

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1150

Urging the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, opposition leaders, and all citizens to respect democratic principles, refrain from violence, and hold free, fair, transparent, and peaceful elections in October 2020.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Mr. PHILLIPS (for himself, Ms. BASS, and Mr. YOHIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Urging the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, opposition leaders, and all citizens to respect democratic principles, refrain from violence, and hold free, fair, transparent, and peaceful elections in October 2020.

Whereas it is in the interest of the United States to maintain a strong relationship with a democratic, peaceful, stable, and economically prosperous Côte d'Ivoire whose leaders prioritize good governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights;

Whereas the United States and Côte d'Ivoire have a strong bilateral relationship with important cooperation on economic interests, regional stability, and counterterrorism priorities, and efforts to advance health and development objectives;

Whereas Côte d'Ivoire has a presidential election scheduled for October 31, 2020;

Whereas previous transitions of power have been marred by conflict and violence against civilians, including most recently in 2010–2011, when 3,000 civilians were killed during an election-related dispute;

Whereas the root causes of past political violence—including religious and ethnoregional tensions, contestation over land, politicization of the judiciary and concerns over due process, and a lack of professionalism, adequate training, and civilian control over the security forces—have not been adequately addressed;

Whereas political leaders have previously manipulated and exploited religious, ethnic, and regional identities and economic grievances to incite violence including through incidents of hateful and divisive speech occurring both in person and online;

Whereas President Ouattara's decision to stand for a third term, despite a two-term limit in the constitution, has heightened tensions, and several citizens have been killed and dozens more injured or arrested amid protests against his candidacy;

Whereas political violence in Côte d'Ivoire could threaten the region's stability and economic development prospects, and undermine efforts to counter violent extremism and terrorist activity;

Whereas the Government of Côte d'Ivoire must protect the health and safety of its citizens and prevent the spread of COVID–19 while also ensuring credible elections and enabling the participation of all voters;

Whereas the Government of the United States is deeply committed to efforts to prevent conflict and atrocities and address the root causes of fragility, as evidenced by the enactment of the Global Fragility Act of 2019 and the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018; and

Whereas the United States Embassy in Côte d'Ivoire issued a statement on August 25, 2020, “supporting free, transparent, and inclusive elections in Côte d'Ivoire” and urging “all parties, groups and individuals to refrain from violence and hateful/divisive speech and to choose dialogue to find peaceful solutions to their disagreements”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) reaffirms that the United States will continue to stand with the people of Côte d'Ivoire in
3 support of peace, democracy, religious and ethnic
4 tolerance, and stability;

6 (2) calls upon the Government of Côte d'Ivoire
7 and all political parties to—

8 (A) protect all civilians from violence and
9 support their right to peacefully demonstrate;

10 (B) condemn all forms of hate speech and
11 incitement of violence while maintaining citizens'
12 open access to information;

13 (C) publicly commit to free, fair, peaceful,
14 and transparent elections and make clear that
15 all Ivoirians, including security forces, govern-

1 ment officials, political opposition members, and
2 the media, will be held accountable for inciting
3 or perpetrating violence;

4 (D) support an independent investigation
5 into the killings of civilians during demonstra-
6 tions;

7 (E) support efforts to implement public
8 health protocols to prevent further spread of
9 COVID-19 and ensure safe participation of all
10 voters on election day; and

11 (F) request the electoral observation serv-
12 ices of the African Union or the Economic
13 Community of West African States, and grant
14 full access to election observers;

15 (3) encourages civil society organizations, local
16 communities, and religious leaders to—

17 (A) remain united in calls for peace, non-
18 violence, tolerance, and democracy; and

19 (B) work to educate voters about the elec-
20 toral process in order to combat disinformation
21 and violence; and

22 (4) calls upon the United States Government
23 and international partners to—

24 (A) continue to condemn violence against
25 peaceful demonstrators and hate speech that

1 promotes such actions, including posts on social
2 media, and urge all political parties to publicly
3 commit to free, fair, peaceful, and transparent
4 elections;

5 (B) continue to support election prepara-
6 tion efforts, including through assistance to the
7 Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), ca-
8 pacity building for civil society and local lead-
9 ers, voter education programs, development of
10 election day protocols, violence prevention pro-
11 grams, support for election observation, and
12 human rights and atrocities prevention moni-
13 toring; and

14 (C) call for and support an independent in-
15 vestigation into the killings of civilians during
16 demonstrations.

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