

# U.N. Diplomats Pay Quick Visit to Embattled Congo Town

By SOMINI SENGUPTA

BUNIA, Congo, June 12 — Members of the United Nations Security Council, who recently dispatched a multinational force to bring order to this embattled town, paid a five-hour visit today.

No sooner had they left late this afternoon than a boy ran up a dirt road in the middle of town, crying and telling everyone he passed that someone had killed his father. His father, an operating room nurse at the United Nations-run hospital, had been found strangled.

Tonight, Red Cross workers retrieved his body from an empty house, a bed sheet wrapped around his neck. United Nations officials said a group of soldiers had abducted him from his home last night.

The killing, for which no motive was given, was the latest in a series of attacks on aid workers and other civilians in Bunia, the principal town of the Ituri district in northeastern Congo. A founder of the United Nations-run hospital was forced to flee because of death threats. Two nights ago, United Nations officials said, five people were abducted.

The town is now controlled by an ethnic Hema militia that calls itself the Congolese Patriotic Union. But militia leaders denied any knowledge of the abductees' whereabouts.

The Security Council delegation included representatives of all 15 of its member states. They renewed their promise to restore law and order to the town and bring human rights violators to justice.

Heading the delegation, the French ambassador to the United Nations, Jean-Marc de la Sablière, pointed to need for neighboring countries in help settle a war that has gone on for nearly five years, leaving an estimated 3.3 million dead.

"The only solution is a political solution, not a military solution," Mr. de la Sablière told reporters this afternoon in front of United Nations headquarters here. "Much depends on the influence of the countries of the region, namely Rwanda and Uganda." The delegation is scheduled to visit the capitals of both countries.

The Hema militia, including its many child soldiers, was out in full force today — roaring through town in pickup trucks, Kalashnikovs slung on their shoulders.

The European Union-led multinational force was sent by the Security Council after warring ethnic militias, vying for control of Bunia, went on a killing spree. By the end of the fighting last month, at least 430 people were killed. Several hundred United Nations peacekeepers could do little to stop the violence.

The Security Council gave the multinational force a stronger mandate than the peacekeepers. Its troops can fire on militia members preparing to harm civilians, rather than wait until they are seen killing them. The mandate expires Sept. 1.

Relief agencies pressed the visiting ambassadors today to allow the new force to drive armed groups out of Bunia and to help prosecute human rights violators, including those who recruit children.

But Col. Gérard Dubois, the spokesman for the new force, has repeatedly said his forces are not authorized by the Security Council to venture beyond city limits, where killing, arson and looting continues.

"The mandate is for Bunia," said John D. Negroponte, the American ambassador to the United Nations, before the convoy left town.

Some 400 troops, largely French, with some Belgians and Canadians, were in Bunia today, stationed at crossroads, the airport and United Nations headquarters. Colonel Dubois said it could take up to 50 days for the entire 1,400-member force to be deployed.