

MAJOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE REQUIRED IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

(New York/Accra: 5 April 2011): West Africa's peace and stability are being tested by the unfolding crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, and unless the international community commits fully to a major humanitarian response, the entire region will be further affected, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos said, as she concluded a two-day mission to the country.

Yesterday, Ms. Amos traveled to the western town of Duékoué, the site of some of the mass killings and of most serious human rights violations that have occurred since the start of the four-month old political crisis. Over 200 bodies have so far been discovered.

"I came to Duékoué to see for myself the scale of the crisis. I heard testimonies from those lucky to be alive, who were both fearful and traumatized and are looking to the humanitarian community for help," Ms. Amos said. Ms. Amos stressed the need for physical protection for the affected as well as the need for food, water, shelter and sanitation.

In meetings with aid workers, Ms. Amos also discussed the adequacy of aid being provided and the challenges of working in the west, a region long known for being Côte d'Ivoire's most volatile.

Today the ERC Ms. Amos traveled to Man, where she met internally displaced people and aid workers.

"There can be no peace and security in West Africa if there is no peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire. The social, economic, and humanitarian consequences of the Ivorian crisis will be overwhelming unless we give the country the support it needs," Ms. Amos said.

For further information, please call:

Stephanie Bunker, OCHA-New York, +1 917 367 5126, mobile +1 347 244 2106, bunker@un.org;

Nicholas Reader +1 212 963 4961, mobile +1 646 752 3117, reader@un.org;

Elisabeth Byrs OCHA-Geneva, +41 22 917 2653, mobile, +41 79 473 4570, byrs@un.org.

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