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Côte d'Ivoire: The Rally of Young Republicans (Rassemblement des jeunes républicains, RJR); its ties to the Rally of Republicans (Rassemblement des républicains, RDR) and to the rebels; treatment of its members by the authorities (2000-2004)

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The Rally of Young Republicans (RJR)

Article 14 of the constitution for the Rally of Republicans (Rassemblement des républicains, RDR) states that the party created a specialized organization, called the "Rassemblement des jeunes républicains (RJR)," [translation] "whose mission is to provide political coaching and training . . . to youths" (n.d.). The party constitution also states that representatives of the youth organization are to participate in various groups of the party, such as the [translation] "core committees, branches or regional offices" (Rassemblement des républicains n.d.).

RJR members or leaders are called upon to participate in political activities organized by the RDR, such as meetings (*Soir Info* 12 Oct. 2004), or to attend the youth meetings of various opposition parties under the umbrella of the Rally for Young Democrats for Peace (Rassemblement des jeunes démocrates pour la paix), such as the meeting that was held on 18 December 2004 in Cocody (*Le Front* 20 Dec. 2004).

Country Reports 2003 indicated that the RDR's youth wing "kept a low profile, especially after [the] September 2002 [rebellion], but staged some activities during the year" (25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 3), without specifying the nature of those activities. However, an 11 December 2002 article from Panapress reported that [translation] "the youth faction of the Rally of Republicans (RDR), the liberal opposition," is against the military mobilization of youths by the Ivorian authorities.

Treatment of RJR and RDR members by the authorities

No specific information on the treatment of RJR members could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response. However, several sources reported that the Ivorian authorities had committed human rights violations against RDR members, including "student" members (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004; HRW 26 Mar. 2004; Freedom House 14 Sept. 2004).

During a rally for RDR youths on Thursday, 30 September 2004, the RJR president announced a conference on the [translation] "role of youths in the RDR fight" (*Le Patriote* 1 Oct. 2004). The president stated that [translation] "RDR students, particularly those in the north and those who are Muslims, are hounded [and] have practically been run out of university campuses" (ibid.). No corroboration of this information could be found among the other sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Country Reports 2003 indicated that a youth RDR activist disappeared after his family had been threatened, but there was no investigation by the year's end (25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 1b). An RDR student leader by the name of Diarrassouba was reported released as part of a general amnesty in August 2003 (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 1d).

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that the victims of human rights violations committed by the Ivorian security forces were primarily "West African immigrants and northern Ivorians, often perceived as supporters of the [RDR] opposition party" (Jan. 2004). HRW also indicated that RDR members were the primary targets of the "excessive force" used to break up a demonstration held on 25 March 2004 in Abidjan (26 Mar. 2004). Freedom House reported that 11 RDR members were detained in October 2004 because they were suspected of plotting to assassinate various politicians and military leaders (14 Sept. 2004; see also *Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004). According to *Country Reports 2003*, "[s]everal members of the opposition party Rally of Republicans (RDR) were missing at year's end" in Côte d'Ivoire (25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 1b).

No specific information on the ties between the RJR and the rebels could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003. 25 February 2004. United States Department of State. Washington, D.C. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27723.htm>> [Accessed 31 Dec. 2004]

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral source: An oral source did not respond to a request for information within the time constraints for this Response.

Internet sites, including: *Afrique Express*, AllAfrica.com, Amnesty International, Abidjan.net, Rassemblement des républicains.

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