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UN Secretary-General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect on the Situation in Côte d' Ivoire

(New York - 29 December 2010) Francis Deng, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, and Edward Luck, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General who focuses on the responsibility to protect, have expressed grave concern at developments in Côte d'Ivoire. They drew attention particularly to indications that some leaders there are inciting violence between different elements of the population so as to serve their political purposes. "Given the history of internal conflict in Côte d'Ivoire," they warned, "such actions are highly irresponsible". There are continuing reports, so far unconfirmable, of serious human rights violations by supporters of Mr. Laurent Gbagbo and by forces under his control as well as the use of inflammatory speech to incite hatred and violence. The latter has especially dangerous implications which are completely unacceptable." Mr. Deng noted that allegations that the Abidjan homes of political opponents of Mr. Gbagbo had been marked to identify their ethnicity were extremely worrying.

Mr. Deng and Mr. Luck reminded all parties of their responsibility to protect all persons in Côte d'Ivoire, irrespective of their ethnicity, nationality, or religion. Special Adviser Luck recalled the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, in which all Heads of State and Government pledged to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. "This responsibility entails the prevention of these crimes, importantly including their incitement," he stressed. "We would like to remind all parties in Côte d'Ivoire, as the Secretary-General did in his statement of two weeks ago, of this solemn commitment and of the fact that they are accountable for their actions under international law."

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