



UNMIL/PIO/PR/20

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UNMIL redeploys one mechanized infantry company to Côte d'Ivoire;
Action taken to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1657

Monrovia, Liberia -- The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is today deploying one mechanized infantry company to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in order to implement a recently adopted UN Security Council resolution. The Force Commander of UNMIL, Lt.-Gen. Chikadibia Obiakor, announced this redeployment at a press conference at the peacekeeping mission's headquarters in Monrovia today.

According to the UNMIL Force Commander, "this deployment is part of the long-standing inter-mission cooperation in West Africa" and he reminded that the first peacekeepers sent to Liberia in 2003 came from the former UN peacekeeping mission in neighboring Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL.

The redeployment of the troops between the two UN remaining peacekeeping missions in West Africa was authorized by the Security Council on 6 February when it adopted Resolution 1657. Due to last month's outbreak of violence in Côte d'Ivoire, the troops are being sent there to provide extra security coverage for United Nations personnel and property, and to perform other tasks mandated to UNOCI. The Security Council has expressed its intention to review these arrangements by the end of March, in light of the situation on the ground.

The mechanized infantry company is being provided by Nigeria and the unit consists of 200 soldiers and officers together with 14 armoured personnel carriers and support vehicles. The redeployment of troops and equipment started on 14 February when an advance party was airlifted from Liberia to Abidjan. The main body of the unit will be deployed today using strategic airlift resources. The full redeployment will be completed on Friday, 17 February.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Liberia, Mr. Alan Doss, reminded the citizens of Liberia that, despite the redeployment of the company of Nigerian peacekeepers to Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations will continue to have a highly capable and robust peacekeeping force in Liberia consisting of close to 15,000 troops, and 1,100 UN police officers.

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