



Daily Brief on Cote d'Ivoire for Wednesday, 16 May 2007

Highlights

- **UNOCI delegation led by o-i-c Abou Moussa has talks with Facilitator of the inter-Ivorian dialogue;**
- **UNPOL, mixed brigade investigate abduction of village chief;**
- **UNOCI's peace-promotion caravan visits another Abidjan neighbourhood**
- **Arms embargo inspections carried out in Bouake and Abidjan;**
- **UNOCI to help with logistics for ICC visit to DDR sites in FAFN zones;**
- **Human Rights Division chief holds working session with judges in Toumodi**

Political

An UNOCI delegation led by the mission's officer-in-charge ad interim, Mr Abou Moussa, travelled yesterday to Ouagadougou to discuss developments within the Ivorian peace process. The delegation met with the Facilitator of the Inter-Ivorian Dialogue, President Blaise Compaore, and the Comité d'Evaluation et d'Accompagnement (CEA), which he chairs.

The CEA has decided to send a team to New York to attend the Security Council's meeting on Côte d'Ivoire, billed for 18 May. It has also established two consultative committees - a national one that includes Ivorian civil society and an international one including Côte d'Ivoire's partners - to help move the Ouagadougou process forward.

Security

BANBATT peacekeepers based in a temporary camp in Zérégbo [former zone of confidence] reported yesterday that an armed robbery had taken place in nearby Georgeskro in the early hours of the morning. According to villagers, eight or ten armed men arrived in the village, stole four motorcycles and took two people hostage, including the village chief. The mixed brigade at Zéalé is investigating the report.

On 15 May, a joint patrol conducted by Teamsite Duékoué and UNPOL in Bangolo reported that many criminals had been arrested in the area following the installation of the mixed brigade and that local people were now reporting their grievances to the brigade.

It was reported today that there are pockets of insecurity in the central and northern parts of Sector East. Near Kalakaha village, 39 kilometers south-east of Ferkessedougou, UNOCI was notified that bandits were stopping cars and taking money from people. In

Korhogo, the office of a local non-governmental organization, Association to Aid Children, was robbed last night. It has also been reported that people travelling by rail between Abidjan and Burkina Faso are frequently robbed by criminals who jump on and off the trains. UNOCI military personnel in the Sector will be holding a special meeting today to propose a strategy to better address these areas of insecurity.

Information

UNOCI today held an information and sensitization session at Treichville Grammar School, located in Abidjan's Treichville neighbourhood. Hundreds of students attended the event, which marked the fifth leg of UNOCI's schools caravan, aimed at explaining UNOCI's mandate to students and helping to develop a culture of peace among them.

Arms embargo

The Abidjan Reserve Team and Force Licorne, escorted by TOGOBATT, yesterday carried out an embargo inspection at "Bataillon Blindé" in Akouedo North, Abidjan. On the same day, a similar inspection was carried out by military observers, UNPOL and Licorne at the 31st Infantry Battalion in Bouaké.

The Chief of Force Headquarters' Embargo Cell, UNOCI's customs expert and the leader of the Embargo Quick Reaction Team Force (EQRTF) attended a meeting with the Chief of Customs at Abidjan Airport. The participants discussed various procedures followed by custom officials at the airport and stressed coordination and cooperation between the EQRTF and customs authorities.

Military

The Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles (FAFN) Sector Commander in Danané, Captain Eddy Meddy, reported at the weekly flag raising ceremony that two Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) soldiers who went to Danané unarmed and in civilian clothes were arrested at the FAFN check point in the town on 10 May 2007 and handed over to UNPOL to be sent to the Mixed Gendarmerie Brigade in Zéalé after investigations.

The Deputy Commander of Sector East explained this morning that mixed brigades had not been installed in the Sector for the following reasons: 1. The FAFN lacks manpower and logistical capacity; 2. The question of the ranks of FAFN soldiers has not yet been resolved. 3. There is a lack of clarity concerning salaries and allowances to be paid to soldiers participating in the mixed brigades. However, the Defence Minister announced yesterday that the issue of military ranks would be resolved by the end of this week.

DDR

UNOCI has been asked to assist with the logistics of a visit by officers from the Integrated Command Centre (ICC) to all DDR sites in the FAFN zones between 18 and 23 May 2007. The visit will begin in Bouaké.

Human Rights

On 15 May, a delegation from the Human Rights Division, led by its chief, Simon Munzu, continued its tour of the division's regional offices with a three-day field visit in the region of Yamoussoukro. It held a series of working sessions with Toumodi's judges, civil society organizations and local authorities to review the human rights situation in the region. The Chief of the Human Rights Division expressed concern about the prolonged and indefinite detention of defendants whose cases had been referred to the Appeal Court of Bouaké, which has not functioned since the beginning of the current political crisis on 19 September 2002. Local NGOs called upon the Human Rights delegation to pay specific attention to racketeering and the detention of civilians at police stations and military checks-points, despite the hopes generated by the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. Some NGOs expressed serious concern about the violation of the right to life in Divo, where people suspected of witchcraft are killed and their homes burnt. Pursuant to its mandate regarding women and children, the Human Rights Division delegation visited a school run by villagers in order to enable their children, many of whom do not possess any identification documents, to have a basic education.

On 15 May, the Prosecutor of the Daloa District Court opened a criminal investigation against a woman accused of forcing a Nigerian woman into prostitution. The 40-year-old alleged victim, who left Nigeria on 8 April with the promise of work as a salesperson, arrived on 17 April with three young women in Bonoufla, situated in the former Zone of Confidence, where they were lodged in Hotel Marino. The victim was beaten up and her identification papers confiscated when she refused to sign a document accepting to work as a prostitute. On 30 April, the victim escaped and lodged a complaint with UNPOL based in Bonoufla before meeting with the Human Rights Officer in Daloa. On 9 May, the Human Rights Officer in Daloa contacted the Prosecutor for appropriate action. It should be noted that cases of Nigerian women being brought for prostitution from their country to Vavoua and Bonoufla have frequently been reported and documented by the Regional Human Rights Office in Daloa.

On 14 May, the Regional Human Rights Office in Duekoué organized a one-day special training on human rights monitoring and documentation for 27 members of the local chapter of the human rights NGO *Ligue Ivoirienne des Droits de l'Homme*, (LIDHO). The aim of the training is to reinforce the monitoring capacity of the local branch of the organization in a region where human rights violations are frequently reported.