

Summary of the UNOCI weekly press conference

(Abidjan, 6 January 2011)

UNOCI'S HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF GIVES UPDATE ON MONITORING OF UNSC RESOLUTION 1946

A committee set up by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to monitor the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1946, is carrying out its mission successfully, the Director of the Human Rights Division, Simon Munzu, said in Abidjan on Thursday, 6 January 2011.

Speaking during UNOCI's weekly press conference, Mr. Munzu recalled that Resolution 1946 is aimed at anyone who threatens the peace process and national reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire, those who attack UNOCI and the Force Licorne, thus preventing them from moving around freely, and people who violate human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Monitoring Committee also monitors public incitement to hatred and violence and the prevention of access to pluralistic information and a diversified media. It « monitors the different cases and when the time comes, the fruits of its work will be presented to the Security Council and its Sanctions Committee, » he explained, noting that international justice sometimes gives the impression of being as slow as a tortoise but has the weight of an elephant « and the work which is being done now could provide results in five years or more ». In this regard, he cited examples of personalities from Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), who are facing international justice for acts they are accused of committing some five or ten years ago.

Giving an update on the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Munzu said that UNOCI had noted 31 new cases of people who died under suspicious circumstances since Thursday, 30 December 2010. UNOCI had also registered 17 new cases of forced disappearances in neighbourhoods in Abidjan.

“This information was collected by our call centre, which, in one week, received 204 calls reporting 316 cases of human rights violations,” said Mr. Munzu. He insisted that everyone should be concerned about human rights violations whatever their political affiliation.

Mr. Munzu also said that UNOCI had recently observed several clashes and inter-community conflicts which had resulted in abuses, especially in Zuénoula and Gambia, in the centre-west.

The Chief of Human Rights said the most serious case were the incidents which took place over the past two or three days in Duékoué, where communal violence broke out following the death of a woman during a robbery. According to information received by UNOCI, at least 14 people were killed during these clashes, which had also resulted in a massive displacement of the population, he said.

Mr. Munzu said the violations also included the raid on the offices of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) and headquarters of the Rally of Houphouëtistes for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) by the Defence and Security Forces of Côte d'Ivoire, that had resulted in one death and several arrests, with numbers varying between 35 and 80 according to different sources. "These people were reportedly taken to the police commissioner's office in Abidjan and we are not sure what became of them," said Mr. Munzu.

The Chief of Human Rights stressed that "UNOCI will continue to do its work because our action is in the interest of Ivorians and until there is proof to the contrary, they still appreciate what we are doing even in the current climate in which relations between the Mission and certain politicians seem tense".

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