



NEWS RELEASE

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NDI URGES IVORIANS TO REJECT VIOLENCE AND CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS OVER ELECTION-RELATED DISPUTES

WASHINGTON, DC -- The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) strongly encourages the government and opposition parties in Côte d'Ivoire to continue negotiations in order to reach agreement on conditions under which meaningful, democratic elections can be conducted. Such negotiations should be carried out in the spirit of openness, tolerance and compromise. All sides should avoid resorting to violence and seek every available means to reach a peaceful political settlement.

NDI had planned to sponsor an international delegation to observe the October 22, 1995 presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire. These plans were made in response to the invitation extended by the Ivorian government to the international community through the United Nations. NDI's observer mission was also part of the Institute's ongoing program to support the democratization process in Côte d'Ivoire. Since August 1994, NDI has carried out programs to assist efforts by Ivorian political parties to participate effectively in the electoral process.

Unfortunately, the prevailing political environment in the period leading up to the presidential election makes it impossible for NDI to field a delegation as planned. Following the failure of a commendable mediation effort by Ivorian civic and religious leaders and others, disagreements persist over the legal framework and the conditions under which this election will be conducted. Although NDI will not be deploying an observer delegation for the October 22 election, the Institute's staff in Abidjan will continue to monitor the situation.

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*Note: The French translation of this communiqué will follow.
A noter : La version française de ce communiqué suivra.*

