

**REMARKS OF ZAINAB HAWA BANGURA SPECIAL  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT AT THE LAUNCH OF  
THE G8 DECLARATION ON PREVENTING SEXUAL  
VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT**

**LANCASTER HOUSE**

*11 April 2013*

**Foreign Ministers, Excellencies, Members of Parliament,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Today we join hands and lift our voices in unison, breaking  
silence on history' s oldest and least condemned crime --  
sexual violence used as a weapon of war.**

**In so doing, we stand in solidarity with the many thousands  
of victims and survivors around the world. To say to them  
that they are not forgotten, that their plight is of the highest  
priority, at the highest level.**

**That this conversation takes place here, in the G8 circle of  
some of the most influential nations, represents  
remarkable progress towards eradicating this crime.**

**Your Declaration today further affirms our conviction that  
sexual violence in conflict is a fundamental threat to  
international peace and security, and as such requires an  
operational and strategic security and justice response.**

**The United Nations Security Council has led the way in the  
past three years, ushering in a paradigm shift that has  
fundamentally altered our approach to dealing with this  
scourge.**

**Thus, even as we concentrate on our obligations to the  
survivors of sexual violence -- the critical health, psycho-  
social, legal and other services that they must have to  
rebuild their lives -- we now also train a more concerted**



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**spotlight on the perpetrators. All those who commit, or command, or condone sexual violence in conflict.**

**The personal leadership of the United Nations Secretary-General, the focus of the Security Council, and the commitment of the G8 as expressed in this Declaration, is an unequivocal signal of intent: sexual violence in conflict will not be tolerated, and the full force of international order will be brought to bear to ensure accountability for such crimes.**

**For the perpetrators, there can be no hiding place; no amnesty; no safe harbour. They will be pursued by any and all means at our collective disposal.**

**In the process, we will begin to transfer the stigma of this crime from the victims, to the perpetrators.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**I come here today en route from my first visits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia.**

**In Mogadishu, I spoke to Luul Ali Osman who, 3 months ago, faced the terrible weight of censure, arrest and imprisonment for daring to speak out about her rape by security forces in an internally displaced persons camp. But in the past months our collective efforts have freed Luul, and those who dared to speak out for her cause.**

**And yesterday, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud speaking to military cadets in Mogadishu, declared that security forces who rape the citizens of Somalia will be fought and defeated like any enemy of the state.**

**I commend the President and his Government for their resolve, and anticipate another important step in preventing sexual violence in Somalia when the international community convenes for the Somalia Donor Conference here in London in a few weeks time.**



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**In the DRC, I visited the community where last year 11 babies, between 6 and 12 months old, were raped. Faced with such horror, we are compelled to turn the despair in our hearts into unshakable resolve that this will not happen to our children.**

**A resolve to match the ruthlessness of those who would commit such unimaginable crimes, with our own relentless and unwavering pursuit of accountability, and ultimately deterrence and prevention.**

**The firm commitment that was made to me by President Kabila to more effectively prosecute crimes of sexual violence is absolutely crucial, and together we must hold the President to his word. At the same time, we must support him and his Government -- technically and financially -- to deal decisively with this problem.**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Today, the Declaration of the G8 represents a beacon of light and hope for Luul Ali Osman, the many devastated communities in Congo, and the countless other survivors in conflicts around the world.**

**We have an opportunity like at no time before in history to break the back of this age-old evil. Sexual violence in conflict is not inevitable; to eradicate it is not a 'mission impossible'.**

**May this be a decisive moment; our moment to put an end to this heinous crime which is a blight on our collective humanity.**

**Thank you.**



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