

INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP - NEW BRIEFING

Côte d'Ivoire: Stepping Up the Pressure

Dakar/Brussels, 7 September 2006: The international community must remain very actively engaged in Côte d'Ivoire, and implement a range of new measures, if the country is to avoid an eventual bloodbath.

[Côte d'Ivoire: Stepping Up the Pressure](#)*, the latest Crisis Group briefing, looks beyond yesterday's cabinet resignations over the toxic waste scandal, and sounds the alarm regarding the real possibility of civil war. As happened in 2005, the country will miss this year's deadline set by the UN Security Council for a presidential election, 31 October 2006. The international community must take tough decisions in September, including postponing the elections, extending Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny's authority, and remaining actively engaged in the country.

“This second election postponement is part of the deliberate strategy by political leaders who do not want a peace beyond their control”, says Gilles Yabi, Analyst for the International Crisis Group. “They are trying to assess the power and engagement of the international community”.

Without new rules to govern the post-October period or the necessary pressure on the political leaders who attempt to block “clean” elections, no transitional Ivorian government will be able to organise a presidential poll in the foreseeable future. Ultimately, the international community will be left with two options: a political and military withdrawal that would leave it to Ivorians to solve their problems as they please, or a full take-over of the electoral process, which would seem like a temporary trusteeship.

African heads of state meeting in September at UN headquarters in New York should propose the following new measures:

- Extend the transition for a further six months and grant Prime Minister Banny extraordinary executive power for this period, including authority to sign decrees, appoint civilian and military administrators and take all necessary measures needed to enforce the roadmap, while at the same time consider as suspended any provisions of the constitution which are deemed to be incompatible with the roadmap;
- Maintain Laurent Gbagbo, whose presidential mandate expired on 30 October 2005, as interim head of state for a further six months from 31 October 2006, while at the same time reaffirming the role of the UN High Representative for elections; and
- Apply the targeted sanctions created by Security Council Resolution 1572 to those responsible for grave violations of human rights.

“If these measures are not implemented, violence in Côte d'Ivoire will spare none of the neighbouring countries” says Suliman Baldo, Crisis Group's Africa Program Director.