THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON IVORY COAST

Posted on April 8, 2011 by Eddie

Category: Africa

I've just opened Facebook to discover that a couple of good friends and their children have just had a fortunate escape when a shell passed close to them and exploded close to some shipping containers nearby. The remaining copies of the Kouya New Testament are stored in one of the containers. Worse news, though it doesn't touch me as closely, is that there have been more bodies found in mass graves in the west of the country.

A few days ago, French helicopters attacked an Ivorian Army base on the outskirts of Abidjan. I have friends who live close to the base and for them it felt as though they had been singled out for attack. I don't know what it feels like when helicopters fire rockets at your neighbours, but it must be pretty scary.

A lot has been said this week about the need for western governments to intervene in Ivory Coast and to stop the conflict. It would take a very long post to examine what would be needed for such an intervention to succeed - if indeed it is possible for it to do so. I may have a go at writing that long post at some point, but for the moment, this 2005 BBC article gives an indication of the complexity of the situation that an outside army would have to deal with.

Sadly, the problems in Ivory Coast have deep roots and go back a long way. For better or for worse, they are Ivorian problems and in the end it will be up to Ivorians to deal with them. The best that outside forces can do is to hold the peace - which is what the UN managed to do for the last six years.