

Gbagbo Supporters Tortured, Killed in Abidjan

Human Rights Watch 2 June 2011 (...) Armed forces loyal to President Alassane Ouattara have killed at least 149 real or perceived supporters of the former President Laurent Gbagbo since taking control of the commercial capital in mid-April, 2011, Human Rights Watch said today. Pro-Gbagbo militiamen killed at least 220 men in the days immediately preceding and following Gbagbo's arrest on April 11, when the nearly four-month conflict drew to a close.

Between May 13 and 25, Human Rights Watch interviewed 132 victims and witnesses to violence by both sides during the battle for Abidjan and in the weeks after Gbagbo's arrest. Killings, torture, and inhumane treatment by Ouattara's armed forces continued while a Human Rights Watch researcher was in Abidjan, with clear ethnic targeting during widespread acts of reprisal and intimidation. (...)

(...) Recommendations

To President Alassane Ouattara:

- Demonstrate that promises of impartial and credible prosecutions of grave crimes are meaningful by ensuring immediate investigations into killings, extrajudicial executions, and torture committed by the Republican Forces in Abidjan. Hold those responsible accountable, including commanders who oversaw the crimes, regardless of their military rank.
- Put commanders implicated in serious abuse on administrative leave, pending investigation.

- Make publicly clear that anyone detained - including former Gbagbo militia implicated in grave crimes - is to be treated humanely in accordance with Ivorian and international law.
- When cordon and search operations are conducted by the Republican Forces, ensure that police, gendarmes, or UN and French peacekeepers are included.
- Seek the assistance of key international donors in assessing the capacity of the Ivorian justice system to prosecute grave crimes and addressing the weaknesses identified.
- Provide complete access to all detention facilities to international monitors and members of the human rights division of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, including access that allows detainees to describe the conditions of their treatment without the presence or interference of the Republican Forces.
- Cooperate fully with the ICC, including arresting suspects, if the court prosecutor opens an investigation of crimes committed in Côte d'Ivoire.

To the UN Security Council:

- To bring light to atrocities committed in the past decade in Côte d'Ivoire, publish the 2004 Commission of Inquiry report when the 2011 Commission of Inquiry report is presented before

the Human Rights Council in June. Failure to do so continues to send the signal that certain people deeply implicated in war crimes and other grave abuses, are being shielded from justice.

To the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire:

- Increase significantly patrols, including joint patrols with the Republican Forces, in Yopougon, particularly in vulnerable pro-Gbagbo neighborhoods like Koweit, Yaosseh, Kouté, and Abobo-Doumé.
- Visit detention centers daily, particularly in Yopougon, and demand access to prisoners without interference by the Republican Forces. (...)

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