



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

Press release

United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Bangura, calls for Action Against the Perpetrators of the Notorious Mass Rape in Walikale, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

New York, 29 July 2016: Six years ago, in Walikale territory, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), civilian residents in thirteen villages on the Kibua-Mpofi road, were attacked by a coalition of about 200 soldiers from the Mai Mai Sheka/Nduma Defence of Congo militia, led by Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka; the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), led by Serafin Lionso; and a group of army deserters.

Over a period of four days (30 July to 2 August 2010), 387 civilians, including 300 women, 55 girls, 23 men, and 9 boys were systematically raped and subjected to other forms of sexual violence by these assailants in one of the worst mass rape incidents in the DRC. During the attacks, other human rights violations including murder, ill-treatment, abduction and looting also occurred with 1,429 total victims affected. The gravity of these crimes indicates that they were not only orchestrated under the command of Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka, but were used as part of a deliberate strategy to target and intimidate the civilian population, particularly, women and girls.

Six years on, we salute the resilience of the survivors as they continue to wait for their perpetrators to be brought to trial. The international community stands with them and will not relent in its quest for accountability for these crimes.

“The Congolese Government has already completed investigations into the Walikale rapes and has issued eight arrest warrants for these crimes against humanity,” Special Representative Bangura said.

In March 2016, the military justice authorities in North Kivu Province included the Walikale rapes among a list of priority cases of the gravest international concern for immediate domestic prosecution. It is, therefore, time for the Government to enforce the existing warrants and bring the perpetrators to justice, including Mr. Serafin Lionso, who is currently in detention. Moreover, with regional and international support, efforts must be made to immediately arrest Mr. Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka who is currently under sanction by the Security Council and continues to commit further crimes.

“My Office will pursue its support to the DRC’s efforts to address all sexual violence crimes,” Special Representative Bangura affirmed.

“We must never forget the victims of one of the most shocking mass rapes in recent history. To all the victims in Walikale and beyond, we say: justice may have been delayed, but it should not be denied. As Walikale remembers today, the world will remember, and will continue to call for the prosecution of all perpetrators, reparations for all victims, and deterrence for the future,” she emphasized.

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