



July 20, 2020

Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
UN Secretariat
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Open Letter

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

We have yet to receive a response to [our June 1 letter](#), which sought answers from you regarding the status of Jane Holl Lute, your Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

You have described eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse as a signal priority of your tenure. It is your responsibility to ensure that the senior UN official charged with overseeing the effort is not absent from duty.

And so we write again to ask:

- **Do you think it is appropriate that your Special Coordinator has not made a visit to any peacekeeping country (outside of Cyprus) since 2016?** We take note of [an investigation](#) that appeared in The New Humanitarian on June 12, detailing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by aid workers and UN personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and a failure to sanction perpetrators. Should not your Special Coordinator be traveling to the DRC to see for herself what has been going wrong and to lead the UN's response?
- **Is it appropriate for a "when-actually-employed" official to oversee the UN's response to sexual exploitation and abuse by its personnel, which you have identified as a key component of your tenure?** According to the [April 2018 report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions \(ACABQ\)](#) on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Ms. Lute transitioned from serving on a full-time basis to a "when-actually-employed" contractual arrangement in May 2017. After the public release of our June 1 letter to you, a reporter asked a question about Ms. Lute's status during the [noon briefing](#) of June 2. "She continues to serve on a when-actually-employed or dollar-a-year, I'd have to check ... on the issue of Cyprus and other issues," said Stéphane Dujarric, your spokesperson.

- **How much time does Ms. Lute spend in her role as Special Coordinator on Improving the UN’s Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse?** Is it within regulations for full-time staff to be supervised by when-actually-employed officials, who are only allowed to work 273 days per year? What is the arrangement for the supervision of the staff in the office of the Special Coordinator on the days when she is not actually employed?
- **How much is Ms. Lute compensated for her work as Special Coordinator?** Is it usual for someone on a when-actually-employed contract to have an office in the UN Secretariat? Ms. Lute, who lives and works in Washington, D.C., remains on the UN payroll at the Under-Secretary-General level and has an office in Room 2707 (with the phone number 1-212-963-4336) in the UN Secretariat building in New York. Does the UN pay for Ms. Lute’s flights to New York? Does it provide her with a Daily Subsistence Allowance and pay for her to stay in a hotel when she works in New York? We note that Section 4.5 of [ST/AI/2013/3](#), the UN’s Administrative Instruction on Official Travel, stipulates that for individual contractors “economy class shall be the standard of accommodation for air travel” unless determined otherwise by you, on the basis of exceptional circumstances such as duly certified medical reasons. Does Ms. Lute travel in economy class? (We recall that in November 2018, you accepted the resignation of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Erik Solheim over abuse of UN travel monies.)

Mr. Secretary-General: We are on record as pointing out the vacuity of essential elements of your “New Approach.” To take just one example, your Circle of Leadership “made up of global leaders who actively support this agenda” includes Pierre Nkurunziza, Burundi’s notorious strongman whose armed forces stand accused of rape as a crime against humanity. Nkurunziza, who died in office on June 8, apparently retains membership in the Circle of Leadership. The UN’s public [list](#) has been updated to include “former President Pierre Nkurunziza.” He is the only deceased member of the Circle of Leadership.

We are concerned that Ms. Lute’s appointment was likewise little more than a public relations exercise. A Special Coordinator whose name is cited in your reports but no longer reports for duty does you—and the United Nations—no measure of credit. Your answers to the questions above will clarify the purpose and effect of your employment of Ms. Lute.

Sincerely,



Paula Donovan
Co-Director, AIDS-Free World



Stephen Lewis
Co-Director, AIDS-Free World