



## **Daily Brief on Cote d'Ivoire for Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

- **UNOCI attends crowning anniversary of western chief;**
- **UNOCI information forum held in Bouna**
- **UNOCI Military Observers asked to leave Ahizabre village near Gagnoa**
- **Licorne and UNOCI to carry out special operation**
- **Villagers tell UNOCI Human Rights delegation of repeated abuses by FAFN**
- **Moroccan Contingent celebrates 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of its army in Bouaké**

### **Political/information**

UNOCI representatives led by CPIO Margherita Amodeo on Friday attended the first anniversary of the crowning of Mr Kpan Raphael Tiemoko, chief of Souin, a canton comprising part of the western town of Man along with 31 neighbouring villages. Speaking on behalf of UNOCI's o-i-c Mr Abou Moussa, Ms Amodeo highlighted the importance of traditional chief as guardians of customs and traditions, and their role in the peace effort, especially with regard to reconciliation and the promotion of values such as tolerance, pardon and harmony. She urged the area's inhabitants to contribute to the return of lasting peace to Côte d' Ivoire. She also invited the chiefs to a UNOCI forum on 29 May in Bangolo. About 50 traditional chiefs took part in the ceremony, held in a village 10 km from Man.

About 400 persons attended a UNOCI information and sensitization forum on Saturday 12 May 2007 in Bouna, some 650 km northeast of Abidjan. Eight UNOCI sections - Civil Affairs; Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR); the Military Force; UN Police (UNPOL); Electoral Assistance; Human Rights and Public Information (PIO) - attended the forum, where they explained their role and work and answered questions.

Major concerns highlighted by participants concerned DDR, especially delays in its implementation, reconstruction, the fate of volunteer teachers, untarred roads and the absence of TV and radio services, except ONUCI FM. A special call was made for radio services in local languages, given the fact that a large section of the population does not speak French. A plea was also made for further assistance for the local community radio.

Key concerns included the lack of essential services such as water, public health, education and electricity, along with conflict between herdsmen and farmers which, according to local civil society, is in the process of graduating from a purely professional discord between members of two professions – farming and livestock rearing - to ethnic conflict between the Lobi and Peuhl ethnic groups. They said customary and military mechanisms for managing the conflict were increasingly being considered as unsatisfactory by the parties, who sometimes charged that fines were too high, that the

arbiters favoured one group or the other, and that people were sometimes intimidated. NGO and other sources said the Forces Nouvelles, who control the zone, have also been extorting money from farmers, market vendors and transporters.

## **Military**

On 12 May 2007, in two separate incidents, FANCI vehicles entered the former Zone of Confidence from Duékoué and went towards Fengolo village, carrying 3 and 9 armed soldiers respectively.

On the same day, Military Observers from Teamsite Gagnoa, based in Daloa, went on a routine patrol with UNPOL to Ahizabre. The patrol met the village chief who refused to speak with them unless they ask permission from the Prefet of Gagnoa. The patrol explained to him about UNOCI's freedom of movement, but he later asked the peacekeepers to leave the town.

During this week, Licorne will carry out a special operation in the area of Touba code named, «Operation West Wind» The mission which is to gather information on the area and to determine if authorities and Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles (FAFN) units are compliant with Ouagadougou Peace Agreement, will include long range patrols with UNOCI units. Following its withdrawal of the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, Licorne's main concern is to show its ability to operate and to support UNOCI everywhere.

UNOCI's Moroccan Contingent, held a parade and peace ceremony in the centre of Bouaké today to celebrate the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Moroccan Army. Following a military parade, which included a flag-raising ceremony, a march past and a drive-by of military hardware, a group of 20 students carrying peace flags released doves on the parade route. The students were each given a hat and tee-shirt from the Moroccan Army. To conclude the ceremony a local dance group named Koba performed three dances, accompanied by seven drummers. Invited guests included the Chief of Staff of the FAFN, General Soumalia Bakayoko, and the FAFN Southern Zone Commander Cherif Ousmane as well officers from the Force Licorne based in Bouaké.

## **Miscellaneous**

A delegation of FAFN representatives from Bouaké accompanied by Commander Fofie, Zone Commander north, held a conference with people in at the cultural centre in Korhogo on 11 May 2007. Topics included core issues such as identification, registration and elections.

## **Human Rights**

On 12 May, a delegation from the Human Rights Division led by its Chief conducted a field visit to Konsou village, near Béoumi, a town in the Forces Nouvelles zone, where FAFN elements repeatedly commit abuses against the local, Baoulé, population,

including arbitrary arrests and ill treatment. At a public meeting in the village, it emerged that elements of the FAFN had imposed an illegal tax of 120.000 FCFA to be paid to them by the villagers every month, ill-treating the village chief and other villagers whenever they failed to pay this levy. The villagers called upon the Human Rights Chief to raise their concerns with the FN authorities in Bouaké and Abidjan.

On 10 May, the Regional Human Rights Office in Korhogo met with the six “Young Patriots”, who were arrested for political reasons in 11 March 2005 and were recently released by FN authorities in Korhogo. Upon their release, the six were handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which will accompany them next week to Abidjan, where they are to be reunified with their families.

On 9 May, the Abidjan Regional Human Rights Office participated in the Peace Caravan for schools organized by UNOCI’s Public Information Office in Attécoubé (Abidjan district). The opening ceremony was attended by a representative of the Minister of National Education, the Mayor of Attécoubé, members of the National Navy and officials of the district. The aim of the event was to sensitize students on the Mission’s mandate and the role and activities of UNOCI’s sections. During its presentation, the Human Rights Office in Abidjan stressed the importance of UNOCI’s support to government institutions and NGOs in raising awareness about the promotion and protection of human rights.