



WARN POLICY BRIEF

RENEWED CRISIS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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BREAKING THE IVORIAN CYCLE OF VIOLENCE: AN URGENT IMPERATIVE

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INTRODUCTION

The Ivorian crisis has taken a new twist as violence has re-escalated following the killing of nine French peacekeepers in the rebel held town of Bouake in northern Cote d'Ivoire in the wake of air bombardments of rebel strongholds by Ivorian air force. The French reaction was swift and energetic. President Chirac ordered the destruction of the entire Ivorian air power. Abidjan, once again became the theatre of violent demonstrations, pillage and looting as anti-French sentiments have surged forcing the international community to start evacuating its nationals and staff based in Cote d'Ivoire. Latest reports say more than 60 people have been killed by French forces and the Ivorian government has accused the French of excessive and non-commensurate use of force and deliberate attempt to humiliate the Gbagbo Government. The French claim they acted in self defence and deny killing any Ivorian. The confidence gap between the supposed peacekeeper (France) and Ivorians especially in the Government held zone has dwindled drastically. The French have forcefully and strategically taken over the international airports in Yamoussoukro and Abidjan.

WEST AFRICA EARLY WARNING NETWORK (WARN)

The West Africa Early Warning Network (WARN) is an integral part of the West Africa Preventive Peacebuilding Program co-ordinated by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). A member of the FEWER, WANEP through its WARN Program is setting the stage for a civil society-based early warning and response network in Africa.

WARN covers the entire Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region including Cameroon and Chad. Our main focus has been the Mano River Basin countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire. We are now expanding to cover the entire sub-region.

WANEP has entered into an agreement with ECOWAS through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the framework of capacity building in Conflict Prevention. One of the goals of this agreement is to interface WARN with the ECOWAS Early Warning Systems.

President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa in an attempt to resolve the crisis has invited the Ivorian opposition to Pretoria to seek a solution to the crisis. Meanwhile, France, the colonial power has been pushing for a UN Security Council Resolution to institutionalize sanctions on violators and spoilers of the peace accord/process. This policy brief examines the critical issues that must be addressed to bring the seemingly illusive peace process back on track which include: the confidence crisis, deliberate misinterpretation of key issues of the peace process for political convenience, the stakeholders and their confusing agenda. Appreciating the contextual realities and complexities of the Ivorian peace process, WARN concludes the briefing by proposing options for response.

Accra III: Key decisions and their Level of Implementation

Since the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis-Kleber Peace Accord in January 2003 to end a protracted civil strife in Cote d'Ivoire, West African leaders under the ECOWAS framework in tandem with the African Union and the United Nations have engaged themselves proactively with the Government, political parties and the New Forces (former rebels) to bring to an end the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. The Accra III Accord of July 2004 defined the framework and re-traced the road map for the beginning of a healing process and sustainable peace as there was a clear shift away from an emotionally induced process to a more pragmatic and assertive one.

The Accra III peace accord strengthened the weaknesses that were identified in the Marcoussis Peace Accord. The process of legislative reforms to deal definitely with the question of *Ivoirité* and the citizenship controversy was outlined. The key issues relating to land, considered as one of the key root causes of the Ivorian crisis was also addressed in relationship to the question of citizenship. Electoral restrictions and the exclusion of those perceived to be ineligible was scrutinized with concrete agreements to remove such restrictions through legislative reforms. The United Nations Commission investigating human rights abuses is expected to release the first part of their findings which will begin to address the issues of impunity. All parties agreed to place emphasis on the preservation of the territorial integrity of Cote d'Ivoire, respect republican institutions and state authority. Other commitments were made to respect press freedom including the international media along with the condemnation of media that promotes xenophobia.

Below we attempt a tabular summary of the Accra III decisions on the obstacles to the Implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra II agreements

Summary Tabulation, Accra III Peace Process/Implementation

	Obstacle	Decision	Level of Implementation
1.	Eligibility criteria for the office of the President of the Republic (Article 35 of the Constitution) and other legal reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Gbagbo to use discretionary constitutional powers • Convene Extra-ordinary session of parliament to adopt decisions, including other legal reforms by August 31, 2004. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problematic: Parliament (majority PDCI) refused to just endorse text, claimed they are independent body with right to make amendments. • Decided on referendum on eligibility, though contested by G7 • Process and deliberations live on TV; prolonged into Ordinary session that began Sept.
2.	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parties committed to commence DDR by Oct. 15, 2004. • Specific timetable to be fixed in accordance with Marcoussis and Grand Bassam and Yamoussoukro agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most Problematic and suddenly conditional • Former rebels claim they can only disarm when all texts have been adopted by parliament • Restoration of State authority still pending

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall include all paramilitary and militia groups • PM to establish timetable for restoration of State administration and public services throughout the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gov't of Gbagbo says vote of additional texts would depend on progress of disarmament process
3.	Delegation of Powers to the Prime Minister Seydou Diarra of the Government of National Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Gbagbo to translate into action the letter dated Dec.12, 2003 delegating powers to the PM in accordance with article 53 of the Constitution • President and PM agreed on a decree to sanction this decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still pending as the adoption of key texts. • Collaboration between PM and President remained fragile and there were threats from or calls for the PM to resign by some press organs
4.	Resumption of work of the Government of National Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The President, PM and Political Parties and Former Rebels agreed to resume official duty and ensure sustained implementation of agreements • Also agreed to convene Council of Ministers in week's time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most implemented of Accra III decisions • President Gbagbo rescinded his sacking of rebel Ministers and convened Council of Ministers and normalcy restored • Salaries of 'recalcitrant' ministers restored
5.	Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights and Rule of Law paramount to successful process; parties agreed to cooperate fully with International Commission of Inquiry to look into violations since September 19, 2002. • Agreed on establishment of National human Rights Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights violations still persisted • National Human Rights Commission created
6.	Monitoring Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tripartite monitoring mechanism composing the representatives in Cote d'Ivoire of ECOWAS, Africa Union, and UN shall make fortnightly reports on progress of implementation of Accra III to Chairman of ECOWAS, Chairperson of AU and Secretary General, UN. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been going on and the degree to which such reports averted the present crisis is a matter of conjecture. • What is certain is the fact that political will and commitment to the peace process was waning.

Source: Accra III document and WARN's field reports from Cot d'Ivoire

In addition to the above, the text relating to the creation of an Independent Electoral Commission was already adopted during the extra-ordinary session of parliament but now contested by the opposition coalition known as G7¹. Texts relating to nationality and land reforms met with amendments and there were signs of relative progress and possibilities of adoption by the end of the ordinary session of parliament that is still sitting. Nevertheless, only the monitoring committee can grade the level of compliance. President Gbagbo and his camp say he is the only one that has respected and implemented Marcoussis and Accra II and III and all other concessions and sacrifices. President Thabo Mbeki in a press statement after talks with Gbagbo acknowledged

¹ *SoirInfo* news tabloid, November 2, 2004.

that President Gbagbo and his Government have made significant progress² even if the G7 coalition feels otherwise. The disarmament process which is considered as key to the peace process never kicked off at all.

New Destabilizing Indicators threatening Peace and Stability

Since the out break of violence on November 6 when the Ivorian army (FANCI) unilaterally decided to liberate the country in defiance of the cease fire and commenced renewed bombardments of rebel positions, new constraints and threats have been unearthed, and old ones revived. We would briefly attempt a brief analysis.

Risk of Conflagration: The risk of a large scale escalation of violence is high. Already, the violence has spread to the heart of the cocoa producing area of Gagnoa where a curfew has been declared. Calls for a curfew in Abidjan have been resisted by the government. Confrontation between the supporters and sympathisers of President Gbagbo and Republican institutions and the French forces has persisted and thousands are fleeing Cote d'Ivoire into the neighbouring countries of Ghana and Liberia. This is coming at a time the Liberian peace process witnessed similar violence, the risk of a regional conflagration is imminent and this might seriously compromise peace and stability in the entire sub-region.

Crisis of confidence: Pundits agree that the main obstacle to peace in Cote d'Ivoire has been a confidence crisis and mistrust than hatred. Nothing explains the prevarications and lack of real commitment to peace and reconciliation rather than suspicion and lack of confidence. Through out the recent cycle of the Ivorian crisis from the Forum on National Reconciliation of October 2001 which resulted in the formation of the first government of national union till today, Ivorian politicians fanned by a highly polarized and biased media has demonstrated an unprecedented level of mistrust. This has embarrassed the international community and those accompanying the Ivorians in the relentless peace process. Finding and creating the missing link here would be a major breakthrough that might usher the much needed level of confidence to move the process forward.

Conditional DDR: "We would not disarm until all texts are voted into law; no vote of laws until State authority is restored in national territory..." is like the egg and chicken argument over which came first. The former rebels claim that Accra III says disarmament only after Marcoussis agreement is voted into law. The EU and the UN however issued a statement iterating that disarmament should be unconditional. By making DDR conditional, the former rebels have put yet another major stumbling block. From our understanding, both sides of the divide were expected to proceed to implement the Accra agreement concomitantly with respect to the set time table. This, according to the Ivorian government is what provoked them to unilaterally decide to re-unite the country by force.

'Francophobia' on the Rise: Anti-French sentiments have surged all over the country following what is now considered a French over-reaction that led to the death of 64 people according media and hospital sources. Even those who are not supporters of President Gbagbo like the PDCI Houphouet Youths (led by Anois Castro) joined the Young Patriots in the sit-in human shield to protect the Presidency from any French attack. The former said their mission is to defend the institutions of the republic under threat and support for the establishment of territorial integrity all over Cote d'Ivoire. About 16,000 French citizens are in Cote d'Ivoire and some have naturalized as Ivorians but their lives are at risk as more deaths are reported from French bullets. French troops are no longer considered or viewed as impartial peace keepers. Coming on the heels of reported burglary into the Central Bank of West Africa branch in Man, western Cote d'Ivoire by French peacekeepers which Paris hurriedly flew them back to France, the French

² *Fraternite Matin* news tabloid, November 9, 2004.

peacekeeping image has been greatly tarnished.

New rebellion ? : Newspaper reports are rife with ‘new’ that two rebellions have emerged in the west of the country. Led by Maho Glofei and Pastor Diomande respectively, the Movement for the Liberation of Western Cote d’Ivoire (MILOCI) and the Front for the Liberation of the Grand West (FLGO) are said to be preparing an assault on Man and Danane³. Renegade Liberian fighters are said to be swelling the ranks of this new initiative as well as ferrying in arms and there are claims that the Ivorian government or elements within the system are sponsoring these ‘rebellions’⁴. The new rebellion seems to nurse more of an ethnic than national sentiments or agenda and fear of an imminent ethnic confrontation is rife.

Massive Prison Evasion from Abidjan Prison: A massive evasion of about 4000 inmates from the Abidjan prison has been reported in the wake of the weekend anti-French riots. *Agence France Presse* reports that of the 5,500 inmates, only 1000 men and some 99 women are left; the rest having taken advantage of a clean up process in their cells to flee from the *Maison d’arret et de Correction d’Abidjan* (MACA).

Aggravating Humanitarian Situation: Northern Cote d’Ivoire has been under stress since September 19, 2002. No banking facilities, schools deserted, hospitals abandoned by medical staff, and fear and uncertainty is the order of the day. Today, the situation has aggravated with absence of electricity, water and telephone network. A catastrophe looms.

Extortion at Road Blocks: Extortion at road blocks by civilian and so called vigilante groups have resurfaced. Claiming that the international community has abandoned them to their fate, fierce looking youths on November 11 mounted road blocks along the Abidjan-Accra highway and extorted money and good from passengers travelling to Ghana by road (only means due to insecurity and cancellation of most flights to Abidjan).

Sub-regional destabilization: The timing of the outburst to coincide with the recent escalation of violence in Liberia is dangerous for sub-regional peace and stability. The spoilers and their network of destabilizers may undermine the entire peace process in West Africa. Fragile peace in Sierra Leone as UNAMSIL plans to start withdrawal; riots in Liberia, and the budding crisis in Guinea are all indicators to watch and act accordingly to avert a massive destabilization.

Opportunities: One development worth noting is the growing confidence in African peacekeepers. The Ivorian media initially hostile to ECOWAS intervention have now changed tune. ECOWAS forces in the UN contingent have performed so well that you do not hear about them⁵. Their professionalism and neutrality has made the South African Foreign Minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma to propose a gradual phasing out of French troops (because of the difficulty that would henceforth ensue working with Ivorian Forces) and replacing them with more West African troops. With Sudan also welcoming deployment of African troops (as against foreign troops) the era of African solutions to African problems may be dawning.

Stakeholders and their Leverage

WANEP attempts an analysis of the level of leverage these major stakeholders now have on the unfolding crisis and perhaps their capacity to effect or influence the course of peace.

Government of President Gbagbo: By violating the ceasefire that has held since the signing of the Macoussis Accord and flying over United Nations Peacekeepers to attack the New Forces, President Gbagbo reneged from his commitment through the Accra Accords not to resort to a military option. Just as President Gbagbo lost face after the brutal suppression by the security

³ *SoirInfo*, November 2, 2004

⁴ Reliefweb, November 10, 2004 (www.reliefweb.int).

⁵ Alarms are usually heard when things are not moving well. That is what makes news.

agencies and parallel forces following an attempted protest on March 25th 2004, the attack on the New Forces in violation of the ceasefire and killing of French Peacekeepers⁶ have done incredible damage to the standing of President Gbagbo.

President Gbagbo will now have to cooperate fully with ECOWAS, the African Union and the UN to end the Ivorian crisis as one way of getting the help of the African leaders to redeem his image. President Gbagbo has to exert leadership over the extremists' elements of his party, the Front Populaire Ivoirienne (FPI) for the necessary legislative reforms to be undertaken as soon as possible to end this crisis. The leadership of the Ivorian Parliament and FPI party leader Mamadou Coulibally and Pascal Affi N'Guessan should be actively involved as primary stakeholders. Parliament would have been more accommodating had they been involved in the process beginning from Lome to Marcoussis and Accra II and III.

France: There is no gainsaying that from impartial peacekeeper, the French have suddenly become a major actor in the crisis. Their situation is now complicated. Being a former colonial master (and still acting as one by Ivorian government standards), the French intervention Mission (Licorne) solicited by President Gbagbo during the early phases of the crisis in September 2002 have not had a cordial relationship with its host. France had been accused by both sides of the divide of partiality even when it did its best to be impartial. By self sponsoring themselves, France must be appreciated for keeping hostilities at bay by maintaining the red line between the antagonists.

However, the tides seem to have turned following the robust reaction following the death of nine French forces. As WANEP consistently reported its policy briefs since February 2003, the French role in ending the Ivorian imbroglio is critical. France has been under pressure to protecting its citizens in Cote d'Ivoire, its economic investment, and maintaining a close relationship with Cote d'Ivoire as a former colony. The action of the French government to destroy the Ivorian air force may be understood in the context of nine French soldiers killed under a UN peace-keeping mandate. By paralyzing the Ivorian air force from further attacks on the New Forces, the French may have averted a major escalation of the crisis. That also has created a major backlash. "On ne tue pas les soldats Francais sans reponse immediate"⁷, Raffarin warned France 2 TV channel.

In the current scenario however, the French presence in Abidjan is not seen by ordinary people in the context of UN peacekeeping⁸. They are now seen as occupiers following attacks on Presidential Palace in Yamoussoukrou and the forceful take over of the Abidjan international airport. It is therefore important that in order to prevent a reaction that could result in more loss of lives, the French retreat into a subdued background role while other UN peace-keepers and the African Union are more visible and seen to be in charge of the management of the security crisis.⁹ This would save the UN and peacekeeping more embarrassments and restore credibility even if reprisals in self defence are permitted.

United Nations: The UN role, vital as it is has been seriously affected. The anti-French feelings and attacks and pillage are a sign that there is no peace to keep. In accordance with resolution 1524 which authorized Operation Licorne as a logistic support force to ONUCI, it is tempting to ask whether the French forces received the command from the ONOCI Force Commander, General Abdoulaye Fall or from President Chirac. Declarations by the French Defence Minister,

⁶ Speaking over CNN on November 10, the Ivorian Ambassador to the UN, Philippe Djangone-Bi regretted the incident but called for an international inquiry into the incident. Some Ivorian observers say such an investigation may shade light on doubts whether the attack really came from the Ivorian forces and whether it was deliberate.

⁷ Meaning France would immediately revenge any death of its troops. But suffice to state here that when the Forces Nouvelles killed two French soldiers, no revenge took place.

⁸ We recall that France refused to allow Nigerian air force fighters to deal with the rebellion following President Gbagbo's appeal for help just days after September 19, 2002. Destroying Ivorian air capability only goes a long way to give Gbagbo's sympathisers that France had a hidden agenda which, to them, is now unfolding.

⁹ Perhaps France may now understand why the US acted the way they did in Iraq. Can two wrongs make a right?

Michele Alliot-Marie, and French Prime Minister, Jean Pierre Raffarin, justifying the French position does not even make allusion to the UN. Thus, the debate over the acceptance of a parallel force to the UN command resurfaces. Cote d'Ivoire is certainly another great challenge for peacekeeping.

On the other hand, the United Nations Commission investigating human rights abuses should release its findings which will begin to address the issues of impunity. By indicting some of the actors of the Ivorian scene, their margin to manoeuvre and capacity to drag or spoil the peace process would narrow.

The Young Patriots: The Young Patriots continue to see themselves as saviours and liberators of Cote d'Ivoire. Although some of them are purportedly on the pay roll of the State, their power base seems to widen with the latest developments. Their capacity to exert maximum nuisance, and inflict collateral damage even without conventional arms remains a phenomenon. It would not be wishful thinking if they are directly involved in the next phase of the peace negotiations. The Youth Patriots regarded as villains as well as liberators (depending on which side one looks at it) are sending a strong message to other thousands of youths in Africa. The Ivorian 'patriotic' claims on both sides of the divide can be described as a veritable youth revolution that is just beginning.

New Forces: Although Guillaume Soro, the leader of the political face of the former rebellion said about 80 civilians were killed during the Government air raids and that they are ready for any eventuality, it seems that the rebellion has been greatly weakened by recent international power struggles since June 2004. The discovery of mass graves and continuous quarrel between Soro and Ibrahim Coulibaly (alias IB) has been self damaging.

Their conditional disarmament call and their uncoordinated and derogatory statements towards the government of Laurent Gbagbo and even the UN or French leaves room to wonder how committed the rebels are to the DDR process. Commensurate pressure must be meted upon the former rebels to unconditionally disarm. Seeing themselves as the liberators, the talk of disarmament is a nightmare to the new forces who are indirectly requesting for compensation and not just dropping their arms.

Political Opposition (G7): Their force lies in constituting a united front in view of the 2005 elections. Their non-violent approach seems not to 'frighten' President Gbagbo since the use of force gained momentum. The unfortunate reality is that negotiators seem to attach a lot of attention and hence give more concessions to armed or violent groups, ignoring the traditional politicians who have persevered over the years. The G7 and their supporters would discretely welcome the persistent stalemate so that by October 2005, President Gbagbo's mandate would expire. At this point Gbagbo would have no legitimacy or legal basis to hang around and the Presidency would be free for all or better still, a transitional government would be formed with Gbagbo hopefully on the sidelines.

Africa Union: African mediation efforts by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa began November 9, when during a brief visit to Abidjan. President Mbeki credited President Gbagbo for making progress on Accra III. This may not resonate well with the mainstream voices that seem to hold Gbagbo responsible for every delay in the entire process. While France is rushing for sanctions on spoilers of the peace process, the AU still feels that peace be given a chance. President Mbeki has in this direction invited the Ivorian opposition to South Africa for further peace talks.

ECOWAS: ECOWAS has continued to play a vital role in the process. A joint statement with the EU condemned the escalation of the crisis and called on protagonists to resume dialogue immediately. The Executive Secretary of ECOWAS and his Deputy for Political Affairs, Defence and Security have all been on ground in Abidjan to rescue the peace process from collapse. The AU, UN and other partners of the international community greatly depend on the collaboration of ECOWAS in finding a lasting solution to the Ivorian crisis.

Possible Scenarios

President Gbagbo Resigns: Due to pressure from within and without, President Gbagbo decides to throw the towel and resign to create ground for a reconciler to lead the peace process forward. His party barons resist but finally concede and Seydou Diarra is given the mandate to lead the country to the 2005 elections. Calm returns and Franco-Ivorian relations are improved and France promises to equip the paralyzed Ivorian air force after Marcoussis and the "tropicalized" version of Accra III has fully been implemented. (Unlikely).

President Gbagbo deposed: Persistent tension and deteriorating security situation and pending humanitarian catastrophe, coupled with the French resolve to effect a regime change of the Iraqi type results in the overthrow of President Gbagbo by French forces and a puppet leader is installed. (Likely).

Full scale war erupts: The situation in Cote d'Ivoire degenerates and a full scale war between the FANCI and New Forces erupts. Inter-ethnic settlement of scores and ethnic cleansing ensues and a fratricidal war of proximity engulfs the country. UN attempts to enforce the peace process fails and another Rwanda type massacre occurs. (Very likely).

Dialogue Resumes: Mediation attempts by the AU, ECOWAS and UN yield fruits and the Accra III document is comprehensively implemented and all parties collaborate to stop the carnage that has besieged Cote d'Ivoire and prospects for a successful 2005 elections are restored. Real reconciliation and healing starts and a vibrant and assertive and non-partisan civil society emerge. (Likely).

Options for Response

Cessation of violence and hostilities: All attempts and efforts should be made to stop all forms of violence and hostilities nation wide. The UN and international community must be seen and heard to be speaking one language in order to save the peace.

Political/good will: The need to demonstrate political will on the part of the Ivorian belligerents is now more than ever before. There must be a clear shift from rhetoric to reality. Everyone talks peace but no one seems to make peace.

Supreme sacrifice in the name of peace: WARN had variously suggested (and would continue to harp) that President Gbagbo, Alassane Ouattara, Henri Konan Bedie, (and by extension Guillaume Soro) in the supreme interest of Cote d'Ivoire should all decline their intentions to run for the Presidential elections in 2005. Such a supreme sacrifice may put an end to the deadly power struggle in Cote d'Ivoire that politicians want to grab at all cost. Incentives and ceremonial positions could be awarded the gentlemen.

Punish defaulters: The days of impunity and deliberate torpedoing of the peace process are over. The world has invested much in terms of money, human resources and human lives. By threatening and effectively sanctioning those who have committed heinous crimes in the Ivorian war of self destruction, and even those who had enjoyed dragging the peace process on the mud, the international community gave the right signals. The UN should publish its Human Rights Report and begin the process of justice which must be seen to be done.

Franco-Ivorian Rapprochement: There is an urgent need for the rift in Franco-Ivorian relations to be repaired and urgently so. Visible overtures in this domain must be made and a high level French delegation to Abidjan or vice versa should be initiated. This is critical to meaningful peace and stability in Cote d'Ivoire. French presence in Abidjan is no longer seen by ordinary people as

UN presence. It is therefore important that the French retreat into a subdued background role while other UN peace-keepers and the African Union are more visible and seen to be in charge of the management of the security crisis. South African Foreign Minister even suggest a gradual phasing out.

Commensurate Pressure on Protagonist: Commensurate and appropriate pressure should be meted on all the protagonists to comply with the decisions taken in Marcoussis and Accra II and III.

Media Caution: Both the locally polarised and international media (particularly some French media) should be made to dissuade from fanning the flames of conflict. Media coverage of the crisis has been deplorable.

Appropriate response and contingency plans and/measures must be put in place in anticipation of any further deterioration. Plans to host influx of refugees in Ghana must be fortified.

Check extortionist tendencies: Innocent Ivorians and foreigners have had more than a fair share of trouble. The erection of extortion barricades as reported on the Abidjan Accra highway must be immediately checked.

Conclusion:

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) appreciates every peace process within the complexity of the conflict that is being mediated. In mitigating escalated violence in such protracted conflicts, every progress that is often made towards peace is often saddled with obstacles that must be dealt with in the peacebuilding process. Sometimes, we take three steps forward in building peace and take two steps backwards. While we vehemently condemn the use of violence as a policy instrument, it is important not to dwell only on the set backs but assess the progress made however little and re-focus attention on the framework for durable peace and stability. It is in this regard that the events of the past week-end may yet be the wake up call that could present new windows of opportunity to accelerate the peace process in Cote d'Ivoire.