



UNOCI – 967

PRESS RELEASE

UNOCI DEPLORES CONTINUOUS ATTEMPTS TO HINDER ITS MOVEMENTS

Abidjan, 29 January 2011 ... The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), deplores the continuous attempts to hinder the freedom of movement of its force.

On 26 January 2011, one of its supply convoys was blocked by civilians at Gesco checkpoint at an entry point to Abidjan. On 26 and 27 January 2011, elements of UNOCI police were forced to use teargas to disperse the crowd.

UNOCI Force Commander Major-General Abdul Hafiz took the opportunity to thank elements of the National Gendarmerie of Côte d'Ivoire, who were on the scene and helped the peacekeepers on the 26, 27 and 28 January 2011.

UNOCI would like to state that contrary to the accusation made on *Radio Television Ivoirienne* (RTI) on 28 January 2011, which claimed that UNOCI “had thrown a grenade in the direction of a gendarmerie squadron from Yopougon, which came to rescue them from an angry crowd,” the peacekeepers did not at anytime use a grenade against anyone. UNOCI contingents do not have grenades nor do they use them.

In a separate incident on Friday, 28 January 2011, some youths set up roadblocks and a tent some 20 km from the entrance of the former American school where UNOCI peacekeepers are based, in an effort to hinder their freedom of movement. The peacekeepers were able to dismantle the roadblock and disperse the youths by using minimum force.

Faced with the deteriorating post-electoral situation, UNOCI would like to appeal for calm and recall that its role is to help and accompany all the Ivorian parties to find a peaceful solution to the current crisis, through constructive dialogue. The Mission reiterates its willingness to spare no effort in helping to find a definitive end to the crisis.

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