

[UN human rights arm urges Nepal to carry out conviction of soldiers in teen's murder](#)

18 April 2017 – Welcoming the conviction of three army officials accused of the murder of a 15-year-old girl during the armed conflict in Nepal more than 13 years ago, the United Nations human rights arm has called on the authorities to implement the court's decision.

"It is the first time that Nepal Army personnel have been convicted by a civilian court for crimes committed during the 1996-2006 conflict," Rupert Colville, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) [told](#) journalists in Geneva.

"None of the officers were present in the District Court of Kavre, and it still remains to be seen whether they will actually be arrested and serve their sentences," he added, urging the country's authorities to implement the verdict on what he called an "extremely important emblematic case."

On 16 April, three soldiers – Babi Khatri, Amit Pun and Sunil Prasad Adhikari – were sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for the [murder of Maina Sunuwar](#), who was picked up from her home in a village in central Nepal on 17 February 2004 and interrogated for suspected links to Maoist rebels by soldiers who were looking for her mother.

She was allegedly subjected to torture and later that month died in the custody of the army at the Birendra Peace Operations Training Centre in Panchkal, located about 15 kilometres from the village where she was arrested.

According to the OHCHR spokesperson, the Nepalese Army and the Government initially denied any knowledge of Ms. Sunuwar's fate or whereabouts and her body was buried secretly.

SEE ALSO: [UN urges arrest of suspects in murder of young girl seven years ago](#)

A fourth officer who had been charged – a major who was repatriated by a UN peacekeeping mission in Chad in 2009 because of the arrest warrant against him – was acquitted by the court.

Mr. Colville added that OHCHR as well as other human rights organizations have persistently advocated for those responsible to be held fully accountable, and the convictions this Sunday come after a long succession of unsuccessful attempts to seek justice for the murder.

[UN blue helmets and Malian forces targeted in 'cowardly' terrorist attacks](#)

18 April 2017 – The head of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali today strongly condemned the “cowardly” attacks that took place against its personnel as well as members of the national armed forces, and voiced deep concern at ongoing insecurity in the northern and central parts of the country.

Early this morning, a vehicle belonging to the peacekeeping mission ([MINUSMA](#)) struck an improvised explosive device or mine about 30 kilometres south of Tessalit in the Kidal region, according to a news release issued by the mission. Two peacekeepers and one civilian were seriously injured; the vehicle, part of an escort of a logistics convoy, was damaged.

Also today, unidentified armed men targeted positions of the Malian Armed Forces and the National Guard at Gourma Rharous, located about 120 kilometres east of Timbuktu, according to the mission.

MINUSMA deployed its attack helicopters to the site in support of the Malian Forces and facilitated the medical evacuation of the wounded by air.

“There is hardly a day when reports of abominable acts of terrorism committed by the enemies of peace and the enemies of this country and its people are not received,” [said](#) Mahamat Saleh Annadif, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of MINUSMA, calling the attacks “cowardly.”

“Their real target is the failure of the peace process and their goal is to impose the reign of violence and chaos,” he said, adding that the UN remains more committed than ever to support the Malian authorities and the country’s defense and security forces.

Mr. Annadif also stressed the need for all Malian parties to redouble their efforts to advance the peace process.

[UN forum highlights importance of stronger partnerships for financing sustainable development](#)

18 April 2017 – Underlining the importance of sustainable finance for the

implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, senior United Nations officials today called for stronger partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders to ensure that resource requirements are met.

In her [opening remarks](#) at the high-level event, [SDG Financing Lab – How to finance the SDGs](#), Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed recalled the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), which was adopted in 2015 at the UN Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

She said the agreement – which sets out a series of bold measures to overhaul global finance practices and generate investments for tackling a range of economic, social and environmental challenges – is a key component of the 2030 Agenda.

“The Action Agenda provides the framework for global cooperation to finance and implement the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) by mobilizing public and private sources,” said Ms. Mohammed.

The deputy UN chief also noted that in addition to prioritizing domestic resource mobilization, aligning public spending with sustainable development and partnership with the private sector and businesses is equally important.

“It is in the interest of all countries, companies and people to tap the wealth of good that sustainable development will bring in environmental, economic and social terms,” she added.



Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed addresses the High-Level Meeting on Financing the Sustainable Development Goals. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

In her remarks, Ms. Mohammed also noted that financial flows and investments are increasingly being aligned with the SDGs and said that with mobilization of large pools of capital such as pension funds and the insurance sector, “greater wins” for everyone can be realized.

“The dividends will reverberate far and wide [...] success on the SDGs will trigger beneficial results that will feed project pipelines leading to progress on gender, economic growth and climate action,” she added, noting examples from around the world that have shown such benefits.

Mobilizing the ‘right mix’ of resources vital – General Assembly President

Also speaking at the opening, the President of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson [said](#) that financing the SDGs could require some \$90 trillion over the next 15 years and called for “exponential transformation” in the global financial system that taps into all sources of funding.

“We are at a time when we must foment a global conversation bringing all stakeholders together to discuss how we can mobilize the right mix of resources to achieve the SDGs,” he said.

“We must distinguish between the various sources of capital and asset classes that they represent, and recognize their varying spheres of operation and influence – from multinational corporations through to grassroots small-holder farmers.”

Mr. Thomson also said that efforts by governments, central banks and financial regulators are already leading to positive developments but multiplying these efforts to reach the scale needed to achieve the global goals remains the main challenge.

In particular, he underlined the need for reforming existing policy and regulatory frameworks to leverage public and private financing for the SDGs, and to contribute to sustainable development, including through local and regional capital markets.

“If we are to succeed, today’s discussions cannot be a one-off occurrence. [It] will have to represent the start of an extended dialogue,” the President of the General Assembly said.

In addition to senior UN officials, Mahmoud Mohieldin, the Senior Vice President for Partnerships at the World Bank Group, also spoke at the high-level event, which also featured a panel discussion on sustainable development financing, an inter-governmental plenary debate, and workshops showcasing approaches to finance specific groups of SDGs.

[Recent attack on evacuated civilians in Syria ‘likely a war crime,’ says UN rights office](#)

18 April 2017 – The United Nations human rights office today expressed great concern about the safety of civilians being evacuated in Syria, saying a weekend attack on a convoy near Aleppo likely amounts to a war crime and the situation in Syria should be referred to the International Criminal Court.

“ [We add our voice](#) to the condemnation of the attack near Rashideen near western rural Aleppo Governorate that hit a convoy carrying people from the besieged Syrian towns of Fuha and Kefraya to Government-controlled areas, killing dozens of people,” Rupert Colville, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)), told journalists in Geneva.

“It is an attack which likely amounts to a war crime,” he stressed.

OHCHR is calling on all parties to ensure the safety and protection of people being evacuated.

“We reiterate the High Commissioner’s call for accountability and the need to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court,” Mr. Colville said.

He noted that while OHCHR cannot confirm how the attack was carried out or those responsible, footage seen by the Office “showed children gathering around a person giving out sweets just prior to the explosion.”

Hospitals in Aleppo city received the bodies of 96 civilians, including 67 children, Mr. Colville confirmed, adding that the number of children reportedly killed is “particularly abhorrent.”

In addition to the people killed, OHCHR has confirmed that some of the injured civilians remain missing.

“Some are believed to have been taken by armed opposition groups to opposition-controlled hospitals in Idleb Governorate,” he said. “Due to their perceived sympathies for the Government of Syria, their families are concerned for their safety.”

There are also reports of at least 120 civilians in the Aleppo University Hospital.

The groups are among those being evacuated from Fuha and Kerfraya as part of the “Four Towns Agreement” negotiated by Qatar and Iran. The two other towns are Madaya and Zabadani.

“These people had been living under incessant shelling for more than two years, with little food or medical supplies, and under the constant fear of attack by armed groups,” Mr. Colville said.

Today’s condemnation echoes senior UN officials, including the Organization’s top humanitarian official and the head of the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), who have expressed “horror” at the attack on civilians evacuated from the besieged towns.

[Grotesque rape chants expose ‘campaign of terror’ in Burundi – UN rights chief](#)

18 April 2017 – Raising alarm over an apparent widespread pattern of rallies in many places across Burundi where young men from the Imbonerakure militia the youth wing of the ruling political party repeatedly chant a call to impregnate or kill opponents, the top United Nations human rights official has called on the authorities to

promptly act to stop such incitement to violence.

In a [news release](#) issued today by his office ([OHCHR](#)), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said that it was particularly worrying that instead of a putting a stop to such events, senior Government officials continue to take part in such rallies.

"The grotesque rape chants by the young men [...] are deeply alarming particularly because they confirm what we have been hearing from those who have fled Burundi about a campaign of fear and terror by this organized militia," said High Commissioner Zeid.

The news release mentions a chilling video, circulating on social media of a rally in the Ntega commune, Kirundo province (northeast Burundi), in which more than 100 Imbonerakure members are seen repeating dozens of times their call to "make opponents pregnant so that they can give birth to Imbonerakure".

In the same video, another group then repeats a chant "audible some 19 times" "he or she should die".

The UN human rights wing noted that the ruling CNDD-FDD party, on 5 April, issued a statement condemning the chanting. OHCHR, however, added that recent reports indicate that similar, larger rallies have been organized across the country by officials from the Government and the President's party.

"[The] condemnation is meaningless if, instead of a putting a stop to such events, senior Government officials continue to take part in such rallies," stressed Mr. Zeid, adding: "The Government needs to stop pretending that the Imbonerakure are nothing but a community development group. Such blatant and brazen hate speech and incitement to violence must not be tolerated, nor encouraged."

Condemnation is meaningless if, instead of a putting a stop to such events, senior Government officials continue to take part in such rallies

In the news release, the UN rights chief also voiced concern over continuing reports of serious human rights violations in the African country, including "systematic use" of torture by security forces, increasing cases of enforced disappearance, nightly raids by the Imbonerakure militia into homes of people who refuse to join the ruling party, and people targeted due to their ethnicity.

According to UN estimates, more than 400,000 people have fled the African nation over the last two years fearing for their safety.

"Those responsible for human rights violations, regardless of their position or rank, must be held accountable," said Mr. Zeid, underlining that the authorities in Burundi must send clear, unequivocal instructions to the police, security, intelligence and military officers to operate in line

with international human rights law.

Impunity for human rights violations by security forces and the
Imbonerakure must be brought to an end.

The High Commissioner also asked the Government to grant OHCHR unfettered access, to be able to monitor the human rights situation throughout the country, to be able to independently verify allegations of grave violations and to support the authorities in bringing the perpetrators to justice.