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UNITED NATIONS  
United Nations Operation in  
Côte d'Ivoire

## **Summary of UNOCI weekly press conference** *(Abidjan, 11 March 2011)*

### ***UNOCI CHIEF DEPLORES THE INCREASING SUFFERING OF IVORIANS AND REAFFIRMS THE MISSION'S IMPARTIALITY***

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Y. J. Choi, on Friday, in Abidjan, denounced the serious human rights violations and abuses aimed at civilians, as well as the hostile acts and harassment towards UNOCI's civilian and military personnel, as the Ivorian electoral crisis, which started on 28 November 2010, enters its fourth month.

Speaking in front of national and international journalists, Mr. Choi highlighted the suffering being endured by Ivorians with an increasing number of victims and warned those responsible for these offences and crimes that the "day of judgement is fast approaching".

In this regard, he clarified UNOCI's role, which he said was based on three essential tasks: the protection of civilians, the protection of the Golf Hotel and the certification and therefore the safeguarding of the presidential election result as recognized by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union.

Mr. Choi stressed UNOCI's military impartiality, which, he said, was one of the cornerstones of the Mission's presence in Côte d'Ivoire. Therefore, he explained, it was strictly forbidden for the UN Mission to transport arms or elements of the Forces Nouvelles, including those based in the Golf Hotel. "The presence of the Forces Nouvelles at the Golf Hotel is as a result of an agreement between the FDS and the FN. Thus, President Gbagbo's camp should face this issue, which is of its own making, without involving UNOCI," he explained.

He, therefore, denounced the intense propaganda aimed at questioning UNOCI's impartiality, especially in the military domain. Some of the fictitious stories, Mr. Choi said, accuse UNOCI of arming elements of the Forces Nouvelles and pro-Ouattara civilians and that UNOCI had a secret attack plan which included using the new helicopters which it had just acquired. "All these stories are pure fiction. They do not contain an ounce of truth," he insisted.

The head of UNOCI reassured journalists that the Mission's action has to be based on its impartiality. "In other words, based on its mandate, UNOCI's action cannot be anything but peaceful. There are no plans to attack or occupy any building or any area in Côte

d'Ivoire in order to ensure that the election result prevails," said the Special Representative, adding that the 2000 peacekeepers and three attack helicopters which are being sent to reinforce the Mission's capacity, as authorised by the United Nations Security Council, will be used for peace and protection, in accordance with the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

He concluded by stressing UNOCI's determination to continue to do its work whatever the intimidation, harassment and hostility towards it, while carrying out its duties which include the protection of civilians, the protection of the Golf Hotel and the certification and safeguarding of the results of the presidential election.

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