



UNOCI – 977

PRESS RELEASE

IVORIAN CRISIS AT THE CENTRE OF MEETING OF HEADS OF PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

Dakar, 28 February 2011... The situation in Côte d'Ivoire was at the centre of discussions at the 20th high-level meeting of Special Representatives of the United Nations Secretary-General in West Africa on Monday in Dakar (Senegal).

The head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Y.J. Choi, briefed his counterparts from Liberia, Guinea Bissau, and the United Nations Office in West Africa on the latest developments in the Ivorian post-electoral crisis. Mr. Choi highlighted the initiatives taken by the international community in an effort to find a peaceful solution to the political impasse which started after the second round of the presidential election.

After a presentation on the electoral process, Mr. Choi spoke of the deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation as a result of a number of violent clashes in Abidjan and across the country.

Faced with this danger, the head of UNOCI said that though the protection of civilians was first and foremost the responsibility of the Ivorian military, the Mission was contributing to the protection of the population by carrying out patrols, especially in Abobo, the main area of tension in the commercial capital. He also briefed them on the protection being provided by UNOCI at the Golf Hotel where President Alassane Ouattara and his government are based.

Participants expressed their concerns over the deterioration of the Ivorian crisis and stressed the need to find a peaceful solution as soon as possible for the good of Côte d'Ivoire and the sub-region.

The meeting also expressed the solidarity of the peacekeeping missions in West Africa with Ivorians and their colleagues in UNOCI at such a crucial moment in the peace process in the country.

The meeting also warned of the regional implications of the Ivorian crisis, including the use of mercenaries.

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