

## **An outcry of the heart**

### **Fondation AMAN-International calls on the German Foreign Office to financially support the work of non-governmental organizations in Côte d'Ivoire**

**Berlin (28.02.2011) - In view of the increasingly dramatic situation in the civil war-ravaged Côte d'Ivoire, the leaders of the aid organization "Fondation AMAN-International" have made an urgent appeal directly to the head of the Africa Department of the German Foreign Office to ask the Ministry to provide financial support as soon as possible for aid activities of non-governmental organizations working on the ground. With explicit reference to the frequently observed misuse of public funds for development aid, the FAI demanded that the use of the funds made available by the various donor institutions be constantly monitored by a neutral party, in order to be sure that the money really does arrive there and is used sensibly for what it is intended.**

In various meetings with senior representatives of the German Foreign Office, FAI President Marie Ginette AMANI-FRIDRICH and FAI Board Director Bernd-Dieter FRIDRICH had expressed their grave concern about the increasingly disastrous humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire, which has been ongoing for weeks: "Recently, the situation in large parts of the country has deteriorated considerably, as we know firsthand not only from the media, but especially from our staff on the ground; one, for example, had to watch with his own eyes in the problem district of Abidjan-Abobo how - barely 30 meters away from him - a younger man struck down a defenseless civilian with a gun. Large parts of the population find themselves in growing despair and far-reaching helplessness, which in some cases also robs them of the last vestige of human dignity: dead bodies in the streets, in addition to the smell of decay everywhere, charred cars, burning shelters, injured people without a roof over their heads and mostly without medical care, sick people waiting to die - all of this is now unfortunately already part of everyday life."

In a letter to the Africa representative of the ministry, it says: "Because of the mission we gave ourselves at the time, 'To provide humanitarian aid and promote sustainable development', we feel and know as those responsible for the organization we founded in Abidjan in 2003 that we must not look on, look away or even be inactive right now. It is no coincidence that eight years ago we chose the phrase 'L'HUMANITAIRE AU QUOTIDIEN' as the slogan that constantly reminds us. As you know, our aid organization, created solely by private initiative, has since achieved remarkable things in Côte d'Ivoire, thousands have benefited from our direct aid or indirectly through cooperation with other civil society institutions, especially children and young women disadvantaged by society and without work.

We hope that public institutions and individuals in Germany, who have unfortunately only morally supported FAI's humanitarian work so far, will feel much more closely connected in the future with our permanent staff in the FAI office in Abidjan and, above all, with the large number of volunteers throughout the country, i.e. with those young men and women, but also older people with practical experience, who have long since internalized the humanitarian idea through our training as part of the FAI program 'FAI-RENCAP-CH' and have since passed it on to others. They and also we ourselves

rely very much on financial support from the German government, especially from the Africa Department of the German Foreign Office.

We, the Fondation AMAN-International (FAI), are the only African non-governmental organization that has not only maintained contacts with personalities in Germany for several years, but also, and above all, at the numerous public events in Côte d'Ivoire - to be understood quite literally, please - demonstratively holds up the German flag next to the Ivorian one, in order to even in this way set a visible sign for the good bilateral relations in the areas in which FAI is particularly committed and has conceived and also implemented numerous programs step by step.

Not least thanks to the numerous helpers in all parts of the country, we have the best knowledge on the ground, especially in rural areas, and have gained extensive experience over the years in the areas of healthy nutrition and health care, education and training, vocational training, business start-ups, nature and environmental protection and the defense of human rights, in order to be able to meet the humanitarian crisis right now with an optimally prepared staff of active helpers. Our CORPS HUMANITAIRE is ready, but also needs tangible financial support right now in order to be able to purchase urgently needed relief goods produced in Côte d'Ivoire, which also directly support the domestic economy.

We therefore ask that the German government, and in this case the Federal Foreign Office as a central part of it, make our aid organization one of its official partner organizations in the humanitarian field as quickly as possible, especially since we are not a large international organization that sometimes operates in a certain "anonymity", but are visibly active on the ground, where any aid reaches the suffering population directly. We are a comparatively very small organization and not one of the government- or privately-financed institutions that repeatedly make negative headlines with regard to the use of donations - for example, UNICEF (German Committee) in Cologne a long time ago. There are also institutions that receive a considerable amount of direct funding from the federal government and from international financial organizations, and that do not use such funds solely in the interests of their donors. In Côte d'Ivoire, we unfortunately had to discover this ourselves.

We, on the other hand, have made a name for ourselves on the ground thanks to our high level of personal commitment - both voluntary and financial - in conjunction with many volunteers, which has earned us the express recognition not only of several Ivorian ministries, of more than 50 civil society organizations in Côte d'Ivoire and many heads of mission of African states accredited in Berlin, but also of the German side.

We are pleased that, for example, according to a press release of February 8, 2011, the German Foreign Office has made funds amounting to 500,000 euros available to the ICRC and the UNHCR for emergency humanitarian aid. If you also think that you should provide a much more modest amount to FAI for short-term relief on the ground, we are always very happy to provide further information to explain some of the needs of the suffering population that we ourselves have identified.

Even here in Berlin, we have recently received inquiries from Ivorian journalists, who have known about our relief efforts for years, as to what Germany can or wants to do concretely with the help of the FAI organization and its CORPS HUMANITAIRE; in the summer of 2007, we offered this program nationwide for the first time and have since gained more than 500 participants, meanwhile also from countries such as Burkina Faso, Benin, Guinea, Nigeria, Congo (Brazzaville) and the Central African Republic, so that we are about to launch an Internet training program that transcends national borders. We plan to contact the more than 500 aid workers who have received their training with us at short notice to determine who is available and willing to help out as soon as possible as part of an operation financially supported by the German Foreign Office, although everyone is well aware of the risk of going on mission.

As in the past, the country will have to wait in vain for government assistance. Whatever the outcome of a political or military "solution" to the current crisis, civil society organizations like ours will have to do the work on the ground alone. Thousands of people are waiting for our help, which will take the form of concrete actions, including medical and psychological support. Hoping that our "CRI DE CŒUR" will find open ears among you, we thank you in advance for a first positive response."