



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Cote d'Ivoire – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 7 September 2010**

**Information required on the Jula ethnic group: its traditions, culture, society, membership, history and situation in Cote d'Ivoire? Information on the treatment of those who are members or are perceived to be members of the group by the government and/or society. Are they being discriminated against, by other groups in Cote d'Ivoire? NGOs working with and supporting the Jula ethnic group. Would police provide protection/services to a member of the Jula experiencing problems due to his ethnicity?**

A *United States House of Representatives Committee on International Relations* report mentions the term “Jula” in relation to the Dioula ethnic group as follows:

“The Northern Mande include the Malinke in the northwest and the Dioula (from *jula*, meaning trader) who settled to the east of the Senufo.” (US House of Representatives Committee on International Relations (12 February 2003) *Prospects for Peace in Ivory Coast*)

See also entry for “Jula” in *The Peoples of Africa – An Ethnohistorical Dictionary* which states:

“The Julas-also known as the Dyula, Diula, Wangara, Ioola, luula, Va, Febe, and Kangah-are one of the Manding-speaking ethnic groups of West Africa.” (Olson, James S. (1996) *The Peoples of Africa – An Ethnohistorical Dictionary* Westport, Greenwood Press)

This entry also states:

“The term ‘Dyula’ in Manding refers to an individual skilled at trade and business, but its specific ethnic designation refers to a people who today live in the northeastern and northern sections of Ivory Coast, in southwestern Burkina-Faso, and across the border in Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Mali.” (ibid)

Footnote 10 of a *Human Rights Watch* report states:

“The term ‘Djoula’ or ‘Dioula’ refers to a simple description of an ethnicity primarily from northeastern Côte d'Ivoire. However, it can also be somewhat pejorative and over the past decade, the term ‘Dioula’ has come to mean more than just another ethnic group such as that of the ‘Baoulé.’ It often now encompasses northerners of Malinké, Sénoufo and other ethnicities, as well as foreigners and people of foreign origin like Ivorians of Burkinabé and Malian heritage. In this report, Human Rights Watch will use the term Dioula as it is commonly used by many Ivorians: to refer to Ivorians who, even if resident

in the south, originated from the northern Mande and Gur ethnic groups, including members of the Malinké, Sénoufo, and Bambara ethnicities.” (Human rights Watch (2 August 2007) *“My Heart Is Cut” – Sexual Violence by Rebels and Pro-Government Forces in Côte d’Ivoire*, p.19)

In a section headed “Introduction / History” a document published on the missionary website *Joshua Project* states:

“A majority of the Dyula live along the trade routes of the Ivory Coast. Dyula clans have also settled in Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, and Guinea-Bissau. The name dyula means ‘itinerant trader,’ and the Dyula are respected for their trading abilities.” (Joshua Project (undated) *Jula, Dyula of Cote d’Ivoire*)

In a section headed “What are their lives like?” this document states:

“The Dyula live in clans, and the clan is the most important aspect of their lives. The people are fiercely loyal to their clans, defending them proudly. They express their history and devotion through the oral traditions of dance and storytelling. Men and women live in separate houses made of mud or cement—the men in round houses and the women in rectangular ones. The father is the head of the family and inheritances are passed down from fathers to their sons. Older males possess the most power and influence. Even though it is illegal, the Dyula still practice polygamy (multiple spouses) and young people are encouraged to marry within their own clans; even marriages between cousins are approved. Girls usually marry at age 16. Since sanitation in the villages is so primitive, nearly half of the population is under the age of 15 and few live beyond age 45. Therefore, the Dyula have great respect for the elderly, especially if a man is an Islamic scholar.” (ibid)

A section headed “What are their beliefs?” states:

“The majority of the Dyula are Sunni Muslim. Most of the others, whom the Muslims call ‘pagans,’ hold to traditional animistic beliefs (believe that non-living objects have spirits). West African Islam does, however, generally retain local traditions and is more tolerant of diversity than elsewhere. Muslim scholars are held in high esteem. Their religious ideals share several similarities with Christianity: the belief in one God who is eternal, creator, omniscient; the existence of protecting spirits (or angels); the concept of the sanctuary or the holy of holies; the Spirit of God who communicates; and analogies to explain complex concepts.” (ibid)

A *Minority Rights Group International* report, in a section headed “Historical context” states:

“Upon seizing power in 1995, Robert Guéï introduced the notion of ‘Ivoirité’, ostensibly to exclude non-Ivoirians from the political process. This appeared aimed at continuing the exclusion of the Dioula politician and presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara, whose parents were not Ivoirian, according to his opponents. In practice this substantially sharpened public sentiment among the majority against northerners, including all Manding, regardless of the length of individual or family tenure in Cote d’Ivoire. When the country fractured in 2002, Dioula clearly came down on the side of the northern rebels, first in the MPCl, and later in the New Forces.” (Minority Rights Group)

International (2008) *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Côte d'Ivoire : Manding (Dioula)*

In a section headed "Current issues" this report states:

"Despite the tenuous north-south peace process, northern peoples including Manding, who live in the south, remain prone to violence from the government and pro-Gbagbo militant groups." (ibid)

A report from *AllAfrica.com* on events in 2002 states:

"Reports from Daloa, Cote d'Ivoire's western cocoa heartland, say men in military uniform have been carrying out arbitrary killings of civilians in the town, since it was recaptured from rebels by government forces last week. Daloa's mainly Muslim, Dioula community appears to be the target, with reports that dozens of men have been summarily executed, 'by people wearing camouflage'. Sources who wished to remain anonymous told journalists that Daloa's Dioula, and hundreds of other Muslim residents, had taken refuge in the town's main mosque in fear for their lives and of retaliation by government forces." (*AllAfrica.com* (22 October 2002) *West Africa: Arbitrary Killing of Muslims in Ivory Coast's Cocoa Capital*)

This report also states:

"The Dioula, who originate from northern Cote d'Ivoire, are perceived by many Ivorians to be natural supporters of the rebels, many of whom are also Muslim northerners." (ibid)

An *Inter Press Service* report on events in 2005 refers to ethnic tension between Dioulas and Guere as follows:

"In Duekoue, the Guere and their nemesis, the settlers, mostly Dioulas (Muslims from northern Cote d'Ivoire) and immigrants from neighbouring Burkina Faso, have been at each other's throats for several years. Their relations have been exacerbated by the political and military crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. And what most Ivorians feared at the beginning of the crisis in September 2002 is now coming to pass: ethnic war, starting in the country's west. The settlers outnumber the indigenous people in this cocoa and coffee-producing region. The Guerres sold off much of their land to the settlers living in the villages of Duekoue. In the city of Duekoue, most shops and transport companies are now owned by the Dioulas. The population of the Duekoue region is estimated at 150,000. Two-fifths of the residents are settlers, according to official sources. 'The relations between Guere and the Dioulas and the Mossis (from Burkina Faso) began to deteriorate in 1996 when land ownership problems divided the communities,' Emmanuel Tanoh of the non-governmental organisation Notre Nation (Our Nation), explained. According to Tanoh, the current national crisis aggravated an already tense local situation. 'Here, the Guerres accuse the Dioulas of supporting the rebels. The Dioulas, on the other hand, not only deny this accusation, they say they are fed up with members of their community being murdered by militias close to the head of state. These militias are mainly composed of young Guerres,' he said." (*Inter Press Service* (9 June 2005) *Politics – Cote d'Ivoire: Ethnic War Threatening to Spiral Out of Control*)

An *IRIN News* report on fighting between these groups in 2005 states:

“Fighting broke out on Friday after some Guere people refused to join a strike over security problems that had been organised by the Dioula ethnic group. The Dioula are mostly Muslims who trace their origins back to northern Cote d'Ivoire and beyond. The Guere are generally animist or Christian and see themselves as the original residents of the region. ‘There were 15 people killed in the clashes - ten Dioula and five Guere,’ Marcel Diahi, deputy Mayor of Duekoue, told IRIN by telephone. ‘Though calm has been restored to the town today, there are still lots of problems...some 4,000 people have been displaced,’ he said.” (IRIN News (2 May 2005) *Cote d'Ivoire: Up to 15 dead and 4,000 displaced in ethnic fighting in troubled west*)

See also *IRIN News* report which states:

“The mayor said men armed with knives and guns had attacked the home of a trader and killed eight people. Two immigrant cocoa farmers who hailed from Burkina Faso were also found stabbed and clubbed to death on the outskirts of town near the headquarters of the pro-government militia, the Patriotic Alliance of the We People, he said. The revenge slayings came just 24 hours after 41 people from the Guere ethnic group were shot, knifed and burned to death by unidentified attackers in two outlying villages. The mayor said Thursday's victims were from ‘the other side’, that is to say they were Dioula.” (IRIN News (2 June 2005) *Cote d'Ivoire: Revenge killings claim 10 lives the day after massacre in Wild West*)

A *New York Times* article states:

“Sandwiched between the lawless rebel-held town of Man and the pro-government militia stronghold of Guiglo in the no man's land between north and south, Fengolo's residents struggle to live beside one another in the poisonous atmosphere of suspicion and ethnic discord that has flourished since the war began. They frequently turn on one another in tit-for-tat violence. The Dioula, who emigrated from the north to work the land, outnumber the Guere and are typically wealthier, which is a source of tension. Young men from both sides are periodically found dead. In February, the bodies of several of the Dioula men were found, and Guere men were suspected of killing them. ‘When they discovered their brothers had been found dead in a well, killed by the Guerres, the population revolted,’ Outtara said. In their fury, they torched the Guere side of the village, destroying 213 houses and 324 mud huts.” (New York Times (1 November 2005) *Ivory Coast struggles as ethnic strife spreads*)

This article also states:

“But the whispers persist, with heated language on both sides. The Dioula insist that the mostly animist Guere are cannibals who eat Muslim children. The Guere insist that the Dioula are interlopers. ‘They are foreigners and cannot own land here,’ Kponde said of his neighbors, many of whom have lived here for generations. ‘This place belongs to the Guere.’” (ibid)

In a section headed “Background” an *Amnesty International* report states:

“The situation was further aggravated by xenophobic hate speech propagated by broadcast and print media close to President Gbagbo focusing on the concept of

'Ivorianness' ('ivoirité'). This concept distinguished 'true' Ivorians from the so-called foreign (allogène) population, commonly referred to as Dioula. Xenophobic rhetoric led to human rights abuses targeting Dioulas, including Ivorians and citizens of other countries in the sub-region, many of whom had been living and working in Côte d'Ivoire for decades." (Amnesty International (15 March 2007) Côte d'Ivoire – Targeting women: the forgotten victims of the conflict, p.3)

In a section headed "The perpetrators" (paragraph 3.2.1 headed "Government security forces") this report states:

"Government security forces have raped and sexually assaulted a number of women, mostly on ethnic or political grounds. The responsibility of the security forces in the rape and sexual assault of Dioula women in December 2000 and at checkpoints since September 2002 has been widely documented. Reports indicate that members of the government security forces continue to commit acts of sexual violence with impunity." (ibid, p.11)

In a section headed "Women Targeted because of their Dioula Origin" a *Human Rights Watch* group report states:

"From 2000 to the present, abuses at checkpoints by pro-government forces against Dioulas frequently turn routine travel into a nightmare for many women. Although extortion and physical violence remained the most common forms of abuse, armed men at pro-government checkpoints subjected women and girls to numerous forms of sexual abuse, including strip searching, sexual humiliation, rape, gang-rape and other abuse." (Human rights Watch (2 August 2007) "*My Heart Is Cut*" – *Sexual Violence by Rebels and Pro-Government Forces in Côte d'Ivoire*, p.65)

This section of the report also states:

"Numerous rapes occurred during the government razing of '*quartiers précaires*' or shantytowns, occupied by thousands of immigrants and 'Dioula' Ivorians. The Red Cross estimated that between September 21 and 24, 2002 some 12,000 people were displaced from Dioula neighborhoods in Abidjan. During these operations from October 2002 to December 2002 and even later, government forces allegedly searched for weapons and rebels, but more often would simply order out all the residents and burn or demolish their homes, engaging in numerous human rights abuses, including extortion, arbitrary arrests and detentions, 'disappearances,' summary executions, the displacement of thousands, and sexual abuse." (ibid, pp.66-67)

An *Amnesty International* report refers to the current situation in Cote d'Ivoire as follows:

"Amnesty International said it is concerned at the resurgence of electoral violence and xenophobia in Côte d'Ivoire, as supporters of the country's president call for tens of thousands of 'foreigners' to be excluded from the electoral roll. Opposition parties have denounced calls by supporters of President Laurent Gbagbo to exclude people suspected of being foreign nationals because they bear Muslim family names." (Amnesty International (25 February 2010) *Violence and xenophobia on the rise in Côte d'Ivoire election campaign*)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently  
available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response  
is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to  
refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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