



Africa

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Ivory coast: FIDH denounces the stubbornness of Laurent Gbagbo and his close aides

FIDH condemns the serious human rights violations which have been casting a shadow over Côte d'Ivoire since the presidential elections and the subsequent comments and actions by the outgoing President, Laurent Gbagbo, and of some of his close aides these past few days, which have resulted in intensification of the political crisis and are leading the country towards a new internal conflict.

On December 18, Mr. Gbagbo called for the immediate departure of the UNOCI forces and the Operation Licorne French troops, calling their impartiality in the current political crisis into question, explaining that the UN forces have allegedly armed and supported the "New Forces", loyal to Mr. Alassane Ouattara.

Mr. Charles Blé Goudé, the Young Patriots movement leader and member of Gbagbo's self-appointed "Government" said: "Playtime is over! I ask all Ivorians to be prepared to fight. We will liberate our country. He added, "We will defend the dignity and the sovereignty of our country until our last breath".

These declarations are particularly worrying considering the ongoing major political and violent crisis in which dozens of civilians have been killed. According to the UN "more than 50 people have been killed and more than 200 injured", following the violent clash which occurred on December 16, in conjunction with the march planned by the Ouattara's camp. Human rights organisations on the ground have confirmed these reports. . One of UNOCI's patrols, was attacked by men in military uniform on December 17 and 18, 2010. They have also reported that "people have been kidnapped from their homes, especially at night, by unidentified armed men in military uniform and accompanied by elements from the Security and Defense Forces or militias. Further information indicates that these people were forcibly taken from their homes and put in illegal detention, incommunicado and without instruction.

FIDH recalls that the international media are still banned from broadcasting and international journalists have been manhandled and temporarily detained by security forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo.

In this context which is deeply worrying for the safety of civilians and the future of Côte d'Ivoire, FIDH calls upon the international community, particularly the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union (EU) and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) to maintain the pressure to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in compliance with the will of the Ivorian people as expressed during the elections. Furthermore, FIDH asks the EU to expand individual sanctions against people who are guilty of incitement to hatred, violence and perpetuation of the crisis. FIDH calls upon the International Criminal Court to remain pro-active in particular by reminding that an analysis on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire is ongoing and that those responsible for the commission of international crimes will be brought to justice.

FIDH asks the different political and security forces of the country to call for peace and to respect the country's commitments regarding the international and regional human rights protection systems. Finally, FIDH recommends that the UN Security Council renew and strengthen, the UN mission in Côte d'Ivoire's (UNOCI) to protect civilians, particularly human rights defenders, and increase the UNOCI resources in terms of surveillance, investigation and protection of fundamental rights.

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