexual violence and other human rights violations as a way to identify perpetrators and ensure that action is taken against them by the Government of the DRC, the Security Council, and others.

Those who committed these terrible rapes must be brought to justice.