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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE SITUATION IN COTE D'IVOIRE**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 270th meeting held on 5 April 2011, Council considered the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. In the communiqué adopted at the end of its deliberations, Council reaffirmed its earlier decisions on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and urged Mr. Laurent Gbagbo to immediately cede power to President Alassane Dramane Ouattara, in order to shorten the suffering of the Ivorians. Council welcomed the resolution adopted by the 39th ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja, on 24 March 2011, and reaffirmed its determination to work in close cooperation which all concerned Ivorian parties and ECOWAS and with the support of the United Nations and other partners, to consolidate peace and promote genuine national reconciliation among the Ivorians. Council also welcomed the adoption, on 30 March 2011, by the United Nations Security Council, of resolution 1975 (2011). Finally, Council requested me, in close cooperation with the ECOWAS Commission and with the support of the United Nations, to take all necessary steps to identify urgent actions that the AU could take to assist the Ivorian authorities to promote national reconciliation among all Ivorians, deepen democracy and consolidate peace.

2. This report provides an update on the evolution of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. It concludes with observations on the way forward, including support to the reconciliation process, peace building and socio-economic recovery, as well as the lifting of the suspension measure taken against Côte d'Ivoire.

II. BACKGROUND

3. Established by the 259th meeting of Council held on 28 January 2011, the African Union High-Level Panel for the Resolution of the Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire presented its report to the 265th meeting of Council, held at the level of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, on 10 March 2011. Its mandate was to evaluate the situation and formulate, on the basis of relevant AU and ECOWAS decisions, an overall political solution.

4. In its proposals, the High-Level Panel reaffirmed the victory of Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara in the presidential election of 28 November 2010, and requested Mr. Laurent Gbagbo to cede power in the interest of the Ivorian people, called on the Ivorian parties to acknowledge that fact and to request the Constitutional Council to swear in Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara as the President of the Republic. The High-Level Panel formulated other proposals relating particularly to the setting up of a National Union and Reconciliation Government, the implementation of the pending aspects of the Ouagadougou Political Accord (APO) and other related reforms, healing and confidence-building measures, as well as accompaniment and support from the AU, ECOWAS and international community. The 265th meeting of Council endorsed the proposals of the High level Panel and requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to appoint a High Representative entrusted with the implementation of this overall political solution.

5. Having been invited to participate in the meetings of the High-Level Panel and of Council, on 10 March 2011, the President-elect, Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara, travelled to Addis Ababa; he accepted the solution proposed. For his part, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo sent a delegation led by Mr. Pascal Affi N'Guessan, President of the *Front patriotique ivoirien* (FPI), who rejected the solution. The President of the Constitutional Council, who was invited to come to Addis Ababa, did not attend.

6. On 26 March 2011, I appointed Mr. José Brito, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cape Verde, as the AU High Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, but the latter was rejected by President Alassane Ouattara. Subsequently, on 29 March 2011, I sent letters to President Alassane Ouattara and to Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, inviting them to send high-level delegations to Addis Ababa for negotiations between the two parties from 4 to 6 April 2011, under the aegis of the AU and ECOWAS. Meanwhile, the military campaign to oust the outgoing President and restore legality had already started.

III. MILITARY CAMPAIGN TO OUST THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

7. Convinced that the outgoing President would never cede power voluntarily and peacefully and that all political and diplomatic efforts only served to give him more time, the Government of President Ouattara undertook to remove him by force. To this end, by an ordinance dated 17 March 2011, the President of the Republic created the *Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* (FRCI), which are composed of the *Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* (FANCI) and the *Forces armées des Forces nouvelles* (FAFN). These forces undertook a campaign whose purpose, as described by President Ouattara, was to "protect the civilian populations, pacify the country and restore legality".

8. The fighting, which pitted the FRCI against the *Forces de défense et de sécurité* (FDS) and the pro-Gbagbo militia, began, in March 2011, in the West of the country, with the FRCI taking some localities, notably Bin-Houyé, Zouan Hounien, Toulépleu, Doké and Bloléquin. Towards the end of March 2011, three fronts were simultaneously opened in the West, Centre and East, from the towns of Duékoué, Daloa and Bondoukou. The military campaign was short, with towns falling one after the other to the FRCI, and within 4 days, FRCI troops were already on the outskirts of Abidjan. It should be noted that, in most instances, the FDS did not fight back, preferring to withdraw before the FRCI arrived.

9. The battle for Abidjan began on the evening of 31 March 2011, but most of the FRCI troops, which had stayed outside the town, attacked on 4 April. At the same time, the helicopters of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the *Force Licorne* which support UNOCI destroyed the heavy weapons of the pro-Gbagbo camp, pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 1975 (2011). The main targets of the strikes were located in the residence and the presidential palace, the Ivorian Radio and Television (RTI), as well as in the Akouedo and Agban military camps. The RTI, which served as a propaganda and mobilisation tool for the Gbagbo camp during the 4 months of the post-election crisis, was the object of heavy fighting between the two parties, during the battle for Abidjan; at one time, it was taken over by the FRCI, then retaken by the pro-Gbagbo combatants; at one time it was broadcasting, at another it was silent.

10. It was on 11 April 2011, and following new strikes against the heavy weapons of the Gbagbo camp, that the final attack was launched on the residence of outgoing President Laurent Gbagbo. He was then arrested by the FRCI and taken to the *Hôtel du Golf*, before being transferred subsequently to the North of the country, where he is under house arrest under the protection of UNOCI.

IV. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

11. The town of Abidjan has witnessed acts of violence since the month of February 2011, particularly in Abobo and Anyama communes, which gradually spread to other communes (Attécoubé, Adjamé, Williamsville, Yopougon, etc.). It started with the repression of demonstrations staged by militants of the *Rassemblement des Houphélistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix* (RHDP) by forces loyal to outgoing President Laurent Gbagbo. Subsequently, an armed group, known as "*commando invisible*" (invisible commando), came to the rescue of the populations of Abobo by attacking pro-Gbagbo forces, which did not hesitate to use heavy weapons against the civilian population. The confrontation intensified to the point that, when the FRCI entered Abidjan at the end of the month of March 2011, the pro-Gbagbo forces had lost control over Abobo and Anyama. It is worth noting the loss of many lives, destruction of private and public property and large-scale displacement of populations fleeing Abidjan to take refuge in the hinterlands or abroad, often under perilous conditions.

12. The battle for Abidjan lasted just over ten days; it considerably worsened the plight of the populations, especially with the stoppage of water and electricity supply, coupled with shortage of food and medicines. Many persons died from the fighting. Those foreigners who were able to, including diplomats, sought refuge with UNOCI and Licorne, to be evacuated either abroad or to Bouaké. After the outgoing President, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, was arrested, fighting gave way to looting of shops and homes by armed men of all sides. All the neighbourhoods were, to varying degrees, affected.

13. The West of Côte d'Ivoire also paid a huge price because of the post-election crisis. Some localities, notably Duékoué, were first the scene of inter-tribal confrontations, before being subjected to the horrors of war during the offensive launched by the RFCI. The ICRC, UNOCI and NGOs reported massacres of populations with victims being counted in hundreds. According to an emergency humanitarian plan elaborated by NGOs and United Nations agencies, about 2 million persons, including 800,000 displaced persons, need emergency humanitarian assistance in Côte d'Ivoire.

V. EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE IVORIAN AUTHORITIES TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION

14. President Alassane Dramane Ouattara addressed messages to the Nation (on 6 April 2011, while Mr Laurent Gbagbo was still entrenched in the presidential residence, and on 12, after his arrest) and held a press conference on 13 April, which clarified his vision of the near future, particularly on the following urgent issues:

- Security: He requested the National Police, the National Gendarmerie, the Republican Forces, as well as the Impartial Forces, to ensure the security of persons and properties in Abidjan and throughout the territory.

- Resumption of economic activity : He directed that prompt repair works be carried out on the water and electricity networks; requested the Governor of the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) to reopen the Bank's agencies in Côte d'Ivoire in order to ensure the resumption of operations of all the banks; requested (and obtained) that the European Union (EU) sanctions on Abidjan and San Pedro ports and on some public entities be lifted; and instructed the Ministry of Energy and Mines to reactivate the SIR refinery for the supply of butane gas and fuel. It is worth noting that France will provide a credit of 400 million euros to assist Côte d'Ivoire to meet urgent expenditure (salaries and functioning of the Administration), while the EU is prepared to grant 200 million euros in assistance.
- Unity and reconciliation: He reiterated his commitment to set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to shed light on all the massacres, crimes and other human rights violations, while urging Ivorians to refrain from acts of vengeance or reprisals, as well as from violence.
- Justice: He announced that legal proceedings will be instituted against former President Laurent Gbagbo and some of his collaborators, that a National Commission of Inquiry has been set up to investigate crimes perpetrated during the crisis and to collaborate with international jurisdictions and human rights organizations.
- Politics: He considers that some months will still be necessary to establish security in the country under the current Government and that, subsequently, all his commitments regarding the composition of the Government will be implemented. Likewise, his swearing-in ceremony will take place at the appropriate time after the resolution of the urgent issues.

15. Beyond these statements, a gradual normalization of the situation is evident. The Heads of the Defence and Security Forces of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as other Heads of Institutions, have sworn allegiance to President Alassane Dramane Ouattara; joint patrols (Police, Gendarmerie, FRCI and Impartial Forces) operate in most of the districts of Abidjan; looting has abated; water and electricity have been restored; the market and commercial activities are gradually picking up; and administration should start functioning again. The biggest challenge for unity and democracy in Côte d'Ivoire will be the resumption of political activities by the two main forces which clashed during the elections and on the battle field, with the planned establishment, as soon as possible, of a Government of National Unity and Reconciliation.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

16. After several months of crisis due to the refusal of the incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo to accept his defeat at the presidential election, Côte d'Ivoire is now back to a normal institutional situation, with the restoration of legality throughout the national territory. Council, which played an active role in the resolution of the Ivorian crisis, should welcome this development.

17. A new page has been opened in the history of Côte d'Ivoire, which should be turned to good account in order to consolidate the newly-found peace, promote and deepen reconciliation and facilitate the socio-economic development of Côte d'Ivoire. President Alassane Ouattara has clearly expressed his commitment, and that of his Government, to spare no effort in attaining these objectives. The AU, which was actively involved in the resolution of the Ivorian crisis, should, in concert with ECOWAS and the international partners, fully play its rightful role in consolidating peace in Côte d'Ivoire. In line with the request made by Council in its communiqué of 5 April 2011, the Commission intends to take all necessary initiatives in this regard.

18. Council will recall that, in the communiqué adopted after its 252th meeting held on 9 December 2010, it decided, on the basis of the relevant instruments of the AU, to suspend the participation of Côte d'Ivoire in all AU activities until the democratically-elected President, Alassane Dramane Ouattara, fully assumes state power. Now that President Ouattara has effectively assumed state power, it is necessary to lift the suspension which had been imposed on Côte d'Ivoire. Such a decision will help consolidate the positive development recorded in Côte d'Ivoire, while allowing it to make its contribution to the attainment of the objectives of our Union.

African Union Commission (AUC)

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PSC Outcomes

Communiqués

2011-04-21

Communiqué of the 273rd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council Held on 21 April 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Peace and Security Council

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