

Ivory Coast official wants peace ceremony

by UPI

CAPE TOWN, South Africa - Ivory Coast Prime Minister Guillaume Soro Thursday proposed a high-profile weapons burning ceremony to cut violence in the north of his nation.

Soro, at a news conference in Cape Town, South Africa, said he was asking South African President Thabo Mbeki to attend the "Flames of Peace" ceremony in Bouake, the city in northern Ivory Coast where his New Forces rebels were based.

Soro said the ceremony could act as a new beginning for peaceful relations in the Ivory Coast. "From that ceremony onwards, the actual disarmament process will start over the whole of Ivoirian territory."

Soro took office April 4 as part of a peace deal with President Laurent Gbagbo. Center of the conflict was citizenship for the multinational residents of the northern part of the Ivory Coast that he controlled. Soro said identification papers could start being issued this month.

Soro also said that the upcoming Ivory Coast elections should be overseen by the United Nations to ensure valid and fair results, AllAfrica.com reported. No date for elections has been set.

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