

21 May 2020

Côte d'Ivoire: Break-in at the office of the Ivorian Human Rights Observatory

Late at night on 19 May 2020, unknown individuals broke into the office of the **Observatoire Ivoirien des Droits de l'Homme** (*Ivorian Human Rights Observatory* – OIHD) in Abidjan and robbed the premises.

[OIHD](#) is a human rights organization whose aim is to protect, defend and promote human rights and inform citizens on their rights. OIHD investigates and publishes reports on human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire, whilst also conducting awareness-raising missions, workshops and advocacy actions.

Late at night on 19 May 2020, unknown individuals broke into the OIHD offices in Abidjan, bypassing the security system. Administrative documents and work materials were stolen, and internet cables, televisions and other digital devices were dismantled.

Members of the organization noticed the burglary on the morning of 20 May. They reported that the magnitude of the damage suggested that there were multiple individuals involved who took a significant amount of time, which may indicate that the organization was specifically targeted. The fact that documents were taken also points in the same direction. The national police opened a criminal investigation on the case.

OIHD members believe that this incident is an act of intimidation, in reprisal for the organization's recent work on several sensitive issues, including the monitoring of the trial of Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé before the International Criminal Court. OIHD has also publicly criticized the Ivorian State's withdrawal of the declaration allowing individuals and NGOs to appeal to the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights, on 29 April 2020.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned by the break-in of the office of OIHD as it believes that the human rights organization is being targeted solely as a result of its peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Côte d'Ivoire to:

1. Condemn the break-in of OIHD office, as it is believed to be directly motivated by the organisation's active, peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the break-in of the office of OIHD, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Côte d'Ivoire are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.