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From: Reines, Philippe I <reinesp@state.gov>
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To: H
Cc: Verveer, Melanne S; Abedin, Huma
Subject: People Op-ed

At bottom is the People op-ed. I just checked and ironically the figure comes from Melanne's testimony during an SFRC hearing, where she stated: "The scale and enormity of the violence directed at women [in the DRC] can scarcely be adequately described. Some 1100 rapes are being reported each month, with an average of 36 women and girls raped every day." Triple checking the origins.

Hillary Clinton Pledges to 'Banish Sexual Violence'
 Originally posted Friday August 21, 2009 12:30 PM EDT

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may be taking some well-earned R&R in Bermuda this week, but last week, the former First Lady and U.S. Senator wrapped up a grueling seven-nation diplomatic mission to Africa.

While much was made back home about her snapping at a Congolese student who asked her about Bill Clinton's thoughts on a trade issue ("My husband is not the secretary of state, I am," she retorted), the emotional heart of her tour was also her most dangerous stop – in Goma, inside the war zone in eastern Congo, where she tearfully met rape victims on Aug. 11. In this exclusive Op-Ed piece for PEOPLE.com, Secretary Clinton shares what she learned on her visit – and what she will do about it.

What I Saw in Goma
 By Hillary Rodham Clinton

In 11 days of travel across Africa, I saw humanity at its worst – and at its best. In Goma last week, I saw both. The Mugunga Internally Displaced Persons Camp sits in a land of volcanoes and great lakes on the edge of Goma, a provincial capital in the eastern Congo. The camp is now home to 18,000 people seeking refuge from a cycle of violent conflict that has left 5.4 million dead since 1998. Chased from their homes and villages by armed rebels and informal militias, these men, women and children walked for miles with little food or water until they reached this relatively safe haven.

Now they live in tents, one next to the other, row after row, some clinging to life, others hanging on to whatever glimmer of hope remains in a region plagued by years of brutality. Many of these people have been robbed of their homes, possessions, families and, worst of all, their dignity.

Women and girls in particular have been victimized on an unimaginable scale, as sexual and gender-based violence has become a tactic of war and has reached epidemic proportions. Some 1,100 rapes are reported each month, with an average of 36 women and girls raped every day.

I visited a hospital run by the organization Heal Africa and met a woman who told me that she was eight months' pregnant when she was attacked. She was at home when a group of men broke in. They took her husband and two of their children and shot them in the front yard, before returning into the house to shoot her other two children. Then they beat and gang-raped her and left her for dead. But she wasn't dead. She fought for life and her neighbors managed to get her to the hospital – 85 kilometers away.

I came to Goma to send a clear message: The United States condemns these attacks and all those who commit them and abet them. They are crimes against humanity.

These acts don't just harm a single individual, or a single family, or village, or group. They shred the fabric that weaves us together as human beings. Such atrocities have no place in any society. This truly is humanity at its worst.

But there is reason to hope. We have seen survivors summon the courage to rebuild their lives and their communities. We have seen civic leaders and organizations come together to combat this appalling scourge. And we have seen health care workers sacrifice comfortable careers so they can treat the wounded

.In Goma, I met doctors and advocates who work every day to repair the broken bodies and spirits of women who have been raped, often by gangs, and often in such brutal fashion that they can no longer bear children, or walk or work. Caregivers like Lyn Lusi, who founded Heal Africa in Goma, and Dr. Denis Mukwege, who founded the Panzi hospital in Bukavu, represent humanity at its best.

The United States will stand with these brave people. This week I announced more than \$17 million in new funding to prevent and respond to gender and sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We will provide medical care, counseling, economic assistance and legal support. We will dedicate nearly \$3 million to recruit and train police officers to protect women and girls and to investigate sexual violence. We will send technology experts to help women and front-line workers report abuse using photographs and video and share information on treatment and legal options. And we will deploy a team of civilian experts, medical personnel and military engineers to assess how we can further assist survivors of sexual violence.

While I was in the DRC, I had very frank discussions about sexual violence with President Kabila. I stressed that the perpetrators of these crimes, no matter who they are, must be prosecuted and punished. This is particularly important when they are in positions of authority, including members of the Congolese military, who have been allowed to commit these crimes with impunity.

Our commitment to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence did not begin with my visit to Goma, and it will not end with my departure.

We are redoubling our efforts to address the fundamental cause of this violence: the fighting that goes on and on in the eastern Congo. We will be taking additional steps at the United Nations and in concert with other nations to bring an end to this conflict.

There is an old Congolese proverb that says, "No matter how long the night, the day is sure to come." The day must come when the women of the eastern Congo can walk freely again, to tend their fields, play with their children and collect firewood and water without fear. They live in a region of unrivaled natural beauty and rich resources. They are strong and resilient. They could, if given the opportunity, drive economic and social progress that would make their country both peaceful and prosperous.

Working together, we will banish sexual violence into the dark past, where it belongs, and help the Congolese people seize the opportunities of a new day.