

## **READING COMPREHENSION TEST # 11 “RAPID RESPONSE TEAM TO HELP SEA VICTIMS”**

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has formed a team of experts to support victims of rape and other sexual assault committed by the mission personnel – a move that further strengthens the UN’s response to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) allegations. The UN Secretary General had in October, 2003 issued a Bulletin for the guidance of all UN personnel, including peacekeepers, stating clearly that: a) Sexual activities with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited. This is regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense b) Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior is prohibited. The bulletin makes it mandatory for UN personnel to report in good faith any suspicion, rumor or allegation of SEA.

Established in January, 2006, the Sexual Abuse and Rape Rapid Response Team, is to provide victims of alleged rape and sexual assault with comprehensive emergency assistance in medical, psychological and legal fields. The team comprised of members of UN Police, Medical Services and Human Rights and Protection Section.

Offices of HIV/AIDS Advisor and the Senior Legal Advisor will help the victims with the collection of forensic evidence, the provision of emergency medical treatment and examination and arrangement of psychological counseling, shelter and other referral services.

The team will ensure all those services are provided in local and international legal frameworks and responded to within two hours of notification. The Conduct and Discipline Unit will coordinate the work.

‘It’s an emergency assistance to the victims under the UN’s SEA policy’ says Nathalie Ndongo-She, UNMIL Senior Legal Advisor. According to her, the team will do whatever is possible to live up to their responsibilities. She went on to say that the establishment of the Team is expected to have positive side effects and will curb sexual misconduct by UNMIL personnel as well as alleviate false accusations of such acts.

The move comes one year after UNMIL appointed a SEA Focal Point and established the SEA Task Force to enforce the UN’s ‘Zero tolerance’ policy, responding to allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeepers in various peacekeeping operations. The mission has since set up a SEA Hotline to receive allegations, made a comprehensive action plan and conducted SEA training to all personnel. Creating the Rapid Response Team was a further step UNMIL took to conform to the policy.

For investigations on sexual misconduct, the missions Office of Internal Oversight Services handles allegations with serious criminal implication while the Security Information Unit and Military Police deal with minor misconducts involving civilians and troops respectively.

**QUESTIONS: READING TEST # 11**  
**“RAPID RESPONSE TEAM TO HELP SEA VICTIMS”**

Family Name: ..... First Name: .....  
Country: ..... Date: .....

**Q1:** Who is UNMIL senior Legal Advisor?

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**Q2:** UN personnel are free to have sex with prostitutes. True or False?

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**Q3:** Who coordinates the work of the Rapid Response Unit?

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**Q4:** What UN policy was the SEA Task force established to enforce?

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**Q5:** What the Secretary General’s stand on sexual activities with children?

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**Q6:** Who investigates sexual misconduct issues with serious criminal implication?

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**Q7:** How fast is the Rapid Response Unit expected to respond to cases of SEA?

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**Q8:** When was the Rapid Response Unit established?

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**Q9:** What is the meaning of SEA?

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**Q10:** The Secretary General’s bulletin makes it mandatory for every UN personnel to do what?

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