

IVORY COAST

Human rights agencies concerned with Ivory Coast violence

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Panglungtshang to CNN. "There were so many."

Panglungtshang states both parties are responsible for the deaths. However, Ouattara's supporters are denying any involvement, according to CNN.

Deputy Head of the Human Rights Division of the U.N. Mission in Ivory Coast Guillaume Ngefa tells the Guardian that Ouattara's supporters are blamed for 220 of those killed, and Gbagbo's supporters are blamed for 110 of the deaths in Duékoué.

Human rights agencies have documented 462 deaths in addition to the 800 in Duékoué, and as the violence escalates they called on the international community to become involved, according to CNN.

"Abidjan is on the brink of a human rights catastrophe and total chaos," said Salvatore Sagues, Amnesty International's researcher on West Africa in a press release. "The parties to the conflict must immediately stop targeting the civilian population. The international community must take immediate steps to protect the civilian population."

Attempts to find a peaceful solution through mediation have been ineffective.

The African Union appointed two mediators. Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga was rejected by Gbagbo, according to Reuters, and former Cape Verde Foreign Minister Jose Brito was rejected by Ouattara, according to the BBC.

Presidents Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, Pedro Pires of Cape Verde, Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone, and Boni Yayi of Benin have also made unsuccessful

attempts to mediate between Gbagbo and Ouattara, reports the BBC.

On March 30, Ouattara's troops collided with Gbagbo's forces near the presidential palace in Abidjan in an attempt to take control of the country and oust the former president, according to Reuters.

Fighting continued throughout the weekend and on Sunday, April 3, the U.N. evacuated 130 members of its civilian staff in Abidjan.

Two French nationals and at least three others were kidnapped as the fighting spread throughout the city, reports The Jerusalem Post.

On Monday, April 4, France agreed to assist the U.N. peacekeepers' operation to destroy Gbagbo's weapons, according to AP.

Two U.N. helicopters attacked two of Gbagbo's military bases and French forces

targeted heavily armed areas near the presidential palace and other Gbagbo-controlled areas of the city, according to The Washington Post.

U.N. officials told The Washington Post the use of force was necessary due to those loyal to Gbagbo firing on civilians and U.N. peacekeepers.

The U.N. and French forces destroyed rocket-propelled grenade launchers, armored vehicles, heavy weapons depots, and television transmitters, according to Reuters.

Bodies lined the street leading into Abidjan. Twelve corpses with bullet wounds to the head were piled on a road bank, and further down the corpses of other soldiers lay in the middle of the street, according to Reuters.

On Tuesday, April 5, Gbagbo and his family retreated to an underground

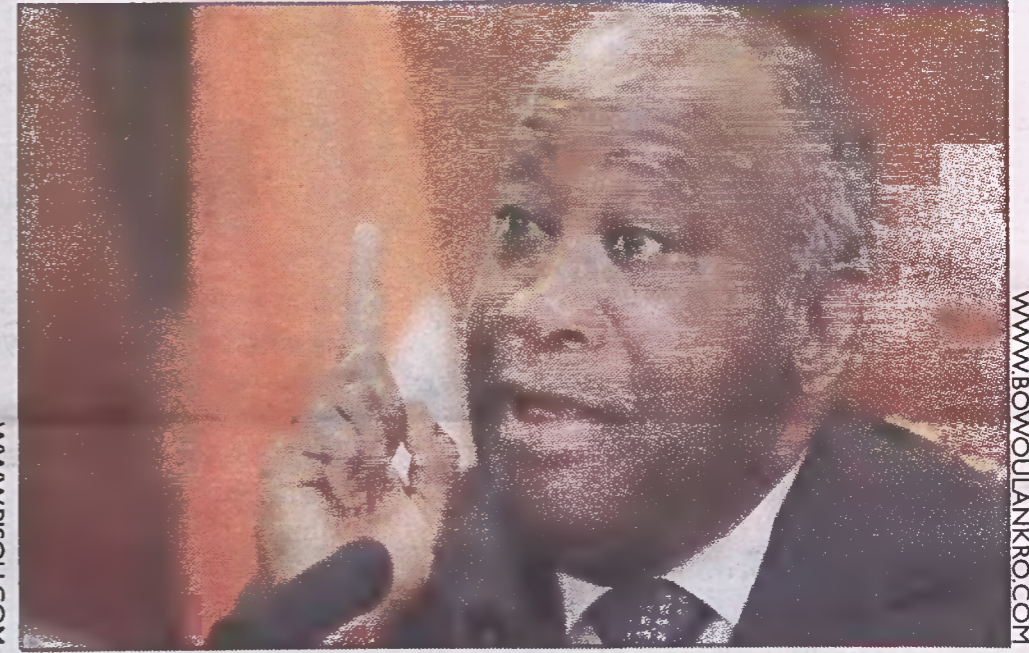
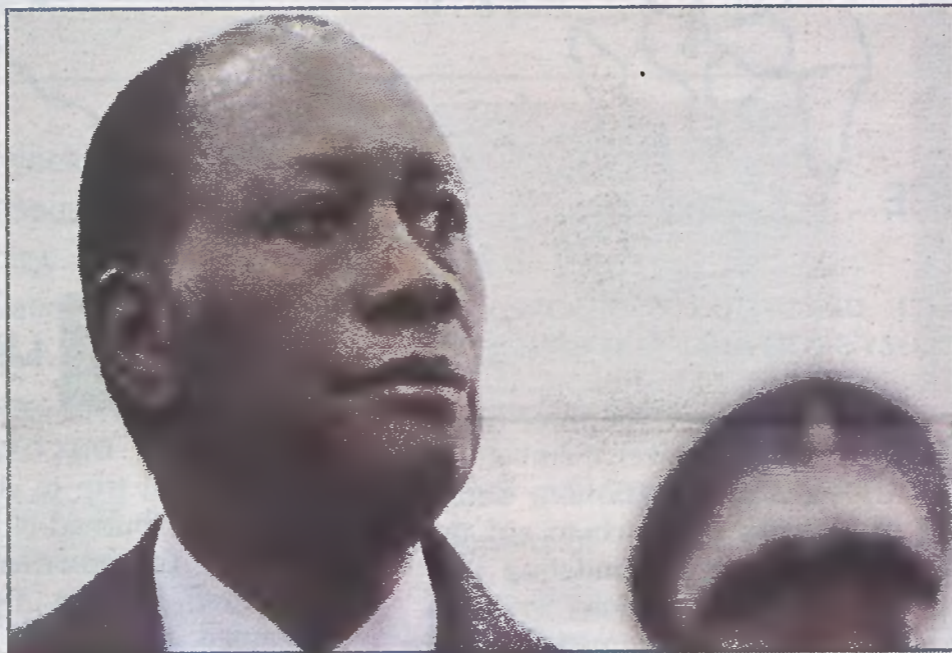
bunker at his home as Ouattara's troops surrounded the house, according to the BBC.

Gbagbo's military chief, General Philippe Mangou, ordered a cease fire, according to Reuters. Three top ranking Gbagbo officials agreed to stop fighting and are seeking the protection of the U.N., reports The Washington Post.

By midday Tuesday, April 5, fighting stopped as U.N. peacekeepers protected and disarmed Gbagbo's soldiers, according to Reuters.

Gbagbo began negotiating his surrender to U.N. officials from his bunker, according to Reuters.

The Washington Post reports that the U.N. has requested Gbagbo sign a document agreeing to cede his power as part of the terms of his departure from Ivory Coast.



Alassane Ouattara (left) lost the November elections in Ivory Coast to Laurent Gbagbo (right) but has refused to step down from power, resulting in protests and violence. On April 2, at least 800 were reported to have been killed.

Thousands rally in London over government budget cuts

By Emily Cooper
STAFF WRITER

On March 26, over 250,000 people rallied in London against the government's budget cut, the largest budget cut in the country's history since World War II.

According to the BBC, the Trades Union Congress organized the main march.

The English government is planning on cutting 80 billion pounds, which is equivalent to \$130 billion, from public spending. Prime Minister David Cameron and the English government are attempting to cut down the country's deficit.

The budget cut is a solution to the government spending large amounts of money on bailing out banks, according to The Huffington Post.

A diverse group of people attended the rally, from school nurses to teachers, firefighters to students, and campaign groups. People of all different backgrounds, ages and viewpoints have strong feelings involving this issue.

"These are the voices of the mainstream majority in our country," said leader of England's Labour Party Ed Miliband to Emn News. "The duty of my party is to stand up for that mainstream majority."

Public spending and budget cuts are issues that affect every citizen in England.

"My godchildren, aged between six and 14, are attending the marches with their mother," Daniel Kent, a citizen of the U.K., told the BBC.

"It shows that the people involved are genuine, concerned citizens, protecting not only the welfare of

themselves but the welfare of the future, as well," said Kent. "These protesters are real and must be heard."

This issue affects every generation, and children especially, because spending issues can lead to issues for future generations

According to Fox News, this is the largest rally in London since the rallies against the Iraq war eight years ago.

Most of the protesters marched peacefully, according to police. However peaceful the rally was, however, more

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Alison Foster, British schoolteacher

than 200 people were arrested.

"My husband and I were on the march," Elaine Graham told the BBC. "We were near the front of the protesters, and — although everyone was peaceful — they were very angry."

As Graham described the rally: "As we passed Downing Street, people showed their frustration and anger by making noise and shouting toward Number 10 (home and workplace of the Prime Minister). The messages on the placards were deeply felt ... 'What am I to do now'? The simplest of all — but it said it all — was 'Listen.'"

A few people were injured and hospitalized, including five police officers, reported Fox.

It was reported by Fox that a small group of masked people branched off from the protest and were seen violently vandalizing stores and throwing light bulbs filled with ammonia at police. Many of the violent protesters were claimed to be anarchists.

Prior to the protest, Miliband worried that it would result in anarchy.

"I don't think the activities of a few hundred people should take the focus away from the hundreds of thousands of people who have sent a powerful message to the government today," said T.U.C.'s General Secretary Brendan Barber to The Huffington Post.

"Ministers should now seriously reconsider their whole strategy after today's demonstration. This has been Middle Britain speaking," said Barber to CBS News.

The British people are hurt and angered by the decisions their government is making regarding how their money is being spent. However, the more important issue surrounds the apparent lack of financial support being for things many people feel strongly about.

"They shouldn't be taking money from public services," said Alison Foster, a 53-year-old schoolteacher. "What have we done to deserve this? Yes, they are making vicious cuts. That's why I'm marching, to let them know this is wrong."

The enormous turnout of people shows this is a serious issue that cannot be ignored by the British government. The people are angry about the way their money is being spent — or, in this case, the way money is not being spent at all.