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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

US  
DPKO

15 May 2006

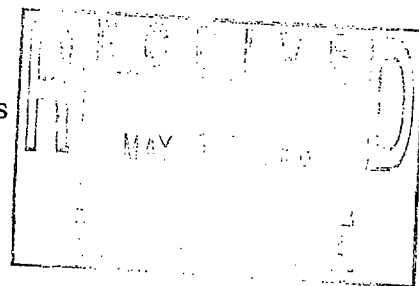
Excellency,

I am writing in response to your letter of 11 May 2006 which echoed the remarks you made to the media following our Security Council luncheon the previous day, referring to a recent report by Save the Children U.K. on sexual exploitation and abuse in Liberia. I could not agree more on the need for the United Nations not only to espouse a policy of zero tolerance with regard to such behaviour but to act swiftly and firmly in enforcing it. I also agree on the importance of Member States to be directly involved in addressing this very serious issue. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on our actions in this regard.

First, however, I would like to point out that Save the Children makes it clear in its report that the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in Liberia and in other missions is a problem that goes beyond the United Nations. It includes humanitarian aid workers and even local community members. Further, the camps mentioned in the report, where internally displaced persons sought shelter from the fourteen-year war, are now closed, effectively shutting down opportunities for sexual exploitation. In addition, the United Nations, with support from Europe and NGO partners, has fielded nearly 500 protection monitors to work with local communities across the nation. Also, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, with the support of the United Nations and NGOs, is now leading a national campaign aimed at eradicating this evil practice.

More broadly, any assertion that the United Nations is not doing enough to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse from its peacekeeping missions should be put in the context of all we are currently doing. The Organization has, together with Member States, embarked on an ambitious three-pronged strategy of prevention, enforcement and remediation that has started to bear fruit.

His Excellency  
Mr. John R. Bolton  
Permanent Representative of the United States  
to the United Nations  
New York



In the area of prevention, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has build on the outcomes of the Zeid Report to clarify standards and raise awareness amongst mission leadership regarding their managerial and command responsibilities and delivered training to managers, commanders and staff alike on the standards of conduct expected of them and how to address sexual exploitation and abuse.

In addition, contractual arrangements with civilian peacekeeping personnel have been amended to include the provisions of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13). Conduct and Discipline Teams have been established in all major missions, including United Nations Mission in Liberia, and their presence has resulted in increased awareness of the standards, more training and greater vigilance. In Liberia specifically the United Nations has been working with local media, especially radio, to inform the public of redress mechanisms and a rapid response team has been established by the United Nations to allow for swift action in the event of sexual assault and rape.

Regarding enforcement measures, DPKO relies on the help of the Office of Internal Oversight Services in all investigations of serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Investigations against peacekeeping personnel since 2004 have resulted in the dismissal of 16 civilians, the repatriation of 155 uniformed personnel and the early return of entire contingents. Furthermore, several troop contributors have taken decisive follow-up action which has resulted in the dismissal of a number of soldiers from their respective militaries. While we agree that more needs to be done, and that investigations must be more expeditious, the United Nations reaction can hardly be characterized as words only.

If you are aware of specific information and allegations, I urge you to bring them to our attention as soon as possible so that we may take appropriate action.

Remedial measures are also in place and include victim referral to medical and psycho-social services. We have developed a robust Victims Assistance Policy and Strategy which will be submitted to Member States shortly.

Far from being sluggish, the United Nations has - as your own staff have repeatedly and publicly acknowledged - vigorously implemented the zero tolerance policy with compulsory training of personnel, an on-the-ground capacity to investigate cases fully and the review of policy and procedures to assist in eliminating the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse.

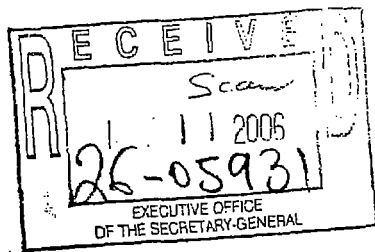
Lastly, we take this opportunity to inform you that DPKO will, together with other parts of the United Nations system, organize a global conference on eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse by international assistance and peacekeeping workers, inviting NGOs and Member States to participate. We will count on your Government's support for this important initiative which will seek to bring such egregious behaviour to an end.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kofi-A. Annan

ACTION Mr. Bolton on 11/25/06  
COPY A/B/C/L/S



THE REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS

May 11, 2006

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express my deepest concern over the recent report by Save the Children UK on incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in Liberia.

The scourge of SEA has cast a shadow over UN peacekeeping for far too long and the continued reports of such activities begs the question of whether the UN is doing enough to address the problem. The UN must act swiftly and firmly in dealing with any cases of SEA involving UN personnel. Reports and investigations only address one portion of this misconduct. It is now time to hold Member States accountable for the misdeeds of their citizens. Far too many UN personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure peace and security to have their good names sullied, along with that of the UN, by the dishonorable actions of a few. I call upon you to use every means at your disposal to address this issue as a matter of the utmost priority.

Sincerely,

*J. R. Bolton*  
John R. Bolton

His Excellency  
Mr. Kofi Annan  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York.