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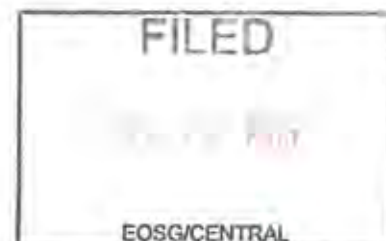
Note to the Secretary-General
(Through the Deputy Secretary-General)

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION IN GABON



1. Further to my update of 2 December, tensions between the Government and opposition leader Jean Ping continue to escalate, to the detriment of national reconciliation efforts, particularly following the release of the EU Election Observer Mission (EUOM) report that pointed to anomalies in the electoral process.
2. On 10 December, Mr. Ping announced he would lead a "national dialogue for alternation", from 18 to 23 December in Libreville that would conclude with the adoption of "a roadmap for resistance". It remains to be seen to what extent his call for dialogue will be heeded. On 15 December, Mr. Ping's lawyers further appealed to the ICC, accusing the Gabonese security forces of crimes against humanity in reference to the attack on his headquarters on 31 August 2016. ICC has yet to revert on whether there was enough ground to open an investigation against Mr. Ping and his supporters for crimes against humanity and incitement to genocide, as per the Government's request in September.
3. On 12 December, EUOM issued its final report on the presidential election at a press conference in Libreville. As anticipated, the report calls into question the integrity of the process and the final result. It also states that EUOM members were intimidated and threatened by Gabonese officials during their mission. Mr. Ping stated that the report "incontestably proves his victory". He called on the international community to take action. The Government strongly criticized the report, stating that EU covered 10 percent of the polling stations and that its recommendations exceeded its mandate. On 16 December, EU invited the authorities to engage in a "reinforced political dialogue", in accordance with Annex 7 of the Cotonou Agreement. The dialogue will aim to build on the conclusions and recommendations of the EUOM report. EU will be submitting a formal invitation to the Government with the hope of starting the dialogue as early as January 2017. Should the Government refuse EU's call for dialogue, EU could in principle invoke article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, suspending its assistance to the country.
4. Meanwhile, President Ali Bongo Ondimba continues to mobilise regional and international support. From 6 to 9 December, he visited China and signed several trade agreements, including for the rebuilding of the National Assembly, set ablaze during post-election violence. The President also hosted the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in Libreville on 30 November.
5. UNOCA, in cooperation with sub-regional and international partners, will remain engaged with both camps and reach out to moderate voices, in an attempt to find common ground and de-escalate tensions. Acting SRSG Fall continues to reiterate UNOCA's readiness to facilitate the national dialogue between all relevant stakeholders.

Jeffrey Feltman
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