

President Obama's Message to the People of Cote d'Ivoire

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The eyes of the world are on Cote d'Ivoire. Last year's election was free and fair and President Alassane Ouattara is the democratically elected leader of the nation. And I commend President Ouattara for offering a peaceful future for all Ivorians--an inclusive government, reunification and reconciliation.

Now Cote d'Ivoire is at a crossroad and two paths lay ahead. One path is where Laurent Gbagbo and his supporters cling to power, which will only lead to more violence, more innocent civilians being wounded and killed and more diplomatic and economic isolation. Or Cote d'Ivoire can take another path.

Where Gbagbo follows the example of leaders who reject violence and abide by the will of the people. Where Ivorians reclaim your country and rebuild a vibrant economy that was once the admiration of Africa. And where Cote d'Ivoire is welcomed back into the community of nations.

This is the choice that must be made. And it's a choice for all Ivorians.

I want to close by speaking directly to the people of Cote d'Ivoire. You have a proud past, from gaining your independence to overcoming civil war. Now you have the opportunity to realize your future. You deserve a future of hope, not fear. You deserve leaders like President Ouattara, who can restore your country's rightful place in the world. You deserve the chance to determine your own destiny.

It's time for democracy in Cote d'Ivoire.

And those who choose that path will have a friend and partner in the United States of America.