



Security Council

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Letter dated 7 January 2011 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and to Security Council resolution 1962 (2010) of 20 December 2010, which extended the mandate of UNOCI until 30 June 2011. I would like to thank the Security Council for the decisions it has taken to reinforce UNOCI during the first and second rounds of the Ivorian presidential election, including through (a) the temporary redeployment of three infantry companies and an aviation unit comprising two military utility helicopters from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to UNOCI under inter-mission cooperation arrangements as provided for in resolutions 1609 (2005) and 1938 (2010), and as authorized under resolution 1951 (2010); and (b) the deployment of an additional 500 uniformed personnel, consisting of 400 troops and 100 formed police personnel to augment already existing UNOCI contingents, which was approved in resolution 1942 (2010).

I am also grateful to the Security Council for approving in resolution 1962 (2010) the further extension of the temporary transfer of the three infantry companies and the aviation unit comprising two military utility helicopters from UNMIL following the unforeseen crisis that emerged in the wake of the announcement of the results of the second round of the presidential election.

The security situation has continued to deteriorate and new challenges have emerged, as the stalemate remains unresolved. UNOCI is operating in an openly hostile security environment with direct threats from regular and irregular forces loyal to former President Gbagbo. The precarious security situation could quickly degenerate into widespread conflict. The specific threats to the mission with regard to logistics include denying customs clearance for vital life-support supplies at the port; instructing vendors not to sell fuel and supplies to UNOCI and its personnel; and obstructing the delivery of supplies to UNOCI personnel and sites through roadblocks and other means.

In response, UNOCI and the Secretariat have been putting in place alternative arrangements to ensure uninterrupted provision of supplies to the mission, including beginning to establish an alternative logistics base in Bouaké and opening up an alternative supply route by road and by air from Ghana and Burkina Faso. However, this alternative arrangement relies upon helicopter flights within Côte d'Ivoire to airlift fuel and other supplies from Bouaké to Abidjan and other areas. This



arrangement remains vulnerable to disruption and therefore requires appropriate protection arrangements.

Furthermore, the media, particularly the State broadcasting corporation Radiodiffusion télévision ivoirienne (RTI), are being used to incite hostility and violence against particular Ivorian ethnic, religious and political groups and against the mission, including by propagating hate messages and disseminating false information.

As a result, crowds of Young Patriots and other elements loyal to former President Gbagbo such as the Republican Guard, the Centre de commandement des opérations de sécurité (CECOS) and the maritime component of the Ivorian security and defence forces are physically obstructing UNOCI patrols and civilian personnel. With the aim of provoking peacekeepers into using force, they are also attacking patrols, leading to injury and destruction of United Nations property. The Young Patriots have also announced that they intend to attack the Golf Hotel, which is the temporary seat of the legitimate Government of Côte d'Ivoire and is still surrounded by regular and irregular forces loyal to former President Gbagbo. These elements are constricting the free movement of UNOCI and civilians into and out of the hotel, and have positioned mortars and other heavy weapons in the environs, targeting the hotel.

Furthermore, serious human rights violations have been reported, both in Abidjan and in other areas, particularly in the west. There has also been in recent days an increase of inter-ethnic tensions, particularly in the west. The situation in Abidjan may also further deteriorate abruptly. However, the restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNOCI severely impede its ability to carry out its mandate with respect to the protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights. Access to the affected areas is essential both to prevent the reported violations to the extent possible, and to conduct investigations so that those responsible can be held accountable. However, a mixture of forces loyal to former President Gbagbo and crowds of Young Patriots are organized to block access by the mission to locations where serious human rights violations have been reported, including alleged sites of mass graves in Abidjan as well as near Daloa in the west. The UNOCI human rights teams investigating reported human rights violations therefore require reinforced security arrangements.

As a first measure, efforts have been undertaken within UNOCI to reinforce its troops and police in Abidjan by redeploying more troops and police from the north and east of the country. For instance, the mission's Quick Reaction Force/Force Reserve (one battalion), which was previously stationed in Yamoussoukro, is now dedicated to providing full-time protection to the Golf Hotel, as are seven platoons of formed police units. This leaves the mission unable to rapidly respond to any deterioration in the security situation in other areas, particularly in the west. Therefore, it is important to replace this critical capacity on an urgent basis.

When the mission was established in 2003, the troop level of UNOCI was predicated on the understanding that the French Licorne forces would provide the requisite quick reaction force capability for UNOCI. However, since then, Licorne has downsized its presence on the ground to the current level of 900 troops, and has indicated to UNOCI that it is only able to provide such quick reaction capability for UNOCI in Abidjan. The Security Council may also recall that in early 2009, as the peace process progressed and the parties had agreed to hold elections, UNOCI

repatriated one battalion following an anticipated reduction in tasks to be carried out by the mission. Therefore, in the current challenging circumstances, the mission requires additional capacity. In particular, the assets already deployed from UNMIL to UNOCI referenced above remain essential.

I therefore wish to recommend that the Security Council authorize the following measures in order to provide the mission with adequate capacity to meet the current security challenges on the ground in terms of protecting United Nations personnel and installations, protecting the delivery of vital life supplies, deterring the threats referred to above, enhancing the mission's ability to address the obstruction and denial of access it is currently encountering, and enabling the mission to make credible efforts to protect civilians:

(a) Deployment of one battalion consisting of 850 troops to replace the mission's Quick Reaction Force/Reserve Force;

(b) Deployment of up to one battalion (850 troops) to replace the three Pakistani infantry companies borrowed from UNMIL when they return to UNMIL. The deployment of this battalion would partially cover the capacity lost when the Bangladeshi battalion was repatriated in early 2009;

(c) Deployment of a level-II hospital, consisting of 100 personnel, in view of the deteriorating security situation and reduced access by UNOCI personnel to national medical facilities;

(d) Deployment, on a temporary basis, of three MI-24 armed helicopters with crews (approximately 200 personnel) from UNMIL to UNOCI to provide escorts for helicopter supply flights, as well as deterrence and protection in light of the hostile environment that has emerged. Should the Secretariat be unable to secure the consent of the troop-contributing country for the transfer from UNMIL, we are exploring options with other troop-contributing countries, and will revert to the Security Council in this regard;

(e) Within the overall authorized police strength, replacement of 60 individual police officers currently relocated and who will be repatriated, with 60 formed police unit personnel to meet threats posed by unarmed crowds to the free movement of United Nations personnel and to United Nations installations;

(f) In the event that the crisis continues, it will be necessary to extend beyond the end of January 2011 the temporary transfer of the aviation unit comprising two military utility helicopters from UNMIL authorized in resolution 1951 (2010); and to extend beyond March 2011 the deployment of the additional 500 uniformed personnel (consisting of 400 troops and 100 formed police personnel) authorized in resolution 1942 (2010).

In total, the above proposals entail an increase in the overall authorized strength of military personnel, through the end of the mandate period, of 2,000 in addition to the temporary military and police capabilities mentioned in subparagraph (f) above.

I would be grateful if you could bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) **BAN** Ki-moon