

APPEAL FOR PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN COTE D'IVOIRE

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Côte d'Ivoire is preparing for its presidential election on 31 October. These elections will be an important step in the development of the country. They have to be free and fair, and the electoral race must remain peaceful to ensure that the outcome is widely accepted by the people of Côte d'Ivoire.

That is possible, but not a given. Côte d'Ivoire 2020 is not Côte d'Ivoire 2010, but the risk of renewed confrontation in the country is real. Now is the time for preventive action.

The 2010-2011 post-electoral conflict claimed more than 3,000 lives and caused significant economic damage. The courage and the determination of Ivoirians have allowed the country to stage a remarkable recovery and make real strides in economic and social development.

However, Côte d'Ivoire's wounds cannot be healed with economic growth alone. As the pandemic cripples the economy, they are returning to the fore. In the absence of justice for past atrocities and effective national reconciliation, the political atmosphere remains tense.

The warning signs are clear. Against a background of distrust and controversy over the legitimacy of the electoral roll, the independence of the electoral commission and the exclusion of some political leaders from the race, there has been a rise in hate speech and clashes along ethnic and religious fault lines. Conflict is not inevitable, but critical confidence-building measures are indispensable and urgent.

>> We call on the people of Côte d'Ivoire to ignore the siren calls of those who would try to manipulate them with appeals to divisive identity politics.

>> We call on the Ivoirian political class to demonstrate awareness of its historic responsibility and commitment to peace and stability. Political prisoners must be released, freedom of expression and movement guaranteed and the rights of all citizens protected.

>> We call on the President of the Republic and all political actors to enter into an inclusive national dialogue, through which political parties and civil society representatives can create the conditions necessary to ensure confidence in the elections. Immediately after the elections, Côte d'Ivoire should initiate reforms of its political system and its electoral environment to consolidate peace and stability.

>> Finally, we call on the international community, the United Nations, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States to work together with the leaders and people of Côte d'Ivoire to ensure a peaceful and broadly acceptable outcome to the elections.

Now is the time to act.

See next page for list of signatories

Signatories:

- **Ruth Dreifuss** - former Federal Councillor and President of the Swiss Confederation; member of the Kofi Annan Elections Integrity Panel of Senior Figures
- **Bert Koenders** - former Foreign Minister of the Netherlands; former Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire; member of the Kofi Annan Elections Integrity Panel of Senior Figures
- **Carlos Mesa** - former President of Bolivia; member of the Kofi Annan Elections Integrity Panel of Senior Figures
- **Olusegun Obasanjo** - former President of Nigeria
- **José Manuel Ramos-Horta** - former President of Timor-Leste; Nobel Peace Prize winner; member of the Kofi Annan Elections Integrity Panel of Senior Figures
- **Elhadj As Sy** - chair of the Board of the Kofi Annan Foundation; co-chair of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board; former Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

NOTES TO EDITORS

> About the Kofi Annan Foundation:

The Kofi Annan Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works to promote better global governance and strengthen the capacities of people and countries to build a fairer, more peaceful world. It was founded in 2007 by Kofi Annan, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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