

# France uses military force after Ivory Coast airstrike

*Chaos erupts with an explosion of anti-French violence in France's former West African colony*

BY PARFAIT KOUASSI  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast — France rolled out overwhelming military force Sunday to put down an explosion of anti-French violence in its former West African colony, deploying troops, armored vehicles, and helicopter gunships against machete-waving mobs that hunted house-to-house for foreigners.

In the second of two days that

stood to alter French-Ivory Coast relations — and perhaps Ivory Coast itself — French forces seized strategic control of the largest city, commandeering airports and posting gunboats under bridges in the commercial capital, Abidjan.

The chaos erupted Saturday when Ivory Coast warplanes launched a surprise airstrike that killed nine French peacekeepers and a civilian American aid worker. The

government later called the bombing a mistake.

France hit back within hours, wiping out Ivory Coast's air force.

The airstrike on the peacekeepers came after government forces last week broke a cease-fire and launched aerial bomb attacks on rebel positions.

The peacekeepers are trying to hold together a nation whose stability is vital in a region where several nations are only just recovering from devastating civil wars in the 1990s.

On Sunday, loyalist mobs rampaged, outraged by the crushing French military response.

A crowd clutching machetes and iron bars entered one neighborhood, demanding to know whether any French lived there.

"If there are any whites in this neighborhood, we're going to get ... them," one man shouted.

"It's better to kill the whites than steal their stuff," another yelled.

The Red Cross said it handled about 150 people wounded in the violence.

The U.N. Security Council, in emergency session late Saturday, demanded an immediate halt to all military action in Ivory Coast, and France blamed Ivory Coast's leader.

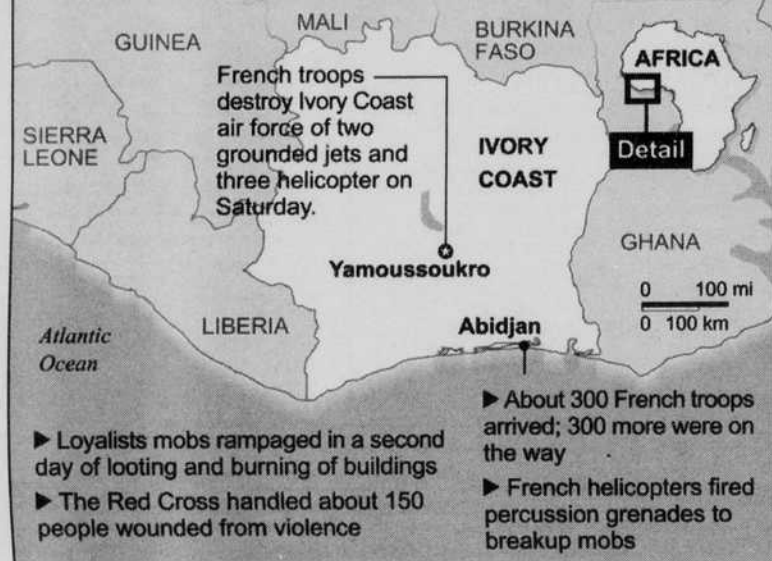
"I think President (Laurent) Gbagbo is personally responsible for what has happened," French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier said Sunday.

Gbagbo's spokesman said that Ivory Coast was willing to cease fire and immediately pull forces from the peacekeeper-controlled buffer zone.

Ivory Coast will ask the U.N. Security Council for action against France, presidential spokesman Desire Tagro said.

## French military move in after clashes

France rolled out overwhelming military force Sunday to curb an explosion of anti-French violence in its former West African colony.



SOURCE: ESRI

AP

## IN BRIEF

### Abundance Northwest: Plus-size clubbing

SEATTLE — Making the club scene is not always fun for full-sized people — that is, the 55 percent of Americans who don't fit the National Institutes of Health's body-mass standard.

Enter Abundance Northwest, about to celebrate a year of size-positive club nights, where big men and women get together to mingle, drink and dance.

About 100 plus-size people find their way once or twice a month to Abundance Northwest's parties, held at various Seattle-area locations. Some travel from as far as away as Portland and Vancouver, British Columbia.

"I think the vibe is different from the Seattle bar scene," said vivacious plus-size Melissa Habeck, 33, of Seattle. "I mean, it's cliquy like anything else, but I guess we all have one common bond."

The goal of Abundance Northwest is to ditch the idea that anyone is too fat to go out.

"They dance a lot and have a good time," said Juan Flores, owner of Chihuahua's Mexican Restaurant and Cantina, a favorite Abundance venue in Auburn, south of Seattle. "We get phone calls from all over, asking directions on how to get here."

James expects crowds to grow as the holidays approach.

"We know there's a lot of hip plus-size people out there, and that's who we wanted to attract — the fun crowd that wants to go out and dance and wear club clothes," she said.

— The Associated Press

# Militants demand prisoners' release; three held hostage

*Videotape of ailing hostages could mean Afghan militants are copying the tactics of Iraqi insurgents*

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, Afghanistan — Militants said Sunday they handed over a list of 26 prisoners, some possibly held by the United States at Guantanamo Bay, who they would take in exchange for three kidnapped U.N. workers.

A purported spokesman for the Taliban splinter group claiming to hold the three foreigners also said it might drop its other demands, which include a U.N. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Ishaq Manzoor said the list was given to Afghan officials during talks at a secret location on Sunday afternoon.

A three-strong government delegation asked for two days to look for the prisoners and find out whether they are in Afghanistan or outside, and where they are being held, Manzoor said in a telephone call.

The talks could resume on Tuesday, he said.

Neither the United Nations nor the government have confirmed any contact with the kidnapers, though Afghan officials insist they are making progress toward the hostages' release.

Another spokesman for the Jaish-al Muslimeen, or Army of Muslims, said it was represented in the talks by two businessmen acting as go-betweens.

Sadir Momin said the group was "hopeful that the government and the United Nations will accept some of our demands. It is likely that we may relax some of our conditions."

The group has previously said that some of the prisoners it wants freed may be in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, or at U.S. and Afghan jails in Afghanistan. It has also demanded that the United Nations and British troops withdraw from Afghanistan.

Momin didn't say which of these demands could be eased and none

of the militants' claims could be independently verified.

The kidnapping of Annetta Flanagan of Northern Ireland, Angelito Nayan of the Philippines and Shqipe Hebibi of Kosovo was the first against foreigners in Kabul since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

The militants released a videotape of the hostages last Sunday fueling concern that they are copying the tactics of insurgents in Iraq.

The group says Flanagan is ailing and that all three are suffering from cold and a diet of little more than cookies.

U.N. spokesman Manoel de Almeida e Silva said the concern of relatives, friends and colleagues was increasing "every day, every hour and every minute."

"The best response for their need of medical attention is their immediate release," Almeida e Silva said.

Separately, a wealthy Kosovan businessman claiming to speak for a group of friends and associates of Hebibi arrived in Kabul with his own initiative to seek her freedom.

Behgjet Pacolli said that he was seeking to contact the kidnapers through tribal, factional and religious leaders and already had "a very, very convincing indication" that she was alive.

Pacolli said he believed the three were being held separately in the Kabul area, but declined to elaborate. He insisted he was not offering money to secure Hebibi's release.

The commander in chief of the Afghan armed forces, Bismillah Khan, condemned the abduction Sunday as "against the culture of Afghanistan."

President-elect Hamid Karzai also renewed his condemnation of the kidnapping on Saturday, when he received a visit from Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Associated Press writer Noor Khan in Kandahar contributed to this report

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