

*For God so loved
the world...
shouldn't we?*

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***Praying for the World
One Country at Time***



**Cote d'Ivoire
October 23, 2011**

Cote d'Ivoire

Full Name

Republic of Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)

Capital

Yamoussoukro

Location

Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Ghana and Liberia

Leadership

President Alassane OUATTARA (since 4 December 2010)

Overview

Once hailed as a model of stability, Ivory Coast has slipped into the kind of internal strife that has plagued many African countries. An armed rebellion in 2002 split the nation in two. Since then, peace deals have alternated with renewed violence as the country has slowly edged its way towards a political resolution of the conflict. For more than three decades after independence under the leadership of its first president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, Ivory Coast was conspicuous for its religious and ethnic harmony and its well-developed economy. All this ended when the late Robert Guei led a coup which toppled Felix Houphouet-Boigny's successor, Henri Bedie, in 1999. Mr Bedie fled, but not before planting the seeds of ethnic discord by trying to stir up xenophobia against Muslim northerners, including his main rival, Alassane Ouattara. This theme was also adopted by Mr Guei, who had Alassane Ouattara banned from the presidential election in 2000 because of his foreign parentage, and by the only serious contender allowed to run against Mr Guei, Laurent Gbagbo. When Mr Gbagbo replaced Robert Guei after he was deposed in a popular uprising in 2000, violence replaced xenophobia. Scores of Mr Ouattara's supporters were killed after their leader called for new elections. In September 2002 a troop mutiny escalated into a full-scale rebellion, voicing the ongoing discontent of northern Muslims who felt they were being discriminated against in Ivorian politics. Thousands were killed in the conflict. Although most of the fighting ended in 2004, Ivory Coast remained tense and divided. French and UN peacekeepers patrolled the buffer zone which separated the north, held by rebels known as the New Forces, and the government-controlled south. After repeated delays, elections aimed at ending the conflict were finally held in October 2010. But the vote ushered in more unrest when the incumbent, Laurent Gbagbo, refused to concede victory to the internationally recognised winner, Alassane Ouattara. The ensuing four-month stand-off was only ended when Mr Ouattara's forces overran the south of the country, finally capturing Mr Gbagbo and declaring him deposed.



Religion

Muslim 38.6%, Christian 32.8%, indigenous 11.9%, none 16.7% (2008 est.)

Population

21,504,162 (July 2011 est.)

Economy

Ivory Coast is world's leading cocoa producer; UN sanctions imposed in 2004 include an arms embargo and a ban on diamond exports

Prayer Concerns

- Ethnic conflict leaves hundreds of thousands of Ivoirians displaced in and out of the country as well as driven out migrants from neighboring states who worked in Ivorian coca plantations.
- March 2007 peace deal between Ivorian rebels and the government brought significant numbers of rebels out of hiding in neighboring states.
- Population affected by excess mortality due to AIDS.
- Illicit producer of cannabis, mostly for local consumption.
- Rampant corruption and inadequate supervision leave the banking system vulnerable to money laundering, the lack of a developed financial system limits the country's utility as a major money-laundering center.