January 19, 2024

The Honorable António Guterres  
Secretary-General of the United Nations  
760 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary-General Guterres:

It has been 105 days since Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel by land, sea, and air, and brutally murdered more than 1,200 innocent babies, men, women, children, and elderly. Overwhelming evidence and numerous eyewitness accounts have confirmed the brutal nature of Hamas’ attacks, specifically heinous raping of women and girls and other acts of sexual violence.\(^1\) Unfortunately, UN Women, whose priorities include ensuring “all women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence,” has failed to issue a timely and fulsome condemnation of these gruesome acts.\(^2\) We are writing to urge you to investigate why it took UN Women more than fifty days to acknowledge Hamas’ sexual violence against women and girls, despite widespread and credible evidence during that time. This delayed response not only undermines principles of international justice and human rights, it also erodes the credibility of UN Women as a leading advocate for the advancement of women’s rights.

On October 7, Hamas terrorists committed unspeakable and repulsive acts of murder and torture, including sexual assault, rape, and genital mutilation. These deliberate and targeted acts were confirmed through the testimony of first responders, eyewitness accounts, and forensic evidence.\(^3\) \(^4\) \(^5\) \(^6\) Sexual violence is a recognized war crime and must always be condemned.\(^7\) Recently, we viewed disturbing raw footage of these attacks taken by Hamas terrorists

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themselves. If you have not already seen this video, we invite you to contact our offices and we will arrange for you to view it. We encourage you to bear witness to these barbaric and vile crimes firsthand.

In the past, the UN and its affiliated organizations have been quick to condemn acts of sexual violence. In comparison, the UN Women’s response to Hamas’ attacks was egregiously late, weak, and tepid. We cannot fathom why an organization that exists for the sole purpose of defending and promoting women’s rights would hesitate for even a moment to condemn the use of rape as a weapon of terror. There is no excuse.

The United Nations and its affiliated organizations have the responsibility to denounce these acts of barbarism, rape, and sexual violence. We urge you to investigate the failures of UN Women to condemn these heinous attacks and take remedial action to ensure that in the future all acts of sexual violence in armed conflicts are condemned, without hesitation. We are disappointed and disgusted that such a request needs to be made and we implore you to take immediate and decisive action to address UN Women’s glaring failure to unequivocally condemn these appalling crimes against humanity.

Sincerely,

Josh Gottheimer  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Maria Elvira Salazar  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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