



Summary of UNOCI weekly press conference

(Abidjan, 28 April 2011)

THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REMAINS A CAUSE FOR CONCERN, THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR STRESSED

The humanitarian situation remains a cause for concern, the humanitarian coordinator Ndolamb Ndokwey said Thursday during UNOCI's weekly press conference. There are enormous needs to be met but the security situation constitutes an obstacle to humanitarian efforts especially in the Abidjan neighbourhoods of Yopougon and Abobo and in some parts of the Western region, he explained.

Mr. Ngokwey remarked that according to an assessment by a UN evaluation and coordination team (UNDAC), the most affected sectors are health, education, water and sanitation, shelter and civilian protection. The humanitarian coordinator who is also the Deputy Special Representative of UN Secretary-General for Cote d'Ivoire said in all these sectors, he had noted a considerable effort by humanitarian organizations.

In the area of health, he said action taken include the supply of medicines, personnel and materials for the functioning of hospitals and health centres as well as the setting up of mobile clinics in the Western region and Abidjan. "The big challenge we are facing today in the health sector is to render operational all the health centres destroyed or pillaged in order to decongest the few hospitals that are still functional.

Mr. Ngokwey also highlighted problems in the education sector, especially the resumption of classes. He cited the displacement of teachers and pupils and the looting of educational materials and establishments. "Certain schools now serve as shelter for displaced persons and even as refuge for combatants," Mr. Ndokwey pointed out. This problem has been met by the creation of temporal sites for the holding of classes and the recruitment of voluntary teachers. "A program of school meals has been introduced to encourage the return of children to school," he said, adding that some 800,000 children, according to UNICEF estimates, have lost four to six months of schooling due to the Ivorian crisis.

Speaking of water and sanitation, he announced that water supply in Abidjan has been restored and was progressively being re-established in the rest of the country. However, he noted that there were frequent shortages in Man. He raised an alarm about the accumulation of refuse in the past several weeks in most of the towns, thus constituting a threat to public health.

On displaced persons, Mr. Ndokwey said the Catholic Mission in Duekoue was overcrowded with 28,000 refugees in a 4-hectare space.

He disclosed that only \$32 million of the \$160 million of funds requested have been made available.



The Assistant director of human rights, Guillaume Ngefa presented the human rights situation in the country and announced the setting up of a team of experts on human rights and UNOCI Police to investigate violations of human rights reported in Abidjan and other parts of the country including Issia, Daloa, Gagnoa, Divo etc

“In Abidjan, the investigation will spread over a period of three weeks as from today,” Mr. Ngefa announced, disclosing that a team that had been investigating the situation in the West of the country since the beginning of April has finished its work and was now finalizing its report. He said the team had covered the regions of Man, Dannane, Bangolo, Toulepleu, Guiglo, Bolequin and Tai as well as 83 villages in the West. “The team has also ended work in San Pedro,” he added.

Mr. Ngefa also signaled the presence in Abidjan of a support team to the International Investigating Commission set up by the UN Human Rights Council at the request of the Ivorian government to establish the facts and circumstances related to violations of human rights since the presidential election with a view to identifying perpetrators of such acts and bringing them to face justice.

The Deputy Director disclosed that he had discussed with the Ivorian Minister of Justice and Human Rights about the detention conditions of the former president, his wife and other members of his entourage, the legal status of persons lodged at Hotel Pergola as well as measures taken by government to provide security for the population.

Responding to a question posed by a journalist, Mr. Ngefa declared the government had made it clear persons lodged at Pergola Hotel were not prisoners. “We are following up their situation and the Minister has reassured us they will not be physically molested; we have confidence in the Ivorian judicial system and we think they would do their work in conformity with international norms of human rights,” he said.

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