

The Forum of Reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire

Youssouf Diallo¹

¹Max Planck Institute, Social anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany

diallo@eth.mpg.de

Conferences of national reconciliation inspired by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission can bring compromise into political conflicts in contemporary Africa. The pressure of the international community on conflicting parties compelled to play the reconciliation card is based on this conviction. Whether reconciliation can be done with actors determined to continue power struggle seems to be a neglected prerequisite.

This paper is about the Côte d'Ivoire where a forum of reconciliation was convened in 2001. During the conference, representatives of political parties, social and religious institutions addressed the roots causes of the Ivorian conflict and told their 'part of the truth'. But the policy of reconciliation brought no tangible results in the end. With the ensuing events, it appeared that competing groups were determined to continue to fight each other. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire became even unstable after the forum, with perilous complications arising from the security forces that triggered army mutinies in 2002.

In attempting to answer the question why the forum of national reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire failed, the paper gives first an overview of the current conflict. Then, it discusses the characteristics, the questions on the agenda, the major players and their logic of participation in the forum.