



Nov. 30, 2010

## Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions

### Main Findings and Preliminary Conclusions

*This statement is preliminary; a final report will be published several months after the end of the electoral process. For previous Carter Center statements on Cote d'Ivoire's elections, please visit [www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org).*

#### Political context

In the presidential election of Oct. 31, 2010, outgoing President Laurent Gbagbo and former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara won the two highest shares of the vote, 38.04 percent and 32.07 percent respectively, qualifying them for a second round run-off election. Former President Henri Konan Bedie (PDCI) came third with 25.27 percent, while the other eleven candidates combined for a total of 4.65 percent.

The losing candidates announced their support for one of the two remaining camps. Members of the political coalition Rally of Houphouetists for Development and Peace (RHDP), which includes former President Bedie, announced their support for Ouattara.

The campaign environment intensified between the two rounds with each candidate hardening their tone and sending significantly more negative messages in both the press and their campaign activities, leading to clashes between party supporters.

The Oct. 31 results revealed strong communal voting patterns, with three important regional vote blocks emerging: the interior of Cote d'Ivoire, Abidjan, and the forest area on both sides of the Valley of Sassandra. In these areas, the Baoule community, who in the first round largely supported Bedie, is either the majority or is strongly represented. Neither candidate could assume that he would automatically garner Baoule support and many believed that capturing their support was a key factor to winning the election. As a result, both campaigns pursued Baoule support through courtship, especially of traditional community leaders, and intimidation tactics.

In more diverse voting districts, there was a noted increase of community tension, especially in the forest zone, where resentment over land ownership was tied to the election campaigns. In some areas, Carter Center long-term observers were able to verify and confirm several first voting round incidents of intimidation and obstruction of voting by residents with roots outside the area as well as threats of reprisal.



The final list of 5,725,721 voters was comprised of eligible voters holding the new national ID card. The political endorsement of the voter register does not eliminate reservations about the overall technical success of the operation or its fulfillment of the ambitious goals of the OPA.

The total number of registered voters is significantly lower than the initial estimate of the eligible voting population of 7,835,768 cited in 2008 by the National Institute of Statistics (INS). Based on this estimate, the final list of registered voters represents 73 percent of eligible voters. Ivoirian political actors minimized this difference by emphasizing that voting, and thus registration, is not compulsory. The Carter Center notes, however, that the voter registration was coupled with national identification and that all Ivoirians aged 16 and over are obliged to be in possession of a national ID card.

Among other concerns, it is important to note that since April 1, 2010, those identified as minors in the sense of the OPA (e.g. born between April 1, 1990, and March 31, 1992), have since reached the age of majority. However, no measures were taken to accommodate them in the voter list for either presidential election or any of the other elections understood as part of the peace process. [Anyone else](#)



sense of public responsibility during their live debate aired by the public broadcaster RTI on Nov. 25. In largely moderate and respectful tones, each candidate appealed for a peaceful democratic election and the end to violence. The debate was a notable first for Cote d'Ivoire, but the relaxed and constructive character of its exchanges was not enough to prevent campaign tensions from persisting. The press associated with each candidate did not abandon the aggressive tactics that bracketed the debate. The candidates should be held accountable to the higher standard of civility and public service they expressed during the debate.

## **Voter education**

The national rate of invalid ballots cast during the first round of voting was 4.66 percent. This average, though relatively good in a context where no election has been conducted for ten years, masks significant regional variations in the numbers of invalid ballots casts, ranging from 2.34 percent of ballots casts in the district of Abidjan to 8.58 percent in the region of Zanzan.

These percentage differences could reflect discrepancies in levels of regional development and may also demonstrate the impact of media access on voter education. These numbers also illustrate the limits of local voter education campaigns, and, in this context, the Center notes that efforts to undertake large, national scale voter education campaigns were stymied by delays in decision making by those responsible for clarifying procedures and providing the material needed to implement voter education.

After the high voter turnout of 84 percent for the first round, some speculated that the absence of former president Henri Konan Bedie as a candidate in the run-off could fuel significant voter apathy. Carter Center observation of the run-off campaign suggests however, that voter interest remained high and did not dissipate despite his absence.

## **Voting Procedure**

The voting process is the cornerstone of the obligation to provide the free expression of the will of the people through genuine, periodic elections. Certain participatory rights must be fulfilled for the voting process to accurately reflect the will of the people. Foremost among these are the right to vote, to participate in public affairs, and to enjoy security of the person.<sup>iii</sup> The state must take all necessary steps to ensure such rights are fully protected and awarded to all citizens in an equal and non-discriminatory manner. The state must take necessary measures to give effect to rights enshrined in the treaty to which they are party. Such rights include the right for all citizens to be treated in an equal and non-discriminatory manner.<sup>iv</sup>

Carter Center observers found that the training of poll workers for the second round of voting was better developed, and more comprehensive than in the first round of elections. These efforts, however, did not succeed in guaranteeing the perfect implementation of voting procedures. In some instances there was confusion over last minute changes in the assignment of polling station staff with many new replacements who did not appear to have received training. The Center identified important weaknesses in several voting day procedures, including the lack of inspection of voters' fingers for indelible ink in nearly half the polling stations visited. Another noted deviation from procedure was









political parties and groupings starting at the point of publication of the provisional voter register through election day and equal access to all candidates during the formal campaign period.

The CNP appears to have demonstrated more commitment to its tasks whereas the CNCA failed to show much interest in playing an effective role.

CNCA statistics for the month of October remain unavailable, suggesting a degree of lack of transparency on its part. Based on the Septembe

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<sup>i</sup> The uniform application of election procedures provides an important means for states to meet their obligation to universal and equal suffrage by awarding all voters an equal opportunity to cast their ballot. ICCPR, Art. 25b.

<sup>ii</sup> Freedom of expression, movement and assembly are enshrined in the ICCPR, Art. 19(2), 12(1), and 21 respectively. The African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, Art. IV.5 further states that “Individuals or political parties shall have the right to freedom of movement, to campaign and to express political opinions with fu[s4t0960c(CPR, AeeS)-4}8(p)-7 aa,r9009-960c(2(1), and 21 )T9o7orm(ation wit in the liam