

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE**  
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

**Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:**

Wednesday, May 26, 2004

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AI INDEX: POL 10/017/2004 26 May 2004

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Media Briefing

AI Index: POL 10/017/2004 (Public)  
News Service No: 127  
26 May 2004

**Embargo Date: 26 May 2004 09:00 GMT**

## Amnesty International Report 2004 Updates Selected events covering the period from January to April 2004 Africa Update

### Côte d'Ivoire

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution establishing a UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire starting on 4 April with a mandate to, amongst others, observe and monitor the implementation of the comprehensive ceasefire agreement of 3 May 2003 and movements of armed groups. Dozens of people were killed by government security forces during and in the aftermath of demonstrations organized by opponents of President Laurent Gbagbo in March 2004. A UN commission of enquiry into the killings noted that security forces and pro-government militias used the march as a pretext for massive arrests without any established legal ground, killing innocent civilians indiscriminately and committing massive human rights violations.

### Liberia

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) of former combatants, including some 20,000 child soldiers, was hindered by delayed deployment of the full complement of troops of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and apparent lack of commitment by some leaders of parties to the conflict. The DDRR only began to get under way in April. At an international reconstruction conference in February, more than US\$520m was pledged to meet post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian assistance over the next two years.

### Sierra Leone

The new court-house of the Special Court for Sierra Leone was officially opened in March. Trials are expected to begin in the next few months. Major challenges remain, however, in bringing to justice perpetrators of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international law committed during Sierra Leone's armed conflict. Charles Taylor, indicted by the Special Court last year, continues to be

harboured by Nigeria, in violation of its obligations under international law.  
in Iran since 1990.

Public Document

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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## External Document

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## Africa Regional Overview

### Covering events from January to December 2003

The human rights situation across the Africa region in 2003 was characterized by widespread armed conflict, repression of political opponents, persecution of human rights defenders, violence against women, and limited access to justice for the most marginalized in society. Illicit trade in resources and arms, near total impunity for past and continuing human rights abuses, and the failure of many governments to live up to professed standards of governance contributed to the denial of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights particularly of the most vulnerable - women and children, refugees and the internally displaced, people living with HIV/AIDS, the poor and those who lack formal education. However, regional initiatives to establish greater respect for human rights progressed, including through intervention and mediation in conflict situations or in the protection of human rights defenders.

#### Armed conflict

Government forces and armed opposition groups frequently abused human rights in conflicts such as those in Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, Sudan and Uganda. Among the abuses were the use and recruitment of child soldiers as combatants and sex slaves. In eastern DRC and particularly the Ituri district, clashes between armed ethnic groups supported by outside powers including Rwanda and Uganda cost the lives of tens of thousands of people. Men, women and children were slaughtered, raped and mutilated indiscriminately, treated as mere pawns in the power play of those benefiting from the frequently illicit exploitation of resources that has fuelled years of conflict. Tens of thousands of people were internally displaced. The intervention of a European Union-sponsored Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) in June improved the security in and immediately around Bunia in the Ituri district, where a previously deployed UN force had failed. However, after the IEMF withdrew in September, serious abuses continued outside the areas that were once again controlled by a reinforced UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). A transitional government constituted in Kinshasa in July, which comprised government

representatives and heads of key armed and unarmed opposition groups, faced the major tasks of rebuilding national institutions, such as a functioning independent judiciary and a credible law enforcement system, and working with the international justice system to end impunity. In October the UN Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the DRC submitted the last of four reports to the UN Security Council. The Panel had come under considerable pressure from a number of companies and governments not to repeat its previous recommendation that certain companies be investigated by their home governments for their activities in the DRC. Despite this, the Panel's fourth report again revealed the responsibility of businesses for the human rights and humanitarian crisis in eastern DRC.

In June, the then Liberian President Charles Taylor was indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Special Court for Sierra Leone - the first time such a measure had been taken against a serving head of state in Africa. He was forced to step down in August after increasing pressure from the international community and following an escalation in the conflict in Liberia. The conflict, particularly in early 2003, resulted in thousands of deaths and involved high levels of sexual violence against women and girls, and mass displacement of people within Liberia and to Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Charles Taylor was given refuge by the government of Nigeria which offered him implicit guarantees that he would not be prosecuted in Nigeria or surrendered to the Special Court. AI protested strongly that the Nigerian government had violated its obligations under international law, but calls to either surrender Charles Taylor to the Special Court or open an investigation with a view to determining whether to pursue criminal or extradition proceedings in Nigerian courts were ignored.

The departure of Charles Taylor from office and Liberia contributed to a stabilization of the conflict in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire. However, the implementation of the power-sharing agreement for Côte d'Ivoire, agreed in January in Linas-Marcoussis, France, and endorsed by the UN Secretary-General, continued to face problems. No progress was made in the investigation of numerous reported human rights abuses by all parties to the conflict. Some progress in conflict resolution was achieved elsewhere. In Burundi, a new government including several parties to the conflict was formed in November, and in Sudan new security agreements were signed in September by the government and the armed opposition group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). However, scores of civilians were killed in Burundi by government forces and armed groups, and in Sudan the conflict in the western province of Darfur claimed hundreds of lives and led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

In the CAR, a coup in March involving armed groups from neighbouring DRC led to the intervention of Chadian soldiers and French logistical support troops. Numerous extrajudicial executions and widespread sexual violence were reportedly carried out. Amnesty International Report 2004 out by several parties involved in the coup. In Uganda, a government military initiative against the armed group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led to an intensification of the conflict in the north. The LRA continued to abduct children to abuse them as combatants and sex slaves.

### **Economic insecurity and denial of rights**

Widespread poverty, high illiteracy rates and large disparities in wealth remained major

obstacles for many people in the Africa region to justice, education and adequate health care and living standards. Political rivalry including violent struggle for power and resources, as well as discrimination, led to the economic and political exclusion of large sections of the continent's population, including its youth. In spite of frequent declarations of goodwill and important regional initiatives for greater national and international investment, such as under the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development), most governments failed to live up to their promises, resulting in the spiralling deterioration of opportunities for the most marginalized and vulnerable to have access to the most basic level of livelihood.

The Africa region continued to have the highest regional rate in the world of people living with HIV/AIDS. In some countries close to 40 per cent of the population were infected, threatening a catastrophic level of human suffering and death and putting at risk the ability of society to develop in a sustainable way. While some progress was made in 2003, the majority of states and the international community continued to fail people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa by not making anti-retroviral drugs and treatment, which can also help prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus, available to the most vulnerable.

### **Violence against women**

Violence against women continued to be widely seen as socially acceptable, and women were frequently and blatantly denied their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. This seriously affected the ability of women to enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights or to gain justice for abuses of their rights. The weaker position of women in the negotiation of safe sex practices and their greater vulnerability to sexual violence led to higher infection rates of HIV/AIDS among women than among men of the same age group.

Women faced widespread discrimination in law and administrative practice. For example, there continued to be different standards of evidence for sexual "offences" such as zina (involving consensual sexual relations above the age of consent), and culpable homicide was used as a charge in cases of abortion and miscarriage in some states in Nigeria. As a result, women, especially those from deprived economic backgrounds and with little formal education, were more likely than men to be convicted and sentenced to death or other cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments for some crimes. Amnesty International Report 2004 Women and girls remained the most vulnerable group in society in armed conflict and as refugees or when internally displaced. They were raped and suffered other forms of sexual violence by perpetrators from different parties to the conflicts in Burundi, CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda and elsewhere.

The human rights of women were further denied by the failure of the state to protect them effectively from criminally motivated sexual violence or to support them as survivors of violence. In countries such as South Africa and Swaziland, this was largely the result of inadequate frameworks and practices of law enforcement and judicial process.

In Senegal, women also faced serious obstacles in access to adequate health care and to redress for abuses committed against them and close relatives in the conflict in the

southern region of Casamance over the past decades. In several countries, legislation on domestic violence was being prepared, but progress was slow. Female genital mutilation continued to be widely practised in different forms in many countries, but only in a few have effective measures been taken at state level to eradicate the practice, despite growing campaigning by civil society to end its use.

### **Political repression**

Political opponents were free in only a few countries in the Africa region to exercise their rights to freedom of conscience, expression and association. Governments of countries such as Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Togo and Zimbabwe used malicious prosecution, arbitrary arrest and excessive force against demonstrators as tools of political repression. In some cases newspapers and radio stations were arbitrarily closed down. Journalists and human rights defenders continued to be harassed by the security forces or accused, charged and detained on grounds of libel to silence dissent and prevent criticism of government acts and policies. In some countries, detainees were denied their right to a fair trial on "security" grounds and in some instances, such as in Kenya, legislation was being prepared that would allow derogation from key human rights obligations on grounds of combating "terrorism".

In many countries, including Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Togo and Zimbabwe, torture and illtreatment of suspects continued to be widespread. Across the region too, the judiciary was undermined and politically influenced by governments to silence opposition. In December, the Commonwealth decided to renew its suspension of Zimbabwe because of the government's poor human rights record; Zimbabwe then withdrew from the Commonwealth.

### **Death penalty**

The worldwide trend towards abolition of the death penalty was reflected in the Africa region, with several countries being abolitionist in law or practice. Opportunities for further progress emerged in 2003 through the work of sub-regional intergovernmental organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). However, many people remained in detention under threat of execution across the region. In Nigeria, Sharia (Islamic law) courts continued to hand down death sentences based on penal legislation passed since 1999, and in Zambia more than 40 people were sentenced to death for participation in an alleged coup attempt. No executions were reportedly carried out in either country. In Chad, however, nine men were executed - the first time death sentences had been carried out in the country since 1991.

### **Human rights defenders**

Human rights defenders in the Africa region continued to play a vital role in monitoring human rights and bringing abuses to international attention. After several years of lobbying by African and international non-governmental organizations, and support from the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights finally decided to designate a

commissioner as a "focal point" to monitor abuses of the human rights of defenders in Africa, recognizing the important role they play and their specific need for protection. However, the Commission failed to adopt a declaration or binding protection mechanism to this end. Amnesty International Report 2004

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## Croatian 'hero' general indicted

**A former Croatian general already serving a prison sentence for war crimes has now been indicted by the international tribunal in The Hague.**

Mirko Norac is accused by the tribunal of crimes against humanity in 1993.

His earlier arrest in Croatia on other charges sparked protests by members of the public who see him as a war hero.

Moves to extradite him would attract strong opposition, but early reports suggest he may be tried in Croatia, in a break with normal tribunal procedure.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/3746463.stm>

Published: 2004/05/25 12:20:33 GMT

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## **African Union's peace council powerful tool for preventing conflict - Annan**

*25 May 2004* – United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has hailed the African Union's new Peace and Security Council as a potentially powerful tool for the prevention, management and resolution of violent conflict on the continent.

"With the establishment of this important body, the African Union has crossed yet another significant threshold in its quest to promote lasting peace and stability, strengthen democratic institutions and support sustainable development throughout Africa," Mr. Annan said in a [message](#) to the official ceremony Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, marking the Council's inauguration.

"The wise counsel and vigorous diplomacy of its members will be crucial in guiding the continent through the troubled waters of instability and economic stagnation to the calmer seas of peace and development," the Secretary-General said through his Special Representative for Ethiopia and Eritrea, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila.

Mr. Annan noted that the ceremony was occurring on the date on which the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was inaugurated 41 years ago, and which is now commemorated throughout the continent as Africa Day.

He said the OAU's inauguration "carried the hopes and aspirations" of Africa's peoples for an independent, peaceful and prosperous continent, and that independence was achieved due in no small measure to its work.

"That Organization has given way to the African Union, which now has the responsibility to guide Africa's future as it strives to fulfil the aspirations of its constituency and meet the challenges ahead," the Secretary-General said, pledging the UN's full commitment to assisting African leaders "in every way possible in your pursuit of integration, development and peace."

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Terms: **un cracks down on child soldier world hotspots** ([Edit Search](#))

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*The News of the World* May 16, 2004

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The News of the **World**

May 16, 2004

**LENGTH:** 274 words

**HEADLINE: UN CRACKS DOWN ON CHILD SOLDIER WORLD HOTSPOTS**

**BODY:**

THE **United Nations** Security Council has passed a resolution calling for tough measures to stop the recruitment of **child soldiers** worldwide.

**UN** reports note that Northern Ireland is one area where kids are being recruited into conflict but our investigation is the first to expose the extent of the scandal.

Recently the Security Council unanimously adopted a call urging the end of the shocking practice across the globe.

The most notorious areas where children have taken up arms are Afghanistan, Burundi, Ivory Coast, Congo, Liberia and Somalia.

The **United Nations** has called on these countries to co-operate with **UN** experts in preparing specific plans within three months to halt the recruitment and use of **child soldiers**.

In addition to those six countries, the **UN** has listed nine other "armed conflicts" where parties recruit or use children-Chechnya, Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, Northern Ireland, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda.

The report states that despite **UN** attempts to get armed groups in Northern Ireland to stop using children, "continuing competitive recruitment of young people by all paramilitary groups has been reported in the context of various feuds and the emergence of dissident groups".

The resolution is based on **UN** secretary-general Kofi Annan's report last November that children were being used as **soldiers** "on a massive scale" around the **world**, with groups in 15 conflicts handing weapons to youngsters.

Security Council members said they would consider imposing measures such as an arms embargo or ban on military assistance to armed groups that refuse to co-operate.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 25, 2004

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## LIBERIA: Member of top US military delegation murdered



MONROVIA, 25 May 2004 (IRIN) - A member of the United States Government 34-man military delegation in Liberia to help set up a new national army, has been murdered at the Mamba Point Hotel in the diplomatic enclave of the Liberian capital, Monrovia, just yards away from the official residence of the US ambassador.

Liberia's defence ministry spokesman Moizou Kromah told reporters on Tuesday that the incident occurred during the early hours of Monday morning in a room at the Mamba Point Hotel where the deceased and the rest of the US delegation were lodging. No official motive has been given by authorities.

The identity of the murdered man has not been established, but the Liberian government has confirmed that the man was a civilian member of the US team.

"We have learnt that the individual murdered in cold blood was one of the four civilians on the delegation...the identity of the deceased will be withheld pending the conclusion of an investigation," Kromah disclosed.

He said the team, which arrived in Monrovia on 19 May, composed of 30 senior military officers of US Military Command and four civilians, was on an assessment mission to assist in the creation of a new Liberian army following 14 years of bloody civil war, brought to an end in August.

Sources close to the Liberian state security told IRIN on Tuesday that the deceased was stabbed to death in his hotel room by an unknown murderer or murderers who entered via a ceiling cavity shared with an adjoining room. Cash and other valuables were missing from the room, they said.

"Because of the embarrassing nature of such a murder of a US citizen in Liberia, the transitional government chairman Gyude Bryant has ordered all of the state security including the police, national bureau of investigation, national security agency [Liberia's intelligence bureau] to investigate the killing and arrest the culprits," one of the sources said.

Expatriates and western visitors lodge at the Mamba Point Hotel, because of its proximity to the US and European Union embassies as well as the offices of various

UN agencies.

Plain cloths Liberian security officers have tightened security at the hotel, replacing the private security agents who operated before the murder to clients' satisfaction.

Frequent visitors to the Mamba Point Hotel, which operated throughout the Liberian civil war, chose the hotel as it usually had electricity and water, a luxury in Monrovia and was located near the sea - an emergency exit in case of troubles.

Shock and anger gripped residents of the capital, Monrovia as news of the murder spread.

"No body should overlook this killing, because it has a propensity to indicate to the international community that Liberia is still not safe," said Daniel Johnson, a student of international relations.

Liberian police officers in collaboration with armed UN police have stepped up patrols in and around the city.

A senior police officer said: "We will search for those responsible and bring them to justice."

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*The Independent* May 25, 2004

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The Independent

**May 25, 2004**

**LENGTH:** 2733 words

**HEADLINE:** SEX AND DEATH IN THE HEART OF AFRICA

**BYLINE:** Kate Holt and Sarah Hughes

**BODY:**

Faela is 13 years old; Joseph is just under six months. Sitting on the dusty ground in Bunia's largest camp for internally-displaced people (IDPs), she cradles Joseph in her arms, and talks about how she ensures that she and her son are fed.

"If I go and see the **soldiers** at night and sleep with them, then they sometimes give me food, maybe a banana or a cake," she says, looking down at her son. "I have to do it with them because there is nobody to care, nobody else to protect Joseph except me. He is all I have and I must look after him."

It is a story that might not sound out of place in any part of the war-ravaged Democratic Republic of Congo but for one thing: the **soldiers** Faela is talking about are not from the rebel groups who have devastated Ituri province, in the north-east of the country, during the past four and a half years of conflict. Rather, they are part of the **United Nations** peacekeeping force, Monuc (**UN** Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo), and are stationed on **UN** orders next to the IDP camp in Bunia.

The **UN** has taken over the local airport, once a bustling trade point that served the entire Ituri province. The region is rich in natural resources, including uranium and huge, newly discovered, oil reserves. Bunia airport is teeming with military personnel, the condition and number of **UN** planes in direct contrast to the rusty and abandoned Congolese planes nearby.

After leaving the airport, one passes a series of roadblocks along unpaved roads. It is just possible to make out the blue helmets of Uruguayan and Moroccan peacekeepers behind their barriers, which are sandbagged and mounted with barbed wire. People in a steady stream tramp along the dusty road, but it is impossible to tell where they are going.

Just off the road, behind forbidding gates where an old supermarket once stood, is the Medecins San Frontieres hospital known locally as "Bon Marche". Near this are a crowded cemetery, and then the town's centre, guarded by several **UN** tanks and a watchtower.

Bunia used to be a thriving commercial centre, but these days it resembles a frontier town from the Wild West. Its businesses are boarded up, although some traders continue the

struggle to stay open. Paint peels off half-derelict buildings, rubbish clogs the roads and chalkboards in front of airline offices display the times of the next flights out of this hellhole. Those who live in the town have learnt to watch their backs. The streets are heavily patrolled and everyone scurries home at the first sign of dusk. Gunfire can be heard nightly, usually between Monuc **soldiers** and local militia groups. **UN** forces here, uniquely, operate under a "chapter seven" mandate, which grants them great power to keep the peace, and allows them the right to kill. A recent confrontation between Monuc and the Front Nationaliste Integrationniste (FNI) saw 10 of the militia shot dead. As the nightly violence escalates, it is increasingly difficult to work out who this war is now between.

Bunia's IDP camp was established a year ago, after fighting between the Hema and Lendu ethnic groups in the region escalated. People converged on the land next to the **UN** military base, hoping for protection.

The camp is now home to 15,000 people, and sprawls on a hillside near the airport and the obligatory **UN** roadblock. Facilities are basic. Row upon row of tents, made from blue plastic sheeting, spread out from the shambolic central point where the camp was first established in the heat of the emergency last year. Then there was no thought for planning, only for providing protection.

Recently, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have attempted to bring some form of order to the chaos, and given people their own plots of land. In some parts of the camp there are now neat rows of huts instead of the plastic tents but, underneath this veneer of organisation, life inside the camp remains hard. Fighting between rival ethnic groups erupts each night, and tension is high. During the day a thriving market has sprung up, selling everything from food to guns.

In this **world** of lost hopes and shattered dreams, Faela's story is a common one. It is a story of war and of **soldiers**, of sex and, most of all, of fear. If she is indifferent to her future it is because violence and submission are what she has known for much of her short life. Her **world**, once filled with parents and siblings, with the ordinary rhythms of every day life, and with hard work and the occasional celebration, has slowly shrunk, its focus narrowing each day until all that remains is her son, and what she must do to feed him.

"I came to this camp nearly six months ago, when the fighting got bad in our village," she explains, quietly. "The **soldiers**, different ones, were coming every night and we didn't know what was going on, we were all scared. Every night the **soldiers** would come to our hut and make my sisters and I do it with them. We had no choice. If we said no, then they would hurt us. Sometimes they put their guns against my chest and sometimes between my legs. I was really scared." Scared enough to leave the village where she had been born and begin the long walk through the jungle of Ituri province to the IDP camp. She knew before she left that she was pregnant, her **child's** father one of the anonymous band of **soldiers**. "I had Joseph in the forest," she says. "My father cannot help me any more - he is ashamed of me because I had this baby when I am not married. He has my brothers and sisters to look after."

Faela expected to be safe in the camp. She believed life would be hard, but at least there would be no more late-night visits, no more men with guns. She felt that she would be fed, clothed and protected. Instead, she slowly discovered, as people refused her food, turned away from her, and talked of her "shame", that she was a pariah.

"It is hard in the camp for the girls like me with little babies and no husbands," she says. "We have no men to look after us. We have been dirtied by the **soldiers** who came to our villages. No one will now take us as their wives and it is hard to get food in the camp for us."

Faced with starvation, and worried for her son, Faela, along with other girls in a similar predicament, turned to the only salvation they felt that they had - the Uruguayan and

Moroccan Monuc **soldiers** stationed directly across from the camp, barely 20 metres away, with only barbed wire separating the two. "It is easy for us to get to the **UN soldiers**," she explains. "We climb through the fence when it is dark, sometimes once a night, sometimes more."

Nor is Faela the only girl to tell such a story. Of more than 30 girls who were interviewed, half admitted to crossing the boundary in search of kindness and food. They said that they felt they had no choice - unmarried with children, they claimed that they had no one in the camp to protect them and, as such, had to take help where they could.

Maria is 15 years old. Like Faela, she too has a small **child**. Standing near the barbed-wire fence, she explains why she feels that she has no choice but to climb through the holes and sleep with **UN soldiers**.

"I go over the fence when I need food," she says. "Nothing bad happens to us over there - the **soldiers** are kind and they give us things. In this camp there isn't much. I came to Bunia to be safe and to get away from **soldiers** who attacked my village."

Maria, like many of the other girls within the camp, is further hindered by her upbringing. Now a **child** looking after a **child**, she has never been to school, and cannot read or write. She had always been an obedient daughter, and had no idea who to turn to once her family abandoned her. She went from being protected and loved by her parents to being cast out by them, and admits, whatever the dangers, she will not stop visiting the **UN soldiers** at night.

"In the camp things are better than they were after the **soldiers** came to our village," she says. "But it is hard to get food sometimes - if you don't have a husband or someone to fight for you. I don't have anyone else to turn to. The **UN soldiers** help girls like me - they give us food and things if we go with them."

Dominique McAdams, the head of the **UN** in Bunia, admitted there was a problem. "I have heard rumours on this issue," she said. "It is pretty clear to me that sexual violence is taking place in the camp."

McAdams is not the only member of Monuc to be concerned about the behaviour of the **soldiers** in Bunia. At the beginning of this month, the **UN** announced that it would launch a full investigation into abuse within the camp. Monuc's spokesman in New York, Fred Eckhard, said: "Monuc is committed to completing a full and thorough investigation into (events at the camp) as a matter of urgency. We will apply all available sanctions against any personnel found responsible."

Yet the gap between the intention to investigate and the reality of investigation remains large. "I have requested evidence and proof on this matter, but I have not received anything from anyone," said McAdams. "**UN** policy with regard to sexual misconduct, both military and civilian, is very strict. All staff are fully briefed on the consequences of such misconduct."

Part of the difficulty faced by the **UN** is that the girls involved refuse to give evidence against the **soldiers**. Extreme sexual violence has been an integral part of the war throughout eastern Congo, but there is currently no recourse for any form of justice: the girls are terrified of all military, foreign and local, making any formal investigation extremely difficult.

Nor is there any real sign that such investigations bring change. In 2002, similar allegations of the sexual exploitation of refugees by humanitarian workers in West Africa made headlines across the **world**. The **UN** responded by establishing a code of conduct for its workers, and Secretary General Kofi Annan announced a policy of "zero tolerance" regarding sexual misconduct. Despite this, a recent report by an NGO, Refugees International, into events in Liberia suggests that such a policy is hard to implement.



According to this report, the head of the **United Nations** Mission to Liberia (Unmil), Jean Paul Klein, has emphasised that V C any member of the **UN** community caught having sex with someone under 18 will be repatriated, and a midnight curfew has been implemented for his **UN** staff. However, the report suggests that such measures are not enough.

"Unmil lacks a clear and transparent process for reporting sexual exploitation incidents," says Sarah Martin, the author of the report. "We interviewed representatives of local NGOs and women's groups, international NGOs and many different members of Unmil's staff - no two people could identify the correct person to report allegations or cases of sexual exploitation. In December 2003 Unmil were asked to appoint a community focal point to hear complaints from the community. As of April 2004 this had still not been done."

Martin's report suggests that the situation is further complicated by the fact that **UN** procedures for investigating a case against military personnel are different from those for investigating a case against civilians. She adds that this makes matters harder for the NGOs providing services for the victims of rape and sexual exploitation, as the procedures for dealing with **UN** military personnel are not clear.

The Refugees International report goes on to state: "A US government representative told us: We know that bad stuff is happening (in Liberia) but it is hard to find out who is responsible. Further, it is hard for victims and their families to find out if justice has been served. If found guilty, violators are usually repatriated to their home countries, where it is impossible to find out what, if any, actions have been taken. Realistically, the **UN** can do little about this impunity."

The situation in Liberia, with its complicated chain of command, failure to establish a coherent policy, and well-meaning but half-hearted investigations, mirrors that in Bunia. Medecins San Frontieres, the NGO responsible for running the hospital next to the Bunia camp, and for providing medical care to the displaced civilian population, said that they treated victims of sexual violence, committed by local militias, daily, and were concerned by lack of monitoring of the situation.

"While we are not directly involved in the camp, it is clear that the necessary steps to protect the displaced population from violence and sexual exploitation have not been followed in the IDP camp in Bunia," said Patrick Barbier, the head of MSF's Bunia mission. "The need to provide protection for these girls is urgent."

Adele is 16 years old. She arrived in the camp last July. "I came because the fighting was getting bad in our village," she says. "Every night **soldiers** came and made me and my mother do it with them. We had no choice. We had heard that in Bunia there were foreign people who would help us, so we thought we should go there."

On the trek to the camp, Adele, like Faela and Maria, discovered she was pregnant. Rejected by her father, who refused to provide food for her following her "shame", she, too, turned to the peacekeeping force.

"I didn't know what else to do," she says. "People in the camp are horrible to me because of my shame. I can't get a food card because I have no man to look after me. The **soldiers** have dirtied me, but I can't leave the camp because nobody will want me there and I won't be able to live with my family again. I don't know what to do."

The sexual exploitation of women in African war zones is an increasingly common occurrence. In 2001, a report commissioned jointly by UNHCR (the **United Nations** High Commissioner for Refugees) and Save the Children found that the sexual violence and exploitation of displaced and refugee children in West Africa was endemic.

In 2002, the two organisations laid down guidelines for the treatment of girls in refugee camps, including demands that camp layouts take into account the need for female privacy and physical security. Outlines were also given as to how instances of exploitation should be reported.

Yet in Bunia those recommendations appear to have been ignored. Standing in a female latrine on the camp boundary, women are fully exposed to the Uruguayan military tents, and holes in the barbed wire are obvious. One camp worker, who refused to give his name and worked for Atlas, the NGO in charge of managing the camp, said: "Yes, we know that girls go and visit the **UN soldiers** every night. There is nothing to stop them, and the girls need food. It is best to keep quiet, though. I am frightened that if I say something I may lose my job, and I have children of my own to feed."

Part of the problem is that IDPs do not come under the mandate of the UNHCR. In certain crises, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, the **UN** Security Council extends the authority of the UNHCR to look after the needs of those internally displaced by fighting. But no such authority has been issued for the Congo, where it is estimated that 3.4 million people have been displaced by the war. And although there are other **UN** and international agencies in Bunia, none has been given the responsibility of protecting the civil rights of displaced people such as Adele.

Matteo Frontini, the head of Unicef (the **United Nations** children's fund) in Bunia, said he was concerned by the exploitation in the camp, but there was little more they could do. "Obviously we are concerned with the protection of the rights of women and children in the camp, and we have been putting measures in place to avoid abuse. But there is an urgent need for more **UN** agencies to be operational in Bunia, as well as an increased response from the Congolese government."

Meanwhile, as the international organisations argue over who is responsible for the camp and its people, the abuse in Bunia continues. For girls such as Adele, Maria and Faela, who have scant hope of protection and little belief that the situation will change, the **UN soldiers** provide the only security they can hope for.

"Going over to the camp is OK because the **soldiers** are kind to me and don't point their guns like the other **soldiers** did," Faela says. "I'm scared for Joseph, but maybe something good will happen soon."

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