

### **What should West African leaders do?**

Sometime in the not so distant future, leaders of West African nations are meeting in Lagos, Nigeria. Over the centuries, many of their former countrymen have migrated to other parts of the world, some voluntarily and some because of force. In these other regions, transplanted West Africans have made major contributions to industry and the arts.

One country, which shall not be named, has a reputation for victimizing its West African population. Even though they are officially citizens of this country, they are subject to discrimination and police brutality and many live in poverty. Medical care for these West Africans is inadequate so their life expectancy is lower than the rest of the population and child mortality is amongst the highest in the world.

Cultural and economic conditions in this country have led to deterioration of families and community values. A sense of hopelessness pervades communities that are plagued by drugs and violence. An increasing majority of all West African children born in this country are the children of unmarried teenage mothers, virtually insuring that they grow up in poverty. As a result, more West African young men end up in jail than in college.

The leaders of the West African nations must arrive at a decision. Should they intervene in the affairs of this country? And if they do, should they limit intervention to economic aid or should they send in troops and overthrow the government? What do you think? Why?