



CÔTE D'IVOIRE

SIX MONTHS OF POST-
ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

SUMMARY

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



1. INTRODUCTION

The violence that followed the disputed presidential election in November 2010 has caused the most serious humanitarian and human rights crisis in Côte d'Ivoire since the de facto partition of the country in September 2002. Hundreds of people have been unlawfully killed, often only on the grounds of their ethnicity or presumed political affiliation. Women and adolescents have been victims of sexual violence, including rape, and hundreds of thousands of people were forced to flee their homes to seek refuge in other regions of Côte d'Ivoire or in neighbouring countries, especially Liberia.

Thousands of people remain displaced after fleeing the wave of human rights violations and abuses, which continued to be committed by both sides after the arrest of former president Laurent Gbagbo. Dozens were killed by pro-Gbagbo militiamen. At the same time, ethnic groups considered to be Gbagbo's supporters have received little or no protection from either the new security forces created by President Alassane Ouattara, or the peacekeeping forces of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

Evidence collected by Amnesty International clearly demonstrate that crimes under international law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed by all sides during the conflict.

The present document highlights testimonies collected by Amnesty International during two missions in Côte d'Ivoire illustrating the human rights violations committed since November 2010. Many more cases are contained in the main report *"They look at his identity card and shot him dead" - Six months of post-electoral violence in Côte d'Ivoire*, AI Index: AFR 31/002/2011, which also provides a more detailed analysis of the context, the root causes and the responsibility of each sides who have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the violence that swept through the country in the last six months.

Youssouf, went out but more forces were still there and started shooting. We rushed back into the courtyard and at that point my brother was hit. He died shortly after."

Enforced Disappearances

A number of people were subjected to enforced disappearance after being arrested by security forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo. Several such disappearances occurred in the aftermath of the 16 December 2010 demonstration. One of the December 16 demonstrators, Dao Sago, born in 1971, was detained by security forces. An eyewitness told Amnesty International:

"When we learnt that the security forces were out shooting and making arrests, we avoided going round in a group, we followed behind each other. Dao was at the front of the march. A group of the security forces and militiamen arrested my brother. When he showed his identity card, the militia and soldiers surrounded him. They took off his clothes until he was only wearing his underpants. They began to beat him with clubs and gun butts. Some of them kicked him. We fled and then I called him on his mobile but someone else answered and told me that they were killing Dao. We went to look for him in all the police stations and mortuaries but couldn't find him."

Shelling of residents of Abobo

In late February and March, security forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo shelled densely populated areas of Abobo, a district of Abidjan that had come under the control of anti-Gbagbo armed elements who called themselves the Invisible Commando. Many people, including women and children, were killed in the shelling. Information gathered by Amnesty International also indicates that when they crossed the Abobo district, security forces fired recklessly, killing and wounding unarmed residents.

"When we went to bed, we couldn't hear any noise or gunfire but suddenly, in the middle of the night, around 11:30pm, we heard a loud noise. A shell had hit our neighbour's courtyard. An adolescent aged 12, who was asleep, was killed immediately. Koné Toumoutou, aged six and Bakary Koné, aged two, were mortally wounded and died after being transferred to a health centre. Two other children from the same family were wounded. Several adults, including the grandmother, aged 53, were wounded." *One of the witnesses of the shelling carried out in the night of 11 and 12 March 2011 in Abobo*

Attacks on mosques and Imams

After the election results were announced, mosques in Abidjan and outside the country's commercial capital were attacked and, in some cases, Muslims, including Imams (Muslim religious dignitaries), were shot dead. These attacks intensified at the end of February 2011, along with the general deterioration of the situation in Abidjan.

Security forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo, accompanied by Young Patriot militias, forcibly entered two mosques. These men justified these acts on the grounds that they were looking for arms. They brutalized and killed several people in these places of worship, including the Imams.

"They began to hit us with their rifle butts. Others punched and kicked us with their boots. One of them threw a Koran he had set alight at me. Then they told us to strip and continued to hit us. When they noticed that one of us, Cissé Moustapha, was wearing amulets, they really set about him, more than on me and the other person. They accused him of being an enemy. They forced us to lie down flat on the ground and then walked all over us. Then they told us to get on our knees, with our chins touching the ground and our buttocks in the air. Then they pushed the end of their guns into our anuses and shook them around. [...] I was coughing so they pushed me to the ground but then they left with Moustapha Cissé and we have not seen him again since that Friday."

A victim who survived the assault on the Lem mosque on 25 February 2011

Sexual violence

Amnesty International documented several cases of rape committed by security forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo in Abidjan. One rape victim told Amnesty International:

"On 19 December [2010], they came to my house in Abobo. They came in the middle of the night; I was sleeping with my husband and my children. They were hammering at the door. Our door is right on the street, we didn't open. They then broke down the door, our door is made of wood. They came in, eight of them, four in plain clothes and four soldiers in military fatigues and balaclavas. Two of them took my husband outside and six of them came upon me. They told me to undress and when I didn't, they came at me again. They all took turns raping me and threw my children to the floor, the children were crying. I was screaming. I don't know what they were doing to my husband. After, I heard two gun shots. Then they left and I found my husband outside lying on his stomach. He was dead. The people who raped me and killed my husband told me that if I wanted to complain, I should go to ADO [Alassane Dramane Ouattara]."

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES COMMITTED BY THE MILITIAS SUPPORTING LAURENT GBAGBO



Young people in militias known as Young Patriots were armed and trained under the former government. Many carried out identity checks at roadblocks they erected around Abidjan, often beating or killing those they suspected of supporting President Ouattara.

For several years, Laurent Gbagbo's government has armed and trained young people in militias known as Young Patriots. These militias have carried out deliberate and arbitrary killings - mainly of people with a Muslim name or wearing Muslim clothes. Among their victims were many foreign nationals from the sub-region, especially from Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Guinea. The Young Patriots have sometimes colluded with the security forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo or acted with their tacit consent. These militias have erected roadblocks at many strategic points in Abidjan have proceeded to carry out identity controls, hitting, extorting and sometimes killing real or presumed supporters of Alassane Ouattara.

The violence carried out by these militias increased sharply after Charles Blé Goudé, leader of the Young Patriots, made a speech at a bar in Yopougon (Baron Bar) on 25 February 2011, calling on the Young Patriots to organize themselves into surveillance committees in order to control access to and from neighbourhoods and "to denounce all foreigners coming into our neighbourhoods". On 27 February 2011, a young man was beaten to death in Yopougon because he did not live in the neighbourhood. An eyewitness told Amnesty International:

"I noticed a crowd near the Sicogi, in Yopougon. When I approached, I saw men and women beating up a young man. They were armed with machetes, clubs and bricks. As they hit him, they said that he was not from the neighbourhood and accused him of being a rebel. They put several tyres around his neck, he was still alive when they set fire to the tyres. After their hideous crime, these

Young Patriots made war cries and started shouting: 'We caught a rebel'. His body was half charred by the time his brother came to find him. [...]"

Militia members also raped women accused of supporting Alassane Ouattara. In some cases, the rapes occurred in the presence or involvement of security forces loyal to Gbagbo. One of the victims told Amnesty International:

"On 16 December [2010], towards 7pm, I was coming back from the market wearing an ADO T-Shirt. I was with some other people. About ten civilians were standing at a roadblock. We were frightened and ran away. I was unable to run quickly because I was carrying my baby on my back. They caught me and another young girl. They immediately pulled off the cloth that was holding my baby. The baby fell to the ground and started screaming. Despite that, they left it on the ground and dragged me to the side of a table. They held me by the hands. One of them pushed my legs apart and another one raped me, then another one also raped me. After raping me, they slapped me and told me that if I wanted to make a complaint, I should call ADO. He finally let me go and I took my baby in my arms. They also raped the other girl who they had caught and who was also wearing an ADO T shirt [...]"

Some 60 dead bodies were discovered on 3 and 4 May in Yopougon. The FRCI claimed that they had been killed by Liberian mercenaries and pro Gbagbo militiamen just after the arrest of Laurent Gbagbo in April 2011. By mid-May 2011, the Ivorian authorities announced that at least 220 civilians have been killed in the south-west of the country by militias and Liberian mercenaries who had backed former President Laurent Gbagbo as they retreated to Liberia.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES COMMITTED BY THE INVISIBLE COMMANDO, AN ANTI-GBAGBO ARMED GROUP

An armed group calling itself the Invisible Commando took control of the district of Abobo at the beginning of 2011. The links between the Invisible Commando and other forces hostile to Laurent Gbagbo have been the subject of debate.

This armed group committed serious human rights abuses by attacking individuals belonging to the Ébrié ethnic group, accused of supporting Laurent Gbagbo. In particular, they attacked the village d'Anonkoua-Kouté, in Abobo, on 6 and 7 March 2011, killing and wounding dozens of people. An eyewitness told Amnesty International:

"About 3am on 7 March, everyone was sleeping when we were woken up by people shooting. These people, some of whom were armed and who were speaking Dioula, entered houses and asked where the arms sent by Laurent

Gbagbo were. They set fire to some houses and some people did not get out in time. Some people were shot dead. Others, including Martin, a chemist, had their throats cut. The armed men accused us of supporting Laurent Gbagbo. When they went into one house, one of the commandos opened a gas cylinder and set fire to the place. In the morning, when Kango Sylvie, 40, one of the villagers, came out of her house, she was red and the skin was peeling off her body. She died of her wounds the same day."

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY THE FRCI DURING AND AFTER THE ARREST OF LAURENT GBAGBO

During the fighting in Abidjan and in the weeks that followed, the FRCI, created by Alassane Ouattara on 8 March 2011, committed serious human rights violations against real or presumed supporters of Laurent Gbagbo.

The attack on Laurent Gbagbo's residence in Abidjan on 11 April 2011 was followed by human rights violations against some of the outgoing president's close supporters, including members of his government. At least one person died and several were injured during the arrest of Laurent Gbagbo and his supporters. Others were ill-treated at the time of their arrest.

One witness described the conditions in which the former Minister of the Interior, Désiré Tagro, who later died in hospital, was wounded.

"Désiré Tagro was in discussions with the French ambassador about the conditions for the surrender of Laurent Gbagbo and his close supporters. Désiré Tagro went out with a white flag but was shot at although he was not hit. He returned and called the ambassador to ask him to stop the shooting. When we went out, I saw that Désiré Tagro was wounded in the jaw."

Presumed supporters of the former President, including journalists and lawyers, were also victims of violent reprisals, despite the fact that President Ouattara launched a call on television on 11 April 2011 "appeal[ing] to all [his] compatriots who might feel the need for vengeance to abstain from all acts of reprisal and violence".

"On 12 April, armed men, some of them in uniforms raided our district Yopougon. It was around 10 am. They took the police officer at his home and shot him dead at point blank range".

Real or presumed supporters of Laurent Gbagbo, continue to be targeted. Some of them have had their homes looted, their offices destroyed and have had to flee, sometimes abroad.

3. VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW IN THE WEST OF THE COUNTRY

The Catholic Mission in Duékoué. Tens of thousands of people have sought shelter in the mission since the beginning of the violence, and particularly after the massacres at the end of March in Duékoué and the neighbouring villages. The displaced people lacked essential food, water, sanitation and medical care.



Since December 2010, the most serious human rights violations and abuses have been committed in the west of the country, a region rich in coffee and cocoa plantations and which has long been the scene of inter-communal tension.

Massacre in Duékoué

On 28 March 2011, the FRCI, supported by auxiliary forces composed particularly of Dozos (traditional hunters), launched a general offensive in the west of the country and, in three days, took control of almost the entire part of the country that was still in the hands of Laurent Gbagbo supporters. In the days that followed, the two parties to the conflict committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, as well as crimes against humanity.

Fierce fighting took place for control of the city of Duékoué on Monday 28 March between forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo and those fighting for Alassane Ouattara. Mercenaries recruited in Liberia and militias supporting Laurent Gbagbo fought alongside of the security

forces against the FRCI. Throughout that day, forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo looted the belongings of Malinkés (Dioulas) and killed civilians, including an Imam and another person who was with him. The pro-Gbagbo militias were unable to resist the attack mounted by the FRCI, supported by Dozos and other armed elements in plain clothes, and fled. From the morning of 29 March 2011, the FRCI accompanied by the Dozos took complete control of Duékoué and, in the hours and days that followed, hundreds of people belonging to the Guéré ethnic group were killed deliberately and systematically in Duékoué and in some surrounding villages, simply because they belonged to this particular ethnic group. Those who survived found refuge at the Catholic Mission in Duékoué or fled to the bush or to neighbouring countries.

Amnesty International has gathered more than 100 witness statements from people who survived this massacre in Duékoué and in the neighbouring villages. A woman who lived in Duékoué told Amnesty International:

"On Monday [28 March 2011], the FRCI easily defeated the security forces and their allies, militias and Liberian mercenaries. The latter quickly deserted, abandoning civilians, leaving us without any protection. The next day, the FRCI and the Dozos entered into Quartier Carrefour. They came into the yards and chased the women. Then they told the men to line up and asked them to state their first and second names and show their identity card. Then they executed them. I was present while they sorted out the men. Three young men, one of whom was about 15, were shot dead in front of me."



Two fighters ride around the empty streets of Duékoué, a few days after the attacks for control of the town. Hundreds of Guérés were massacred on ethnic and political grounds.

In their attempts to flee these massacres, thousands of people tried to enter the Duékoué Catholic Mission. Some of them were killed on their way there. Some people were killed in front of their parents, sometimes with a knife. The mother of one young man who had his throat cut in front of her told Amnesty International:

"On Tuesday morning, about 10am or 11am, they came into the yard and fired in the air. My son and I went out, with our hands on our heads. They said they wanted to kill the boy, I began to cry. One of them shouted out that he did not want to kill women: 'We want the boy. As for the women, we'll leave them to the dogs (*les femmes, ce sont nos chiens qui vont coucher avec vous*)', and they cut my son's throat."

A woman looks at the remains of a body in the Carrefour district of Duékoué, where forces supporting President Ouattara rampaged through the compounds on 29 March 2011 looking for Guérés. Women and girls were made to leave, and hundreds of men were executed.



The massacre at Duékoué took place in spite of the presence of a UNOCI base 1 km from the *Quartier Carrefour*, the main location of the killings. The first people to find refuge in the Catholic Mission requested the help of the peacekeeping force but received no assistance.

One woman told Amnesty International:

"I went to see the UNOCI people to tell them that our men and boys were being massacred and that they ought to intervene but they did nothing."

Massacres and killings in the villages in the Duékoué region



List of people murdered in the Delobly village during the attack by the pro Ouattara forces at the end of March 2011. By mid April when an AI delegation visited the area, only 16 people out of the 995 inhabitants had returned home.

The Amnesty International delegation also investigated killings and massacres committed by the FRCI, the Dozos and other armed elements allied to them in several villages near Duékoué, including Dahoua, Delobly, Bahé Bé, Pinhou, Guéibli, Guinglo-Zia, Diéhiba and Diahouin. As a result of these attacks, these villages were often abandoned by communities belonging to the Guéré ethnic group and many people who fled the killings found refuge in the bush where they were chased and in some cases killed. One witness, a resident of Dahoua, told Amnesty International:

"On Friday 1 April, Dozos and men in fatigues arrived, causing panic in the village. They vandalized the house of the village chief, a former sergeant in retirement. They burned his house down and said they would be back. All the inhabitants sought refuge in the bush. The next day, I returned to the village but I was caught by the FRCI. They told me to call the villagers but the FRCI and the Dozos said they had not come to kill people. They then asked people to assemble. They took three young people from the displaced population. They said that these were criminals. Two of them were tied together back-to-back, with their hands behind their backs, another was attached in the same way. One of them took out a knife and cut their throats."

Massacres in Guiglo

The road between Blolequin and Guiglo in the west of Côte d'Ivoire where fighting took place at the end of March 2011.



Amnesty International delegation also visited Guiglo (about 30 km to the south west of Duékoué) in April 2011. Although they took the control of the town of Guiglo without any resistance, the FRCI and the armed elements fighting with them killed members of the Guéré ethnic group.

Liberian refugees, who had been living in Guiglo for more than 20 years, after fleeing from the conflict in Liberia in the 1990s, were also targeted by the FRCI, which treated them as though they were pro-Gbagbo Liberian mercenaries. One Liberian woman refugee told the Amnesty International delegation how FRCI soldiers had killed a Liberian refugee:

"FRCI soldiers arrived in the camp. They fired some shots to frighten us. A Liberian refugee called Julian was captured. They tied his hands behind his back and then tied his feet together. Julian was put in a vehicle and a few metres from the camp, they threw him to the ground like a bag of rice and told him to clear off. He said that he could not because his feet were tied together. They accused him of being a Liberian mercenary. He replied that he was Ivorian and not Liberian. One of them took out his bayonet from his rifle and stabbed him in the head and a few times in the side and Julian collapsed to the ground. The FRCI then told three women to 'rejoice' and clap their hands. I could not rejoice. I looked towards the bush. One ordered me to look and to clap my hands. We were forced to obey."

Attacks in other regions in the west of the country

After Gbagbo's arrest on 11 April 2011, the FRCI and the troops fighting with them attacked

some villages claiming they were searching for arms and Liberian mercenaries.

Attacks against villages - where people belonging to ethnic groups considered as supporters of Laurent Gbagbo lived - continued during the first weeks of May 2011. Several villages located in the sub-prefecture of Dago, in the department of Sassandra, were looted and set ablaze. A village chief told Amnesty International on 9 May 2011:

“Since 6 May, the FRCI and the non-indigenous populations (allogènes) are committing many abuses against us. There are dead bodies everywhere and as people fled to the bush, there is nobody to bury the corpses that are exposed on the road. Behind all this, there is a land issue as the allogènes want to take our lands.”

Between the 6 and 8 May 2011, several villages were set ablaze and dozens of people were killed, notably in the village of Gobroko. The FRCI justified these acts by saying that they were looking for arms and Liberian mercenaries.

Sexual violence

Amnesty International also gathered information on cases of rape and sexual violence committed against women and girls by the FRCI and other armed elements fighting with them.

For example, on 31 March, in the village of X [name withheld for security reasons], near Duékoué, a girl aged 14 was raped and killed. A witness said:

"On 31 March, men in fatigues surrounded my “campement” (a house surrounded by a plantation). First they shot me. I fell down, they thought I was dead. Then they surrounded other people. The daughter of a woman, aged 14 and who also lived in the camp, was raped and then killed. She struggled, she screamed, she called for help, to no avail, the other people could do nothing. One of the attackers ripped her skirt and raped her, then shot her and then shot other people."

Other women were detained for several days and raped repeatedly.

After more than 15 years of xenophobic discourse that tore apart the people of Côte d'Ivoire, there is an urgent need to reassure and protect the different communities who live in Côte d'Ivoire. Unfortunately, the very serious violations and abuses committed by the FRCI and the armed elements fighting alongside them since the arrest of Laurent Gbagbo send the signal that people from ethnic groups considered to be supporting Laurent Gbagbo continue to be targeted.

President Alassane Ouattara and his government should live up to their promises of fighting against impunity and ensuring justice and reparation to all victims whatever political affiliation or ethnic group they belong to. If this is not done as a matter of priority, the future of Côte d'Ivoire risks plunging again into a cycle of human rights violations and abuses that go unpunished and that will provoke calls for revenge and lead to further violence.

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