

**STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION
OBSERVER MISSION ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
IN COTE D'IVOIRE ON NOVEMBER 28, 2010
MADE BY HIS EXCELLENCY
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HEAD OF MISSION**

At the end of the mission, the African Union Observers noted the following:

The mission noted with regret, serious acts of violence, namely losses of human lives, infringement of physical integrity, intimidations, and abduction attempts and damage to the electoral material. So many facts that should be object to a careful assessment from the competent institutions, so as to determine their impact on the ballots.

In addition, the Mission denounces the late openings of some voting stations, the lack of stickers in some voting polls, the relatively charged atmosphere around some voting stations.

Finally, the Mission denounces the confinement of two of its observers and thanks ONUCI for the happy ending of the ordeal that occurred just in time.

THE FACTS

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IN THE KORHOGO DISTRICT

Already the day before the ballot, that is Saturday, November, 27, 2010, the representatives of the LMP candidate who were going from Abidjan to Korhogo, were forbidden to enter the said city by the New Forces (ex-rebels) as it is consigned in a report from the Chief of the Integrated Military Command Structure, Brigadier General Kouakou Nicolas as well as in the hearing minutes written out by a bailiff.

The representatives already in the premises were either forbidden to go in their polling stations or were savagely evicted by the New Forces after having been robbed of all their goods and documents.

The LMP representatives were thus unable to participate in any polling process in the district of Korhogo (town and administrative subdivision), even though, the polling was held without their presence, situation which broke the stability and fairness provided for by Article 35 of the above mentioned law and preventing the LPM candidate to guarantee the procedure, transparency and the counting of the votes.

It is a fact that in the entire district of Korhogo, serious cases of murders, death threats, intimidation, confinement and physical assaults were perpetrated against the LMP activists and representatives by the New Forces and the RDR activists.

For example, one of the LMP supervisors, Mrs. Coulibaly Sita, was savagely beaten then illegally detained before being murdered after denouncing the irregularities she recorded during the polling process in her area of duty.

Another sad example, Mrs. Traore Kady, LMP supervisor, was denuded, savagely beaten, publicly dragged off then jailed. She was evacuated to the hospital where she is currently receiving care (Picture of Mrs. Traore Khady).

Mr. Yéo Kalifa, LMP activist, residing in Midrigue, administrative subdivision of M'Bengué, located 50 miles from Korhogo, died from the wounds he received from the New Forces.

Some of the acts of violence perpetrated during the polling process in Korhogo, were recorded on videos from which the victim's testimonies are brought out (Video).

In addition to the LMP representatives being prevented to or constrained under threats to leave the polling stations, the voters were as well prevented to freely express their choice, some of the voters being even forced to vote for the RDR candidate under a loaded gun.

In numerous polling stations, the Defense and Security Forces (FDS) assigned to the supervision of the said stations were not in place thus leaving the population at the mercy of the New Forces sowing terror.

It is patently obvious that the recorded violence were directed against the Candidate Laurent Gbagbo representatives and against the activists of his political party LMP.

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Even worse, at the closing of the polls, the RDR activists helped by the New Forces, constrained some previously locked away LMP representatives to sign the minutes of the counting of the votes in order to certify the results obtained from voters registered in their absence's.

The strong involvement of the New Forces in the polling process violates the measures of Article 11, paragraph 2 of Decree 2010-278 dated October 12, 2010, about the organizing and operating of polling stations which stipulates that: "No armed forces can, without the authorization of the polling station president, be present inside a polling station or in its immediate surroundings"

The following events were as well observed:

The LMP representatives were assaulted in three (3) polling centers (Franco-arabe, Collège Nalo Bamba, EPP Nalo Bamba) and their motorcycles were confiscated.

Around noon, District Campaign Director Coulibaly Mamourou and Minister Lancine Gon had to be evacuated by the ONUCI forces after being threatened by RDR activists and sympathizers.

Minister Lancine Gon's vehicle was attacked, its windows being broken. LMP candidate representatives were molested and thrown out from the polling stations, their motorcycles being confiscated.

At the EPP Nalo Bamba, the polling process was interrupted and Mr. Coulibaly Mamourou, Campaign Director, as well as the LMP representatives were thrown out by the rebels.

At college Nalo Bamba, the police were absent. Some RDR activists and sympathizers, in non compliance with the current legislation, were still campaigning on the polling premises constraining the voters to vote for the RDR candidate.

At the Franco-arabe school, a LMP supervisor was beaten, thrown out then prohibited to come back inside the polling station and his electoral card was torn up. The police were not present.

In Siélékaha, the LMP representative was thrown out of the polling station.

In Nabromandougou, in non compliance with the law, the ballot box was put outdoor. Consequently, the vote was held in plain view, contrary to the ballot secrecy principle.

In the Soba neighborhood, the New Forces molested the LMP supporters as well as at the EPP Soba where the LMP supervisor was beaten.

In the Kassirimé 2 neighborhood, death threat letters were slipped under citizens doors in order to frighten them. It was the case for Mr. Yeo Yaradjiwa and Mr. Soro Nougounou.

At he EPP Nanguin, the police were not present and the population was at the mercy of the New Forces.

A LMP supervisor was held at gun point. His motorcycle and some electoral documents were robbed.

In the Ahoussabougou neighborhood, Mr. Silué Moussa was chased and his colleague was beaten and covered with blood. He is currently hospitalized in a critical condition.

At the EPP Soba (BVI), RDR activists and sympathizers verbally threatened the LMP representatives. They succeeded in making the New Forces to arrest one of our supervisors for reasons still unknown.

The police were not present in the Kassirimé neighborhood, at the EPP Tchekeleso and in the Lonya and Nabounoukaha villages so the voters' minds were not at rest thus they abstained to vote.

In Nanguinkaha, the LMP representative was thrown out of the polling station.

At the closing of the polls, the LMP representatives, under arms threats, were called in and constrained to sign the minutes of the counting of the votes, the record data and the tally of the votes.

Overall, armed elements of the New Forces patrolled all day in the polling stations demanding the votes for the RDR candidate.

These facts are not exhaustive and were not occurring only in the Korhogo District, the Bouaké District was the scene of the same events.

In the Bouaké District

Town of Bouake Koko

In several polling stations, the LMP representatives were arrested, notably at:

The EPP Dar Es Salam 2 (code 036)

The EPP CNPS (code 039) Lycée moderne 2 (code 037)

The Djézou Rails groupe scolaire (code 096)

At the Yamoussou Marie Thérèse High School (code 040) numerous representatives were beaten then locked up. One of them is currently in a critical condition. Only the District Prefect intervention saved his life.

At Dar Es Salam 2, Mr. Daouda Sylla., supervisor of the polls, was beaten up by elements of the New Forces before being kidnapped.

At the Modern Lyceum, some polling stations representatives were thrown out. Found at their residence at the closing of the polls, they were forced under arms threats to sign the minutes of the counting of the votes even though they did not witness the process.

Numerous polling stations were affected by the above mentioned events. Among them are the following:

Groupe scolaire Aboliba 4BV (code 060)
Foyer des jeunes de Koko 4BV (code 058)
EPP Dar Es Salam 2 à 6 6BV (code 036)
Modern Lyceum 2-5BV (code 037)
Yamousso Marie Thérèse High School 4BV (code 040)
Groupe scolaire CNPS 4BV (code 039)
EPP Dar Es Salam 1-6BV (code 038)

It has to be noted that numerous minutes were torn up in polling stations, notably at the EPP Djezou Kouamekro 1 (code 098) and at the Berger Kindergarten (code 097).

In the Allokro-Yaokro polling station, the presidents made some persons of their choice vote in place of absent voters and the minutes were taken away by elements of the New Forces.

The said elements chased the LMP activists up to very late at night and arrested people after the closing of the polls.

The day before the polls at about 7:00 p.m., the LMP Campaign Headquarters located at Gonfreville Habitat, was attacked, vandalized and pillaged by the very armed New Forces.

Pictures of the damages perpetrated during this attack.

These armed men were aboard a military vehicle where the words "Commander Zone 3" could be read and was directed by the Second of Commander Cherif Ousmane.

The attack and pillage of the Headquarters generated serious harm.

Indeed, five million eighty two thousand (5 082 000) CFA Francs designed for paying off, transportation and catering for the delegates, were taken along with all material from the District Campaign Direction and the Headquarters personnel was locked away then driven and jailed at the 3rd Division until 2:00 in the morning.

The District Campaign Director, Mr. Kouassi Ferdinand a.k.a. Watchard Kedjebo, was pursued while his driver and his body guard were already under arrest.
Bailiff report minutes

Town of Bouaké Ahougnanssou

In this electoral ward, armed people on board of two unregistered Mercedes vehicles vandalized and burned the entire LMP headquarters during the night of November 27/28, 2010.

On Sunday, November 28, election's day, elements of the New Forces and of the RDR assaulted and kidnapped the representatives of the polling stations (Henri Poincaré and Ouezzin Coulibaly High Schools) under pretense that the representatives had no original representation authorization documents.

This very day, the residences of some LMP representatives were vandalized.

In the village of Konanprikro, across Bouaké Campus 2, ballot boxes left on the floor close to an ONUCI vehicle were stuffed by about twenty people before being brought to the local CEI headquarters.

In order to intimidate and to frighten the population, elements of the New Forces fired arms in the city to prevent people to go out and vote according to their right.

Bailiff report minutes

Town of Bouaké Belleville

As District Campaign Director, Mr. N'Goran Kouassi Pierre's statement shows, the vote was held under very difficult conditions in Bouaké Belleville.

Indeed, on November 28, 2010, during the ballot process, the representatives of the LMP candidate as well as their activists and sympathizers, were subjected to death threats, physical acts of violence, intimidation and other criminal acts from elements of the New Forces.

As an example, we can consider the eviction of the representatives of the LMP candidate who were turned away one after the other from the one hundred forty seven (147) polling stations located in this town.

In Minankro and at the Saint Jacques School, all the supervisors of the LMP candidate were arrested by elements of the New Forces. The documents in their possession authorizing their representation were shred.

Mr. Sinan Souleymane, District LMP candidate Campaign Deputy Director in this town was brutally beaten by the New Forces.

All these events were recorded at the ONUCI Integrated Command Center.

In all polling stations, the minutes of the closing of the polls were signed either in the absence of the LMP representatives, or by themselves under arms constraint.

The polling stations where serious irregularities occurred were recorded are the following:

EPP Kotiakoffikro (03 polling stations)
EPP Kanontakpé (4 polling stations)
Saint Jacques School (13 polling stations)
EPP Dogouba (05 polling stations)
EPP Liberté (05 polling stations)
Groupe scolaire Bakassa (06 polling stations)
Groupe scolaire Paris Bouaké (05 polling stations)
Groupe scolaire Annexe (04 polling stations)
Groupe scolaire Oliénon (03 polling stations)
EPV protestant (05 polling stations)
Mohamed 5 Modern Lyceum (7 polling stations)
Groupe scolaire Belleville 14 (04 polling stations)
Belleville Modern Lyceum (04 polling stations)
Collège moderne jeunes filles (05 polling stations)
EPP military camp
Groupe scolaire Belleville Nord

These extremely serious events prove that the ballot process, in Bouaké, Korhogo, Frekessedougou, Boundiali, Samatiguila, Mankono, among other localities, could not be held in the transparent way which is essential for the honesty of the ballot and can constitute an important technicality in the electoral operation.

These serious events which are not exhaustive obviously prevented our representatives and our electors to participate in and to follow the ballot process and ultimately to prevent them to guarantee to honesty of the results. In most cases, they were prevented from getting the minute document copy that is rightly theirs.

The tallying testimonies from the involved persons, the hearing minutes and bailiff reports, the preliminary report from the coordination of African Electoral Observers (COEA), observers who had been accredited by the CEI for following up the polling process, are evidence of the truthfulness of the above mentioned events.

(Minutes of bailiff reports)
(COEA Preliminary statement)

N.B.: note the serious irregularities and say that they can mar the honesty of the ballot and modify the overall results, violating Article 9 of Decree 2010-278 dated October 12, 2010, on organizing and operating polling stations. And that will be fairness.