



NPWJ and the NRPTT commend the ICC's decision to extend investigations in Côte d'Ivoire to include crimes committed since 2002

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Yesterday, Pre-Trial Chamber III (the Chamber) of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued its decision to extend the temporal scope of its investigations into the crimes committed in Côte d'Ivoire, to include those following the 19 September 2002 coup attempt. In light of additional information provided by the Prosecutor, the Chamber has determined that serious human rights violations have been committed since the September 2002 coup attempt, and that these crimes may fall within the Court's jurisdiction and must therefore be investigated.

Côte d'Ivoire, while not being a party to the Rome Statute, had accepted the jurisdiction of the ICC on 18 April 2003 and reconfirmed that acceptance on 14 December 2010 and 3 May 2011.

Statement by Alison Smith, Legal Counsel of No Peace Without Justice:

“No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) and the Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty (NRPTT) commend the Chamber's decision to extend the temporal scope of its investigations, to include crimes allegedly committed between 19 September 2002 and 28 November 2010. This decision, called for by NPWJ and the NRPTT since the opening of the investigations, follows the provision of additional information by the Prosecutor, which revealed that serious human rights violations (including murder and rape) have been committed since the September 2002 coup attempt, and must be investigated.

“The fundamental right to justice belongs to all victims, including those who suffered prior to the culmination of violence in 2010. NPWJ and NRPTT thus welcome yesterday's decision as an important step toward ensuring comprehensive and inclusive justice for all Ivorian victims.

“In order for this valuable opportunity for justice to be realized, the Chamber's decision to extend investigations must be met with cooperation by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, as in past years. Continued cooperation during increased investigations will signify that Côte d'Ivoire is committed to a future based on full respect for the human rights of all.

“NPWJ and the NRPTT urge the Prosecutor to investigate the entirety of the crimes allegedly committed by all fighting forces since 2002 as a matter of urgency. This will ensure that justice for Ivorian victims remains impartial, which is a critical precondition for lasting peace. In order to break the cycle of violence and impunity, all individuals who bear the greatest responsibility for crimes against the civilian population must be brought to justice, irrespective of their rank or political allegiance.

“NPWJ and the NRPTT also urge the ICC to begin outreach activities in Côte d'Ivoire as soon as possible. With yesterday's decision to expand investigations in the region, it is now more urgent than ever before that the Court engage with victims and affected communities in two-way dialogue, in order to promote understanding and manage expectations regarding its activities, with a particular focus on women and children.”

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