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H.E. Dame Karen Pierce, DCMG
UK Mission to the UN
885 2nd Ave, New York NY 10017, USA

1 August 2018

Dear Ambassador Pierce,

I am writing to you as the UK takes up its presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of August in my capacity as convenor of the Mission Justice campaign - a coalition of NGOs and activists (see list overleaf) working on the issue of sexual violence within UN peacekeeping.

As friends of UN peacekeeping, we strongly support the Secretary-General's peacekeeping reform agenda. However, we are deeply concerned that his efforts, particularly in relation to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), will not bear fruit without robust support and further action by troop contributing countries (TCCs) and the Security Council.

While SEA is abhorrent in all forms, we are particularly focussed on acts committed by uniformed personnel and on acts of sexual violence. While SEA is a term that covers a broad range of conduct from the criminal to the professionally inappropriate, there is a strong consensus that sexual violence, a crime in international law, is conduct that should always be treated as criminal, and not as a disciplinary offence. If uniformed personnel commit such acts, their home country must be willing and able to prosecute them for it.

At present, the Secretary-General is able to take disciplinary steps, such as repatriation, and is empowered, through UNSC Resolution 2272, to ask that member states take action. But decisions as to "whether a Member State has taken the appropriate steps to investigate, hold accountable and inform him of the progress of its investigations when determining whether that Member State should participate in other ... peacekeeping operations" are highly political, and can put the Secretary-General in a difficult position, especially when troops are in short supply.

We therefore urge Security Council members to give the Secretary-General their full support in operationalising this mechanism under Resolution 2272, and to consider whether the Council needs to take further measures to ensure that peacekeepers cannot be deployed unless there are processes in place to ensure that they can be held to judicial account. As the penholder on peacekeeping reform, the UK is well-placed to take forward further measures, which could usefully include:

- Asking the UN's Conduct and Discipline Units to track allegations of criminal acts of sexual violence separately from wider issues of exploitation and abuse. This would give greater clarity over the nature and scale of the criminal accountability deficit.
- Providing a small amount of voluntary funding (six figures) to permanently extend the successful pilot of OHCHR-led enhanced vetting of troop contributions, first employed for the Sri Lankan deployment to Mali
- In the absence of enhanced vetting, encouraging TCCs – particularly those who have signed the voluntary compact - to publish the names and photographs of officers to be deployed on peacekeeping missions to allow civil society to conduct their own vetting processes

For more information on our campaign please visit <http://www.mission-justice.org/>.

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Samarasinghe
Executive Director, United Nations Association – UK

Hundreds of individuals have pledged their support to Mission Justice, signatories have also indicated that they are pledging their support on behalf of the following organisations and that they have authority to do so:

- Africa Sustainable Development Office (ASDO) Ltd
- Better World Campaign (BWC)
- Citizens' Association "Women's Voice of Priboj"
- Centre for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
- Collectif des Organisations de Défense des Droits de L'Homme et de la Démocratie (CODDHD)
- Colonies Pionniers du Développement (CPD)
- CSLI Indonesia (Lazarus Union)
- Dispute Resolution & Development Initiative (Democratic Action Group DAG)
- European Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
- Femmes et Education des Adultes (FEDA)
- Gender Awareness Programme – (GAP-SL)
- Help4Help
- HEN Foundation
- Her Dear Diary Women & Youths Empowerment Initiative (HDDI)
- Heswall United Reformed Church
- Humanist Watch Salone (HUWASAL)
- Industrial Workers of the World
- International Voluntary Service
- Kashmir Relief and Development Foundation
- Leadership Initiative for Transformation and Empowerment (LITE-Africa)
- Making herstory
- Nagaad Network
- Post Conflict Research Centre
- RS Collaboration
- Sri Lanka Campaign
- Teen Confront Organisation (TEENCO)
- UNA Finland
- UNA Sri Lanka
- UNA-UK
- Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA)
- West Cheshire Multicultural Women's Group (WCMWG)
- WIND – Sierra Leone
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)