

**Côte d'Ivoire: Gbagbo's ICC Transfer Advances Justice** Human Rights Watch 29  
November 2011

The transfer of former President Laurent Gbagbo to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague for his alleged role in international crimes during Côte d'Ivoire's devastating post-election violence is a major step toward ensuring justice, Human Rights Watch said today. Human Rights Watch called on the ICC prosecutor to move swiftly on investigations for grave crimes committed by forces allied with the current president, Alassane Ouattara.

Gbagbo's refusal to step down when the Independent Electoral Commission and international observers proclaimed Ouattara the winner of the November 28, 2010 presidential run-off set off six months of violence. At least 3,000 people were killed and more than 150 women raped during the conflict period, often in targeted acts by forces on both sides along political, ethnic, and religious lines. (...)

Efforts by both the ICC and the Ivorian government to ensure accountability for the post-election crimes are important in returning the rule of law to Côte d'Ivoire, Human Rights Watch said. However, investigations with a view to prosecutions are needed without delay for individuals implicated in grave crimes who fought in the forces allied with Ouattara. (...) In May, Ouattara asked the ICC to open an investigation into the post-election violence, indicating that Ivorian courts would not be able to prosecute those at the highest levels for the worst crimes committed. The ICC judges authorized the prosecutor to open an investigation on October 3, citing evidence of war crimes and likely crimes against humanity by both sides' armed forces and allied militia groups. Gbagbo's arrest and transfer on November 29 is the first for the ICC's investigation in Côte d'Ivoire. Credible information suggests that several Gbagbo allies implicated in serious crimes may likewise be subject to imminent ICC arrest warrants.

The ICC prosecutor should also pursue cases involving crimes committed during the 2002-2003 armed conflict and its aftermath, Human Rights Watch said. The 2010 violence capped a decade of human rights violations and impunity in Côte d'Ivoire. The failure to address the worst earlier abuses risks undermining important efforts to enshrine the rule of law, Human Rights Watch said.

Ouattara has promised repeatedly that anyone implicated in crimes committed during the post-election period will be brought to justice. But in terms of charges brought at the national level, the reality remains in stark contrast. (...)

**Read the full**  
[article](#)