

**Statement by Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual
Violence in Conflict Margot Wallström**
**SUDAN: PRESIDENTIAL PARDON SENDS POSITIVE SIGNAL FOR
REPORTING ON RAPE**
(2 September 2011)

The Presidential pardon issued on 27 August to representatives of the Sudanese press is welcome news. It is an important signal of respect for freedom of expression by the Sudanese Government. I hope that the pardon will be extended to all media representatives and acted upon without delay.

This pardon must now pave the way for increased public debate in the Sudan, including on subjects traditionally regarded as taboo. In particular, public discussion on sexual violence must not be stifled. The journalists working to break the silence about acts of alleged rape should be seen as allies and partners. Our common enemy is the conspiracy of silence that too often surrounds this crime. I reiterate that rapists – not reporters – must face criminal charges in the Sudan.

My office looks forward to working with the Sudanese authorities to deepen reporting and analysis of sexual violence as a basis for meaningful action. Such action will benefit the women of Sudan and their families and communities as a whole.

We will continue to monitor the situation in the Sudan and anywhere else that sexual violence may occur.
