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Editorial

The progress of democracy and how it becomes anchored in nations' habits capture the attention of media, who are also its best defenders and promoters. However, it has been observed that, when a crisis arises, like the one that Côte d'Ivoire is currently going through, no field is spared, including media, who walk the dangerous tight rope between professionalism and sensationalism, between responsibility and arson.

In fact, given the role played by certain media in disgregating social cohesion in certain parts of Côte d'Ivoire, it is necessary to recall that a media professional has a code of professional ethics to adhere to and that tomorrow, he will be responsible to Côte d'Ivoire and to history for the consequences of his behaviour.

Whereas one has a right to expect media to accompany constructively the consolidation of peace and the spirit of tolerance, the reader, TV viewer, radio listener or Internet surfer is completely disoriented by the violence and alarming nature of the décor painted by a section of the press. Media professionals attached

to the fundamentals of journalism are also disturbed by the degree to which the credibility of the profession is endangered by the way fictitious information and bad faith affect the treatment of information.

It is still time to avoid the shipwreck. One can still remember the exemplary coverage of the presidential campaign, especially the direct debate between the two presidential candidates on 25 November 2010, just before the election, a moment that resonated throughout the continent as people beyond the country's borders marveled at the mastery demonstrated by the protagonists of that exercise. The sense of responsibility that guided the actors of the regulation in favour of access to information for populations throughout the country is still fresh in our memories.

And one can still remember that the some 100 community radios throughout Côte d'Ivoire opted to fulfil their civic duty and prepare the populations for an exemplary vote, with a participation rate of 84% in the first round of the presidential election and 81% in the second. These radios still deserve to be acclaimed today. They work

daily for the preservation of a peaceful post-election environment in many towns through programmes on peace and social cohesion, dialogue and tolerance.

Similarly, in an environment filled with malevolent and hateful rumours, certain media remain attached to the precepts of journalism. They call on consumers to turn away from the harmful campaigns built on lies. They warn against the consequences of incitements to hatred and the danger of the disintegration of the secular ties between communities. They remind readers, TV viewers, radio listeners and Internet users that they are the first censors of media, whose fame and survival depend solely on them.

Finally, they have the important responsibility of delivering fact-based information to Ivorians and to the international community so as to facilitate a healthy understanding of the stakes, a constructive reading of the situation in order to pave the way for a modern Côte d'Ivoire that moves forward resolutely along the path of legitimacy

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1 *UNOCI in action*

• General Hafiz hands over to General Béréna

General Gnakoudè Béréna officially took over as head of the military force of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on 22 March, when his predecessor, Gen. Abdul Hafiz, handed over to the new force commander at the mission's headquarters in Seboko, Abidjan. Looking back at his one-year stint as head of the UN Blue Helmets in Côte d'Ivoire, Gen. Hafiz described it as "positive", both before and after the presidential election. He recalled that, during that time, the force, in keeping with its mandate, provided considerable logistical, material and security support for the organization of a poll which, in the opinion of everyone, was a total success for UNOCI. The post-election situation and especially the clashes in the West between the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FCI) and the Defence and Security Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FDS-CI) were a source of concern for the outgoing Force Commander in recent weeks. However, he remains optimistic, and feels that "we are almost at the end of the crisis". Gen. Hafiz returns home to Bangladesh after a mission that has been termed a "total success". Gen. Béréna, who was welcomed with military honours on 21 March 2011, has taken over the reins of the force with the intention of



placing his rich experience at the service of the mission and playing his part, together with his men and women, in the effort to bring peace to Côte d'Ivoire. To this end, the chief of the UN force immediately went to work visiting the Golf Hotel, whose protection is one of the main aspects of his mandate. Other missions are to follow, including visits to the different Ivorian forces and the various UNOCI sector units stationed in Côte d'Ivoire.

• Bangladesh battalion rushes to the rescue of the population in Man

It took 20 members of UNOCI's Third Bangladesh Battalion, Banbatt 3, less than an hour to help extinguish a fire that broke out in a store in Man's Avocatier neighbourhood, on the road to Facobly. The peacekeepers used a 5000-litre water tank to douse the flames. Two persons who suffered light burns during the fire were treated by the medical team at UNOCI's hospital. Mr Seba Ali, proprietor of the building that housed the store, expressed gratitude at



the peacekeepers' intervention. "We thank UNOCI for coming to the rescue of our brothers," he said. "I would like to thank the peacekeepers who came to put out the fire." For his part, Maj. Hossain Parvez of BANBATT 3, who led the operation, responded that the action was part of the mission's civilian-military cooperation, under which humanitarian aid is provided to the Ivorian population.

• Niger Battalion at the service of peace in Cote d'Ivoire

For UNOCI's Niger Battalion, contributing to the restoration of lasting peace in Cote d'Ivoire is more than a challenge. It is a calling. Day and night, the battalion keeps on carrying out actions meant to ensure the population's safety, such as joint patrols and discussions with the population in order to fulfil its mandate and restore confidence to men, women and children ravaged by several years of crisis. The 16th Niger Detachment in the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, based in the Savanes region conducts day and night time patrols with a platoon of 20 soldiers in Korhogo and its outskirts. It has recently intensified patrols following reports of motorcycle theft and shares information with other forces present in the area in order to dissuade potential offenders. Besides security, the Nigerbatt provides free medical consultation and treatment to the population at its



health centre, distributes drinking water and organizes escorts for UNOCI civilian staff on assignment

• Awareness-building in Bodokro

The inhabitants of Bodokro, 65 Km east of Bouake, hosted a UNOCI campaign for the consolidation of peace and the preservation of a peaceful post-electoral environment on 23 March 2011. During this awareness-building session, Issa Koné of UNOCI's Rule of Law Unit dispelled the concerns of the population, who blame the UN mission for being inactive with regard to the rise in violence in the south of the country. "UNOCI may appear slow in its action, but be assured that it acts. Maintaining peace is not easy. Despite difficulties, UNOCI

will accomplish its task for the benefit of the people," he said. Another issue discussed was the evil effects of rumours which, today like yesterday, affect social cohesion. Mrs. Fatoumata Ouattara of the Public Information Office called on the area's people to be wary of rumours and, rather, cultivate values which form the basis of social cohesion. The encounter fell within the framework of UNOCI's ongoing sensitization programme and it gave Bodokro's inhabitants the opportunity to have a better understanding of the post-electoral mandate of UNOCI.



ONUCI FM's FREQUENCIES

ABENGOUROU 94.7 • ABIDJAN 96.0 • ADZOPE 96.0 • BANGOLO 91.1 • BONDOUKOU 100.1 • BOUAKÉ 95.3 •
BOUNA 102.8 • BOUNDIALI 90.0 • DABAKALA 93.9 • DALOA 91.4 • DANANÉ 97.6 • DAOUKRO 94.7 • DUEKOUÉ 91.1 •
FERKESSEDOUGOU • 104.4 • GUIGLO 93.7 • KORHOGO 95.3 • MAN 95.3 • ODIENNÉ 101.1 • SAN-PEDRO 106.3 •
SEGUELA 101.8 • TABOU 95.3 • TOULEPLEU 93.7 • YAMOOUSSOUKRO 94.4 • ZUENOULA 95.3

2 *UNOCI and the press :*

The arrival of General Béréna at the head of the force, the patrols conducted by the force, the increasing violence, the continuing exodus, both internal and external, and the support given to the populations were among the topical issues broached on Thursday 24 March by the Spokesman of the UN mission, Hamadoun Touré, and Guillaume Ngefa, Deputy head of the Human Rights Division. Below are excerpts from the press conference.

This week's news has been dominated by the shelling of the commune of Abobo by the Defence and Security Forces (FDS) from the commando camps in Abobo and neighbouring areas, especially Angré and Plateau Dokoui".

"UNOCI reminds the officials of the FDS, elements of the "Invisible Commando" and other actors of the post-election crisis that generalized or systematic attacks launched knowingly against civilian populations can constitute crimes against humanity".

"Ever since World War II, Katyusha rocket launchers are not considered conventional weapons, Can they be used? No"

« We are a peacekeeping mission not a peace enforcement mission. »

"It is not UNOCI's responsibility to change its mandate. We carry out the mandate given to us by the Security Council."

"We concentrate a large part of our troops on providing security at the Golf Hotel. That is a vital task for the peace process".



"Where our troops conduct patrols, we have been able to prevent large-scale crimes. We cannot ensure everyone's security at the same time".

« Waging war with figures or using deaths for political aims is indecent. »

« We report verified facts. We have a call centre that enables us to report allegations, then we go into the field. For tallying, we need to have the identity of the person, the place where he/she was killed and the family's contact information. That allows us to avoid duplications. »

« The Force carried out 1,114 land and air patrols over the past week. In the town of Abidjan alone, 151 patrols were registered. A reinforced patrol on 17 March 2011 reported finding the spent cartridges of 81-mm mortar shells fired on and around the Abobo market by the special forces of President Gbagbo's camp".

"Last week, 1228 Ivorian patients were treated for free and 22,100 litres of drinking water were distributed. This is a 100% increase in free medical care and a 10% one in the supply of drinking water."

3 *Peace message :*

**by Konan Emile, inhabitant of Bodokro and participant
an UNOCI awareness-building session**

« Today I can declare that I understand the work of UNOCI. I encourage you in this mission for the wellbeing of the people. Had this get-together

been organized earlier, the people would have better appreciated your presence in Cote d'Ivoire.»

4 *Human rights situation*

The impact of the post-electoral crisis in Cote d'Ivoire on economic and socio-cultural rights

Political violence before and after the presidential election in Cote d'Ivoire has given rise to massive human rights abuses. The crisis has had a negative impact on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. The imposition of sanctions by the European Union, the closure of the national branch of the Central Bank of West African States which led to the closure of certain principal banks, causing liquidity problems, and a call for civil disobedience by the Rally of Houphouetistes for Democracy and Peace (RHDP), the opposition coalition which won the election run-off, are among factors that

have aggravated the socio-economic situation in Cote d'Ivoire. Supplies of essential commodities has been disrupted, sparking price hikes. Access to medical care and education has equally been affected due to the absence of staff in certain sectors. Added to these is the increasing shortage of medicines, while unemployment has affected more and more people, thereby limiting their ability to provide basic foodstuffs, whose prices have gone up. Under these conditions, women and children continue to remain most vulnerable, including victims of sexual violence, who have little or no access to appropriate socio-medical services.

5 *Portrait of Lt. Colonel Layid-Addi, military doctor in Divo*

A much appreciated contribution

"They are kind and they take good care of people; thank you UNOCI. May peace return to Cote d'Ivoire! We children want peace; we want to be able to work and become somebody in future," said Mariam Diakite, 14, who went to benefit from UNOCI's free medical consultation and treatment programme after suffering from burns. Coincidentally, it was the very first consultation exercise conducted in Côte d'Ivoire by Lt. Col. Layid Addi, whose stint in Divo with the 14th Moroccan contingent is his first peacekeeping assignment. The 48-year-old father of three says he is satisfied with his choice of UNOCI and his decision to participate in the humanitarian mission pursuant to the historic and friendly links between his country, Morocco, and Cote d'Ivoire. "Besides the work with my colleagues, which consists of taking care of the health of Moroccan military personnel, we also carry out the humanitarian aspect of the UN mission by regularly providing the local population with free medical consultations and medication normally destined for the military personnel of the contingent. Despite



the difficult situation, we shall continue to attend to the sick and provide the necessary care for their well-being. Our wish is that peace returns to Cote d'Ivoire for the good of Ivorians and the whole of Africa", says Dr. Layid.

6 *Image of the week*



7 *On ONUCI FM...*

ONUFI FM, the Radio for peace, whose objective is to inform Ivorians on peace and the national reconciliation process, presents regular news slots from 7h00 daily. The Radio for peace offers a range of reportages, information, and educational, cultural and musical programmes.

Every day, from 07h40, ONUFI FM carries special reports. This coming week, ONUFI FM brings you reports on the impact of the post-electoral crisis, with a focus on Tieningbe and Bouake, efforts by the people of Gbolo to keep their water pump in working order and the fight against female genital mutilation waged by the NGO Soutra in Odienné.

DITES-MOI DOCTEUR, Saturday at 14h00, gives advice on what to do when a child is attacked by tuberculosis.

On Monday evening at 18h40 EMPLOI JEUNES...**LES BON PLANS** will give useful hints on how to run a small business such as a kiosk or café. **ESPACE ENFANT** will discuss the issue of discipline on Saturday at 16h40 and Sunday at 13h10.

VIH/SIDA on Wednesday 20h30 explains what a couple needs to do when one partner becomes seropositive. In collaboration with the Radio for peace, the NGO Search for Common Ground treats the issue of child labour. For that reason, **ENFANT EN ACTION** visits a charcoal manufacturing unit in Guiglo. **PASSERELLE** goes to Irogougou to discover the traditional method of village community management. **WORDO WORDO TOUR** examines inter tribal alliances while **UNIS DANS NOS DIFFERENCES** discusses the question of respect for human rights in times of crisis.

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