



Pat-MedMUNC III Security Council

Situation in the Ivory Coast

The Ivory Coast was long one of Africa's most stable and prosperous countries. For decades after its independence from France in 1960, the country enjoyed religious and ethnic harmony. All that changed in 1999 when Army General Robert Guei led a military coup that overthrew the government of Henri Konan Bedié and led to deep national divisions. In September 2002, northern Muslims expressed discontent in a mutiny that escalated into a full-scale rebellion. Cote d'Ivoire has been a divided country since a 2002 failed coup attempt evolved into an armed rebellion that split the country in two. The conflict appeared to have ended with the French-brokered Linas-Marcoussis peace accords of January 2003, creating a new government of national reconciliation with power shared between northern-based rebels and the southern government leadership.

Both sides, however, threatened to return to violence. The supporters of the government accused the French of helping the rebels to overthrow President Laurent Gbagbo. In September 2003, the rebel group New Forces pulled out of the reconciliation government, accusing President Gbagbo of lacking good faith in implementing the peace agreement.

Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo and rebellion New Forces leader Guillaume Soro signed the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA) in March 2007, and a new government was formed with Soro as Prime Minister (PM). Implementation of the accord, including federal elections, is ongoing, but long-awaited elections have been postponed repeatedly. The government has not regained full control of the northern part of the country, which remains under the de-facto control of the New Forces.

Despite the presence of over 9,000 UN forces (UNOCI) in Cote d'Ivoire since 2004, ethnic conflict still leaves displaced hundreds of thousands of Ivorians in and out of the country as well as driven out migrants from neighboring states who worked in Ivorian cocoa plantations; the March 2007 peace deal between Ivorian rebels and the government brought significant numbers of rebels out of

hiding in neighboring states.

Cote d'Ivoire's five-year civil war split the country between the Government-controlled south and the New Forces-held north. In between was a buffer zone called the "Zone of Confidence" patrolled by UN peacekeeping forces and France's Force Licorne soldiers.

Citizen identification and voter registration continues to be a challenge. Identification and registration was launched nationwide in early December 2008 and had proceeded fairly smoothly, with only some delays. On November 11, 2009, the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) announced that the elections scheduled for November 29 would again be postponed to allow for the completion of the registration process. No new election date was set at the time of postponement. Another presidential election was attempted October 31st, 2010. In preparation, the UN Security Council voted, on September 29, 2010, to increase the number of peacekeeping forces in Cote d'Ivoire by 500 troops. The current goal of the mission and the reason for the increase in peacekeeping forces is to protect the status quo long enough to hold fair and free elections. Alassane Ouattara had won the election in the second round with 54% of the vote. The President of the Constitutional Court immediately declared that the results were invalid, however. Even with a winner, many cannot accept the transition and problems of poverty, refugees and political unrest persist.

The political impasse in Côte d'Ivoire had brought about a degradation of the humanitarian situation, with 20,000 persons internally displaced and 33,000 others fleeing to neighboring Liberia. More than 270 people have been killed and many others have disappeared or been arbitrarily arrested in the past six weeks, he added.

Points to Consider

- Should the Security Council remove the Peace Keeping Troops now that the elections are over? Should they stay and help maintain peace?
- What is to be done with the refugees fleeing to Liberia?
- How should the racial issues be addressed?