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UK/Kenya: Kenyan alleged rape victims renew their call for justice

As Adam Ingram MP, the UK Minister of State for the Armed Forces, visits Kenya this week, Amnesty International reiterates its call on the UK government to establish without delay an independent and impartial commission of inquiry into allegations of rape by members of the UK Army training in Kenya. Amnesty International members will today join the women and members of Kenyan non-governmental organizations on a march to demand justice

"Adam Ingram and the UK authorities need to take note of their protest. More than 650 allegations of rape have been made against members of the UK Army posted to Kenya for training over a period of more than 30 years. A blind eye has been turned to the suffering of these women and the children born as a result of pregnancies reportedly following rapes."

"Adam Ingram and the UK government must act swiftly to ensure that at long last their allegations are taken seriously and the perpetrators of these crimes finally held accountable," Amnesty International said today.

"The failure of the UK Army to investigate and prosecute such a large number of rape claims may amount to institutional acquiescence and may have encouraged a pattern of grave human rights violations. The UK government should send a clear message that it is determined to bring an end to such systemic failures and launch an independent and impartial commission of inquiry."

"An inquiry is vital - these people deserve justice. Similarly, any systemic or institutional failures within the UK armed services must be identified and dealt with in order to ensure that other women will never have to suffer like this again."

Amnesty International has also mobilised its one million plus membership worldwide and the world human rights' movement to support the call for an inquiry. Anybody can take action by visiting www.amnesty.org and clicking on *UK - reports of hundreds of rapes of Kenyan women by UK Army personnel shrouded by impunity*.

Background

In the report published last month - *United Kingdom: Decades of impunity: Serious allegations of rape of Kenyan women by UK Army personnel* - Amnesty International urged the UK government to:

to establish without delay an independent and impartial commission of inquiry into the conduct of the UK Army in light of hundreds of allegations of rape of Kenyan women by UK Army personnel over the course of more than three decades;

to ensure that civilian police and prosecution authorities investigate impartially, independently and thoroughly all allegations of criminal conduct of any UK soldiers in Kenya; and that any person reasonably suspected of criminal conduct be brought to justice in the course of a fair trial. Such criminal investigations and prosecutions must be conducted in a manner that guarantees respect for the dignity and protection both of those who were subjected to sexual violence, and also of witnesses;

to ensure that effective redress and adequate reparation will be provided to all the people who were subjected to sexual violence by members of the UK Army and to children born reportedly as a result of such violence;

to make public the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Kenyan governments, regarding the operation of the UK forces in Kenya, including any provisions in it regarding policing of UK Army personnel in Kenya.

Information in the report was collected by an Amnesty International mission to central Kenya in June 2003. The mission's representative interviewed women alleging that they had been raped, chiefs and witnesses.

Public Document

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