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## U.S. Measure Against Rape Fails at U.N.

By [WARREN HOGE](#)

[UNITED NATIONS](#), Nov. 16 — The United States has failed to obtain a [General Assembly](#) resolution focused on rape used by governments and armed groups to achieve political and military objectives.

A General Assembly committee has instead adopted a resolution that reiterates past condemnations of rape in general but eliminates language in the American draft making specific reference to rape employed by soldiers and militia members as a tactic for intimidation and in warfare.

United Nations officials have identified the tactic as one used frequently by government-supported janjaweed militias in Sudan to terrorize the population of the [Darfur](#) region.

The nonbinding measure was watered down in response to objections from South Africa and Angola, acting on behalf of the Africa Group, a 43-nation coalition.

Revisions were made throughout the text to drop mention of organized and state-sanctioned rape, and in a final excision before adoption Thursday night, the final words of the title of the resolution, “Eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including as instruments to achieve political objectives,” were changed. The phrase after the comma was altered to read “including in conflict and related situations.”

South Africa’s ambassador, Dumisani Kumalo, defended the revised measure.

“The original U.S. draft appeared to concentrate on condemning rape when perpetrated for political and military purposes only,” he said. “We felt strongly that this would have created two categories of rape, that is, rape by military and militia groups and rape by civilians.”

Mr. Kumalo said that the Africans had insisted on the changes “to balance the text by making certain that there was no politicization of rape.”

Grover Joseph Rees 3rd, an American ambassador with responsibilities for human rights, protested that “contrary to what some have suggested, this resolution never said there were ‘two kinds of rape.’”

He said the original language had been aimed at “the particularly outrageous situation in which a state condones the use of systematic mass rape by its own forces or surrogate militias in order to advance their military or political objectives.”

While he said the United States welcomed the final agreement by consensus, he added, “It is no secret that we would have strongly preferred the final wording to place stronger emphasis on the use of rape to attain political and military objectives.”

Kristen Silverberg, the assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, said Friday: “We are very disappointed that we could not secure stronger language condemning government-sponsored rape. We would not have imagined that language along those lines would provoke controversy.”

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