



KVINNA TILL KVINNA



His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon
UN Secretary-General
The United Nations
1 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017-3515

Stockholm, 11 November 2009

Re: The appointment of a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in accordance with UNSCR 1888 of 30 September 2009

Your Excellency,

Kvinna till Kvinna and *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Sweden* appreciate the recent positive developments re. the participation and protection of women in armed conflict. In particular we want to mention UNSCR 1888 and its concrete proposal of the appointment of a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Kvinna till Kvinna cooperates and support over 120 women's organisations in conflict and post conflict regions such as the Balkans, South Caucasus, the Middle East, Liberia and DRC. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is bringing together women from Sweden and from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means, promoting political, economic and social justice for all.

We understand that you are currently in the process of selecting the most qualified person to be appointed Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. In relation to this we would like you to consider the following:

Our long term cooperation with women's organisation in conflict affected regions has given us invaluable insights into the fact that strengthening women's rights and women's participation in decision making on all levels in society is at the heart of reaching greater protection of women during armed conflict. We are convinced that there can be no effective protection from sexual violence without the component of women's participation in accordance with UNSCR 1325.

Therefore it is crucial that the Special Representative understands the interconnection between protection and participation.

We agree fully with the European Women's Lobby in their letter of 30 October 2009, when arguing that "at the moment, women are very much under-represented in formal peace-processes, and are generally seen only as the victims of war rather than as actors helping to build peace. It is for this reason that we prefer that a woman should be appointed to lead efforts for the protection of women from sexual violence, but also for their attainment of equality within their societies. It is also for this reason that we would favour the mandate of the UNSR being extended beyond sexual violence to cover women, peace and security more broadly."

The Special Representative will engage in high level advocacy work. We would emphasize the requirement on proven high-level diplomatic and political advocacy experience and commitment to women, peace and security issues, combined with unimpeachable personal integrity. Furthermore, an excellent understanding of the role of civil society organisations' work on these issues is crucial to inform policy-making and working methods at UN level, including in peace-keeping operations.

In our view, *Mrs Margot Wallström* displays excellent leadership skills and all of the above mentioned qualities and competencies. Her international network among politicians and policy makers gives her unique access and ability to put the issues of sexual violence in armed conflict and the importance of women's participation high on the global agenda. She has a long standing track record of engagement for women's rights and gender equality in all her previous leadership positions, be it as a governmental minister, as the Vice President of the European Commission or as an aid worker in Sri Lanka. Even more importantly, during the length of her national and international political life she has displayed a keen interest in listening to and engaging with civil society. We do acknowledge the need to involve military structures for the purposes of strengthening the performance of UN peace-keeping operations, competencies that could be tied to the SR through high-level advisory positions.

With her often expressed commitment and recognition of the interconnection between women's participation and the protection and security of women, Mrs Wallström would bring a much needed comprehensive approach and excellent political leadership to the position of Special representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

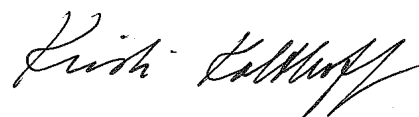
In light of the above, we warmly support her appointment.

We thank you for considering our views and look forward to further exchange and cooperation.

Sincerely Yours,



Lena Ag
Secretary-General,
The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation



Kirsti Koltoff
President
WILPF Sweden