

## **Open letter to Kofi Annan and to African and western heads of state and government**

### **WE DEMAND THE DEPLOYMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL POLICE FORCE THROUGHOUT IVORY COAST TO PROTECT THE WHOLE CIVILIAN POPULATION.**

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This open letter as well as the list of its signatories is destined to be published a few days from now in the African, European and American press

We invite you to sign it before Wednesday December 18th 2002, at 12 pm GMT.

Please also pass this document on and ask for more signatures.

Terror reigns in Ivory Coast. Mass graves are being discovered, civilians have been summarily executed, hundreds of corpses are piling up in the streets of several towns, hit lists are circulating, death squads are patrolling nightly and eliminating people, fighting is everywhere, the people are terrified. One of our correspondents writes "Where can you go, where can you hide when the killer is the neighbour who denounced you?"

How many pogroms are being secretly perpetrated today in Ivory Coast? How many macabre discoveries will be made tomorrow?

Despite the cease-fire, despite the presence of the French peacekeeping force along the front line, the exactions, disappearances, and assassinations increase by the day well away from the front line. According to all observers, the risk of large scale massacres is very real today in Ivory Coast.

For two years, the Belgian NGO Prévention Génocides has tried to draw attention to the political situation in Ivory Coast, which it describes as a veritable powder keg.

Today things are at fever pitch. Fear of other people is at its paroxysm, hatred for one's neighbour is such that murder actually appears to be a necessary measure to preserve the life of one's family. This is the terrible dialectic of the victim and the assassin.

The ghost of Rwanda rears its head. A comparable scenario is underway in Ivory Coast!

It is intolerable to see Ivory Coast destroyed before our eyes while we stand idly by. Already the civilian victims could accuse the international community of the crime of non-assistance to persons in danger.

**We, the undersigned demand that the international authorities act without delay.**

- ▶ To put an end to the killings, increase safety, protect non-combatant civilians (not only Westerners **but also Africans**) and stop further crimes against humanity **we demand the immediate deployment of an international police force throughout Ivorian territory** and not only along the front line. It must have a clear mandate to enforce the cease fire and should be authorised to use arms to protect non-combatant civilians and not only to protect itself. It must be a "peace making" rather than a "peace keeping" mission.

For several days the Ivorian authorities have been urging the international community to "intervene militarily where necessary". The force we are asking for cannot therefore be deemed unacceptable by the powers-that-be in the country. But it is obvious that the mandate of this force must be limited to the protection of non-combatant civilians and enforcement of the cease-fire without serving the aims of any party to the conflict.

- ▶ To fight against impunity, which is necessary for any lasting reconciliation, we call upon the international organisations to exhort the Ivorian authorities to use all existing legal means to shed light on crimes perpetrated recently in Ivory Coast.

In particular, the Ivorian National Assembly should ratify immediately its recognition of the treaty of International Criminal Court and bring a case to this court so that it can immediately investigate the massacre at Monoko-Zohi, at Bouaké and all the other such crimes. Not to act in this way before such crimes, would be to turn a blind eye to their perpetrators and to favour impunity. In order that those who commit crimes and those who incite them to do so know that, sooner or later, they will be called to account, we would strongly urge the UN Security council and all victims to bring these cases before the International Criminal Court.

Beyond urgent measures to re-establish order and security, and beyond the indispensable prerequisite of the fight against impunity,

- ▶ Ivorian political forces and their leaders must be urged to cease fire and negotiate the conditions of lasting reconciliation and
- ▶ finally, we exhort the providers of international funds to grant future aid, only on condition that there is no incitement to hatred and violence in the official media or by political leaders.

**It is already very late.**

**But the worst is still, perhaps, avoidable.**

**Action is urgent.**

**No one can say " I did not know"!**

## The initial signatories are:

- ▶ Gerald CAPLAN, Coordinator Remembering Rwanda - Canada
- ▶ Pr. Israel W. CHARNY, Executive Director, Editor-in-Chief, Encyclopedia of Genocide, Institute on the Holocaust & Genocide, Jerusalem - Israël
- ▶ Jean CORNIL, sénateur (Parti Socialiste), ancien président du Centre pour l'égalité des chances et la lutte contre le racisme - Belgique
- ▶ Georges DALLEMAGNE, sénateur (CdH), ancien directeur général de "Médecins Sans Frontières", ancien directeur général de "Handicap International" - Belgique
- ▶ Josy DUBIE, sénateur (Ecolo) - Belgique
- ▶ Kelly FISH, Intern researcher, Survivors' Rights International - USA
- ▶ Guy HAARSCHER, professeur à l'Université Libre de Bruxelles - Belgique
- ▶ Ben KIERNAN, Director, Genocide Studies Program, Yale University - USA
- ▶ Joëlle LIBERMAN, sociologue - Belgique
- ▶ Pierre MERTENS, écrivain, membre de l'académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature française - Belgique
- ▶ Michel MOLITOR, vice-recteur de l'Université Catholique de Louvain - Belgique
- ▶ Jacky MORAEL, sénateur (Ecolo), ministre d'Etat - Belgique
- ▶ John MORAVEC, Treasurer, Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota - USA
- ▶ Alex PARISEL, ancien directeur général de "Médecins Sans Frontières" - Belgique
- ▶ Alexandre PYCKE, sociologue - Belgique
- ▶ Benoit SCHEUER, sociologue, fondateur de "Prévention Génocides" - Belgique
- ▶ Gregory H. STANTON, founder of the International Campaign to End Genocides - USA
- ▶ Marie STENBOCK-FERMOR, sociologue - Belgique
- ▶ Teresa TAYLOR, Executive Director, Survivors' Rights International Inc. - USA
- ▶ Dominique TREMBLOY, sociologue - Belgique

***YOU TOO, SIGN THIS CALL***

***SEND A FAX (SEE FORM PAGE 4) TO : 00 32 10 45 98 65***

***OR SIGN ON THE INTERNET AT : [http://prevention-genocides.org/fr/petition\\_en.html](http://prevention-genocides.org/fr/petition_en.html)***

Belgian NGO Prevention Genocides was founded in 1999 by a group of social scientists. It produced a film, "Ivory Coast, an explosive identity crisis". For more than six months a team of sociologists tried, via hundreds of interviews, to understand the origins dynamics and consequences of a concept of purity of identity called "ivoirité". The film shows the danger of the politics of exclusion, ethnicity and xenophobia which had been growing for ten years or more in this country, against a background of a serious economic crisis.

Since the death of Houphoët Boigny, a crazed struggle for power has caused the leading politicians to disseminate powerful propaganda, establishing in people's minds the idea of two distinct identities: the "true, 100 percent pure Ivorians, of multi-secular origin" and the "doubtful Ivorians", assimilated with foreigners and presented as impure, threatening and even as assailants. The film showed the violence of the "ivoirité" situation, well before it made the front pages internationally. It has been shown by Ivory Coast television and has contributed to the debate there.

At the end of October 2002, "Prévention Génocides" sent two more teams of sociologists to Ivory Coast. They filmed the neighbourhoods of Abidjan burned down by the forces of law and order, leaving numerous innocent civilians homeless. They gathered the accounts of witnesses who were fleeing to the borders with Burkina Faso and Ghana.

Among the members of its Board of Administration, Prevention Genocides counts senators from various democratic parties, a Minister of State, intellectuals and university professors.

It is a member of the International Campaign to End Genocides

Web site : [www.prevention-genocides.org](http://www.prevention-genocides.org)

Contact : [info@prevention-genocides.org](mailto:info@prevention-genocides.org)

**FAX THIS FORM TO PREVENTION GENOCIDES TO :  
00 32 10 45 98 65  
BEFORE MIDNIGHT, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18TH 2002.**

**I UNDERSIGNED :**

**FIRST NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LAST NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TITLE(S)/FUNCTION(S) :** \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTITUTION :** \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNTRY :** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGN HEREUNDER THE OPEN LETTER OF THE NGO PREVENTION GENOCIDES ABOUT IVORY COAST**

**TODAY : \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ /2002**

**SIGNATURE :**