



UNOCI – 952

PRESS RELEASE

HEAD OF UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS VISITS COTE D'IVOIRE

Abidjan, 27 December 2010... The head of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Alain Le Roy, who arrived on Monday 27 December 2010 in Abidjan for a visit of a few days to Côte d'Ivoire, met President-elect Alassane Ouattara on the same day.

« As head of peacekeeping operations, my first objective is to come and support our missions, especially when they face particularly delicate moments as is now the case in Côte d'Ivoire, » Mr. le Roy told the press after the meeting, held in a hotel where President Ouattara and his team have been residing since the end of the presidential poll on 28 November 2010.

“UNOCI [the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire] is facing a population and political leaders who are partially hostile to its presence, the head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations added. In this context, he felt it was important for UN headquarters in New York to continue providing support to UNOCI and ensure it is fully and firmly fulfilling its mandate.

« President Ouattara found that UNOCI was fulfilling its mandate satisfactorily, but said, however, that there were still improvements to be made, » the head of Peacekeeping Operations said, while recalling that the UN mission was at war with no-one.

“We protect civilians as impartially as possible because we have to protect civilians whoever they are, whatever their political affiliation or ethnic group, » Mr. Le Roy stressed.

Asked whether he might meet President Laurent Gbagbo, Mr. Le Roy stated that he had requested a meeting and was awaiting a response.

This is Mr. Le Roy's second visit to Côte d'Ivoire. His first was in June 2009.

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