



Summary of UNOCI weekly press conference (Abidjan, 12 May 2011)

UNOCI ASSOCIATES ITSELF WITH THE MOURNING OF IVORIAN PEOPLE

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) associates itself with the three days of mourning decreed by the Ivorian government to honour the memory of the victims of the post-electoral violence, the Spokesman of the UN mission Hamadoun Touré, said in Abidjan on Thursday.

Deploring the loss of life during the post-electoral crisis, Mr. Touré, who was speaking during the mission's weekly press conference, said that the unnecessary massacres could have and should have been avoided.

Turning to the visit in Côte d'Ivoire of the United Nations assessment mission, Mr. Touré said that it had gathered "a good harvest" from its high level meetings with Ivorian authorities. In this regard, he recalled that the delegation had exchanged views with representatives of political parties, civil society and the international community. "The Mission has a global vision of the national needs and the government's priorities, which would allow it to outline recommendations with regard to the United Nations' support to help Côte d'Ivoire meet the multifaceted challenges it is facing in the aftermath of the post-electoral crisis, whose effects should be erased as quickly as possible on the political, economic and social level," the Spokesman stressed.

On the issue of human rights, Mr. Touré announced that the *Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI)* had released 57 people they had arrested at Baptist Church in Yopougon, and were detaining at Gesco, Yopougon, after an investigation carried out by UNOCI on the attack against the church by FRCI members. He also said that results of a preliminary inquiry by UNOCI in Yopougon had established that at least 68 persons killed by militias, had been buried in ten mass graves on 12 April 2011. Mr. Touré said that UNOCI was continuing with its investigations on human rights violations in Yopougon, in the Lagune region, specifically in Dabou, Irobo and Grand Lahou, as well as in Sinfra and Issia in the Haut Sassandra region.

The Spokesman also said that a human rights team had visited seven people close to the former president who had been held in Bouna since 26 April 2011 in relation to events on 11 April 2011.

Regarding military issues, Mr. Touré outlined the operational and humanitarian activities carried out by UNOCI forces on the ground during the past week. He said that the peacekeepers had carried out 1,031 air and ground patrols. “They also carry out mixed patrols with their counterparts from the *Forces républicaines de Côte d’Ivoire (FRCI)*,” he added.

In conclusion, Mr. Touré said that the Mission’s bomb disposal unit continued to collect ammunitions and defuse bombs and unexploded ordinances.

Responding to a question on the number of victims since the post-electoral crisis started in December 2010, Mr. Touré said that the figure was between 2,000 and 3,000 but added that it was better to wait for a final figure as atrocities were still being committed in the west of the country.

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