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UNOCI WORRIED AT THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN DUEKOUÉ

“The humanitarian situation in Duékoué is serious and worrying, and thousands of displaced persons await our assistance, » the Chief of Staff of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, George Rautenbach, said on Wednesday 30 March 2011 in Duékoué.

Speaking at the end of a visit to the Moroccan Battalion (MORBATT) camp and the Catholic Mission in this town located 484 km west of Abidjan and scene of violent clashes, Mr. Rautenbach said he had come to find out about the humanitarian situation of the many displaced persons there, and that this would be faithfully reported to the Special Representative.

“All the necessary measures to assist the populations will be taken,” stated Mr. Rautenbach, praising the dedication of the Moroccan battalion, whose visible and useful presence at the side of the displaced persons is strongly appreciated by the authorities of the parish.

The head of UNOCI's Child Protection Unit, Josiane Codja, who is the interim humanitarian coordinator, described the situation as “dramatic”. “Thousands of displaced persons, including many pregnant women as well as children, live in promiscuity that risks being dangerous,” she noted, adding that all the humanitarian structures needed to intervene immediately.

The Catholic mission alone hosts about 40,000 displaced persons, according to Father Cyprien, the parish priest. He praised the efforts by Morbatt to ensure the security of the premises and of the affected population. Father Cyprien also called for a solution to be found rapidly for the problems faced by the displaced persons, including water supply, medicines and electricity. “We are no longer able to deal with this situation, which is beyond our competence,” he said.

The MORBATT camp has 105 displaced persons, many of them women, their sons and daughters, and other, unaccompanied, children. “Other than these displaced persons, we have provided medical treatment to seven wounded people, including two severely wounded ones who were evacuated to the Daloa hospital,” MORBATT's Commander, Col. Major Zeidane Mahfoud, indicated.

Pour toute information supplémentaire, prière de contacter :

Hamadoun Touré, Porte-parole
Tél. : +225-06203305 ; Portable : + 225-05990075 ; Fax : +225-06203305
Email: hamadoun@un.org

<http://www.onuci.org>