



Summary of press conference of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire

(Abidjan, 8 December 2010)

UNOCI CHIEF EXPLAINS METHODS USED FOR CERTIFICATION OF THE IVORIAN PRESIDENTIAL POLL

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Y.J. Choi, on Wednesday, gave a step by step explanation to journalists of the methods used for the certification of the second round of the presidential poll which led to him establishing the truth regarding the election of candidate Alassane Ouattara.

"I used three methods in order to arrive at the absolute conviction with regard to the winner of the second round of the presidential election," Mr. Choi said during a press conference, which included a power point presentation, at the headquarters of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in Abidjan. In this regard, he said, that he carried out his certification without taking into account the methods used and the results announced by the Independent Electoral Commission and the Constitutional Council.

The first method, the Special Representative explained, consisted of obtaining the voting trends as early as possible. In order to do this, he continued, UNOCI deployed 721 dedicated staff members were deployed to an equal number of carefully pre-selected polling stations throughout the country, who telephoned him to give the results of the second round, which had been posted in the polling stations on the evening of 28 November. "I needed these results as a means to enhance the credibility of the final result I would be obtaining with my third method, but as certifier I could not share these results with anybody until I completed my analysis and evaluation through the other two methods," he added.

The head of UNOCI further explained that his second method was to collect the electoral results from the 19 regional electoral commissions. "In order to do so, as early as one week before the election, nineteen UNOCI staff members were identified and given the task of collecting the results. Every one of them duly reported their findings to me on 30 November. The collation of their reports further confirmed the trends I had obtained two days earlier, that is to say that at that moment it was almost certain who had won and who had lost the election," said the Special Representative.

Regarding the third method, Mr. Choi said that this involved examining all 20,000 tally sheets received by UNOCI from the Ivorian authorities on 30 November for the

purpose of certification. "In order to do so, a tabulation centre was set up at UNOCI HQ and 120 UNOCI staff members, who had been trained weeks ago, worked in three shifts, day and night. The training was necessary as the job did not involve a simple collation. It involved examining one tally sheet after another to see whether there was any trace of fraud or manipulation, especially including whether the tally sheets had been signed by the representative of The Presidential Majority," he said. As a result, he added, a number of tally sheets had to be discarded.

"The collated result showed almost identical percentages as those of my second method. Moreover, percentage wise, the trends I had obtained from the first method were very close to those resulting from the second and third methods. It was then absolutely clear to me that the Ivorian people had made their choice without any doubt on the winner of the second round of the presidential election," said the Special Representative.

On the issue of the complaints about election "irregularities" made by President Laurent Gbagbo's camp and which were used as the basis for the announcement made by the Constitutional Council on 3 December 2010, Mr. Choi recalled that these complaints were based on two main arguments.

The first, explained the head of UNOCI, was on the use of violence in nine departments in the north which prevented people from voting. On this issue, Mr. Choi said a rate of participation as high as 81 % certainly could not mean that there was enough violence to prevent people from voting. According to a map prepared on the basis of collated reports on the violence in the north and west on election day, there was no doubt that there was less violence in the north than in the west on polling day, he said.

Concerning the second claim that tally sheets had not been signed by President Gbagbo's representatives, Mr. Choi said that after having reviewed all the tally sheets in the departments concerned and discarded those that were not signed by representatives of President Gbagbo's camp, UNOCI had concluded that even such an exercise did not alter in any significant way the outcome of the second round

It had in fact reaffirmed that the Ivorian people had chosen candidate Mr. Alassane Ouattara with an irrefutable margin as the winner over Mr. Laurent Gbagbo. "By saying this, I am not at all interfering in Ivorian affairs. As certifier of the Ivorian elections, I am only doing my job as accepted by the Ivorian authorities," he insisted.

Mr. Choi explained that in terms of certification of elections by the United Nations, Côte d'Ivoire was the first such case in Africa. "The United Nations did not seek this responsibility; it was requested to play the certification role by Ivorian leaders by virtue of the 2005 Pretoria Agreement. This is a solemn responsibility that the United Nations has towards all Ivorian people, who deserve peace, stability, prosperity and the respect of their will," he concluded.

Responding to a question regarding the evacuation of non-essential staff of UNOCI, the Special Representative said that UNOCI was continuing its work with 95% of its military, civilian and police personnel in place. "We are in orange security phase and when this is the case we have an obligation to respect the measures which have been put in place. It is due to this fact that we decided to evacuate some non-essential staff to a neighbouring country. They will return to Abidjan as soon

as possible,” said the Special Representative, adding that Ivorians can be assured that UNOCI is still present and the international community remains beside them.

For further information, please contact:

Hamadoun Touré, Spokesman

Tel. : +225-06203305 ; Cell phone : + 225-05990075 ; Fax : +225-20235107

Email: hamadoun@un.org.

<http://www.onuci.org>