



Transcript of an interview given to Afreekelection by the Spokesman of UNOCI, Hamadoun Touré

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The Spokesman for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) Hamadoun Touré, outlines the Mission's position on certain political developments in the Ivorian peace process as a guest on the online television news channel, **Afreekelection.com**.

Afreekelection.com: Our guest is Mr. Hamadoun Touré, a journalist by profession and today Spokesperson for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. Mr Hamaddoun Toure, Good day

Hamadoun Toure: Good day

Afreekelection.com: We and our internet subscribers are pleased to welcome you. We are pleased to have you once more on our website. The National Council for Audiovisual Communication (CNCA) has decided to withdraw the broadcast licence of ONUCI FM. Were you expecting such a move? Are you going to respect that decision?

Hamadoun Toure: Listen. UNOCI and ONUCI FM have the same mandate. By that I mean ONUCI FM is an integral part of the UN mission here and is carrying out the same work. What UNOCI does in the political, diplomatic and military domains, ONUCI FM is doing with regard to information. The two are closely linked. And ONUCI FM is executing the mandate assigned to it by the Security Council which installed it in Cote d'Ivoire.

Afreekelection.com: Clearly speaking the CNCA decision will not be respected?

HT: Listen. I have told you all there is to say about the matter. ONUCI FM continues to perform its duties.

Afreekelection.com : The divorce between UNOCI and certain members of the public, I mean those that are close to President Gbagbo, has now been finalized. How do you intend to handle the atmosphere of distrust and defiance in order to restore a bit of serenity?

Hamadoun Toure : No, no divorce has been finalized. I don't agree with your assessment. I do not share your pessimism. Our relationship is facing some difficulty now. I mean political relations, and not personal, because we do not operate at that level. There has been a misunderstanding over the presidential election results which UNOCI certified and which is the result recognized by the international community. The Gbagbo camp has another approach, a different vision and a different attitude. But we haven't broken the bridge yet. We still maintain relations with certain personalities in that camp, civilian as well as military and others. So the bridge is not yet broken. We therefore cannot talk of the divorce being finalised.

Afreekelection.com: **With hindsight, don't you think UNOCI went too far in its support for Ouattara following the certification of the election you mentioned?**

Hamadoun Toure: I don't think it has to do with supporting anyone. It has to do with supporting the will of the Ivorian people as expressed on 28 November. On 28 November, Ivorians decided to vote for one of two candidates. This is how UNOCI see this issue. If we must talk about support, then it is support for the Ivorian people that has been expressed. We have always told them that they should vote and that we would ensure that the winner will be the winner. So the only thing we could do was to remain true to all the arrangements we made, all our appeals, all our statements and all our promises.

Afreekelection.com: *But the last reaction of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon himself, who was worried that some heads of states wanted to hear another version in order to form their own opinion over this post-electoral crisis also shows that the United Nations anyway sided with one camp. In this regard, has the UN or rather UNOCI not put itself in a difficult position?*

Hamadoun Touré: But UNOCI was deployed here to carry out three essential mandates: maintaining peace and security, certifying elections and accompanying the Ivorian parties as part of the Ouagadougou Agreement. When we are in this direction as desired by the parties, I cannot see how we can be accused of supporting one camp against the other. We work in accordance with the decision taken by the very parties. I think that the UN did not want to change its attitude. It wanted to be constant and respect what the actors asked it to do. And the Secretary-General never said that the heads of state should not come. He just mentioned the recounting and said it had already been done. And it would not be fair to question what was scientifically done by UNOCI as part of the certification.

Afreekelection.com: *Could recounting also be a solution to the current crisis?*

Hamadoun Touré: Listen, with hypotheses, one can consider that everything is possible. But we should be steadfast when we have made a reliable, objective and impartial decision. We do not see the need to question this decision. This is the reason why the UN in general and UNOCI in particular adopted this attitude.

Afreekelection.com: Mr. Hamadoun Touré, when will the additional contingent of 2000 peacekeepers arrive in Côte d'Ivoire? And what will this contingent do exactly?

Hamadoun Touré: The contingent has not yet announced an exact date. But what I can tell you is that some countries are ready to provide troops. And that is good news. The troops will be deployed in the west, in Abidjan, in areas where there are difficulties regarding the electoral process or the post-electoral process and in areas where there has been violence.

Afreekelection.com: The work of the experts was completed today. We are waiting for the African Union's panel of heads of states. Now, if, after all these consultations it was decided - this is only an hypothesis, it was decided against the advice of the United , by the panel to have the votes recounted or a rerun of the election, would you rule out these two possible solutions to the crisis?

Hamadoun Touré: I think the UN has said enough on this matter. The UN has also said it would support the panel's work. This is why in the statement of the African Union, you saw in cooperation with the UN. The UN, as an observer, is in the panel of experts and in the committee of experts responsible for preparing the work of the Heads of State. We have already said what we have to say. We will continue to support the panel's work. For us, the most important thing is a peaceful resolution to the current political impasse created by the post- electoral crisis. The United Nations is consistent. The UN has been created to bring peace and security in the world. Wherever it feels that there is a threat against peace and international security, it intervenes by saying what it thinks needs to be done to avoid a deterioration of the situation.

Afreekelection.com: The final concern Mr. Touré, have you been notified that UNOCI would no longer benefit from tax privileges for the acquisition of goods and services in Côte d'Ivoire?

Hamadoun Touré: Listen, I have read it in newspapers, probably like you. We will discuss this matter and make our position known later.

Afreekelection.com: We were with Hamadoun Touré, the Spokesman of UNOCI

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