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## Anti-French Rioting Rages on in Ivory Coast

By SOMINI SENGUPTA

LAGOS, Nigeria, Jan. 27 — Government supporters rioted for a second day today in the streets of Abidjan, Ivory Coast's main city, venting their anger with an accord signed on Saturday in Paris to end Ivoirians' civil conflict.

Rioters erected barricades across the city, singling out foreigners, looting shops and effectively shutting down Abidjan, a vital port for West Africa.

The peace accord, brokered by France, envisions rebel groups sharing power with the government, an approach that has enraged backers of President Laurent Gbagbo.

They have taken out their anger on French sites in Abidjan. In addition to bonfires set in front of the French Embassy over the weekend, the French Cultural Institute has been damaged, as well as the Air France office and outlets of Orange, the French telephone company on which many Ivoirians rely every day. Other targets have been bookstores and supermarkets with apparent connections to the French — if only in name.

A spokesman for the French Army, which has about 2,500 soldiers in Ivory Coast to maintain a cease-fire and protect French citizens, said today that some of them had been attacked by the protesters.

The spokesman, Col. Ange-Antoine Leccia, also said some protesters had entered French homes, demanding money and making threats.

The Gbagbo loyalists accuse France, the country's former colonial ruler, of forcing the deal.

"The French government cannot impose their decision," said Blé Goudé, a leader of a pro-government youth group. "It is the people here who elected President Gbagbo."

The embattled president, who returned to Abidjan on Sunday night after agreeing to the accord at talks in Marcoussis, France, addressed protesters briefly this afternoon, appealing for calm. "I am not about to betray you," he told them. "Go back to your homes, go back to work and stop the destruction."

He promised a detailed response later this week — after, he said, he has discussed the peace deal with his government.

The United Nations Security Council is to discuss the Ivory Coast conflict on Tuesday. Discussions have been under way on deploying United Nations peacekeepers as a means of easing the four-month-old conflict, but no decision has been made.

The United Nations secretary general's special envoy to Ivory Coast, Carolyn McAskie, said today that while the situation remained volatile, the peace deal was not doomed. The challenge for the Gbagbo government, she said, is to soothe the passions of the pro-government groups.

"It was to be foreseen that there would be elements who would find it difficult to swallow," she said of the accord. "There are a lot of uncontrollable elements. It is also true that some of these elements are elements the government has empowered. It is impossible to suddenly rein them in."

The peace plan envisions an interim national unity government composed of representatives of rebel groups and Mr. Gbagbo's government and headed by the prime minister, Seydou Diarra. No dates are specified for the elections outlined in the accord or for the interim government's starting date.

A critical part of the interim government's mission will be to ensure the expulsion of mercenary forces from the country and the establishment of a rights commission. Mr. Gbagbo has dismissed reports that the rebel groups would be granted control of the Defense and Interior Ministries.

The conflict began on Sept. 19, when insurgents from the north tried to unseat Mr. Gbagbo, who was elected in 2000. Rebels now control the northern half of the country. The war has displaced more than a million people.

The question of citizenship is at the heart of the conflict in this country, for years the cosmopolitan hub of West Africa.

Foreigners — a term that can include people born here — make up more than 25 percent of the population. Nativist anger began to swell when cocoa prices took a nose dive a few years ago and the good times began to fade. New laws were passed tightening the rules on who could vote and run for office and how to obtain the coveted "certificate of nationality."

Supporters of Mr. Gbagbo's government have accused northerners — as well as refugees and immigrants from neighboring Burkina Faso, Mali and Liberia — of responsibility for the insurgencies in the north and west. Shantytowns populated by immigrants have been targets since the civil war began. And in the last two days there have been reports of attacks against West African immigrants.