

**CONFRONTING RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CONFLICT
ZONES SPOTLIGHT: DRC AND SUDAN**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL
OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS,
HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY,
AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

—————
MAY 13, 2009
—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/senate>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

53-635 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2009

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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**CONFRONTING RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CONFLICT
ZONES; SPOTLIGHT: THE DEMOCRATIC RE-
PUBLIC OF CONGO AND SUDAN**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2009

U.S. SENATE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, SUB-
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND
ORGANIZATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, AND
GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN
RELATIONS,

Washington, DC.

The subcommittees met jointly, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Russell Feingold, chairman of the Subcommittee on African Affairs, and Hon. Barbara Boxer, chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy, and Global Women's Issues, presiding.

Present: Senators Feingold, Boxer, Shaheen, Kaufman, Corker, Isakson, and Wicker.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Chairman FEINGOLD. This hearing will come to order. Good afternoon, everybody. On behalf of both the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs and its Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy, and Global Women's Issues, I want to welcome all of you to this innovative joint hearing entitled, "Confronting Rape and Other Forms of Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones; Spotlight: The Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan."

I'm, of course, honored to be cochairing this hearing with Senator Boxer, who has been a great leader in raising awareness about the many challenges facing women and girls around the world. I want to also recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee that I chair, Senator Isakson, and we look forward to the ranking member of the subcommittee Senator Boxer chairs, Senator Wicker. I'll invite my colleagues to deliver some opening remarks in just a moment.

Among the many troubling things I've seen and heard during my travels over the last 17 years as a member of this committee, the suffering of women and girls in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo stands out.

In 1999, I traveled to 10 countries in Africa in an effort to help bring about a resolution to Congo's ongoing crisis, and then nearly a decade later, in the summer of 2007, I traveled to eastern Congo to see firsthand the conditions that have persisted through a decade of conflict and crisis.

Millions have died during that decade and millions more have been displaced from their homes. During that most recent trip, I met with women and girls who have been gang raped and sexually abused, often leaving them with horrific physical and psychological damage. Many of these women had lost their husbands, their homes, and their livelihoods and yet against all odds, they refused to give up, if only for the sake of their children.

The stories I heard in eastern Congo are horrifying, and even more horrifying is how common such stories have become for women and girls across eastern Congo and other conflict zones, including those in Sudan. Rape and other forms of gender-based violence are not just outgrowths of war and its brutality, they can also be weapons of war.

In the past few years, there has been an increased focus on the urgent need to address these brutal tactics, whether through the U.N. Security Council resolutions or NGO campaigns, and the United States has an important role to play in helping to facilitate such initiatives and ensure that sound policies are implemented.

I hope today's hearing will evaluate how the United States and our partners, including regional and international organizations, can best do so in the context of our overall strategies to promote lasting peace and stability in Congo, Sudan, and all other conflict zones.

At the same time, I hope today's hearing will examine structural changes within the U.S. Government as well as the international community that can help integrate gender-sensitive approaches into our assistance programs, especially with regard to security sector reform.

In addition, there are steps that the international community can take to enhance our collective capacity to anticipate, prevent, and respond to sexual- and gender-based violence. For example, the U.N. Security Council last year passed Resolution 1820, which condemns the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict situations and states that rape can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide.

The resolution also calls for effective steps to prevent and respond to acts of sexual violence as a way of contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security, including ending the impunity for perpetrators.

Finally, the resolution requested the Secretary General to develop and implement appropriate guidelines, training programs, and strategies for how U.N. peacekeeping missions can better address sexual violence, and this is due at the end of June. So I certainly hope that today's discussion will contribute to and further these current efforts.

Now, just before I turn to my colleagues, let me quickly introduce our first panel of witnesses. We will hear from Assistant Secretary for International Organizations Esther Brimmer; Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verweir; and Acting

Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Phil Carter. I'm grateful to all of you for being here. Your presence together shows the kind of cross-bureau coordination at State that we want and that we need in order to address such an important issue.

And I especially congratulate Secretary Brimmer and Ambassador Verveer on your recent confirmations. I ask that you do your best to keep your opening remarks to 5 minutes each so we can have plenty of time for questions and discussion.

And then on our second panel, we will hear from several non-governmental experts on these issues, including individuals who have seen firsthand, often many times, this violence, and have led programs to combat it.

Senator Boxer will introduce our second panel of witnesses, and I will now turn to her for her opening remarks. And once she is done, we will go to Senator Isakson, and then Senator Wicker, if he has arrived, and then on to our witnesses.

Senator Boxer.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BARBARA BOXER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA**

Chairman BOXER. Good afternoon. I want to express my deep gratitude to Senator Feingold for agreeing to hold this joint subcommittee hearing with me today, and to our ranking members, Senator Wicker and Senator Isakson. And, of course, I want to thank our chairman, John Kerry, for allowing me to chair a new subcommittee, which will focus on international women's issues.

I want to say one more word about Senator Feingold, and that is that he is a great human rights leader, so this opportunity to team up with him on this passion of his called "what happens in Africa" is very special, and I'm really pleased.

I want to, before I make just about 3 minutes or less of remarks, introduce somebody very special, Mariska Hargitay. Mariska is an actress. You probably know who she is, founder of the Joyful Heart Foundation, whose mission is to heal, educate, and empower victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse. After "Law & Order" did an episode about child rape and child soldiers in Africa, she became extremely engaged on this issue. And so, Mariska, would you stand up? We want to say thank you very much for being here. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Chairman BOXER. I also want to express a very strong welcome to our distinguished first panel. I think the strong representation we have here today from the administration speaks to the gravity of this heartbreaking issue and their commitment to take a look at it and do something about it.

I think we will also find that this issue is very complex, and I know that efforts have been made to address sexual violence in conflict zones today, but it is entirely unacceptable that we continue to hear reports of thousands of women and children being brutally raped. Some are merely infants. If raping an infant is not a crime against humanity, I don't know what is.

Today, we're going to spotlight Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to examine the brutal sexual violence that women around the globe are subjected to during conflict. As you

will hear from our distinguished panelists, violating a woman in this manner often goes far beyond mutilating her body. It is an effort to destroy families, communities, and entire societies.

I keep coming back to a passage from a report issued by Refugees International because I think it captures best what is going on in Darfur, Sudan. Rape, it says, is “an integral part of the pattern of violence that the Government of Sudan is inflicting upon the targeted ethnic groups in Darfur. The raping of Darfuri women is not sporadic or random, but is inexorably linked to the systematic destruction of their communities.”

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the magnitude of the problem defies comprehension. Hundreds of thousands of women and children have been raped during the course of the conflict that has spanned 12 years. And while the country has made strides toward stability, including holding democratic elections, the rapes are continuing at a grotesque rate.

According to Human Rights Watch, “the number of women and girls raped since January has significantly increased in areas of military operations by armed groups and soldiers of the Congolese army.”

I was particularly touched by a quote issued by 71 Congolese women’s organizations about how the sexual violence is impacting their society and their lives. This is a quote from them: “We are vulnerable in our fields, in the streets, and even in our own homes. Even our daughters as young as 3 years old are vulnerable when they are playing with their friends or on their way to school. The nuclear family, the base of our society, no longer exists. There is a crisis of authority and a culture of impunity.”

Colleagues, I know you share what I’m about to say. This must stop. And, colleagues, we must come together across all the lines that normally divide us. And we know there are many, but we can end this madness if we work together. I truly believe it.

And so I will turn back to Senator Feingold to call on the ranking members for any comments they have. And I thank both panels for being here today.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Thank you, Senator Boxer, of course, for your tremendous work on the committee and your drive to make this happen, and I’m very pleased to be having this hearing with you as well and appreciate everything you’ve done to make it happen.

Senator Isakson.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHNNY ISAKSON,
U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA**

Senator ISAKSON. Well, thank you, Chairman Feingold and Chairman Boxer, for calling this session today. I also want to thank our witnesses. I am not going to waste their valuable time by making a long statement, except to say that I have a sincere and deep interest in this issue and that in 10 days, Senator Corker and I will be in Darfur. We have already arranged to go into Khartoum and then later into Darfur specifically to explore this particular issue, among other things. So I am glad to have our witnesses here today, both panels. I look forward to hearing from you,

and I thank Chairman Boxer and Chairman Feingold very much for calling this hearing today.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Senator Corker, would you like to make a statement? I know Senator Wicker is maybe coming.

Senator CORKER. Even though I'm not ranking member, I have tremendous interest in this issue, and I thank you for having the hearing.

Chairman FEINGOLD. All right. Thank you very much. And now we'll begin with the witnesses.

Mr. Carter.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Chairman, what we've decided to do is for the brevity and to get to the questions and the interchange that the Ambassador at Large will speak for all of us, in terms of her opening statement.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Fair enough.

STATEMENT OF HON. MELANNE VERVEER, AMBASSADOR AT LARGE FOR GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES, ACCOMPANIED BY HON. ESTHER BRIMMER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, AND PHIL CARTER, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ambassador VERVEER. Thank you, Chairman Feingold, Chairman Boxer, Senator Isakson, Senator Corker. We thank you greatly for this opportunity to come before you today on this important issue. Let me preface my remarks by saying that violence against women as a tool of armed groups is in no way limited to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan or just to Africa. We've seen this in Bosnia, Burma, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere. The underlying problems—gender inequality and the dehumanization of women—are often the same, and our assessment of needs and recommendations is similar across regions.

Violence against women in the DRC and Sudan is an urgent humanitarian crisis, unquestionably so. However—and I emphasize this point—to regard it solely as a humanitarian crisis would be a mistake. These brutal attacks are part of an armed conflict strategy carried out through rape and sexualized torture.

As we have heard, the crisis in DRC is reaching its 12th year. The scale and enormity of the violence directed at women can't adequately be described. Some 1,100 rapes are being reported each month, with an average of 36 women and girls raped each day.

In addition to these rapes and gang rapes, of which there have been hundreds of thousands over the duration of the conflict, the perpetrators frequently mutilate the women in the course of the attacks. The apparent purpose is to leave a lasting and inerasable signal to others that the woman has been violated. In the DRC and in many other cultures, this translates into a lifelong badge of shame. Moreover, the lethal spreading of HIV/AIDS is increasing the toll of death and debilitation long after the initial attack. All of these consequences are more than the tragic effects of rape. They are also the strategic incentives for the perpetrators.

Rape is employed as a weapon because it is effective. It destroys the fabric of societies from within and does so more efficiently than

do guns or bombs. Humanitarian organizations on the ground report that attacks on women destroy the nucleus of the family, and with the unraveling families, the communities also disintegrate.

There's little place in these villages to shore up the collapse of these integral institutions. There are NGOs in place, to be sure—few, but effective—as well as heroic individuals like Dr. Denis Mukwege, director of the Panzi General Referral Hospital in the DRC's South Kivu province, who struggles around the clock to repair the victims' mutilated bodies. To speak with him or others who are desperately trying to cope with the reality on the ground, as I have, is to have a window on the magnitude of the horror.

Our Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, will be traveling shortly to Africa with the U.N. Security Council. In a few days, she and her colleagues will visit a hospital in eastern DRC similar to that of Dr. Mukwege's. It is providing care to the victims of these atrocities. That the Security Council is paying serious attention to this issue is important, and we must see that much more is done.

Currently, there are no adequate ways to hold the perpetrators of these crimes accountable for their actions. Prosecution is essential. First and foremost, the atmosphere of impunity must end. These crimes must be recognized not as isolated and aberrant incidents of rape, but as part of a strategy of brutalization and as crimes against humanity.

A recent report by the U.N. Human Rights Integrated Office in the DRC concluded that "law enforcement personnel and magistrates continue to treat rape and sexual violence in general with a marked lack of seriousness. Men accused of rape are often granted bail or given relatively light sentences. Few cases are reported to the police and fewer still in prosecution." Of the 14,000 rape cases registered in provincial health centers in the DRC between 2005 and 2007, only 287 were ever taken to trial.

More must be done to identify and punish perpetrators. Police must receive better training. There must be more focus on initiatives to strengthen the rule of law and provide victims with access to justice while offering them protection throughout the judicial process.

The United States has recognized, both in Darfur and the DRC, that ending the conflicts is the most important, direct, and certain path to ending the violence. Peace negotiations and the transition from post-conflict environments should remain our highest priority.

The United States has also sought to engage both the U.N. General Assembly and the Security Council in constructive measures that recognize the political aspects of this crisis and that are designed to commit the U.N. to specific actions and eventually end the use of sexual violence as an instrument of armed conflict, wherever it occurs.

Last year, during the U.S. presidency of the Security Council, the United States introduced Security Council Resolution 1820. It built upon Resolution 1325, which had been adopted in 2000; Resolution 1325 requires parties in conflict to respect women's rights and to support their participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction. Women must be included at the negotiating table so that their relevant experiences can be brought to bear and

their needs in post-conflict civil reconstruction incorporated from the start.

Resolution 1325 has been widely and justifiably praised, but Member States, including the United States, as well as NGOs, have rightly noted that tangible progress related to the goals that it outlined have so far been few.

Security Council Resolution 1820 reinforces many of the aspirations of 1325 and also establishes a clear link between maintaining international peace and security and preventing and responding to sexual violence used to deliberately target civilians. It also affirms the Council's intention to take sexual violence in situations of armed conflict into account when establishing or renewing state-specific sanctions.

Security Council resolutions now include in peacekeeping mandates, where necessary, specific instructions for U.N. peacekeepers to prevent gender and sexually based violence and to take steps to protect against it. For example, the mandate of UNAMID, the joint African Union/U.N. Hybrid Operation in Darfur, includes specific reference to both 1325 and 1820, and requests the Secretary General to report on their implementation.

We hope and expect that this increased attention, as well as the reporting requirements, will help to expose the offenses and diminish the chances that they will be committed with impunity. The United States continues to actively work with the U.N. Secretariat and fellow U.N. members to prevent sexual misconduct by U.N. peacekeeping personnel—military, police, and civilians. The peacekeeping missions should have, as their highest priority, protecting women and children—the most vulnerable—particularly in the places that they move and congregate.

The United States is also providing much-needed assistance to victims in the areas of conflict. For example, since 2000, the Department of State has funded a special program for prevention of, and response to, violence against women in refugee populations. The program has provided over \$27 million for such projects in cooperation with international organizations and NGOs worldwide.

USAID and bureaus and offices within the State Department also fund programs that we have described more fully in the testimony. These programs not only address survivors' immediate needs with psychological counseling and medical services, but also provide more comprehensive support, such as literacy training, and services aimed at reintegrating them into their communities.

Our testimony also contains additional recommendations to address this crisis, from more effective implementation of the U.N. resolutions described, to improving peacekeeping operations, to legal assistance.

The Obama administration recognizes the urgency of this crisis and the use of rape as a tool in armed conflict as an abhorrent violation of human rights and an ongoing security crisis for the region. We pledge to work with you and your colleagues to promote the peace process, to communicate the urgency and gravity of the situation to all nations and parties involved, and to ensure that victims are protected, that perpetrators are prosecuted, and that women are free from violence.

Thank you.

[The joint prepared statement of Ambassador Verveer, Assistant Secretary Brimmer, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Carter follows:]

JOINT PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR MELANNE VERVEER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY ESTHER BRIMMER, AND PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PHILLIP CARTER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

I'd like to commend the Subcommittees on Human Rights, Democracy and Global Women's Issues and on African Affairs for devoting time to this urgent issue, and to the search for a more effective response to this ongoing crisis. African Affairs Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson regrets that he cannot join us today, but, thanks to the Senate's quick confirmation, he was able to attend South African President Zuma's inauguration and currently is in Kenya. His deputy, Phil Carter, is here. We thank you for the opportunity to offer our testimony.

Let me preface my remarks by saying that gender-based violence (GBV) as a tool of war is in no way limited to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan, or just to Africa. We've seen this in Bosnia, Burma, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and elsewhere. The underlying problems—gender inequality and the dehumanization of women—are often the same, and our assessment of needs and recommendations are similar across regions.

There is, however, an important difference in scope and intensity. The crisis in DRC is reaching its 12th year. The scale and enormity of the violence directed at women can scarcely be adequately described. Some 1,100 rapes are being reported each month, with an average of 36 women and children raped every day. Armed perpetrators—elements of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC), the Congolese National Police, and illegal, nonstate armed groups—are reportedly responsible for 81 percent of reported cases in conflict zones and 24 percent in nonconflict areas. Women are being attacked solely because they are women, with sexualized torture of unprecedented savagery on both the physical and psychological levels.

In addition to these rapes and gang rapes that are happening at the rate of upward of a thousand a month—hundreds of thousands over the duration of the conflict—the perpetrators frequently mutilate the women in the course of the attack. The apparent intent is to leave a lasting and inerasable signal to others that the woman has been violated. In the DRC and in many other cultures, this translates into a lifelong public badge of shame.

The victims of these crimes are stripped of every shred of their humanity. To the perpetrators, they are nothing more than vessels for carrying out a war strategy—a war these women do not perpetrate and in which they play no voluntary military role.

Humanitarian organizations on the ground report that attacks on women destroy the nucleus of the family. Husbands blame their wives, even when they're forced to witness the rapes. Shattered women cease to perform the caregiving roles that serve as the family glue. And with the unraveling families, the communities also disintegrate.

There are nongovernmental organizations in place—few, but effective—as well as heroic individuals, such as Dr. Denis Mukwege, director of the Panzi General Referral Hospital in the DRC's South Kivu province, that can try to repair the perforated bladders and shredded vaginas of the women that can reach them. There are small but essential counseling programs, such as those provided by the Center for Victims of Torture, that can try to reintegrate the women into their communities and address the psychological dimension of healing. Even in those cases where damage can be mitigated, however, infectious diseases—HIV and other sexually transmitted infections—increase the toll of death and debilitation long after the initial attack, and ripple throughout the villages and regions.

Our Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, traveling with the U.N. Security Council, will in a few days visit a hospital in eastern DRC similar to that of Dr. Mukwege, which has recovery facilities for victims of these atrocities. That the Security Council is paying serious attention to this issue is critical, but we must do much more.

Currently, there are no adequate ways to hold the perpetrators of these crimes accountable for their actions. The United Nations mission to the DRC, MONUC, as its top priority, is mandated to protect civilians in the DRC. However, MONUC is in need of additional troops and assets to fulfill its extensive mandate. The United States strongly supported the Security Council's November authorization of 3,000 additional MONUC forces, the first of which should arrive in the DRC in late May

or early June. And although women are the group most adversely affected by the ongoing war, they are not represented at the negotiating table.

Prosecution is essential. First and foremost, the atmosphere of impunity must end. These crimes must be recognized not as isolated and aberrant incidents of rape, but as part of a coordinated strategy of brutalization and as crimes against humanity.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

In both Darfur and the DRC, the United States recognizes that ending the conflicts is the most direct and certain path to ending the violence. Peace negotiations and transition from post-conflict environments should remain our highest priority.

Darfur

The President and Secretary appointed U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration, on March 17, and he is robustly addressing issues in Sudan. Restoration of humanitarian capacity in the wake of the Government of Sudan's March 4 expulsion of 13 international aid organizations and closure of three national agencies is of extreme importance at this time. Gration's efforts are ongoing, and we are watching the situation closely. USAID's Acting Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance actively participated in the special envoy's engagement this month in Sudan, to help give specific content to the administration's policy and commitment to remove constraints on humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts in Sudan. Meanwhile, the United Nations humanitarian agencies have assumed much of the responsibility for filling short-term gaps in key areas, such as the provision of food and water.

We continue to remain focused on our long-term priorities in Sudan, including implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and resolution of the conflict in Darfur. Sudan's national elections in February 2010 will be an important benchmark in CPA implementation and we are providing essential support to make them credible. Elections and the democratic transformation they contribute to are essential to Sudan's future. On Darfur, the United States has called on all parties to the conflict in Darfur to join the Doha peace talks immediately and to cease all provocations and violent actions in Darfur. We are striving for an interim cease-fire that will allow the armed movements and the Government of Sudan to achieve a comprehensive solution that includes security, individual compensation, wealth-sharing, respect for land rights and political participation by all the people of Darfur. We continue to support the work of United Nations-African Union Joint Chief Mediator Bassol, and further welcome the Libya-mediator and Qatari-sponsored bilateral talks in Doha between Sudan and Chad as a positive step forward.

On March 4, 2009, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Sudan President Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Though we are not members of the ICC, we nonetheless refrained from vetoing U.N. Security Council Resolution 1591 (UNSCR 1591) referring the situation in Sudan to the ICC in order to support accountability there. We are strongly committed to the pursuit of peace in Sudan and believe those who have committed atrocities should be brought to justice.

DRC

In 2006, President Kabila won the first democratic election in 40 years; nevertheless, the problems faced by the Congolese state and population remain rife: endemic corruption; widespread abuse of human rights; economic mismanagement and extreme poverty. Weak state institutions coupled with the presence of domestic and foreign-armed militias have prevented the extension of state authority throughout the country, but recent military cooperation with Rwanda and Uganda against foreign-armed groups in eastern DRC and peace agreements with domestic militias are positive developments that could usher in real change.

Eastern DRC has been the scene of unrelenting conflict and violence for many years. We have long supported and encouraged bilateral cooperation between the DRC and Rwanda on issues of mutual interest, including regional security. The two governments' decision to plan and launch (in January) a joint operation against an illegal armed group in eastern DRC, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), was illustrative of such improved coordination. In fact, it's worth noting that the countries gave the operation the name "Umoja Wetu," which is Swahili for "Our Unity."

Rwandan forces pulled out of DRC in February. Although the joint operation succeeded in weakening the capabilities of the FDLR to a certain extent, it remains active and continues to terrorize the local civilian population. The FDLR is able to do this because the Rwandans' departure resulted in a security vacuum that the

Congolese military cannot fill. The FARDC is bloated, ill-trained, ill-equipped, under-resourced and frequently unpaid for months on end. The United States, MONUC, and other international partners have undertaken major security sector reform efforts in concert with the DRC government to address these issues. On May 12, in Brussels, representatives of several key donor nations and organizations met for a day-long discussion of how to better coordinate security sector assistance—including ensuring that all such assistance includes a focus on FARDC and other security forces' adherence to human rights norms.

The GDRC and Government of Rwanda continue to take steps to normalize relations, a process they started last year by meeting regularly in each other's capitals. Rwanda has just named its Ambassador to the DRC; the DRC is likely to follow suit with its nominee for Rwanda shortly.

Additionally, the Government of the DRC has now demonstrated its willingness to address, through recent joint military operations with the Governments of Uganda and Southern Sudan, the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA is a Ugandan rebel group that is now based in northeastern DRC that uses rape and the sexual enslavement of women and girls as just one of its tools of terror against civilian populations in the DRC, Central African Republic and Southern Sudan. Although these operations have not yet met their stated objective to capture senior LRA leadership, operations against LRA elements have degraded LRA capabilities, destroyed LRA camps, and seized LRA equipment, supplies, food and weapons. Operations have also captured LRA combatants, freed abductees, and increased military cooperation among participating governments, especially between Uganda and the DRC. However, despite these advances, attacks by the LRA against civilian populations in DRC and Southern Sudan have continued, with more than 900 killed and over 160,000 displaced. As military efforts to contain the threat advance, regional militaries must continue to make the protections of civilians a priority.

Eighty percent of the population of the DRC lives below the poverty line. World market prices of (and demand for) the key mineral resources that form the basis of the DRC's formal economy have fallen sharply in recent months, cutting GDP growth projections by half and undermining previous economic gains. Prior to the recent approval of IMF assistance totaling \$200 million, the DRC Government was operating with only a few days' cash reserves and faced significant balance of payments and fiscal gaps. The World Bank has subsequently provided \$100 million and the African Development Bank, \$97 million. Without this critical emergency assistance, civil servants, teachers, police and the military risked not being paid—and in fact soldiers' pay is still 2 months delinquent—while already inadequate basic services could have been curtailed. Higher inflation and a depreciating local currency have resulted in the continued escalation of food prices, placing further hardships on the most vulnerable members of the population.

More should also be done to address the unregulated mining and trade of Congolese natural resources, which for too long have funded violence and facilitated human rights abuses in the eastern DRC. We are consulting with the DRC, other regional governments and the international community on how to regulate this trade so that it benefits and fosters development for the greatest number of people possible.

U.S. PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Overall

Since 2000, the Department of State has funded a special program for "Prevention and Response to GBV" for refugee populations. The program has provided over \$27.8 million for sexual violence prevention and response projects, in cooperation with international organizations and NGOs worldwide.

In fiscal year 2008, the Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) supported several stand-alone programs that targeted the prevention of, and response to, gender-based violence, totaling \$6,341,281. In order to address GBV effectively, program components that include GBV are also integrated within larger multisectoral assistance programs. As a rough assessment, in FY 2008 PRM provided an estimated \$3.2 million to support such integrated programming. For example, a health program for Burmese refugees in Thailand also included a community GBV coordinator, and a radio program for refugees from Darfur included segments and features on GBV.

Darfur

In Darfur, although the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the U.N. cluster lead for international refugee protection activities in West Darfur, the Government of National Unity (GNU) has refused to recognize any mandate for

UNHCR beyond that of the provision of assistance to refugees. Despite host government resistance, UNHCR specifically looks at GBV issues and intervenes through various outreach activities: psychosocial support; trauma counseling; clinical management of rape; access to justice; and women's empowerment. Although many of the beneficiaries lost access to this UNHCR support following the March 4 NGO expulsion, the GNU had already shut down most NGO programs that have protection or GBV components before those expulsions. UNHCR is looking for new partners to continue this type of programming.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided resources to UNHCR to support stronger human rights monitoring in Darfur, and also to the U.N. Development Program to integrate awareness of sexual violence into the rule of law. USAID is also the principal donor in Darfur funding humanitarian programs, including, but not limited to, the provision of food, water, sanitation, shelter, and health services (including maternal and reproductive health) for people living in internally displaced person (IDP) camps and other underserved areas. They supply programs that provide women with the skills and resources to pursue income-generating activities, thus reducing their dependence on the economic activities that leave them more vulnerable to rape, such as firewood collection.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) has provided over \$2 million to support 10 women's centers in Darfur internally displaced persons camps. These centers have provided GBV survivors with psychosocial counseling and referrals for medical services and have provided thousands of women with a safe space in which to receive such diverse training on such issues as literacy and advocacy skills.

DRC

USAID has allocated more than \$10 million since 2002 that has helped more than 100,000 survivors in the region. Programs provide care and treatment services, including access to medical care, fistula repair, counseling and family mediation, and social and economic reintegration support. Community awareness activities educate and mobilize local communities, including traditional leaders and women's groups, to promote women's rights, the acceptance of rape survivors, and protection of the whole community. USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) also supports protection and emergency health programs in North Kivu and Orientale provinces, including medical services for IDPs and GBV survivors. OFDA-funded GBV programs provide integrated psychosocial, medical, and community outreach and education services.

On December 16, 2008, USAID signed a \$5 million 3-year cooperative agreement with the international NGO *Cooperazione Internazionale* (COOPI). The agreement builds on the past successes of COOPI GBV programming in the eastern provinces of Orientale (Ituri District) and Maniema. The programs address physical, psychological, and economic needs of survivors, with a particular focus on minors and women pregnant as a result of rape. They also aim to strengthen the community response to GBV to prevent future acts of violence.

Within the Department of State, PRM supports the efforts of UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Their programs include initiatives to boost health center capacity to provide psychosocial, as well as physical, rehabilitation support to victims, and efforts to sensitize communities to prevent and respond to GBV. One example is the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), which hires and trains national staff to serve as mental health providers as well as providing training staff at local and international NGOs, U.N. agencies, and other institutions. Other NGO partner programs assist victims with reestablishing their livelihoods through skills training and help with market access. In its role as head of the IDP protection cluster, UNHCR plays an active role in monitoring and conducting needs assessments in conflict-affected areas.

PRM also provides support to UNHCR and partner NGOs in preventing and responding to gender-based violence in DRC refugee camps and settlements in neighboring countries. For example, they support the American Refugee Committee in Rwanda and the International Medical Corps in Uganda.

Also within the Department of State, DRL has programs in the DRC to promote human rights, provide legal services to survivors, and build the capacity of local NGOs, the justice sector, law enforcement personnel, and the media.

Through its Africa Bureau, the Department of State funded a program in cooperation with the Defense International Institute for Legal Studies (DIILS) and MONUC to build sex crimes investigation capacity within the DRC's military justice system. Embassy Kinshasa's "Democracy and Human Rights Fund" also provides small grants on an annual basis to local organizations that provide economic and legal support to survivors.

MULTILATERAL EFFORTS

U.N. General Assembly Resolution 62/134; Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820

Abundant information exists about violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations, including the widespread and systematic use of rape. Yet international efforts to address such violence are often hindered by lack of political will and by assertions that the information is insufficient to warrant action. To address this problem, the United States has sponsored resolutions in both the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) and the U.N. Security Council (SC) that call upon States to take specific actions toward ending the use of sexual violence in armed conflict. Effective implementation of these resolutions is crucial.

UNGA Resolution 62/134 (December 2007) calls special attention to the issue of rape in conflict situations and to rape and other sexual violence committed to achieve political or military objectives. The resolution affirms the need for States to ensure that perpetrators of such acts do not operate with impunity and suggests concrete ways that States and other actors can assist victims. It contains a number of provisions that are particularly relevant to cases in which rape is used or condoned by those in authority. And it calls for the Secretary General to issue a report that is intended, among other things, to help identify situations in which rape is being used to advance political or military objectives, in order to spur the international community to act to stop this practice.

During the U.S. presidency of the Security Council, the United States introduced SC Resolution 1820 (June 2008), a resolution that built upon SC Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security and drew attention to the egregious use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war. SC Resolution 1325 recognizes that women are not only victims in conflict situations, but must play a central role in the post-conflict reconstruction process if societies are to thrive. That resolution is widely praised, but Member States and civil society organizations have rightly noted that followup actions leading to tangible results have been conspicuously lacking.

SC Resolution 1820 recognized that preventing and responding to sexual violence deliberately targeting civilians could significantly contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. It affirmed the Council's intention to take sexual violence in situations of armed conflict into account when establishing or renewing state-specific sanctions, and requested the U.N. Secretary General to report to the Council on situations of armed conflict in which sexual violence has been systematically employed against civilians. We hope that this reporting requirement, and the forthcoming first report in June 2009, will bring these instances to light and encourage steps to halt the sexual violence.

Children and armed conflict

The United States is also leading efforts at the U.N. to address rape and sexual violence committed against children in the context of armed conflict. Specifically, we are working to expand the list of "triggers" for listing state and nonstate actors in the annexes of the Secretary General's annual report on Children and Armed Conflict to include rape and sexual violence committed against children in the context of armed conflict. At present, the only existing "trigger" is unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers.

When a country is listed in the annexes, monitoring and reporting of unlawful recruitment and use in the conflict situation begins. Action plans to address unlawful recruitment and use are also developed. If we are able to add the trigger of rape and sexual violence committed against children, we will be better equipped to assess the scope of the problem in a given country and to develop action plans to combat it.

Based in part on U.S. efforts, the Security Council approved, on April 29, 2009, a Presidential Statement that expressed deep concern with the high incidence and appalling brutality of rape and sexual violence committed against children in the context of armed conflict. The statement recognized the importance of including in the annexes to the Secretary General's reports on Children and Armed Conflict state and nonstate actors that commit acts of rape and other sexual violence against children. The statement further expressed the intent to take action on the expansion of the trigger within 3 months. The United States actively supported this important statement of intent, which we hope will lead to the adoption of this additional trigger. We are working to make this happen.

Peacekeeping

Security Council resolutions now include in peacekeeping mandates, where necessary, specific instructions for U.N. peacekeepers to prevent gender and sexually

based violence and to take steps to protect against it. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is developing and improving training modules (both predeployment and on arrival) and field manuals on this subject, and the Secretary General's regular reports on each mission include information on sexual violence, where that is an issue.

The United States continues to actively work with the U.N. Secretariat and fellow members of the U.N. to prevent sexual misconduct by U.N. peacekeeping personnel—military, police, and civilians.

Darfur

The African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) report issued by the Secretary General in April 2009, reported that the vulnerability of women in IDP camps to sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, is a continuing problem. In an attempt to address the ongoing violence, UNAMID's mandate asks the Secretary General to ensure that UNAMID personnel implement Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 and to report on their implementation in the periodic SYG reports. UNAMID conducts community policing initiatives, employs women police officers to educate women about rape and sexual violence, encourages the reporting of rape, urges women to join camp security committees, and conducts escorts and patrols when women are outside the camps collecting firewood.

The Secretary General has also urged Sudan's Government of National Unity to adopt a comprehensive strategy to address sexual violence, including strengthening the capacity and coverage of family and child police units, and continuing to train and build the capacity of police and judicial officials and social workers on issues related to sexual violence.

DRC

Upon renewing the mandate for MONUC in December 2008, the Security Council identified the protection of civilians as MONUC's top priority. In addition, due to the scale and severity of sexual violence committed especially by armed elements in the DRC, the Security Council requested MONUC to strengthen its efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence, including through training for the Congolese army, and to regularly report on actions taken in this regard.

MONUC has focused on developing innovative strategies to improve civilian protection and recently developed the concept of joint protection teams (JPTs) to enhance and improve the implementation of the mission's mandate. During the past 3 months, 10 multidisciplinary joint protection teams were deployed to the main conflict-affected areas in North Kivu. MONUC has also created what it calls "MONUC-protected corridors," where civilians can be evacuated preemptively in anticipation of an attack. MONUC continues to search for more effective, innovative approaches to complement and enhance the military effort to protect civilians.

Under the auspices of the U.N. Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, and on the basis of extensive consultations with MONUC and partner agencies, a comprehensive strategy on combating sexual violence in the DRC has been developed to provide a platform and framework for action and to strengthen prevention and protection and the response to sexual violence. The strategy is aimed at supporting the efforts of the U.N. system and the Government of the DRC to combat sexual violence and ensure complementarities with ongoing processes and initiatives, including the reform of the security sector and the security and stabilization support strategy.

While both the current mandate and rules of engagement do provide for use of force to protect civilians, most observers and analysts agree that MONUC's numbers on the ground are simply too few to effectively implement a comprehensive prevention and protection strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ACTIONS AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Needs

The most basic, urgent, and fundamental need is to move from words to action. DRC President Joseph Kabila has said he has "zero tolerance for sexual abuse," but such statements need to be backed up by concrete action on rape prevention, protection of women, victim services, and the prosecution of perpetrators.

We have a potential tool in SC Resolution 1820, but without adequate funding and political will, its good intentions remain unrealized. MONUC has the potential to be more effective, but a realization of the 3,000-troop plus-up foreseen in last November's SC Resolution 1843 and December's mandate renewal SC Resolution 1856 is essential.

Specific and focused responses require specific and focused information about the true extent and geography of the crisis. To that end, it is imperative to have a broad network of trained data collectors in place.

The culture of impunity must end. As even the most horrific rapes become trivialized and accepted as routine, rates of rape committed by civilians are also increasing. A recent U.N. Human Rights Integrated Office in the DRC (UNHRO) report concluded that “law enforcement personnel and magistrates continue to treat rape and sexual violence in general with a marked lack of seriousness. Consequently, men accused of rape are often granted bail or given relatively light sentences and out-of-court settlements of sexual violence cases are widespread.” Few cases are reported to the police and fewer still result in prosecution. Of the more than 14,000 rape cases registered in provincial health centers in the DRC between 2005 and 2007, only 287 were taken to trial.

The trend toward increasing lawlessness and impunity will not end until respect for the rule of law and for humane conduct is established. Until then, more must be done to identify and punish perpetrators. Police must receive better training; there must be more focus on initiatives to strengthen the rule of law and provide victims with access to justice while offering them protection throughout the judicial process.

Protection of women needs to be mainstreamed from the start into our efforts to rebuild civil society in Darfur and the DRC. In Darfur, efforts to involve civil society in the peace process have always made the participation of women a priority. We cannot allow the participation of women to become an afterthought or a separate category, but rather we must make programs for women’s empowerment, girls’ education, shelters, and care for victims of violence mainstreamed into general humanitarian and capacity-building work in this region. These issues should play an important role in our response to any conflict in any country, not just in the DRC and Sudan. These problems are not just women’s issues or African issues, but a humanitarian and burgeoning security crisis, and need to be addressed as such.

Recommendations:

Building on the needs identified above, our specific recommendations are to:

- Establish a U.N. fund for gender advisors to help implement SC Resolution 1820. Develop a U.S. national action plan for SC Resolution 1325 that includes input from, and roles for, agencies such as the Department of State, Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, as well as civil society. Build public awareness of SC Resolution 1325 and 1820 and bring international pressure and suasion to bear on countries that violate their provisions.
- Empower MONUC’s formed police units, working in close coordination with EUSEC (the EU Security Cooperation entity, which has the lead on police reform in the DRC) to provide training in gender and human rights issues to the Congolese National Police. Clarify the peacekeepers’ rules of engagement, and, particularly, the circumstances under which they are able to take perpetrators into custody.
- Enhance prison facilities. Currently, in the DRC, even if rapists can be arrested and convicted, there is often nowhere to incarcerate them without adding to the chronic, dangerous and physically detrimental overcrowding throughout the DRC prison system.
- Establish guidelines for social responsibility in consultation with organizations active in DRC and for humanitarian operations in Sudan. Require that all private military contracting firms hired to conduct activities have adequate numbers of women in supervisory roles, have been trained in proper and confidential reporting methods, and promptly and appropriately respond to reports of violence.
- Foster public awareness campaigns and efforts to shift national opinion about the seriousness of rape. DRC First Lady Olive Kabila and NGOs led by Congolese women have begun to have some success in this area.
- Enhance community reintegration services for victims, including schooling, vocational training, employment services and child care.
- In cooperation with the Department of Defense, launch an effort to link participation in sexual violence to career consequences for officers in the FARDC. Establishing a human rights office within DOD could be helpful for coordinating programs, policies, and data collection to achieve this goal.
- Provide additional protection patrols within IDP camps in Darfur and the DRC. Within the context of enhanced data collection, identify specific locations and patterns of daily activity—for example, water and firewood collection—that create the most vulnerability to attack, and fortify patrols and protection in those geographic areas and at those times.

- Provide personnel to gather documentation and testimony for the prosecution of rapes. Supply legal experts to help establish clear and consistent guidelines for identifying and punishing perpetrators. The United States has already undertaken efforts along these lines by supporting civilian justice sector reform that parallels our military justice reform work. Through a USAID-funded program, the American Bar Association is helping Congolese rape survivors navigate the justice system so that they are not discouraged by the bureaucracy of a system that should be working for them.
- Encourage the African Union to carry out the recommendations presented in their International Commission of Inquiry report of 2006 into sexual violence and abuse in Darfur, including those that focus on holding African Union (AU) troops accountable for actions of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as more general prevention of impunity and protection efforts.
- Include women in negotiations to end the conflicts in Sudan and the DRC. Women must be represented at the negotiating table so that their specific needs in post-conflict civil reconstruction are incorporated, from the start, directly into the fundamental documents and blueprints of reconciliation.

We at the State Department are eager to work with you in developing more serious and sustainable actions, coordinated across the U.S. Government, to combat the violence. The Obama administration assesses that this humanitarian crisis urgently requires attention, and we pledge to accelerate our efforts and our engagement.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Thank you, Ambassador Verveer, very much. We now begin with a 7-minute round for the panel. I'll start it off. Mr. Carter, as you know, one of the major drivers of the instability in eastern Congo is the dismal state of the security sector itself, which does not protect or provide adequate justice for the civilian population and, moreover, many in the Congolese army, as you also know, have been implicated in rape and other forms of gender-based violence over the years.

The U.S. Government has been involved with other donors over recent years in efforts to reform Congo's security sector, and the President requested additional funds in the supplemental, as well as a substantial increase in foreign military financing for Congo in his FY10 budget request. With all this increased support going to the Congolese army, how are we integrating, analyzing, and addressing gender issues, as well as seeking to enhance the accountability within the Congolese military?

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue, as you rightly put, is—it's a structural one we face with the Congolese army. What we've also come to realize is that the United States alone cannot make an effective reform effort. It has to be done with an international coalition.

On May 12, the United States participated with other international donors in Brussels on a means by which we could better coordinate our efforts for what we would consider security sector reform. But we've recast it as security sector transformation, but it has to look beyond not just elements within the army, but also the police and the judicial system itself, that working on one component isn't sufficient, for example, if you don't have a judicial system that can deal with the questions of impunity in a clear-cut and open way.

With regard to the military itself, we have an ongoing commitment to develop a rapid reaction force and model battalion based on the principles that we use with, for example, the ACOTA program for peacekeeping, which folds in significant training on the issues of human rights, dealing with gender sensitivity issues. That would be an issue that we'd be looking at, but once again, it has

to be a coordinated effort with ourselves and other international donors.

Chairman FEINGOLD. You mentioned ACOTA. Are there specific components of any of our training programs that deal with the gender issues that are more than just a box-checking exercise? What does this really entail?

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Chairman. The question there is what's inside the ACOTA program, essentially, what we're looking at with regards, for example, for peacekeeping training. It is an extensive series of classroom exercises, workshops, as well as role-playing exercises that the peacekeepers go through that focus on human rights issues generally, but also focus on the issue of gender sensitivity, how to address the question of gender-based violence. Since 1997, we have trained about 75,000 peacekeepers, African peacekeepers, and according to our records, not one of those who have been trained—these peacekeepers who have been trained have been implicated in any effort of gender-based violence themselves. So what we see is that the training that we offer the peacekeepers within ACOTA is actually working.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Assistant Secretary Brimmer and Mr. Carter, there's understandably a lot of frustration that the U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Congo, MONUC, has not done enough to protect civilians. I was pleased when the Security Council authorized an additional 3,000 troops for MONUC, but it's my understanding now that 6 months later, those troops have still not arrived in Congo; is that so? And if so, what's the holdup?

Ms. BRIMMER. Senator, thank you very much for your question, if I may. Indeed, the last time that we renewed the mandate for MONUC, we did add important provisions, including the addition of the 3,000 forces that you mentioned. Indeed, they have not yet arrived. They are expected to arrive in early June. Because they're from several different countries, assembling them has taken additional time, but we've been assured that they'll be there within weeks, by the beginning of the next month.

Chairman FEINGOLD. And what practical protection mechanisms or resources would actually enhance MONUC's ability to protect? I understand they need greater intelligence support and helicopters to respond more rapidly to reported violence. But, for example, would the so-called Foreign Police Units like we have in Darfur, would those also be useful?

Ms. BRIMMER. Senator, thank you. Indeed, there are still additional assets that they would need. In particular, the information would be an important element of that. Foreign Police Units do have the advantage that they receive—they actually have trained together, deploy as a unit, and are able to receive the additional training which we've discussed separately, so that may be an important element.

However, the provision of Foreign Police Units takes longer to put together. Not all countries are able to provide Foreign Police Units, but they can come with additional and often higher skills than individual police elements.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Ambassador Verveer, what steps can the United States take to ensure that survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have access to justice and high-level government

officials and military personnel who are alleged to commit such crimes are prosecuted? And also, what about rebel leaders? How can we hold them to account if similar allegations exist?

Ambassador VERVEER. Well, obviously, Senator, we have to do this on so many levels, and the top level is the level of political will and the kinds of diplomatic efforts that we make within the United Nations and, of course, in our own bilateral relationships and with the groups and other nations with whom we are working in these regions. So I think this has to be a foremost consideration, and, too frequently, it is maybe the last box, if it's checked at all, instead of an integrated top priority. I think that has really been at the heart of our basic problem.

Second, with respect to bringing the kinds of assistance the women need in coping with the terrible, terrible traumas that they have endured: we need to bring in everything from medical assistance to psychological assistance, but also, beyond that, to help record what has been happening to them, to use that in a way that will be effective, ultimately, to get to the perpetrators of the crimes against them and to help build the kind of infrastructure, civil society infrastructure that will enable the rule of law, ultimately, to become a reality, as opposed to the impunity that we have now.

But it's a lot that has to happen at one time on several levels. I think first and foremost, the power is at the level of political power, and that's what really is critical in terms of the ultimate outcomes.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Thank you, Ambassador.

Senator Boxer.

Chairman BOXER. Thank you. I guess I will ask this of you, Ambassador Verveer. In an article, the Associated Press tells us about an 11-month-old baby from Congo who was raped by a 22-year-old neighbor. We learn about a 4-year-old who was kidnapped by soldiers and gang raped when her mother sent her across the road to borrow something from a neighbor. She was infected with HIV. And we learn about a 12-year-old girl who was savagely raped by five soldiers and after raping her, they left her destroyed, with a foreign object inside her.

The article then goes on to say that a Dr. Christof Kimona is one of only two surgeons who perform the reconstructive operations in eastern Congo that may be able to mend the physical damage done to these women. Some 1,100 rapes are being reported each month, with an average of 36 women and children raped every day. How is it possible that there are only two fistula surgeons in all of eastern Congo, given the scope of the crisis, and how can the United States help provide more health care, specialists, and surgeons to treat women in the Congo and other countries where women are suffering from fistula and other trauma?

Ambassador VERVEER. Thank you, Senator, for that question. It's obviously a very severe problem, and one that requires greater resources. The United States has heretofore provided some resources in terms of assistance to medical institutions for fistula repair and for other kinds of health services, but it's obviously nowhere near what is required.

I think we need a concerted effort with our allies and multilateral institutions, to see what we can do to at least turn this imme-

diate suffering around, as opposed to the longer term consequences which will take, obviously, longer to address.

But you have hit on something that is absolutely pressing. I know that you know Dr. Mukwege as well, and I have sat with him and heard how really horrible the situation has become. And we know it's not better, so we clearly have an obligation to try to do more in terms of our own abilities to do that and beyond in terms of other donors.

Chairman BOXER. We need to get doctors there, OK, and we need to take the lead. You know, we have other countries that aren't friends of ours that send doctors all over the world. We have the finest physicians. I know so many, and they would just do anything to help humanity like this. So it seems to me—and I'm so excited that our colleagues, Senator Corker and Senator Isakson, are going over there—that maybe it's something you could explore on how we could help get doctors there.

Because when I first talked to Senator Feingold about this, and he's been working on this for so long, he looked at me and said, "This is all part of a war, and that is why we've got to end the war."

But still, everyday there are rapes and rapes and rapes. So in the meantime, it seems to me that we need a short-term strategy and a longer term strategy, and part of the short-term strategy is to relieve the suffering. And, of course, we want to stop those rapes now, tomorrow, yesterday, but at least let's get some physicians in there. I hope you will take that back to the President, take it back to Secretary Clinton. And I would ask this of anyone on the panel.

Ambassador VERVEER. Senator, if I might, I will personally commit to try to convene the important players in all of this, both on the inside and outside, so we can begin to make better progress.

Chairman BOXER. That would be wonderful. In 1996, the U.N. General Assembly adopted Resolution 1612, in which they established the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict to promote and protect the rights of children affected by armed conflict. I'm interested in exploring a similar position to address women who are caught in conflict.

Now, this is interesting, colleagues, because the Special Representative for Children works in coordination with the Security Council Working Group on Children, and they published country-specific reports on children caught in armed conflict.

And the reports serve as triggers for action, so they're just not reports that sit on the shelves. They discover something and trigger action by the Security Council, and it puts public pressure on countries in conflict to halt violations against children.

So I'll give you an example. In the Central African Republic, the Special Representative for Children used her stature to engage in discussions with the Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy, the APRD. She was able to secure their commitment to release all children associated with their forces. This is progress. And what she said is—and this is quoting her—"when I go out into the field, there are armed groups who want to get off the list of shame that the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1612 sets up for those who recruit and use child soldiers."

So would the United States support the establishment of a high-profile position within the U.N. to address these issues, such as a special representative of the Secretary General to address rape and other sexual violence against women? I would ask anyone on the panel.

Ambassador VERVEER. Obviously, we would support the outcome of what you just described that worked so well for the children in comparable situations. One of the issues right now, Senator, is that the United Nations is undergoing a process to reform the institution to better respond to the whole range of women's issues in general at the United Nations and to bolster the voice, the structure, the resources, the whole range of responses. And we would have to see, because obviously, we want both. We want the reform to take place in a way that makes a difference, and we want the outcome you just described. So certainly, we will be part of those discussions.

Chairman BOXER. OK. Well, my subcommittee oversees our work at the United Nations. Ambassador Brimmer, if you would like—

Ms. BRIMMER. Senator, thank you very much for that question. As Ambassador Verveer has mentioned, we're very interested in strengthening the mechanisms to deal with women's issues at the United Nations, and we want to look at what's the best way to do that—to continue to have a high-profile attention here, and to see what we can do to increase attention here.

As you noted that the special representative for children in armed conflict actually provides us a mechanism also to address the very issues we're looking at today, one of the things the United States is trying to do is to expand the list of triggers that actually highlight issues for that particular special representative, because that's an important vehicle, and we're trying to introduce these issues in all of the vehicles that exist in the U.N. system.

Chairman BOXER. OK. I have one more question, but my time is up, and I'd rather just complete the circle on this. And my question, which I'll ask you to address in writing, deals with how are we helping to train the U.N. forces, because we know we've had problems with what they do as well. So I'm going to ask you to answer that in writing.

But I guess what I want to say to you—and this is my last point—is that we need a sense of urgency. You're new, you're all new, but you're not new to these issues. And I say grab hold of this, because the thing is, there are things we could do tomorrow that aren't that complicated. It's not that complicated to replicate what the U.N. is doing for children.

We cannot wait. We cannot read another one of these stories. We cannot look at another one of these pictures. And I know that the current administration and the last one were very dedicated to doing something, but we know what works. And I think a couple of things we've discussed back and forth here—including getting more doctors out there, getting a special person who's responsible for speaking out on these issues—are easy things.

And if I can do anything to help in my role here—and I think I speak for everyone here—please let us know. Because we don't have time for the U.N. to get its act together on everything, because they may never get their act together on everything.

But they need to get their act together on this, because it is a shame on the human race. It's as simple as that. And take that message back. You can tell them that you've got a couple of Senators here that feel very strongly about this. And I thank you very much for the time.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Thank you, Senator Boxer. We're pleased to see Senator Kaufman here. And Senator Wicker, ranking member of Senator Boxer's subcommittee, has joined us. He's asked unanimous consent that his statement be placed in the record, and for the sake of time, we thank him.

[The prepared statement of Senator Wicker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER F. WICKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to highlight the continued incidences of the systematic use of rape and sexual violence against women as an instrument of war. This is a very important topic. I would like to extend my regards and gratitude to Chairwoman Boxer and Senator Isakson for their willingness to make this a joint hearing with the Subcommittee on African Affairs.

Throughout history, armies have used rape and sexual violence as an instrument of war. This abhorrent practice continues to this day. Let me be clear: This practice is immoral, unspeakable, inexcusable, and needs to be eradicated. There is no possible military or political justification for its use.

The two cases that these committees are going to review here today, that of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, are particularly egregious examples, if for no other reason than the frequency with which systematic rape is practiced. If I may, I would like to say a few words about each of these cases.

The First and Second Congo Wars brought casualties on a scale that had not been seen in years. Together, they caused civilian casualties of upwards of 5.6 million, a death toll that has not been seen in any military engagement since the Second World War. Still more troubling were the numerous reports that various factions in the war—both those fighting for the government and the various rebel factions—engaged in the systematic use of atrocities, including rape and sexual violence as an instrument of war. This was carried out as a strategy to systematically dominate, control, and possibly even destroy whole populations. There continue to be reports that fighting and rape in the eastern provinces continues to this day, particularly in the provinces of North and South Kivu. Aside from the horror that rape engenders in and of itself, it has also substantially contributed to the incidence of HIV/AIDS. All of this needs to stop.

I would also like to address briefly the situation in Sudan. Sudan has fought various civil wars for all but 10 years since its independence in 1956. While prospects for Sudan have never been good, its most recent civil war, the Darfuri conflict, is particularly sordid. There is every reason to believe the abundance of reports that the government-backed Janjaweed have systematically resorted to rape and sexual violence to subdue the ethnically non-Arab population of Darfur. Further, there is reason to believe that the Government of Sudan has responded to the International Criminal Court's recent issuance of an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir by accelerating the ongoing atrocities. The Sudanese decision to retaliate by expelling the humanitarian aid agencies providing emergency assistance has only reduced our ability to provide relief to victims of rape and sexual violence, and other Darfuri communities in need. I hope the witnesses today can discuss some practical strategies to address and alleviate this crisis.

It is my hope that this hearing will help draw increased public and international attention to the use of rape and sexual violence as an instrument of war. I hope that this will cause further action, both public and private, to be taken for the provision of emergency humanitarian relief to women, children, and communities that have been victimized. I also hope that this hearing will galvanize other policymakers and organizations, both at home and abroad, to decry and take action against this practice. I warmly greet all of the witnesses, and look forward to hearing their testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Now we turn to Senator Isakson for his round.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador Verveer, in your testimony, you said that international efforts to address “such violence,” meaning rape, were often hindered by lack of political will due to assertions that available information is insufficient to warrant action. And to that end, you say the United States has sponsored resolutions in the U.N., to which you referred, that call upon states to take specific action toward ending sexual violence in the Sudan. What specific action have we called on the Khartoum Government to implement?

Ambassador VERVEER. Perhaps my colleague would better address that.

Mr. CARTER. In the context of our discussions, with the situation in the Sudan, the emphasis has been in terms of resolving and trying to bring an end to the actual conflict in and of itself within Darfur, Senator. And so the concentration of our efforts with the appointment of Scott Gration as the special envoy has been focusing on first addressing the humanitarian situation following the expulsion of 13 nongovernmental organizations, trying to reinsert or restructure the humanitarian infrastructure that was damaged as a result of that expulsion, focusing on those issues to get the humanitarian relief to Darfur, which has a bearing in terms of some of the services to women and children in that region.

And, in addition to that, he’s also been very active working with the international community to reinvigorate the Doha peace process, to bring steps toward a political settlement in Darfur so that these fundamental issues of infrastructure development, reconstruction, and the question of impunity that has been exhibited over the past several years as a result of the conflict can be addressed.

But at this stage, the effort with the Khartoum Government has been to stabilize the situation in Darfur, get a peace process, and address the humanitarian crisis that exists there now.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, on the subject of the humanitarian crisis and with reference to the Ambassador’s statement about specific actions, has the U.N. made specific requirements of the Sudanese Government with regard to the protection of these NGOs and the delivery of humanitarian services? Have we specifically asked them to do so, and have they denied or rejected doing so? Or is there a U.N. accountability mechanism through which we’re trying to assure delivery of humanitarian services and protection of NGOs?

Ms. BRIMMER. Well, in terms of—Senator, thank you for your question. I will address part of it from the U.N. point of view. Some of my colleagues may address it more particularly from our—the issues from—African issues.

I would say that in terms of dealing with the humanitarian situation in Sudan, we’ve been particularly concerned with trying to recover from the expulsion of the NGOs at the beginning of May, which was a serious setback, as we all know, we’ve seen the effects of that.

And so we’ve been working particularly with the U.N. agencies, which have been able to get back in, to try to continue to provide some form of assistance, because we’re having to deal with Khartoum’s egregious treatment of those people who are really dedicated to try to bring humanitarian assistance.

Thank you.

Senator ISAKSON. On that—yes, sir, go ahead.

Mr. CARTER. Well, specifically, if you're asking what the United States Government has done directly with the Government of Khartoum on this issue, I would say that we have raised your specific point, Senator, with the government, particularly as the special envoy has looked to determine a means by which to redress the problems following the expulsions of the 13 NGOs. Part and parcel of that is an agreement and an understanding from the Government of Sudan that they must support these international NGOs' operations, not harass them, and not exhibit the kind of behavior that we've seen before.

Now, whether they honor the letter of those agreements is the question at hand, which requires continuing monitoring and surveillance on our part.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, I asked the question because Senator Corker and I are going there in about 10 days, and one of the requirements of us is to spend 1 day with the Khartoum Government before entering Darfur to see what is really going on.

But we are going to be sitting there across the table, and I do not know what level of discussion we will arrive to. I would certainly like, and I think Senator Corker would like as well, to have as definitive a direction as we can regarding what we can tell the Sudanese Government that we expect them and regarding which types of questions would hold them accountable to the expectations of both these U.N. resolutions to which the Ambassador referred.

So any information like that that you can get to us would be helpful. We would like for our trip to be meaningful, if for no other reason than to raise our understanding of the issue and this committee's understanding of the issue.

Mr. CARTER. Senator, thank you. That is excellent. We will be happy to provide you with the appropriate information as well as points that would help reinforce the efforts that we're making there—as well to once again underscore with the Government of Sudan that the issue of the humanitarian situation in Darfur, the treatment of these NGOs and support of the United Nations operations there, are absolutely critical for the engagement with the international community in a broad way. We will provide that to you very, very soon, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, I appreciate that. And if you need us to meet with you, just let us know. Senator Corker and I both will come.

My last point is this. I was very pleased, as was Chairman Feingold, with the appointment of Gen. Scott Gration as the special envoy to the Sudan. It sounds like logistics and strategy are pretty important, in terms of protecting these NGOs to get the humanitarian aid to Darfur. So I think it is particularly helpful that he's a two-star general who has been in charge of logistics for the Air Force and the Department of Defense.

Do you know if there have been any discussions with General Gration, or is he still in the process of assessing the situation on the ground in terms of securing those NGOs?

Mr. CARTER. He has been—this has been the centerpiece of some of his activity in his first trip. He's made two trips there to the re-

gion. Yes, he's had these discussions directly with the authorities. He's worked with the United Nations operations in the field. He's had discussions with the neighborhood, so to speak, the governments of the surrounding areas as well as our development partners. He has also had discussions with the NGOs themselves, so he is seized with this issue.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be happy to defer.

Senator KAUFMAN. Thank you very much. I just have a very short—one short question. I really appreciate it. You know, these horrors, these stories are just so horrific, but, you know, it's like an echo to me of what went on in Bosnia when you read the stories about what happened during the genocide there.

And it seems to me that more and more, what you described has kind of become the trademark of those involved in genocide. It isn't just killing people, but it's trying to make a permanent obliteration of what's gone on. And too often, these issues get kind of lumped with Africa, and I understand.

But is there anywhere—especially Ambassador Verveer—is there anyplace in the world where we've been able to kind of control this kind of activity or mitigate it or do what Senator Boxer and others have said, where we've been successful in trying to stop this thing during a period of genocide, which it seems to me we're going to have to be living with this for the indefinite future, or am I wrong about that?

Ambassador VERVEER. I don't know if you're wrong about it. I hope you're wrong about it. But I think where we have been able to work to build civil society in ways that can operate to have the kind of social infrastructure that will keep a lot of the worst from happening, we are in a much better situation.

And that is why it's so important, when you've got these failed situations with no institutions working and with no recourse, whether in terms of the political institutions or the civil society undergirdings, that's when we have the serious problems. But if we would build that and see these as long-term investments, we would be in a far different place from where we are in too many of these places.

And I think we know that investing in women in particular has that kind of positive impacts. So I would hope that we wouldn't look at this as a marginal issue at the early stages and consequently wind up where we are today, where we've got these situations that are unspeakable. We have to ask: What could we have been doing a lot earlier to ameliorate some of this?

So I think it speaks to the longer term smartness, if you will, about how we conduct our foreign policy, the kind of investments we make in development, and our diplomatic investments, but, in the long term, it pays off. Otherwise, we're going to find ourselves in more and more of these situations.

And as I've heard many Senators talk about the fact that when we get into a situation where we wonder what the prospects are for the United States in terms of the ill-will toward us, a lot of it comes out of messy situations on the ground, when we don't have

a vibrant civil society, or institutions that function. And I think we need to do a lot more to invest in that, because it is a long-term critical investment.

Ms. BRIMMER. Senator, if I may?

Chairman FEINGOLD. Yes; you may.

Ms. BRIMMER. Thank you for the question. If I may, I would just like to highlight a particular example, the case of Liberia, a country which suffered for, unfortunately, years of violence against civilians, yet there was positive engagement, both by Liberians and by the international community, including a peacekeeping operation. And there now we have an elected government headed by a woman. Our Ambassador there is a woman. The one special representative to the Secretary General there is a woman. And this is also a case where the issues confronting women were a particular part of the engagement by the international community.

Earlier, the chairman had asked me about Foreign Police Units. Liberia actually was a place where the special unit, all-female unit from India, was deployed. That has actually inspired Liberian women themselves to pursue careers in law enforcement. So there are some cases where long-term and committed engagement has really made a difference.

Senator KAUFMAN. Chairman Boxer, you know, this would be a good hearing, how prevention, how diplomacy and economic development helps, and the rule of law affects all these issues that we deal with, and how important those are. And I want to thank Senator Wicker for allowing me to ask my question. I appreciate it.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much. I understand that in opening statements, the role of U.N. peacekeepers has been touched on. I'd like to explore that topic a little more. And perhaps I'll be repeating myself, but let me just observe that it is indeed hard to believe in 2009, there's a necessity for having hearings such as this.

And I think we can all speak in one voice that rape as a weapon of policy is completely—has always been completely unacceptable, but certainly in this day and age, we should have a plan and a policy and an action plan to make sure that we're actually making some progress. Let me specifically mention that the U.N. mission to the Congo was established in 1999. It deployed some 10,800 peacekeepers from 50 countries.

And in 2004, Secretary General Kofi Annan was forced to admit that there had been cases of this U.N. peacekeeping force sexually violating the refugees, who were supposed to be under the protection of the force. Indeed, there had been prior allegations of U.N. peacekeepers sexually exploiting their charges, but this was the first instance in which widespread evidence was available of peacekeeper misconduct.

One common allegation is that these U.N. peacekeepers would rape a refugee and then later, supply that refugee with food, so as to make the act appear to be an act of prostitution, rather than rape. A number of the allegations were that the rapes were perpetrated against children.

And in fact, Amnesty International told the Christian Science Monitor, "The issue with the U.N. is that peacekeeping operations

unfortunately seem to be doing the same thing that other militaries do. Even the guardians have to be guarded.”

Now, this is an older allegation, admittedly. But I just wonder, is our government satisfied that the United Nations has adequately addressed this question, that they’ve gone back and, as a matter of United Nations governance, made sure that this has been addressed, and that we’ve received ground truth concerning what actually happened, and that there has been a plan adopted to make sure that at least U.N. peacekeepers, the folks doing the guarding, are not the perpetrators of this ancient kind of abuse and torture?

Ms. BRIMMER. Senator, thank you for that question. Indeed, any such issue is one too many, and the situations you described are indeed troubling. However, I should note there’s been an important sea change in the approach to these issues at the United Nations, and that Member States, with the United States in the lead, have made important changes in how the United Nations addresses these issues, and in particular, in the case of MONUC, the operation in Congo. The figures you cited—

Senator WICKER. MONUC is the French acronym for these peacekeepers in the Congo?

Ms. BRIMMER. They are the peacekeepers in the Congo. The situation you described in 2004 was indeed serious, and this has taken the attention seriously of the Security Council. In the most recent renewal of the Security Council mandate for that operation in December, there was an explicit emphasis on sexual violence, on trying to address the situation. And we need to differentiate between the peacekeepers’ actions and the actions by others in Congo.

In terms of the peacekeepers, their mission now, and the primary mission now is civilian protection. And there have been important efforts to work on the training of the peacekeepers, extensive training before they go in-country and once they’re in-country. The resolution—

Senator WICKER. If I could interrupt, is it the official position of the United Nations now that the acts did indeed occur, and that regrettably, they were perpetrated in part by persons there under the auspices of the United Nations?

Ms. BRIMMER. In terms of the incidents of 2004, I would have to go back and look. As far as addressing it specifically myself, I would want to go back and look specifically at the incidents you raise in 2004 and get back to you regarding those particular allegations. I was going to comment on the more recent activities.

In particular, we’ve noted that currently now in the peacekeeping operation, there are about 18,400 peacekeepers currently in Congo. Of those, we’ve noticed a decline in the reported incidents. I should say that we also are trying to encourage the reporting in the first place, because we want to have adequate reporting. In 2007, there were 48 cases, and in 2008, there were 38 cases so far. Any case is too many, but I would say that now there’s a more organized effort to try to have adequate reporting and to deal with the cases that come up, and I should say that the mandate for the operation in Congo also requires the Secretary General of the United Nations to report explicitly on sexual violence issues when reviewing the peacekeeping mandate.

In terms of looking ahead, the mandate will be renewed again, if appropriate, in December. It comes up in December 2009. Again, we'll be looking very seriously at these issues and how the peace-keeping operation addresses these issues at the time of the mandate renewal.

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Thank you, Senator. Let me just add that obviously, this is a serious concern with regard to any misconduct by U.N. troops. And when I was in eastern Congo, I did speak to the Pakistani troops about an incident involving them, but I do want to say that it is only because of MONUC, only because of the U.N. peacekeepers—Pakistanis, the Indians, the Moroccans, and others, and our own former Ambassador to the Congo, who was head of the MONUC at the time, Ambassador Bill Swing—that I was able to go and meet these women and have a private meeting and learn of the strategy.

So this has to be faced. Any misconduct has to be fixed, but let's not have any confusion coming out of this hearing, that the issue that founded this has to do with rape and other conduct being used essentially as a form of genocide or war, and that is not something that, in my view, the U.N. peacekeepers can be fairly lumped in with, as serious as it is.

I do not want to undercut how important it is that we have something like MONUC in order to provide us the ability to simply get in there and try to do the kinds of things Senator Boxer's particularly talking about. So thank you for raising that issue.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your testimony. As anybody would be, I'm incredibly troubled at every level at what is happening. I guess I want to understand, if the issue seems so huge, where do you start to have impact, and knowing that probably during this hearing—not probably, but knowing that during this hearing it is happening right now, as we're sitting on this panel, and somebody else is being affected for life.

My understanding is the biggest impact we could have is to end the conflicts; is that correct? That is the most major impact. So obviously, as we step down—and we know this conflict has been going on for some time, and certainly, I don't think enough has been done at any level to try to end it. But so as we step down, then I guess the cooperation internationally through the U.N. is the next level, is that correct, of impact?

So I see you nodding. I don't want to waste time with that answer, since it seems to be unanimous. But the U.N. seems to be divided always. There's some Member State or country that keeps us from taking effective action. If you didn't have the U.N., you would create one, but because of these divisions, it seems that we're very ineffective at that level.

Is there anything about this issue that divides the U.N. or their member countries that look at this, that look at our trying to take action against this, that create resistance within the U.N., that calls it not to take the actions or be as effective as could be? Is there any division inside of the U.N. as it relates to this issue?

Ms. BRIMMER. Senator, thank you. Thank you for that question about the approaches at the United Nations. I do not see such divisions. What I note is that the U.N. has been trying very much to work on both aspects of this question, both making sure that peacekeepers in the field who are absolutely vital to trying to help achieve long-term peace, that they receive adequate training in the field and their adequate reporting mechanisms. That's one aspect. But then the real perpetrators are not the peacekeepers. And the question there is——

Senator CORKER. But as far as working, the member countries, there's no division. There are no countries in this world who are resistant to us addressing this issue?

Ms. BRIMMER. I would say I see strong support for addressing this issue in many parts of the U.N.

Senator CORKER. Are there any parts of the U.N. that resist it? That is the question.

Ms. BRIMMER. I do not see at this point areas which are causing significant resistance, I think, but there are always more things we can do to always improve attention to this issue.

Senator CORKER. So stepping down from there, it seems to me then the thing that we can do to those—with those who have been affected is to have effective programs to deal with those people that have already been affected; is that correct?

Ms. BRIMMER. Well——

Senator CORKER. And, you know, we have this massive PEPFAR program that seems to be having positive effect. I know last year, we were able to get an amendment in to deal with male norms. In many countries, even acknowledging that AIDS is an issue, HIV is an issue, is hard to do. Is there anything programmatically that we might think about as it relates to PEPFAR and the way we've approached the issue there that might be applicable in these countries—the Congo, Sudan, and other places—that might be effective? Is there anything there that——

Mr. CARTER. Senator, thank you for that question. The issue here is what can we do bilaterally with the kind of programs that we have in place to address the impact, not necessarily in terms of prevention, but in response to some of the challenges that this issue places on local populations.

With USAID, for example, in the Congo, over the last few years, we've spent about \$10 million looking at the kind of medical treatment and dealing with about 100,000 survivors in the Congo with AID resources, in terms of the health infrastructure, in terms of providing health services at the local level.

We have ongoing programs with various groups in the Congo with USAID resources to mitigate the impact of rape and to address some of the medical conditions that are there. More needs to be done in that sector for sure.

But if you're looking at kind of an institutional structure like PEPFAR to address this issue, I have to say that would be a major challenge, given that the circumstances that we see, for example, in Darfur versus the scope of the problem that we see in eastern Congo or other parts would make it difficult to create an institutional response that fits each specific country.

I think what we need to have is an integrated approach with unity of government approach to the question, but as well, one that is an international approach with our donor partners. There's not one country that can move on this issue alone.

Senator CORKER. I know we've had the NGO issue in Khartoum, but is there a direct resistance to any country trying to work within Sudan to try to deal with this issue by the Government of Khartoum? Is there direct resistance to that?

Mr. CARTER. Generally, with regard to the NGOs themselves, I mean, the government itself has been resistant and has put up obstacles to almost the entire humanitarian network that is operating in Darfur, both in the context of health services and food delivery, the United Nations program. So, if you're looking at where has there been significant resistance, I would say it is in Khartoum itself.

Senator CORKER. To this specific issue or just all NGOs?

Mr. CARTER. I think it's—I would say global. If you want to fold this under that, I would say that as well.

Senator CORKER. I just—we have contacted organizations that are dealing with women that have been violated in this way, and we read stories about what happens after the fact, and many of them living by themselves, off away from their families.

It just—and I know we'll know a lot more when we return in a couple of weeks—but it just is beyond fathomable to me that, as Senator Boxer mentioned, that we have two physicians, that we don't have people funded to deal with the psychological issues, that we don't have people in place to deal with the aftermath of this tragedy.

And it is just beyond belief to me that something that has to have universal offense to every living human being, we have not mobilized more resources to, at the very least, deal with the victims after the fact. The other issues I know are complex. I realize that there are many victims beyond what we're talking about, as it relates to the entire conflict, and I know it's going to take years for us to solve that, and I am just baffled that we have not mobilized greater resources. I would love to have any comments. I know my time is up.

Ambassador VERVEER. Senator, I think you're exactly right about that, and, as Senator Boxer also mentioned, there is a lack of physicians to deal with this problem. You know, there are any number of assistance programs. They are not adequate, obviously, to the task. Much of the assistance we're doing; is it enough? Certainly not, in terms of what is required, but what we are doing goes to the heart of what you're describing that needs to be done.

But there's just so much more that needs to be done than is adequately being met, and I think that's an issue here on the table. The resources to really get at some of this in a much broader, deeper, extensive way than we are currently doing, we as the United States, the multilateral organizations, the other partners that we have around the globe, countries that are participating in humanitarian assistance. We need to do more, and there's no disagreement on that.

Senator CORKER. Thank you for your testimony.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Thank you for your testimony.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for missing what I know was very compelling testimony, and you may have answered this question already. But if you were going to—I know you said that ending the conflict in Darfur and in the Congo would be the most important thing. But short of that, what's the one single change effort that can make the most difference? You talked about resources. Is it just resources?

Ambassador VERVEER. I think, Senator, it's about protecting those who are in the path of these horrors that are being perpetrated. We just have to do a better job because these horrors are occurring. When women go to market, they're occurring. Where they congregate, they're occurring, wherever there are regularized activities they have to perform. And oftentimes they are in the path of attacks that result in the kinds of the things we've been discussing.

So I think the protection issue is an absolutely critical one. There are so many other pieces to this, and we really need the broad, integrated approach; clearly. But, in terms of saving lives, that is critical, because you can't save lives unless the vulnerable can be protected from those who are attacking them.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. It seems to me that perhaps we do have a window of opportunity here, given the number of women now are in positions of power in the United States, whether it's Secretary Clinton or Senator Boxer who are pointedly calling attention to these tragedies, that hopefully, we will take this opportunity to address it. So thank you.

Ambassador VERVEER. Senator, if I might, on that point, related to women in these conflict zones: there are so many women who are clearly victims, and their plight has been on our table today, but there are so many community leaders, peace leaders, and activists who are well-trained, who know what's going on, and who are committed to a resolution.

And I think one of the things this discussion has to be about to get at some of the things that, for example, Senator Corker, you've been mentioning, is to ensure that these women are part of the decisionmaking processes, that they're in the peace negotiations, that they're part of the rebuilding.

The outcomes, whether it's their human rights or whether it's their future security, are going to be dependent on whether or not they participate in this. We've seen this in other peace processes. If they are not at the table, it is unlikely that the outcomes, as much as we want the peace, will be as good for them, because long after the guns are put down, the violence against women will continue.

So they have to be part of the solution, and that's why this whole issue of Resolution 1325 is so critical, to get more engagement and recognition on the part of the decisionmakers to have the political will, if you will, to really ensure that women are going to be at the table.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much for, again, reiterating that point. And I would hope that all of us—those of you who are headed to this part of the world would raise that issue whenever we have the opportunity, with both the leaders in the

countries affected with our own military leaders, and with the decisionmaking apparatus in this country.

Ambassador VERVEER. Thank you.

Chairman FEINGOLD. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. That concludes our first panel, and I'll shortly be turning the gavel over to Senator Boxer for purposes of the second panel. We will, as I understand it shortly, be having three votes in a row, so if some Senators are not here for a while, that is not out of a lack of interest. It's because we have to go and do our job and vote. But I will be back as soon as I possibly can. Senator Boxer, I turn it over to you.

Chairman BOXER [presiding]. First, we would like to say thank you very, very much. We'll be following up on all these matters. We'll ask the second panel, as quickly as they can, to take their seats, because my plan is to start us off now. We'll first hear from Eve Ensler, and we'll go from there. When we have to take a break, we will have to take about a ½-hour break.

I'm sorry to be so insistent with the gavel, but because—the vote hasn't started yet, we'd like to get as many panelists in with their 5 minutes. Now, I'm going to cut you off at 5 minutes. OK? You've got the little clocks there. So we will put your entire statement in the record.

And we're going to hear from Eve Ensler. Ms. Ensler has devoted her life to stopping violence, envisioning, as her Web site states, a planet in which women and girls will be free to thrive, rather than merely survive. She's the author of the critically acclaimed play, "The Vagina Monologues," which inspired her to create V-Day, a global movement to stop violence against women and girls. She's raised \$60 million, helping countless women across the globe.

As you will hear, Ms. Ensler's particularly passionate about stopping sexual violence against women in the Democratic Republic of Congo. So why don't you start, Eve, and then we'll go one by one, and I'll introduce each of you before you speak. Go right ahead.

**STATEMENT OF EVE ENSLER, FOUNDER, V-DAY,
NEW YORK, NY**

Ms. ENSLER. Good afternoon. I'm here on behalf of countless V-Day activists worldwide and in solidarity with my sisters and brothers in the Congo who demand an end to rape and war injustice. I thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today and for your commitment to ending violence against women and girls.

I'm here because you, the U.S. Government, are the most powerful government. You have great influence in the Great Lakes region. I would like to believe it can be your legacy to inspire and provoke the world community to put an end to the worst femicide on the planet.

My play, "The Vagina Monologues," opened my eyes to the world inside this world. Everywhere I traveled with it, we've had scores of women lined up to tell me of their rapes, incest, beatings, mutilations. It was because of this that we started V-Day 11 years ago, a worldwide movement to end violence against women. And it has spread in 11 years to 130 countries.

I've visited and revisited the rape mines of the world, from defined war zones like Bosnia, Haiti, and Afghanistan to the domestic battlegrounds in colleges and communities throughout North Amer-

ica, Europe, and the world. My inbox and heart have been jammed with stories every hour of every day for the last decade.

I'm here to tell you that nothing I've heard or seen compares with what is going on in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where corporate greed, fueled by capitalist consumption and the rape of women, have merged into a single nightmare, where femicide, the systematic and planned destruction of the female population, is being used as a tactic of war to clear villages, village mines, and destroy the fabric of Congolese society.

Women's bodies are the battleground of an economic war. In 12 years, 6 million are dead; 1.4 million displaced. Hundreds and thousands of women have been raped and tortured. Babies as young as 6 months old, women as old as 80, their insides torn apart.

What I have witnessed in the DRC, frankly, has shattered me and changed me forever. I will never be the same. I hope none of us will ever be the same. I think of Beatrice, who was shot in the vagina, who now has tubes instead of organs; Honorata, who was raped by gangs as she was tied upside down on a wheel; Sowadi, who was raped and raped, and forced to eat dead babies.

Noella, who is my heart, an 8-year-old girl who was raped for 2 weeks, as groups of grown men raped her over and over. Now she has a hole inside her, a fistula from all the things that were shoved into her. Now she urinates and defecates on herself and lives a life of humiliation. So young, she didn't even know what a penis was.

There is something sinister afoot. I was there in Bosnia in 1994, when it was discovered there were rape camps where white women in Europe were being raped. Within 2 years, I witnessed adequate intervention. Yet in the DRC, femicide has continued for 12 years. Why? Is it that coltan, the mineral that keeps our cell phones and computers in play, is more important than Congolese girls?

Is it flat-out racism, the world's utter indifference and disregard for black people and black women, in particular? Or is it simply that the U.N. and most governments are run by men, who have never known what it feels like to have a bayonet shoved up their vagina?

What is happening in the DRC is the most brutal, rampant violence toward women in the world. If it continues to go unchecked, if there continues to be complete impunity, it sets a precedent that expands the boundaries of what is now permissible to do to women's bodies in the name of exploitation and greed everywhere.

Frankly, it's cheap warfare. Women in the Congo—and I have spent a great deal of time with them. I've been there three times in the last 18 months—are simply the strongest, most gorgeous, resilient women in the world. They need protection.

I ask you to fund a training program for Congolese women police officers. Do something for this sector so they can develop the right to defend themselves in a legal way. Address our role in plundering minerals, and demand that companies trace the roots of these minerals, make sure we are making and selling rape-free products. Put pressure on Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and all the countries in the Great Lakes region to sit down with all the militias involved in this conflict and find political solutions. I'm here to tell you that mili-

tary solutions are no longer an option. All they do is bring about more raping.

Most of all, I urge you to support the women. The women in the Congo are the future. They are at the center of the horror, and they have to be at the center of the solutions and peace negotiations. Supply funds for women's medical, psychological care, and economic empowerment. Women are the future of the DRC, and they are her greatest resource.

I'm sad to say that we are not the first to testify. Dr. Mukwege, who is my good friend and colleague, was here a year and a half ago, and he was here with me for February, touring America for a month. When he returned, as we've heard today, there have been 1,100 women who have been raped each month since January, since this new incursion—the successful incursion was started.

Dr. Mukwege returned. His first patient was a 9-year-old girl who was missing her anus and her vagina. That was what he returned to. And every single day since he has returned, he's operated 10 hours a day on girls.

We have to do more, and I urge you, the U.S. Government, we can make a huge difference if there is a will. There needs to be a will. Let the Congo be the place where we end femicide. Let it be the template. Let it be the place where we outline what the future will look like, where we stop eviscerating women's bodies, whether it be floggings in Pakistan or horrible rape laws in Afghanistan, or the ongoing rapes in Darfur and Haiti and in Zimbabwe.

Let the Congo be the place where women are finally cherished and life affirmed, where the humiliation and subjugation ended, where women take their rightful agency over their bodies, their land, and their country.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ensler follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EVE ENSLER, FOUNDER, V-DAY, NEW YORK, NY

Good afternoon, I am here on behalf of countless V-Day activists worldwide, and in solidarity with my many Congolese sisters and brothers who demand justice and an end to rape. I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I am here because you—the United States Government—are the most powerful government in the world. You have great influence in the Great Lakes region of Africa. It can be your legacy to inspire and provoke the world community to put an end to the worst femicide on the planet.

As some of you may know, my play "The Vagina Monologues" led me into the world of violence against women and girls. Everywhere I traveled with it scores of women lined up to tell me of their rapes, incest, beatings, mutilations. One out of three women on this planet will be raped or beaten in her lifetime.

It was because of this that over 11 years ago we launched V-Day, a worldwide movement to end violence against women and girls. The movement has spread like wildfire to 130 countries, raising \$70 million. I have visited and revisited the rape mines of the world, from defined war zones like Bosnia, Afghanistan, Haiti to the domestic battlegrounds in colleges and communities throughout North America, Europe and the world. My in-box and heart have been jammed with stories every hour of every day for over a decade.

I am here today to tell you that nothing I have heard or seen compares with what is going on in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

When I returned from my first trip there nearly 2 years ago, I was shattered. I had crossed over to another zone in my psyche. I am not sure I will ever get back.

Upon my return, still in a state of initial madness, I was unphased by all those who said the world was not interested in the Congo, all those survivors and activists I had met in Bukavu and Goma who had been working for years with their counterparts in the Congolese diaspora throughout the world. Those like Dr. Mukwege, a

Congolese OB/GYN and founder of the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu who has been sewing up women's and little girls' vaginas for 12 years as fast as the militias are ripping them apart. I was unphased by the cynicism and doubt as any new zealot. The world simply hadn't gotten the necessary information. No world government, no leader, no body of the U.N. could turn its back, could sit and do nothing when they heard what I had heard, seen what I had seen. In 12 years, 6 million dead Congolese; 1.4 million displaced. Hundreds and thousands of women and girls raped and tortured. Babies as young as 6 months, women as old as 80, their insides torn asunder. No one could rightly ignore femicide—the systematic and planned destruction and annihilation of a female population as a tactic of war to clear villages, pillage mines of their coltan gold and tin, and wear away the fabric of Congolese society. No one could turn their back on Beatrice, a lean, pretty woman who was found in the forest after a soldier shot a gun in her vagina. She now has tubes instead of organs, or Lumo who was raped by over 50 men in the course of one day and had nine operations and still has fistula, or Honorata who was taken by militia and tied to a wheel upside down then was raped and raped and over by so many soldiers she lost count—they called her “the queen,” or Sowadi—who watched the soldiers choke and smash the skulls of her children, then was forced to watch her best friend's child cut from her pregnant belly, and after, they were forced to eat the dead cooked baby or die. It goes on and on. Women who were being raped as they watched their husbands being slaughtered, women watching their daughters being raped, sons being forced to rape their sisters and mothers, husbands watching their wives be raped. Sons being raped. All this happening for 12 years, all this happening right now as I speak.

I believed that just telling their stories, speaking these words, would be enough to propel those with power into action. I have traveled everywhere these last 2 years speaking out to the Security Council, the Secretary General, Parliaments, world leaders. With many others I have pleaded for more peacekeepers asking over and over when the so-called 3,000 troops, who are supposedly on their way to DRC, will ever show up? Asking when the powers that be might flex their diplomatic muscle in the best interest of the Congolese people by advocating for a political solution to the largest conflict since WWII.

I have felt a murderous lethargy in the halls of power. I have heard members of the European Parliament say they had no idea it was even happening. I have been in situation after situation where the serving of protocol trumps the saving of human lives. I have heard empty promises and straight-out lies. I have waited as those that have the power to change this situation work through bureaucracy and hierarchies so that months and months pass and nothing is ever done. And then when it is all too late, ill-conceived plans made in back rooms are rushed into play that bring more violence and rapes but get labeled success by the world community. Witness the recent joint military operations against the FDLR (the remnants of the Hutu genocidaires) by the Congolese and Rwandan troops in January, now be touted in the West as a success. A success for whom? We know the action was a failure, as rather than neutralizing the FDLR, it scattered them, emboldening them to rape and pillage with reckless abandon.

The women we work with in Goma at the Heal Africa Hospital are reporting 500 raped women have arrived each month since January. The U.N. Secretary General's recent report says 36 women are raped a day in eastern Congo. Now, all of South Kivu is clenched, sleepless as they wait for the next nightmarish incursion. Even the MONUC officials themselves do not hold back when talking about their lack of faith in the situation on the ground—during a recent security briefing about South Kivu one colonel said publicly that the joint operation of MONUC and the Congolese army will be a huge disaster that will most probably end in terrible tragedy because strategy, logistical support, and funding for soldiers was lacking, not to mention that the vast, dense forest proves to be a difficult place to win. Even Alan Doss, Special Representative of the General Secretary of the United Nations in DRC, admitted on Radio Okapi that he needs more men if the mission is ever to succeed.

What these policies or strategies indicate, (if we can call them that, as strategies usually imply a vision of outcome and consequences) and what the last 10 years of policies indicate, is the profound indifference and shocking disregard for the lives of the Congolese people, in particular women and girls on the ground.

There is something sinister afoot.

I was there in Bosnia during the war in 1994. When it was discovered that there were rape camps and that thousands of women were being raped as a strategy of war. I watched the rapid response of the Western world community. After all, these were white women in Europe being raped. Within 2 years there was adequate intervention. It has been 12 years in the DRC. Hundreds of thousands of women and girls raped and tortured. I can only believe now that we are dealing not just with

the terrible legacy of genocidal colonialism in the DRC, the core impact of it now lodged in the DNA of the worst perpetrators, but more disturbingly the Congo has become not the “heart of darkness,” but the “heart of racism”—the place where the world’s disregard, its indifference toward black people and particularly black women has completely manifested.

Is it because the powers that be care more about power and resources and money? Is it that coltan, the mineral that keeps our cell phones and computers in play, is more important than the bodies and souls of little Congolese girls? International mining companies have significant economic investment in the DRC and I fear they privilege economic interest over the bodies of women. We in the West with our cell phones and PlayStation and computers filled with minerals extracted on the bodies of women. We in the West leaving the women in the forests to be raped and tortured. Is it the British and U.S. guilt over terrible inaction in Rwanda (which allowed genocide), which now allows them to turn a blind eye to Rwanda’s role in the femicide and murder of the Congolese?

Is it simply that the U.N. and most governments are run and controlled by men who have never known what it feels like to have a bayonet shoved up their vagina or who have never lost a bladder and rectum and then had to wait for months for a pouch for their urine and feces so they could be freed from sitting in a wretched smell, exiled from everyone and everywhere? Is it that they won’t allow themselves to imagine what this feels like? Or is it that patriarchy has so normalized violence against women that none of this shocks or disturbs them? Is it that they know that for patriarchy to continue, for them to keep their power, this violence must continue as well?

What is happening in the DRC is the worst violence toward women in the world. If it continues to go unchecked, unstopped, if there continues to be complete impunity it sets a precedent, a standard, it expands the boundaries of what now becomes permissible to do to women’s bodies in the name of exploitation and greed everywhere. Already it is spreading. Just this week I received an e-mail that documented that Congolese soldiers are kidnapping and selling young Congolese girls between 12 and 16 years of age to Angolan soldiers. This impunity sends a signal to the world that the bodies of women and children will be the new battleground on which cheap wars will be fought. It says the international community is willing to sacrifice African women and girls to get the resources it needs. And we know as resources become more precious, more and more women, first the poor and marginalized, then the rest will be sacrificed.

Women in the Congo are some of the most resilient women in the world. They need protection. I ask you—fund a training program for Congolese women police officers. Address our role in plundering minerals and demand that companies trace the routes of these minerals. Make sure they are making and selling rape-free products. Put pressure on Rwanda, Congo, Uganda, and other countries in the Great Lakes region to sit down with all the militias involved in this conflict to find a political solution. Military solutions are no longer an option and will only bring about more rape. Most of all support the women. Because women are at the center of this horror, they must be at the center of the solutions and peace negotiations. Supply funds for women’s medical and psychological care, for educational and economic empowerment. Women are the future of the DRC. They are her greatest resource.

Yet, in eastern Congo, 1,100 women are being raped each month. More Noella’s are being raped as I speak. Where is the United States? I implore you—lead the world. Take action. Make this your mission.

Let the Congo be where we ended femicide, the trend that is madly eviscerating this planet—from the floggings in Pakistan; the new rape laws in Afghanistan; the ongoing rapes in Haiti, Darfur, Zimbabwe; the daily battering, incest, harassing, trafficking, enslaving, genital cutting and honor killing. Let the Congo be the place where women were finally cherished and life affirmed; where the humiliation and subjugation ended; where women took their rightful agency over their bodies and land. Where the United States led the world in standing against rape and femicide; where the United States stood for women.

Chairman BOXER. Thank you, Eve, for your passion.

[Applause.]

Chairman BOXER. Thank you. Next we will hear from Niemat Ahmadi. Ms. Ahmadi fled northern Darfur in 2005, after two assassination attempts on her life by the Sudanese Government. Before fleeing Darfur, Ms. Ahmadi spent much of her time advocating for the rights and protection of women. Welcome.

**STATEMENT OF NEIMAT AHMADI, DARFURI LIASON OFFICER,
SAVE DARFUR COALITION, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. AHMADI. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Senator Boxer and Senator Feingold for bringing the issue of sexual and gender-based violence to the attention of the United States Government and all of those who are concerned about women issues in Darfur, Congo, and elsewhere in the world.

I'm here today because what is taking place in Darfur, I've witnessed and seen, and I have lived it, and my heart is broken. That is why I use my voice to speak on their behalf. As I speak to you today, the situation in Darfur is really grave, and the suffering of our people has been too long.

As a Darfuri woman who was forced to flee the current genocide in Darfur, I feel sometimes I have left my people behind. I'm almost overwhelmed and often ashamed. Because that's why I use my voice on their behalf. Myself and many other women have been beaten, harassed, and tortured, and forced to leave our beloved homeland, leaving behind our families and friends, and many other women continue to endure unimaginable pain.

Sadly, in the recent history and in the current crisis in Darfur, war is too often fought on women's bodies. In Darfur, where the slaughter continues for about 6 years and more, women are the most common targets. Women and children make up the overwhelming majority of those who live in internal displaced camps, which is estimated about 80 percent.

Every week, hundreds of innocent people in Darfur, especially children, women, and elderly, are losing their lives, or are forcibly displaced from the villages. Countless women and girls continue to face brutal rape, humiliation, beating, starvation, diseases on a daily basis.

I will never forget the stories of so many women. Miriam, who is from my village, came to—her mom carried her on her back after she was raped by seven men, and she had made a decision either to leave her because of the stigma or to bring her to get treatment, and then she can be able to save her life. Whereas as soon as she arrived, she was bleeding and she went in a coma.

She made that decision. She was thinking of bringing her daughter because her dad was killed on the same day, and she was bringing her to help her, to treat her, and get her more education, so that she can be able to support herself. No one can support her in our community because they consider her as spoiled.

I will never forget eight young girls in the hospital. They're just children and they have children as a result of rape, and they refused to breastfeeding them. And we tried to help them to accept that. They said, "No. When they are raping us, telling us you slaves. Now you will be getting—and you are a child. That's why this child, if we help them and raise them, they will come again and fight against our people."

The rape that's used in Darfur is not something that happened as a product of attacks or uncontrolled troops. It is systematic. It is well planned and orchestrated, and a calculation to destroy our community. Women are raped, and when they are attacked in their villages, when they flee their homes seeking a safe refuge, and

while they are living in the internal displaced camps. Even when guns have stopped, rape does not stop at all.

Sadly, despite the magnitude of the crisis in Darfur and the magnitude of the suffering of those women, the issue of sexual violence and gender-based violence, they have—little has been done to address the issue of sexual violence, especially rape. There is no proper studies conducted to find the impact of the sexual violence on women and girls. There is not enough trauma counseling or psychosocial support or treatment for these victims. There is not any knowledge about women's HIV status in Darfur.

There is no support. Even the U.N. Security Council and the U.N. campaign to stop rape, they announced that more than 100 women are raped on a monthly basis, but nothing is done. So then the women continue to—any attempt to put an end to the suffering of our people. The United Nation and African Union mission is failing to protect our people in Darfur.

Chairman BOXER. I'm sorry. You're going to have to finish, because our next witness flew in from the Congo, and I want to get her in before we go to vote. So if you could conclude, I'd appreciate it.

Ms. AHMADI. Thank you so much. I just call upon you to join me to call on the United States Government to take serious steps to stop the violence against women, for the Darfuri women to be safe.

Only janjaweed, if they are disarmed and the government—a distance from the place where civilians and women are living in the internal displaced camps, and protection and engendering the UNAMID troops, the resources should be in place, designing special projects and education for Darfuri women and empowerment of women. And it will be appreciated if you would include my testimony in your record.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ahmadi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NIEMAT AHMADI, DARFURI LIAISON OFFICER, SAVE DARFUR COALITION, WASHINGTON, DC

I would like express my sincere appreciation to Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Russell Feingold for their remarkable effort to bring the issue of sexual violence and gender-based violence against women to the attention of the United States Government and to all those concerned about the tragic situation of women in Darfur, Congo, and elsewhere in the world.

Today, the situation in Darfur is grave and the suffering of our people has gone on far too long. As a Darfuri woman who was forced to flee the current genocide in Darfur, I feel sometimes that I have left my people behind. I am often overwhelmed and ashamed. But on a daily basis, through my work and my ability to speak out publicly in the United States, I carry with me the plight of my mother, aunts, sisters, and countless other women in Darfur who face brutality and violence as part of their daily life. Beyond my own story, I know many others with similar experiences—we have been threatened and harassed to the point that we must leave our beloved homeland, our families, and our friends. Still millions more have been forced to leave their homes to exist in unspeakable conditions in internally displaced persons camps as they continue to endure unimaginable pain.

Sadly, in recent history and in the current crisis in Darfur, war is too often fought with women's bodies. In Darfur, where slaughter continues and insecurity has reigned supreme for over 6 years, women are the most common targets. Women and children make up the overwhelming majority of the camp population, estimated at 80 percent. Every week hundreds of innocent people in Darfur—especially children, women, and the elderly—lose their lives or are forcibly displaced from their villages. Countless women and girls continue to face brutal rape, humiliation, beating, starvation and disease on a daily basis. The United Nations "Stop Rape Now" campaign,

a partnership of 12 U.N. agencies, reports that hundreds of women continue to be raped in Darfur every day.

In Darfur, rape is being used as weapon of war. It is a systematic tactic to destroy the very fabric of our community. Rape and sexual violence in Darfur is not the product of chaos or uncontrollable troops during the attacks. It is not an after-effect of war. It is well planned and orchestrated in a calculation to break apart families, tear down leadership structures, and leave long-term social, emotional, and physical scars on an entire community. Women are raped when their villages are attacked, when they flee their homes seeking safe refuge, and while they are living in camps for the internally displaced. Abduction and sexual slavery is a tactic used by the Sudanese Government and its allied Janjaweed militia. This terrorizing of women, families, and communities is not a nightmare—it is the reality of daily life in Darfur.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will say again that today, the situation for my people is dire. Girls as young as 8 years old are raped and have died as a result. Countless others have been ostracized because of the stigma, abandoned by their husbands and families because they are considered to be spoiled. Many of the children born as the result of rape are left without care to die.

Despite the alarming rate at which rape and other forms of sexual violence are used in the genocide in Darfur—and elsewhere—little has been done to address this deadly phenomenon. Until today, there has been no study carried out to determine the actual impact of the sexual violence on women and girls, which is indeed beyond our imagination. There is a lack of trauma counseling and psychosocial support for women survivors. And there is a lack of projects designed to provide fuel alternatives that could keep women safe in the camps. Instead, women go in search of firewood and means of sustenance and risk facing this cruel act of violence.

The recent expulsion of NGOs has put women at risk more than ever before. Some of these NGOs were doing very important work specifically in addressing women's health needs and some other protection projects. Even though the programs were not enough before, now it is crucial to work to keep them alive at all.

The Government of Sudan continued to obstruct any effort to put an end to the tragic situation that has been going on for years. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, or UNAMID, is failing to meaningfully impact security on the ground due to a lack of resources and slow troop deployment. All international instruments concerned with violence against women such as Resolution 1325 and Resolution 1820 have not been implemented.

Accordingly, I asked you to join me in calling upon the United States Government to take the leading role in protecting the women of Darfur and bringing a lasting solution to the conflict in Darfur.

The following steps are crucial to ending the pandemic violence against women in Darfur:

- First, women can only be safe if Janjaweed are disarmed and Sudanese Government forces are distant from the areas inhabited by IDPs and innocent civilians.
- Direct protection of women must become the first priority in response to the conflict in Darfur.
- The United States must work to engender the makeup of the UNAMID force by providing the resources, training, and recruitment of more female police within the camps. We must strengthen the command structure to better protect women.
- U.S. Department of State must create effective mechanisms and tools for addressing violence against women in conflict zones.
- The U.S. mission to the United Nations must ensure full implementation of UNSCR 1820, including a monitoring mechanism and enforcement.
- There must be advancement in the human rights agenda through special attention to women's human rights.
- Studies must be conducted to assess the impact of violence on women in Darfur.
- Support must continue for accountability for crimes committed against women and support must be provided for women to seek justice.
- Projects must be designed to cover the gaps in the protection of women, such as fuel alternatives programs and other conflict sensitive programs to reduce the vulnerability of women to the sexual violence.
- Emergency interventions must be designed to deal with trauma counseling, psychosocial support and empowerment for the survivors of sexual violence.
- Special support must be provided for girls' education, capacity-building and promotion of women's leadership capacity in Darfur.
- Special funds must be allocated to support projects that support women in Darfur.

There is much work to be done to protect the women and girls of Darfur. I thank you for inviting me here today and look forward to working together to stop violence against women in Darfur, Congo, and everywhere in the world.

Chairman BOXER. Oh, absolutely, we will. But we just—we want to hear from Chouchou Namegabe Nabintu. Chouchou currently runs a radio program in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which she uses to combat violence against women, especially in rural areas. She's the founder of the South Kivu Women's Media Association.

In 2007, she brought the plight of Congolese women to the international stage, pleading the case of Kivu's women at the International Court of Justice. She also recently won the Vital Voices Global Leadership Award for her work in fighting injustice against women. So we're going to hear from her, and then we're going to go vote, and then we'll be back in about 25 minutes after that. So please go right ahead, Chouchou. Welcome.

**STATEMENT OF CHOUCYOU NAMEGABE NABINTU, PRESIDENT
AND FOUNDER, SOUTH KIVU WOMEN'S MEDIA ASSOCIATION,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

Ms. NABINTU. Thank you for having this important hearing. I am grateful for the invitation to be here. The women of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo have waited a long time for American policymakers to take an interest in this situation. I thank Vital Voices Global Partnership for their commitment to empowering women around the world and for the support of the women of the Congo.

Rape and sexual violence is used as a weapon and tactic of war to destroy the community. The South Kivu Women's Media Association is the voice of thousands of voiceless women. We use radio to give them the space to express what has happened to them, begin their healing, and to seek justice.

We have interviewed over 400 women in South Kivu, and their stories are terrifying. In fact, the word rape fails to truly describe what is happening, because it is not only rape that occurs, but atrocities also accompany the rapes. That is what makes the situation in the eastern Congo so different and horrible. Of all the testimonies we recorded, there are two that stay in my mind that I will share with you.

I met a woman who had five children and was raped. They took her into the forest with her five children and kept them there for several days. As each day passed, the rebels killed one of her children and forced her to eat her child's flesh. She begged to be killed, but they refused and said, "No, we can't give you a good death."

Last month, after the joint operation between the Congolese army and the Rwandese army to break down the FDLR, in their running away, they raped more women. And our journalists were told that after they raped the women, they put fuel in their vaginas and set them on fire, and then extinguished the fire. This was done not to kill them, but to let them suffer.

There were many other horrible atrocities, but why? Why such atrocities? Why do they fight their war on women's bodies? It is because there is a plan to put fear into the community through the

woman, because she is the heart of the community. When she is pushed down, the whole community follows.

We also ask why the silence of the developed countries? When a gorilla is killed in the mountains, there is an outcry, and people mobilize great resources to protect the animals. Yet more than 500,000 women have been raped, and there is silence. After all of this, you will make memorials and say, "Never Again." But we don't want commemorations; we want you to act now.

There are six actions that I request of you to help this situation. The first need of the women is security and peace. Rape is not peace. Rape is just like a gun, to show the force of the rebel groups. We ask for your involvement to station the U.N. peacekeepers to protect women in the rural areas.

In the Congo, we believe that there will be security when the FDLR returns to Rwanda, the one element that used the presence of the FDLR. That's why I ask the American Government to get involved politically by pressuring the Rwandan Government to accept their return back and to begin their—the FDLR, so that they stop fighting their war in our country and on women's bodies.

We need strong justice to end impunity on rape and sexual violence. We ask the United States to join us in pressuring the Congolese Government to stop giving amnesty to rebels who use rape as their war strategy. The American and Congolese Governments should request the International Criminal Court, the best ones, for the Congolese and Rwandan rebel leaders. We also ask you to pressure the International Criminal Court to include rape and sexual violence in the charges filed against these war criminals.

Finally, we ask for assistance to pursue the legal reforms needed in the Congo to end impunity for rape and sexual violence in war. We need zero tolerance on rape and sexual violence at all levels of the justice system. We ask that the American Government and United States multinational corporations contribute financially to the recovery and healing of the women and the communities, because your economy benefits from the minerals of the Congo.

The women and families need medical and psychological services to heal from the trauma to their bodies and minds. There are also children born of rape who live as orphans because the community has rejected them and sees them as ticking bombs who will grow up to become like the rebels. These women and children are left with nothing.

Another part of this recovery is to help Congo to strengthen the formal economy in the eastern provinces and end the profitability of blood minerals. We ask that you work with the United States multinational corporations to develop ways to ensure that Congolese minerals imported to the United States are conflict-free, and that the security infrastructure and capacity of the eastern provinces is built up through this investment. Economic recovery is part of the total recovery of the women and their communities.

Last, I would like for the United States to have an increased presence in the eastern Congo. Toward that end, I invite the American Government and private sector to send a delegation to the east to see the reality on the ground and explore ways to improve security and to promote the formal economy. Having a presence in the east would also allow the U.S. Government to have a better sense

of what is happening in the area and would help the United States to be a better advocate for women and families.

I would like to conclude by expressing our hope for the future. There are many people and organizations in the eastern Congo working tirelessly for peace, justice, and healing. This good work can be more effective and help even more people, if we have the support we are requesting.

The women of the Congo want to work with you, and we need your support to stand with dignity. We want to empower Congolese women. Stand with us, and help us to heal our nation. Thank you for your attention.

[Applause.]

[The prepared statement of Ms. Nabintu follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHOUCOU NAMEGABE NABINTU, FOUNDER, SOUTH KIVU
WOMEN'S MEDIA ASSOCIATION, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Thank you for having this important hearing. The women of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have waited a long time for American policymakers to take an interest in this situation. I am grateful for the invitation to be here.

Rape and sexual violence is used as a weapon and tactic of war to destroy the community. The rapes are targeted and intentional, and are meant to remove the people from their mineral-rich land through fear, shame, violence, and the intentional spread of HIV throughout entire families and villages.

The South Kivu Women's Media Association is the voice of thousands of voiceless women. We use radio to give them the space to express what has happened to them, begin their healing, and to seek justice. We have interviewed over 400 women in South Kivu, and their stories are terrifying. In fact, the word rape fails to truly describe what is happening, because it is not only rape that occurs, but atrocities also accompany the rapes. That is what makes the situation in the eastern Congo so different and horrible. Of all the testimonies we recorded there are two that stay in my mind that I will share with you.

I met a woman who had five children. They took her into the forest with her five children, and kept them there for several days. As each day passed the rebels killed one of her children and forced her to eat her child's flesh. She begged to be killed but they refused and said "No, we can't give you a good death."

Last month, after the joint operation between the Congolese army and the Rwandese army to break down the (Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda, or Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) FDLR, in their running away the FDLR raped more women. Our journalists were told that after they raped the women, they put fuel in their vaginas and set them on fire, and then extinguished the fire. This was done not to kill them, but to let them suffer. There were many other horrible atrocities.

The women ask WHY? Why such atrocities? Why do they fight their war on women's bodies? It is because there is a plan to put fear into the community through the woman, because she is the heart of the community. When she is pushed down, the whole community follows. We also ask, Why the silence of the developed countries? When a gorilla is killed in the mountains, there is an outcry, and people mobilize great resources to protect the animals. Yet more than 500,000 women have been raped, and there is silence. After all of this you will make memorials and say "Never Again." But we don't need commemorations; we want you to act now.

There are six actions that I request of you to help end this situation:

1. The first need of the women is security and peace. Rape is not peace! Rape is used just like a gun, to show the force of the rebel groups. We ask for your involvement to station the U.N. peacekeepers not only in the cities and towns to protect business, but also in rural areas where they can actually protect the women.

2. In the Congo, we believe that there will be security when the FDLR returns to Rwanda. I ask that the American Government get involved politically, by pressuring the Rwandan Government to accept their return and to begin dialogue with the rebels, so that they stop fighting their war in our country, and on women's bodies.

3. We need strong justice to end impunity on rape and sexual violence. We ask the United States to join us in pressuring the Congolese Government to stop giving amnesty to rebels who use rape as their war strategy. The American and Congolese Governments should request International Criminal Court arrest warrants for the

Congolese and Rwandan rebel leaders. We also ask you to pressure the International Criminal Court to include rape and sexual violence in the charges filed against these war criminals. Finally, we ask for assistance to pursue the legal reforms needed in Congo to end impunity for rape and sexual violence in war. We need zero tolerance on rape and sexual violence—at all levels of the justice system.

4. We ask that the American Government and U.S. multinational corporations contribute financially to the recovery and healing of the women and the communities, because your economy benefits from the minerals of the Congo. The women and families need medical and psychological services to heal from the trauma to their bodies and minds. There are also children born of rape who live as orphans, because the community has rejected them and sees them as “ticking bombs” who will grow up to become like the rebels. These women and children are left with nothing.

5. Another part of this recovery is to help Congo to strengthen the formal economy in the eastern provinces, and end the profitability of blood minerals. We ask that you work with the U.S multinational corporations to develop ways to ensure that Congolese minerals imported to the United States are “conflict-free” and that the security, infrastructure, and capacity and of the eastern provinces is built up through this investment. Economic recovery is part of the total recovery of the women and their communities.

6. Last, I would like for the United States to have an increased presence in the eastern Congo. Toward that end, I invite the American Government and private sector to send a delegation to the east to see the reality on the ground and explore ways to improve security and promote the formal economy. Having a presence in the east would also allow the U.S. Government to have a better sense of what is happening in the area and would help the United States to be a better advocate for women and families.

I'd like to conclude by expressing our hope for the future. There are many people and organizations in the eastern Congo working tirelessly for peace, justice, and healing. This good work can be more effective and help even more people, if we have the support we are requesting.

We, the women of the Congo want to work with you, and we need your support to stand with dignity. Stand with us and help us to heal our nation.

Thank you for your attention.

Chairman BOXER. Chouchou, I think you have to know—all of you on the panel have to know—and we will come back and hear our remaining two speakers—that in the Senate today, the silence on this issue has ended, and in the Senate today, across party lines, we hear you very clearly. And we're going to do some things here that you're suggesting and that Eve has suggested and all of our panelists have suggested.

So we'll come back and we will hear from our last two important speakers. And then I hope you can all stay, because we will have questions. So thank you so much. This has probably been one of the most difficult hearings that I've ever had the privilege to chair, and I'm so ashamed of the human race sometimes when they get lost. And I didn't do enough in the past, and so I pledge to you that I, just me, just this voice, is going to be heard. And I know I speak for others on this committee and off this committee.

So we'll take about a 25-minute break, and we'll be back.

We stand in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman BOXER. The committee will come to order. We have obviously had a very important and emotional hearing, and we want to thank all of you for your contributions. And I've been talking to Senators on the floor about this as we were voting for three different votes, and people are very interested, and they want to engage, especially the women Senators, and several of the men. And so I feel really good that already, you're making a difference with your voices.

So we are now going to hear from Robert Warwick. Mr. Warwick is the executive director of U.S. Programs at the International Rescue Committee's Baltimore office. His work with the IRC has included posts as the country director for Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo programs, as interim country director for Uganda, as well as country director for Eritrea and northeast Sudan programs.

Prior to that, he served as the country director for the American Refugee Committee in Rwanda and Mozambique. In 1992, Robert founded the Malawi Girls Education Program, which he continues to oversee today. So we really welcome you and please proceed.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT WARWICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF U.S. PROGRAMS, FORMER COUNTRY DIRECTOR, SOUTHERN SUDAN AND DRC, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, BALTIMORE, MD

Mr. WARWICK. Madame Chairman, thank you. Let me begin by saying I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the issue of gender-based violence in the Congo and Sudan. I represent and speak from the perspective of a U.S.-based relief agency that has prioritized the problem of violence against women and girls.

In my oral testimony, I would like to briefly address the issue of sexual and other grave forms of violence. First, I will provide the primary causes and enabling factors for gender-based violence. Second, I'll share IRC's experiences in combating this problem in a conflict setting in Congo. Third, I'll discuss IRC's experiences in a post-conflict setting in Southern Sudan. And finally, I'll propose key steps the United States must take to address these problems.

First, the primary causes and enabling factors for gender-based violence. Violence against women and girls occurs in the family and community before, during, and after conflict, where it is often hidden and accepted due to social and cultural attitudes and beliefs that condone and perpetuate it.

While the underlying cause of gender-based violence is unequal power, other factors perpetuate it. These include systems of traditional male authority, cultures of silence, conflict, and displacement.

During conflict, sexual violence is both a tactic of warfare and a consequence of conflict and displacement. They often go hand in hand. The systematic use of rape in war has many purposes, including ethnic cleansing, humiliation, and control and domination of select groups. To put it bluntly, it is domination through sexual terror.

This tactic of warfare is effective. It produces unwanted children, spreads disease, and leaves an imprint on the individual and collective psyche that is difficult to erase. Vulnerable women and children make up the majority of the world's displaced. Daily necessary tasks, such as firewood and water collection or farming, are typically the work of women. Sexual assault of women and girls engaged in foraging for wood and water has become commonplace.

The end of conflict does not mean the end of gender-based violence. Once having escaped conflict, women may be forced to exchange sex for survival and protection of their children. Because of insecurity, shame, or simply because services do not exist, sur-

vivors of sexual violence can often wait for weeks, months, and even years to seek services or to tell their story.

My second point, sexual violence in the conflict setting in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the IRC response. Since August 2008, an estimated 250,000 people have been displaced due to escalating violence in eastern Congo. During this time, women continue to care for families and face tremendous risks. The IRC has implemented GBV programs in over 20 conflicts around the world, and in our experience, Congo is one of the cruelest conflict zones in the world for women and girls.

IRC programs worldwide aim to meet the safety, health, psychosocial, and justice needs of women and girls who are survivors of, or vulnerable to, gender-based violence. In eastern Congo, access to support and life-saving services to help women heal and recover from incidents of sexual violence are lacking. Many health facilities are ill-equipped. Trained health staff are few in number, and stocks of life-saving treatments are inadequate.

In Congo, since 2003, the IRC has assisted more than 40,000 survivors of sexual violence. This has been achieved in partnership with women's organizations and Congolese aid organizations. The IRC has identified risks linked to women's movement on roads, where armed groups frequently use illegal checkpoints to attack civilians. If unable to pay checkpoint taxes when returning from fields, women are beaten and often raped.

Survivors of sexual violence seen as tainted and damaged face increasing abuse in their homes and with no other means of survival, may be forced to exchange sex for food or money.

My third point, sexual violence in a post-conflict setting in Southern Sudan. Although the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 brought an end to the fighting in Southern Sudan, violence has continued. Qualitative research conducted by the IRC in Southern Sudan revealed the following.

Women and girls were targeted throughout and immediately following the war, and continue to be affected by violence to date. Women typically consider domestic violence to be a normal part of a marriage. The only incidents reported to local authorities are those resulting in severe injury or death. Early and forced marriage is common. One 14-year-old girl explained how her husband was chosen for her, saying, "If you refuse the man that is chosen, you should be beaten and taken to that man by any means, whether you want it or not."

Economic violence, in the form of denial of employment opportunities and withholding of money for food and health care, is also common within families in Southern Sudan. Social stigma and fear of ostracism prevent many women from reporting cases, and the requirement to pay often exorbitant court fees excludes many women from seeking justice.

Finally, what the U.S. Government can do to address the problem, and I'll limit my recommendations to four, given the time constraints. First, resources for gender-based violence programs. This has come up several times in our discussion so far. We thank the U.S. Government for the resources provided thus far to address the issue of violence against women and girls. However, given the magnitude of the challenges we face, much more will be required.

Second, effective and efficient programming. The State Department and USAID should help ensure that U.S. agencies efficiently and effectively coordinate gender-based violence programming.

Third, U.S. leadership in the U.N. The U.S. Government should continue to be a strong leader in the landmark U.N. Security Resolution 1820. It is vital that the first report on 1820 address the priority problems of women's participation, program coordination, high-level leadership, quality care, and unethical information gathering.

The appointment of a high-profile, authoritative, and independent global advocate for women in conflict, such as a U.N. Special Representative to the Secretary General for Women, Peace, and Security will help ensure that the resolution is taken seriously and that there is followthrough.

Finally, U.S. legislation. In the 110th Congress, Senators Biden and Lugar introduced bipartisan draft legislation—the International Violence Against Women Act—which would make violence against women a key priority in U.S. foreign assistance programs. The draft legislation is of vital importance for the hundreds of thousands of women and girls affected by violence. Those of us working day in and day out on this issue support quick passage of a new bill, modeled on the earlier bill, which we hope will be introduced soon by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In conclusion, I again commend both subcommittees for bringing the attention of the Senate to bear on this critical issue. I thank you for the opportunity to present mine and the International Rescue Committee's views. Sexual violence and extreme consequences do not have to be an inevitable part of conflict and displacement.

The U.S. Government can help make that hope a reality for women and girls around the world. We look forward to working with both subcommittees and the rest of Congress to ensure fulfillment of that hope.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Warwick follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT WARWICK, DIRECTOR, THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC), BALTIMORE, MD

Mr Chairman, Madam Chairman, Senator Isakson, Senator Wicker and members of the committee, please let me begin by saying that I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today, along with my colleagues to testify on the issue of gender-based violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. My name is Robert Warwick and I am the former country director for the International Rescue Committee in both the Democratic Republic of Congo and Southern Sudan; and I currently run the IRC's office in Baltimore, MD, that helps resettled refugees adjust to life in the United States. I bring to this hearing today experience working on the issue of violence against women and girls, and the insight gained through two decades living and working on the African Continent. I represent and speak from the perspective of a U.S.-based relief agency that has prioritized the problem of violence against women and girls in conflict. We seek to assure that women and girls not only survive conflict, but ultimately thrive in times of peace.

Founded in 1933, the IRC is a global leader in emergency relief, rehabilitation, protection of human rights, post-conflict development, resettlement services and advocacy for those uprooted or affected by violent conflict and oppression. The IRC is on the ground in 42 countries, providing emergency relief, relocating refugees, and rebuilding lives in the wake of disaster. Through 24 regional offices in cities across the United States, we help refugees resettle in the United States and become self-sufficient.

In my testimony, I would like to address the issue of sexual and other grave forms of violence against women and girls that occurs during conflict settings as well as

afterward in a post-conflict setting. First, I will provide you with the primary causes and enabling factors for gender-based violence. Second, I will share with you some of IRC's programs combating this problem in DRC. Third, I will discuss IRC's experiences in a post-conflict setting—Southern Sudan. Finally, I will propose key steps the United States must take to address the problem. I will also strive to represent some of the voices and experiences of the hundreds of national and expatriate humanitarian workers devoted to this issue, many of whom are themselves civilian victims of war and displacement.

PRIMARY CAUSES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT
SETTINGS

We all know that women are particularly exposed to certain forms of violence simply because they are women. Violence¹ is directed against women because they have unequal power and status. In most cultures, countries, and societies, women are in a disadvantaged position compared to men as the following illustrates:

- Women perform two-thirds of the world's work;
- Women earn one-tenth of the world's income;
- Women are two-thirds of the world's illiterates;
- Women own less than one-hundredth of the world's property.

Whilst the underlying cause of gender-based violence directed at women and girls is unequal power, other factors perpetuate it. These include systems of traditional authority, cultures of silence, harmful cultural beliefs and practices.

They are at risk if they remain at home, during flight from conflict and in refugee or internally displaced settings. Social dislocation and upheaval means the formal and informal mechanisms that might exist to protect them are often weakened, collapsed or controlled by those who perpetrate the violence.

The perpetration of sexual violence is both a tactic of warfare, and an opportunistic consequence of conflict and displacement. They often go hand in hand. Either way, women's bodies become the front line of an unnecessary and cruel battle.

As a weapon of war, sexual violence seeks to accomplish a larger objective than the specific act of rape itself. The systematic use of rape in war has many purposes, including ethnic cleansing, humiliation, or control and domination of select groups. Groups may be targeted because of their ethnicity, political affiliation, nationality or geographical location—and obviously their gender. Up to a half a million women were raped during the Rwandan genocide. We've seen this tactic or strategy used extensively in eastern Congo, where the national military and numerous rebel groups use brutal forms of sexual violence—in part to secure their own food and provisions from the rural population. It is domination through sexual terror.

This form of warfare is effective. It can be modified based on the whim and depravity of the perpetrators. And while it's the bodies and spirits of women and girls that are directly trampled upon, sexual violence creates deep wounds and schisms within a target community. It destroys the fabric of a community in a way that few weapons can. It produces unwanted children, spreads disease, and leaves an imprint on the individual and collective psyche that is difficult to erase.

The strategic use of sexual violence is usually accompanied by opportunistic rape. Opportunistic rape is not a weapon of war but a consequence of the breakdown of social norms that occurs during conflict and is perpetrated, not only by armed groups, but also within families and communities. Societal norms that regulate behavior and afford some degree of protection to women break down during war, and give way to an "anything and everything goes" mentality that can, over time, rub off on the affected population.

Women and children make up the majority of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons. They are often separated from their immediate and extended families. Daily tasks such as firewood and water collection or farming are typically the work of women. These are necessary for survival in areas of insecurity but increase their exposure to sexual violence. Sexual assault of women and girls engaged in foraging for wood or water has become commonplace.

While men and boys are also affected by conflict in many terrible ways, women and girls are the main victims of rape, mutilation, abduction into sexual slavery, and sexual exploitation during times of conflict.

And unfortunately for women and girls, the threat of violence remains long after fighting ends. Violence against women and girls occurs in the family and community before, during and after conflict, where it is relatively hidden and often accepted due to social and cultural attitudes and beliefs that condone and perpetuate it. The

¹ Gender-based violence can and does impact men and boys however this is neither the focus, nor an area of expertise of IRC programs at this time.

neglect, physical and sexual abuse, and rape of girl children and women by family members and other members of the household, as well as spousal and nonspousal abuse, continue to go unreported. Other forms of socially accepted and perpetrated violence include harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early and forced marriage, sex-selective abortion and female infanticide, honor killing, denial of education, food, health care, property rights and opportunities.

The perpetrators will often be the members of the community itself. Crippled, corrupt, or destroyed justice systems do little to dissuade civilians from abusing their relative degree of power and control.

Once having escaped the conflict, women may be forced to exchange sex for survival and protection of their children. During protracted humanitarian crises, women also face a growing threat of physical, sexual, and economic abuse within their own households.

A study conducted by the IRC and Columbia University in post-war Liberia (August 2007) indicated that violence against women and girls is widespread. In the study population: 55 percent of the women surveyed had experienced domestic violence; 30 percent of all women seeking medical attention have experienced domestic violence; 72 percent of women reported that their husbands had forced them to have sex in the last 18 months; and, 13 percent of minors² in one county and 11 percent of minors in another county had been sexually abused in the last 18 months.

Unfortunately survivors of sexual violence can often wait for weeks, months and sometime years to seek services or tell their story. This delay is a result of a number of things including, a lack of accessible services, fear of stigma, feeling of shame, and actual physical insecurity that prevents women from reaching services.

In times of relative calm, access to services improves and women and girls who have suffered for years as a result of an attack—or multiple attacks—come forward when it becomes possible and safe to do so. Currently, women in eastern Congo have to walk for days to reach health services, and frequently are subjected to attacks again during their journey to seek help. Access to life-saving services is a prevailing problem in rural areas affected by war. In these areas, there may be few doctors, clinics, or other resources.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Since August 2008, an estimated 250,000 people have been displaced due to escalating violence in eastern Congo. Civilians have fled their homes in an effort to escape fighting, and have found themselves in internally displaced person (IDP) camps that are still highly militarized and often dangerous.

Congo is one of the cruelest conflict zones in the world for women and girls. A surge in the conflict in late October 2008 in North Kivu was no exception; women and girls were once again in the crosshairs of violence.

In eastern Congo, women continue to take on the burden of caring for families, and face tremendous risks when they search for additional food, firewood, and water outside camps and population centers. Civilians tell IRC that these daily chores in isolated forests and fields make women and girls an easy target for rape by armed actors.

IRC has also identified risks linked to women's movement on roads, where armed groups frequently use illegal checkpoints to tax civilians. Women have reported demands for taxes as high as \$10 when they return from their fields across front lines. In contrast, the crops they spend a day collecting sell for around \$2; other women seek out day labor in the fields of landowners, earning less than \$1 per day. If unable to pay checkpoint taxes when returning from the fields, they are beaten and sometimes raped.

Destruction of homes and livelihoods, widespread displacement and pervasive lawlessness breed violence in eastern Congo. Women increasingly face abuse in their homes and, with no other means of survival, may be forced to exchange sex for food or money.

The myriad risks faced by women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo demand the attention and commitment of the international community, as well as a careful and concerted response by humanitarian organizations with the right technical expertise.

IRC RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

IRC programs worldwide aim to meet the safety, health, psychosocial and justice needs of women and girls who are survivors of, or vulnerable to, gender-based vio-

²Children younger than 18 years of age.

lence. The IRC empowers communities to lead efforts that challenge dangerous beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. This is done in partnership with communities and institutions to safeguard the human rights of women and girls and to empower them to enjoy these rights.

In eastern Congo, the IRC has assisted more than 40,000 survivors of sexual violence since 2003. In North Kivu, IRC is responding to the current emergency by carrying out activities to mitigate the risks of violence, ensuring that survivors have access to appropriate medical and psychosocial care, and helping to meet basic health and hygiene needs of women and girls.

Emergency interventions to date have included:

- Distribution of firewood for nearly 20,000 families displaced by recent fighting in order to help women and girls avoid risks faced when they leave populated areas in search of fuel wood;
- Presence of IRC staff trained in gender based violence (gbv) prevention and response in displaced settings to provide women and girls with information about available services, to ensure proper referral and treatment, and to carry out followup with survivors;
- Equipping health facilities with essential drugs, supplies, and necessary training to manage the medical consequences of sexual violence in the Rwanguba health zone, as well as in and around the city of Goma;
- Distribution of sanitary supplies to 9,000 women and girls of reproductive age in order to ensure women's basic hygiene needs are met; kits distributed also include a battery-operated light for women and girls to use when moving around crowded living conditions after dark.

In South Kivu, IRC works with local civil society groups and other aid agencies in six territories to promote access to quality services for survivors of sexual violence. By providing technical material and financial support to local service providers, IRC helps survivors gain access to quality medical, psychosocial, family counseling, and legal services.

IRC also partners with more than 20 grassroots women's organizations in North and South Kivu to support community-based initiatives that work toward the healing and empowerment of women and girls affected by sexual violence. IRC works with women's groups and local leaders at the community level to address the psychological and social consequences of sexual violence, to improve survivors' access to services and promote the safety and well-being of women and girls.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

Although the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 brought an end to the fighting in Southern Sudan, violence remains commonplace. Prolonged conflict has exacerbated and created new security risks, especially for women and children. These include the destruction of community and family structures, a breakdown in conflict resolution mechanisms, the presence of arms and vigilantes, prevalent trauma, increased alcohol consumption, weak security institutions, poor law and order and tensions between those who have fled and those who remained during the civil war.

Inequality between women and men—as well as pervasive physical, psychological, and sexual violence, early marriage and few educational and livelihood opportunities for girls and women—represent crucial obstacles to the process of recovery, reconstruction, and sustainable development.

While there are limited studies on the situation of women and girls in Southern Sudan, they have produced evidence of an overwhelming male bias in judicial and social systems as well as widespread domestic violence, early/forced marriages, wife inheritance, inequity in property ownership, unfair child custody, arbitrary incarceration, female genital mutilation and sexual harassment and assault.

Qualitative research conducted by the IRC with Southern Sudanese returnees and host community members, local leaders, government officials, and ordinary women and men revealed:

1. Women and girls were targeted throughout and immediately following the war for violence, and continue to be affected by violence to date.

2. There is an entrenched normalization and expectation of violence. Women typically consider domestic violence to be a normal part of a marriage; the only incidents reported to local authorities are those resulting in severe injury or death. However, even in these instances, the use of violence itself is not questioned. Rather, the violent man is characterized as “losing control.”

3. Early and forced marriage is common. One 14-year-old girl explained how her husband was chosen for her, saying “if you refuse the man that is chosen, you should be beaten and taken to that man, by any means, whether you want it or

not.” A 16-year-old boy concurred saying that “the girl should be beaten and forced by all means to the man, according to the will of her parents.”

4. In the provincial town of Rumbek, spears, guns, and other weapons are commonly used in domestic disputes.

5. Women are not generally perceived to have the right to say no to sexual relations with their husbands with the exception of special cases such as illness or recent childbirth.

6. “Economic violence,” in the form of denial of employment opportunities and withholding of money for food and health care, is also common within families.

7. Low levels of awareness of human rights in general, and women’s rights in particular, persist. Although parents often recognize the right of children to education, in practice this right generally applies only to boys, with parents expressing preferences for marrying daughters to secure bride wealth over sending them to school.³

Those affected by gender-based violence often have no recourse through statutory and customary justice mechanisms. Customary beliefs and attitudes that treat gender-based violence as normal and prevent all but the most serious physical assaults from being treated as crimes.

There are insufficient juvenile and family courts, a lack of female judges and chiefs, and inadequate juvenile justice and family laws. Social stigma and fear of ostracism prevent many women from reporting cases, and the requirement to pay often exorbitant court fees excludes many people, particularly vulnerable members of society, from seeking justice.

Although a wide range of gender-based violence-related cases are brought to customary courts, IRC has documented systematic discrimination against women in the handling of claims while monitoring these cases in the capital city of Juba and the provincial town of Rumbek under its Access to Justice Project. For example, many survivors of gender-based violence are brought to courts as defendants accused of having been illegally involved in sexual activity, even in cases when such activity is nonconsensual.

Those who might have the opportunity to report violence and abuse through the justice system often face further harm if they do pursue this recourse. IRC’s projects in the state of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, for example, have regularly received reports of local courts imprisoning women as a punishment for seeking to divorce abusive husbands.

ROLE OF SOUTHERN SUDANESE WOMEN IN PEACE-BUILDING

A preliminary assessment of gender-based violence in regions of Southern Sudan commissioned by USAID in 2005 found “almost no programming to date that specifically targets gender-based violence,” and demonstrated the link between the condition of women and the prospects for a sustainable peace, concluding that “to continue to ignore gender-based violence is to do so at South Sudan’s peril: As stated in USAID’s Fragile States Strategy, “data shows a strong correlation between state fragility and inequitable treatment of women.” More than 3 years later, except for several small-scale GBV prevention programs implemented by IRC and colleague agencies, IRC finds these conditions largely unchanged.

Sudanese women delegates to the April 2005 Oslo Donors Conference identified gender-based violence as a key priority area and proposed mechanisms to protect women and girls from exposure to violence.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement provides for affirmative action and support to women so that they can become part of the reconstruction process. Women and girls are getting new opportunities in the post conflict rebuilding of Southern Sudan; but with those new opportunities, come additional layers of challenges. Southern Sudan has a long history of discriminatory attitudes and practices toward women. Provisions of the CPA mandated that women be placed in key government positions. But the women were given little to no training or experience in these positions before taking office. This opportunity, for women to contribute toward peace-building has instead led to “frustration” by both men and women. Women have to “catch up” to men and are expected to do so overnight.

Women in high-level positions who fail to thrive, are then put forward as “evidence” or justification that women don’t belong in these leadership positions within the Government of Southern Sudan. Building the capacity of women in leadership and management positions is critically needed.

³In 2004, Southern Sudan had the lowest school attendance in the world; more than 3 years after the signing of the CPA, the situation has barely improved: only Afghanistan has lower primary school enrolment rates. Total adult literacy in Southern Sudan is estimated at just 15 per cent, with significant disparities reported between males and females.

RESOURCES, PROGRAM AND SERVICES MOST NEEDED TO ASSIST SURVIVORS AND PROTECT AND EMPOWER THOSE AT RISK OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1. Protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, especially in war-affected areas.
2. Improved and decentralized health services for survivors of sexual and physical assault including: medical treatment; reducing the likelihood of contracting HIV and other STIs; voluntary HIV/AIDS counseling and testing; primary health care and surgery.
3. Culturally appropriate counseling, basic emotional and psychological support provided through trained and monitored service providers and community-based structures.
4. Assistance to survivors, families, and communities to help facilitate the acceptance, social reintegration, and long-term recovery of survivors.
5. Humanitarian assistance, where appropriate, including food distribution, shelter, and nonfood items.
6. Provision of legal information and referrals, as requested, to survivors of sexual violence. This includes information about the potential risks and benefits associated with legal action so that survivors can make informed choices about safe actions which appropriately meet their needs.
7. Economic opportunities and training for women to assist with the recovery process as well as to increase their decisionmaking power within the home and community and to ensure that alternatives exist to commercial sex trade.
8. Education opportunities for women and girls in safe schools. Assistance programs should target efforts to improve educational opportunities for women and girls by providing resources to address violence against women and girls in school settings through teacher training, improved reporting mechanisms, awareness-raising with students, and by ensuring the safety of girls on school grounds and during commutes to school.
9. Systematic advocacy with state institutions, donor governments, U.N. agencies, NGOs, and others to improve the delivery of specialized services and efforts to address and reduce violence against women through policy and legal reform. Advocacy should focus on emerging and chronic protection concerns, the scope and manifestation of violence against women, and gaps in service delivery, and calling for sustained commitment to address sexual and other forms of violence against women and children.

WHAT CAN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DO TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AND SOUTHERN SUDAN?

The United States has a key role to play in promoting the allocation of resources to stop violence against women in war and post-conflict settings and to ease the suffering of its innocent victims. Let me highlight key areas where the U.S. Government can make a critical contribution:

1. *Resources for Gender-Based Violence Programs:* We thank the U.S. Government for the resources provided thus far to address the issue of violence against women and girls. For example, funding from USAID in DRC has allowed us to support 14 Congolese organizations provide service to 40,000 women and girls. Given the scale of the challenge and problem, in order to have a meaningful impact in terms of lives and increased security, much more will be required. Increased resources will translate into improved capacity in being able to hit the ground faster and more effectively to set up life-saving services and start advocacy efforts at the onset of an emergency.
2. *Best Practices and Accountability:* The U.S. Government should work with the U.N. system and Member States to insist that sexual violence response and prevention programs supported by U.S. funding be carried out according to international standards and best practices, and with utmost concern for the safety and well-being of beneficiaries and their communities.
3. *Efficient and Effective Programming:* The State Department and the Agency for International Development should help ensure that U.N. agencies (including UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNHCR—as well as U.N. Action) efficiently and effectively coordinate gender-based violence programming that is being carried out by multiple actors in the areas of health, psychosocial support, community outreach and prevention.
4. *Do No Harm:* The State Department and the Agency for International Development should help ensure that U.N. agencies continue to work in collaboration with aid agencies in order to facilitate safe, ethical, and targeted analysis of the problem of violence against women and girls. However, this effort should not slow down or distract from the urgent priority of improving the coordinated response and making

quality medical and psychosocial services widely available and accessible to women and girls.

5. *Protection*: The U.S. Government should work with the U.N. system to help U.N. peacekeepers in Congo fulfill its mandate by taking tangible steps to improve protection of civilians in eastern Congo, especially in areas occupied by the FDLR.

6. *Safety and Security and the Rule of Law*: The State Department should work with the state actors to reestablish command and control over government soldiers who operate outside the bounds of national and international humanitarian law.

7. *U.S. Leadership in the U.N.*: The U.S. Government should continue to be a strong leader in the landmark U.N. Security Council Resolution 1820, to ensure effective implementation. It is vital that the first report on Resolution 1820 address the priority problems of: women's participation; program coordination; high-level leadership; quality care; and unethical information gathering. Civil society groups must be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to address gender-based violence. Accessible services and quality care is a crucial factor for survivors of sexual violence and must be recognized as a priority. Information-gathering at the field level must take into account ethical and safety concerns of survivors and their caregivers. The absence of systematic surveys or irrefutable data of sexual violence prevalence should not be presumed to indicate an absence of violence. The appointment of a high-profile, authoritative, and independent global advocate for women in conflict, such as a U.N. Special Representative to the Secretary General for Women, Peace, and Security will help ensure that the resolution is taken seriously and that there is followthrough.

8. *U.S. Legislation*: Violence against women in conflict is now commonly understood by the international community as a violation of basic human rights. The understanding of a state's responsibility to protect women from violence has evolved considerably. In the 110th Congress, Senators Biden and Lugar introduced bipartisan draft legislation—the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA, S. 2279)—which would make violence against women a key priority in U.S. foreign assistance programs. The draft legislation is of vital importance for the hundreds of thousands of women and girls affected by violence. In recognition of how violence against women is exacerbated by conflict and continues long thereafter, the bill was designed to address the issue in war-torn, post-conflict and development settings. Those of us working day in and day out on this issue support quick passage of a new bill, modeled on the earlier bill; which we hope will be introduced soon by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I again commend both subcommittees for bringing the attention of the Senate to bear on this critical issue, and I thank you for the opportunity to present mine and the International Rescue Committee's views. Sexual violence and its extreme consequences do not have to be an inevitable component of conflict and displacement.

The women and girls in conflict zones are waiting for the chance to heal and live free from the threat of violence. The U.S. Government can help make that hope a reality for women and girls around the world. We look forward to working with both subcommittees and the rest of Congress to ensure fulfillment of that hope. I would be happy to answer your questions.

Chairman BOXER. Thank you very much. And our last panelist is Mr. John Prendergast. He's the cofounder of the Enough Project, an initiative to end genocide and crimes against humanity. As the Director of African Affairs of the National Security Council during the Clinton administration, he was involved in a number of peace processes in Africa.

John has also worked for Members of Congress, for the United Nations, for human rights organizations and think tanks. He is the author of eight books on Africa, and he helped create the Raise Hope for Congo campaign to end violence against women and girls in the Congo.

So with that said, we certainly have someone who has been working on this issue for a very long time, and we are so pleased you are here, John.

Please proceed.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN PRENDERGAST, COFOUNDER, THE
ENOUGH PROJECT, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. PRENDERGAST. Thank you so much, Senator Boxer and Senator Feingold, for the considerable light you're shining on this issue today and what you've done before this. I think this hearing is going to reverberate beyond these walls this day for a long time because of my fellow panelists. And I hope that what you were saying earlier about being down on the floor and talking to other Senators will be able to continue.

The essential problem I want to deal with is this. The United States and the broader international community are focused almost exclusively on treating symptoms rather than dealing with the causes of these two wars, as they're responding to what are the two deadliest wars in the entire world.

We spend now billions of dollars a year on humanitarian aid and military observers—this is our taxpayers' money—without dealing substantially or seriously with the causes of these conflicts. It is irresponsible in my view to continue to spend taxpayers' money in this fashion without a clear plan to solve the problems which we didn't hear this morning or this afternoon from the earlier panel, rather than just managing them year after year.

Yes, there are marginal improvements that we could make in the lives of women and girls in both countries in the short run, and I think, again, the earlier panel talked about that. Yes, we can reorient the peacekeeping missions in both Congo and Sudan to focus more specifically on civilian protection.

We could, in fact, authorize more funds for caring for the survivors of terrible sexual violence like the work that my fellow panelists have been talking about. We could, and we should, make a greater commitment to accountability for the orchestrators and the perpetrators of rape as a tool of war. These are all terribly important things to do, but it is urgent that we go beyond treating symptoms and focus on solution, focus on ending the wars once and for all.

Now, the core causes of these two conflicts are different and, thus, they require different solutions. There's no cookie-cutter for conflict resolution in Africa or anywhere in the world. Let's look at Congo first. For the last century, this country has been picked apart by corporate and state predators, stripping the country of its valuable natural resource bases.

Even others have already said until we deal with these conflict minerals, as we call them, in Congo, there will be blood. It is very much, I think, like the blood diamonds of Sierra Leone. Until our demand for those diamonds was altered, until we stopped buying blood diamonds, Sierra Leone burned. When consumer and congressional pressure combined to alter buying practices, to alter the corporate practices, Sierra Leone had a chance for peace, and it grabbed it.

Sierra Leone is a dramatic success story. Congo could be, too, if our demand for its conflict minerals is addressed. There, in Congo, the three T's, we call them, in gold—tantalum, tungsten, and tin—are fought over by Congo's armed groups. These conflict minerals help power our entire electronics industry, and when we deal with that conflict-producing demand finally—we have not done that in

100 years of stripping that country of its resources—when we finally start dealing with that conflict-producing demand back here, in North America and Asia and Europe, Congo will finally have a chance for peace.

Now, Senator Feingold, along with his colleagues, Senator Durbin and Senator Brownback, has introduced the Congo Conflict Minerals Act just a couple weeks ago, of 2009. This is an excellent start and deserves the cosponsorship of everyone on this committee going forward and throughout the Senate.

Furthermore, Congo's—in addition to the Conflict Minerals issue, Congo's eastern neighbors particularly have added a great deal of fuel, gasoline, to the fire raging in eastern Congo.

And we think that the Obama administration—I think our panelists are unified on this—the Obama administration must expand its role in addressing this regional dimension, both in confronting Rwanda and Uganda for their roles in conflict mineral extraction, as well as in the trade, as well as in supporting—and this is crucial, and Senator Feingold has been a leading voice on this. We have to get action now—supporting more effective counterinsurgency efforts at neutralizing two of the deadliest and most ruthless militias on the face of the earth, and that is the LRA, the Large Resistance Army, and the FDLR, who originate from Rwanda and Uganda, but have absolutely devastated large swaths of eastern Congo.

Let's move to Sudan. Although natural resources are not insignificant there, the root cause is different. It's the continued warfare and the continued concentration of most of the power and most of the wealth—and there's a lot of wealth now with oil—in the hands of a small group of people in Khartoum in the National Congress Party, the ruling party of Sudan.

The best way to erode this absolute authority, short of full regime change, which no one is interested in right now, is through peace deals that allow for power-sharing gradually with Darfuris, with southern Sudanese, with Easterners, with Nubans and Nubians and others around the country, who have to have a share of that power in order for a peaceful Sudan to occur.

This requires, I think, a focus by the Obama team we haven't quite seen yet, supported by Congress, which will need a much greater support and attention for implementing the existing north/south/east deal, and building something that doesn't exist. To the shock of most of us, Darfur activists, something that hasn't existed and doesn't exist now for 6 years of this crisis in Darfur, which is a credible peace process that would lead to a resolution of a conflict there.

This ought to be General Gratian's first and most pressing priority, not running down every rabbit hole every time there's a humanitarian aid problem or somebody gets denied a visa. These are critical issues. They have an aid administrator, so we can deal with those issues, and have General Gratian deal with the conflict in Sudan, and particularly in Darfur, in rescuing the north/south deal. That's where we're going to get progress.

The Darfur Anti-Genocide Constituency, which you guys are very familiar with, I think, remains alive and well, and I think we're increasingly focusing on this agenda of peacemaking as the essential

solution. And Congress has stepped up in a number of important ways. Just a couple of weeks ago, a number of Congress persons, for example, were arrested in front of the Sudanese Embassy and spent the day in jail.

Furthermore, activists from all over the United States, along with some actors and super actors, along with now Congressman Payne and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, have taken up an ongoing fast, which they're handing off to each other for aid and peace in Sudan, and they want—we all want to invite either of you to join that Darfur Fast for Life.

Most of them are fasting for 3 days, but with your frenetic schedules, we've created a 1-day fasting option for Senators. And we hope that you will consider this one-time offer in the coming weeks, maybe on a day without so many votes and so many hearings.

In summary, this is an extraordinary case I think in which the interests of the American taxpayer and the interest of war-affected Africans actually coincide. When we refocus our policy on dealing with the root causes of these wars, we will save literally—it's no exaggeration—literally billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of lives.

That, Senators, I think, is the best way to protect women and girls in Congo and Sudan in the long run, by ending the world's two deadliest wars.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Prendergast follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT JOHN PRENDERGAST, COFOUNDER OF THE ENOUGH PROJECT,
WASHINGTON, DC

Let me first thank Chairwoman Boxer, Senator Feingold, Senator Kerry, Senator Lugar, and all other members of the committee for holding this hearing on a difficult topic and an extraordinary challenge for the international community: how to end the scourge of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan. These two conflicts are characterized not just by appalling death tolls—nearly 8 million and counting since 1983—but also by widespread crimes against humanity. Indeed, heinous crimes against women and girls occur with numbing regularity in Congo and Sudan, where rape has become the tool of choice of many of the armed groups as a means to control, subjugate, humiliate, intimidate, and ethnically cleanse.

So let's be absolutely clear: measures to deal with rape as a weapon of war in isolation will fail and fail miserably. If we truly want to end this scourge we must move from managing conflict symptoms to ending the conflicts themselves.

Yet rather than trying to end the conflicts in Congo and Sudan, most international efforts deal with symptoms. We spend billions of dollars a year on humanitarian efforts and peacekeeping, while the root causes of the violence remain inadequately addressed. This is irresponsible and deadly—costly in lives lost as well as costly to American taxpayer.

How revolutionary would it be to deal with the causes rather than the symptoms? Why can't we focus our policy on ending these wars rather than simply dealing with their consequences? From our meeting with President Obama a few weeks ago at the White House, he clearly understands the importance of such a strategic objective. But will his administration organize structures, personnel and assets to achieve these objectives, or will the pursuit of lasting solutions remain largely rhetorical? And will Congress support a sustained interagency effort to end these wars, or will the resources needed to ramp up diplomatic efforts be siphoned off for other ends?

We at the Enough Project believe that the game changer, to use the President's favorite term, would be a commitment by the Obama administration to make the strategic objective of U.S. policy the resolution of the wars that cause this scourge of gender-based violence.

A comprehensive strategy for protecting women and girls would include the following elements:

- *Protection*: Reorient efforts of peacekeeping forces in Congo and Sudan—MONUC, UNMIS, and UNAMID—to focus on protecting women/girls where they are most vulnerable: Camps for internally displaced persons; firewood collection routes; major water points; check points; etc.
- *Accountability*: Support efforts to prosecute rape as a war crime in both Congo and Sudan. This includes support for police and judicial reform, access to justice programs, and legal training. At the international level, investigations should be intensified into the chain of command that either encourages or allows rape to be utilized as a war strategy.
- *Treatment*: Expend additional resources on supporting the efforts of Congolese, Sudanese, and international organizations that are supporting the survivors of sexual violence.
- *Peace*: Over the long term, the United States and other concerned countries must work to change the calculus of the armed groups committing crimes against women and girls and re-invest in diplomacy to help bring these conflicts to an end.

Because my time is limited, I will focus my remarks on this fourth point, the crucial steps that the United States can take to promote lasting peace in Congo and Sudan.

A. CONGO—COLLAPSING THE WAR ECONOMY

In my 25 years of working on African conflict resolution, Congo is by far the most complex war I have witnessed. But one of the biggest drivers of the conflict—and in which most Americans are unknowingly but directly involved—has long been clear: competition over the extraordinary natural resource base. If we don't address the economic roots of violence, we will only be finding temporary respites from the logic of continued war and exploitation.

Conflict minerals

Sexual violence in Congo is often fueled by militias and armies warring over “conflict minerals,” the ores that produce tin, tungsten, and tantalum—what we call the “3 Ts”—as well as gold. Armed groups from Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda finance themselves through the illicit conflict mineral trade and fight over control of mines and taxation points inside Congo.

But the story does not end there. Internal and international business interests move these conflict minerals from Central Africa around the world to countries in East Asia, where they are processed into valuable metals, and then onward into a wide range of electronics products. Consumers in the United States, Europe, and Asia are the ultimate end-users of these conflict minerals, as we inadvertently fuel the war through our purchases of these electronics products.

Based on calculations by researchers at Enough, the 3T's and gold together generate as much as \$183 million annually for the armed groups that torment women and girls in eastern Congo. One of the biggest moneymakers in this trade is the FDLR, a Rwandan militia whose high command includes persons responsible for the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The FDLR and other armed groups force miners to work in desperate, dangerous conditions for an average of \$1–\$5 a day. Without alternative sources of income, these miners and their families remain virtually enslaved to armed groups and the conflict minerals trade.

A comprehensive approach to conflict minerals

There is clearly no silver bullet solution to the conflict in eastern Congo. However, if the international community and regional actors work in conjunction with the private sector to align their efforts around the common goal of a revitalized legitimate mineral trade in eastern Congo, long-term efforts could have major impact in resolving the conflict. There are four main components to a new strategy for such efforts:

1. *Shining a light on the supply chain*. Push electronics companies—the principal end-users of the 3T's and gold—to change the way they practice business by working together with their suppliers to create a tracing system paired with credible monitoring of the system by independent third parties. This would provide a critical step toward demanding greater accountability for corporate behavior and transparency. With 80 percent of consumer electronics companies trading on U.S. stock markets, U.S.-based activists have some of the most powerful opportunities for leverage on this part of the supply chain.

2. *Identifying and securing strategic mines*. The United Nations should collaborate with the Congolese Government identify key mining sites under the control of armed groups. Properly integrated Congolese security forces, supported by U.N. peacekeepers, should secure these sites and transit routes. This approach must be

grounded in a more comprehensive and coherent effort to advance broad security sector reform in Congo, and a well-planned and resourced counterinsurgency effort to eliminate the FDLR as a security threat to the region. Nonmilitary measures, particularly robust support for defections and voluntary disarmament and repatriation to Rwanda of the FDLR's rank-and-file forces, are vital.

3. *Reforming governance.* The international community should work hand in hand with the Congolese Government to force the will and capacity to exercise control over mining and commerce in eastern Congo. With Congo sorely in need of international funds, there is an opportunity to press for not just commitments but demonstrable reforms to the regulation of mining, commerce, and taxation.

4. *Supporting livelihoods and economic opportunities for miners.* Impoverished Congolese miners and their families are dependent upon their meager incomes and have few viable economic alternatives. Efforts to end the trade in conflict minerals absolutely must be accompanied by international support for livelihoods and economic opportunities in eastern Congo. This should include legal reform, and investments in both infrastructure as well as alternative livelihoods such as agriculture and manufacturing. The sooner the illicit conflict minerals trade is eliminated; the sooner the people of Congo will actually enjoy the benefits from their own resources.

In addition, any effort to address the link between minerals and ongoing violence in eastern Congo must be wed to a broader strategy to generate the political will in Congo and among its neighbors to find diplomatic solutions to the local, national, and regional tensions that have proliferated over the past 15 years. Transparency and accountability must extend across borders to include other governments in the region. Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi (to a lesser degree) have profited enormously from the illicit minerals trade and Congo's continued instability—to which they have directly contributed at times. By the same token, Congo's neighbors have legitimate security concerns and economic interests in eastern Congo, and a more even-handed approach to these regional actors from the United States and its allies is vital to address these security concerns, ending the prominent role these states continue to play in the destructive conflict minerals trade, and promoting the rule of law in Congo and beyond.

Support legislative efforts

The United States Senate has a crucial role to play in advancing these objectives. By introducing the Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009, original cosponsors Senators Brownback, Durbin, and Feingold have demonstrated important leadership and welcome dedication to the cause of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and should be congratulated for their efforts. The Enough Project supports this bill and I urge each and every member of this committee to sign on as a cosponsor to this legislation. This bill would direct the State Department to support multilateral and U.S. Government efforts to break the link between the trade in minerals and armed conflict in eastern Congo, require companies listed on U.S. stock to disclose the origin of their minerals to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, and expand U.S. efforts to improve conditions and livelihoods for communities in eastern Congo who are dependent upon mining.

B. SUDAN—BUILDING A PEACE SURGE

In Sudan, crises in Darfur, the South, and the East continue to place civilians in great peril. Women and girls are especially vulnerable. Concentrating peacekeeping assets on the protection of civilians, particularly women and girls, is an achievable objective that would produce a tangible improvement in the security of populations in areas where the UNAMID forces are deployed. However, ending the violence and cultivating lasting peace throughout all of Sudan is critical to ending violence against civilians once and for all. Doing so means focusing on the root causes of Sudan's violence, addressing the political causes of war, and doggedly pursuing and implementing credible peace processes.

As you are well aware, activists all over the world and from all walks of life continue to press their governments to help end the deplorable suffering in Sudan. Some may scoff when public figures use their fame to help bring attention to a crisis, but I don't think we can question the commitment of my friend, Mia Farrow, who just completed a 12-day fast for the people of Darfur. And that effort is continuing. Others are following Mia's example, and Richard Branson, Peter Gabriel, Pam Omidyar, and even your colleague from the House, Representative Donald Payne, are either fasting now or have pledged to fast in the coming days and weeks.

These activists and millions of people around the world are pushing for one thing in Sudan: peace. And in my more than two decades of closely observing the situation in Sudan I have rarely seen as big an opportunity as we have right now to fun-

damentally alter that country's downward trajectory. Here it is: A global consensus exists for peace in Sudan, even if there is not agreement on the best path to achieve this goal. China, the Arab League, the African Union, the European Union, and the United States all want peace, but little has been done to build the necessary infrastructure to help bring it about.

What is the missing ingredient? The Enough Project has held meetings with a number of key actors in the past several weeks—from the French and Norwegian Governments, to the United Nations and African Union, to the Sudanese warring parties themselves—and the answer is nearly universal. What has long been missing in Sudan is America's strategic leadership. The rebels, the ruling party, Sudan's neighbors, and other key actors have all been waiting for President Obama and his team to engage.

The Obama administration must lead in constructing a multilateral strategy for peace by establishing an inclusive peace process for Darfur, revitalizing implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the dangerously neglected Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement, and ending Sudan's proxy war with Chad. Toward that end, General Gration should focus on building a multilateral coalition of countries with significant leverage. At the same time as the processes are being constructed, the United States should work assiduously to create the necessary unilateral and multilateral carrots and sticks to press the parties in the direction of a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of Sudan's multiple, interlocking conflicts. It is vital that the administration work closely with other key governments in dealing with Sudan; a reliance on bilateral diplomacy will provide Khartoum the opportunity to play one party off against the other, as it has historically done with great success.

The key tasks are as follows:

- *Darfur peace process:* The structure should be similar to the Naivasha talks that produced the CPA, and some of the ingredients are already in place. As did Kenyan Gen. Lazaro Sumbeiywo with the Naivasha process, AU/U.N. mediator Djibril Bassolé should lead the Darfur process, which can be based in Doha, Qatar (although Qatar's recent diplomatic support for Bashir in the wake of the ICC indictment has impaired its credibility as a facilitator of negotiations). He must be supported by a strong team of diplomats and regional experts and backed by a small group of countries with leverage, high-level support, and full-time representation at the talks. We believe that this inner circle should consist at a minimum of the U.S., U.K., France, China, and Egypt. An outer circle group of countries and multilateral organizations (U.N., AU, Arab League) should also be engaged in a formal manner to discourage spoilers, and other key nations such as Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa would need to be thoroughly consulted.
- *CPA implementation:* The Assessment and Evaluation Commission established by the CPA is clearly insufficient to monitor and press the parties to implement the deal (largely because it lacks sufficiently senior representation and clear reporting guidelines). As a matter of international peace and security, CPA implementation should be at the forefront of the U.N. Security Council's agenda and the Council should back a new ad-hoc mechanism to guide implementation. The Obama administration should quickly work with other Security Council members, relevant U.N. agencies, and the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development, or IGAD, to establish core benchmarks for the parties, a clear timeline, and genuine penalties for failure to meet deadlines. An international meeting on CPA implementation could provide a vehicle for reenergizing efforts around the CPA and provide the launching pad for the creation of the ad-hoc implementation mechanism.
- *Chad/Sudan peace process:* The Sudanese Government continues to seek a military solution for Darfur through regime change in Chad, and Chad continues to back the JEM in response. The Obama administration should work with France and China to support high-level negotiations in Libya aimed at reducing state support for foreign armed groups and eventual normalization of relations.
- *Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement monitoring:* Eastern Sudan remains volatile. The Obama administration should work with its international partners (particularly the U.K. and Norway) and with the Eritrean and Saudi Governments to establish a monitoring group for the agreement that will report on implementation and make recommendations for improvements.

Building the necessary leverage

A serious peace process with credible mediation putting forward fair proposals will secure a deal for Darfur. A competent and higher level oversight mechanism with the involvement of countries with influence will ensure the implementation of

the CPA. Having the right balance of meaningful pressures and incentives will ensure that prospects for success are much greater.

In broad strokes, the United States should present the Sudanese regime with a choice:

Behind Door One: If the Sudanese Government permits unimpeded humanitarian access, removes the indicted President, and secures peace in Darfur and the South, a clear process toward normalization will be mapped out. Almost all of the incentives for Sudan come in the form of more normal relations with much of the world, the lifting of sanctions, a return to more normal patterns of trade and diplomacy, and the other benefits that would naturally flow from Sudan achieving stability as a result of more equitable power and wealth-sharing.

Behind Door Two: If President Bashir and his party remain defiant by continuing to undermine efforts at peace for the country, a series of escalating costs will ensue, including diplomatic isolation, targeted economic sanctions, an effective and expanded arms embargo, and, if necessary to stop massive loss of civilian life, eventual targeted military action.

If the benefits of Door One and the consequences of Door Two are meaningful, the chance for peace in Sudan increases dramatically. The missing ingredients in efforts to date for Darfur and CPA implementation have been adequate leverage and lack of strategic vision for resolving comprehensively the country's conflicts. Without real sticks and carrots, the warring parties in Sudan will remain focused on military confrontation. The international community needs to help change the incentive structure in Sudan from war to peace.

On the incentive side, phased cooperation with and, ultimately, normalization with the United States is the largest carrot the Obama administration has to offer. Removal of certain unilateral sanctions and penalties could be undertaken in response to verifiable changes on the ground in Darfur and the South. Full normalization should only occur once the Sudanese Government adheres to its obligations under various peace agreements. Any negotiating process must be guided by the reality that Khartoum has a long history of grabbing carrots, then failing to follow through on commitments.

On the pressures side, there seems to be an erroneous belief that there are no meaningful pressures left to use. In fact, a number of points of leverage are available. Until now, however, most sticks have been unilateral and have had limited effect on the regime's calculations. Substantial and focused multilateral pressures have not been tried and should form the basis of the new administration's strategy. Clearly, equally robust pressures and incentives should be developed and applied impartially to the rebel factions and SPLM to the degree to which their actions may warrant these measures.

I am happy to discuss the available pressures in greater detail in the Q and A.

The United States should now begin stronger and more sustained efforts to build a coalition for peace. But this effort will only be successful if we treat the situation in Sudan as a strategic priority, build the necessary leverage, and invest in the diplomacy critical to achieve an equitable and lasting solution.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman BOXER. Well, again, thanks to all of you. You've really taken our breath away with your explanation of the problem, and what's happening on the ground is just too hard to listen to. And that was the reason I felt we had to do this, and Senator Feingold agreed. It's hard to look at, but you've got to look at it, and you've got to stop it, period.

So I am a person of action, and so I want to take some steps. I have complete faith in Senator Feingold in terms of what he's trying to do to end these conflicts. And with an administration now that I trust and hope will finally focus on this more than it has been focused on before, I will follow his lead on this very, very strongly. I also will work with Senators Durbin and Feingold and Brownback in terms of the minerals and boycotting, and I believe in that.

What I'm going to do myself, because I've got other incredible people in the lead in these other areas, supporting them, I want

to focus on making things better for women now, so I'm going to focus on that.

And, John, you're totally right. That is an outflow of these wars, but until you guys have it figured out, we women, I think, are going to start stepping it up to call attention to this. Because one of the things I've learned, in all the years that I've fought for human rights, when I started to fight for human rights way back when I was in the House, I was fearful that if you put the light on it, things would get worse. I was very scared. I thought, "Am I doing the right thing?" You know, I'd take cases to the floor of the House and talk about them, and thought, "Well, wait a minute, this could make things worse for the people." And all the human rights activists told me, "No, it will help us."

So I said, "OK. I'm scared, but I'm going to do it," and sure enough, we were able to get people out of the Soviet Union. We were able to get people out of these places where they were being put into prison and mistreated and the rest.

And, of course, as Eve pointed out, in Bosnia, when the attention was focused, there were solutions so here's the thing. So we're going to try to get things done. It's not that nobody else has done it. A lot of people have done it, and a lot of you are right here. But I'm going to be a reinforcement with my colleagues. So the things I'm trying to get at is what we can do right now.

Now, the first thing we can do is shine the light, and so what we're going to do is now send a followup letter to our great new President and to our great Secretary of State and say, "Please make this a priority, and please help us."

And following up on Ambassador Verveer's open invitation for the first panel to help, I didn't find an action agenda there, because I think they're just getting their papers straight on the desk. They just took over, right?

So here's the deal. I want you to help me, all of you, since you know I want to focus on making things better on the ground tomorrow. What should I put in the letter? Here are the things I'm planning on putting in the letter. First, we need to get more doctors out there. And, wait, I'm going to call on you, Eve, in a minute.

We want to get more doctors out there. These are the things I picked up. We want a special person, as I believe it was either Robert or John said, which I mentioned during my questioning about the U.N., who focuses on violence against women and publishes what's going on, and kind of outs these countries for what's going on there to put the shame of public opinion on them in the hope that they will start realizing they're losing steam, not gaining it. So that's the second thing.

Then listening to Eve and listening to—I believe it was Chouchou, but I'm not sure which. I think it was Chouchou who talked about the need to get women more involved in the security, in the police force, in the U.N. peacekeepers, because putting women in the position of power there would be very helpful. And then picking up on Robert's point about getting more aid to organizations. But I fear that these organizations have been kicked out of Darfur, but that's another issue.

So you see what I'm thinking about is what we can do right now. And so those are a few things. If I could just go down the line and

put aside the more complicated points that John raised, which I agree with a thousand percent. As I told Russ, he's my leader on this. Whatever we need to do, we'll do.

So if each of you could name one, two, or three things you think ought to go in that letter, we'll get that down. But the caveat is it has to be something straightforward. Now we can get it done. So we'll go down. And if each of you has one or four things, go ahead.

Ms. ENSLER. I want to echo something Chouchou said, because I think we're in agreement about a couple of things. I think one thing is the idea of the delegation, some kind of high-profile delegation that could come immediately to eastern Congo and really meet with women and look at the situation on the ground.

I think second of all, I would like to highly recommend the idea that we'd look at training women police officers in the bush and in the forest who are legal, who are trained, who their salaries are paid, and they can be people who can enforce the law.

Chairman BOXER. Who would they work for?

Ms. ENSLER. They would work for the government. Yes, they would be hired by the government, but there would be women police forces, so that women could turn to them and they could—because there are women police forces in the Congo and they're very effective, and if there were a lot of them in places where MONUC—and other places—don't travel, which is just about everywhere where women are being raped, then I think women would be able to protect themselves, and they could be able to call on those police forces.

And then I think the third thing, in terms of doctors, I just want to say I think there are more than two doctors in eastern Congo. What I think they need—and I can really firm this up with Dr. Mukwege and Dr. Lucie in Goma—is I think they need for more doctors to be trained in-country so that we build a capacity in the Democratic Republic of Congo and more doctors are trained there, rather than bringing in people from the outside, because we want the people of Congo to rule their own destinies and have their own doctors.

And I think we need funding for that, and we need probably doctors to come and train them, but I want to talk to Dr. Mukwege in depth about that.

Chairman BOXER. So you think that what we need is not our doctors or other doctors to go in there, but just for our doctors perhaps to train?

Ms. ENSLER. Exactly, to do training and build capacity in-country.

Chairman BOXER. OK. Yes?

Ms. AHMADI. Thank you. I think what I mentioned earlier in Darfur, the disarmament—are critically important because they are manipulating the cities and the areas around, and the government army needs to be away from the areas where there are civilians.

And the second thing, the alternative fuel, alternative programs, because women are still seeking firewood and going out to fetch water as a coping mechanism, so they need to stay to at least keep them in their camps to be safe. And the third, supporting the accountability—

Chairman BOXER. I didn't quite understand. You said they need to stay in their camps to be safe?

Ms. AHMADI. Yes, to provide them with fuel alternatives. They need not only to depend on firewood, so they're going in search of firewood.

Chairman BOXER. Because that's when they get attacked, is what you're saying?

Ms. AHMADI. Yes. They risk their life to get attacked and to be raped repeatedly. So they need to have some project that provides them with fuel, and they can be in their camp safely. And also psychosocial support and health treatment, adequate treatment, is a problem.

But the most important problem is the expulsion of these organizations. They were doing small projects, but it was very important and crucial to keep women alive, because the survival of rape, like the getting treatment from different organizations, now they don't get it. And that is really critical.

Chairman BOXER. We need to get the organizations back in.

Ms. AHMADI. All of them. Like I'm hearing people speaking about some of these organizations, but that is not a solution, because these organizations, there is a no-go area for the U.N. agencies.

Chairman BOXER. Now, the leader of the country has banished them; isn't that right?

Ms. AHMADI. Yes.

Chairman BOXER. He said they have to leave.

Ms. AHMADI. Yes.

Chairman BOXER. So when I get to John down the line, I'm going to talk about how we can get him to reverse that, or this could lead to some conflict, because this is a real problem, right? You have no witnesses, nobody there.

Ms. AHMADI. Yes, nobody there, and the rainy season is coming. Even in the normal situation in Darfur, the rainy season is really very difficult, and all the operation is stopped. They need to prepare for it for months. But now that doesn't exist. That's why I think it's important. And the first one is supporting justice, because women will only heal when they see their perpetrator held accountable, and also to end the culture of immunity. Because it's happening in Darfur, it's happening in Congo. While it happened before, we need to see those people who perpetrated the——

Chairman BOXER. You need a justice system?

Ms. AHMADI. Yes, and supporting for the ICC. I want the administration to support the ICC in different ways, even though the United States is not a Member State, but in the case of Darfur is prepared by the U.N. Security Council, the United States role in the Security Council is of crucial importance.

Chairman BOXER. Thank you. Chouchou? And, remember, I'm writing this letter to the administration, and I'm coming up with these ideas. What would be your top ideas to help women in the short term now?

Ms. NABINTU. Yes. The first thing is to work on the real cause, and I think that everybody knows that that's the economic war which leads to all of this. And it's to make a pressure on our neighbors, Rwanda, Uganda, to stop it, because you know the FDLR in

Congo, they are there. They have exploited them, and it's from Rwanda. So Rwanda, it benefits from the instability of Congo.

So to make pressure on Rwanda and Uganda—so to make pressure on Rwanda to stop first the economic war and accept the turn back of the return to Rwanda of the FDLR, and to make—because now, Congolese people are trained on what they think—they don't know.

The second thing is to work on justice. As I said, the United States can make—or, yes, can make an arrest warrant—on the—did rape and sexual violence—to end impunity. It could make, for example, an—arrestment on—on what he did in 2004 in South Kivu and what he did in North Kivu, on the—responsible of the FDLR. He's not. He's—I think. And on—he's now—he has now a warrant arrestment, but he is protected by the government. It's to encourage impunity.

And the third thing is the assistance for victims. The victims are in extreme poverty. They've lost everything, and I think that they've even lost the lands where they lived. If they can have somewhere to live to be to them houses that can be considered for them as monument for their—for their courage, because when you admire their courage—sometimes I think if it was me—I don't know. Because when we make interviews with them, you know, they show smiles, although the thing that happened to them was horrible. So if they can have that—

Chairman BOXER. You call that restitution. You help the person, the victim, is what you're saying?

Ms. NABINTU. Yes.

Chairman BOXER. Helping the victims get a life back.

Ms. NABINTU. Yes.

Chairman BOXER. Give them a home, give them support?

Ms. NABINTU. Give them a job so that they can have economical power, and so it can help them to forget what happened to them.

Chairman BOXER. Well, that's very important. Robert? I know you gave us your list. You just want to go through it quickly again? You said more help for the NGOs to give assistance to the people.

Mr. WARWICK. Thank you, Senator Boxer. That's in our written testimony. If you don't mind, if I could just add a few items to what I mentioned earlier.

Chairman BOXER. Please.

Mr. WARWICK. I think we're in agreement. Some of the other comments made by my colleagues, IRC really sees this as a problem of an imbalance of power at the root, and we believe that we need to take a holistic approach to whatever we do, and that means partially to look at the emergency needs, as we've discussed already, whether they're health or psychosocial, as well as long-term needs.

I think Niemat said earlier when the guns stop, the violence continues. So if the conflict goes away, we can expect that the violence against women will continue, and we need to try to address that.

IRC takes a four-pillar approach, and we believe that any program that we want to pursue in DRC or in Sudan, whether it's south Sudan or Darfur, would include access to justice and rule of law. We need to improve, and in some cases, establish justice systems in the countries in which we work.

A big part of what we do is changing attitudes. Social norms need to change, so a lot of what we do is awareness-raising, working with communities, talking not only, of course, with women who are our main clients, but also with men. Men have to be a part of this process.

Certainly health and psychosocial support. You mentioned doctors, the fistula problem—I mean, there are terrible problems we're all facing. Funding for those emergency needs are essential. What we find is that until services are available, women and girls do not come forward. It's a culture of silence that I mentioned earlier. So those services are essential and they have to be accessible.

And finally, economic empowerment, the fourth pillar of our approach. And I think that overall, what has been mentioned earlier is the issue of partnership and capacity-building. Many of us will not be there for very long. International organizations were there sometimes 5, 10 years. The international community, we really need to focus our attention on working with our partners within the countries, whether it's DRC or Sudan, building capacity.

And then finally, I think a lot of—maybe we wouldn't be here today if more women weren't in power. I'm thinking about the south Sudan situation where, in fact, there are documents—the Interim Constitution of South Sudan, for instance, is very, in many ways, supportive to women in terms of the details of the Constitution. The problem is it's not being enforced. It's not being enacted.

So a lot of what we need to do is work with women, not just to make sure that they have places of power within the government and in the economic sector, but also that they're trained, their capacity is built to achieve that.

Chairman BOXER. Thank you so much. John, would you like to wrap this up for us and give us some more of your insights, please?

Mr. PRENDERGAST. Three things, but first, I want to parenthetically say there is a Congolese doctor in the house, Dr. Roger Luhere, and it would be great if one of your staff people could talk to him and—

Chairman BOXER. Doctor, will you stand up, just so we can see if you're here.

Mr. PRENDERGAST. There you are.

Chairman BOXER. Thank you so much for being here.

Mr. PRENDERGAST. And he's worked with Dr. Mukwege and done a lot of incredible stuff in the Congo. So my three things, I think, in terms of immediate action, would be, first, in the realm of accountability, because there has to be a cost, a consequence for committing rape, especially orchestrating rape as a tool of war.

Now the Bush administration basically never, of course, was very hostile to the International Criminal Court, but supported in the end of the day the ICC case in Darfur, and actually stood up for it in the United Nations Security Council, and the Obama administration has continued that policy, but I don't see any movement toward ratifying ICC, but they still support the case of the ICC in Darfur.

What I would say about accountability is to press for the administration to work with the chief prosecutor in The Hague to expand the ICC's remit to the Kivus to work—to the eastern Congo, to work on rape as a tool of war, start the investigations in earnest,

and let those rebel leaders, those militia leaders and government army officials know that we're starting to collect evidence about their perpetrating these kinds of cases. That will have an immediate dampening effect.

Second, I want to build on something Niemat was saying about protection. And to use—the biggest—aside from the humanitarian—the biggest investment we're making as America in these conflicts, in responding to these conflicts, are these peacekeeping missions. They're huge missions. They're the two biggest missions in the world, in Congo and Sudan, and they do very little to protect civilian populations.

So what I would say is that you and Senator Feingold and some of the Senators on this, is to start pressing the administration to press the United Nations for a plan and give them a timeline, a deadline that says within X number of days, we want to see a plan for how you can take the existing resources that these peacekeeping forces have and better protect civilian populations, particularly women and children, in the areas where they congregate, in the highest risk areas.

We already know where the majority of rapes occur in Darfur, and Niemat has already told us about that. Why is it that this UNAMID, this peacekeeping mission, cannot be structured in a way that prioritizes the prevention of those rapes? It's very simple. It's a question of policy imperative and priority.

And so if the Congress, who is giving the money for these—30 percent or whatever it is of the money of these missions—is saying, "Unless you do this, we're pulling the plug," they're not going to stop the war. These peacekeeping missions are there—they're not going to—until there is a resolution of the conflict, they're—what they can protect people in the meantime. That would have a huge impact.

The third thing, and the final one I would say, is to demand from this administration and anyone that follows it a diplomatic strategy to counter rape as a tool of war. And you start with strong representations with President Kabila and President Kagame and President Museveni, and you send representatives from Washington, and you say this issue of sexual violence is completely out of control and it's on your watch, and we're now going to integrate this issue into our relationship. And until you demonstrably show that you are making specific adjustments and alterations into how you conduct your business with respect to your military forces, both within Congo and across the border, then we're not going to treat this relationship as business as usual.

It is a devastating epidemic, and we can't treat these people as if it's business as usual, pat them on the back for positive economic growth rates that are based on human exploitation. This is incredible that we're doing this.

So I think having a diplomatic strategy for rape and integrating these issues, mainstreaming these issues into our regular diplomacy instead of sticking them over here as gender issues that are to be raised by some gender official, it's a central part of—it ought to be a central part of our foreign policy, and it ought to come straight from the White House.

Chairman BOXER. OK. Well, that was beautifully said. Eve, did you want to add—

Ms. ENSLER. Yes, I want to echo that, because I think in some ways, that's really the most significant thing that can be done, is to make rape and sexual terrorism something that we're addressing as confidently and with as much power and force as anything else that we're addressing.

And I just want to add one thing to that. One of the things that we're seeing in the Congo, the campaign we'd launched 2 years ago is really coming from the women on the ground, and it's really about building a women's movement in the Congo, where women are advocating, breaking the silence, telling their stories, standing up, and knowing and owning their rights.

And I think that's something really important in connection to what John is saying, in conjoining with that, so that women don't again get left out of that process, but that women are brought into the process of movement building, which will be part of making sexual violence a central issue, which it is. Because if there are no women, there is no future to any country.

Chairman BOXER. How true. Yes, Chouchou.

Ms. NABINTU. What I'd like to add for the—to fight against to impunity is it could be a training for Congolese lawyers to collect evidence for the court or the ICC, even a training to doctors to collect medical evidence to support victims and to justice. Because nowadays, they ask victims to show the proof. The proof is to show a medical sheet. That's why we started an action to make interviews with victims, to collect their testimonies, so it could help to the justice.

Chairman BOXER. Well, I think this links right into the trial that's going to go on, and expanding it, I think, is just a brilliant idea. Well, you have all given me just what I needed to hear.

Niemat.

Ms. AHMADI. I want to add one thing. For the countries like Sudan and Congo, there should be a measurement for human rights situations, and accountability should be attached to that human right abusers, because—and even in terms of improving the relation between countries, and also, there should be a measurement or—within the U.N. that—to hold these countries accountable, because the human rights violation, in relation to women human rights, is really—and there is no—that holding countries accountable within the U.N., because—the United Nations.

And then also, United States should find a way of pointing that out, like these countries, like—this country's—human right abusers, so that internationally, they will be like blocked, and they would be held accountable.

They should be—and in addition, also, I just want to mention that in case of Darfur, the ICC investigated rape as a tool of genocide and as a tool of distraction, and that there is a section that created within their International Criminal Code that investigating—which is something very promising to put an end to this phenomena.

That is why I think that support for the International Criminal Code is really crucial, in terms of ending violence against women.

Chairman BOXER. Yes. I hear you loud and clear. Before I close, I'm going to ask that two statements be submitted for the record. The first is Human Rights Watch. The second is from Physicians for Human Rights. Both feel very strongly about this issue. So we'll put those in the record.

And any other document, if anybody else has it, let me know now. All your statements will be placed in the record, as if you had given your entire statement.

I just have to say, John, that the way you stated everything here, which is to have a diplomatic effort to end rape as a tool of war, I mean, that's obviously the purpose of this hearing. I'm not a diplomat. God knows that. I'm not very diplomatic. But I'm in the U.S. Senate, and I have an opportunity to speak with Secretary Clinton. I know how strongly she feels about this. Ambassador Verveer. I know the President and the First Lady care about this.

So we are in a new time, but we just don't have a lot of time to waste on this. So we need to tell everybody that this is the moment. That's why I wanted you to come here. That's why I am so pleased that you did.

This is just the beginning. We have to focus in our country, there's a short attention span. So you need to remind people of something 10 times, until you get tired of saying it. So we really are going to have to focus, focus, focus, focus. And I think that you can help me do that, because if there's any good news coming out of these areas as a result of what we've done, I sure would like to know. If there are bad things happening, I want to know. I know you'll let me know.

But my staff's unbelievable here, and Ann Norris is heading this effort. We have hundreds of issues on our plate here. You know that we have problems in our country. We have people suffering in our country. We have all of that. But the bottom line is for America to be great, we have to open our eyes to these humanitarian issues. We have to; to these issues associated with conflict.

We can't say that we can block off what's happening in the rest of the world, because a human right is a human right. What happens to any of us, happens to all of us. I mean, it's a spiritual thing. This is it. So we can't disconnect ourselves. What we need to do is reconnect. And I just feel we're going to do this.

It's overwhelming. There's no doubt about it. It's overwhelming. There are so many things. That's why I'm going to have a rule that I'm going to carve out for myself with others that I know really care to pound on this and pound on it and pound on it and pound on it, and take these steps, which we'll work with you on.

What I just wanted you to know is that we will be following up with you within the next 5, 6 workdays. And we're going to write this letter. We're going to come up with these things. You're going to check on the doctor situation, what is the best way for us to approach it.

We will send this letter to all of you, because I'm trying to encompass everything you've told me that fits into what I'm trying to do, which is to stop these things from happening, which John made such a good point about giving an effort.

And I'm going to talk to Johnny Isakson, who's going over there, and Bob Corker. The message is, you'd better shape this thing up,

because you're not going to get any help from us unless you really stop rape as a tool of war, and this criminal behavior, and the ICC expanding it so that we can get these testimonials.

And I think when people start getting afraid of what could happen to them—because people are telling us stories, thanks to a lot of Chouchou's work and all your work. They may just change their behavior right now, or at least moderate it if they know we're all watching.

So each of us knows what we can do, and let's just get out there and do it. This has been an amazing experience for me, very draining, very overwhelming, very important. And I just thank you from the bottom of my heart for coming here and sharing your insights, your passion, and your advice with me.

Thank you very much, and we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:50 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

[From the Associated Press, May 5, 2009]

IRAN, SYRIA DEFEND PALESTINIAN MILITANCY—AHMADINEJAD MEETS WITH HAMAS, HEZBOLLAH IN VISIT TO DAMASCUS

DAMASCUS, Syria.—The leaders of Iran and Syria reaffirmed their support for "Palestinian resistance" on Tuesday, a defiant message to the U.S. and its Mideast allies who are uneasy over Washington's efforts to forge closer ties with the hard-line government in Tehran.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also met with the chiefs of Hamas and other Damascus-based Palestinian radical groups during his visit to Syria. Iran is a strong supporter of Islamic militants in the region, including Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Ahmadinejad's visit to Syria comes as the U.S. is trying to improve strained ties with the two longtime adversaries. Two U.S. envoys, Jeffrey Feltman and Daniel Shapiro, left Washington on Tuesday for Syria for their second visit since March to explore ways to ease tensions between the United States and Syria, the State Department said. The envoys would be in Damascus on Thursday, Syria's ambassador to Washington, Imad Mustapha, told The Associated Press.

But Ahmadinejad and his top Arab ally Syrian President Bashar Assad made little mention of American outreach as they sat together at a press conference following their talks.

The hard-line Iranian leader said the two countries' alliance was achieving "victories" in preventing "the big powers' offensive to dominate the region."

RESISTANCE WILL CONTINUE

"Syria and Iran have been from the very beginning united and in agreement to stand on the side of the Palestinian resistance," Ahmadinejad said. "They will continue to do so. We see that the resistance will continue until all occupied territories are liberated."

Ahmadinejad later held talks with Hamas' political leader Khaled Mashaal and the head of the smaller militant Islamic Jihad. The Iranian leader "affirmed Iran's support for the Palestinian people and their resistance," said Ziad Nakhleh, a senior Islamic Jihad official.

Ahmadinejad and other Iranian officials have been sending mixed messages in response to President Barack Obama's calls for dialogue—at times taking a moderate tone, only to fall back on a tough line.

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who is visiting the Middle East, said Tuesday the U.S. is still waiting to see how the Iranians respond to Obama's outreach, but so far the rhetoric from Ahmadinejad has been "not very encouraging."

Gates sought to reassure U.S. Arab allies, who are worried that their rival Iran will be boosted by a U.S. dialogue. He also said a "grand bargain" between Tehran and Washington was unlikely.

There has been widespread speculation in the Middle East that the Obama administration would try to forge a "grand bargain" with Iran, in which Washington

would press Israel for concessions in the peace process with the Palestinians in exchange for Tehran rolling back its nuclear program.

“The United States will be very open and transparent about these contacts, and we will keep our friends informed of what is going on so nobody gets surprised,” Gates said at a news conference in Egypt before heading to the Saudi capital.

WORRY ABOUT IRANIAN INFLUENCE

The U.S. overtures to Iran are raising concerns among its Arab allies like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, as well as Israel. They fear Iran is trying to spread its influence across the Middle East, with its support of Hamas, Hezbollah and other militant groups.

Arab diplomats who met in Cairo Tuesday with the State Department’s new special envoy for the Persian Gulf, Dennis Ross, said they voiced those concerns.

“Some of what he heard was more than just grievances. They warned that Washington should be careful not to be so mild to Iran,” said one diplomat who attended one of these encounters. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul-Gheit expressed similar concerns on Monday.

“Iran’s behavior in the region is negative in many aspects and does not help in advancing security, stability and peace,” the state-run Middle East News Agency quoted Aboul Gheit as telling Ross.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due to meet Obama later this month at the White House for their first meeting since each leader took office earlier this year. Netanyahu is expected to come under pressure to publicly accept the principle of a Palestinian state, a step he has avoided amid U.S. attempts to revive the peace process.

Netanyahu is expected in turn to push for a tough U.S. stance on Iran. Israel argues that progress in peace with the Palestinians can’t happen unless Iran is reined in.

Hamas’ top political leader Khaled Mashaal, who is based in Syria, was quoted by the New York Times Tuesday as saying that Hamas is willing to support a two-state solution. But he also said Hamas would not renounce violence against Israel or recognize the Jewish state.

PREPARED STATEMENT FROM PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) commends Senator Feingold and Senator Boxer for their initiative in holding this hearing. In Sudan, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo and elsewhere, tens of thousands of women and girls continue to suffer rape, forced pregnancy, mutilation and death at the hands of brutal and ruthless militias as well as government-backed forces in ongoing conflicts. The Senators’ willingness to shine a light on these violations of the most basic human rights comes at a crucial moment, as advocates for international justice and local human rights and health organizations are struggling to protect women, document incidents, treat victims, and end impunity for this “silent” crime.

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), founded in 1986, is a national organization that mobilizes health professionals to advance health, dignity, and justice and promotes the right to health for all. PHR has investigated, reported on, and advocated to stop sexual violence in the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan. We have trained health professionals from many countries in methods for documenting these crimes and supporting survivors. PHR has published pioneering reports and articles in leading medical journals on the use of rape as a weapon of war, on the importance of holding perpetrators accountable, and on the prevalence as well as the medical and psychological consequences of sexual violence in armed conflicts.

In PHR’s analysis, rape and other forms of sexual violence are perpetrated against target populations to:

- Instill terror in the civilian population;
- Humiliate and degrade individuals, their families, and their communities;
- Further an agenda of cultural and ethnic destruction, exploiting the stigma that falls upon rape victims and their children to weaken marital and communal relations;
- Displace populations, and hamper the ability of communities to reconstitute and organize a sustained return;

- Destroy group bonds, which has serious, pervasive, and even deadly effects for women in particular.

PHR is convinced that impunity for perpetrators is tantamount to giving a license to rape. Although much progress has been made in bringing the perpetrators of sexual violence to justice in international courts, enormous hurdles remain. These include underreporting by survivors due to fear of public knowledge or reprisals, predominance of male interviewers and prosecutors, challenges of witness protection, exploitation of victims in the media, further traumatizing of victims, exclusive focus on the “big fish” perpetrators, and the lack of vigorous prosecution of rape cases. Additionally, justice and accountability efforts should not obscure the importance of preventing such atrocities in the first place.

RECENT RESEARCH IN CHAD

As part of its continuing research on the problem of sexual violence, Physicians for Human Rights and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (PHR/HHI) set out in November 2008 to conduct a systematic assessment of sexual assault and other human rights violations suffered by Darfuri women who had been subjected to sexual violence in the course of attacks on their villages in Darfur and forced flight to camps on the Chad/Sudan border. The effort was part of a continued commitment to assuring that crimes against humanity, including sexual assault, be documented and exposed, and their mental, physical and social consequences understood so that increased protection, prevention, healing and comprehensive justice can be delivered to the survivors. The PHR/HHI study was conducted in Chad as security conditions precluded such an assessment in Sudan.

Rape in Darfur has been documented by the United Nations, by human rights organizations, and by the International Criminal Court. The United Nations International Commission of Inquiry, whose findings led to the referral of the Darfur situation to the International Criminal Court, found that rape and sexual violence had been used by the Sudanese army and Janjaweed as “a deliberate strategy with the aim of terrorizing the population, ensuring control of the movement of the IDP population and perpetuating its displacement.”¹ Sexual violence has also been reported in and around the camps in Chad in recent years.²

Few studies have looked at the effects of such war-related sexual violence or documented how resulting trauma is exacerbated by current conditions of life. PHR and HHI have worked extensively over the past 15 years and in preparation for this study to develop methods to document this “silent crime” and its consequences in a safe and respectful manner. PHR/HHI undertook to overcome the obstacles inherent in such research and developed a plan to interview survivors of sexual assault in refugee camps in Chad and to corroborate accounts of assault with evaluations by clinical experts. Limited in their access to all refugee camps due to security and logistical constraints, a team of four field researchers from PHR and HHI conducted in-depth interviews with 88 women in one refugee camp. As the team was concerned about the risk for women who report sexual violence in this context, and was restricted in the framework of questioning by the guidelines and regulations of camp officials, the researchers did not specifically seek out women exposed to such violence, but instead asked any women interested in being interviewed to discuss their health and lives in the camps. In order to assess the reliability of allegations of rape, medical evaluations were conducted of a subset of 21 individuals. These evaluations were carried out according to international medico-legal standards to assess the extent to which physical and psychological evidence corroborated testimonial accounts.

Although the sampling methods do not permit generalizations to larger populations, the 88 cases demonstrate the effects of crimes against these women in the form of systematic attacks characterized by murder, rape, looting, destruction and burning of property, and forced displacement in Darfur, but also in Chad where sexual assaults are perpetrated with utter impunity. The nightmare therefore continues in refugee camps in Chad, through the constant threat of rape (when women forage for firewood to cook their food), chronic hunger, and a lack of essential needs to support their families. Many of the women expressed the feeling that they would be better off anywhere else and even, some said, better off dead. We provide recommendations which aim to prevent further assaults on women, meet their current

¹“Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nations Secretary General,” January 25, 2005; at 94. Available at http://www.un.org/News/dh/sudan/com_inq_darfur.pdf. Accessed April 28, 2009.

²The field team heard firsthand accounts of such violence during their interviews in the Farchana Camp.

needs for support in the camp, and provide a foundation for the safe return of women and their families to Darfur.

BACKGROUND

The women interviewed in the Farchana camp in eastern Chad are but a few of the millions whose lives have been indelibly altered by the crisis which erupted in Sudan's Darfur region in 2003. In April of that year, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Janjaweed, the proxy militias that they armed and funded, responded to an attack on military and police installations in the North Darfur town of El Fasher by systematically bombing thousands of villages in Darfur, killing men, raping women and looting livestock. The attackers chased villagers out into the desert where temperatures regularly top 115 degrees Fahrenheit and there is little potable water or food.³ The conflict has left between 200,000 and 400,000⁴ dead of violent injuries, starvation or disease and has displaced nearly 3 million people; 2.7 million are displaced within Darfur itself and another 268,500 refugees in eastern Chad. Nearly 3.5 million people are dependent on the international community for food aid as a result of this conflict.⁵

THE FARCHANA CAMP

UNHCR established the Farchana camp in January 2004 to house 2,000 Darfuri refugees⁶ fleeing violence across the border, 55 kilometers away. In November 2008, the population of Farchana was 20,650, with 5,643 families.⁷ Movement into and out of the camp is fluid, with refugees leaving the camp regularly to collect firewood, graze animals or go to the market several miles from the camp and on the outskirts of Farchana village. At the time of the PHR/HHI investigation, approximately 2,000 Chadian soldiers were present around the Farchana camp, and team members saw several dozen armed soldiers inside the camp.

As of November 2008, there were three doctors to care for the 20,000 refugees in Farchana camp and the villagers from Farchana who come to the camp to seek medical care. Many women must obtain permission from their husbands to receive any services at the clinic. In spite of provision of a limited supply of firewood by one NGO, many women must still make the dangerous and often lengthy journey outside the camp to gather fuel for cooking from scarce firewood and brush.

Refugees suffering depression or trauma are encouraged to talk to refugee mental health workers who have received a 3-month training by the international staff of the NGO in basic concepts of mental health such as sexual violence, trauma, and family dynamics. Many of the women interviewed by PHR/HHI investigators had not taken advantage of these services.

FINDINGS

Rapes in Darfur and Chad

In Darfur and Chad, a total of 20 confirmed rapes occurred among 17 of the 88 women interviewed, with 1 woman suffering two assaults in Chad and two women suffering an assault each in Darfur and Chad. An additional 12 instances were considered highly probable by the interviewers. This assessment was based on behaviors and verbal responses to interview questions that were designed to allow expert interviewers to deem a sexual assault likely. Eight of the 88 respondents had witnessed sexual assaults and 30 respondents stated that they were aware of rape incidents occurring in either Darfur (16 respondents) or Chad (14 respondents). For 19 of the women, the interview was the first time she had discussed the sexual assault with anyone.

In each case of rape, Istanbul Protocol medical and psychological evaluations provided physical and psychological evidence that was highly consistent with women's specific allegations of rape and other physical abuse. These clinical evaluations indi-

³This is the pattern of attack described to PHR investigators in visits to the Chad/Sudan border in 2004, 2005 and 2008.

⁴Physicians for Human Rights. "Darfur—Assault on Survival: A Call for Security, Justice and Restitution." January 2006, at 13. Available at <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/report-sudan-2006.html>. Accessed April 15, 2009.

⁵UNHCR estimates this to be the number of registered and nonassisted Sudanese refugees in Chad as of January 2009. There are 251,713 registered refugees in the camps. From the "Statistiques Mensuelles Des Refugies Soudanais Et Centrafricains Au Tchad" an Internal UNHCR memo. At press time, UNHCR was conducting a verification exercise in all camps.

⁶"Chad: Pre-Registration of Sudanese Set to Begin," UNHCR Briefing Notes, January, 2004. Available at <http://unhcr.org/news/NEWS/4003d4410.html>. Accessed May 6, 2009.

⁷This figure was obtained from an operational NGO in the camp.

cate a very high level of reliability of allegations of rape among the overall sample of women in the PHR/HHI study. There were no cases in which allegations were either unsupported or inconsistent with the physical and/or psychological evidence observed.

Darfur Violence

Of the 32 instances of confirmed and highly probable rape, 17 occurred in Darfur (17 of the 88 respondents). Of these, nine were confirmed rapes and the majority of them (7) were gang-rapes. Additionally, five women reported that they had witnessed gang-rape in Darfur. Three of the nine confirmed rapes resulted in pregnancies. One rape was described as being committed in the presence of family members. The narratives indicate that rapists frequently beat women with guns and/or attacked them with knives before or during the rape. One woman described being raped during the attack on her village. She was 13 at the time:

One of the Janjaweed pushed me to the ground. He forced my clothes off, and they raped me one by one vaginally. When they shot my father, they saw I was a little girl. I did not have any energy or force against them. They used me. I started bleeding. It was so painful. I could not stand up * * * I was sick for 7 days. No one helped me * * *

After being raped, women reported excessive bleeding, not being able to walk, and general body aches.

Destruction Witnessed

Respondents described similar patterns and characteristics of methods and behaviors by perpetrators during the attacks in Darfur. Assailants were typically described as fair-skinned and wearing green or khaki uniforms with head wraps. Interviewees noted that the assailants often spoke Arabic and rode horses or camels. The village was usually surrounded by a large number of perpetrators and attacks often occurred in the early morning. Concurrent air strikes were another common feature.

There were many—unable to quantify—followed by Sudanese in planes and horses wearing official Sudanese army clothes. They entered into the village and were shooting and people started running. Those that remained were rounded up and made to lie down. They covered them with wood and branches, and set the wood on fire. Sixty-five died that day.

Many of the women reported family members killed during the attacks on their village. Some witnessed the shooting or beating of close family members including husbands, fathers, brothers, and cousins.

Few women said that they reported either the rape they had suffered or the attacks on their villages, because, they said, the attacks were committed by the government itself. They declared that this fact left them without any options for reporting the crimes.

PHYSICAL INJURY EXPERIENCED IN DARFUR

One-third of the respondents suffered direct physical harm as a result of the attack on their villages in Darfur. Women reported acute symptoms including pain, swelling, bleeding, bruising, lacerations, difficulty walking and loss of consciousness; rape victims reported vaginal bleeding, discharge and pelvic pain. Chronic complaints included headaches, hip pain and chronic pelvic inflammatory disease/endo-metritis. Few women had sought and received medical attention from a doctor, clinic, hospital or traditional healer and few had been evaluated for sexually transmitted diseases or HIV.

Previous Life

When asked to describe their lives in Darfur, most women said that they were farmers who grew a variety of crops, and also owned animals. While their descriptions of wealth differed (in the amount of animals owned or land owned), most women stated that they had had everything they needed in Darfur and that life was good there.

Sexual and Other Physical Violence in and Around Camps in Chad

Of the 32 instances of confirmed and highly probable rape, 15 occurred in Chad, with 1 woman assaulted twice there. Of these, 11 were confirmed rapes and 4 were highly probable rapes. Of the 11 confirmed rapes, 8 were reported to have resulted in a pregnancy. There was one confirmed gang-rape. The majority of confirmed rapes (10/11) occurred when women left the camps in search of firewood or to pas-

ture their livestock. Respondents identified the rapists as Chadian soldiers and civilians. While NGOs acknowledge that rape and sexual assault of refugee women in camps is occurring, it is likely that the extent of the problem is substantially under-reported due to stigma and repercussions following divulgence of a sexual assault.

One woman related, "I went out alone to bring my animals to pasture. A man came up to me and threatened me with his gun. Then he did everything he liked."

The incident occurred approximately 9 months prior and the respondent was pregnant.

One quarter of the respondents reported suffering physical harm since living as refugees in Chad. One respondent stated, "The first year I was here, two men beat me when I went to collect wood. They beat me on my arm and head with wood. Six of us were there. They beat two of us. I told my mother and father, and we reported it to the president of the camp, but nothing was ever done."

Fear, Insecurity, and Impunity in Chad Camps

The lack of safety and the ongoing fear of sexual violence were a concern of virtually half (46 percent) of the women interviewed in the Farchana camp. As one lamented, "This is not my country. We get raped when we leave the camp. In my village, we could do what we wanted and there was enough food. I want to go back to my village, but it's still not safe."

Women noted that though they had reported assaults to camp authorities, there was no response. Some feared that their families would find out if they report the rapes. Women said that they preferred to suffer in silence rather than risk repercussions.

Food Insecurity

A strong majority of the women interviewed, nearly 60 percent, reported insufficient food as a problem. Many said they were always hungry; that the diet and quantities of food were insufficient and that rations were continuing to be cut. Food rations consisted of 2,100 calories in the form of corn-soy blend, oil, salt and sugar.⁸

Physical and Mental Health

Researchers asked women to rate their physical and mental health status in Darfur and now in Chad on a 1–5 scale with 1 being "very good" and 5 being "poor." Women reported a marked deterioration in their physical health status since leaving Darfur, with an average ranking of 3.99 for health in Chad versus 2.06 for Darfur. The study indicated a marked deterioration in self-reported mental health, where the average score in Chad was 4.90. Few women felt comfortable using the mental health services in the camp, saying that they felt ashamed and did not want to tell anyone about the violation. Women who experienced rape (confirmed or highly probable) were three times more likely to report suicidal thoughts than were women who did not report sexual violence. "I am very sad, especially when I am alone. How can I feel happy? They raped me. They killed my family. They raped me here." She reported marked sleep disturbances and frequent nightmares about "what happened." She also experienced frequent exaggerated startle reactions and constant hypervigilance: "I always think someone is following me and wants to rape me. It is better to die."

For the 21 women who received evaluations based on the Istanbul Protocol, there were findings of both physical injury and psychological consequences:

- **Physical Injury.**—These women experienced multiple acute and chronic physical symptoms and disabilities. Acute symptoms included pain, swelling, bleeding, bruising, lacerations, difficulty walking, and loss of consciousness. Those who were raped also reported vaginal bleeding, discharge, and pelvic pain. Some went on to develop scars which were consistent with allegations of injury or bony deformities from fractured bones that were documented by visual inspection by the clinical evaluators. Symptoms of chronic pain, hip pain, and chronic pelvic inflammatory disease/endometritis were also documented.
- **Psychological Consequences.**—All of the 21 women experienced one or more of the following conditions, Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), Depressive Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (DD–NOS), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or some symptoms of PTSD. Fifteen of the twenty-one (71 percent) women interviewed demonstrated diagnostic criteria for MDD. The overall prevalence of psychological symptoms and diagnoses and comorbid states speak strongly for the need to address women's psychological health. The physical and psychological consequences of such experiences are likely to have a marked, adverse impact

⁸This was told to the investigators by an NGO.

on women's overall health and well-being, their family and social interaction, and potentially their capacity to work in the future if their time in Chad continues to be prolonged.

Women reiterated common feelings of persistent hyper-vigilance and a state of being easily startled; routine sleep disturbances; generalized feelings of sadness and dysphoria; decreased energy and generalized feelings of weakness and anhedonia; and recurrent flashbacks of the attacks in Darfur and murdered relatives.

Social Stigma/Physical Repercussions

Rapes resulting in pregnancies carried significant physical and social consequences, particularly for familial and communal relationships. Women with confirmed rapes were six times more likely to be divorced or separated than those who were not raped, and some women described community rejection and physical violence by family members. One woman stated, "After the man raped me, they (my family) would not eat with me. They treated me like a dog and I had to eat alone."

The Camps in Chad

The PHR/HHI investigators found that after 5 years, the Darfurians living in the camps are reaching a "tipping point" of physical misery, depression, and dissatisfaction in the camps. This is due to a variety of reasons including the lack of physical security outside the camps, insufficient food rations, a yearning to return home and a lack of opportunities for adults to earn money.

The 12 refugee camps in Chad are "federalized," with different NGOs providing services in different camps. As the lead agency, UNHCR attempts to set minimum standards in health services and psycho-social services. However, due to the physical insecurity and environmental extremes, eastern Chad is an extremely difficult place to work. This leads to high staff turnover and difficulty finding qualified staff which in turn creates tremendous challenges to provision of high-quality services, including psycho-social support.

Farchana Women Protest for Dignity and Rights

In June 5, 2008, seven women accused of prostitution for working outside the camp were tied up, whipped, and beaten with sticks of firewood by camp residents. Following this event, a group of eight Darfurian women wrote a one-page document in Arabic appealing for their rights and for recognition of the plight of women refugees in Chad.

PHR published this document as the "Farchana Manifesto." It calls for freedom of expression, movement, property ownership, the right to education and opportunity for employment, the right to determine age of marriage and to be free from violence and exploitation. The document is included in this report with more details presented at www.Darfurianwomen.org.

CONCLUSIONS

Insecurity and Perpetual Vulnerability for Refugee Women

Darfurian women fled a war and yet have not found safety in Chad. They are compelled by the basic need of survival to leave the camp to obtain the fuel to cook food for their families, and in doing so, risk being raped and subsequently rejected and ostracized by their husbands and families. The war crimes of killings, destruction of livelihoods and forced expulsion from Darfur have also left them in a state of perpetual vulnerability and need for the most basic elements of human survival. The violence that occurred in Darfur persists as a terrible memory, but what most concerns the women interviewed in the Farchana camp is the oppressive environment of insecurity they must endure on a daily basis.

Heavy Psychological Burden: Women Feel Trapped

The cumulative emotional experience of previous attacks is now combined with the impact of current insecurity and ongoing fear of new assaults. Women express lack of trust in camp leadership, a sense of being trapped in a place that is not safe, and fear of speaking out lest they risk retaliation. This heavy psychological burden manifests itself in the high levels of depression and anxiety expressed in interviews, and it may explain the described deterioration in general health and constrained use of other services. The study revealed a general innate feeling of hopelessness in living under current camp conditions.

Failure to Institute Adequate Protection in Chad Refugee Camp

The results of this study indicate that the protection regime built by international, national, and local authorities still has many gaps for women in the camps. The women report that along with Chadian civilians, Chadian soldiers are

among the assailants; they are allowed to come into the camp and evidently are insufficiently trained in their protection obligations.

Absence of Accountability Mechanisms

The absence of accountability mechanisms of any efficacy—such as reporting channels, investigations, arrests, or trials—reinforced the prevailing sense of marginalization and insecurity expressed by these women. Not only were they under constant threat, as they saw the situation, but no one seemed to care.

Lack of Legal Recourse

Darfurian survivors of rape and other sexual violence have little to no legal recourse in either Chad or Sudan. Chad has international treaty-based legal obligations to protect women from sexual and gender based violence including through its ratifications of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the African Charter, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, which Chad has also ratified, refugees must be given all legal recourse extended to Chadian citizens.⁹ Unfortunately, the lack of meaningful enforcement of the rule of law and the absence of a functioning judiciary in Chad hamper any recourse that may be extended to refugees under Chadian law.

Chad's Penal Code governs punishment for rape and gross indecency.¹⁰ But Chadian law criminalizing rape and sexual violence suffers from serious deficiencies. Human rights advocates report that necessary implementing decrees (*décrets d'application*) for laws protecting women from violence have not been promulgated. In addition, traditional tribal courts which apply customary law often hold sway in rural areas.¹¹

Serious structural problems with Chad's justice system also result in a judiciary that is widely reported to be ineffective and weak.¹² A recent initiative to bring mobile courts to eastern Chad has been hampered by insecurity and lack of political will.

Failure to Protect

Among U.N. agencies, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has the lead responsibility for the well-being of refugees in Chad largely through its operational and implementing partners. Its obligations for international protection include: ensuring the safety and well-being of refugees in countries of asylum; meeting the special needs of victims of violence and women who are single heads of household; ensuring the prompt investigation of allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation; enhancing women's meaningful participation in decisionmaking processes related to refugee protection; empowering women so that there is equitable camp governance; ensuring accessible and confidential complaint and redress mechanisms for victims of sexual abuse; and ensuring the existence of adequate remedial measures for victims of such abuse. Unfortunately, this study reveals that refugees in Chad under the administration of UNHCR suffer from woefully inadequate protection from rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

The Chadian Government has, with the assistance of the U.N., begun to take a more prominent role in attempting to provide protection to women and girls living in refugee camps. It is hoped that a new specialized Chadian police force, bolstered by the U.N. Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), will increase protections for refugees in eastern Chad. There is concern, however, that the low numbers of the force and the magnitude of the security vacuum mean that it is unlikely to have an immediate or significant change in the lives of women and girls. As to reports of rape of refugee women by Chadian army soldiers, crimes committed by members of the military are supposed to be tried in military court; as of

⁹United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. "World Refugee Survey 2008—Chad." June 19, 2008. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/485f50c98a.html>. Accessed April 5, 2009. As noted above, Chad is party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, as well as the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, ("OAU Convention"), September 10 1969. 1001 U.N.T.S. 45. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b36018.html>. Accessed April 30, 2009. Article 16 of the 1951 Convention provides in relevant part that "A refugee shall enjoy in the Contracting State in which he has his habitual residence the same treatment as a national in matters pertaining to access to the courts."

¹⁰Ordonnance N°12-PR-MJ du 2 juin 1967 portant promulgation d'un code pénal, on file with PHR.

¹¹International Commission of Jurists (ICJ). "Chad—Attacks on Justice, Eleventh Edition." August 27, 2002 at 71. Available at <http://www.icj.org/IMG/pdf/chad.pdf>. Accessed April 30, 2009.

¹²*Id.* at 1, 8.

February 2009 such courts had not been established.¹³ Local authorities and refugee camp leaders also appear to be in a state of formal denial, as one local Chadian official indicated, “It is our responsibility to protect these refugees, and I can tell you that there is not rape happening here—it’s all consensual.”

LESSONS LEARNED

From PHR’s work in Chad and in other conflict areas over the years a number of broadly applicable challenges to accountability have emerged. Various factors prevent accountability for perpetration of rape as a weapon of war. These include a failure to prevent attacks in the first place; the underreporting of the actual problem and its relative invisibility in the media; the failure to adequately protect women as well as civilians in general in the midst of conflicts, difficulties of documenting the crime for evidentiary purposes, and the inadequate support for effective prosecution efforts, at both domestic and international levels.

Prevention

- A paramount challenge is preventing the widespread use of rape as a weapon of war in the first place. Though the Geneva Conventions state that “women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault,” rape was widely perpetrated in wars throughout the 20th century where civilians increasingly became targets of war. In civil conflicts during the past 20 years, governments have sponsored the use of rape as a weapon of war either by overtly sanctioning or failing to prohibit its use by their armed forces or proxy militias (as is the case in Darfur, where the Sudanese Government knows that the Janjaweed militias are employing rape as a technique), or failing to protect women and children from mass rape by an armed rebel group (i.e., the RUF in Sierra Leone).

Underreporting of the Crime

- While the rates of sexual violence found by PHR and others in studies in former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Darfur and the DRC are high, these rates are likely lower than the actual prevalence levels. There are a number of reasons why rape and sexual assault are not reported. First is the stigma and shame associated with rape; rape is seen as bringing shame upon a woman’s family and her community. In the case of Darfur, a woman who has been raped may be divorced by her husband if she is married, or considered unmarriageable if she is single. In some cases, she may even be forced to leave the community altogether. Second, a woman may not report the crime as there is often little ambient security and she may risk further violence in the process of seeking medical attention or reporting an incident. In some countries, women may be forced to report the crimes to officials before they are able to receive medical treatment. In such circumstances rape victims may be unlikely to take the risks inherent in filing a claim of sexual assault: harassment by authorities; being charged with adultery; and ostracism by her husband, family, or community. These hurdles are formidable especially when the chance of successful prosecution of the perpetrator is slim.

Weakness in Documentation of Rape

- In conditions of armed conflict, it is often extremely dangerous, if not impossible, for women to seek and receive treatment for their injuries, let alone provide evidence or information about the attacks. In the case of Darfur, for example, many women and girls were attacked in the course of devastating assaults on their villages in which nearly all of the residents fled into the surrounding desert to escape. They wandered for weeks and even months with no access to medical treatment. By the time these women reached safety, little physical evidence of sexual violence remained, although physical and mental effects persisted.
- From 2004 until the present, dozens of humanitarian organizations have been working under extraordinarily difficult circumstances in refugee camps in Chad and in camps for the internally displaced in Darfur. During this time, several groups that published reports documenting widespread rape were harassed by the government; in one case two aid workers who spoke publicly about rape in Darfur were arrested and interrogated. The Government of Sudan accused one

¹³United States Department of State. “2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices—Chad,” February 25, 2009. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/49a8f19ca1.html>. Accessed March 23, 2009.

NGO of falsifying a rape report, then subjected the rape victim to multiple gynecological exams and published her name, age, occupation, and location of residence in the newspaper.

- A woman reporting rape in Sudan must fill out the Form 8 at the police station. Few, if any, police in Sudan are trained to deal with victims of sexual violence, and many women report that the police lack tact and compassion and may themselves be verbally or even physically abusive. Thus, the requirement of the Form 8 serves as a deterrent for women to report rape. In addition, Form 8 is incomplete as a method of documenting rape; it records only the most basic information, not all of it either relevant or appropriate (recent loss of virginity, bleeding or the presence of sperm), and does not require more complete or relevant physical documentation or the collection of the aforementioned evidence.

Weakness of Local Judicial Systems

- In many cases, national judicial systems are either incapable of, or unwilling to, prosecute rape on an individual scale, let alone a massive scale. Furthermore, rape laws usually have such a high burden of evidence that prosecution is nearly impossible. In Sudan, for example, a woman must present four male witnesses to the act of penetration, a nearly insurmountable burden of proof. And, as mentioned before, because the crime of rape is defined as “zinna,” which is translated as “adultery,” a woman who comes forward to report that she has been raped risks in turn being charged with adultery. Finally, because the Form 8 does not require a more complete physical exam or collection of relevant evidence (photographs of bruises, a woman’s testimony of the incident), it is relatively ineffective in a court of law where high burdens of eyewitness, physical, and documentary evidence are currently demanded.

Justified Reluctance of Humanitarian Actors to Become Involved in Accountability

- There is a legitimate fear amongst humanitarian actors that they may risk access to the populations they are there to serve, or endanger their own personnel if they speak publicly about human rights violations that they are aware of. In the recent past, relief workers have been the targets of harassments such as administrative refusal to renew visas or work permits; physical searches or beatings, and even sexual assault or killings for speaking publicly. There is also an understandable prioritization by most international relief organizations of their role in meeting the immediate health needs of the communities they serve, and a concomitant reluctance to collect or provide evidence of rape and other atrocities, which also requires special training, expertise, and security measures. Such activities may also engage politically “neutral” NGOs in roles where they may appear to, or be accused of, taking sides in a conflict. In the case of Darfur, the Sudanese Government’s arrest of NGO workers who have reported on or spoken publicly about mass rape in that conflict has sent a chilling message to the entire humanitarian community.

Failure to Prioritize Prevention of Sexual Assault in Peacekeeping Situations

- When the situation in a given country becomes so fraught that the United Nations intervenes with a peacekeeping or protection force, not enough attention is paid to the problem of sexual violence against women in the course of the conflict. Except for those specifically hired to deal with gender-based violence, few peacekeepers, U.N., or NGO workers have training in how to deal with victims of sexual assault.
- There are measures that NGO workers or peacekeepers can take to protect women from violent sexual assault. African Union peacekeepers implemented firewood patrols in Darfur to accompany women when left internally displaced persons camps to gather firewood. However, these patrols were never implemented across all of the camps, and even in the camps where they formed they are reported to have been uneven, irregular, and unpredictable.

The Importance of Accountability

- There are several reasons why accountability is important. First, a lack of accountability breeds a culture of impunity and leads to further breakdown of the rule of law. Second, it is vital to promote a culture of respect for international norms and to destroy the cynicism that accepts rape as an inevitable component of war. Finally, accountability measures offer victims acknowledgement of the wrongs and harms done to them, and provide other essential forms of redress such as arrest, prosecution, and punishment of the perpetrators, as well as compensation and repair.

Breaking the Culture of Impunity

- Perpetrators of mass rape in war have little reason to believe that they will be held accountable for their actions. The International Criminal Court has called for the arrest of two Sudanese men, Ahmed Haroun, former Minister of State for the Interior, and Ali Kushayb, a Janjaweed leader, on a total of 51 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity (among those counts, Haroun is charged with 4 counts of rape, Kushayb with two). Mr. Haroun has actually been promoted to acting Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, and is responsible for overseeing the coordination and delivery of aid to the very people against whom he is accused of committing attacks. Very few governments have come forward to assist in pressing the Sudanese Government to turn these men over to the Court, even though the U.N. Security made the referral to the ICC. This sends a very real message to perpetrators and victims alike that perpetrators of war crimes, including mass rape, are beyond the reach of the law.
- PHR has witnessed and documented a strong desire for justice among numerous victims, their families and their communities. In some cases, it is only the knowledge that the perpetrators will be punished for what they have done that will allow the victims and communities to heal and for cycles of violence and revenge to cease. In Darfur, for example, local NGOs prosecuting rape say that they have seen dozens of courageous women, aware of the near impossibility of winning a rape conviction, who would like to bring forward cases in spite of the obstacles. Many seek a comprehensive form of justice which enables them to rebuild their broken lives and communities and live without fear.

Promoting Adherence to International Norms

- It is important that a country act within the bounds of international norms, including protecting women from mass rape in war. “Rogue states” not only present dangers to their own people, but also threaten to weaken their neighbors. The crisis in Darfur has had destabilizing consequences for neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic.

Compensation and Reparation

- In the past several years, courts have begun to recognize the rights of victims to compensation and reparations (including access to medical and psychological services). Therefore, accountability measures are critical so that women may have access to financial, medical, and psychological support, which is also tied into acknowledgement of the guilt of the perpetrator.

Conclusions/Recommendations

- The capacity of the humanitarian community to assess and respond to systematic sexual violence in conflict has increased in recent years. U.S. Government aid efforts funded by the Congress have played an important role in increasing this capacity. Nonetheless, mechanisms for promoting the rule of law with regards to sexual violence before and after conflicts, reporting and documentation of sexual violence during armed conflicts, treatment, advocacy, and restitution often receive insufficient attention or resources.
- The U.S. Government should work to ensure that the U.N. and other international actors always incorporate an assessment of sexual violence when monitoring threats to civilians in a conflict or post-conflict situation. Staff should be trained on awareness of rape as a war crime, and given clear protocols to follow in recognition that documentation is a crucial element to advocating for the victims. Physicians for Human Rights recommends that those involved in protection efforts, such as peacekeeping forces, humanitarian aid organizations, local and international NGOs, and other relevant actors incorporate best practices for responding to rape as a weapon of war into their work. These include:

1. *Prevention.*—Rape as a weapon of war must be stopped in its course, rather than assuming that it will be an inevitable byproduct of conflict. The U.S. Government should support mechanisms that help prevent sexual violence, such as supporting interventions by international peacekeeping and protection forces where appropriate, identifying the perpetrators and those supporting campaigns of systematic rape, and publicly sanctioning governments that fail to protect victims of rape and/or refuse to investigate, disarm, and prosecute perpetrators.

2. *Protection.*—All too often, the systems that have been developed to protect civilians are simply not being deployed or are not being deployed effectively. The United States must provide more support for diplomacy, intervention, and enforcement as laid out in the tenets of the Responsibility to Protect by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. For example, for the past 6 years the international community has failed to protect vulner-

able women and girls in Sudan despite credible accounts of widespread and systematic rape. As a matter of urgency, the United States must ensure that international protection forces in Darfur and elsewhere have the necessary means to fulfill their mission.

3. *Documentation.*—The United States should support efforts to build the capacity of local and international responders to safely document and publicly report on sexual violence in a manner that does not endanger individual victims or humanitarian workers and their agencies. It should also encourage and support more collaboration between humanitarian groups and human rights organizations to address challenges in documenting and reporting these crimes.

4. *Justice and Accountability.*—Where possible, the international community should work to strengthen local justice systems by improving rape laws, enhancing protection for victims who come forward, and supporting local efforts to hold perpetrators accountable (including truth and reconciliation commissions, special courts for the prosecution of rape as a war crime, and restitution efforts). The United States should also support the international system of legal accountability, which will be necessary when local justice systems are incapable of prosecuting crimes that fall under the Rome Statute of the ICC. The arrest warrants issued by the ICC for Haroun and Kushayb for war crimes and crimes against humanity including mass rape in Darfur, for example, should be given top priority.

The U.S. Government should facilitate the ability of victims of systematic rape during war to seek asylum in the United States via the following:

- Enact legislation stating that in cases in which sexual violence is being perpetrated by any party to an armed conflict, there be a presumption that rape took place on one of the five protected grounds for asylum (in which the asylum applicant has a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, nationality, religion, political opinion, or membership in a social group).
- Repeal the 1-year bar on asylum applications in recognition of the undue burden that it places on survivors of severe trauma such as rape during war, and more generally to all asylum seekers.

5. *Treatment and Remedy.*—Given the magnitude of this crisis and the enormous needs of survivors for medical care and trauma recover, the United States should assess and commit to support international and local responses. PHR urges the U.S. Government to:

- Increase funding for addressing the immediate long-term needs of victims, including providing them with medical care, culturally appropriate mental health care, skills training and compensation. In particular support the capacity of indigenous women and organizations to work and lead in these areas.
- Increase funding and support for programs to rebuild communities in the aftermath of systematic rape, recognizing that there are specific needs for both the community and for the victims of sexual violence. Programs should incorporate community education and advocacy programs to help combat the stigma associated with rape survivors and their children.
- Compel governments responsible for rape in war to provide reparation to the victims, and provide financial support to the Victims Trust Fund established by the International Criminal Court.
- Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration programs for ex-combatants must include resocialization and sexual violence education. Women should be involved in all DDR efforts.
- Develop a better understanding of perpetrators' motivations and the patterns that are associated with systematic rape as a weapon of war.