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SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN BY U.N. PEACEKEEPERS¹

In October 2001, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (“UNHCR”) and Save the Children-UK commissioned a joint assessment team to explore allegations of sexual violence and exploitation of refugee children in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The assessment team issued a report (the “UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report”) of its findings², which included allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation against 67 individuals representing agencies charged with the responsibility of caring for the refugees. The agencies possibly implicated by the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report included United Nations (“U.N.”) peacekeeping forces.

On arrival, U.N. peacekeepers are briefed on the U.N. Code of Conduct³ and the Ten Rules of Conduct for U.N. Blue Helmets.⁴

¹ Special thanks to Asmita Naik, independent human rights consultant and one of the authors of the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report, *infra*, for her helpful suggestions and comments, to Jeff Drumtra at the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) who directed me to contact Ms. Naik, to Professor Wilbert Roget of Temple University for his excellent aptitude for French-English translation, to the excellent editorial staff and members of the New York Law School Journal of Human Rights, and to Victoria Levin for her love and support.

² UNHCR AND SAVE THE CHILDREN-UK, NOTE FOR IMPLEMENTING AND OPERATIONAL PARTNERS (2002), available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+kwwBmeEfp-swwwnwwwwwwhFqo7E2RN02ItFqopwGBDnG5AFqo7E2RN02IcFqFIwVnaBrnagrocmGnDauQaGnpdGBDzmxwwwwww1FqhRl200/opendoc.pdf>. (This is an official UNHCR/SC-UK summary and not the full findings of the report).

³ THE CANADIAN FORCES CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR PEACE SUPPORT, PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS FIELD BOOK, § 4.2 (2002), available at http://army-app.dnd.ca/pstc-cfsp/documents/pso_fm/pso_field_book_internet.pdf. [hereinafter FIELD BOOK]. This section is entitled “The U.N. Code of Conduct.” The U.N. code of conduct for Peacekeepers “requires that all personnel must maintain the highest standards of integrity and conduct,” which require, *inter alia*, that peacekeepers conduct themselves in a professional and disciplined manner at all times, that they show respect for local customs and practices through awareness and respect for the culture, religion, traditions and gender issues, and that they treat the inhabitants of the host country with respect, courtesy and consideration. *Id.*

⁴ See *id.* § 4.3. This section is entitled “Ten Rules of Conduct for U.N. Blue Helmets”. Specifically, Rule three mandates, “You are there as a guest to help them and in so doing will be welcomed with admiration. *Neither solicit nor accept any material reward, honour or gift.*” Rule four mandates *Do not indulge in im-*

Reportedly, “the code of conduct and the reality on the ground appeared to be different matters.”⁵ The UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report mainly focused on abuses by aid workers but also included many allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of refugee children at the hands of peacekeepers.⁶

The UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report indicated that most of the exploited children were between the ages of 13 and 18 years. Many men who were interviewed in the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report expressed what seems to be a commonly held view of many agency workers and community leaders that younger girls are more desirable as sexual partners. Some believed that sex with a virgin could cleanse a man from infection. Many exploiters also operate under the mistaken notion that younger children do not carry HIV.⁷ Sexual favors reportedly became the source of basic survival for refugee families. The aid workers and peacekeeping forces allegedly abused their positions of relative power to use “. . . the very humanitarian aid and services intended to benefit the refugee population as a tool of exploitation.”⁸

In exchange for sex with refugee girls less than 18 years-old, the U.N. peacekeepers and other agencies would allegedly trade the humanitarian services they were supposed to have been freely

moral acts of sexual, physical or psychological abuse or exploitation of the local population or U.N. staff, especially women and children.” (emphasis added). *Id.*; see also *Code of Conduct of the Blue Helmets*, available at <http://www.pronato.com/peacekeeping/conduct.code.htm>. (stating that a United Nations Peacekeeper will never “commit any act that could result is [sic] physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to members of the local population, especially women and children,” and will never “become involved in sexual liaisons which could affect our impartiality, or the well being of others.” (emphasis added)).

⁵ UNHCR AND SAVE THE CHILDREN-UK, *supra* note 2.

⁶ *Id.*; see also Human Rights Watch, *Sexual Violence in the Sierra Leone Conflict* (Feb. 26, 2001), at <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/sl-bck0226.htm> (describing several reported cases of rape by the international peacekeeping forces, including the rape of a 12 year-old girl by a Guinean peacekeeper, the rape of a 9 year-old girl by a Nigerian peacekeeper, the rape of another young girl by two Ukrainian peacekeepers, and the rape of a 14 year-old boy by a Bangladeshi peacekeeper).

⁷ THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S FUND, PROFITING FROM ABUSE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF OUR CHILDREN 17 (2001), available at <http://www.unicef.org/pubsgen/profitng/profitng.pdf>, cited in Amy McCoy, *Children “Playing Sex for Money”: A Brief History of the World’s Battle against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*, 28 N.Y.L. SCH. J. HUM. RTS. 499 (2002).

⁸ UNHCR AND SAVE THE CHILDREN-UK, *supra* note 2.

providing, such as food staples, medicine, or skills training. Often, payment for sex would be little more than "a few biscuits, a plastic sheet, [or] a bar of soap."⁹ Of all the agencies implicated by the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report, the U.N. peacekeepers "are reportedly among the highest paying customers for sex with children."¹⁰ The peacekeepers are alleged to have paid between \$5 to \$300 for sex with a child. Some peacekeepers allegedly pooled their money and then all had sex with the same girl.

The UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report detailed that certain peacekeepers would meet with a girl's parents to express good intentions before having sex with their daughter for money. A group of peacekeepers in a community in Sierra Leone allegedly rented a room for the purpose of having sex with teenage girls. Reportedly, teenage girls traveled great distances to arrive to Sierra Leone for the purpose of having sex with peacekeepers for money, supplies, or favors. The girls affected by such exploitation and abuse reported far-reaching, negative consequences on their lives.¹¹

Following their review of the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report, UNHCR adapted and adopted the recommendations made by the assessment team and incorporated those recommendations into a Framework for Action,¹² which was sent to all concerned UNHCR offices. Additionally, on March 3, 2002, Acting

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Asmita Naik, *Protecting Children From the Protectors: Lessons from West Africa*, FORCED MIGRATION REV., Issue 15, at 16-19. "The girls, mainly aged between 13 and 18, reported far-reaching consequences on their lives: pregnancies, abortions, teenage motherhood, exposure to STDs and HIV/AIDS, lost educational, skills-training and employment opportunities and even dashed hopes of future personal relationships." *Id.* at 17.

¹² UNHCR AND SAVE THE CHILDREN-UK, *supra* note 2 at 14. The Framework for Action ("The Framework") called for an all-staff meeting to be held, where information concerning the general allegations made against the U.N. Peacekeepers would be provided, and general guidance would be given with respect to the behavior and conduct expected of staff. Additionally, the Framework required branch offices in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone to prepare a plan of action to implement the recommendations in the Framework. The Framework additionally required the determination of what disciplinary actions were available, and that all UNHCR staff receive gender-awareness training to which implementing partners should be invited to participate. Among the numerous recommendations made in the Framework were specific recommendations to improve staff management, to develop and enforce legal standards, to prevent future abuses by employees, to develop education programs, and to involve the community.

Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General in Sierra Leone, Behooz Sadry, issued a press release stressing that the U.N. Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone ("UNAMSIL") ensures that "all military contingents serving under it receive systematic training on women's and children's rights as part of their induction."¹³ Sadry maintained that all military and civilian personnel of UNAMSIL are given codes of conduct, which are also explained to them by human rights officers, child protection advisers and commanding officers.

Sadry further explained that any allegations of misconduct among UNAMSIL's peacekeepers would be investigated, with offenders facing rigorous disciplinary action in accordance with the "zero tolerance" policy propagated by Secretary General Kofi Annan "for any such acts perpetrated by anyone employed by or affiliated with the United Nations."¹⁴ According to Sadry, "UNAMSIL would welcome concrete information regarding any offenses that may have been committed by its peace officers."¹⁵

In another response to the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report, Kamel Morjane, the third highest-ranking official of UNHCR, confirmed that sexual exploitation by aid workers in refugee camps is a fact.¹⁶ The U.N. Security Council soon followed with adoption of an aide-memoire "recalling 54 recommendations by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to protect civilians in armed conflict."¹⁷

¹³ Panafrican News Agency Daily Newswire, *Alleged Sexual Abuses Shock U.N. Mission in Sierra Leone* (Mar. 3, 2002), available at http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve/frames?_m=ba993265cf022465ab6bdbfe3cc653b2&csvc=bl&cform=bool&_fmtstr=FULL&docnum=1&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVtz-ISIbz&_md5=64251fcdc1f09f406aeefd758058ef1.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Xinhua General News Service, *Abuses of Child Refugees in West Africa Exist: U.N.* (Mar. 8, 2002), available at http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve/frames?_m=4295986efec83aacefb0f087ab5b117b&csvc=fr&cform=free&_fmtstr=FULL&docnum=1&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVlb-ISIbl&_md5=332b2aae358f2df5738cbb46d3a5df75.

Kamel Morjane, the third highest-ranking official of UNHCR, led a high-power team on a four-day visit to Guinea and Sierra Leone to investigate the allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of refugee children by aid workers. After visiting a camp in Guinea, Morjane said that sexual exploitation in refugee camps is a fact, and stressed that those aid workers who sexually exploited refugees would be severely punished, and even prosecuted. *Id.*

¹⁷ Robert Holloway, *U.N. Security Council Pledges to Protect Children in War Zones* (Mar. 15, 2002), Agence France Presse, available at http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve/frames?_m=10cf82272c0b64dcc2f65db6db6c44f0&csvc=

In May, 2002, the Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement, read out loud by its President for the month, Kishore Mahbubani (Singapore).¹⁸ The Statement reiterated the Security Council's strong condemnation of, *inter alia*, the sexual exploitation and abuse of children in armed conflicts, and called for all parties involved in such armed conflicts to immediately desist from such practices.¹⁹ Present at the meeting of the Security Council was Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nation's Children's Fund ("UNICEF"), who stated that the allegations of widespread sexual abuse and exploitation against refugee and international displaced children by humanitarian workers in West Africa were "of great concern."²⁰

Also in May 2002, Ruud Lubbers of UNHCR acknowledged that the "dramatic situation of sexual abuse" was spreading, but dismissed the possibility of child sexual abuse by members of his own staff as "gossip."²¹ In a follow-up press release, Lubbers stated that

bl&cform=bool&_fmtstr=FULL&docnum=1&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVtz-
lSlbz&_md5=cf70d19112b649cd9205ce13df61f968. The aide-memoir called for codes of conduct to "give substance" to the U.N.'s "zero tolerance" policy for any U.N. employees perpetrating acts of sexual exploitation of children in refugee camps in West Africa. "Among its recommendations were the integration of child protection advisers in peace-keeping operations, and a 'secure channel for complaints' about exploitation and abuse." *Id.*

¹⁸ M2 Presswire, *UN Security Council, in Presidential Statement, Reiterates Strong Condemnation of Targeting, Use of Children in Armed Conflicts; Council Hears Statements on War Experiences from Three Children in Prelude to General Assembly Special Session* (May 8, 2002), available at http://www.lexis.com/research/retrieve/frames?_m=3021b51886c6a0a791df50b7cae24279&csvc=bl&cform=bool&_fmtstr=FULL&docnum=1&_startdoc=1&wchp=dGLbVtz-lSlbt&_md5=aaa25475ef041af249b736591925dfca.

¹⁹ *Id.* Specifically, "[t]he Security Council expresses its concern at the grave impact of armed conflict in all its various aspects on children and reiterates its strong condemnation of the continued targeting and use of children in armed conflicts, including their abduction, compulsory recruitment, mutilation, forced displacement, sexual exploitation and abuse, and calls on all parties to conflict to desist from such practices immediately." *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.* Bellamy stated that "children, especially girls, were extremely vulnerable to abuse, sexual violence, and rape perpetrated during armed conflicts." Additionally, Bellamy stated that "the Fund remained unwaveringly committed to ensuring the highest standards of conduct for its staff, to improving its accountability to the beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance, and to ensuring that such aid was provided in a manner that protected children and prevented their sexual exploitation and abuse." *Id.*

²¹ Charlotte Raab, *Sexual Abuse of Child Refugees Increasing, U.N. Says* (May 9, 2002), Agence France Presse, UNHCR, available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/>

preliminary results of a “professional investigation” showed that there was no widespread abuse.²² In accord with that stance, the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) issued a report in October 2002 (the “OIOS Report”), that “rejected as ‘misleading and untrue’ allegations of widespread sexual exploitation of refugees by U.N. peacekeepers and international aid workers in West Africa.”²³ The OIOS Report stated that though the problem of sexual exploitation of refugees is a real problem, the “stories” reported by the “consultants” (i.e. UNHCR and Save the Children-UK) could not be verified.

Additionally, the OIOS Report found that the widespread sexual exploitation in the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report provided only vague examples of uncorroborated incidents of sexual exploitation, which could not be substantiated after investigation. The Investigation Team itself uncovered forty-three additional cases of possible sexual exploitation in its own independent investigation, but could only substantiate ten of those cases. The OIOS Report concluded that because the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report of widespread sexual exploitation of refugee children by

cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+lwwBme5B6WswwwwOwwwwwwhFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIcFq7InL1wcawx15nadhaqrocmaGnh1tnn5aoDqGnw5oDtDzmxwwwwww/opendoc.htm. Lubbers, in rejecting the possibility of child sexual abuse by members of his own UNHCR staff as gossip, stated that “[t]here is not one case proven by my humanitarian workers.” *Id.* Lubbers stated that steps had been taken by UNHCR to reduce the risk of such abuses, through both tighter management of refugee camps and strict rules banning sexual relations between humanitarian workers and young refugees, as he insisted that truly consensual relations are impossible in such conditions. *Id.*

²² Associated Press, *U.N. Stricter in Refugee Camps* (May 11, 2002), UNHCR, available at [http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+CwwBme4X+\\$wwwwwwwwwmFqwnFqwhFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIcFqZuNaIBGoqBnGaoDa2nh1tnnagwMp5awDmac1xxnG5MzmwwwwwwDzmxwwwwww1FqnN0bIVFqn-uPPiFqw/opendoc.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+CwwBme4X+$wwwwwwwwwmFqwnFqwhFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIcFqZuNaIBGoqBnGaoDa2nh1tnnagwMp5awDmac1xxnG5MzmwwwwwwDzmxwwwwww1FqnN0bIVFqn-uPPiFqw/opendoc.htm). Lubbers reiterated that there was not one case proven against his UNHCR workers, only gossip. He stated that “even one case would be one case too much.” *Id.*

²³ Robert Holloway, *U.N. Rejects Accusations of Widespread Sexual Exploitation of Refugees* (Oct. 31, 2002), Agence France Presse, UNHCR, available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=3db659aa23&page=news>. The United Nations rejected in many ways the findings of the UNHCR AND SAVE THE CHILDREN-UK, *supra* note 2. For the official report referred to in the article, see *Investigation into Sexual Exploitation of Refugees by Aid Workers in West Africa: Note by the Secretary General*, U.N. GAOR, 57th Sess., Agenda Item 122, U.N. Doc. A/57/465 (2002) [hereinafter *Note by the Secretary General*].

U.N. peacekeepers could not be confirmed, there was not sufficient evidence for either criminal or disciplinary proceedings against any of the alleged offenders.²⁴

Not all were accepting of the U.N.'s position as expressed in the October, 2002 Report. Asmita Naik, one of the team members and authors of the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report, expressed her opinion that the U.N.'s conclusion was "implausible and misleading."²⁵ In reaction to the October 2002 Report, Save the Children-UK issued a press report of its own in disagreement with the United Nations' findings.²⁶ Brendan Paddy of Save the Children-UK expressed his organization's belief that "[n]othing that the U.N. has found makes us think that we were wrong."²⁷ Paddy urged a reading of the OIOS Report that would minimize the narrow conclusions of the report (i.e. the United Nations' inability to substantiate the original findings of the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report) and would instead focus on the fact that the OIOS Report illustrates how widespread the problem is and how difficult it is to prove.²⁸ Agnès Callamard of the Humanitarian

²⁴ Note by the Secretary General, *supra* note 24. "The consultants' report of widespread sexual exploitation of refugees has not been confirmed, in the cases which OIOS was able to substantiate, by sufficient evidence for either criminal or disciplinary proceedings." *Id.* Summary.

²⁵ ASMITA NAIK, *Opinion*, FORCED MIGRATION REV., Issue 16, at 46-47. Ms. Naik opined that the U.N. did not fully investigate the core complaints from the original report, that the report was rejected on a "variety of unfounded and spurious grounds," that the U.N. investigation itself was suspect, that the 43 cases of alleged sexual exploitation resulting in 10 "provable" cases illustrates how widespread the problem really is, in that statistically, the British police estimate that only one in ten cases of rape are reported and only one in seven of those reported cases result in a successful prosecution, and that similar problems in other refugee camps (Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Nepal) underscore the supposition that this is a problem of global proportions. *Id.* See also Agence France Presse, *U.N.-backed Officials Said Involved in Sex Harassment in Nepal* (Nov. 19, 2002), UNHCR, available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+3wwBmeniXW8wwwAwwwwwwwFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIcFqv1DaxwqAnmadhhoqowca5womaoDVdcVnmaoDa5nLa5qDwmwcaoDaDnpwcDzmxwwwwww/opendoc.htm> (highlighting similar accusations of sexual exploitation of refugee women and girls by U.N. peacekeepers).

²⁶ Ruth Gidley, *U.N. Says Refugee Exploitation is Serious, but not Widespread* (Oct. 25, 2002), AlertNet, at <http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/541377.htm>.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ See *Id.* "Nothing has changed since the first report [referring to UNHCR AND SAVE THE CHILDREN-UK, *supra* note 2]. Their experiences [the United Na-

Responsibility Project (“HRP”) in Geneva was extremely disappointed by the OIOS Report, stating that “the U.N. lost a chance to take the bull by the horns. The objective of the inquiry was too limited. The inspectors took into consideration the allegations of abuse of refugees, but not of displaced persons. They tried to prove that sexual favors were exchanged for food aid, for example, but not when it was done for money.”²⁹ Numerous other reports confirm a significant problem in this region.³⁰

As recently as January 2003, Human Rights Watch issued a report documenting sexual violence committed by international peacekeeping forces, and confirmed that “UNAMSIL investigations into allegations of sexual violence by peacekeepers indicate a lack of appreciation for the seriousness of the problem of sexual violence.”³¹ In that report, Human Rights Watch agrees with Ms. Naik that the “zero tolerance policy” for sexual exploitation by UNAMSIL staff and affiliates has had no teeth to date. Human Rights Watch proposes that new measures should be adopted to ensure

tions’ team that compiled the October, 2002 Report] shows [sic] that individual cases are very difficult to prove. We knew that. What was very clear was that this wasn’t a few individuals who were raising spurious concerns. It was a very widespread concern right across the communities and we got the same consistent story from a very wide number of people in a lot of very different places. That strongly suggested to us that this problem was very real, although we recognized from the outset that it was going to be very hard to pin it down.” *Id.*

²⁹ Andre Allemand, *Des humanitaires abusent d’enfants. L’ONU ergote* (Nov. 20, 2002), Humanitarian Accountability Project, available at <http://www.hageneva.org/pdf/Tribune%2020%20Nov%2002.pdf>.

³⁰ See, e.g., HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, FORGOTTEN CHILDREN OF WAR—SIERRA LEONEAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN GUINEA (1999), available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/guinea>; see also TANYA KAISER, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES EVALUATION AND POLICY ANALYSIS UNIT, A BENEFICIARY-BASED EVALUATION OF UNHCR’S PROGRAMME IN GUINEA, WEST AFRICA (2001), available at http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+YwwB-meX7fq_wwwqwwwwwwwwhFqo20I0E2gltFqoGn5nwGqrAFqo20I0E2glcFqew7QtaFnDnhoqowGOe2hww5nma0Vwc1wBodDadhauNlg2e5AxDPgdtGwMMnaoDaH1oDnwCabn5BaEhGoqwDzmxwwwwww/opendoc.pdf; see also VALID INTERNATIONAL, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES EVALUATION AND POLICY ANALYSIS UNIT, MEETING THE RIGHTS AND PROTECTION NEEDS OF REFUGEE CHILDREN: AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF UNHCR’S ACTIVITIES (2002), available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+QwwBm9WeiYmwwwwwwAwwwwwwwhFqo20I0E2gltFqoGn5nwGqrAFqo20I0E2glcFq8EDafDmnpnDmnDBa0Vwc1wBodDadhaBrnafMpqwBadhauNlg2e5AxDEqBoVoBon5Dzmxwwwwww/opendoc.pdf>.

³¹ See *Sexual Violence in the Sierra Leone Conflict*, *supra* note 6.

that states prosecute the accused in existing cases, while implementing gender sensitization programs and training, alongside a revised U.N. Code of Conduct for Peacekeepers and a revised Military Observer Handbook to “ensure that the peacekeepers understand the code of conduct and the consequences if they do not adhere to it.”³²

Human Rights Watch proposed the following solutions to the problem: (1) UNAMSIL should ensure that states report within the prescribed six months of follow up to cases involving military personnel that have resulted in the alleged perpetrator being repatriated to his country of origin, in order to ensure that states prosecute the accused; (2) civilian staff who commit sexual violence should be fired and their misconduct properly recorded in their personnel file to ensure that they are not rehired in another U.N. mission; (3) the UNAMSIL human rights section should provide in-depth gender sensitization training to military and civilian staff; (4) the U.N. Code of Conduct for peacekeepers and the Military Observer Handbook need to be revised to ensure that the zero tolerance policy for sexual exploitation by persons employed or affiliated with U.N. missions and the consequences of such acts are clearly stated in these guidelines; and (5) that similar guidelines for civilian staff need to be widely disseminated to all U.N. missions.³³

Soon after the OIOS Report was released, the UNHCR issued a press release which re-iterated its position on sexual and gender-based violence, conforming itself with its earlier adoption of the recommendations of the UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report, and providing an update of the progress with which UNHCR has been able to initiate the adoption of those same recommendations.³⁴ Since the original UNHCR and Save the Children-UK Report, there has been much writing and discussion about sexual exploitation and abuse of refugee women and children by U.N. peacekeeping forces, with arguably little or no real progress made toward resolving the problem and preventing recurrence in the fu-

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Press Release, UNHCR, UNHCR Remedial Actions and Preventative Measures Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Refugees (Oct. 22, 2002), available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/↑wwBmeO91R8wwwwhwwwwwwFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIcFqewzTcNlg2a2nMnmowcaEqBodD5awDma7GnVnDBwBoVnaTnw51Gn5aEtwoD5BaInL1wca0LpccoBwBodDawDmaEx15nadha2nh1tnn5Dzmxwwwwww/ependoc.htm>.

ture. With new policies and procedures in effect, it remains to be seen whether the similar problems involving aid workers and peacekeepers in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Eritrea and Nepal will be resolved productively in light of recent developments, or “swept under the carpet,” as some have suggested the U.N. did with the allegations of widespread sexual abuse and exploitation of refugee women and children in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea.

Recent reports suggest that the U.N. needs to start the process of improvement by taking a look in the mirror. An unnamed U.N. official reportedly told Marie Claire that the U.N.’s “. . . response has been a shrug, as if sex with kids by peacekeepers was a perk of the trade. We’re fighting a culture of sexism that exists even at U.N. headquarters.”³⁵ U.N. peacekeepers, aid workers and personnel have recently been linked to Bosnia’s growing sex trade as they have allegedly patronized nightclubs featuring young naked girls, and they have been linked to prostitution rings in the Balkans. A spokeswoman for the U.N. Liaison Office in Bosnia responded to the above allegations by boldly stating, “[a]ll cases have been thoroughly investigated. There is absolutely no toleration of a ‘boys will be boys’ attitude here.”³⁶ If the investigation of the Bosnian allegations was performed as “thoroughly” as the OIOS Report, one would not be mistaken to squint at such bald conclusions. Madeline Rees, the U.N.’s top human rights official in Bosnia, came up with what would seem a workable solution to all the above conflict, “Without an enforceable code of conduct, immunity often means impunity. We should look at ways of waiving that immunity.”³⁷

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³⁵ Jim Goodwin, *War is Hell on Women and Children*, MARIE CLAIRE, NOV. 2002, available at <http://www.geocities.com/alienatedzine/warchildren.html>.

³⁶ U.N. Wire, *Wants Action Against Personnel Involved with Sex Trade* (Feb. 10, 2003), available at http://www.unfoundation.org/unwire/util/display_stories.asp?objid=31956.

³⁷ *Id.*