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**UNITED NATIONS**  
United Nations Operation in  
Côte d'Ivoire

## Summary of UNOCI weekly press conference

### ***THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN COTE D'IVOIRE HAS DETERIORATED OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS, ONUCI SAYS***

**Abidjan, 23 December 2010...**Political problems are not solved by abusing human rights, and the solution to the political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire lies elsewhere than in the violation of the rights of simple citizens, the Head of the Human Rights Division of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Simon Munzu, said Thursday in Abidjan.

Giving an overview of the human rights situation in the country just as the UN Human Rights Council was holding a special session in Geneva on the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Munzu indicated that no one, at the national or international level, could now deny that the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire was worrisome.

Mr. Munzu, who was speaking at UNOCI's weekly press conference, denounced the severe human rights violations registered by the mission since 16 December. "We have registered 173 cases of extrajudicial killings, 90 cases of torture or other forms of maltreatment, 471 arbitrary arrests and detentions as well as 24 cases of forced disappearances," he said.

« We were able to verify all these cases, » Mr. Munzu stated, noting that since not all abuses were systematically brought to UNOCI's knowledge, there was reason to believe that the figures quoted represented only part of the reality. He added that in recent days, UNOCI's team on the ground found it increasingly difficult to gain access to places where they needed to do verifications in order to confirm or deny the many facts reported to it, including allegations that bodies had been dumped in some localities. "Our role is not to heap blame on, or point a finger at, anyone but rather to bring the truth to light," he explained.

In this regard, the Head of the Human Rights Division denounced the blocking on the road to Anyama of a UNOCI delegation led by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, while on its way to the locality of N'Dotre to verify allegations that bodies had been dumped there. "Soldiers from the Defence and Security Forces accompanied by heavily armed hooded men prevented us from going to the site, » Mr. Munzu said.

Within this framework, he launched an appeal to all parties concerned, civilians and military, whatever their political affiliation, to allow UNOCI to do its work. "We assure them that we are doing this work in all objectivity and without any bias," he said.

He also announced the creation of a task force comprising about 100 members of staff from the mission and the UN agencies. “This personnel is deployed in teams of three to five persons in 12 localities throughout the country, said Mr. Munzu, who also recalled that UNOCI had set up a hot line that is open around the clock for people who have information on human rights violations or are themselves victims of such abuses.

Earlier, UNOCI Spokesman Hamadoun Touré read a declaration regarding severe human rights violations and acts of intimidation in various Abidjan neighbourhoods as well as in the west of the country. “These acts include identifying houses by marking them with distinctive signs. At night, armed individuals enter homes to perpetrate abductions or commit other crimes,” he noted.

Mr. Touré also referred to the obstruction of the pursuit of UNOCI’s activities. “Our supply trucks are being blocked, as well as our patrols. Similarly, our patrols continue to be followed by armed men travelling in vehicles,” he said.

He also mentioned the blocking of the two roads that lead to the Golf Hotel and deplored the baseless pursuit of the hostile media campaign waged by President Laurent Gbagbo’s camp against UNOCI.

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