



A decisive step forward: ending impunity for sexual violence in Guinea

Press Release: For Immediate Release

New York, 1 August 2024: The United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), Ms. Pramila Patten, applauds the outcome of the trial regarding the tragic events of the 28 September 2009. “This verdict sends a powerful message that impunity will not be tolerated and reaffirms the commitment to upholding the rights of survivors,” stated Special Representative Patten. “The delivery of the first-instance verdict is a significant milestone in the pursuit of justice for survivors of sexual violence and accountability for perpetrators. Sexual violence crimes have always been at the centre of this accountability process, both in investigations and trial,” added Special Representative Patten.

The Office of the Special Representative has supported this process since the 2011 signing of the Joint Communiqué between the Guinean Government and the United Nations on the fight against impunity for the 28 September 2009 events, including sexual violence. Through the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Office of the Special Representative has provided technical assistance to the investigating judges throughout the investigation phase and in the establishment of a Steering Committee for the organization of the trial. Special Representative Patten commended the crucial efforts by the Guinean authorities in organizing this nationally owned process and praised the proactive role of the national judicial system. She also lauded the magistrates’ professionalism, in the conduct of a fair trial with over more than 160 hearings.

With regard to the conviction of former President Dadis Camara, Aboubacar Diakite, and former Secretary of state Moussa Thiegboro Camara for crimes against humanity, including sexual violence, based on their responsibility as commanders and that of other lower-ranking defendants for crimes against humanity, including sexual violence, based on their direct involvement in the commission of these crimes, according to the Rome Statute, Special Representative Patten added: “This is the first time in the history of Guinea that the Rome Statute, and more specifically its provisions related to sexual violence, have been implemented”. “The complementary approach between national and international legal frameworks should ensure the effective protection of the rights of parties and a fair trial, including during the second-instance trial,” she continued.

Special Representative Patten underscored the importance of recognizing victims as crucial parties within the justice system and ensuring their full and effective participation in the proceedings. She praised the courage of the victims and the associations supporting them, acknowledging their critical role in the legal proceedings spanning more than a decade. She noted that their involvement was critical and will so remain in the subsequent legal proceedings. Special Representative Patten expressed appreciation for the enactment of the law on the protection of victims, witnesses and other persons at risk. While acknowledging progress, she noted several gaps that still need to be addressed to ensure a full implementation of the legislative

framework in the upcoming legal proceedings. Special Representative Patten also welcomed the allocation of reparations to survivors and emphasized the importance of continuing to ensure appropriate reparations for all the victims.

Regarding the related legal proceedings concerning the events of 28 September 2009, Special Representative Patten emphasized the need to conduct these investigations effectively and in alignment with international standards. She reiterated the offer of the support of her Office, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and the United Nations at large to advance this accountability process. "The journey towards justice is long, but this verdict marks a decisive step in breaking the cycle of impunity and ensuring accountability for those responsible for sexual violence," concluded the Special Representative.

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