

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **"The amnesty excludes crimes against human kind," President Laurent Gbagbo tells an Amnesty International delegation**

"The recent amnesty excludes economic crimes and crimes against human kind and I can assure you that victims will have every opportunity to lodge their complaints," indicated the Ivorian Head of State, Laurent Gbagbo, at an audience granted to an Amnesty International delegation, in Abidjan, on 12 July 2007.

This position was reiterated by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Mamadou Koné, who met the Amnesty International delegation on 11 July 2007. The Minister of Justice expressly indicated that the recent regulation issued in April 2007, granting an amnesty for most offences committed during the conflict that has shaken Côte d'Ivoire since September 2000 "excludes war crimes and crimes against humanity."

"We take note of these commitments, which respond to the organisation's publicly expressed concerns about the scope of the recent amnesty," Erwin Van Der Borght, Director of the Amnesty International Africa Program said today.

Following the adoption of the amnesty, the organisation publicly expressed its concern that, contrary to the amnesty law adopted in August 2003, which excluded "crimes constituting serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and crimes listed in articles 5-8 of the Treaty of Rome on the International Criminal Court" and contrary to what was agreed in the recent Ouagadougou Agreement, signed by the two parties to the conflict on 4 March 2007, this new amnesty did not expressly exclude crimes under international law.

At the audience granted by President Gbagbo to the Amnesty International delegation, the Ivorian Head of State also firmly condemned acts of sexual violence against women. These acts of violence against women, which were perpetrated with total impunity and in a widespread and, at times, systematic way by all parties to the conflict, were denounced by Amnesty International in two reports published in March 2007 : *Côte d'Ivoire: Targeting women, the forgotten victims of the conflict* and *Côte d'Ivoire: Voices of women and girls, the forgotten victims of the conflict*.

"We are very pleased about this condemnation of sexual violence and we call on President Gbagbo to send a message to both the victims and the perpetrators of these acts, clearly indicating that those responsible for these atrocities will be brought to justice and that the victims and their families will receive justice and reparation," said Erwin van der Borght today.

The Amnesty International delegation also urged President Gbagbo to [[ensure]] that Côte d'Ivoire votes for the resolution calling for a global moratorium on executions that will probably be presented at the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly.

"President Gbagbo assured the delegation of his long-standing commitment to the abolition of the death penalty and we strongly hope that Côte d'Ivoire, which abolished the death penalty in 2000,

will support the adoption of this resolution, which, if accepted, will be a decisive step towards the abolition of the death penalty," said Erwin Van Der Borghet today.

**See Amnesty International reports:**

*Côte d'Ivoire: Targeting women, the forgotten victims of the conflict*  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR310012007>

*Côte d'Ivoire: Voices of women and girls, forgotten victims of the conflict*  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR310022007>

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For more information, contact the Amnesty International press office in London, the United Kingdom, on +44 20 7413 5562 Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW.  
web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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