YAKO CÃ´TE D'IVOIRE

Posted on March 10, 2011 by Eddie

Category: Africa

A few years ago, I made a trip to Brazzaville in Congo. On my way there, I was asked to carry out a new digital recorder for the BBC correspondent who was based in the city. It turned out that the reporter, John James, was living at the centre that I was visiting and we chatted quite a bit over the time I was there.

Since then, John has moved on to Ivory Coast and is now the BBC correspondent in Abidjan. This week, he has produced a piece for 'From Our Own Correspondent' which I think is the best thing I have read on the current situation in Ivory Coast.

> *This was a part of Africa that did not need handouts to develop, just a few decent politicians. Instead it has seen a race to the bottom for power at any price, with the very real threat of a return to civil war...*
>
> *The destructive rage is almost a madness.*
>
> *Attacking mosques in a country roughly divided half-and-half between Muslims and Christians who until now were living peacefully side by side.*

John writes with passion about what is happening in the country and the last few paragraphs show why he is so concerned.

> *This is the country where I work, but it is also now home. I have lived here for more than three years.*
>
> *My wife is Ivorian, and only recently I picked up my own Ivorian passport. At the same time I bought a house.*
>
> *This remains a place of friendly people, amazing fresh fruit, long and unspoilt tropical beaches, and, yes, it ought to have a bright future.*
>
> *But at the moment, the place is being held hostage, and there seem to be more atrocities committed every day. I wonder when my family should evacuate. The dark clouds seem to be gathering.*
>
> *Ivorians wanted one president but they got two, they wanted peace and they got war, they were promised debt relief, but instead the country defaulted on its debt, they wanted prosperity and the economy shut down.*
>
> *There is an important word here that I have never found the equivalent for in English - "Yako". It is a deeply-felt way of saying, "I'm so sorry".*
>
> *Ivory Coast, "Yako".*

Read the whole article here: please.

Meanwhile, Global Voices have created a section devoted to the unrest in Ivory Coast. It is well worth subscribing to.