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Sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1603 (2005) of 3 June 2005, by which the Council requested to be regularly informed of the development of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and of the Linas-Marcoussis and Pretoria Agreements. The report covers major developments in the peace process since my report to the Security Council of 17 June 2005 (S/2005/398). During that period, the Council received the fortnightly reports prepared by the Monitoring Group established under the Accra III Agreement comprising the representatives in Côte d'Ivoire of the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

II. The peace process

2. Regrettably, since my previous submission to the Council, there has been only limited progress towards implementing the provisions of the Pretoria Agreement on the Peace Process in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2005/270, annex I) of 6 April 2005, and the significant gap between the positions of the parties has widened. In an effort to revitalize the peace process, the African Union Mediator, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, convened a meeting of the Ivorian parties in Pretoria from 28 to 29 June, which focused on removing the remaining obstacles to the full implementation of the Pretoria Agreement. The meeting, which brought together Laurent Gbagbo, President of Côte d'Ivoire; Seydou Diarra, Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire; Henri Konan Bédié, President of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire; Alassane Ouattara, President of the Rally of Republicans; and Guillaume Soro, Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, resulted in the signing on 29 June of the Declaration on the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement on the Peace Process in Côte d'Ivoire.

3. In the Declaration, in addition to reaffirming the importance of moving speedily towards the holding of elections in October, the parties agreed that the dismantling and disarmament of militias should be completed by 20 August, and that the Troika, comprising UNOCI, the Office of the Ivorian Prime Minister and the African Union Mediation, would determine what additional measures were required

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to expedite the process. Regarding the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, the parties agreed that the chiefs of staff of the Ivorian National Armed Forces (FANCI) and the Forces nouvelles would meet on 7 July to finalize a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration timetable scheduled to begin by the end of July.

4. The parties also called on the National Assembly to adopt the necessary amendments to the laws on the Independent Electoral Commission, the financing of political parties, nationality, identification, the Human Rights Commission, the print media and audio-visual communication by 15 July. Failing to do so would allow the Mediator to be authorized to decide on "exceptional measures", which should be taken by President Gbagbo to ensure the adoption of the amendments.

5. Finally, the signatories of the Declaration agreed that the African Union should impose appropriate sanctions against those parties who failed to implement the Pretoria Agreement and blocked the peace process. They also agreed that, in such cases, the Mediator would recommend that the Security Council impose the targeted measures envisaged in resolution 1572 (2004).

III. Implementation of the Pretoria Agreement and Declaration

Legislative reforms

6. Following the signing of the Declaration, some progress was made towards carrying out the legislative reforms envisaged in the Linas-Marcoussis and Pretoria Agreements. On 10 July, realizing that the National Assembly would not allow passage of the amended laws on time, due to the continued resistance from the majority party, the Ivorian Popular Front, President Mbeki formally requested President Gbagbo to use his exceptional powers under article 48 of the Ivorian Constitution to ensure the adoption of the amended laws within the timeframe stipulated by the Declaration. On 15 July, in response to the request of the Mediator, the President signed a series of decrees promulgating revised versions of the laws on the Independent Electoral Commission, nationality, identification, the Human Rights Commission, and the print media and audio-visual communication.

7. The Forces nouvelles and the members of the Group of Seven (G-7) opposition parties expressed, however, strong reservations on several of the revised texts, claiming that they still did not conform to the letter and spirit of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. In a letter to the Mediator, dated 12 August, the Presidents of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire and the Rally of Republicans outlined their objections to the laws in question. In particular, they pointed out that the amended law on the Independent Electoral Commission did not provide for the representation of the Forces nouvelles in its local organs and failed to establish the primacy of the Independent Electoral Commission over the National Institute of Statistics in the electoral process. They also noted that the new version of the nationality law still deprived certain categories of the population their rights, while the law on identification introduced new criteria, which had not been envisaged in any of the agreements. The Forces nouvelles raised similar objections in a separate letter to the Mediator dated 28 July, in which they also stated that they would not nominate their representatives to the Independent Electoral Commission until their concerns had been met.

8. In the light of those concerns, on 16 August, the Mediator sent a letter to President Gbagbo clarifying his views on various aspects of the contested laws. On 29 August, using again the exceptional powers granted to him under article 48 of the Ivorian Constitution, President Gbagbo promulgated new versions of the law on the Independent Electoral Commission, the nationality code and the naturalization law, bringing them into conformity with the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. However, controversy over the political process continued. On 1 September, in response to a statement by the South African Deputy Foreign Minister, Aziz Pahad, blaming the forces of the opposition for blocking the peace process, the Forces nouvelles declared that they would no longer work with the African Union Mediation, claiming that it was biased towards President Gbagbo, and called on the Chairman of the African Union, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, to determine how best to move the peace process forward. On 11 September, the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro, reiterated his movement's rejection of the African Union Mediation. He also stated that, as of 30 October, President Gbagbo would no longer be President of the Republic but would become an "ordinary citizen" and called on all concerned to work together to put in place a transitional government.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

9. In accordance with the Pretoria Declaration, the chiefs of staff of FANCI and the Forces nouvelles met in Yamoussoukro from 7 to 9 July to discuss the new timetable for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. The meeting resulted in the adoption, on 9 July, of a timetable that envisaged the start of the pre-cantonment of the forces on 31 July, during which the identification of combatants would take place, and the actual disarmament and demobilization of the combatants would be conducted between 26 September and 3 October. It also established a direct link between the implementation of the various phases of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the other key provisions of the Pretoria Declaration, including the adoption of revised laws, the establishment of the reconstituted Independent Electoral Commission and the dismantling and disarmament of militias. In addition, it envisaged the establishment of a joint committee for the restructuring of the defence and security forces, which was subsequently launched on 30 July. However, on 31 July, the chief of staff of the Forces nouvelles declared that pre-cantonment would not begin on that day, asserting that several of the laws promulgated by President Gbagbo on 15 July did not fully conform to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

10. Meanwhile, efforts continued towards the rehabilitation of the disarmament sites. According to the Office of the Prime Minister, as of 26 August, five of the nine disarmament sites in the north and five of the six sites in the south had already been rehabilitated.

Dismantling and disarmament of militias

11. The active presence of ethnic and community-based militias continues to be a major source of instability, particularly in the western part of the country, which in recent months has been the scene of violent inter-ethnic clashes. Following the signing of the Pretoria Declaration, some progress was made towards the dismantling and disarmament of militias, although none had been dismantled by the deadline of 20 August, as stipulated in the Pretoria Declaration. On 16 August, three

of the armed militias operating in the west — the Alliance patriotique Wé, the Union des patriotes pour la résistance du Grand Ouest and Le Front pour la libération du Grand Ouest — announced that they would begin the dismantling and disarmament of 2,000 members on 24 August, in Guiglo. On 17 August, an unarmed militia, known as the Force de libération du peuple, was also dismantled in the Abobo area of Abidjan. Ceremonies marking the dismantling of a number of militias operating in the western part of the country were held in the presence of the Ivorian authorities, UNOCI and the African Union Mediation in Toulepleu on 27 and 28 August and in Pehe on 30 August. As of 1 September, 4,800 militias had been registered in this exercise, although no weapons have been collected so far.

12. In spite of this progress, the difficulties encountered in handling the dismantling of the militias demonstrate the need to develop a more assertive political strategy to address the root causes of this phenomenon. In this regard, it is envisaged that 2,000 militia members in the west will be integrated into the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Others should benefit from alternative reintegration programmes.

Security of the Government of National Reconciliation ministers

13. The UNOCI Sous-Groupement de Sécurité continues to provide security to the ministers of the Government of National Reconciliation and the signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. At the same time, the Mediation has developed a plan for the protection of the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro, with a view to facilitating his return to Abidjan. In addition, UNOCI will contribute to an overall plan for the protection of presidential candidates from the opposition, including Mr. Bédié, who returned to Côte d'Ivoire on 11 September, and Mr. Ouattara. In a letter to President Mbeki, dated 19 August, Mr. Bédié and Mr. Ouattara each requested that the South African Government train an additional 20 hand-picked bodyguards, who would form part of an integrated team comprising elements of the UNOCI Sous-Groupement de Sécurité, as well as the 135 Ivorian gendarmerie officers and Forces nouvelles elements who received close protection training from the South African Government. They also underlined the need for the bodyguards to be provided with the necessary arms and equipment to effectively carry out their tasks, noting that the Ivorian Government had, so far, failed to provide a clear indication of how those arrangements would be funded.

14. Meanwhile, following the storming of Ivorian Radio and Television by Young Patriots on 24 July, UNOCI has also agreed to provide security to its Managing Director. It is important to recall, however, that beyond those confidence-building measures, the Ivorian Government remains responsible for the safety and security of its citizens. On 6 September, in Abidjan, the Minister of Territorial Administration, Issa Diakite, was attacked by a group of Young Patriots. During the attack, the reinforcements dispatched by UNOCI in support of the Minister's security escort were deliberately blocked by the Young Patriots and associated elements of the local population and a number of UNOCI vehicles were destroyed. On 7 September, my Special Representative strongly condemned the attack, which constituted a major blow to ongoing efforts to restore confidence between the parties, and called on the Government to launch an immediate investigation into this unwarranted act of aggression.

IV. Restoring security

15. As of 8 September, the overall force strength of UNOCI stood at 6,430, against an authorized strength of 7,090, including 200 military observers. The shortfall is due to the imminent arrival of part of the infantry battalion authorized under resolution 1609 (2005), which is expected to arrive in Côte d'Ivoire by the end of September. The advance party of that battalion and a Special Forces company have already been deployed to Yamoussoukro and Abidjan. In addition, a troop contributor for the aviation unit has now been identified, and the unit is expected to be deployed to Côte d'Ivoire by mid-October.

16. During the reporting period, UNOCI continued to carry out its tasks in accordance with the revised mandate set out in Security Council resolution 1609 (2005). The Mission has re-evaluated its operational commitments in the light of the limited reinforcements authorized under the resolution. Sustained efforts are being made to build confidence among the population and promote goodwill among the warring factions. Robust mobile patrolling of the Zone of Confidence continues with a view to preventing hostilities and enhancing UNOCI visibility, even in remote areas. While adjusting its deployment in anticipation of the arrival of reinforcements and the commencement of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, UNOCI is refining operational plans to assist in the provision of area security during the various phases of the electoral process.

17. The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains unpredictable and volatile. Continued violations of the zone of confidence, mainly involving elements of the Forces nouvelles, have contributed to increased tension between the parties. In a positive development, on 10 September, the Forces nouvelles vacated the area of Hopounté, located in the zone of confidence, where they had erected three checkpoints, and withdrew to their original position at Danbaku, which is outside the zone of confidence.

18. Following the attacks, in early June, on the villages of Guetrozon and Petit Duékoué in the west of the country, UNOCI has strengthened its presence in the area and has been conducting joint patrols with FANCI. The appointment of military governors in this volatile part of the country has also contributed to restoring a degree of security, resulting in some internally displaced persons returning to their villages. On 9 September, in Duékoué, UNOCI and Licorne troops, along with elements of FANCI, secured the release of the leader of l'Alliance Patriotique Wé militia group and four of his associates who were being held hostage by a group calling themselves the Young Wé Patriots of Duékoué.

19. Meanwhile, UNOCI efforts to maintain a secure and stable environment have been severely hampered by a dramatic increase in instances of deliberate obstruction of Mission movement and operations in various parts of the country. Between June and July, there was an eightfold increase in the number of cases of UNOCI movements being obstructed by Government forces and associated elements of the local population, particularly Young Patriots. Tensions were further exacerbated by inflammatory statements made by former high level FANCI officers. In particular, on 20 August, the former FANCI chief of staff, General Mathias Doué, called for the departure of President Gbagbo, and threatened to resort to "all necessary means" if the international community failed to ensure his departure. Previously, the former

FANCI spokesperson, Colonel Yao Yao, issued several statements identifying persons alleged to have participated in death squad operations.

20. On 23 July, unidentified assailants carried out attacks on two police stations in the towns of Anyama and Agboville, north of Abidjan, resulting in several casualties among the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces. The Ivorian National Armed Forces regained control of Agboville the following day and arrested 48 persons alleged to have participated in the attacks. On 24 July, following highly inflammatory remarks by some leaders, including the leader of the Young Patriots, Blé Goudé, UNOCI troops were denied access to the town of Agboville, on the outskirts of Abidjan, despite an earlier agreement between the UNOCI Force Commander and the chief of staff of FANCI that UNOCI should assist in containing the situation in that location. On 5 August, a UNOCI fact-finding mission to Agboville was again obstructed by the local population, mainly by Young Patriots, backed by elements of the Defence and Security Forces. Similarly, Licorne forces were denied access to San Pedro on 3 and 4 August, when they tried to deliver vital supplies to the UNOCI Senegalese contingent. On 6 August, the vehicle of my Special Representative was attacked by a group of Young Patriots staging a demonstration in front of the Licorne forces headquarters.

21. On 8 August, my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire met with President Gbagbo to express his concern over the recurrent obstruction of UNOCI movement and operations, while the Force Commander of UNOCI sent a letter to the FANCI chief of staff suggesting the establishment of a coordination mechanism between FANCI and UNOCI, including the reactivation of telephone hotlines at central and regional levels. On 10 August, the Office of the President issued a press statement calling on all Ivorians to refrain from obstructing UNOCI movement and operations. However, on the same day, a group of Young Patriots prevented UNOCI staff members from holding a meeting with the local authorities in the western town of Gagnoa. On 11 August, two military observers were prevented from investigating the incident and had to be rescued by UNOCI troops after their vehicle was severely damaged.

22. On 15 August, my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire sent a formal letter of protest to the President providing a full list of incidents involving the obstruction of UNOCI movements and reminding President Gbagbo of his obligation under the status-of-forces agreement between UNOCI and the Ivorian Government, relevant international conventions and Security Council resolutions to ensure the freedom of movement of the Mission. On 27 August, President Gbagbo, in a nationwide broadcasted address, called on all Ivorians to allow the impartial forces to move freely throughout the country.

23. Although the security situation in the north has been relatively calm, on 31 August a member of the UNOCI Moroccan contingent was brutally murdered in Bouaké. An investigation into the circumstances of the incident is under way. Furthermore, on 9 September, a UNOCI patrol was fired on by unidentified assailants in the northern town of Tiebila.

Monitoring the arms embargo

24. During the period under review, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1584 (2005), UNOCI has carried out 90 arms embargo inspections in Government and rebel-held areas. Key air and sea ports are being monitored for any

illegal transportation of arms and equipment. Monthly reports and most relevant cases have been referred to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire for appropriate action. However, most of the inspections carried out by UNOCI have so far proven inconclusive. Meanwhile, an arms embargo expert is being identified to advise UNOCI on how to improve the effectiveness of its arms embargo inspection teams.

25. The Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1584 (2004) has also continued its work and will shortly report its findings to the Security Council.

V. Re-establishing the rule of law, including the police presence and support to the judiciary

Policing

26. As of 8 September, the strength of the police component of UNOCI stood at 464 police officers out of an authorized strength of 725, including 375 officers to be deployed with the three formed police units authorized under Security Council resolution 1609 (2005). The shortfall in the Mission police component continues to be a major cause for concern and affects the ability of the Mission to carry out its mandated tasks. Efforts are being undertaken to identify contributing nations that could deploy French-speaking police officers, who will have a major role to play in the critical months ahead. Meanwhile, the first two formed police units were deployed on 5 and 22 August, respectively. The full deployment of the third formed police unit should be completed by the end of September. The main role of the formed police units, which will be based in Abidjan, Bouaké and Daloa, will be to enhance the protection of United Nations personnel and facilities while assisting in building the capacity of national law enforcement agencies.

27. During the reporting period, the UNOCI police component has focused on training the 600 security auxiliaries recruited from the ranks of the Forces nouvelles who, according to the Pretoria Agreement, will be deployed alongside UNOCI forces in the north and will be responsible for providing security once the cantonment of the Forces nouvelles begins. The training of the 600 auxiliaries began on 1 August, in Bouaké, with UNOCI police officers, Forces nouvelles former police and gendarmerie personnel acting as instructors, as well as civilian personnel from other UNOCI sections. The basic police training will last 45 days. At the same time, during the last three months, UNOCI police also participated in the training of 455 Ivorian police officers and gendarmes, as well as 276 police officers and gendarmes for services at the Abidjan International Airport.

28. The mixed patrols in Abidjan, consisting of FANCI, Ivorian national police and gendarmerie and UNOCI police and military components, were suspended at the end of July due to the claim by the Ivorian security forces that they lacked the human resources needed to continue the patrols. It is hoped that that important confidence-building measure will resume at the earliest.

29. In the meantime, the efforts of the UNOCI police component to advise the Government of National Reconciliation on the restructuring of the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces and assist in the restoration of a civilian policing presence throughout the country have been hampered by the uncooperative attitude of the

local authorities, the absence of a comprehensive reform plan for the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces and the lack of agreement between the Ivorian parties on the deployment of Ivorian police and gendarmerie officers to the north.

The justice system

30. The absence of a functioning justice system in the north and in the zone of confidence continues to be a major cause for concern. In an effort to enhance the ability of UNOCI to address the prevailing culture of impunity in the zone of confidence, UNOCI has developed procedures for the hand-over of persons apprehended by UNOCI or Licorne for serious crimes committed in the zone of confidence to the local authorities. UNOCI is also helping Ivorian judicial institutions to address the lack of courts in the north and in the zone of confidence, and its consequences for the electoral process. Precarious working conditions, lack of clarity regarding the legal status of magistrates and corruption continue to undermine the efficiency, independence and impartiality of the judiciary.

Prisons

31. During the reporting period, UNOCI made frequent visits to prisons in Daloa, Bouafle, Adzopé, Bondoukou, Abengourou, Aboisso, Bassam, Agboville and Abidjan. The absence of adequate health care and nutrition and the poor state of prison infrastructure continue to be serious causes for concern. Furthermore, minors are not always separated from adults and some prisoners are still subjected to extended periods of pre-trial detention, sometimes lasting as long as 10 years. Meanwhile, UNOCI is gradually expanding its monitoring and advocacy capacity throughout the country and is continuing to make recommendations to the concerned authorities for the improvement of conditions of detention.

Protecting human rights

32. During the period under review, the human rights situation continued to deteriorate throughout the country. Politically motivated and arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, rape, confiscation of private property and the intimidation of opposition leaders and their followers were widely committed with impunity by elements of the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces and by the Forces nouvelles, and militias associated with both forces. Of particular concern were the incidents of ethnically motivated human rights abuses such as killings, rape and the destruction of dwellings, which were also committed by ethnic and community-based militias.

33. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, visited Côte d'Ivoire from 6 to 9 July as part of a tour of West African countries. During her visit, she met with President Gbagbo, Prime Minister Diarra and a number of ministers, as well as opposition leaders in Abidjan and the leadership of the Forces nouvelles. She also collected numerous testimonies about human rights violations committed by elements of the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces and of the Forces nouvelles. The High Commissioner voiced her concern over the continuation of widespread abuses and the prevailing culture of impunity throughout the country, particularly in the zone of confidence, and the erosion of the rule of law within the Government and the Forces nouvelles-controlled areas. A plan of action is being developed to ensure proper follow-up to the issues raised by the High Commissioner.

34. UNOCI continues to closely monitor the human rights situation throughout the country. Its assessment is issued in bimonthly reports, a practice which has contributed to raising awareness of human rights problems.

VI. Redeployment of State authority and restoration of basic services

35. Since my last report, some noticeable steps have been taken towards restoring State authority throughout the country. The national committee for the redeployment of the administration fielded several missions to the areas occupied by the Forces nouvelles. Consequently, Force nouvelles agreed that internally displaced civil servants from the education and health sectors could be redeployed as soon as possible. A census of all displaced civil servants was consequently undertaken in July by the respective ministries. The national committee is also assessing public infrastructure, which requires urgent rehabilitation to ensure that redeployed public servants can return to their areas of responsibility. UNOCI is providing logistics and other support for these efforts to ensure that health and educational services are restored throughout the country before the impending elections.

VII. Elections

36. The obstacles to the holding of free, fair and transparent elections in Côte d'Ivoire remain significant. The controversy over the laws promulgated by President Gbagbo on 15 July has further delayed the establishment of the reconstituted Independent Electoral Commission. As a result, key benchmarks in the electoral process, such as the posting of the provisional register of voters, which according to the Electoral Law must be done at least three months prior to polling day, have been missed. The volatility of the security situation casts further doubt on the feasibility of holding elections within the timeframe stipulated by the Ivorian Constitution.

37. On 19 July, I announced my intention to appoint Antonio Monteiro of Portugal as my High Representative for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire. Following his appointment, the High Representative, whose mandate is to verify, on behalf of the international community, that all stages of the electoral process provide all the necessary guarantees for the holding of open, free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections in Côte d'Ivoire, visited the country from 8 to 18 August. During his visit, the High Representative met with a wide range of actors, including the national authorities, the Forces nouvelles, political parties, the diplomatic community and the various members of the United Nations family. He succeeded in obtaining assurances from both the Forces nouvelles and the G-7 that they would nominate their representatives to the Independent Electoral Commission without further delay. In addition, on 16 August, the High Representative, accompanied by my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, met with the African Union Mediator in Pretoria to discuss the remaining obstacles to the establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission, particularly the continuing dispute over the laws adopted by President Gbagbo on 15 July, following which President Gbagbo promulgated a revised version of the laws on 29 August.

38. However, on 25 August, the Forces nouvelles declared that elections could not be held on 30 October since the necessary conditions, including the identification of

all Ivorians nationwide, had not been met, and that a political transition would therefore be required. The communiqué reaffirmed the willingness of the Forces nouvelles to designate their representatives to the Independent Electoral Commission subject to certain conditions, including the participation of the Forces nouvelles in the local organs of the Independent Electoral Commission and the exclusion of the National Institute of Statistics from the electoral process.

39. In addition to the political and security challenges, the funding of the electoral process is also a matter of very serious concern. It will be difficult to finalize the electoral budget until the new Independent Electoral Commission has been established. However, initial estimates already point to a considerable funding gap of around $31 million. The financial support of the international community will be crucial to the success of the electoral process. At the same time, it will also be important for donors to provide their full support to the High Representative.

VIII. Promoting peace and combating media inciting hatred and violence

40. During the period under review, incitements to violence, exclusion and intolerance and calls for a resumption of the armed conflict, continued uninterrupted by the Ivorian media, in particular those associated with the ruling party. Following the Duékoué killings in June and the incidents in Anyama and Agboville in July, the media have engaged in a deliberate campaign to discredit UNOCI, targeting some members of the Mission senior leadership, and accusing the Mission of partiality.

41. A number of attempts to restrict the freedom of the press and access to information also occurred during that period. On 24 July, a group of Young Patriots, backed by personnel from the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces, forcibly interrupted the normal programming of the Radio Television Ivoirienne in Abidjan to broadcast a statement by their leader Charles Blé Goudé. Meanwhile, UNOCI has continued to receive reports on the seizure and destruction of opposition newspapers and the beating of journalists by members of the security forces. In addition, Radio France Internationale FM broadcasts in Côte d'Ivoire have been suspended by the National Commission for Audiovisual Communication since 15 July. UNOCI closely monitors incitements to hatred and violence in the Ivorian media, providing monthly reports to the Security Council, and will further reinforce its media monitoring and analysis capacity in the period leading to the elections.

42. UNOCI has increased its efforts to raise Ivorian public awareness of the mandate and objectives of the Mission in an effort to counteract the effects of the current campaign to discredit UNOCI. At the same time, the Mission radio station, UNOCI FM, has expanded its coverage in the areas under the control of the Forces nouvelles, where frequencies have been made available. In a positive development, the Ivorian Government has provided UNOCI FM with additional frequencies to broadcast in Government-controlled areas.

IX. Humanitarian challenges and economic and social perspectives

Humanitarian situation

43. Limited access to basic social services is having a severe impact on the most vulnerable sections of the population. The situation is of particular concern in the north and west of the country. In addition to acute water shortages in the north, lack of maintenance and over-exploitation of water installations has resulted in the deterioration of the quality of water in certain urban areas, which poses a potential health hazard to the local population. A study commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross and funded by the European Union indicates that a considerable percentage of water samples analysed in several towns are not suitable for human consumption and that 7 per cent of those samples are seriously contaminated by life-threatening agents, such as those responsible for typhoid fever and dysentery.

44. In certain areas, poor rainfall is compounding food insecurity by jeopardizing the planting season and triggering a rapid increase in the price of staple foods. The ability to assist the increasing numbers of malnourished children at feeding centres is being hampered by the absence of qualified health-care personnel, most of whom have fled to the south. Despite the efforts of humanitarian agencies and donors, it is estimated that more than 700,000 children, mostly girls, have been denied access to primary education over the past three years due to a lack of teachers and worsening living conditions. However, as of 31 August, only 33.3 per cent of the US$ 36.4 million outlined in the consolidated appeal process for Côte d'Ivoire had been provided.

45. Humanitarian agencies are extremely concerned with the increasing lack of access to affected populations and difficulties in ensuring the protection of civilians. Access is still limited in critical areas due to security constraints or natural obstacles such as the poor conditions of roads and bridges. Given the volatility of the security situation, the return of the 500,000 internally displaced persons, 120,000 of whom are thought to be living in Abidjan with host families, appears unlikely in the near future. During the period under review, United Nations humanitarian agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations have provided about 110,000 internally displaced persons primarily in the west with food, health facilities, shelter, and water and sanitation.

46. Meanwhile, the census of internally displaced persons, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of September, would constitute a useful tool to elaborate future responses and return plans. As of 31 August, more than 29,000 refugees had returned to their home countries, including 11,724 assisted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and an estimated 18,000 had returned spontaneously to Liberia. Some 40,560 refugees remain in the country.

Economic and social situation

47. While the gross domestic product (GDP) of Côte d'Ivoire was estimated to have increased by more than 1 per cent in 2004, economic growth has slowed in 2005 due, in great part, to the negative impact of the crisis of November 2004.

Despite favourable climatic conditions, coffee and cocoa production levels declined by an estimated 45.8 per cent and 31.5 per cent, respectively, in the first half of 2005, due to a number of factors, including a drop in international market prices and the low domestic price offered to local producers. Activity in the industrial sector also decreased by 1.5 per cent, while oil production dropped by 36.8 per cent over the past three years. On the other hand, gas production increased by 10.2 per cent in the first half of 2005. Meanwhile, the rate of inflation increased to 3 per cent, compared to its rate of 1.7 per cent during the same period in 2004. The crisis also continues to have a significant negative impact on the economies of countries in the subregion.

48. Meanwhile, Côte d'Ivoire continues to be in non-accrual status vis-à-vis the World Bank. In that regard, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund undertook a joint mission to Côte d'Ivoire in early September to identify the fiscal and structural reforms required for the resumption of financial aid. The mission indicated that support from the International Monetary Fund, in the form of a post-conflict arrangement, would be conditional upon the Government exercising effective control over most of the national territory, clearance of World Bank arrears to allow the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to move forward and completion of the disarmament phase of the process.

X. Gender

49. UNOCI continued to conduct gender-awareness training for military personnel, United Nations police and civilian personnel, including through the weekly broadcasting of sensitization messages on various gender-related issues. In that regard, 205 staff members have been trained since last June. UNOCI also contributed to integrating the needs of women into the planning and execution of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. However, despite repeated requests, the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has yet to provide UNOCI with the total number of women involved in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which remains critical for planning and logistical purposes. Meanwhile, UNOCI is working closely with United Nations agencies and other key stakeholders on the development of a strategy for responding more effectively to the pressing needs of the most vulnerable groups. Following several reports on rape and increased violence against women, UNOCI has prepared a train-the-trainers workshop on gender-based violence. UNOCI has also been liaising with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), civil society organizations, including women's associations, and international non-governmental organizations, with a view to increasing the participation of women in the elections.

XI. HIV/AIDS

50. UNOCI continued to mainstream HIV/AIDS awareness into Mission activities and conducted outreach projects to reduce the risk of peacekeepers contracting or spreading HIV/AIDS. Several risk-reduction activities have been carried out, including the training of peer educators and the provision of voluntary confidential

counselling and testing. Since May 2005, 1,308 personnel have been sensitized and 142 peer educators trained.

51. Meanwhile, UNOCI has established partnerships with more than 10 national and international organizations and agencies for the provision of educational, financial and human resources. The Mission has also partnered with a network of more than 50 local non-governmental organizations with a view to extending its outreach to the host community.

XII. Child protection

52. With the deployment of a child protection adviser to UNOCI in mid-June, a strategy for the mainstreaming of child protection issues into the activities of the Mission is being developed. A protection task force, including key United Nations agencies, has been established to gather information, identify key vulnerabilities and report in a timely manner. Peacekeeping personnel training in child protection began in August.

53. A joint field assessment visit conducted from 11 to 16 July to the west and north of the country by UNOCI, the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and non-governmental organization partners, confirmed the continuous use of child soldiers by pro-Government militia groups in Guiglo and by the Forces nouvelles in Korhogo. Meanwhile, resources are being mobilized with the support of UNOCI, UNICEF and the World Food Programme to rehabilitate and reintegrate 511 child soldiers, including 204 girls, who have been released and handed over to UNICEF by the leadership of the Forces nouvelles.

54. The reporting period also witnessed the adoption, on 27 July, of a multilateral cooperation agreement to combat child trafficking in West Africa by Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo.

XIII. Disciplinary issues

55. During the period under review, my Special Representative continued to actively remind all UNOCI staff of the high standards of personal conduct expected of them, on the basis of my Bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) of 9 October 2003. Curfew rules containing a list of places off limits to United Nations vehicles are reviewed on a continuous basis to cover all locations with a major United Nations presence.

56. The Mission Policy Group on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is finalizing a UNOCI code of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse and participates in the country network on sexual exploitation and abuse. During the reporting period, UNOCI trained a total of 177 civilian and 325 military personnel on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and developed a training plan for the period for August through December 2005 that includes training and awareness sessions for incoming staff and refresher courses on sexual exploitation and abuse. UNOCI is also in the process of recruiting personnel for its Personnel Conduct Unit.

57. During the reporting period, investigations were launched into three allegations of sexual misconduct received by the Mission. One of the investigations, which is being conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, is still ongoing. The other two, which were both conducted by UNOCI, have been completed. In one case, the allegations received proved to be unfounded, while in the other, the allegations were substantiated. The Mission report on the outcome of that investigation is being reviewed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

XIV. Staff security

58. During the reporting period, the Mission continued to pay particular attention to enhancing staff security. Criminal activities, including banditry, some of which have affected United Nations staff, are on the rise. In addition to deploying troops to monitor sensitive areas, UNOCI has reactivated a security emergency group to monitor potential sources of tension that could affect the life and movement of United Nations personnel in various areas.

59. The move of the Mission into an integrated headquarters complex, currently under refurbishment, is of paramount importance to the overall security of staff in Abidjan and the coordination of responses to potential security threats. Unfortunately, the refurbishment of the building selected for this purpose has been significantly delayed due to the difficulties encountered by the Government in effecting payments to the contractor according to the agreed schedule. Options are currently being explored to facilitate the occupation of the new complex as soon as possible.

XV. Observations

60. Despite the very commendable efforts of the African Union Mediator, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, actively supported by the United Nations, the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, and in particular the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, has made little progress. Moreover, the gap between the positions of President Gbagbo and his ruling party, on one side, and those of the forces of the opposition, on the other, remains wide. As members of the Council are aware, the African Union Mediation considers that the remaining obstacles to the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis, Accra III and Pretoria Agreements have been removed. Although many in the international community have questioned the posture adopted by President Gbagbo in the past, the Mediation feels that he is now committed to finding solutions to the problems facing his country. The Forces nouvelles, however, have not implemented the commitments they have undertaken. The Mediation also advised the Security Council not to impose targeted sanctions on individuals at this stage of the peace process, as that may have a negative impact on its efforts, but rather to consider taking actions against those obstructing the implementation of the agreements they have signed. At the same time, in the view of the Mediation, the lack of trust between the Ivorian leadership continues to affect the manner in which they interact. Ivorian leaders, like many others before them, must seek to overcome the continuing legacy of mistrust and engage in a genuine sustained dialogue.

61. Meanwhile, in a letter to me dated 28 August, Guillaume Soro expressed strong doubts over the impartiality of the Mediation, suggesting that, at this stage in the peace process, a "political transition" would be required, the modalities of which should be discussed within a broader framework than that provided by the Mediation. On 29 August in Abidjan, the political opposition declared that it would be impossible to hold elections on 30 October, while stressing the need for a transitional period during which President Gbagbo would not be in power. Furthermore, in a letter to me dated 8 September, the main leaders of the political opposition, including Mr. Bédié and Mr. Ouattara, expressed surprise over the assessment that President Gbagbo had carried out what was required of him under the Pretoria Agreement.

62. Once again, therefore, Côte d'Ivoire finds itself at a crossroads, with daunting challenges lying ahead. Under the present circumstances, the elections will not be held on 30 October, as required by the Ivorian Constitution. Consequently, urgent attention must be given to the management of the post-30 October period and the preparation of free, fair and transparent elections, the results of which would be acceptable to all. The parties will need to agree on a realistic time frame for meeting key benchmarks in the electoral process. In particular, now that the nationality and identification laws have been brought into conformity with the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, sufficient time will need to be allotted to the voter registration process in order to ensure that it is conducted in a credible manner. Meanwhile, it is vital that the reconstituted Independent Electoral Commission be established without further delay. Urgent steps must also be taken to dismantle and disarm the militia, while continuing preparations for the pre-cantonment of the Forces nouvelles combatants.

63. To that end, the Security Council may wish to consider taking firm action against those who attempt to obstruct the implementation of these and other key provisions of the Pretoria Agreement, notably through the imposition of the targeted sanctions envisaged under Security Council resolution 1572 (2004). The time has come for the Ivorian parties to clearly assume their respective responsibilities. I therefore welcome the decision of the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) to visit Côte d'Ivoire in the coming weeks.

64. At an extraordinary meeting held in New York on 14 September, in the margins of the General Assembly, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union entrusted ECOWAS with the responsibility of determining how to overcome the current impasse in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. To that end, ECOWAS will convene an emergency meeting before the end of September and report accordingly to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. On 15 September, I met with the Chairperson of the African Union, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Mbeki of South Africa in New York to discuss the way forward in Côte d'Ivoire. We agreed on the need to intensify the efforts of the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations in support of the implementation of major agreements reached in Côte d'Ivoire. We also agreed that the parties should re-establish a genuine, much-needed dialogue and proceed, without delay, towards the dismantling of militias, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants and the organization of free, fair and credible elections. To that end, the United Nations intends to continue working closely with the African Union and ECOWAS to assist the people of Côte d'Ivoire in achieving a peaceful and durable settlement of the crisis.

65. In the meantime, I urge all Ivorian parties to exercise the utmost restraint and cooperate fully with the United Nations and other key stakeholders involved in the resolution of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. The international community will continue, for its part, to monitor closely the words and actions of all Ivorian leaders at this delicate juncture of the peace process.

66. It is also essential that the international partners of Côte d'Ivoire remain fully engaged in the peace process. A significant amount of financial assistance will be required from the international community, in particular for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and electoral processes, as well to support the work of the High Representative for the elections. I therefore urge all potential donors and multilateral institutions to contribute generously to these key areas and to support ongoing efforts to meet the needs of the population, particularly the most vulnerable groups, as well as the process of recovery and long-term development in Côte d'Ivoire.

67. I am deeply concerned that the Government and the Forces nouvelles have shown little determination to bring to justice the perpetrators of human rights abuses, or those responsible for inciting violence and hatred and instigating ethnic tensions. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed during her visit to Côte d'Ivoire in July, in order to address the culture of impunity, individual responsibility for human rights abuses should be asserted. In this regard, I urge the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to urgently complete investigations into the events of Duékoué in May and Anyama and Agboville in July and bring the perpetrators to justice. I also call on the Security Council to consider, as a matter of urgency, the report of the international commission of inquiry on serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Côte d'Ivoire, covering the period 19 September 2002 to 16 October 2004, which I transmitted to the Council on 23 December 2004.

68. In conclusion, I would like to commend my Special Representative, Pierre Schori, and the civilian and military staff of UNOCI for their untiring efforts in support of the search for sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the High Representative for the elections, Antonio Monteiro. Similarly, I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations country team, humanitarian and development organizations and bilateral donors, as well as the countries that are contributing troops and police personnel to the Mission, and to the African Union and ECOWAS for their contribution to the peace process.

Annex

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire: military and police strength as at 8 September 2005

Country	*Military observers*	*Military component*			*Police*
		Staff officers	*Troops*	*Total*	
Argentina					3
Bangladesh	10	8	3 018	3 036	7
Benin	6	3	305	314	16
Bolivia	3			3	0
Brazil	4	3		7	0
Cameroon					50
Canada					10
Central African Republic					3
Chad	3			3	4
China	7			7	0
Congo	5			5	0
Croatia	3			3	0
Djibouti					22
Dominican Republic	4			4	0
Ecuador	2			2	0
El Salvador	3			3	0
France	2	16	171	189	10
Gambia	5	1		6	0
Ghana	6	6	397	409	1
Guatemala	5			5	0
Guinea	4			4	0
India	7			7	0
Ireland	2			2	0
Jordan	7	10	200	217	252
Kenya	5	4		9	0
Lebanon					2
Morocco	1	3	731	735	0
Namibia	3			3	0
Nepal	3			3	0
Niger	6	3	364	373	20
Nigeria	5			5	3
Pakistan	10	11	364	385	0
Paraguay	9	2		11	0

Country	*Military observers*	*Military component*			*Police*
		Staff officers	*Troops*	*Total*	
Peru	3			3	0
Philippines	3	1		4	0
Poland	2			2	0
Portugal					1
Romania	5			5	0
Republic of Moldova	4			4	0
Russian Federation	11			11	0
Senegal	8	9	313	330	23
Serbia and Montenegro	3			3	0
Sri Lanka					1
Togo	6	4	292	302	1
Tunisia	2	1		3	0
Turkey					24
Uganda	2	2		4	0
Uruguay	1	1		2	11
Yemen	5			5	0
Zambia	2			2	0
Total	**187**	**88**	**6 155**	**6 430**	**464**

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Cartographic Section