

Côte d'Ivoire could be 'success story' if peacekeeping gains fully backed, Security Council told

8 February 2017 – Côte d'Ivoire is on the path to durable stability, the United Nations envoy for the country today told the Security Council, but warned that authorities need to invest more in national reconciliation and transitional justice, and to improve the economic, social and cultural rights of Ivoirians.

“With a new Constitution and an inclusive legislature, Côte d'Ivoire is presented with the opportunity and momentum to fully consolidate the country's achievements towards long-term stability,” Aïchatou Mindaoudou, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire said presenting the latest Secretary-General's report on developments in the country.

She noted that the people of Côte d'Ivoire must more fully enjoy “the dividends of the thriving economy that has remarkably recovered since the post-election crisis of 2010/2011.”

The country is on track to becoming Africa's fastest-growing economy, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

This is a remarkable change from 2010, when the Security Council, at the request of the Government, agreed to keep the UN peacekeeping mission that Ms. Mindaoudou heads, known by the French acronym ONUCI, on the ground to protect civilians, protect good offices and support the Ivorian Government in disarmament, among other responsibilities.

All peacekeepers are now due to leave the country in four months, as agreed by the Council and the Government in resolution 2284 (2016), with the majority of the Mission's uniformed personnel to depart by 15 February.



Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire Aïchatou Mindaoudou addresses the Security Council. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Addressing the Security Council for one of the last times before the Mission winds down in April, said the work of the UN in Côte d'Ivoire could be “a real success story” if the authorities finance activities to consolidate the peacekeeping gains ONUCI made over the past 14 years.

“In all of these, our combined support – the Security Council, Member States, international and regional partners, and the UN system in Côte d'Ivoire – remains essential to ensure that Côte d'Ivoire is definitely heading towards sustainable peace and stability,” she stressed.

She also highlighted the need to investigate and prosecute crimes committed during the post-2010 election crisis, particularly those related to sexual and gender-based crimes.

“The timely and expeditious adjudication of such cases is critical to ensuring the safety and security of the most vulnerable of societies – women and children,” said Ms. Mindaoudou.

The Special Representative also called for greater efforts to enhance the standard of living of soldiers and to organize a professional army. She said it was “essential” that authorities prioritize the institutional reforms of the military, gendarmerie and police, as well as reinstate ex-combatants.

The comments come as ONUCI peacekeepers reported that they were monitoring sporadic arms fire by disgruntled soldiers of the Ivorian Special Forces who say they were not paid the bonuses that the Government promised them.

[UN commemorates 20 years of protecting children in armed conflicts](#)

8 February 2017 – Top officials from the United Nations and the international community today applauded two decades of efforts to protect children from the scourge of war by marking the 20th anniversary of General Assembly resolution 51/77 (1997) on promotion and protection of the rights of children.

In an informal meeting of the 193-member Assembly in New York, the UN body’s President, Peter Thomson, called the resolution “a landmark development in our global efforts to improve the protection of children in conflict situations.”

“Among the incomprehensible horrors that take place in the chaos of warzones, unconscionable crimes, violations, exploitation and abuse are perpetrated against the most vulnerable members of our societies – namely our children,” Mr. Thomson said.

He called for a concerted effort to protect children in armed conflict as part of the international community’s commitments to peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

Mr. Thomson spoke alongside Leila Zerrougui, the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. As an outcome of the historic resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to name a Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. In addition to Ms. Zerrougui, today’s event recognized past mandate-holders – Graça Machel, Olara Otunnu and Radhika Coomaraswamy.

It was Ms. Machel's landmark report back in 1996 that led to the creation of the mandate and the appointment of a Special Representative.



A view of the Trusteeship Council Chamber during the General Assembly informal meeting to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

She urged Member States to consider children as “zones of peace” and said that by focusing on them, “politicians, Governments, the military and non-State entities will begin to recognize how much they destroy through armed conflict, and therefore, how little they gain.”

The best way to protect children from armed conflict is to prevent armed conflict in the first place, Ms. Machel wrote. That idea was echoed in the message of Secretary-General António Guterres, delivered by his Chef de Cabinet, Maria Luiza Ribeira Viotti.

The Secretary-General identified good quality education and productive, decent work for young people as prerequisites for both peace and development.

When prevention fails, however, he called on the Special Representative's Office to continue monitoring and reporting violations to promote informed and timely action.

“We also need to continue to and strengthen engagement with local and national authorities, regional partners, and civil society to prevent and protect children from grave violations,” Mr. Guterres said.

Grave violations against children

- Recruitment and use of children
- Killing and maiming
- Rape and sexual violence in conflict
- Attacks on schools and hospitals
- Abduction of children
- Denial of humanitarian access

The Office of the Special Representative has over the years worked with other UN agencies, notably the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to protect children in conflict areas.

Among the joint projects is the Children, Not Soldiers campaign, which aims to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers by Government armies. Since 2000, the work of the Office and partners has led to the release of more than 115,000 child soldiers.

“Children don't belong on the battlefield, they belong in school where they can build a future,” said UNICEF Executive Director Tony Lake, who

participated in the event.

Assistant-Secretary-General Miroslav Jenca, who represented the UN Department of Political Affairs, a key partner of Ms. Zerrougui's Office, reiterated the importance of integration to protect children.

For example, he highlighted the utility of a checklist for drafting children and armed conflict provisions developed with UN and partners, as a useful tool for mediators.

[Libyans must make 2017 the 'year of decisions,' UN envoy tells Security Council](#)

8 February 2017 – Still seeking to implement a political accord signed more than a year ago, Libyans must make 2017 “the year of decisions” and political breakthrough, the United Nations envoy for the North African country urged today.

“We are beginning to see an emerging consensus among parties. 2017 must be a year of decisions and political breakthrough,” Martin Kobler, the Secretary-General Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), told the UN Security Council.

He noted that 2016 was spent seeking to implement the agreement and begin the re-establishment of State authority across the country.

Despite some gains, “Libyans are not in a position to address the root causes of divisions,” he cautioned, stressing that some important decisions must be taken, including on possible amendments to the political agreement, on ways to form a strong army and police force, and on how best to utilize the revenues from oil and gas exports for the benefit of all Libyans and end the dire humanitarian situation in the country.

Mr. Kobler said many meetings have taken place to discuss amendments to the agreement, including the question of the Supreme Commandership of the army and the future composition and role of the Presidency Council.

On the security front, he said that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorist group, which one year ago was expanding its territory in Libya, now controls none. However, it still poses a threat and the fight against terrorism is far from over, he added.

“The country's borders remain porous. Terrorists, human and weapons traffickers and criminal gangs continue to exploit the security vacuum,” he

warned, welcoming the initiative of the neighbouring States to form a panel of experts to develop recommendations on how to improve regional border security.

The on-going formation of the Presidential Guard is a step in the right direction but is a transitional measure until a unified Libyan army is formed.

Turning to the economy and finance, he said that despite its wealth and abundant natural resources, the country saw living conditions and public services deteriorate over the past years. However, oil production has increased to over 700,000 barrels per day, and the 2017 budget has been agreed at 37.5 billion Libyan dinars (about \$26 billion).

“This is an opportunity to address much-needed service delivery,” in particular in the area of health, he said.

Mr. Kobler also voiced concerns about the human rights abuses against migrants, especially those in detention centres.

In January, a workshop was held in Malta with Libyan experts and activists, to establish a roadmap for national reconciliation. “A process is needed to heal the wounds of years of conflict and oppression,” he said.

“I am hopeful that with bold decisions and actions we will witness a political breakthrough that can place Libya on the path of peace, prosperity and stability,” he concluded.

[With UN support, surgeon Denis Mukwege and Panzi Hospital aid rape survivors in Guinea](#)

8 February 2017 – The United Nations office working to end conflict-related sexual violence helped to bring world-renowned surgeon Denis Mukwege and a team from his Panzi Hospital to Conakry, Guinea, to provide medical and psychological treatment for 30 of the women and girls raped in politically-motivated violence in 2009, it was announced today.

In a statement, Under-Secretary-General Zainab Hawa Bangura, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, called the visit “an innovative example of how South-South cooperation can contribute to enhancing capacities and assisting victims of conflict-related sexual violence.”

Dr. Mukwege, a surgeon and gynaecologist, and his team, aided 30 survivors of

sexual violence between 23 and 27 January, according to the statement.

The Congolese doctor also met with high-level officials, including from the health and justice ministries, to discuss the need for sustained health support and the importance of investigating and prosecuting those responsible for the 2009 violence.

On 28 September 2009, civilians organized an opposition rally in a soccer stadium in Conakry when Guinean security forces opened fire on demonstrators. A UN-led International Commission of Inquiry found that at least 156 people were killed and 109 women and girls raped and subjected to other forms of sexual violence.

In July 2015, the head of the country at the time of the attacks, Moussa Dadis Camara, was indicted, but remains in Dakar awaiting extradition.

The indictment was part of an international effort aided by the team of legal experts working under Ms. Bangura, who have provided technical assistance to Guinean authorities since 2012, according to the UN office.

Seven years since the incidents, Special Representative Bangura today said that she is convinced "that we are closer to seeing the delivery of services, justice and reparations to victims."

The visit of the Panzi Hospital took place at the invitation of the Guinean Government and with support from the Guinean Association of Victims, Parents and Friends of September 28, 2009 (AVIPA).

Dr. Mukwege, who co-founded the Hospital, was among the 2008 awardees of the UN Human Rights Prize, an honorary award given to individuals and organizations in recognition of outstanding achievement in human rights.

[Security Council, UNAMA condemn attack near Afghanistan's Supreme Court](#)

8 February 2017 – The Security Council and the United Nations political mission in Afghanistan have joined Secretary-General António Guterres in condemning the deadly attack outside of the Supreme Court in Kabul.

"This attack is nothing short of an atrocity. Those responsible for planning and carrying out this horrendous act must be brought to justice," the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, said in a statement issued earlier today.

Mr. Yamamoto, who is the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), noted that the attack fits a pattern of violence against judicial

authorities in recent years. Since 2015, UNAMA documented at least 74 attacks, which killed 89 people and injured 214 others.

The Mission reminds all parties that judges and staff of civilian courts including the Supreme Court are civilians, the statement said. Attacks intentionally targeting civilians are tantamount to war crimes.

At least 20 civilians, mostly female employees of the Supreme Court, were killed yesterday when a suicide attacker detonated a device outside the Court. No person or group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

Calling the killings heinous and cowardly, the Council members late last night reiterated their serious concern at the threats posed by groups such as the Taliban, Al-Qaida, and the Islamic State (ISIL), on the local population, National Defence and Security Forces and the international presence in Afghanistan.

They also stressed that no violent or terrorist acts can reverse the Afghan-led process along the path towards peace, democracy and stability in Afghanistan, which is supported by the people and the Government of Afghanistan and by the international community.