



European Asylum Support Office

Côte d'Ivoire Country Focus

Country of Origin Information Report



June 2019

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Côte d'Ivoire

Country Focus

Country of Origin Information Report

June 2019

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Dr Marie Miran-Guyon, Lecturer at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), researcher, and author of numerous publications on the country reviewed this report.

It must be noted that the review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of EASO.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Contents.....	4
Disclaimer.....	6
Glossary and Abbreviations	7
Introduction	10
Methodology	10
Defining the terms of reference.....	10
Collecting information.....	10
Quality control.....	10
Structure of the report	10
Map	12
1. Ethnic groups	13
1.1 Overview.....	13
1.1.1 Constitutional framework	13
1.1.2 Languages.....	14
1.1.3 Religions	14
1.2 Geographical location of ethnic groups.....	15
1.2.1 Dioula	16
1.3 Conflicts involving specific ethnic groups.....	17
2. Recent History.....	20
2.1 Houphouët-Boigny's presidency (1960 – 1993)	20
2.2 Bédié's presidency and the birth of <i>Ivoirité</i> (1993 – 1999)	20
2.3 Military coup and election of Laurent Gbagbo (1999 – 2002)	21
2.4 First Ivorian crisis (2002-2010): a divided country	22
2.5 The post-electoral crisis (2010-2011)	24
2.5.1 Overview	24
2.5.2 Actors in the conflict	26
2.6 Ouattara's presidency.....	27
2.6.1 Ouattara's first term.....	27
2.6.2 Ouattara's second term	28
3. Political situation.....	29
3.1 General overview.....	29

3.2 Political parties	33
3.2.1 The main political parties and alliances	35
3.2.2 Senatorial election	43
3.2.3 National reconciliation	44
3.2.4 Situation of Gbagbo supporters	46
4. Security situation	53
4.1 General security situation.....	53
4.1.1 Minors in conflict with the law (so-called <i>microbes</i>)	53
4.1.2 Challenges related to the defence forces	57
4.1.3 Terrorism	65
4.2 Security situation in the west of Côte d'Ivoire	66
4.2.1 Land disputes	67
5. Specific human rights issues	73
5.1 General overview.....	73
5.1.1 Prisons	73
5.1.2 Corruption	73
5.1.3 Freedom of press	75
5.1.4 Freedom of association, of religion, of expression	76
5.1.5 People with disabilities.....	76
5.2 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender persons (LGBT)	77
5.3 Women: violence, domestic violence, FGM/C, forced and early marriage.....	79
5.3.1 Sexual violence	80
5.3.2 Domestic violence	82
5.3.3 Forced and early marriage	84
5.3.4 Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)	85
5.4 Trafficking in human beings.....	88
5.4.1 Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation	89
5.4.2 Trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.....	90
Annex 1: Bibliography	91
Annex 2: Terms of Reference	145

Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EASO COI Report Methodology (2012)¹. The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EASO nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 24 May 2019. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).

¹ The EASO methodology is largely based on the Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI), 2008, and can be downloaded from the EASO website: [url](#).

Glossary and Abbreviations

ACDEG	African Charter for Democracy, Election and Governance
AFD	<i>Alliance des force démocratiques</i> (Alliance of Democratic Forces)
AFFDO-CI	<i>Association des Femmes et Familles des Détenus d'Opinion de Côte d'Ivoire</i> (Political Prisoners' Wives and Families Association)
AIDF	<i>Association ivoirienne pour la défense des droits de la femme</i> (Ivorian Association for the Defense of Women)
Allochthones	Ivorian citizens belonging to a community which is not autochthon in the place they live. For example Baoulé (originating from the centre of Côte d'Ivoire) are considered allochthones in western Côte d'Ivoire.
AU	African Union
Autochthones	people belonging to a social group considered to be the first occupants of the place they live in
CDVR	Commission dialogue, vérité et reconciliation (Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEI	<i>Commission Electorale Indépendante de Côte d'Ivoire</i> (Independent Electoral Commission of Côte d'Ivoire)
CNDHCI	<i>Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme de Côte d'Ivoire</i> (National Committee for Human Rights in Côte d'Ivoire)
CNE	<i>Commission nationale d'enquete</i> (National Commission of Inquiry)
CNP	<i>Conseil National de la Presse</i> (National Council for the Print Media)
COJEP	<i>Congrès panafricain pour la justice et l'égalité des peuples</i> (Pan-African Congress for Justice and People's Equality)
Comzones	Zone Commanders of the FAFN
CONARIV	<i>Commission Nationale pour la Reconciliation et l'Indemnisation des Victimes</i> (National Commission for the Reconciliation and Indemnification of Victims)
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index (of Transparency International)
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CSEI	<i>Cellule spéciale d'enquete et d'instruction</i> (Special Investigation Unit)
DDH	<i>Division des droits de l'homme</i> (Division of Human Rights) (of the ONUCI)
Dozos	Traditional hunters
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West Africa
EDS	<i>Ensemble pour la démocratie et la souveraineté</i> (Together for democracy and sovereignty)
FACI	Forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire (Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire)
FCFA	CFA Franc

FESCI	<i>Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire</i> (Students' Union of Côte d'Ivoire)
FIDH	<i>Fédération internationale des droits de l'Homme</i> (International Federation for Human Rights)
Foreigners (<i>allogènes</i>)	Non-Ivorian citizens, for example Burkinabé. Some of them have been living in Côte d'Ivoire for several generations but are still considered <i>allogènes</i>
FPI	<i>Front populaire ivoirien</i> (Ivorian Popular Front)
FRCI	<i>Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire</i> (Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire) (since 2016 became FACI)
GOR	<i>Gbagbo ou rien</i> (Gbagbo or nothing)
HABG	<i>Haute Autorité pour la Bonne Gouvernance</i> (High Authority for Good Governance)
HACA	<i>Haute Autorité de la Communication Audiovisuelle</i> (High Audiovisual Communications Authority)
HCDH/ OHCHR	<i>Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme</i> (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner)
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
JFPI	Jeunesse du Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI Youth league)
JPDCI	Jeunesse du PDCI (PDCI Youth league)
JUDPCI	Jeunesse de UDPCI (UPDCI Youth league)
LIDER	<i>Liberté et Démocratie pour la République</i> (Liberty and Democracy for the Republic)
LIDHO	<i>Ligue Ivoirienne des droits de L'homme</i> (Côte d'Ivoire Human Rights League)
MACA	<i>Maison d'arrêt et de correction d'Abidjan</i> (House of Arrest and Correction of Abidjan)
MFA	<i>Mouvement des forces d'avenir</i> (Movement of the Future Forces)
MINUCI	UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PDCI	<i>Parti démocratique Côte d'Ivoire</i> (Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire)
PIT	<i>Parti ivoirien des travailleurs</i> (Ivorian Workers Party)
PNDU/ UNDP	<i>Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement</i> (United Nations Development Programme)

POECI	<i>Plateforme des Organization de la Societe Civile pour l'Observation des Elections en Côte d'Ivoire</i> (Platform of Civil Society Organisations for the Observation of Elections in Côte d'Ivoire)
RACI	<i>Rassemblement pour la Cote d'Ivoire</i> (Rally for Cote d'Ivoire)
RDR	<i>Front populaire ivoirien</i> (Ivorian Popular Front)
RER	<i>Rassemblement des Enseignants Republicains</i> (Rally of Republican Teachers)
RFR	<i>Rassemblement des Femmes Republicaines</i> (Rally of Republican Women)
RHDP	<i>Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix</i> (Rally of Houphouëtist for Democracy and Peace)
RJR	<i>Rassemblement des Jeunes Republicains</i> (Rally of Young Republicans)
RSF/ RWB	<i>Reporters Sans Frontiere</i> (Reporters Without Borders)
UDPCI	<i>Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire</i> (Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire)
UE-UDPCI	<i>Union des Enseignants de l'UDPCI</i> (Union of teachers of UDPCI)
UF- UPDCI	<i>Union des Femmes de l'UDPCI</i> (Union of the women of UPDCI)
UFDCI	<i>Union des Femmes du PDCI</i> (Union of Women of PDCI)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNFPA/FNUP	Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population (United Nations Population Fund)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCI/ONUCI	Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire (United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire)
UPCI	<i>Union pour la Côte d'Ivoire</i> (Union for Côte d'Ivoire)
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

Introduction

This report was written in the framework of the [2018 EASO Operating Plan to Italy](#), Measure IT 3.0: Support to the National Asylum Commission and Territorial Commissions.² The co-drafters of this report are mentioned in the [Acknowledgements](#) section.

Methodology

Defining the terms of reference

In a country focus report, EASO aims to provide information focusing on selected topics of particular relevance for international protection status determination (refugee status and subsidiary protection), in this case for Ivorian applicants. It is not meant to be a general description of the human rights situation in the country, nor a comprehensive overview of all topics at stake in international protection status determination.

The terms of reference (ToR) were based on a list of information needs provided by Italian asylum authorities, a systematic review of queries from Italian territorial commissions and courts processing applications for international protection from Ivorian applicants in 2017, as well as input from the Swiss SEM and EASO COI specialist network on West Africa. ToR were finalised during a meeting held in July 2018 with the drafters, and can be found in annex to this report under [Terms of Reference](#).

Collecting information

The information is mostly the result of desk research of public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources and was supplemented with information collected from field work in Côte d'Ivoire conducted by SEM's COI specialist. The reference period for describing events was from September 2016 until September 2018.

The information has largely been retrieved from open sources, namely international and Ivorian NGOs, think tanks, media and academic research, both during the deployment of the IT researchers to SEM, and during several rounds of peer and external reviews that further contributed to the information collection process (see [Quality Control](#)). All cited sources are listed in the bibliography.

Quality control

In order to ensure that the authors respected the EASO COI Report Methodology, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section, and by EASO. In addition, a review of the report was carried out by researcher/academic Marie Miran-Guyon. EASO performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

The quality control process led to further research and the inclusion of some additional information up to 24 May 2019, in response to feedback received during the respective reviews. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report.

Structure of the report

This report is divided into five main chapters:

² EASO, Operating Plan Agreed by EASO and Italy, 15 December 2017, [url](#)

The first chapter presents an overview of the main Ivorian ethnic groups, their geographic distribution, as well as the conflicts some ethnic groups are involved in.

The second chapter provides some historical background information on the country's political environment from the death of its first president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, as well as context information on the two periods of civil unrest (2002-2007; 2010-2011).

In chapter three, readers can find an overview of the political scene in Côte d'Ivoire, including political parties, the March 2018 Senate elections, and a look into the reconciliation process and the situation of Laurent Gbagbo's supporters.

The fourth chapter focuses on aspects of the security situation, in particular on the west part of the country, inter-ethnic conflicts related to land disputes and the role and current activities of the Com-zones; this section also looks into social unrest and criminality, specifically the *microbes* phenomenon.

The last chapter is dedicated to some specific human rights issues in the country, namely the situation of LGBTI persons, women (including domestic and sexual violence, FGM/C, and forced and early marriage) and trafficking in human beings.

Map

Map 1 Côte d'Ivoire, December 2011, ©United Nations³

³ United Nations, Map no. 4312 Rev. 3, December 2011, [url](#). For a map that reflects the latest administrative changes, see Côte d'Ivoire, Carte de Côte d'Ivoire Administrative, 2012, [url](#)

1. Ethnic groups

1.1 Overview

This section gives a brief overview of the main aspects of ethnic groups, such as demography, languages and religions. In addition, it discusses several ethnically related conflicts.

The population of Côte d'Ivoire is multi-ethnic; there are over sixty ethnic groups with different linguistic and cultural identities and complex interrelationships.⁴

The main ethnic groups in Côte d'Ivoire (with many subgroups) are the Akan (38.1 %), the Voltaïque or Gur (21.2 %), Northern Mandé (19 %), Southern Mandé (9.1 %) and Krou (11.3 %).⁵

Twenty-four per cent of the population of the country are non-Ivorians⁶ coming from neighbouring countries, such as Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Liberia, Senegal, Mauritania, Lebanon⁷, Cameroon, Togo, Niger, and migrants from Europe.⁸

Marriages between men and women having different religious beliefs and/or belonging to different ethnic groups exist⁹, more so in urban areas, especially Abidjan, than in rural areas. Marriages, friendship and coalitions across ethnic and religious lines are more frequent within the political elite than among other social groups.¹⁰

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Ivorian politicians have used the regional, ethnic, and religious divisions in Côte d'Ivoire to gather political support.¹¹ During the years of political turmoil, members of the Bambara, Malinké, and Northern Manding (Mandé or Dioula) groups originating from the northern and central areas of the country were generally considered to be pro-Ouattara, while groups in the western and central-western areas, including Krou, and some southern subgroups of the Akan, were thought to be mostly pro-Gbagbo. Akan subgroups in the central part of the country were considered more pro-former President Bedié, whose party allied with the Ouattara coalition.¹²

1.1.1 Constitutional framework

Article 4 of the 2016 Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire states that all Ivorian people are free and equal in rights. No one may be privileged or discriminated against by reasons of their race, ethnicity, clan, tribe, skin colour, sex, region, social origin, religion or belief, opinion, fortune, culture or language, social situation or physical or mental state.¹³

⁴ Minority Rights Group International, Côte d'Ivoire, updated January 2018, [url](#); Norway, LandInfo, Côte d'Ivoire: Ethnicity, Ivoirité and Conflict, 2 November 2006, [url](#); CIA, The World Factbook, Côte d'Ivoire, updated 1 January 2019, [url](#); Ethnologue, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁵ INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#)

⁶ INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#)

⁷ Minority Rights Group International, Côte d'Ivoire, updated January 2018, [url](#); Norway, LandInfo, Côte d'Ivoire: Ethnicity, Ivoirité and Conflict, 2 November 2006, [url](#)

⁸ Norway, LandInfo, Côte d'Ivoire: Ethnicity, Ivoirité and Conflict, 2 November 2006, [url](#)

⁹ Bandyopadhyay S. and Green E., Explaining inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa, n.d., [url](#); Norway, LandInfo, Côte d'Ivoire: Ethnicity, Ivoirité and Conflict, 2 November 2006, [url](#); OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

¹⁰ Norway, LandInfo, Côte d'Ivoire: Ethnicity, Ivoirité and Conflict, 2 November 2006, [url](#); OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

¹¹ Thierno Mouctar Bah, Addressing Côte d'Ivoire's Deeper Crisis, 31 March 2012, [url](#). Cf. Chapters 2 and 3 of this report for the concept of *Ivoirité* and its consequences.

¹² UNHCR, Interim Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Côte d'Ivoire, 15 June 2012, [url](#)

¹³ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 2016-886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#)

Article 23 provides that anyone persecuted because of their political, religious or philosophical opinions or because of their ethnicity, may benefit of the right of asylum on the territory of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire under the condition that they conform to the Law of the Republic.¹⁴

Article 25 provides that political parties and groups organised along regional, religious, tribal, ethnic or racial lines are prohibited.¹⁵

1.1.2 Languages

The estimated sixty languages in the country can be divided into four distinct linguistic groups: the Gur languages of the north-east (Senofo, Kolango, Lobiri), the Kru languages of the south-west (Bete, Dida, Wè), the Kwa languages of the south-east (Baule, Agni) and finally the Mandé languages of the north-west (malinké) and the south Mandé languages in the west of the country (Yacuba, Gagu, Goro).

French is the only official language, and the only language used in public life and education. The Mandé language Dioula has become an important vehicular language, and is used all over the national territory as a *lingua franca*. Even though Dioula is propagated all over the territory, it is associated with the northern areas of the country and, consequently, with Islam.¹⁶

Due to the fact that Côte d'Ivoire is an economic centre of gravity in West Africa, several languages from neighbouring states are also present in the country, for example Mandé languages from Mali and Guinea, Moore from Burkina Faso, and Hausa from Niger and Nigeria.¹⁷ Other non-Ivorian African languages which can be heard are Mossi, Gourounsi, Fanti, Ewe, Fon, and Wolof.¹⁸

1.1.3 Religions

According to the 2014 census, Ivorian inhabitants, including both Ivorian and non-Ivorian nationals, are mainly Muslims and Christians, namely 42.9 % of the population is Muslim and 33.9 % Christian. The latter include 17.2 % Catholic, 11.8 % Evangelical, 1.7 % Methodist, 0.5 % Harrist, 0.4 % Celestial, and 2.2 % other Christian denominations. Animists are 3.6 %, while followers of other religions constitute 0.5 %. The census reports that population without any religion is 19.1 %¹⁹, while 20 % did not respond to the census.²⁰

Traditionally, the south of the country is associated with Christianity and the north with Islam, but devotees of both religions live all over the country.²¹ However, the researcher Miran-Guyon states that Muslims also mainly live in the south, considering the fact that the large majority of the Ivorian population is located in the south.²²

¹⁴ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 2016-886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#)

¹⁵ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 2016-886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#)

¹⁶ Moseng Knutsen A.: Ivory Coast: The Supremacy of French. In: A. Simpson (2008). Language and National Identity in Africa. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 158-171

¹⁷ Moseng Knutsen A.: Ivory Coast: The Supremacy of French. In: A. Simpson (2008). Language and National Identity in Africa. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 158-171

¹⁸ Alvin E. , Ivory Coast History on Politics, Art, Culture, Ethnic groups and Migration: Inside Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), 7 November 2016, p. 73

¹⁹ INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#). The category 'without religion' is explained in another source as 'deism, agnosticism, atheism'. Atlasocio.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Les résultats du recensement de 2014, 9 August 2015, [url](#)

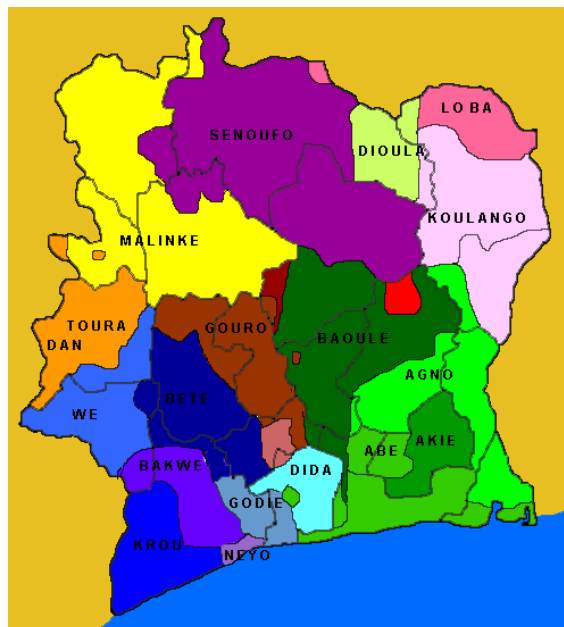
²⁰ United States, USDOS, 2017 Report on International Religious Freedom - Côte d'Ivoire, 29 May 2018, [url](#)

²¹ United States, USDOS, 2017 Report on International Religious Freedom - Côte d'Ivoire, 29 May 2018, [url](#)

²² Miran-Guyon M., Société musulmane et régime Ouattara en Côte d'Ivoire. Des affinités électives en demi-teinte, 2017 [url](#)

Many individuals combine Christian and Islamic beliefs with traditional ones.²³ Practitioners of various religions live peacefully together. Conversions are frequent and tolerated, according to Miran-Guyon.²⁴

1.2 Geographical location of ethnic groups



Map 2 The main ethnic groups of Côte d'Ivoire ©Etienne Ruedin [CC BY-SA 3.0]²⁵

The main cultural clusters are divided into 5 groups:²⁶

- The dominant Akan speakers, mainly located in the centre, east and south-east.²⁷ According to the 2014 official census, 6 540 553 persons belong to this cluster.²⁸

The Baoulé are the largest Akan subgroup and constitute 15-20 % of the population.²⁹ Other Akan subgroups are the Abbey, Abidji, Abouré, Adioukrou³⁰ (or Adjoukrou³¹), Agni, Ahizi, Akyé³² (or Attié³³), Alladian³⁴ (or Alladjan³⁵), Avikam, Bron³⁶ (or Abron³⁷), Ebrié, Ega, Ehotilé³⁸

²³ Minority Rights Group International, Côte d'Ivoire, updated January 2018, [url](#); CIA, The World Factbook, Côte d'Ivoire, updated 1 January 2019, [url](#)

²⁴ Marie Miran-Guyon, Société musulmane et régime Ouattara en Côte d'Ivoire. Des affinités électives en demi-teinte, 2017 [url](#)

²⁵ Colour code: yellow/yellow-green: Malinke, green: Kwa/Akan, orange: southern Mande, blue: Kru; pink: Voltaic-Gur. Etienne Ruedin, [source: [url](#)], 1 July 2006, [url](#)

²⁶ This is not an exhaustive list, due to the high number of ethnic groups and alternative names existing in the country. Minority Rights Group International, Côte d'Ivoire, updated January 2018, [url](#); INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#)

²⁷ Minority Rights Group International, Côte d'Ivoire, updated January 2018, [url](#)

²⁸ INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#)

²⁹ Minority Rights Group International, Côte d'Ivoire, updated January 2018, [url](#)

³⁰ Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, Groupes ethniques, n.d., [url](#)

³¹ OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

³² Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, Groupes ethniques, n.d., [url](#)

³³ Joshua Project, Attie in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

³⁴ Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, Groupes ethniques, n.d., [url](#)

³⁵ OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

³⁶ Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, Groupes ethniques, n.d., [url](#)

³⁷ OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

³⁸ Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, Groupes ethniques, n.d., [url](#)

(or Éotilé³⁹), Elomouin, Essouma, Gwa⁴⁰ (or Mbato⁴¹) N'zima⁴² (or Nzema, or Appolo⁴³, or Appollo⁴⁴), Yowré.⁴⁵

- The Northern Manding (Mandé), living mainly in the north-west.⁴⁶ According to the 2014 official census, 3 276 186 persons belong to this cluster.⁴⁷ This group is mainly composed of the Malinké group, which, in turn, is divided into the Western Malinké, composed of the Mandinka, the Koyaka, the Mahouka, and the Bambara, and the Eastern Malinké.⁴⁸ Northern Manding also include Kamara, Djimini⁴⁹, Gbin, Koyaka, Nigbi, Siaka.⁵⁰
- The Southern Manding (Mandé) in the west. In 2014, the Southern Manding cluster amounted to 1 570 438 persons.⁵¹ The Dan (or Yacouba) are considered a peripheral Mandé ethnic group, living in the extreme west of the country.⁵² Other ethnicities in this group include Bêrê, Gagou, Gouin, Gouro, Mahou, Moua, N'Gain, Ouan, Toonie, Toura, Yaouré.⁵³
- The Voltaic (or Gur), mainly located in the north, include Birifor, Béré, Dégha, Samogho, Siti, Sénoufo, Tagbana, Djimini, Lobi, Lohron, Komona, Koulango and Nafana.⁵⁴ In 2014, the group amounted to 3 656 517 persons.⁵⁵
- The Kru, living in the south-western and western region, include Bakwé, Bété, Dida, Ghaboua, Godié, Gouja, Kodja, Krabou, Kouya, Kouzié, Kroumen, Néyo, Nianbwa, Niébiboua, Nigbi, Oubi, Wané⁵⁶, Wè (Guéré and Wobé).⁵⁷ In 2014, the group amounted to 1 197 505 persons.⁵⁸

1.2.1 Dioula

The descendants of Muslim merchants on the southern shores of the Sahara, who settled in the region, today speak a vernacular language close to the Malian Bambara or Guinean Malinké: the dioula. This language community has become, over time, a social designation that is often assumed or ascribed, and is sometimes confused with ethnicity or religion. Yet, those who are designated as 'dioula' in Burkina Faso and especially in Côte d'Ivoire are not a homogeneous group reducible to this identity of merchant or marabout native of the north.⁵⁹

³⁹Perrot, C.H., Les Éotilé à livre ouvert, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, Groupes ethniques, n.d., [url](#)

⁴¹ Joshua Project, Nglwa, Mbato in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d. [url](#)

⁴² Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, Groupes ethniques, n.d., [url](#)

⁴³ Joshua Project, Nzema, Appolo in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁴ OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, Groupes ethniques, n.d., [url](#); OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Minority Rights Group International, Côte d'Ivoire, updated January 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁷ INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#)

⁴⁸ ASSN, Les Malinké en Côte d'Ivoire, February 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁹ The source places the Djimini both in the Northern Manding and Gur groups, though most of the sources include them only in the Gur group.

⁵⁰ OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

⁵¹ INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#)

⁵² Minority Rights Group International, Côte d'Ivoire, updated January 2018, [url](#)

⁵³ OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

⁵⁴ OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

⁵⁵ INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#)

⁵⁶ OHCHR, Intégration et autonomie des minorités en Côte d'Ivoire, E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2004/WP. 8, 5 January 2004, [url](#)

⁵⁷ Canada, IRB, Current situation of members of the Wè ethnic group, including where they live, their characteristics, and how they are treated by government authorities (2002-Aug. 2003), 25 August 2003, [url](#)

⁵⁸ INS, Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat 2014, [url](#)

⁵⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Western Africa, n.d. [url](#); Encyclopaedia Britannica, Dyula People, n.d., [url](#); MEUNIER R., Mandé, Encyclopedie Universalis, n.d., [url](#); KONATE Y., Le dioula véhiculaire : Situation sociolinguistique en Côte d'Ivoire, 2016, [url](#)

The researchers Launay and Marie-Guyon note that the ethnicisation of Ivorian politics in recent years has greatly favoured the ethnic conception of the Dioula identity and has sometimes given rise to self-identification as 'dioula', but this identity assignment is strongly politically connoted.⁶⁰

1.3 Conflicts involving specific ethnic groups

Interethnic alliances are ancient and cultural non-aggression pacts were signed between the ancestors of different ethnic groups of Côte d'Ivoire.⁶¹ These alliances have the function to maintain peace and provide mutual assistance to the groups involved, enhancing social cohesion.⁶²

The conflicts between ethnic and religious elements of the population are not due to ancestral hatred among them, but rather to inter-communal factors, such as land disputes in the cocoa-producing western areas.⁶³ The perceived sense of economic inequality between indigenous people and migrants is a reason of resentment between and within the communities.⁶⁴ On the other hand, resentments between ethnic groups whose identities are associated with political spheres, where autochthones consider the migrants linked to Ouattara as the invaders, flare up in violence whenever conflicts arise.⁶⁵ Western areas have for decades seen disputes over land ownership between native groups and migrants, both from other countries and other regions of Côte d'Ivoire. Tensions over land contributed to serious violence during both Ivorian civil wars in 2002-2003 and 2011.⁶⁶ Since the disputed presidential election in 2010, sporadic clashes over land have taken place almost every year.⁶⁷ For more information on the land dispute issue, see [Section 4.2.1.](#)

Although the west is the region where ethnic conflicts are more numerous, clashes have recently broken out also in north-eastern and southern areas of the country.⁶⁸

Violent farmer-herder conflicts are a common issue in west and central African countries. The Sahel and northern region is becoming drier and desertification, which reduces land availability, is expanding because of the climate change. This, along with increasing land-exploiting commercial activities and the competition for the use of resources as forests, grazing lands and water, has led to a higher frequency of clashes.⁶⁹

After 2011, in the north-eastern region of Côte d'Ivoire, in the town of Bouna and its hinterland, tensions between Fulani herders, Lobi farmers and autochthonous Koulango have increased, due to conflicts over access to and control over land and political rivalry between the Koulango and Lobi.⁷⁰ In March 2016, a conflict broke out in the town of Bouna between farmers of the Lobi ethnic group and Fulani (Peul) herders. The Lobi accused the Fulani of destroying their crops by grazing their cattle. 33 people died, 50 were injured and around 2 000 were displaced.⁷¹ In April 2016, President Ouattara

⁶⁰ Robert Launay, Marie Miran-Guyon, *Beyond Mande Mory. Islam and Ethnicity in Côte d'Ivoire*, 2000, [url](#), pp.63-84

⁶¹ Abidjan.net, *Alliances interethniques : des pratiques culturelles utiles à la cohésion sociale*, 18 August 2015, [url](#)

⁶² Côte d'Ivoire Tourisme, *Alliances inter-ethniques*, n.d., [url](#); AIP, *Les alliances inter-ethniques comme ferment de la cohésion sociale*, 23 February 2016, [url](#)

⁶³ Thierno Mouctar Bah, *Addressing Côte d'Ivoire's Deeper Crisis*, 31 March 2012, [url](#)

⁶⁴ Interpeace, Indigo, *'L'étranger ne peut pas venir se cacher derrière une termitière et vouloir que sa tête la dépasse'*, January 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁵ Akindès F., *'On ne mange pas les ponts et le goudron'*, 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁶ Reuters, *Ethnic land dispute forces thousands to flee in Ivory Coast cocoa belt*, 9 October 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁷ IRIN, *Land clashes test Côte d'Ivoire's fragile security**, 25 October 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁸ Akody.com, *Côte d'Ivoire : Affrontements meurtriers entre Toura et Burkinabé dans le département de Biankouma*, 14 May 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁹ Nnoko-Mewanu, J., *Farmer-Herder Conflicts on the Rise in Africa*, 6 August 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁰ Jeremy Speight, *Bouna, une 'instabilité permanente'? Foncier, autorité et violence post-conflit en Côte d'Ivoire dans la longue durée*, March 2017, [url](#)

⁷¹ RFI Afrique, *Côte d'Ivoire: Alassane Ouattara lance un message d'apaisement à Bouna*, 30 April 2016, [url](#). Other sources report different numbers: Jeune Afrique, *Côte d'Ivoire : 22 morts lors d'affrontements intercommunautaires dans le Nord-Est*, 25 March 2016, [url](#); Le Monde, *Au Burkina Faso, avec les déplacés du conflit entre Peul et Lobi*, 5 April 2016, [url](#)

went to Bouna to call for appeasement in order to continue working on reconciliation and to ensure that these kinds of events would not happen anymore.⁷² In 2017, hostilities between the groups were still ongoing.⁷³ In 2019, a dialogue has started to solve the dispute. Supported by the German NGO GTZ, farmers and cattle breeders are involved in a pilot project to designate cattle routes to protect the Comoé national park and the agricultural land. In turn, water points and grazing land are provided to the cattle herds.⁷⁴

Following those clashes, on 21 and 22 April 2016, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire had organised an interdepartmental seminar with the aim of analysing and finding solutions to the problem of communal conflicts.⁷⁵

Sources report that in June 2017, in Gonaté, about 20 kilometres from the city of Daloa in the central western region, a conflict arose between youths of Gouro and Malinké ethnic groups after a group of Malinké students stabbed to death a student of the Gouro ethnicity. The conflict caused injuries to people and damages to properties. This kind of crisis repeatedly happens in Gonaté, usually at the end of the school year.⁷⁶ The Ministry of Solidarity, Women and Child protection, with the financial support of UNFPA, organised a workshop after this event in Gonaté with the aim to strengthen the process of reconciliation between the two ethnic groups.⁷⁷ In October 2017, a conflict broke out between the Dan (Yacouba) ethnic group and the Burkinabé (originally inhabitants from Burkina Faso) in the village of Daleu, in the mountainous western Tonkpi Department. Tensions developed over the Burkinabé exploitation of timber for commercial use without the permission of the indigenous people. The Ministry of Solidarity, Women and Child protection, in cooperation with the financial support of UNFPA, organised meetings to bring together the community and religious leaders, officials, women and youths, and thus enhance the intercommunity dialogue and social cohesion.⁷⁸

From mid-September to early November 2017 in the Guiglo area in the western region of Cavally, conflicts were ongoing between Wè members of the so-called Wè youth Alliance (*l'Alliance des jeunes Wè*), the Baoulé and the Burkinabé. The Wè created the alliance in April 2017 in order to regain land from the illegal cocoa plantations in the Goin-Debé forest occupied by the 'outsiders' Baoulé and Burkinabé.⁷⁹ The Goin-Débé forest reserve suffers from degradation by 80%. According to the official report of local authorities, the conflict left 11 dead, while according to actors of the civil society 16 people died. After an unsuccessful attempt at mediation by the prefect of the region and the Minister of Health, Environment and Sustainable Development, police, gendarmes and soldiers were deployed to ensure the security of the area. The government decided to identify and expel the occupants of the Goin-Débé forest.⁸⁰ In January 2018, the Minister of Water and Forests announced the project of a census (mapping) of all occupations of the Goin-Débé forest for the implementation of an effective

⁷² RFI Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Alassane Ouattara lance un message d'apaisement à Bouna, 30 April 2016, [url](#)

⁷³ Speight J., Bouna, une « instabilité permanente? Foncier, autorité et violence post-conflit en Côte d'Ivoire dans la longue durée, March 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁴ DW, After deadly clashes, Ivorian farmers and herders try dialogue, 17 February 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁵ Portail Officiel du Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Conflits communautaires : un séminaire interministériel organise a grand-bassam en vue de trouver des solutions durables pour maintenir la paix, la stabilité et la cohésion sociale, 21 April 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Gonaté, conflit ethnique causé par le décès de l'élève Ouattara, les communautés appelées à la reconciliation, 30 August 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁷ Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Gonaté, conflit ethnique causé par le décès de l'élève Ouattara, les communautés appelées à la reconciliation, 30 August 2017, [url](#); AIP, Côte d'Ivoire/ Un dialogue intercommunautaire pour retrouver la cohésion sociale à Gonaté, 30 August 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Après les affrontements inter-ethniques à Guiglo, un autre conflit foncier frappe encore l'ouest du pays, 19 October 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#); Reuters, Ethnic land dispute forces thousands to flee in Ivory Coast cocoa belt, 9 October 2017, [url](#)

⁸⁰ Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#)

strategy for the sustainable management of agricultural parcels.⁸¹ By the end of 2018, the census project, including sensitization and involvement of the population, was half-way.⁸²

Other tensions erupted in May 2018 between the indigenous Toura and the Burkinabé in Gandié, in the western region of Biankouma, due to the occupation of the sacred forest by the Burkinabé.⁸³ The Toura attacked in order to regain the area; clashes resulted in the death of a Burkinabé person. In revenge, the Burkinabé led a punitive offensive against the inhabitants of Gandié, who fled to surrounding villages. The gendarmerie intervened to curb the tensions.⁸⁴ In general, land ownership has always been the main reason for conflicts between the Guéré and Burkinabé inhabitants, but now even a small dispute can trigger a fight without restraint, as one source notes.⁸⁵

In June 2018, a clash between the Wè and Burkinabé broke out in the town of Bangolo, in the western region of Guémon, following the homicide of a Guéré/Wè woman reportedly committed by her lover, a young Burkinabé. During clashes, one person was injured. The suspected murderer was arrested.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Portail Officiel du Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Forêt Classée De Goin-Debe : Le recensement des occupants agricoles démarre, 31 January 2018, [url](#)

⁸² IDH, SODEFOR half-way the full census of the Goin-Débé forest reserve, 7 December 2018, [url](#)

⁸³ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: Nouvel affrontement Guéré- Burkinabé à Bangolo, 25 June 2018, [url](#); Akody.com, Côte d'Ivoire : Affrontements meurtriers entre Toura et burkinabé dans le département de Biankouma, 14 May 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁴ Akody.com, Côte d'Ivoire : Affrontements meurtriers entre Toura et Burkinabé dans le département de Biankouma, 14 May 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁵ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: Nouvel affrontement Guéré- Burkinabé à Bangolo, 25 June 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁶ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: Nouvel affrontement Guéré- Burkinabé à Bangolo, 25 June 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : le meurtre d'une jeune femme ravive les tensions communautaires, 26 June 2018, [url](#)

2. Recent History

2.1 Houphouët-Boigny's presidency (1960 – 1993)

Côte d'Ivoire gained independence from France on 7 August 1960. Its first president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, held power until his death in 1993. Although the 1960 Constitution foresaw multipartism, Houphouët-Boigny's party, the *Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire – Rassemblement démocratique africain* [Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire - Democratic African Rally] (PDCI-RDA) was the only party until 1990, when the first contested presidential election took place and the incumbent president, challenged by Laurent Gbagbo from the *Front populaire ivoirien* [Ivorian Popular Front] (FPI), was re-elected for a seventh term.⁸⁷

The first two decades of Houphouët-Boigny's presidency is still often referred to as the period of the 'economic miracle'. Indeed, approximately from 1960 to 1980, Côte d'Ivoire experienced a booming economy thanks to cocoa and coffee farming.⁸⁸ In this context, the President urged foreign planters and labourers to settle in Côte d'Ivoire and Ivorian farmers to move to other zones to grow cocoa.⁸⁹ His principle was: 'Land belongs to those who cultivate it.'⁹⁰ This politic benefitted particularly the Baoulé, Houphouët-Boigny's own ethnic group.⁹¹ There were massive migration movements towards the western and southern forest areas.⁹² In the 1980s, the economic situation deteriorated and had become a crisis by 1990. The decline of cocoa prices challenged the model of rent redistribution set up by then President Houphouët-Boigny. This situation triggered discussions on the Ivorian identity ('Ivoirité', see [Section 2.2](#)).⁹³

2.2 Bédié's presidency and the birth of *Ivoirité* (1993 – 1999)

After Houphouët-Boigny's death on 7 December 1993, a power struggle developed between the President of the National Assembly Henri Konan Bédié, who was the constitutional successor, and Prime Minister Alassane Dramane Ouattara, who had replaced Houphouët-Boigny several times during the latter's absences for medical reasons. Bédié swiftly proclaimed himself president and acted as such until the next presidential elections, which were scheduled for 1995. Alassane Ouattara resigned from his office and left the country some months later to assume his new function of Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund in Washington.⁹⁴

The Bédié presidency marks the creation of the concept of '*Ivoirité*' ('Ivorianness' or 'Ivoriens First'), a kind of state-induced ethno-nationalism.⁹⁵ President Bédié entrusted a group of academics called *Cellule universitaire de recherche et de diffusion des idées et des actions politiques du président Henri Konan Bédié* [Academic cell for research and dissemination of the ideas and political actions of President Henri Konan Bédié] (CURDIPHE) to elaborate this concept. They stated that a person claiming

⁸⁷ Marie Gibert, Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History, 2018, p. 357

⁸⁸ Thomas Hofnung, La crise en Côte d'Ivoire, 2005, p. 21; Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation (CDVR), Rapport final, December 2014, [url](#), p. 12

⁸⁹ Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, Le Monde, 7 December 2017, [url](#); See also: International Crisis Group, Côte d'Ivoire's Great West: Key to Reconciliation, Africa Report 212, 28 January 2014, [url](#)

⁹⁰ Jean-Pierre Chauveau, Question foncière et construction nationale en Côte d'Ivoire – Les enjeux silencieux d'un coup d'Etat, 2002, [url](#)

⁹¹ Alfred Babo & Yvan Droz, Conflits fonciers. De l'ethnie à la nation. Rapports interethniques et « ivoirité » dans le sud-ouest de la Côte-d'Ivoire, 2008, [url](#), p. 741

⁹² Koffi Justin Kouassi, Les Conflits fonciers ruraux en Côte d'Ivoire, March 2017, [url](#)

⁹³ Dominique Lagarde, Une nation en miettes, 2 November 2000, [url](#); Xavier Harel, Robert Jules, Aline Robert, Pourquoi les cours des matières premières agricoles sont devenus fous, 19 November 2010, [url](#)

⁹⁴ Marie Gibert, Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History, 2018, p. 358

⁹⁵ Francis Akindès, Côte d'Ivoire: Socio-political Crises, 'Ivoirité' and the Course of History, 2003, [url](#), p. 12

their *Ivoirité* 'is supposed to have Côte d'Ivoire as his/her country, be born from Ivorian parents belonging to one of the ethnic groups native to Côte d'Ivoire'⁹⁶ (e.g., having his/her ancestral 'village' in Côte d'Ivoire). Early on, the concept of *Ivoirité* favoured peoples from the south, the centre and the west but not peoples from the north, often referred to as 'Dioulas' (for an explanation on Dioulas see [Section 1.2.1](#)). These Dioulas were regarded as foreigners, notably because their names and Muslim faith were also common in neighbouring Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali.⁹⁷

Bédié won the 1995 presidential elections. These had been boycotted by the *Front Républicain* (formed by the other two major parties, *Rassemblement des Républicains* [Republicans' Rally] (RDR) and FPI) because of the new eligibility requirements foreseen by the electoral code in order to stand for president: the candidates must be Ivorian born from two parents themselves Ivorian by birth, and must have been living continuously in Côte d'Ivoire during the five years preceding the elections.⁹⁸ These new provisions excluded Ouattara, who would have been the candidate of the 1994-founded RDR, from running for president.⁹⁹ Indeed, according to his opponents, Alassane Ouattara is said to have Burkinabé origins and to have studied and worked abroad under Voltaic/Burkinabé citizenship.¹⁰⁰ Ouattara became the leader of the RDR in 1999.¹⁰¹

2.3 Military coup and election of Laurent Gbagbo (1999 – 2002)

In December 1999, a military coup ended the Bédié presidency and marked the entry of the army into politics. General Robert Gueï, initially spokesperson and subsequently leader of the military junta, affirmed that their objective was to restore order in the country. He declared not to be interested in remaining in power and promised a quick transition for the purpose of giving back power to civilians as soon as possible.¹⁰²

The presidential elections did take place in 2000, but a new amendment of the Constitution had tightened the qualifying criteria for standing for presidential election: besides being Ivorian born from two parents both of Ivorian origin, the candidates must henceforth never have renounced the Ivorian nationality nor claimed any other nationality.¹⁰³ These provisions were clearly aimed at preventing Ouattara from participating in the elections. The Supreme Court then ruled that Ouattara and Bédié were both not eligible, along with 10 other candidates.¹⁰⁴ The election would oppose Robert Gueï and Laurent Gbagbo. Gbagbo was elected after a poll, which he himself called 'disastrous'.¹⁰⁵

While the international community was hoping that the legislative polls of December 2000 would bring a consensus on the democratic process, the electoral commission barred Alassane Ouattara

⁹⁶ Jolivet, Elen, *L'ivoirité, de la conceptualisation à la manipulation de l'identité ivoirienne, 2002-2003*, [url](#), p. 26; translated in: Francis Akindès, *Côte d'Ivoire: Socio-political Crises, 'Ivoirité' and the Course of History*, 2003, [url](#), p. 12

⁹⁷ Francis Akindès, *Côte d'Ivoire: Socio-political Crises, 'Ivoirité' and the Course of History*, 2003, [url](#), p. 14

⁹⁸ RFI, Paris. Côte d'Ivoire: les grandes dates de l'histoire politique, 16 August 2010, [url](#); Thomas Hofnung, *La Crise en Côte d'Ivoire*, 2005, p. 33; Libération, *La difficile succession d'Houphouët par les urnes, L'opposition ivoirienne boycotte la présidentielle*, 21 October 1995, [url](#)

⁹⁹ Francis Akindès, Bouaké. Côte d'Ivoire: Socio-political Crises, 'Ivoirité' and the Course of History, 2003, [url](#), p.12; Alfred Babo, *L'étranger à travers le prisme de l'ivoirité en Côte d'Ivoire*, 2012, pp. 104-105; RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: les grandes dates de l'histoire politique, 16 August 2010, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ Alfred Babo, *L'étranger à travers le prisme de l'ivoirité en Côte d'Ivoire: retour sur des regards nouveaux*, 2012, [url](#), p. 105, footnote 20

¹⁰¹ *Rassemblement des Républicains, L'Histoire du RDR*, 1 September 2017, [url](#)

¹⁰² Thomas Hofnung, *La Crise en Côte d'Ivoire*, 2005, p. 39

¹⁰³ Elen Jolivet, *L'ivoirité. De la conceptualisation à la manipulation de l'identité ivoirienne, 2002-2003*, [url](#); Côte d'Ivoire, *Loi n° 2000-513 du 1^{er} août 2000 portant Constitution de la Côte d'Ivoire*, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Hofnung, *La Crise en Côte d'Ivoire*, 2005, pp. 40-42

¹⁰⁵ Kouamé S. Kouassi, *Regard retro-prospectif sur les crises ivoiriennes de 1993 à 2011*, 2013, [url](#), p. 138 ; Thomas Hofnung, *La Crise en Côte d'Ivoire*, 2005, pp. 43-44

from running for a seat, claiming that he was not Ivorian by birth from two Ivorian parents. The RDR boycotted the elections.¹⁰⁶

In 2001, after the RDR's good results at the municipal elections, the pro-government media raised its voice against the vote of 'foreigners', claiming that many voters were Dioulas originating from the north of the country and hence potentially foreigners. The government then decided to review the electoral registers and to issue new and more secure electoral cards. As a result, the number of voters decreased by 20 % at the departmental elections of July 2002. This voters' decrease particularly affected RDR-friendly areas. The departmental elections had a low turnout, as members of the RDR and people from the north of the country denounced exclusions on ground of alleged identity.¹⁰⁷

2.4 First Ivorian crisis (2002-2010): a divided country

On 19 September 2002, Abidjan, Korhogo and Bouaké were attacked simultaneously while President Gbagbo was travelling abroad. The loyalist troops managed to free Abidjan after some hours, but Korhogo and Bouaké remained under the control of the assailants. General Gueï, accused of instigating the coup, got killed on the same day. Failing to seize power, the assailants took over the northern half of the country within a few days. Their identity was finally revealed at the of September 2002, when a former mutineer and former ally of General Gueï announced the creation of the *Mouvement patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire* [Patriotic movement of Côte d'Ivoire] (MPCI), composed of military deserters, mainly from the north of the country. They demanded the resignation of Gbagbo from power followed by inclusive elections. Their political leader was Guillaume Soro, former leader of the *Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire* [Student's and educational Federation of Côte d'Ivoire] (FESCI), which was then mainly pro-Gbagbo.¹⁰⁸ Soro would later act as president of the National Assembly from March 2012 until February 2019.¹⁰⁹

In October 2002, a ceasefire agreement froze the zones under the rule of rebel and loyalist forces: the country was de facto split in a rebel north and a loyalist south. The French troops established a buffer zone called *zone de confiance* [zone of confidence] on the non-crossing line (see [Map 3](#)).¹¹⁰ Later on, the MPCI merged with other rebel groups and was renamed *Forces nouvelles* [New Forces] (FN).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Kouamé S. Kouassi, *Regard retro-prospectif sur les crises ivoiriennes de 1993 à 2011*, 2013, [url](#), p. 137; Marie Gibert, *Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History*, 2018, p. 359

¹⁰⁷ Christian Bouquet. *Election des conseils généraux de Côte d'Ivoire (Juillet 2002)*, 2002, [url](#); Kouamé S. Kouassi, *Regard retro-prospectif sur les crises ivoiriennes de 1993 à 2011*, 2013, [url](#), p. 139

¹⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch, "The best School", *Student Violence, Impunity, and the Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire*, 21 May 2008, [url](#), p. 22

¹⁰⁹ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Côte d'Ivoire (S/2003/374)*, 26 March 2003, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, *Côte d'Ivoire: Guillaume Soro élu président de l'Assemblée nationale à l'unanimité*. 12 March 2012, [url](#); BBC News, *Guillaume Soro, le président de l'Assemblée nationale, démissionne en Côte d'Ivoire*, 11 February 2019, [url](#) (26 March 2019).

¹¹⁰ Marie Gibert, *Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History*. In: *Africa South of the Sahara 2018*, p. 359; France 24, *Les 11 années de crise qui ont ébranlé le "miracle ivoirien"* (1/2), 17 October 2010, [url](#)

¹¹¹ NDI, *Evaluation du cadre juridique et politique des élections en Côte d'Ivoire*, March 2014, [url](#), p.41

Map 3: UNOCI, Côte d'Ivoire, 18 November 2004, © UN¹¹²

¹¹² United Nations, Map No. 4220 Rev.2 bis, January 2005, [url](#)

In January 2003, after lengthy negotiations, Ivorian political parties and rebel groups signed an agreement in Linas-Marcoussis (France).¹¹³ The contracting parties were seven political parties: FPI, *Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire – Rassemblement démocratique africain* (PDCI-RDA), RDR, *Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire* (UDPCI), *Mouvement des forces d'Avenir* (MFA), *Union démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (UDCY), *Parti ivoirien des travailleurs* (PIT) and three rebel groups: MPCI, *Mouvement pour la justice et la paix* (MJP) and *Mouvement populaire ivoirien du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO). They agreed that Laurent Gbagbo would remain president of Côte d'Ivoire until the end of his mandate and that a national reconciliation government, including a 'consensus Prime Minister', would be set up in order to organise democratic elections in 2005.¹¹⁴ In May 2003, the UN Security Council decided to establish a UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) later called UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).¹¹⁵

After stalling progress - notably on the issues of the disarmament and on eligibility criteria to run for president - and several mediation attempts by the international community, President Gbagbo, Prime Minister Seydou Elimane Diarra, Henri Konan Bédié (PDCI), Alassane Dramane Ouattara (RDR) and Minister Guillaume Soro (FN) signed the Pretoria agreement in April 2005.¹¹⁶ This agreement contains a declaration ending the war and an agreement on immediate disarmament and dismantling of militias.¹¹⁷

After 2 years of political deadlocks on disarmament and eligibility criteria for presidential candidates leading to the postponement of the presidential elections¹¹⁸, the Ouagadougou peace agreement was signed in March 2007. Guillaume Soro was appointed Prime Minister. The agreement foresaw several measures including the drawing of a new electoral register, the resumption of the demobilisation process and the integration of 8 400 *Forces armées des forces nouvelles* [Armed forces of the New forces] (FAFN) soldiers into the national army. Elections were scheduled for January 2008.¹¹⁹

2.5 The post-electoral crisis (2010-2011)

2.5.1 Overview

After several postponements, notably caused by conflicts on voters' registration, the first round of the presidential election finally took place on the 31 October 2010, without major incident. Fourteen candidates and all the important political parties of the country participated. On 28 November 2010, the second round opposed the incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo against Alassane Ouattara. Both claimed victory. While the *Commission électorale indépendante* [Independent Electoral Commission] (CEI) and the international community recognised the victory of Alassane Ouattara¹²⁰, the Constitutional Council that had invalidated votes in some northern departments known to be pro-Ouattara declared Laurent Gbagbo as the winner.¹²¹

¹¹³ France 24, Les 11 années de crise qui ont ébranlé le "miracle ivoirien" (1/2), 17 October 2010, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ United Nations Security Council, Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, 23 January 2003, [url](#); NDI, Evaluation du cadre juridique et politique des élections en Côte d'Ivoire, March 2014 [url](#), p.40

¹¹⁵ Alexandra Novosseloff, The Many Lives of a Peacekeeping Mission: The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, June 2018, [url](#) p 10.

¹¹⁶ Cyril Daddieh, Historical Dictionary of Côte d'Ivoire (third edition), 2016, pp. Ixii-Ixv

¹¹⁷ RFI, L'accord de Pretoria du 6 avril 2005, 6 April 2005, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ Cyril Daddieh, Historical Dictionary of Côte d'Ivoire (third edition), 2016, pp. Ixv-Ixviii.

¹¹⁹ Marie Gibert, Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History. In: Africa South of the Sahara, 2018, p. 361

¹²⁰ Marie Gibert, Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History. In: Africa South of the Sahara 2018, pp. 362-363; ONU, Côte d'Ivoire: Ban Ki-moon félicite Alassane Ouattara pour son élection, 3 December 2010, [url](#); ONU, L'élection présidentielle en Côte d'Ivoire a produit "un seul vainqueur –Alassane Ouattara- avec une marge irréfutable", affirme M. Choi Young-Jin, CS10102, 7 December 2010, [url](#)

¹²¹ Marie Gibert, Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History, 2018, pp. 362-363; Le Point, Limogeage du président du Conseil constitutionnel de la Côte d'Ivoire, 25 July 2011, [url](#)

Both 'presidents' were sworn in during separate ceremonies and both appointed their own government. Côte d'Ivoire had de facto two parallel administrations.¹²² While the two heads of state were fighting for legitimacy, power and access to the country's finances and the international community was trying to solve the situation through mediation, violence broke out on the streets, particularly in Abidjan and the western part of the country.¹²³

Days after the swearing-in, on 16 December 2010, demonstrations of pro-Ouattara supporters were repressed by pro Gbagbo security forces and *Jeunes Patriotes* [Young Patriots]. According to the international inquiry commission, this date marks the intensification of violence as well as the introduction of the use of war weapons. As a response, self-defence groups of youth, some of them run by commanders of the pro-Ouattara *Forces armées des Forces nouvelles* [Armed forces of the New Forces] (FAFN), were created in some areas of Abidjan in order to protect the population.¹²⁴

In February 2011, the *Forces de défense et de sécurité* [Defense and Security Forces] (FDS) of Gbagbo began attacking FAFN positions. The FAFN, soon to be absorbed into Ouattara's new army called *Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* [Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire] (FRCI)¹²⁵, began a conquest of several cities until Abidjan was declared freed on 6 May 2011. As on previous occasions, the troops supporting Gbagbo called on militias usually linked to his youth supporters of the *Jeunes patriotes* to resist the pro-Ouattara forces, while the latter got support from their own militias as well as from some deserters of the FDS.¹²⁶ Armed combats took place in Abidjan.¹²⁷ Both sides committed systematic abuses against civilians based on (presumed) ethnicity and (supposed) political affiliation, particularly in the Abobo neighbourhood (Abidjan) as well as in the western part of the country.¹²⁸ The Yopougon district was the last bastion of the pro-Gbagbo militias where clashes waged till the end.¹²⁹

The arrest of former President Laurent Gbagbo in Abidjan on 11 April 2011 marked the beginning of a slow return to calm, first in Abidjan, then in the rest of the country. However, in the city of Abidjan FRCI began a spate of violent repression searching for pro-Gbagbo militiamen, causing abuses of some specific ethnic groups perceived to have supported Gbagbo or persons suspected of being militiamen or informants.¹³⁰

In November 2011, Gbagbo was extradited in order to be brought before the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, where he has been prosecuted for crimes against humanity, together with his former Minister of Youth Charles Blé Goudé.¹³¹ In January 2019, both Gbagbo and Blé Goudé have been acquitted and conditionally released. The former Ivorian President joined his second wife,

¹²² Marie Gibert, Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History, 2018, p.363 ; BBC News Ivory Coast crisis as presidential rivals both sworn in, 4 December 2010, [url](#)

¹²³ L'Express, La chute de Gbagbo en huit actes, 11 April 2011, [url](#); OHCHR, 14th Special Session on The situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire since the elections on 28 November 2010, 23 December 2013, [url](#)

¹²⁴ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011 [url](#), pp. 10-11.

¹²⁵ Jeune Afrique, un pays, deux armées, 30 August 2009, [url](#)

¹²⁶ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#), p. 11.

¹²⁷ Libération, Côte-d'Ivoire: bataille rangée autour du QG de Ouattara à Abidjan, 9 April 2011, [url](#)

¹²⁸ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#), p. 11 ; Marie Gibert, Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History, 2018, p. 363.

¹²⁹ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : la bataille d'Abidjan, 12 April 2011, [url](#) ; Le Monde, Yopougon, dernier bastion pro-Gbagbo dans la bataille d'Abidjan, 21 April 2011, [url](#); Le Figaro, Les forces pro-Gbagbo reculent à Abidjan, 14 March 2011, [url](#); Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#), p. 11; Marie Gibert, Côte d'Ivoire: Recent History. 2018, p. 363.

¹³⁰ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#), pp. 11-13

¹³¹ ICC, Gbagbo and Blé Goudé Case, n.d. [url](#)

Nadiana Bamba, who was a refugee in Belgium while Blé Goudé remained in The Hague awaiting to find a host country.¹³²

The post-electoral crisis caused approximately 3 000 deaths, the departure of approximately 300 000 refugees and the internal displacement of nearly one million persons.¹³³ Combatants and civil supporters of both sides perpetrated numerous exactions. The international commission of inquiry found that both pro-Gbagbo and pro-Ouattara armed forces had committed war crimes and probably crimes against humanity.¹³⁴

In 2014, UNHCR estimated that there are nearly 700 000 stateless people in Côte d'Ivoire. Among them were migrants and their children (no land rights), some orphans, border populations, refugees and displaced persons.¹³⁵ Since 2002, in the northern regions many civil status registers have been destroyed; in the southern regions a dual-register system existed, with persons with a North-sounding name sometimes registered in a different register than the official one. On the other hand, it is also reported that, when the electoral registers were drawn up in 2010, many people who did not meet the criteria for eligibility for Ivorian nationality were nevertheless registered in the electoral files because of corruption.¹³⁶ The current administration is leading a roadmap with UNHCR to solve this issue: judgments are issued to persons at risk of statelessness and citizenship certificates are issued for those who ask for citizenship by declaration, including stateless persons. As of June 2018, 189 citizenship certificates had been issued.¹³⁷

2.5.2 Actors in the conflict

2.5.2.1 Armed Forces¹³⁸

Forces de défense et sécurité [Security and Defense Forces] (FDS):

These forces were under the command of President Laurent Gbagbo until 17 March 2010, when the FRCI (see below) were created.

With approximately 55 000 men, FDS included:

- *Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* [National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire] (FANCI). The FANCI consisted of three main forces: the land force, the air force and the navy. Mainly the special forces that were part of the land forces were active during the post-electoral crisis;
- The *Garde Républicaine* [Republican Guard] (approx. 1 500 men) composed of three infantry regiments based in Abidjan;
- The National Gendarmerie with approx. 12 000 men;
- The National Police;
- The *Centre de commandement des opérations de sécurité* [Centre of command of security operations] (CECOS) composed of 5 squadrons in Abidjan;
- Several special/combined forces units.

¹³² ICC, ICC Appeals Chamber to impose conditions on Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé upon their release following their acquittal, 1 February 2019, [url](#); RFI, La Belgique "accepte d'accueillir" l'ex-président ivoirien Laurent Gbagbo, 2 February 2019, [url](#); RFI, CPI: Laurent Gbagbo et Charles Blé Goudé sortent de prison sous conditions, 1 February 2019, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: la lettre de Charles Blé Goudé à ses concitoyens, 28 March 2019, [url](#)

¹³³ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#) p. 11; IDMC, Côte d'Ivoire: De nouveaux engagements offrent une lueur d'espoir aux 300 000 personnes encore déplacées dans le pays, 26 February 2015, [url](#)

¹³⁴ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#) p. 11; HRW, Côte d'Ivoire: Inquiry's Shortcuts Raise Red Flags. 23 February 2012, [url](#)

¹³⁵ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: près de 700 000 apatrides selon les Nations unies, 9 November 2014, [url](#)

¹³⁶ ADJAMI Mirna, L'apatridie et la nationalité en Côte d'Ivoire, UNHCR, 1 December 2016, [url](#), pp. 56-64

¹³⁷ UNHCR, Bulletin Apatridie, April-June 2018, [url](#)

¹³⁸ The information in this section is based on Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#), pp. 5-9

Forces Armées des Forces Nouvelles [Armed Forces of the News Forces] (FAFN): These forces were the army of FN led by Guillaume Soro. Ten zone commanders called Com-zones ran the ten military and administrative zones. The headquarters were in Bouaké.

Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire [Republican Forces of the Ivory Coast] (FRCI) were created by the Ouattara Government merging the FANCI and the FAFN and were under the authority of the Defence Minister Guillaume Soro. However, Gbagbo could reportedly still count on the loyalty of some elite units that had been previously part of the FDS.¹³⁹

2.5.2.2 Pro-Gbagbo Militias:¹⁴⁰

Militias usually linked to the *Jeunes Patriotes* [Young Patriots] called the *Galaxie Patriotique* [Patriotic Galaxy] including:

- In Abidjan: *Groupe des patriotes pour la paix* [Patriots' group for peace] (GPP), armed elements of the FESCI and militias linked to the *Front National pour la libération totale de la Côte d'Ivoire* [National front for the total liberation of the Ivory Coast] (FNLTCI).
- In the west: several militias affiliated to the *Front de résistance du Grand Ouest* [Resistance Front of the Great West] (FRGO), including some associated to Liberian militias: *Front de Libération du Grand Ouest* [Liberation Front of the Great West] (FLGO), *Union des Patriotes Résistants du Grand Ouest* [Resistant patriots' Union of the Great West] (UPRGO), *Alliance des patriotes Wê* [Wê Patriots' Alliance (APWE)], *Mouvement pour la Libération de l'Ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire* [Movement for the Liberation of the Ivory Coast] (MILOCI).

Mercenaries, mostly recruited in Liberia and active in the western part of the country (and in Yopougon, in the 2011 battle of Abidjan).¹⁴¹

2.5.2.3 Pro-Ouattara Militias:¹⁴²

- The Invisible Commando, based and active in the PK 18/Agouéto-Abobo neighbourhood in Abidjan at the end of the fighting. This militia, and especially its leader Ibrahim Coulibaly who was killed in April 2011 by the FRCI, reportedly had an ambiguous political position.¹⁴³
- Traditional hunters called *Dozos*. They were accused of several abuses, especially in the west.¹⁴⁴

2.6 Ouattara's presidency

2.6.1 Ouattara's first term

Alassane Ouattara was officially sworn in on 6 May 2011.¹⁴⁵ During his first term, his government managed to restore economic growth.¹⁴⁶ A national commission of inquiry on the post-electoral crisis was established, a reconciliation commission was created, a demobilisation, disarmament and

¹³⁹ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#), pp. 5-9

¹⁴⁰ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#), pp. 5-9.

¹⁴¹ Le Monde, Yopougon, dernier bastion pro-Gbagbo dans la bataille d'Abidjan, 21 April 2011, [url](#)

¹⁴² Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale indépendante sur la Côte d'Ivoire, 14 June 2011, [url](#), pp. 5-9.

¹⁴³ Observers France 24, Les forces de Ouattara attaquent leurs anciens alliés du Commando invisible, 27 April 2011, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ See also: ONUCI, Rapport sur les abus des droits de l'homme commis par des Dozos en République de Côte d'Ivoire, June 2013, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Ouattara prête serment comme président, 6 May 2011, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ World Bank, The Might of the Elephant: Benefiting from Strong Growth to Create Better Jobs, December 2015, [url](#)

reinsertion (DDR) program was set up and a reform of the security sector (RSS) was initiated. The effectiveness of these measures has sometimes been questioned¹⁴⁷, as observers felt that the deeper roots of conflict (the issue of exclusion / *Ivoirité*) had not been addressed adequately.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the impartiality of justice concerning crimes committed during the post-electoral crisis was often criticised by NGOs¹⁴⁹, as well as a lack of effort for national reconciliation.¹⁵⁰

2.6.2 Ouattara's second term

The October 2015 presidential elections took place without major incidents. Supported by the *Rassemblement des houphouëtiste pour la démocratie et la paix* [Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace] (RHDP) coalition of several parties and facing a weak and fragmented opposition, Alassane Ouattara was re-elected with a clear majority.¹⁵¹ The low turnout and the voters' behaviour showed that the Ivorian population remained divided and that national reconciliation was far from being achieved, according to the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).¹⁵²

During Ouattara's second term, Côte d'Ivoire adopted a new constitution and so started its third Republic in November 2016.¹⁵³ Article 55 of the Constitution now cancels and supersedes Article 35, stating that presidential candidates must be Ivorian by birth born from one Ivorian parent with Ivorian origins, either father or mother, which is a major change.¹⁵⁴

Another significant action related to the post-electoral crisis that Ouattara took during his second term was the presidential amnesty he announced during his national day speech in August 2018. He granted amnesty to approximately 800 persons prosecuted or condemned for offences linked to the post-electoral crisis.¹⁵⁵ Several prominent prisoners were released, including former first lady Simone Ehivet Gbagbo.¹⁵⁶ However, three human rights organisations have called on the Ivorian authorities to reverse this decision in order for the victims of human rights violations to access justice.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁷ France 24, Désarmer, démobiliser, réinsérer : le casse-tête de la résolution des conflits en Afrique, 20 November 2018, [url](#); United Nations Security Council, Final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution 2153 (2014), 13 April 2015, [url](#), pp. 15-20; HRW, Côte d'Ivoire: Inquiry's Shortcuts Raise Red Flags, 23 February 2012, [url](#); GRIP, La Commission Dialogue Vérité et Réconciliation en Côte d'Ivoire: la réconciliation n'a pas eu lieu, 30 June 2015, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, Côte d'Ivoire: The Illusion of Stability, 24 October 2015, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ HRW, Côte d'Ivoire: Inquiry's Shortcuts Raise Red Flags, 23 February 2012, [url](#); Amnesty International, Des fosses communes dans les puits, 23 July 2013, [url](#); L'Infodrome, Nathalie Kouakou (Amnesty-CI): « Le système judiciaire est l'une des plaies de la gouvernance Ouattara », 14 January 2015, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ ACAT France, Rencontre Hollande-Ouattara: pour la réconciliation, mettre fin à la justice des vainqueurs, n.d. [December 2014] [url](#); HRW, Rapport mondial 2015 : Côte d'Ivoire, 2015, [url](#); TV5 Monde, Côte d'Ivoire : une enquête inédite sur le bilan de la réconciliation nationale, 2 January 2019, [url](#). See also Giulia Piccolino, Peacebuilding and statebuilding in post-2011 Côte d'Ivoire: A victor's peace? July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵¹ ISS, Côte d'Ivoire presidential election: beyond Alassane Ouattara's victory, 6 November 2015. [url](#). See also Piccolino, G., One Step Forward, Two Steps Back? Côte d'Ivoire's 2015 Presidential Polls, 2016, [url](#)

¹⁵² ISS, Côte d'Ivoire presidential election: beyond Alassane Ouattara's victory, 6 November 2015. [url](#)

¹⁵³ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: la nouvelle Constitution créant la 3e République adoptée, 2 November 2016, [url](#). See also Ousmane Zina, «Le caillou a-t-il été retiré du soulier de la République ?» 2017, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi no 2016.886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, 8 November 2016, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ Côte d'Ivoire, 58e fête de l'indépendance: 800 personnes amnistiées, 6 August 2018. [url](#); The Guardian, Ivory Coast president pardons 800 people including ex-first lady, 7 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ Reuters, Ivory Coast's Simone Gbagbo leaves detention after amnesty, 18 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ FIDH, Côte d'Ivoire: Three organisations lodge an appeal against presidential amnesty, 15 November 2018, [url](#); DUHEM Vincent, Côte d'Ivoire: l'amnistie accordée par Alassane Ouattara contestée par plusieurs ONG, 15 November 2018, [url](#)

3. Political situation

3.1 General overview

Côte d'Ivoire is a Presidential Republic.¹⁵⁸ According to the 2016 Constitution, the president is elected, for a five-year term, directly, by universal suffrage and he may be re-elected once.¹⁵⁹ The president exercises the executive power along with the prime minister, who serves as the head of Government and the Cabinet, and is appointed by the president.¹⁶⁰

The current president of Côte d'Ivoire is Alassane Dramane Ouattara, who has won a second five-year term in 2015.¹⁶¹ Ouattara was the leader of the *Rassemblement des Républicains* [Rally of the Republicans] (RDR), and his re-election was endorsed by Henri Konan Bedié and his *Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* [Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire] (PDCI).¹⁶² Ouattara's main competitor was Pascal Affi N'Guessan, candidate of the *Front populaire ivoirien* [Ivorian Popular Front] (FPI), the party founded by former President Laurent Gbagbo. The FPI had split into two factions, one pro-Gbagbo (led, until his death in 2018, by Abou Dramane Sangaré) which did not acknowledge Affi N'guessan as President of FPI and boycotted the elections.¹⁶³

Ouattara won the 2015 presidential election with 83.7 % of ballots, while the turnout rate was 52.9 %.¹⁶⁴ Affi N'Guessan garnered 9.3 % of the ballots. According to Institute for Security Studies (ISS): 'The Ivorian election was peaceful, but not necessarily a democratic success [...] and the elections' results underlines that: [...] the national reconciliation remains a challenge.'¹⁶⁵ However, the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) and the *Plateforme des Organizations de la Société Civile pour l'Observation des Elections en Côte d'Ivoire* [Platform of Civil Society Organisations for the Observation of Elections in Côte d'Ivoire] (POECI) considered this election fair and free.¹⁶⁶

On 30 October 2016, a new constitutional text was approved with a majority of votes – 93.4 % - in a constitutional referendum.¹⁶⁷ The participation rate stood at 42.4 %, according to the results published by the *Commission Electorale Indépendante de Côte d'Ivoire* [Independent Electoral Commission of Côte d'Ivoire] (CEI)¹⁶⁸ and confirmed by the *Conseil Constitutionnel* [Constitutional Council].¹⁶⁹

¹⁵⁸ CIA, World Factbook (The), Côte d'Ivoire, Executive branch, last update 20 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹ Republique de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 du 8 Novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la Republique de Côte d'Ivoire 2016 art. 55, [url](#).

¹⁶⁰ CIA, World Factbook (The), Côte d'Ivoire, Executive branch, last update 20 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ BBC, Ivory Coast election: Alassane Ouattara wins second term, 28 October 2015, [url](#)

¹⁶² Mbaku J. M., Africa Growth Initiative, African Elections in 2015: a Snapshot for Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Sudan, 2016, [url](#)

¹⁶³ Al-Jazeera, Ivory Coast's Ouattara re-elected by a landslide, 28 October 2015, [url](#); Abidjan.net, Laurent Akoun: "Nous ne sommes pas contre l'unité au FPI", 25 October 2017, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, 21 November 2017, [url](#); Reuters, Gbagbo's FPI picks presidential hopeful after years of boycotts, 9 August 2015, [url](#); Canada, IRB, Côte d'Ivoire: The Ivorian Popular Front (Front populaire ivoirien, FPI), including the treatment of its members (July 2014 July 2015), 24 July 2015, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ Roberts T. et al. Côte d'Ivoire's 2015 Presidential Election: A Sign of Democratic Progress?, June 2016, [url](#), pp. 54-60.

¹⁶⁵ ISS, Côte d'Ivoire presidential election: beyond Alassane Ouattara's victory, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ HRW (Human Rights Watch), To Consolidate This Peace of Ours- A Human Rights Agenda for Côte d'Ivoire, 2015; POECI, Rapport de l'Observation du Processus Electoral de 2015, https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/EXAMPLE_PLATEFORME-POECI.pdf

¹⁶⁷ Presidential Power, Côte d'Ivoire – Analysis of presidential powers in the new constitution, 9 November 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ CEI, Referendum pour l'adoption de la Constitution – Scrutin du 30 Octobre 2016 – Resultat National, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: le Conseil Constitutionnel valide le référendum, 4 November 2016, [url](#)

The new Constitution of the *Troisième République* (in place since 8 November 2016)¹⁷⁰, introduces two new offices, the Senate¹⁷¹ and the Vice-President of the Republic¹⁷², and does not mention the concept of *Ivoirité* as requirement for a presidential candidate (see [Chapter 2](#) for the concept of *Ivoirité* and its consequences).¹⁷³ The opposition, in particular the FPI, boycotted the referendum.¹⁷⁴ The process was controlled and managed by the President without the participation of a 'Constituent Assembly'. Ouattara appointed in June 2016 a committee of experts for the drafting of the text. In October 2016, the committee submitted the text to the Parliament, dominated by the RHDP, after which the text was approved by referendum. The whole process took from June to December 2016. There was hardly any time for public and parliamentary debates.¹⁷⁵

The *Commission nationale des droits de l'homme de Côte d'Ivoire* [National Commission for Human Rights of Côte d'Ivoire] (CNDH), the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the POECI and other organisations observed the referendum.¹⁷⁶ According to all observers, opposition parties were subject to violations of freedom of expression and assembly along with some disturbances during the referendum campaign¹⁷⁷; however it did not affect the fairness of the process.¹⁷⁸

The elections for the 255 seats of the National Assembly followed on 18 December 2016 after the approval of the new Constitution, with a voter participation rate of 34.1 %.¹⁷⁹ The majority of the seats was won by an election coalition of *Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix*, [Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace] (RHDP), comprised of RDR, PDCI (before the break up in August 2018 between Ouattara and Bédié¹⁸⁰, and other minor parties. Ouattara appointed the RDR Amadou Gon Coulibaly as Prime Minister and the PDCI Daniel Kablan Duncan as the first Vice-President in Côte d'Ivoire's history.¹⁸¹

The legislative elections were characterised by a high number of independent candidates: 789 out of 1 391 of all registered candidates. The majority of independents were, in reality, dissident members of RDR or PDCI who did not achieve the formal investiture of the parties.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁰ Abidjan.net, Côte d'Ivoire: "la III^e République est une république moderne" (Ouattara), 2 January 2017, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ République de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 du 8 Novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, art 85, [url](#)

¹⁷² République de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 du 8 Novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire art. 78, [url](#)

¹⁷³ République de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 du 8 Novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire 2016 art. 55, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ BBC, Afrique, Referendum en Côte d'Ivoire: avis partagé, 31 October 2016, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ Zina O. « Le caillou a-t-il été retiré du soulier de la République ? » Réconciliation nationale et réformes constitutionnelles en Côte d'Ivoire, 2017, [url](#), p. 33.

¹⁷⁶ Security Council UN, Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 31 January 2017, [url](#), p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ HRW, Rapport Mondial, Côte d'Ivoire événements de 2017, 18 January 2018, [url](#); Abidjan.net, Côte d'Ivoire: Respecter les droits du camp du « non » lors du referendum, 27 October 2016, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ Security Council UN, Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 31 January 2017, [url](#), p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ IFES (International Foundation for Electoral System), Elections in Côte d'Ivoire: 2016 Legislative Elections, 14 December 2016, [url](#); IPU, Côte d'Ivoire Assemblée nationale (National Assembly), [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ For background on the creation of the RHDP, see next section. Le Point Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: pourquoi l'année 2019 sera déterminante, 9 January 2019, [url](#); Le Point Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire- RHDP: Alassane Ouattara reste à la barre jusqu'en 2020, 28 January 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ Security Council UN, Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 31 January 2017, [url](#), pp. 3-4.

¹⁸² Bouquet C., Les élections législatives de Décembre 2016 en Côte d'Ivoire sous le signe de la démobilisation, 2017, [url](#), pp. 240-241.

The distribution of seats in the National Assembly is:¹⁸³

Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP)	167
Independents	76
Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI)	6
Ivorian Popular Front (FPI)	3
Union for Côte d'Ivoire (UPCI)	3

The new Constitution underlines the importance of gender parity but in the legislative election, women were only 12 % of the candidates¹⁸⁴ and won just 27 seats in the National Assembly.¹⁸⁵

The legislative elections and the referendum saw a low participation of voters, in particular in the regions reputed to be pro-Gbagbo.¹⁸⁶

The election for the Senate took place on 24 March 2018, two years after its establishment. The election was indirect and concerned only two thirds of the seats; the remainder seats were to be appointed by President Ouattara. However, in January 2019, these nominated seats have not been provided.¹⁸⁷

On 4 July 2018, Ouattara dissolved the government, after Bédié's refusal to have his PDCI join RDR in one single party RHDP. At the background lie the rising rivalries between the two leaders regarding the candidacy for the presidential elections of 2020 and the unification process of the RHDP parties into a single party.¹⁸⁸ According to Ouattara, the new Constitution does set a limit of two presidential terms, but it 'should not take into account his victories in 2010 and 2015'. In June 2018, he announced that he will make a decision in the coming two years whether he will present his candidacy to a next presidency mandate in 2020.¹⁸⁹

This announcement was, according to Bédié not in accordance to the Daoukro Appeal in 2014, by which his PDCI supported Ouattara's candidacy in the 2015 presidential election.¹⁹⁰ The Daoukro Appeal forms the political basis of the unification process of the RHDP in which alternation in the candidacy for presidential election between the RDR and PDCI was the cornerstone.¹⁹¹ However, Ouattara stated that he never promised the support of RDR to a PDCI's candidate in the 2020 elections.¹⁹²

Due to these rivalries within the coalition, Ouattara implemented a government reshuffle and Amadou Gon Coulibaly was re-appointed as Prime minister of a government comprised of 35 ministers and 5 secretaries of state.¹⁹³ All the PDCI members of the Cabinet were fired, but with the re-shuffle almost

¹⁸³ IPU, Côte d'Ivoire Assemblée nationale (National Assembly), [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ Godfrey G. (guest post in Presidential-Power.com), Takeaways from Legislative Election in Côte d'Ivoire, 16 January 2017, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ IPU, Côte d'Ivoire Assemblée Nationale (National Assembly), 15 June 2018, [url](#). See also an interview with female MP Yasmina Ouégnin, Miran-Guyon, Marie, Autobiographie d'un engagement politique en Côte d'Ivoire - Entretien avec Yasmina Ouégnin, 2017, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ BTI, Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, 2018 [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ Le Monde En Côte d'Ivoire, la coalition au pouvoir remporte le premières élections sénatoriales, 26 March 2018, [url](#).

¹⁸⁸ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Alassane Ouattara dissout le gouvernement, 4 July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ Bloomberg, Ivory Coast President Ouattara Says He May Seek Third Term, 3 June 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: comment le discours d'Alassane Ouattara sur le 3e mandat a évolué, 5 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ Abidjan.net, L'"Appel de Daoukro", acte politique majeur en 2014, 1 January 2015, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ Abidjan.net, RHDP: la mise en place du parti unifié constitue le « prolongement de l'appel de Daoukro » (Duncan), 4 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹² Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Rupture de confiance, Bedé en gilet pare balle chez Ouattara, 8 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹³ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: un nouveau gouvernement ivoirien aux couleurs du RHDP, 10 July 2018, [url](#)

all were re-hired in different positions.¹⁹⁴ Asking members of his party not to endorse the new unified party constitution, Bédié expelled the 18 PDCI members who joined the new government from the *bureau exécutif* of the party.¹⁹⁵

In August 2018, the PDCI withdrew from the RHDP coalition and Bédié declared that the PDCI is entitled 'to promote a platform of collaboration' with other political parties.¹⁹⁶

The current political situation in Côte d'Ivoire is characterised by an escalation of tensions and violent verbal attacks amongst different parties.¹⁹⁷

Beyond the breakup between PDCI and RDR and their leaders, Guillaume Kigbafori Soro resigned from his position as Speaker of National Assembly in February 2019 due to the tensions with President Ouattara regarding in particular the presidency of RDR and the creation of the unified party.¹⁹⁸ On 23 February 2019, Soro met Bédié in Daoukro in order to discuss the electoral platform/alliance of opposition parties for 2020 elections that may comprise also the FPI.¹⁹⁹ Soro is said to have presidential ambitions but he has not confirmed yet whether he plans to run in 2020.²⁰⁰ Soro's candidacy is openly supported by the *Rassemblement pour la Côte d'Ivoire* [Rally for the Cote d'Ivoire] (RACI), a political movement which became a political party in February 2019. Soro is the Honorary President of the RACI.²⁰¹ Also Bédié did not confirm his candidacy in the 2020 election but he will be likely the candidate of PDCI.²⁰² As said above, President Ouattara declared that he will decide on his candidacy in 2020 but he stated that the 2016 Constitution allows him to be candidate.²⁰³

According to the EU diplomatic representatives, Côte d'Ivoire's political situation is characterised by a worsening of corruption and social inequalities and a gradual shifting towards authoritarianism.²⁰⁴

A deep characteristic of the political landscape in Côte d'Ivoire is the high rate of corruption: Côte d'Ivoire is the 105th least corrupt nation out of 180 countries according to Transparency international.²⁰⁵ In order to fight the phenomenon and improve transparency, the government has taken some measures such as the creation of the High Authority of Good Governance, the investigation led by State's General Inspectorate (SGI) and the institution of a requirement that all public officials submit asset declarations.²⁰⁶ However, despite the actions undertaken by the

¹⁹⁴ Africa Confidential, It's Ouattara Party, 27 July 2018, [url](#), p. 12

¹⁹⁵ Reuters, Ivory Coast government faces collapse in coalition row, 20 July 2018, [url](#); Africa News, Côte d'Ivoire: des exclusions en cascade au sein de la coalition au pouvoir, 24 July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ Africa News, Ivory Coast: PDCI – RDR alliance broken [The Morning Call], 10 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: la recrudescence de la violence verbale entre politiques indigne la société civile, 5 February 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ Financial Afrik, Côte d'Ivoire: Guillaume Soro, 72 Heures après...!, 10 February 2019, [url](#); France24, Leader of Ivory Coast's parliament Soro resigns amid dispute with President Ouattara, 8 February 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ RFI Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Guillaume Soro rencontre Henri Konan Bédié à Doukro, 24 February 2019, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Chacun Cherche son candidat pour 2020, 20 December 2018, [url](#); BBC, Bédié-Ouattara: la guerre a-t-elle repris?, 28 January 2019, [url](#); L'Infodrome, Depuis Daoukro, Bédié cogne ses adversaires: 'En 2020, nous allons bilayer les faussaires impénitents', 22 February 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ Reuters, Ivorian parliament speaker resigns ahead of possible presidential run, 8 February 2019, [url](#)

²⁰¹ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: le RACI, mouvement de soutien à Guillaume Soro, devient un parti, 17 February 2019, [url](#); L'Infodrome, Situation socio-politique, Guillaume Soro: "Si je n'étais pas rebelle, Alassane ne serait pas président en Côte d'Ivoire", 6 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁰² L'Infodrome, présidentielle 2020: La candidature de Bédié se précise 5 January 2019, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: 2020, la candidature d'Henri Konan Bédié se précise. Décryptage 14 November 2018, [url](#); Africa news, Présidentielle 2020 en Côte d'Ivoire: l'ex-président Bédié pourrait se présenter, 11 January 2019, [url](#)

²⁰³ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Alassane Ouattara dira en 2020 s'il brigue un troisième mandat, 26 January 2019, [url](#); RFI, Ivorian president Ouattara says all are free to stand in presidential election, 11 February 2019, [url](#); Le Point Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire – RHDP: Alassane Ouattara reste à la barre jusqu'en 2020, 28 January 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ Le Monde, La Côte d'Ivoire « moins solide et démocratique » qu'on pourrait le penser, selon l'UE, 2 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ Transparency International, Côte d'Ivoire, 2018, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ IACC, Despite Legal Frameworks, Corruption Still Thrives in Côte d'Ivoire, 4 February 2019, [url](#); Export.gov, Côte d'Ivoire – Corruption, 1 September 2017, [url](#)

government, the corruption remains widespread and has affected many sectors of political and economic life of the country.²⁰⁷

3.2 Political parties

From 1960 to 1990, the political landscape of Côte d'Ivoire was dominated by the united party PDCI, led by President Félix Houphouët-Boigny. In May 1990, opposition parties were legalised and a number of parties were registered.²⁰⁸

The Ivorian Constitution guarantees the free establishment of political parties, except if they are 'organized along regional, religious, tribal, ethnic or racial lines'.²⁰⁹

The most relevant actors in the political landscape of Côte d'Ivoire are:

- *Front populaire ivoirien* [Ivorian Popular Front] (FPI) – split into two factions: the moderate one led by N'Guessan, and the so called *Gbagbo ou Rien* (GOR), led by Sanagaré until his death occurred in November 2018 and currently by Laurent Gbagbo and Assoa Adou, the one in which the supporters of Laurent Gbagbo recognise the most;
- *Liberté et Démocratie pour la République* [Liberty and Democracy for the Republic] (LIDER) – President Mamadou Koulibaly;
- *Mouvement des forces d'avenir* [Movement of the future Forces] (MFA) – Split into two factions: one led by Moutayé, and the other one led by Siaka Ouattara;
- *Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* [Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire] (PDCI) – President Henri Konan Bédié;
- *Parti ivoirien des travailleurs* [Ivorian Workers Party] (Pit) – Split into two faction: one led by Joseph Séka Séka and the other one led by Aka Ahizi Daniel;
- *Rassemblement des Républicains* [Rally of the Republicans] (RDR) – President Henriette Dagri Diabaté and honorary President Alassane Ouattara;
- *Union pour la Côte d'Ivoire* [Union for Côte d'Ivoire] (UPCI) – in 2018 split into two factions, one led by Brahim Soro and the other one led by Serge Brou;
- *Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire* [Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire] (UDPCI) President: Albert Toikeusse Mabri.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Areion 24, Côte d'Ivoire: le bilan inquiétant du « Système Ouattara », 28 January 2019, [url](#); RFI, Journée mondiale de lutte contre la corruption. Où en est la Côte d'Ivoire?, 9 December 2018, [url](#); Africa N°1, Côte d'Ivoire: « Le Fléau de la corruption présent à tous les niveaux », 4 December 2018, [url](#)

²⁰⁸ Encyclopedia Britannica, Government and society – Political process, last update 7 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁹ République de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 du 8 Novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire 2016 [url](#), art.25

²¹⁰ CIA, World Factbook (The), Côte d'Ivoire, Legislative Branch, last update 20 March 2019, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: s'allier pour mieux régner, 29 August 2018, [url](#); 2 Com Info, FPI décision du président Laurent Gbagbo, 20 November 2018, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : Alassane Ouattara renonce à la présidence du RDR, 10 September 2017, [url](#); L'Intelligent d'Abidjan, Upci: Soro Brahim démis pour trahison, Sidibe Yacou Président par interim, 10 June 2018 [url](#); Ivoiresoir, UPCI : Brahim Soro dénonce « l'idéologie du ventre » du RHDP et appelle à sortir du « cycle infernal », 1 January 2019, [url](#); Abidjan.net, Côte d'Ivoire / crise au MFA : le congrès du camp Moutayé interdit pour « menace de trouble à l'ordre public », 18 May 2018, [url](#)

Reshaping the political map of Côte d'Ivoire 2019.

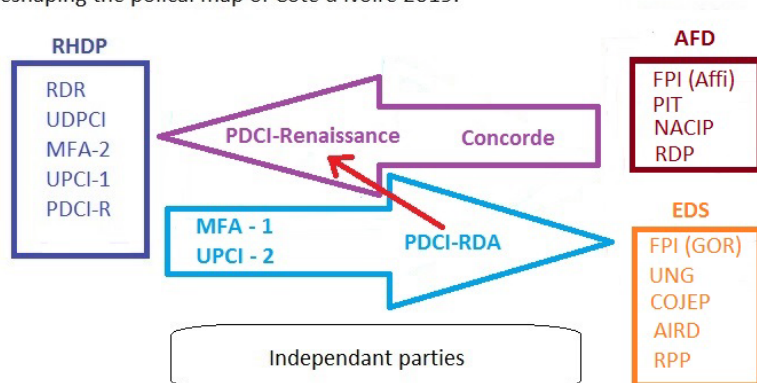


Figure 1: Reshaping the political map of Côte d'Ivoire

In general, Ivorian political parties share common characteristics and critical issues such as: authoritative management of the charismatic leader of the party, the internal rivalries among high ranked members, conflicts regarding the interpretation of the statutes and the strategic targets and troubled process of internal democratisation.²¹¹

Moreover, the process of unification of RHDP has increased the centrifugal forces in many Ivorian parties which have led to a progressive weakening of the opposition parties.²¹²

Examples of these dynamics are represented by the new movements joining the RHDP such as *PDCI – Renaissance* founded by Kablan Duncan and separated from the PDCI (see [Section 3.2.1.2](#))²¹³ and *Concorde* founded by Alcide Djedje, former member of FPI, N’Guessan’s faction²¹⁴, and by many splits, occurred in different political parties. These movements have led to situations of ‘bicephalism’ as in the cases of UPCI, MFA and the small left-wing party called *Parti ivoirien des travailleurs* [Ivorian Workers Party] (PIT), which joined the RHDP-coalition only in 2016. In these parties the leadership is split between two positions: one pro-unification and one against the unification with the RHDP.²¹⁵

Moreover, the high number of independent candidates, even if after the election most of them usually join a coalition, in each election in Côte d’Ivoire represents a further element of fragmentation in the political landscape of the country.²¹⁶

²¹¹ Connection Ivoirienne, Côte d’Ivoire: De la division des partis politiques à l’exigence d’une démocratie fonctionnelle, 25 September 2018, [url](#)

²¹² L’Infodrome, situation politique: Ouattara et Bédié se partagent des partis politique, 23 August 2018, [url](#)

²¹³ Jeune Afrique, Côte d’Ivoire – Lancement du PDCI-Renaissance: vers une guerre ouverte entre Bédié et Duncan?, 24 December 2018, [url](#)

²¹⁴ Jeune Afrique, Côte d’Ivoire – Alcide Djedje: ‘Mon parti va intégrer le RHDP’, 31 August 2018, [url](#)

²¹⁵ Afriki Press, Upci, ex-parti de Gnamien Konan, dit non au parti unifié: Brahima Soro sur le depart, 24 April 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d’Ivoire: le parti unifié RHDP se met en place, sans Bédié et en l’absence de Soro, 16 July 2018, [url](#); Koaci.com, Koacinaute: “Entrée” du PIT au RHDP, Aka Ahizi écrit à Henri Konan Bédié, 6 June 2016, [url](#); RFI, Côte d’Ivoire: la coalition au pouvoir s’agrandit, avec l’arrivée du PIT, 25 May 2016, [url](#); L’Expression Quotidien, Côte d’Ivoire: les vieux démons resurgissent au PIT, 18 January 2019, [url](#); Koaci.com, Côte d’Ivoire: Convention du PIT, gauche et PDCI unanimes ‘c’est un régime fasciste qui tente de s’installer’, 19 January 2019, [url](#); MagikNews, Rififi au PIT à propos du RHDP/ Le Sg du parti recadre Wodié et les dissidents, 23 January 2019, [url](#); Fratmat.info, Congrès constitutif du RHDP; Le Pit appelle ses militants à se mobiliser, 24 January 2019, [url](#)

²¹⁶ Le Monde, Côte d’Ivoire: le pouvoir bousculé par les indépendants, 23 December 2016, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d’Ivoire: confusion autour des ralliements d’élus indépendants au RHDP, 25 October 2018, [url](#); Apa News, Municipales ivoiriennes: 684 listes dont 389 indépendants, 11 September 2018, [url](#); BBC, Le RHDP en tête des élections locales en Côte d’Ivoire, 17 October 2018, [url](#)

3.2.1 The main political parties and alliances

3.2.1.1 *Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix*, [Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace] (RHDP)

The RHDP, founded in 2005, is the ruling coalition party composed of RDR, PDCI, MFA and UDPCI.²¹⁷ It was founded as electoral coalition, in opposition to former President Gbagbo, based on the concept of *Houphouëtisme* or rather the recovery of the ideas and the actions of former President Félix Houphouët-Boigny.²¹⁸ Until 2018, RHDP held, according to Freedom House: ‘... a virtual lock on national political power’.²¹⁹

On 16 July 2018, the constituent general assembly of the RHDP was held, during which the presidential party RDR and its allies signed the statutes of the future unified party.²²⁰ Henriette Diabaté, President of RDR, was appointed as Vice-President of RHDP party while Ouattara became its president.²²¹ On 26 January 2019, the first congress was held of the unified party RHDP, composed by RDR, UDPCI and factions of other parties such as: MFA, PIT and UPCI.²²²

3.2.1.2 *Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire – Rassemblement démocratique africain* [Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire – African democratic rally] (PDCI - RDA)

The PDCI - RDA was founded by Félix Houphouët-Boigny in 1946.²²³ It was the sole party until 1990.²²⁴ In 1993, after Houphouët-Boigny's death, Henri Konan Bédié became the leader of the PDCI-RDA. Bédié's take-over ended a struggle for power between Bédié and Alassane Ouattara, the then Prime Minister.²²⁵ In 1994, the PDCI split and Ouattara joined the breakaway party RDR. The PDCI won again the presidential election in 1995, boycotted by the RDR and the FPI.²²⁶ The PDCI ultimately lost power in the 1999 military coup.

The last years of PDCI's supremacy in the Ivorian political landscape were characterised by the introduction of the concept of *Ivoirité* which stressed the ethnic balance of the country and led to a deterioration of the attitude towards migrant workers.²²⁷ This concept had the political function of excluding Ouattara from running for president in 1995 and triggered the conflict regarding which ethnic group is more Ivorian.²²⁸

After years of rivalries with Ouattara's RDR, the PDCI joined the coalition RHDP in 2005. the coalition was in opposition of former President Laurent Gbagbo in the 2006 election (which was postponed to 2010, see [Section 2.5](#)). In 2010, Bédié's party supported the election of Alassane Ouattara as president and with the '*Appel de Daoukro*' in 2014 renewed his support to his ally in the 2015 presidential election.²²⁹

²¹⁷ Peace Insight, Ivory Coast: Key People and Parties, n.d., [url](#)

²¹⁸ Afrik.com, Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix, 19 May 2005, [url](#)

²¹⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2017, Côte d'Ivoire profile, [url](#)

²²⁰ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: le parti unifié RHDP prend forme, 17 July 2018, [url](#); Bloomberg, Ivory Coast Coalition Names Ouattara as Unified party Leader, 17 July 2018, [url](#)

²²¹ Africa Confidential, It's Ouattara Party, 27 July 2018, [url](#)

²²² RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: après la création du RHDP, que reste-t-il des anciens partis?, 31 January 2019, [url](#)

²²³ PDCI RDA, Le PDCI RDA, Notre Fondateur, n.d., [url](#)

²²⁴ Peace Insight, Ivory Coast: Key People and Parties, n.d., [url](#)

²²⁵ Norway, LandInfo, Ethnicity, Ivoirité and Conflict, 2 November 2006, [url](#)

²²⁶ IPU, Côte d'Ivoire – Parliamentary Chamber: Assemblée nationale – Elections held in 1995, n.d., [url](#)

²²⁷ UK Home Office, Operational Guidance Note, Ivory Coast, 13 February 2009, [url](#); Norway, LandInfo, Ethnicity, Ivoirité and Conflict, 2 November 2006, [url](#)

²²⁸ Norway, LandInfo, Ethnicity, Ivoirité and Conflict, 2 November 2006, [url](#)

²²⁹ France 24, Côte d'Ivoire: entre Ouattara et Bédié, le torchon brûle...de nouveau, 10 August 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: Les dessous du divorce Ouattara/Bédié, selon Guikahué, 27 September 2018, [url](#)

During Ouattara's second mandate, new tensions arose between RDR and PDCI regarding the alternation in candidacy and the unified party process which was initially endorsed by the PDCI. Tensions reached high levels as exemplified by Bédié's official communication of 13 July 2018 in which he forbade PDCI's leaders and militants to participate in the General Assembly of the *Parti unifié* [Unified Party].²³⁰

On 9 August 2018, Bédié announced the PDCI's withdrawal from the project of a unified party.²³¹ The breakup was primarily due to the non-respect of the previously agreed alternation in the candidacy. Indeed Bédié does not exclude the possibility to be the candidate of PDCI in the 2020 election.²³² Moreover the unification, from Bédié's perspective, is not needed in a situation in which there is not a strong opposition in the representative institutions of Cote d'Ivoire, due to the boycott by FPI.²³³

Following the withdrawal of the PDCI from the unified party process, Daniel Kablan Duncan, Vice-President of Côte d'Ivoire and former Vice-President of PDCI, created, with the other PDCI members of the government, a movement called PDCI - Renaissance, that supports the unification in RHDP.²³⁴ This split was strongly condemned by Bédié and he dismissed high-ranking PDCI members who supported Duncan's movement such as Ahoua N'Doli Théophile and Achi Patrick.²³⁵ Therefore several PDCI members joined the PDCI - Renaissance.²³⁶

The end of the coalition with the RDR opened new scenarios for the PDCI and in general for the political landscape of Côte d'Ivoire, for example a new coalition with other opposition parties, such as Affi N'Guessan's FPI faction, in order to present a PDCI candidature in the 2020 election.²³⁷

The PDCI structure comprises:

- the presidency made up by *le Président, les Vice-présidents, le Comité des Sages* [Committee of Wise Men] and *le Secrétariat Exécutif* [Executive secretary];
- *le Bureau politique* [Political bureau], *les Secrétaires Généraux de Section* [General secretaries of sections]; and
- two *Organisations Spécialisées* [Special organisations]: *l'Union des Femmes du PDCI* [Women League of PDCI], (UFDPI) and *la Jeunesse du PDCI* [Youth League of PDCI] (JPDCI).²³⁸

²³⁰ Ivoire Soir, Bedie Durcit le Ton: 'Je demand à tous les militants du PDCI de ne pas s'associer' à l'AG du Parti Unifiée, 13 July 2018, [url](#)

²³¹ France24, Côte d'Ivoire, Côte d'Ivoire : entre Ouattara et Bédié, le torchon brûle... de nouveau, 10 August 2018, [url](#)

²³² RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : le PDCI ne veut pas d'un parti unifié avec le RDR avant 2020, 18 June 2018, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : le PDCI ne veut pas d'un parti unifié avec le RDR avant 2020, 18 June 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : les dessous du divorce Ouattara/Bédié, selon Guikahué, 27 September 2018, [url](#)

²³³ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire – Christian Bouquet : « Tous les rapprochements sont possibles », 20 August 2018, [url](#)

²³⁴ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Henri Konan Bédié se sépare de vice-presidents pro-RHDP, 4 January 2019, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire, Enfin les raisons de la colère de Konan Bédié contre Kablan Duncan, 7 January 2019, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire – Lancement du PDCI-Renaissance : vers une guerre ouverte entre Bédié et Duncan ?, 24 December 2018, [url](#)

²³⁵ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire, Enfin les raisons de la colère de Konan Bédié contre Kablan Duncan, 7 January 2019, [url](#); L'infodrome, PDCI : Deux membres du bureau politique, déshabillent Bédié et Guikahué, voici ce qu'ils prévoient de faire, ; Rumeurs d'Abidjan, PDCI RDA : Nouveau coup du pur Bédié, 6 March 2019, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : Bédié fait le ménage dans les instance dirigeantes du PDCI 5 January 2019, [url](#)

²³⁶ L'infodrome, PDCI : Deux membres du bureau politique, déshabillent Bédié et Guikahué, voici ce qu'ils prévoient de faire, 14 February 2019, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : Henri Konan Bédié se sépare de vice-presidents pro-RHDP, 4 January 2019, [url](#)

²³⁷ Jeune Afrique, Pascal Affi N'Guessan : « L'alliance FPI-PDCI, c'est un vieux souhait qui va bientôt se réaliser », 16 August 2018 [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: s'allier pour mieux régner, 29 August 2018, [url](#)

²³⁸ PDCI RDA, Notre Président, n.d.; PDCI RDA, Les Vice-Présidents, n.d. [url](#); PDCI RDA, Le Comité des Sages, n.d.; PDCI RDA, Les Secrétariat Exécutif, n.d. [url](#); PDCI RDA, Le Bureau Politique, n.d., [url](#); PDCI RDA, Les Secrétaires Généraux de Section, n.d. [url](#); PDCI RDA, UFPDCI, n.d. [url](#); PDCI RDA, JPDCI, n.d. [url](#)

The press organ of the PDCI is *Le Nouveau Réveil*²³⁹ although according to *Courrier International* it is a newspaper close to PDCI.²⁴⁰

Decentralised party structures are formed by village committees, sections, general delegations and departmental and communal delegations.²⁴¹

Officially, according to the Statute, members of PDCI-RDA participate in the selection of the officials of the party and every one of them is eligible.²⁴² However, the decision-making process within the party is typically top-down as shown in cases of resignations/appointments of political cadres or the choice of the political direction or alliances of the party (e.g. *Appel de Daoukro*).²⁴³

3.2.1.3 *Rassemblement des Républicains* [Rally of the Republicans] (RDR)

The RDR was founded in 1994 by Djéni Kobina as a central, democratic liberalist party, splitting from the PDCI.²⁴⁴ It is a founding member of the African Liberal Network²⁴⁵ and it joined the Liberal International at the Dakar Congress in 2003.²⁴⁶

The party is based on the political ideas of Ouattara, as reported on its official website.²⁴⁷ The core idea of RDR is that the three key areas of development for Côte d'Ivoire are: '... good economic policy, a conducive legal and political environment, and attention to equitable social development. Finally, the RDR believes in the growth of a free society based on personal liberty, personal responsibility and social justice'.²⁴⁸ However, an internal report by EU ambassadors, cited in AFP on 2 August 2018, reportedly criticises the government for gradually restricting the freedom of expression and for not listening to internal and external criticism, while social protest is increasing. At the political level, the creation of a unified party is considered a way to ensure reelection and marginalising opposition movements.²⁴⁹

The party and its leader are supporters of the economic liberalism and the withdrawal of the social state. Actually this approach has caused a strong perception of inequalities in the Ivorian society: the majority of the population, indeed, feels that there is a bias, mostly ethnic-based, in the access to opportunities and advantages of the economic growth.²⁵⁰ Moreover, the government, facing this situation, shows a progressive closure to external or internal criticism.²⁵¹

The RDR structure comprises: *le secrétariat général* [general secretariat], *les secrétaires nationaux* [national secretaries], *le conseil politique* [the political council], *le Rassemblement des femmes républicaines* [rally of republican women] (RFR), *le Rassemblement des enseignants républicains* [rally of republican teachers] (RER), *les inspecteurs* [the inspectors], *le Rassemblement des jeunes*

²³⁹ Akindes F. A., *La reinvention de soi dans la violence*, 2011, [url](#), p. 66.

²⁴⁰ *Courrier international*, *Le Nouvea Réveil*, n.d. [url](#)

²⁴¹ PDCI RDA, Statuts, n.d., [url](#), artt.3-10

²⁴² PDCI RDA, Statuts, n.d. [url](#), art.7

²⁴³ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: Bédié fait le ménage dans les instance dirigeantes du PDCI, 5 January 2019, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Henri Konan Bédié se sépare de vice-présidents pro-RHDP, 4 January 2019, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: Ehnri Konan Bédié reçoit les cadres du PDCI à Daoukro, 28 October 2018, [url](#); Le Monde, Côte d'Ivoire: « l'appel de Daoukro » adopté dans un unanimité brejnévien, 1 March 2015, [url](#).

²⁴⁴ RDR, Présentation, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴⁵ African Liberal Network, Member Parties, Our Members – Africa – RDR Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴⁶ Liberal International, Our Members – Africa – RDR, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴⁷ RDR, Présentation, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴⁸ African Liberal Network, Our Members – Africa – RDR Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴⁹ Le Monde, La Côte d'Ivoire « moins solide et démocratique » qu'on pourrait le penser, selon l'UE, 2 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁰ Akindés F., « On ne mange pas les ponts et le gourdon » : les sentiers sinueux d'une sortie de crise en Côte d'Ivoire, 2017, [url](#)

²⁵¹ Le Monde, La Côte d'Ivoire « moins solide et démocratique » qu'on pourrait le penser selon l'UE, 2 August 2018, [url](#)

républicains [rally of young republicans] (RJR), *les secrétaires départementaux* [the departmental secretaries], *les commissions techniques* [technical commissions].²⁵²

RDR's press organ is *Le Patriote*.²⁵³

From 1999 to 2017, Ouattara was President of the RDR.²⁵⁴ On September 2017, during the third party Congress²⁵⁵, Ouattara chose Henriette Dagri Diabaté as new president of the party²⁵⁶, even if the organisational chart of the party refers to her as 'godmother' of the party.²⁵⁷ Kandia Camara was appointed as general secretary of RDR.²⁵⁸ Historically its supporters mainly originate from the north of Côte d'Ivoire.²⁵⁹

The RDR won the elections in 2010 after boycotting the ones in 1995 and in 2000²⁶⁰, due to the rejection of Ouattara's candidacy based on his then alleged Burkinabé origin.²⁶¹

Since 2011, RDR's main political effort has been the attempt to create a unified party named RHDP with other parties of the RHDP coalition, before the presidential election in 2020. It is the strongest party within the RHDP.²⁶²

The core idea of the creation of a unified party is the achievement of the stability of the state and the political landscape, dominated since the 1990s by three big parties (PDCI, RDR and FPI). These three parties represent around 95 % of the electorate, even if none of them can gain a presidential election alone. Hence a unified party (at least composed by RDR and PDCI) may represent around 2/3 of the electorate. However, it is also noted that this may lead to a large power block, marginalisation of the opposition and reduction of public debate and democratic competition.²⁶³

The RDR's convention on 5 May 2018 approved the project of unification.²⁶⁴

3.2.1.4 Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire [Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire] (UDPCI)

The UDPCI is a centrist party and its ideology is based on social liberalism.²⁶⁵ It was founded by General Robert Gueï in 2001.²⁶⁶ The President of UDPCI, Albert Toikeusse Mabri²⁶⁷, was State Minister, Minister of Planning and Development from 1 June 2011 to 13 January 2016, then Minister of Foreign Affairs from 12 January 2016 till 25 November 2016.²⁶⁸ He was ousted due to the conflicts with President Ouattara and the Executive board of the RHDP regarding the selection of candidates for the

²⁵² RDR, Les structures, n.d., [url](#)

²⁵³ RDR, Présentation, n.d., [url](#)

²⁵⁴ African Liberal Network, Member Parties, n.d. [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : Alassane Ouattara choisit Henriette Dagri Diabaté pour présider son parti, 10 September 2017.

²⁵⁵ Apa news, Henriette Diabaté, présidente, Kandia Camara SG: les femmes prennent le "pouvoir" au RDR, 10 September 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Alassane Ouattara choisit Henriette Diabaté pour présider son parti, 10 September 2017, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ RDR, Bureau National RFR, 1 May 2018, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ Apa News, RDR: Kandia Camara nomme 56 secrétaires généraux adjoints dont des proches de Guillaume Soro, 14 December 2017, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ BBC, Q&A: Ivory Coast parliamentary elections, 11 December 2011, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ Peace Insight, Ivory Coast: Key People and Parties, n.d. [url](#)

²⁶¹ CNN, President-elect: Ivory Coast's Alassane Ouattara, 11 April 2011, [url](#)

²⁶² Security Council UN, Finale progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 31 January 2017, [url](#), p. 3.

²⁶³ Contrepoints, Côte d'Ivoire: le parti unifié menace la démocratie, 9 June 2018, [url](#); Le Monde, La Côte d'Ivoire « moins solide et démocratique » qu'on pourrait le penser selon l'UE, 2 August 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁴ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: le RDR adopte le projet de parti unifié RHDP, 6 May 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ UDPCI, Statuts et Règlement Interieur, December 2013, [url](#), art. 2.

²⁶⁶ Jeune Afrique, Mabri Toikeusse peut-il sauver l'UDPCI ?, 4 October 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ CIA, World Factbook (The) – Côte d'Ivoire – Government-Political Parties and Leaders, 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁸ UDPCI, Le Président – Biographie, Curriculum Vitae, n.d. [url](#); Côte d'Ivoire, Gouvernement : le Chef de l'Etat Sem Alassane Ouattara a mis fin au fonctions des ministres Toikeusse Mabri et Gnamien Konan, 22 November 2016 [url](#)

legislative election in 2016.²⁶⁹ Indeed the UDPCI, its candidates put in minority by RDR and PDCI in certain constituencies, submitted its own lists of candidates.²⁷⁰

However UDPCI has joined the unified party project and its delegates have attended the Constituent Assembly of RHDP on 16 July 2018 and Mabri was appointed second Vice-President of the unified party.²⁷¹

In the governmental reshuffle in July 2018 Mabri was appointed as minister of high education and research.²⁷²

Moreover, in January 2019, UDPCI and its leader participated in the first congress of RHDP.²⁷³ The creation of the RHDP did not lead to the dissolution of the UDPCI, however, the process of fusion of the different parties is thought to be progressive.²⁷⁴

The structure of UDPCI comprises: la *Direction du Parti* [Direction of the party], l'*Inspection du Parti*, [Inspectors of the party], le *Cabinet du Président*, [Cabinet of the President], le *Conseil d'Honneur et de l'Ordre* [Council of honour and order], la *Commission Technique* [Technical commission], les *Secrétariats Nationaux* [National secretaries], le *Bureau politique* [political bureau], les *secrétariats régionaux* [regional secretaries], l'*Union des Enseignants de l'UDPCI* [teachers League of UDPCI] (UE-UDPCI), l'*Union des Femmes de l'UDPCI* [women League of UDPCI] (UF-UDPCI) and la *Jeunesse de l'UDPCI* [Youth league of UDPCI] (JUPDCI).²⁷⁵

The members of UDPCI have to belong to a *comité de base* [local committee].²⁷⁶

3.2.1.5 Union pour la Côte d'Ivoire [Union for Côte d'Ivoire] (UPCI)

The *Union pour la Côte d'Ivoire* is a liberal party, founded in 2009 by Gnamien Konan²⁷⁷, which does not refuse the State intervention in specific key sectors in order to guarantee the protection of the most vulnerable groups of the population.²⁷⁸

The UPCI joined the RHDP and supported the candidacy of Alassane Ouattara in the 2015 presidential election.²⁷⁹ However in 2016, due to the disagreement with Ouattara concerning the candidacies to legislative elections, Gnamien, then Minister of Environment, was fired.²⁸⁰ The UPCI submitted its own list of candidates.²⁸¹

²⁶⁹ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : les ministres Mabri Toikeusse et Gnamien Konan limogés du gouvernement, 25 November 2016, [url](#)

²⁷⁰ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Législatives, l'UDPCI de Mabri claque la porte du RHDP, 22 November 2018, [url](#)

²⁷¹ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: le parti unifié RHDP prend forme, 17 July 2018, [url](#); Apa news, Ouattara désigné président du Parti unifié RHDP adopté « à l'unanimité », 16 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁷² La Afrique Tribune, Côte d'Ivoire: le nouveau gouvernement enfin nommé (LISTE), 10 July 2019, [url](#)

²⁷³ Fratmat.info, RHDP, Ouverture du premier congress avec plus de 10 mille congressistes, 25 January 2019, [url](#)

²⁷⁴ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: après la creation du RHDP, que rest-t-il des anciens partis?, 31 January 2019, [url](#); L'Infodrome, Après le congress du samedi 26 janvier, confusion totale au RHDP, 7 February 2019, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ UDPCI, La direction generale du parti, n.d. [url](#); UDPCI, Inspection du parti, n.d. [url](#); UDPCI, Cabinet du Président, n.d. [url](#); UDPCI, Conseil d'Honneur et de l'Ordre, n.d. [url](#); UDPCI, Commission Technique, n.d. [url](#); UDPCI, Secretariats Nationaux, n.d. [url](#); UDPCI, Bureau Politique, n.d.; UDPCI, Secretariats Regionaux, n.d.; UDPCI, Organes Speciales, n.d. [url](#)

²⁷⁶ Udpai, Statuts et Reglement Interieur, art. 8, [url](#)

²⁷⁷ Abidjan.net, Après sa démission de l'UPCI, Gnamien Konan veut créer un autre mouvement, 12 June 2017, [url](#)

²⁷⁸ UPCI, Historique de l'UPCI, n.d., [url](#)

²⁷⁹ Jeune Afrique, Présidentielle en Côte d'Ivoire: 10 candidatures validées par la Cour constitutionnelle, 9 September 2015, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ RFI, En Côte d'Ivoire, la grogne de l'UPCI contre l'accord de parti unifié, 1 May 2018, [url](#); Ivoire Business, Côte d'Ivoire: Mambri et Gnamien limogés pour indiscipline et désaccord avec les houpouétiste, selon le porte-parole du gouvernement, 1 December 2016, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : les ministres Mabri Toikeusse et Gnamien Konan limogés du gouvernement, 25 November 2016, [url](#)

²⁸¹ Abidjan.net, Législatives 2016: La liste des candidates UPCI, 18 November 2016, [url](#)

In 2017, Gnamien Konan left his party.²⁸² In July 2018, Soro Brahima, former secretary of the party, was appointed as President of UPCI.²⁸³ In April 2018, the UPCI militants voted against the unified party (RHDP) with 90 % of ballots.²⁸⁴ The refusal to join the unified party RHDP led to a split of the party.²⁸⁵

On 9 June 2018, Soro was ousted, *in absentia*, by the political bureau of the dissident faction of the party and replaced *ad interim* by Sidibé Yacou.²⁸⁶ However, the official bodies of the party renewed their support to Soro Brahima.²⁸⁷

In July 2018, the dissident faction of UPCI held its congress in Abidjan in order to associate with the unification process of RHDP and to elect Serge Brou as the new President of the party. The congress was not recognised by Soro Brahima who has accused the presidential's party, RDR, of having actively supported the split.²⁸⁸

The UPCI structure comprises: le *Bureau Politique* [political bureau], le *Conseil National* [National Council], la *Jeunesse UPCI* [UPCI youth league], l'*Union des Femmes UPCI* [Women's League of the UPCI], le *Comité des Enseignants* [Committee of teachers] and le *Comité des Entrepreneurs* [Committee of entrepreneurs].²⁸⁹

3.2.1.6 Front populaire ivoirien [Ivorian Popular Front] (FPI)

The FPI was founded by Laurent Gbagbo in 1982.²⁹⁰ That same year, due to the harassment by Houphouët Boigny's security forces²⁹¹, Gbagbo went into exile in France.²⁹² In Côte d'Ivoire opposition parties had been banned since the independence of the country in 1960.²⁹³ At the beginning, the FPI was a clandestine Marxist-Leninist political movement²⁹⁴ and its supporters fought for the introduction of a multiparty system.²⁹⁵ In 1988, the FPI became a political party and was officially recognised in 1990.²⁹⁶ It is a centre-left democratic and socialist party.²⁹⁷ The FPI rose to power in 2000 and Laurent Gbagbo was the President of the Republic until 2010.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Gbagbo

²⁸² Afriki Press, Gnamien Konan désavoué et éjecté: dessous d'une vraie fausse démission, 10 June 2017, [url](#); Koaci, Côte d'Ivoire: UPCI, Gnamien Konan démissionne de la présidence du parti, l'interim assure par le SG pour trois mois, 12 June 2017, [url](#), accesse 28 December 2018.

²⁸³ UPCI, Maître Soro Brahima, président de UPCI (Union Pour la Côte d'Ivoire), 9 August 2017, [url](#); AIP, Côte d'Ivoire/ 1er Congrès de l'UPCI: Soro Brahima élu nouveau président du parti, 10 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ GRIP, Monitoring de la Stabilité Régionale dans le Bassin Sahélien et en Afrique de l'Ouest, April-June 2018, 5 July 2018, [url](#); Afriki Press, Upci, ex-parti de Gnamien konan, dit non au parti unifié : Brahima Soro su le départ, 28 April 2019, [url](#); Rumeurs d'Abidjan, 24 January 2019, Brahima Soro de l'UPCI avant le Congrès du RHDP : « Nous ne sommes plus avec le RHDP, que cela soit très clair », 24 January 2019, [url](#)

²⁸⁵ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: le "Oui de la dissidence de l'UPCI au parti unifié "n'est pas pour un poste ministerial, 10 July 2019, [url](#); Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire : L'UPCI accuse de « égarés » qui tentent de diviser le parti et considère la question du 3^{ème} mandat de Ouattara comme un « non-sujet », [url](#)

²⁸⁶ L'Intelligent d'Abidjan, Upci: Soro Brahima démis pour trahison, Sidibe Yacou Président par interim, 10 June 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁷ L'Infodrome, Upci: Le conseil national réaffirme sa confiance à Me Soro Brahima, 12 June 2018, [url](#)

²⁸⁸ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: le "oui" de la dissidence de l'Upci au parti unifié n'est pas pour un poste ministériel, 10 July 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: Le bichépalisme s'installe à l'UPCI (papier d'angle), 9 July 2019, [url](#) Ivoire Soir, UPCI : Brahima Soro dénonce « l'ideologie du ventre » du RHDP et appelle à sortir du « cycle infernal », [url](#)

²⁸⁹ UPCI, Membres du Bureau Politique, n.d., [url](#); UPCI, Membres du Conseil National, n.d. [url](#); UPCI, Structures Spécialisées, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁰ Trial International, Laurent Gbagbo, 9 June 2016, [url](#)

²⁹¹ BBC, Ivory Coast's Laurent Gbagbo: from democrat to autocrat, 11 April 2011, [url](#)

²⁹² RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: les grandes dates de l'histoire politique, 6 August 2010, [url](#)

²⁹³ Moncrieff R., Political opposition in the Ivory Coast – Problems and perspectives, in Soundings, issue 10: Windrush Echoes, Autumn 1998, [url](#) p.2.

²⁹⁴ FPI, Historique, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁵ RFI Afrique, Portrait de Laurent Gbagbo, 26 November 2010, [url](#)

²⁹⁶ FPI, Historique, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁷ Peace Insight, Ivory Coast: Key people and Parties, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁸ Abidjan.net, Politique-Laurent Koudou Gbagbo-Biographie, n.d., [url](#)

conceded that the 2000 election was affected by the origin-based exclusion of Ouattara and by the absence of plausible rivals.²⁹⁹

Until 2011, the party was a member of Socialist International but after the post-electoral crisis this organisation expelled the FPI.³⁰⁰

Since 2001, FPI adopted a 30 % quota for women for all levels of its structure and for its candidates' lists.³⁰¹

The governing bodies of the party are *la Présidence* [the Presidency], *le Secrétariat Général* [General Secretary], *le Congrès*, *le Comité Central* [Central Committee] and *la Convention* [the Convention]. The president of the party is elected by the federal assemblies, appointed by the congress and he can be re-elected. Territorially the party is organised in sections and the local structures are represented by the *comités de base* [local committees].³⁰²

Membership can be acquired after the local structure of the party has accepted the request. Members aged between 16 and 30 belong to the *Jeunesse du Front Populaire Ivoirien* [FPI youth league] (JFPI). The members of the FPI are not allowed to attend meetings of other parties or arrange events with other parties or organisations without the permission of the central bureau of the party.³⁰³

The FPI's press organ is the daily newspaper *Notre Voie*.³⁰⁴

Since 2011, the FPI, the major opposition party³⁰⁵, is split into two factions³⁰⁶: *Gbagbo et nous* (Gbagbo and us) and *Gbagbo ou rien* - [Gbagbo or nothing] (GOR). The former is led by Pascal Affi N'Guessan, the President of the Party, and the latter faction, the dissident (or hardliner) FPI, was led by Aboudramane Sangaré, former minister of foreign affairs, until his death on 3 November 2018.³⁰⁷ After Sanagré's death, Laurent Gbagbo regained control of his branch of FPI.³⁰⁸ The N'Guessan's FPI is the pillar of the 2014 opposition coalition *Alliance des forces démocratiques* [Alliance of Democratic Forces] (AFD), while the dissident faction belongs to the 2017 coalition *Ensemble pour la démocratie et la souveraineté* [Together for democracy and sovereignty] (EDS).³⁰⁹

N'Guessan, Prime minister under Gbagbo's presidency from 2000 until 2003³¹⁰, stands for a direct involvement into the political life of Côte d'Ivoire and for a regular participation to the electoral processes, even though he boycotted the previous presidential elections and the constitutional referendum.³¹¹ Indeed N'Guessan argued: 'The FPI needs members in Parliament to be a force against the ruling coalition...'³¹²

²⁹⁹ GOUNIN Yves, « La France en Afrique: Le combat des Anciens et des Modernes », De Boeck Supérieur, 2009 ; Le Pape, Marc, and Vidal, Claudine (eds), Côte d'Ivoire - L'année terrible 1999-2000, KARTHALA Editions, 2003, see p. 271 ; OUEDRAOGO Jean-Bernard, SALL Ebrima, "Frontières de la citoyenneté et violence politique en Côte d'Ivoire », African Books Collective, 2008 - 217 pages (see p.48) ; Le Figaro , Gbagbo, l'homme qui voulait rester roi, 11 April 2011, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ Socialist International, SI Presidium addresses situation in Côte d'Ivoire, 19 March 2011, [url](#)

³⁰¹ Idea, Gender Quotas Database – Côte d'Ivoire, 11 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁰² Fpi, Statuts et Règlement Intérieure, n.d., art. 25-43, pp. 8-13, [url](#) , art. 25-43 , pp. 8-13.

³⁰³ Fpi, Statuts et Règlement Intérieure, n.d., art. 17-24, pp.7-8,, [url](#) , art. 17-24, pp.7-8.

³⁰⁴ Courrier international, Notre Voie, n.d.; Banks A.S., Day A.J., Muller T.C., Political Handbook of the World 1998, Palgrave MacMillan UK, 1998, [url](#), p. 232.

³⁰⁵ Ike Udogu E., Leadership and the Problem of Electoral Democracy in Africa – Case Studies and Therotical Solutions, 11 November 2016, [url](#), p. 81.

³⁰⁶ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018 – Côte d'Ivoire profile, 2018, [url](#)

³⁰⁷ Atoo.ci, De boycott en boycott des élections, la frange Gbagbo du FPI exaspère en Côte d'Ivoire, 7 January 2018, [url](#); RFI Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : Aboudramane Sangaré, fidèle de Laurent gbagbo, est décédé, 3 November 2018, [url](#)

³⁰⁸ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : Gbagbo contre Gbagbo au FPI, 18 November 2018, [url](#); 2CM Info, Fpi décision du président Laurent Gbagbo, 20 November 2019, [url](#)

³⁰⁹ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: l'opposition lance une nouvelle coalition, 21 April 2017, [url](#)

³¹⁰ Peace Insight, Ivory Coast: Key People and Parties, n.d., [url](#)

³¹¹ Bloomberg, Ivory Coast Chooses Parliament as Opposition Ends Boycott, 28 December 2016, [url](#)

³¹² Bloomberg, Ivory Coast Chooses Parliament as Opposition Ends Boycott, 28 December 2016, [url](#)

The GOR has boycotted parliamentary and local elections since the 2010-2011 crisis and refused to recognise N'Guessan as the FPI's leader.³¹³ The hardliner FPI has demanded Gbagbo's release before it will consider going to elections.³¹⁴ Thus many FPI's supporters continue boycotting the elections.³¹⁵

Despite N'Guessan's side attempts for a reconciliation of the party³¹⁶, the dissident wing of FPI, during its last congress in August 2018, appointed Laurent Gbagbo, currently in conditional release³¹⁷, as its leader.³¹⁸ He was elected with 97.5 % of ballots and there were 5 325 voters.³¹⁹ The National Secretary for Communication declared to AFP: 'We are satisfied [...] The Congress allowed us to appreciate the vitality of the party and it shows that Laurent Gbagbo remains the cornerstone of our party.'³²⁰

Meanwhile N'Guessan was re-elected by the congress, held on 27-28 July 2018, head of the official FPI, for a five-year term.³²¹

After the break between Ouattara and Bédié, formalised on 9 August 2018 by the announcement of the withdrawal of PDCI from the unified party³²², the possibility of an alliance between N'Guessan's FPI and the PDCI opened up.³²³

3.2.1.7 *Mouvement des Forces d'avenir* [Mouvement of the Future Forces] (MFA)

The MFA is a political party founded by Anky Kobena. In 2005, MFA, alongside with RDR, PDCI and UDPCI, founded the RHDP coalition.³²⁴ After the *Appel de Daoukro* in 2014, the MFA faced an internal crisis between Kobena, who was against the *appel* and Anzouma Moutayé who supported it, which led to a split of the party.³²⁵

In an extraordinary party congress, Kobena was replaced by Moutayé as President of MFA and, in the 2015 presidential election, the MFA supported Ouattara's candidacy.³²⁶

The MFA was affected by another crisis in 2017 when the *bureau politique* of the party suspended Moutayé and appointed Ouattara Siaka as President *ad interim*.³²⁷ Ouattara Siaka was elected by acclamation by the extraordinary congress on 25 March 2018.³²⁸ Moutayé appealed to the judge in order to obtain the annulment of the decision of the *bureau politique* and the election of Ouattara Siaka. The judge of first instance stated that the appeal was not well founded.³²⁹ However President Alassane Ouattara and then Prime Minister Amadou Gon recognise Moutayé as President of MFA.³³⁰

New tensions rose within the party in April 2018 when Siaka Ouattara subscribed the agreement for the creation of the unified party RHDP.³³¹ Moutayé's faction refused to join the RHDP and associated

³¹³ Reuters, Faction of Gbagbo's party calls for Ivorian election boycott, 19 August 2015, [url](#)

³¹⁴ Reuters, Gbagbo's FPI picks presidential hopeful after years of boycotts, 9 August 2015, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018 – Côte d'Ivoire profile, 2018, [url](#)

³¹⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung, Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, - Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, 2018, [url](#)

³¹⁶ Afrique-sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : FPI, enfin la paix entre Affi N'Guessan et Sangaré ?, 26 September 2017, [url](#)

³¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Laurent Gbagbo at Charles Blé Goudé restant en détention, 18 January 2019, [url](#) ,

³¹⁸ Africanews.fr, Côte d'Ivoire : Laurent Gbagbo élu chef de l'aile dissidente du FPI, 5 August 2018, [url](#)

³¹⁹ Le Figaro, Côte d'Ivoire : Laurent Gbagbo élu chef de l'aile dissidente de son ancien parti, 6 August 2018, [url](#)

³²⁰ APR News, Côte d'Ivoire : Laurent Gbagbo élu chef de l'aile dissidente du FPI, 4 August 2018, [url](#)

³²¹ Africanews.fr, Côte d'Ivoire : Pascal Affi N'Guessan réélu à la tête du parti du FPI, toujours divisé, 29 July 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Affi N'Guessan revendique toute la légitimité au FPI, 13 January 2019 [url](#)

³²² France24, Côte d'Ivoire, Côte d'Ivoire : entre Ouattara et Bédié, le torchon brûle... de nouveau, 10 August 2018, [url](#)

³²³ Afrique-sur7, Côte d'Ivoire : alliance PDCI - FPI, Bédié confirme la possibilité, 11 August 2018, [url](#)

³²⁴ Zina O. « Le caillou a-t-il été retiré du soulier de la République ? Réconciliation nationale et réformes constitutionnelles en Côte d'Ivoire, 2017, [url](#), pp. 25-29, 33.

³²⁵ Educariere.ci, Côte d'Ivoire: Anzoumana Moutayé élu nouveau président du MFA, 13 April 2015, [url](#)

³²⁶ Jeune Afrique, Présidentielle en Côte d'Ivoire: 10 candidatures validés par la Cour constitutionnelle, 9 September 2015, [url](#)

³²⁷ Fratmat.info, MFA: Anzoumana Mutayé suspendu de ses fonctions, 26 August 2017, [url](#)

³²⁸ Abidjan.net, Congrès extraordinaire du Mfa: Siaka Ouattara élu nouveau président par acclamation, 27 March 2018, [url](#)

³²⁹ Abidjan.net, Mfa/ Les 2 décisions de justice qui ont mis fin à la crise, 29 March 2018, [url](#)

³³⁰ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: Moutaye reconnu comme président du MFA, 26 April 2018, [url](#)

³³¹ Afrique sur 7, CIV/ Parti unifié: la signature de Siaka Ouattara contestée au MFA, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

with the camp of Anaky Kobena.³³² In October 2018, Moutayè and Kobena participate in the extraordinary congress of PDCI with other opposition parties leaders.³³³

3.2.1.8 Congrès panafricain des jeunes patriotes [Young Patriots Pan-African Congress] (COJEP)

The COJEP as the *Congrès panafricain des jeunes patriotes* [Pan-African Congress of Young Patriots] (COJEP) was founded by Charles Blé Goudé in 2011.³³⁴ In 2015, it turned into a political party and became the *Congrès panafricain pour la justice et l'égalité des peuples* [Pan-African Congress for Justice and People's Equality] (COJEP).³³⁵

On 2 March 2019, the general assembly of the COJEP was held in Yopoung. Blé Goudé, the President of the party, intervened by telephone and confirmed the political support of the COJEP to former President Laurent Gbagbo.³³⁶

3.2.1.9 The composition of the National Assembly

The legislative election in 2016 results shaped the composition of the National Assembly as follows³³⁷:

Party	Seats	Votes	%
RHDP	167	1 019 057	56.26
Independents	76	780 629	38.5
UDPCI	6	60 566	2.99
FPI	3	118 130	3
UPCI	3	20 806	1.03
Other parties	0	28 273	1.39

According to the new Constitution, members of the National Assembly were elected on 18 December 2016 for an exceptional four-year term³³⁸ (normally the term is five years³³⁹), so that the presidential election in 2020 and the start of the new legislature will coincide.³⁴⁰

3.2.2 Senatorial election

The institution was introduced in the new Constitution in 2016 and it exercises legislative power along with the National Assembly.³⁴¹ According to Article 87 of the Ivorian Constitution: 'The Senate ensures the representation of territorial communities and of Ivorians established outside of Côte d'Ivoire. Senators are elected, for two thirds, by indirect universal suffrage. One third of the senators is

³³² L'Infodrome, Situation politique: Ouattara et Bédié se partagent des partis politique, 23 August 2018, [url](#)

³³³ Afrique sur 7, Les opposants de Ouattara se réunissent au congrès du parti de Bédié, [url](#)

³³⁴ AFP, « Côte d'Ivoire : Blé Goudé promet à Ouattara une opposition « non armée », Jeune Afrique, 17 July 2011, [url](#)

³³⁵ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: le mouvement de Blé Goudé deviant un parti politique, 17 August 2018, [url](#)

³³⁶ Ivoire Soir, Blé Goudé parle: « Je ne suis pas l'ami de Gbagbo mais son élève, l'élève de Messi peut devenir Messi » 8 March 2019, [url](#)

³³⁷ CEI, Election deputes a l'Assemblée Nationale, Scrutin du 18 Decembre 2016, Resultat National, , [url](#)

³³⁸ Security Council UN, Finale progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 31 January 2017, [url](#), p.3.

³³⁹ Republique de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 DU 8 NOVEMBRE 2016 portant Constitution de la Republique de Côte d'Ivoire art. 86, [url](#)

³⁴⁰ Presidential Power, Côte d'Ivoire's Senate Elections: The Next Move on the 2020 Elections Chessboard, 9 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁴¹ Republique de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 DU 8 NOVEMBRE 2016 portant Constitution de la Republique de Côte d'Ivoire art. 86, [url](#)

appointed by the President of the Republic among Ivorians recognised for their expertise and proven competence in the political, administrative, economic, scientific, cultural, sports, professional and social fields.³⁴²

Senatorial elections were held on 24 March 2018.³⁴³ The turnout was at 63.9 %.³⁴⁴ The opposition boycotted the election mainly due to its lack of confidence in the *Commission électorale indépendante* (CEI). Moreover, the Senate's voters were the local and regional councillors elected in the 2013 boycotted elections.³⁴⁵ The RHDP coalition won 50 seats while 16 independent candidates were elected.³⁴⁶ Jeannot Ahoussou-Kouadio (PDCI) was appointed President of the Senate.³⁴⁷

President Ouattara, according to the Constitution, has to appoint 33 senators (of the 99). However, due to the rivalries between RDR and PDCI, Ouattara refused to nominate the senators and transferred the Senate's powers to the National Assembly.³⁴⁸

Despite the provisions included in the Constitution³⁴⁹, regarding gender equality and the promotion of women's political rights, only 8 women were elected.³⁵⁰

The POECI judged the election as fair and satisfying.³⁵¹ The security situation of the elections did not raise concerns.³⁵² However, the POECI along with the opposition³⁵³, called for a reform of the CEI in order to limit the governmental influence on it.³⁵⁴

3.2.3 National reconciliation

The post-electoral crisis was triggered by Gbagbo's refusal to cede power to Ouattara, after the 2010 presidential elections.³⁵⁵ In 5 months (December 2010 – April 2011)³⁵⁶, the conflict resulted in more than 3 000 people killed, more than 150 women raped (see also [Section 5.3.1](#) on sexual violence), approximately one million internally displaced people (IDPS) and 200 000 Ivorian refugees in the neighbouring countries.³⁵⁷ Armed forces from both Gbagbo's and Ouattara's side attacked civilians because of their political, ethnical and religious affiliations.³⁵⁸

³⁴² République de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 DU 8 NOVEMBRE 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire art. 87 [url](#)

³⁴³ Portail officiel du gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Politique nationale: les élections sénatoriales en Côte d'Ivoire, le 24 Mars, [url](#)

³⁴⁴ Jeune Afrique, Sénatoriales en Côte d'Ivoire : les enseignements de la percée des « indépendants », 25 March 2018, [url](#)

³⁴⁵ Presidential Power, Côte d'Ivoire's Senate Elections: The Next Move on the 2020 Elections Chessboard, 9 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁴⁶ CEI, Répartition de élus par Groupement/parti politique et sexe, scrutin du 24 mars 2018, [url](#)

³⁴⁷ Presidential Power, Côte d'Ivoire's Senate Elections: The Next Move on the 2020 Elections Chessboard, 9 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁴⁸ Connection Ivoirienne, Côte d'Ivoire: Le sénat victime de la guerre politique RDR/PDCI (par Safiatou Ouattara), 9 November 2019, [url](#)

³⁴⁹ République de Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 DU 8 NOVEMBRE 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire – Preamble, art. 36-37, [url](#)

³⁵⁰ APR News, Côte d'Ivoire: 8 femmes et 58 hommes ont été élus lors des élections sénatoriales, n.d.; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Côte d'Ivoire Assemblée Nationale (National Assembly), 15 June 2018, [url](#)

³⁵¹ All Africa, Côte d'Ivoire: Élections sénatoriales 2018 - La Poeci juge le scrutin satisfaisant, 26 March 2018, [url](#)

³⁵² Apa news, Sénatoriales ivoiriennes: 63,92% de taux de participation à la mi-journée, 24 March 2018, [url](#)

³⁵³ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : la Commission électorale au centre des critiques à la veille des sénatoriales, 19 March 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁴ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : « Il faut un nouveau consensus » sur la Commission électorale indépendante, 5 March 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁵ Reuters, Gbagbo faces charges of crimes against humanity: ICC, 30 November 2011, [url](#)

³⁵⁶ BBC, Ivory Coast Profile – Timeline, 10 January 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ HRW, Côte d'Ivoire's Forgotten Victims, 23 February 2018, [url](#) ; UNHCR Global Report 2011, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#), p. 115; Ocha, Côte d'Ivoire – Humanitarian crisis . Situation report n. 21, p.1, 15 April 2011, [url](#); The Carter Center, International Election Observation Mission to Côte d'Ivoire – Final Report – 2010 Presidential Elections and 2011 Legislative Elections, n.d., [url](#) p.8

³⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch, Côte d'Ivoire: Justice for 2010-11 Crimes Stagnates, 8 May 2018, [url](#)

After the defeat and arrest of Gbagbo, a lot of FPI members went into exile and Gbagbo's assets' were frozen.³⁵⁹ Furthermore, the UN Council imposed sanctions against Gbagbo and his inner circle.³⁶⁰

Reconciliation after the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis is still a concern in Côte d'Ivoire.³⁶¹ On September 2011, Ouattara set up the *Commission Dialogue, Vérité et Réconciliation* [Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission] (CDVR).³⁶² The Commission, chaired by former Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny, ended its work in 2014 and issued a final report with its conclusions and proposals, in particular: implementation of the 1998 rural land tenure law, improvement of the situation of women, sensitisation of the population on nationality and citizenship, creation of a modern and well-organised army, introduction of a 'national day of remembrance and forgiveness' and implementation of a general amnesty.³⁶³

However, according to the Brussels-based research group GRIP (Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security), the Commission failed in its mission to promote reconciliation and social cohesion.³⁶⁴ This was mainly due to its lack of independence from the presidency and ill-defined powers.³⁶⁵ The final report of 2014 was published by the government only in 2016³⁶⁶, but, according to Ivorian media, some of its contents have reportedly been manipulated.³⁶⁷ Some of its original fragments were disclosed by Ivorian news sources in 2018.³⁶⁸

In 2015, an Ivorian court sentenced Gbagbo's wife, Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, to 20 years of imprisonment for undermining state security, disturbing public order and organising armed groups.³⁶⁹

On 24 March 2015, Ouattara created the *Commission Nationale pour la Réconciliation et l'Indemnisation des Victimes* [National Commission for the Reconciliation and Indemnification of Victims] (CONARIV) and appointed bishop Paul Siméon Ahouanan as chairman.³⁷⁰ The new body was created in order to replace the CDVR and to submit a single list of victims (amounting to 316 954) and the proposal of financial compensation for the victims to President Ouattara.³⁷¹ On 2 May 2018, the Minister of Solidarity, Mariatou Koné declared that CFA 3.8 billion had been distributed to 4 500 victims of the crisis who were entitled to compensation.³⁷²

The President of the CONARIV encouraged Ouattara to keep on with the dialogue with the opposition and the process of reconciliation, mainly by providing provisional release of detainees and by granting presidential pardon or amnesty. Furthermore, he recommended the resolution of pending processes

³⁵⁹ BBC News, Millions in Laurent Gbagbo assets frozen in Switzerland, 5 May 2011, [url](#)

³⁶⁰ Reuters, U.N. Council slaps sanctions on Ivory Coast's Gbagbo, 30 March 2011, [url](#)

³⁶¹ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: la réconciliation en souffrance, 30 May 2018, [url](#)

³⁶² Le Monde, Ouattara installe une commission de réconciliation en Côte d'Ivoire, 28 September 2011, [url](#), .

³⁶³ Côte d'Ivoire, CDVR, Résumé de rapport finale, October 2016, [url](#), pp. 10-21; IHEJ (Institut des Hautes Etudes sur la Justice), La Commission Dialogue Vérité et Réconciliation ivoirienne: une belle coquille vide?, 5 October 2015, [url](#)

³⁶⁴ GRIP, Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire: the reconciliation never happened, 20 June 2015, [url](#).

³⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2012 – Côte d'Ivoire – Events of 2011, n.d., [url](#); Piccolino G., Peacebuilding and statebuilding in post-2011 Côte d'Ivoire : A victor's peace ?, July 2018 [url](#)

³⁶⁶ Côte d'Ivoire, Commission dialogue, verite et reconciliation, rapport final, December 2014, [url](#)

³⁶⁷ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : CDVR, le rapport authentique de Banny (enfin) dévoilé, 5 June 2018, [url](#), .

³⁶⁸ Ivoire Soir, Exclusif/Côte d'Ivoire reconciliation: Voici le rapport cache de Banny (1ère partie), 2 June 2018, [url](#); Ivoire Soir, Rapport caché de Banny (fin) : Ces recommandations de la CDVR que Ouattara a refusé d'appliquer, 8 June 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : CDVR, le rapport authentique de Banny (enfin) dévoilé, 5 June 2018, [url](#); Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Banny insiste, «les résultats de la CDVR doivent être mis à la disposition des ivoiriens», 20 August 2018, [url](#); L'Infodrome, Réconciliation nationale: Banny réclame la publication du travail de la Cdvr, 18 August 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁹ BBC, Ivory Coast's former first lady Simone Gbagbo jailed, 10 March 2015, [url](#), .

³⁷⁰ Republique de Côte d'Ivoire, Communiqué de la Présidence de la République, 24 March 2015, [url](#).

³⁷¹ Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Indemnisation des victimes des crises, la liste consolidée de la CONARIV disponible, 316954 dossiers retenus sur 874056, 19 April 2016, [url](#)

³⁷² Portail Officiel du Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Indemnisation des victimes des crises: 3.8 milliards de FCFA distribues globalement aux ayants droit, 3 May 2018, [url](#).

for persons detained in connection with the post-elections crisis and major efforts to encourage the return of Ivorians in exile.³⁷³

In order to prosecute the authors of the atrocities during the crisis, President Ouattara created the *Commission nationale d'enquête* [National Commission of Inquiry] (CNE)³⁷⁴ and the *Cellule spéciale d'enquête et d'instruction* [Special Inquiry and Instruction cell] (CSEI).³⁷⁵ The latter has charged more than 150 people, among Gbagbo and Ouattara forces, for so-called blood crimes, but very few proceedings have reached the trial phase.³⁷⁶

3.2.4 Situation of Gbagbo supporters

Political prisoners of the post-electoral crisis

The main issue concerning the reconciliation is linked to the political prisoners and the concept of 'victor's justice'.³⁷⁷ The perception of victor's justice is highlighted by the prosecution of Gbagbo's supporters, accused of crimes against the state, by the one-side prosecution of ICC, and on the other hand the substantial impunity of pro-Ouattara forces.³⁷⁸ Indeed the investigation of 20 pro-Ouattara soldiers, accused of atrocities, did not lead to an actual incrimination, even though they were formally charged by the CSEI.³⁷⁹

On 31 December 2015, Ouattara announced a presidential pardon to release or reduce the sentences of 3 100 detainees, including political personalities from the FPI, even though he rejected the definition of 'political prisoners'.³⁸⁰

There is no concordance on the figures of political prisoners in detention. The list issued in 2014 by the *Association des Femmes et Familles des Détenus d'Opinion de Côte d'Ivoire* [Political Prisoners' Wives and Families Association] (AFFDO-CI) to the *Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme de Côte d'Ivoire* [Ivorian Human Right Commission] (CNDHCI) stated that there were more than 400.³⁸¹

In January 2016, there were reportedly 311 political prisoners, most of them without conviction. On 15 January 2016, 85 of them received pardon.³⁸² In March 2016, an FPI report noted that 241 militants of the FPI (192 civilians and 49 militaries) were still in prison.³⁸³

³⁷³ UN Security Council, Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 31 March 2016, [url](#), p.1

³⁷⁴ Portail Officiel du Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Commission Nationale d'Enquete: la President annonce le lancement des activies, 11 November 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Ouattara met en place une Commission nationale d'enquete, 16 June 2011, [url](#)

³⁷⁵ FIDH, Côte d'Ivoire / crise post-électorale: la Cellule speciale d'enquête reconduite, 14 January 2018, [url](#)

³⁷⁶ AI, Côte d'Ivoire: No Amnesty for Serious Crimes of 2010-11 Crisis, 7 August 2018, [url](#); International Center for Transitional Justice, Disappointed Hope, Judicial Handling of Post-Election Violence in Côte d'Ivoire, April 2016, [url](#)

³⁷⁷ UN Security Council, Thirty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 7 May 2015, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World – Côte d'Ivoire 2015, , [url](#); Piccolino G., Peacebuilding and statebuilding in post-2011 Côte d'Ivoire : A victor's peace ? July 2018, [url](#)

³⁷⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World – Côte d'Ivoire 2015, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World – Côte d'Ivoire, 2016, [url](#) ; , Liberation, A Duékoué, l'impunité des pro-Ouattara, 16 July 2014, [url](#); World Politics Review, Gbagbo's Trial Is The Latest Sign of Victor's Justice in Côte d'Ivoire, 4 May 2016, [url](#)

³⁷⁹ ISS, Can Gbagbo's ICC trial quench Côte d'Ivoire's thirst for justice?, 9 March 2016, [url](#)

³⁸⁰ Fondation Hirondelle, Côte d'Ivoire's Prisoners of the New Regime, 13 April 2016 [url](#)

³⁸¹ Le Débat Ivoirien, Côte d'Ivoire: La Mort d'un Détenu politique dans la Parison d'Abidjan Annonce-T-Elle le Début d'un Processus? 6 December 2015, [url](#)

³⁸² Le Monde, Qui sont les 300 prisonniers politiques de Côte d'Ivoire?, 27 January 2016, [url](#); CORI (Country of Origin Recherche and Information), Côte d'Ivoire Issue: The treatment of Ivorian Popular Front (FPI)/ Gbagbo supporters in Côte d'Ivoire by both state and no-state actors, incidente of arrest and/or violence against FPI/Gbagbo supporters in Côte d'Ivoire; the willingness and ability of the State to protect FPI/Gbagbo supporters in Côte d'Ivoire , 17 August 2016, [url](#) pp.12-13.

³⁸³ FPI, RAPPORT N° 2-2016: Detenus Politiques en Côte d'Ivoire, 30 March 2016, [url](#)

Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated that 200 Gbagbo-supporters, arrested in 2011, were still in prison in 2017 awaiting trial.³⁸⁴ In April 2018, the AFFDO-CI declared that, 7 years after the end of the post-electoral crisis, 120 out of 300 people were convicted while 120 were in pre-trial detention³⁸⁵, although the maximum term of pre-trial detention in Côte d'Ivoire is 18 months.³⁸⁶

The condition of detention of Gbagbo-supporters was defined as inhuman by the President of the *Association des femmes et familles de détenus d'opinion* (AFFDO-CI), Désirée Douati, who pointed out that political prisoners are deprived of the right to medical assistance.³⁸⁷ In June 2017, two detainees died in *Maison d'arrêt et de correction d'Abidjan* (MACA).³⁸⁸

Government response to opposition activities

Although both the 2000 and 2016 Ivorian Constitutions guarantee freedom of association, assembly and peaceful demonstration³⁸⁹, freedom of expression of thought and freedom of expression³⁹⁰, the government intervened several times in order to limit the protest of the opposition.³⁹¹

In 2015, 19 meetings of opposition parties, trade unions and students associations were banned or dispersed.³⁹²

The number of arrests of opponents increased in the months before the presidential election in 2015.³⁹³ In January 2015, 32 Gbagbo-supporters were arrested for the attack at the Grabo military check point, in which two soldiers were killed.³⁹⁴ Relatives of the detainees stated that their arrest was due to their political support to the former regime.³⁹⁵ One of the arrested people, Kouya Gnepa Eric, was tortured and died in prison.³⁹⁶

On the eve of the presidential election about 50 people were arrested.³⁹⁷ For instance, on 13 September 2015, Samba David, leader of the opposition platform *Coalition des indignés*, was arrested after the protests erupted against the validation of the candidacy of Ouattara and was charged with disruption of public order.³⁹⁸ On 2 October 2015, he was convicted to six months imprisonment.³⁹⁹ After serving the punishment he was kept in prison without conviction, charged with endangering the State, unauthorised unarmed march and wilful destruction of objects.⁴⁰⁰ He was released on July 2018 due to his health condition after 34 months in prison.⁴⁰¹

³⁸⁴ HRW, World Report 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d. [url](#); Amnesty International, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

³⁸⁵ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: des familles de détenus d'opinion lancent un cri d'alarme, 16 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁸⁶ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 60-366 du 14 Novembre 1960 portant Code de Procédure Penale, art. 138, [url](#) p. 47.

³⁸⁷ Le Figaro, Côte d'Ivoire: décès d'un détenu pro-Gbagbo, 29 June 2017, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: décès à la Maca d'un deuxième détenu pro-Gbagbo en un mois, 30 June 2017, [url](#)

³⁸⁹ Côte d'Ivoire Loi N° 2000-513 du 1er Aout 2000 Portant Constitution de la Côte d'Ivoire, art. 11, [url](#) p.3; Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 DU 8 NOVEMBRE 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire 2016 art. 20, [url](#) p.3.

³⁹⁰ Côte d'Ivoire Loi N° 2000-513 Du 1er Aout 2000 Portant Constitution de la Côte d'Ivoire, artt. 9-10, [url](#) p.3; Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2016-886 DU 8 NOVEMBRE 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire 2016 art. 19, [url](#) p.3.

³⁹¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2016 – Côte d'Ivoire, 23 August 2016, [url](#)

³⁹² UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 8 December 2015, [url](#)

³⁹³ Wilane Paté, Côte d'Ivoire's Prisoners of the New Regime, JusticeInfo.Net, 13 April 2016, [url](#)

³⁹⁴ Le Monde, Qui sont les 300 prisonniers politiques de Côte d'Ivoire?, 28 January 2016, [url](#); Reuters, Gunmen kill two soldiers in attack on Ivory Coast border town, 10 January 2015, [url](#)

³⁹⁵ Le Monde, Qui sont les 300 prisonniers politiques de Côte d'Ivoire?, 28 January 2016, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ L'Infodrome, Maca: Un pro-Gbagbo est mort, 7 December 2015, [url](#)

³⁹⁷ La Croix, Côte d'Ivoire, arrestations dans l'opposition avant la présidentielle, 22 October 2015, [url](#)

³⁹⁸ Ivoire Business, Côte d'Ivoire : arrestation de Samba David, membre du directoire de la CNC, 14 September 2015, [url](#)

³⁹⁹ Abidjan.net, Justice – 16 mois après, Samba David toujours à la MACA, reproches et explications dévoilés, 28 February 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁰ The world News, Après 3 ans de détention : Samba David en liberté provisoire, 25 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁰¹ L'Infodrome, Justice : Samba David libéré après 3 ans de détention, 25 July 2018, [url](#); PCF, En Côte d'Ivoire Samba David enfin libéré, 27 July 2018, [url](#)

On 26 May 2016, three opposition politicians were sentenced to 30 months of imprisonment for an unauthorised demonstration.⁴⁰²

On 15 July 2016, three FPI militants, Prospère Djandou, Jean Léopold Messihi and Ange Patrick Djoman Gbata, were arrested in Yopougon for collecting signatures for Gbagbo's release. They were charged with public order offences.⁴⁰³ Amnesty International considered the arrest and the trial, which began on 25 July 2016, illegal and a violation of the rights included both in the Ivorian Constitution and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).⁴⁰⁴ The three FPI activists were released two weeks after the arrest.⁴⁰⁵

The interventions of the government on the freedom of association, organisation, assembly and expression, increased in particular during the referendum campaign in 2016.⁴⁰⁶

In October 2016, a march of the opposition was repressed by the police.⁴⁰⁷ The leaders of the opposition, including Sangaré, were arrested with around 20 other opposition supporters.⁴⁰⁸

On 17 March 2018, a meeting of the opposition was dispersed by the police in the west of Abidjan. The participants, supporters of the EDS coalition, claimed for the reform of the CEI.⁴⁰⁹

On 22 March 2018, two days before the senatorial elections, another meeting of the opposition was repressed in Abidjan, after clashes between protesters belonging to the FPI and parties of the EDS coalition and the police.⁴¹⁰ Some participants were arrested and released after two weeks of imprisonment, but Jean Gervais Tchédé, the President of the organisational committee of the meeting and spokesman of EDS, remained in detention.⁴¹¹ His detention was due to an arrest warrant issued in March 2013 in which he was accused of genocide, looting, financing of armed groups, rape and endangering state security.⁴¹²

The *Fédération étudiante et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire* [Students' Union of Côte d'Ivoire] (FESCI), is a violent and powerful student's union, close to former President Gbagbo and reportedly responsible for a number of violent attacks, such as against political opponents.⁴¹³ Sources report that several strikes and meetings of the organisation were repressed and dispersed, and militants were arrested. The FESCI is involved in numerous violent confrontations with the police.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰² HRW, World Report 2018 Côte d'Ivoire – Events of 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁰³ L'Infodrome, Pétition pour la libération de Laurent Gbagbo: Amnesty international exige la libération des 3 pro-Gbagbo arrêtés 28 July 2016, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: l'atteinte à la liberté d'expression de retour, 22 July 2018, [url](#), .

⁴⁰⁴ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: Amnesty International dénonce la détention de pro-Gbagbo, 25 July 2018, [url](#); AI, Côte d'Ivoire. Les autorités doivent abandonner les poursuites contre trois militants de l'opposition, 24 July 2016, [url](#), .

⁴⁰⁵ AI, Report 2016/17 – Côte d'Ivoire – Freedoms of association and assembly, 22 February 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁶ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 12 July 2017, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2017, Events of 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ RFI, Constitution ivoirienne: arrestations d'opposants lors d'une manifestation, 20 October 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁸ Reuters, Ivory Coast police crack down on marche against new constitution, 20 October 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁹ APA News, Côte d'Ivoire: un meeting de l'opposition disperse par la police à l'Ouest d'Abidjan, 17 March 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁰ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: une manifestation de l'opposition dispersée à Abidjan, 22 March 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹¹ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : pourquoi Jean Gervais Tchédé a été maintenu en détention, 9 April 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹² APR, Côte d'Ivoire : La plateforme Eds dénonce la détention de Tchédé Jean Gervais , 10 April 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹³ HRW, World Report 2008 – Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#); Diarassouba I., Violence Syndicale Etudiante Dans Les Universités Publiques De Côte d'Ivoire: Perceptions et Enjeux, March 2017, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire: la violence de la Fesci filmée par des caméras cachées, 20 July 2016, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire – Fulgence Assi: "La Fesci est un esprit, on ne peut ni le supprimer ni le dissoudre", 3 April 2015, [url](#)

⁴¹⁴ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Après l'interpellation de Fulgence Assi de la Fesci, la tension monte entre police et étudiants, 14 April 2016, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: nouvelles violences à l'université Houphouët de Cocody à Abidjan, 19 July 2016, [url](#); Le Monde, Violents affrontements entre étudiants et policiers à l'université d'Abidjan, 19 July 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: des poursuites engagées contre un leader étudiant après des affrontements à Abidjan, 14 September 2017, [url](#); AIP, Côte d'Ivoire/ La FESCI annonce des arrestations d'étudiants grévistes, 29 May 2018, [url](#); APA News, La police disperse une manifestation d'étudiants à Abidjan, 11 September 2018, [url](#); APR, Côte d'Ivoire: Etudiants et policiers s'affrontent, 11 September 2018, [url](#)

However according to HRW, the arbitrary arrest's rate decreased from 2015 to 2017 but investigations against the authors of the abuses were rare.⁴¹⁵

The scope of the political prisoners issue also involved the freedom of press. In 2017, the newspapers *La Voie Originale* and *LG Infos* (close to FPI – GOR), were suspended.⁴¹⁶ These newspapers had affirmed the existence of political prisoners still detained in Côte d'Ivoire, in glaring contradiction to the official position of the Ivorian government (President Ouattara had stated previously that no one was detained for his political opinion). Hence the suspension of the cited newspapers by the Conseil National de la Presse [National Press Council].⁴¹⁷

Michel Gbagbo, son of former President Laurent Gbagbo, and Laurent Despas, Director of the information site Koaci.com, were convicted for divulgation of fake news regarding political prisoners: the former has been sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and to the payment of CFA 10 million, the latter to the payment of CFA 500 000.⁴¹⁸

The 2018 amnesty

In order to improve the reconciliation process, President Ouattara, on Monday 6 August 2018, signed an Amnesty Ordinance for Simone Ehivet Gbagbo and another 800 Ivorian citizens.⁴¹⁹ The citizens had been prosecuted or condemned for crimes related to the post-electoral crisis, and included those who live in exile or had already been released provisionally.⁴²⁰ The latter, according to Ouattara, concerned about 500 people.⁴²¹

On 8 August 2018, the first political prisoners were released based on the amnesty, among whom were two important figures of the former Gbagbo regime: Assoa Adou, former Minister of Construction and Moïse Lida Kouassi, former Defence Minister., Jean Gervais Tchédidé, spokesman of the EDS, was also among those released.⁴²²

Ouattara's ordinance of amnesty was criticised by human rights organisations. HRW, Amnesty International, LIDHO and eight more NGOs⁴²³ issued a statement in which they underlined that Ivorian judges: '... have indicted far more than 60 people for crimes against humanity and war crimes [...] including high-level military and political leaders from both sides of the conflict. It is now unclear who among these indictees will ultimately face justice.'⁴²⁴

Ouattara expressly declared that the amnesty will not apply to 60 military officials and members of armed groups who committed international crimes.⁴²⁵

⁴¹⁵ HRW, World Report – Côte d'Ivoire 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: deux journaux d'opposition suspendus, 15 December 2017, [url](#)

⁴¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: deux journaux d'opposition suspendus, 15 December 2017, [url](#); AI, Côte d'Ivoire : a fragile human rights situation, October 2018, [url](#), p. 14.

⁴¹⁸ VOA Afrique, Michel Gbagbo condamné à 6 mois de prison pour "fausses nouvelles" en Côte d'Ivoire, 27 January 2018, [url](#)

⁴¹⁹ Guardian (the), Ivory Coast president pardons 800 people including ex-first lady, 7 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴²⁰ Bloomberg, Update1-Ivory Coast's Ouattara grants amnesty to wife of ex-leader Gbagbo, 7 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴²¹ France24, Ivory Coast announces amnesty for former first lady Simone Gbagbo, 8 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴²² Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: un mois après l'amnistie, les exilés hésitent toujours à rentrer, 13 September 2018, [url](#); All Africa, Côte d'Ivoire: Simone Gbagbo Gets Amnesty With Hundreds of Others, 7 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴²³ The signatories of the statement are: Amnesty International, Ligue Ivoirienne des droits de l'Homme (LIDHO), Mouvement ivoirien des droits humains (MIDH), Action pour la protection des droits humains en Côte d'Ivoire (APDH), Réseau acteurs ivoiriens des droits humains (RAIDH), Coalition ivoirienne des défenseurs des droits humains (CIDDH), Club Union Africaine, Forum de la société civile ouest-africain Côte d'Ivoire (FOSCAO-CI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), Fédération internationale des droit de l'Homme (FIDH).

⁴²⁴ AI, Côte d'Ivoire: No Amnesty for Serious Crimes of 2010-11 Crisis, 7 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴²⁵ ICTJ, President Ouattara's Amnesty: Promoting Political Reconciliation to the Detriment of Victim's Rights and Accountability, 19 September 2018, [url](#)

The ordinance of amnesty was welcomed by the majority of Ivorians and several political figures recognised it as an important step toward national reconciliation.⁴²⁶

Both parts of the FPI expressed their satisfaction after this announcement of the release of prisoners and wished that it will open the way to a wider reconciliation including the return from the ICC of Gbagbo and Blé Goudé.⁴²⁷

Return of refugees and the situation Gbagbo allies in exile

According to UNHCR, as of February 2019, the majority of Ivorian refugees are located in Liberia (9 097), Ghana (6 565) Guinea (3 597) and Togo (1 880).⁴²⁸

In general, an increase of voluntary returns has been registered. According to the UNHCR, thanks to the implemented measures aimed at encouraging the voluntary return of Ivorian refugees, 162 returns from Ghana and 333 from Guinea were registered in the first semester of 2018, while in 2017 the figures were significantly lower.⁴²⁹ The returnees from Liberia were stopped in 2014 due to the Ebola outbreak and returns were resumed in 2015.⁴³⁰

The ordinance of amnesty of August 2018 involves those Ivorians that took the way of exile after the defeat and the arrest of former President Gbagbo. After the proclamation of amnesty, several persons exiled in Ghana have returned to Côte d'Ivoire, such as the daughters of Gbagbo and some people close to Blé Goudé.⁴³¹

The *Congrès panafricain pour la justice et l'égalité des peuples* [Pan-African Congress for Justice and People's Equality] (COJEP), founded by Charles Blé Goudé and turned into a political party in 2015⁴³², stated that in order to grant a secure return of exiled pro-Gbagbo supporters, the ordinance of amnesty should be converted into an amnesty law.⁴³³

A month after the ordinance of amnesty in August 2018, 160 Ivorian refugees from Ghana and Togo had returned to Côte d'Ivoire.⁴³⁴

At the same time, the return of people living in exile is a key for the national reconciliation and one of the most important concerns for President Ouattara.⁴³⁵

The most influential members of Gbagbo's former government and high-ranked FPI members went into exile in Ghana.⁴³⁶ Between 2012 and 2016, the government of Ghana granted the extradition of pro-Gbagbo figures such as Charles Blé Goudé and lower profile Gbagbo exiled supporters. Since the election of the new President of Ghana in December 2016, the position of the Accra government concerning the extraditions has changed and these 'forced returns' have stopped.⁴³⁷

⁴²⁶ Atoo.cj, Unanime reconnaissance de la valeur de l'amnistie de Simone Gbagbo malgré quelques réserves, 8 August 2019, [url](#)

⁴²⁷ FPI, Déclaration du FPI, suite à la libération des prisonniers politiques, n.d., [url](#); Ivoirebusiness.net, Côte d'Ivoire: Déclaration de EDS, relative à l'ordonnance d'amnistie générale, 12 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴²⁸ UNHCR, Operational Portal Refugee Situations, Côte d'Ivoire, Voluntary Return of Ivorian Refugees, 31 January – 28 February 2018, [url](#)

⁴²⁹ UNHCR, Engagé, Bulletin semestriel du HCR Côte d'Ivoire, August 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁰ UNHCR, Ivorian returns resume from Liberia after Ebola outbreaks, 18 December 2015, [url](#)

⁴³¹ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : un mois après l'amnistie, les exilés hésitent toujours à rentrer, 13 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴³² RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: le mouvement de Blé Goudé déviant un parti politique, 17 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴³³ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: les exiles politiques réticents à revenir malgré l'amnistie, 28 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁴ *Fraternité Matin*, Après l'ordonnance d'amnistie: 160 exilés Ivoiriens sont rentrés du Ghana et du Togo, 5 September 2018, [url](#)

⁴³⁵ *Le Monde*, En Côte d'Ivoire, le retour symbolique de quatre réfugiés pro-Gbagbo, 1 July 2016, [url](#)

⁴³⁶ Arndt C., et al. Growth and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2016, [url](#), p. 336.

⁴³⁷ IFRI, Tensions entre le Ghana et la Côte d'Ivoire, Opposants ivoiriens à Accra et enjeux pétroliers à la frontière maritime, January 2018, [url](#); BBC, Charles Ble Goudé: Ghana extradites Ivory Coast Gbagbo ally, 18 January 2013, [url](#)

There had been a few remarkable voluntary returns of Gbagbo-allies from Ghana in the past years, such as those of Voho Sahi, former minister of Culture, Anne Gnahouret, former ambassador to Angola, Alain Dogou, former Minister of Defence, in 2014.⁴³⁸ On 30 June 2016, four Gbagbo's collaborators, Kadet Bertin, former Ministry of Defence, Watchard Kedjebo, a militia leader, Kacou Brou, one of the leaders of the FESCI and Franck Yaon, a Gbagbo bodyguard, voluntarily returned from Ghana.⁴³⁹

The government issued many warrants of arrests against figures close to former President Gbagbo. Examples of such cases are Justin Katina, former Minister of Budget, after being sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment alongside Laurent Gbagbo, former Prime minister Aké N'Gbo, and Désiré Dallo, former Minister of Economy, on 18 January 2018⁴⁴⁰; Hubert Oulaye who was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment⁴⁴¹, Assoa Adou who was sentenced in 2017 to 4 years imprisonment⁴⁴² and the bench warrants and the attempted arrest of Lia Bi Douayoua, former Minister of Communication.⁴⁴³

In January 2018, the President of the *Coordination des Ivoiriens exilés au Ghana*, Emile Guiriéoulou, former Gbagbo's Minister of the Interior, declared that a new audit of the 2010 elections was the preliminary and basic condition for the return of the pro-Gbagbo exiled, and he underlined the concerns regarding the risk of government reprisal against them.⁴⁴⁴

On 19 July 2018, an Ivorian governmental delegation led by Dieket Minata, director of the *Direction de l'Aide et de l'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Apatrides* of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, met Emile Guiriéoulou in Accra.⁴⁴⁵ During the talks, enshrined in the three-party talks amongst UNHCR, Ivorian Government and Ghanaian government, Emile Guiriéoulou underlined that without a true reconciliation there would not be return. He renewed his worries about the reliability of the assurances given by the Ivorian government.⁴⁴⁶

On 15 January 2019, the International Criminal Court (ICC) acquitted Laurent Gbagbo and his former minister for Youth Charles Blé Goudé from all charges of crime against humanity, including murder, rape and other inhumane acts or - in alternative - attempted murder, and persecution. Currently they are in conditional release.⁴⁴⁷ On 31 January 2019, Emile Guiriéoulou and other 50 Ivorian people living in exile returned in Cote d'Ivoire. Their voluntary return was arranged by the Ivorian and Ghanaian authorities along with UNHCR.⁴⁴⁸

⁴³⁸ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire – FPI: paroles d'anciens exilés, 15 May 2014, [url](#)

⁴³⁹ Le Monde, En Côte d'Ivoire, le retour symbolique de quatre réfugiés pro-Gbagbo, 1 July 2016, [url](#); Reuters, Aides to ousted Ivorian leader return home after five-year exile, 2 July 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁰ APR, Côte d'Ivoire: Le sort d'Aké N'Gbo et Désiré Dallo connu le 18 janvier, 27 December 2017, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : Justin Koné Katinan visé par un nouveau mandat d'arrêt international, 18 May 2018, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: un 3e mandat d'arrêt international pour de Justin Kone Katinan, 19 May 2018, [url](#); L'Infodrome, Condamnation à 20 ans de prison, mandat d'arrêt, Koné Katinan : « Nous ne marchandons, ni nos principes, ni nos convictions », 21 January 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴¹ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: vingt ans de prison pour Hubert Oulaye, ex-ministre de Gbagbo, 27 December 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁴² RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: l'ex-ministre Assoa Adou condamné à quatre ans d'emprisonnement, 19 July 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁴³ Le débat Ivoirien, Abidjan: Lia Bi Douayoua repend l'exil craignant une arrestation injustifiée; le pouvoir veut-il la réconciliation?, 7 March 2016, [url](#); Ivoire Business, Côte d'Ivoire/Scandale: Lia Bi Douayoua échappe à une arrestation, 7 March 2016, [url](#); Ivoire Business, Scandale/ Lia Bi DOUAYOYA depuis son exil : « Plus d'une centaine d'exilés sont morts au Ghana », 30 August 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁴ APR, Côte d'Ivoire: Les exilés posent des conditions pour leur retour, 4 January 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁵ AfricaNews, GHANA: Le ministre Emile Guiriéoulou Crache ses verites a une délégation du régime Ouattara venue négocier le retour volontaire des réfugiés ivoiriens, 19 July 2018, [url](#); Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Des émissaires du gouvernement rencontrent des pro-Gbagbo en exil, les vérités de Guiriéoulou à la delegation, 19 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁶ APR, Ghana: « Le gouvernement ivoirien ne fait rien pour favoriser la réconciliation », Emile Guiriéoulou, 19 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁷ ICC, ICC Trial Chamber acquits Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé from all charges, 15 January 2019, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: Laurent Gbagbo at Charles Blé Goudé restent en détention, 18 January 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁸ All Africa, Ghana : Rentré du Ghana/Emile Guiriéoulou – « Nous n'avons plus besoin de rester en exil », 31 January 2019, [url](#)

The scope of the issue of Gbagbo allies in exile has affected the national security situation, according to HRW.⁴⁴⁹ Several cross-border raids, both through the Liberian and Ghanaian borders, were reported since the end of post electoral crisis.⁴⁵⁰ In 2017, the Ivorian Ministry of Interior attributed to 35 Gbagbo's allies (including youth leader Daman Pickass and Gbagbo's son-in-law Stéphan Kipré), at least one of them living in exile in Ghana, most of the attacks against number of police posts and security installations.⁴⁵¹ At the beginning of 2018, 10 Gbagbo supporters were convicted for a cross-border attack that occurred in 2012 and resulted in 7 fatalities.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ HRW, "Bien loin de la Réconciliation", Répression militaire abusive en réponse aux menaces sécuritaires en Côte d'Ivoire, 2012, [url](#), pp. 8-20.

⁴⁵⁰ HRW, World report 2013: Côte d'Ivoire, events of 2012, 2013, [url](#); HRW, Liberia Takes action on cross-Border Attacks into Côte d'Ivoire, 3 January 2013, [url](#); Reliefweb, Second Deadly Attack Near Liberian Border, 21 September 2018, [url](#); Bbc, Ivory coast closes Ghana border after deadly attack, 22 September 2012, [url](#); BBC, Ivory Coast 'targeted Laurent Gbagbo allies' in Ghana, 2 December 2013, [url](#); 45° Nord.ca, La Côte d'Ivoire, face à l'impunité d'une reconstruction arbitraire, 26 February 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁵¹ Reuters, Gbagbo allies behind attacks in Ivory Coast: interior minister, 7 September 2017, [url](#); Crisis Group, Crisis Watch, Côte d'Ivoire, September 2017, [url](#); Atoo.ci, Des exilés pro-Gbagbo mis en cause dans les attaques contre les postes de gendarmerie et de police, 7 September 2017, [url](#); VOA Afrique, Le gouvernement ivoirien accuse des proches de Gbagbo de tenter de déstabiliser le pays, 7 September 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁵² Jeune Afrique, Les victimes oubliées de la Côte d'Ivoire, 23 February 2018, [url](#)

4. Security situation

4.1 General security situation

Generally, the security situation has improved in the past years and has allowed many refugees – mainly from neighbouring countries – and displaced persons to return home.⁴⁵³ This positive trend continued, as evidenced by the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on 30 June 2017 and its last field office by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in April 2018.⁴⁵⁴ Henceforth, the ICRC has only a regional office in Abidjan, which focuses its activities on the Sahel Region.⁴⁵⁵

Nevertheless, security issues remain. Violence increased globally during the first Ivorian crisis (2002-2010), when small arms and light weapons were circulating from the rebel zones towards the pro-governmental zones. As a consequence, a high percentage of murders (77 %) is linked to armed robbery, as survey on data gathered between 2011 and 2015 revealed. Perpetrators are mostly young men aged 18 to 39 years. Moreover, Côte d'Ivoire displays also a rather high rate of extra-judicial killings by security forces (13 %).⁴⁵⁶

Besides urban criminality (armed robberies by minors in conflict with the law (so-called « *microbes* »), highway bandits and racketeering by members of security forces)⁴⁵⁷, the main security challenges discussed in this chapter are linked to the security and defense forces (the position of former 'Comzones', mutinies, internal conflicts between units, etc.). In addition, violence regularly flares up due to land disputes, particularly in the West.

4.1.1 Minors in conflict with the law (so-called *microbes*)

The phenomenon of 'minors in conflict with the law', often called by the pejorative term '*microbes*'⁴⁵⁸, was born in the Abobo district (Abidjan) in 2012 after the post-electoral crisis.⁴⁵⁹ These juvenile criminal groups operate essentially in Abidjan, although this phenomenon seems to have occasionally affected other cities of the country as well.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵³ IDMC, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018 : Côte d'Ivoire, 2018, p.6, [url](#); UNHCR, Côte d'Ivoire Factsheet, December 2018 [url](#), p.3; Jeune Afrique, Carte : où se trouvent les 45 000 réfugiés de la crise postélectorale ivoirienne?, 12 May 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁴ UN Security Council, Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 31 January 2017, [url](#); Le Point sur, Côte d'Ivoire : le CICR ferme son bureau de la région du Cavally à Guiglo, 18 April 2017, [url](#); ICRC, Annual Report 2013, n.d. [2014], [url](#), p. 217; ICRC, Annual Report 2014, n.d. [2015], [url](#), p.220

⁴⁵⁵ Le Point sur, Côte d'Ivoire : le CICR ferme son bureau de la région du Cavally#Guiglo, 18 April 2017, [url](#); ICRC, Genève. Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁵⁶ Nabi Youla Doumbia & Maurice Cusson, Les homicides dans quatre pays d'Afrique francophone de l'Ouest, 2017, pp.32-34

⁴⁵⁷ Afrique sur 7, Abidjan: Face à l'insécurité, la police ivoirienne trouve une solution, 21 July 2018, [url](#); L'Infodrome, Lutte contre le Racket, l'Inspection générale de la police avertit : « Nous allons frapper très fort », 22 April 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁸ Conseil des droits de l'homme, Rapport de l'Expert indépendant sur le renforcement de capacités et la coopération technique avec la Côte d'Ivoire dans le domaine des droits de l'homme, 17 June 2016, [url](#), p. 16.

⁴⁵⁹ Victor Gautier, Microbes et sécurité en Côte d'Ivoire, 14 March 2017, [url](#); Indigo Côte d'Ivoire & Interpeace, Exister par le gbonhi, February 2017, [url](#), p. 60.

⁴⁶⁰ France 24, Côte d'Ivoire : des milices pour contrer la violence des "microbes", 15 September 2017, [url](#); La Dépêche d'Abidjan, CÔTE D'IVOIRE - Lutte contre la criminalité : lancement de l'opération Epervier III à Yopougon, 22 September 2017, [url](#); Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Daloa, la police sévit après les attaques répétées d'une horde de «microbes», 19 March 2017, [url](#); Abdijantv, Après Abidjan, Les microbes se déplacent sur Bouaké: voici leurs cibles, n.d. [2014 ?], [url](#); Akody.com, Côte d'Ivoire : Biankouma, les microbes auteurs d'attaque à Biankouma condamnés, 17 May 2018, [url](#)

Even though they are mostly described as 'children', members of the so-called *microbes* groups are usually aged between 8 and 25⁴⁶¹, whereas the majority of them are aged from 9 to 15.⁴⁶² The leaders of the groups are usually to be found among the older members.⁴⁶³ *Microbes* are essentially boys and young men, but sometimes girls also participate in their activities.⁴⁶⁴

Girls reportedly have specific roles within the group. For instance, they are responsible for bringing the weapons on a location before an attack, for provoking a verbal altercation in order to create a crowd gathering, for standing guard or gathering information.⁴⁶⁵ A research on crime and violence in Côte d'Ivoire found out that more and more girls join the '*microbes*', even creating family units within these gangs.⁴⁶⁶

Many of these youths have lost one or both parents or live with members of their extended family, even though they still have one or both parents.⁴⁶⁷ Most of them come from underprivileged backgrounds and neighbourhoods in Abidjan (essentially Abobo) and are often school dropouts.⁴⁶⁸ They are predominantly Dioula (see definition provided in [Section 1.2.1](#)).⁴⁶⁹ Some of them have also served in local militias during the post-electoral crisis or helped the combatants in some other way.⁴⁷⁰ According to the sociologist Rodrigue Fahiraman Koné, these martial activities have broken down their moral and ethical barriers regarding the use of violence as well as familiarised them with the handling of weapons and the strategic use of violence.⁴⁷¹

The *microbe* groups have a hierarchical pyramidal structure (see [Figure 2](#)): the leader is called *vié-père* [from *vieux père*, old father] or General. He is designated in accordance with the fame his violent acts brought him. Thus, he can lose his place at the top of the hierarchy to a more violent member. The *Devant-Gbonhi* [approximate translation: 'Front of the group'] or Lieutenant, the direct subordinate of the *vié-père*, is the mastermind of the group. He interacts directly with the several *Têtes-masses* who are responsible of setting their own subgroups in motion when an attack is planned. These subgroups include youths called 'Varans', who are famous for being the most efficient ones. The *Gros-chats* [big cats] are affiliated followers. The position of a member in the hierarchy depends on his bravery and violent actions, not necessarily on his age.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶¹ IDRC, Crime and Violence in Côte d'Ivoire, June 2016, [url](#); RFI, Enquête sur les enfants « microbes à Abidjan », 15 May 2015, [url](#)

⁴⁶² Jean-Claude N'guia & Koko Lucie N'Goran, Psychosocial impact of the crisis post-election in Ivory Coast on girls and boys youth in Abidjan, 30 November 2016, [url](#), p. 10174.

⁴⁶³ Indigo Côte d'Ivoire & Interpeace, Exister par le gbonhi, February 2017, [url](#), p. 60.

⁴⁶⁴ CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, [url](#), p. 6; Francis Akindès, Paroles aux microbes [documentary film], 2017, [url](#); Indigo Côte d'Ivoire & Interpeace, Exister par le gbonhi, February 2017, [url](#), p.48.

⁴⁶⁵ CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, p. 6, [url](#); Francis Akindès, Paroles aux microbes (documentary film), 2017, [url](#); Okon Marguerite Koffi-Djah, Violence et culture de la rue dans le district d'Abidjan: cas des enfants dits « microbes » dans la commune d'Abobo, November-December 2017, [url](#) p.13.

⁴⁶⁶ International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Crime and Violence in Côte d'Ivoire, June 2016, [url](#) p.2.

⁴⁶⁷ Jean-Claude N'guia & Koko Lucie N'Goran, Psychosocial impact of the crisis post-election in Ivory Coast on girls and boys youth in Abidjan : The phenomenon of germs and academicians, 30 November 2016, [url](#), p. 10173

⁴⁶⁸ Jean-Claude N'guia & Koko Lucie N'Goran, Psychosocial impact of the crisis post-election in Ivory Coast on girls and boys youth in Abidjan : The phenomenon of germs and academicians, 30 November 2016, [url](#), p. 10174

⁴⁶⁹ Marie Miran-Guyon, Société musulmane et régime Ouattara en Côte d'Ivoire. Des affinités électives en demi-teinte, March 2017, p. 252.

⁴⁷⁰ Abidjan TV, Phénomène des microbes à Abidjan: qui sont-ils ? Et d'où viennent-ils ? Est-on en droit d'interroger, 9 November 2014, [url](#)

⁴⁷¹ Abidjan TV, Phénomène des microbes à Abidjan: qui sont-ils ? Et d'où viennent-ils ? Est-on en droit d'interroger, 9 November 2014, [url](#)

⁴⁷² Indigo Côte d'Ivoire & Interpeace, Exister par le gbonhi, February 2017, [url](#) pp. 44-45.



Figure 2 Structure of a Microbe group

Microbes operate in groups; predominantly at night in neighbourhoods they know well⁴⁷³, hence Abobo, Anyama, Attécoubé, Adjamé, sometimes also Yopougon or the outskirts of Cocody.⁴⁷⁴ Their usual modus operandi is the following: they enter a busy street in a large group and make a lot of noise, simulating fights between them or with a rival gang. Then, very quickly, they steal everything possible from everyone on their path before withdrawing in an organised way.⁴⁷⁵ Another tactic of them is to pretend to beg for food or money in order to stop passersby, quickly surrounding them and robbing them.⁴⁷⁶ Their weapons are mostly machetes, knives, sticks or other blunt objects⁴⁷⁷, rarely

⁴⁷³ Francis Akindès, *Paroles aux microbes* (documentary film), 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁴ Jean-Claude N'guia & Koko Lucie N'Goran, Psychosocial impact of the crisis post-election in Ivory Coast on girls and boys youth in Abidjan : The phenomenon of germs and academicians, 30 November 2016, [url](#), p. 10174; Mahier Jules-Michel Bah & Jean Louis Niamke, Socialisation à la violence en Côte d'Ivoire : Des enfants soldats aux « Microbes » dans le district d'Abidjan, 4 April 2016, [url](#), p. 25

⁴⁷⁵ Séverin Kouamé Yao, Nouchis ziguéhis et microbes d'Abidjan: déclassement et distinction sociale, December 2017, p. 91; CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, [url](#) p.6; Okon Marguerite Koffi-Djah, Violence et culture de la rue dans le district d'Abidjan: cas des enfants dits « microbes » dans la commune d'Abobo, November-December 2017, [url](#) p.14.

⁴⁷⁶ Jean-Claude N'guia & Koko Lucie N'Goran, Psychosocial impact of the crisis post-election in Ivory Coast on girls and boys youth in Abidjan : The phenomenon of germs and academicians, 30 November 2016, [url](#), p. 10174

⁴⁷⁷ Séverin Kouamé Yao, Nouchis ziguéhis et microbes d'Abidjan: déclassement et distinction sociale, in: Politique africaine n° 148, December 2017, p. 91.

firearms.⁴⁷⁸ They perpetrate blunt violence, sometimes clearly aiming at causing death.⁴⁷⁹ They often act under the influence of drugs which they buy in dedicated places called *fumoirs* (smokehouses).⁴⁸⁰

As concerns the motivations of these gang members, scholars think that these youths are not just trying to flee poverty but that they are looking for a social recognition within the group. These gangs also offer the perspective of moving up the social ladder.⁴⁸¹ Furthermore, in a context without job perspectives, where education does not guarantee any social success and where violence is a daily occurrence, they feel that crime is a legitimate economic activity.⁴⁸²

In order to combat these youth gangs, the Ivorian authorities set up the police operation *Epervier* [Hawk] I in May 2016, followed by *Epervier* II and III in September 2016 and 2017 respectively. Implemented by the General Direction of the National Police, in collaboration with the National Gendarmerie, the army and the CCDO, these operations mobilised over 2 500 members of the security forces each time. Hundreds of persons were arrested, arms and drugs were seized and many *fumoirs* destroyed.⁴⁸³ 'Anti-microbes' intervention units set up in every police district in Abidjan also contributed to the dismantlement of several *fumoirs* frequented by the gangs.⁴⁸⁴ However, the attacks by the *microbes* did not stop.⁴⁸⁵

A widespread opinion among the population is that 'microbe' youths might get support or protection from ex-combatants integrated in the armed forces, and might hence sometimes escape judicial sentences.⁴⁸⁶ However, prosecution and condemnation of 'microbe' gang members do happen. In 2016-2017, 45 children were brought to court.⁴⁸⁷ The media recounted several condemnations of 'microbe' gangs members during the last years, with (sometimes conditional) prison sentences ranging from some month to 20 years.⁴⁸⁸ A September 2017 report by the CNDHCI states that some of these youths were being prosecuted at the time of publication. It also outlines that the Ivorian criminal code foresees that underage children having committed crimes or offenses should be brought before a children's court or a juvenile criminal court (*Cours d'assises des mineurs*).⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁷⁸ International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Crime and Violence in Côte d'Ivoire, June 2016, [url](#) p.2.

⁴⁷⁹ Séverin Kouamé Yao, Nouchis ziguéhis et microbes d'Abidjan: déclassement et distinction sociale, in: Politique africaine n° 148, December 2017, p. 91.

⁴⁸⁰ Jean-Claude N'Guia & Koko Lucie N'Goran, Psychosocial impact of the crisis post-election in Ivory Coast on girls and boys youth in Abidjan : The phenomenon of germs and academicians, 30 November 2016 [url](#), p. 1017; CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, [url](#), p. 6.

⁴⁸¹ Indigo Côte d'Ivoire & Interpeace, Exister par le gbonhi, February 2017, [url](#) pp. 59-60

⁴⁸² Les observateurs France 24, Côte d'Ivoire : de quoi les "microbes d'Abidjan" sont-ils le nom ?, 2 October 2017, [url](#); Indigo Côte d'Ivoire & Interpeace, Exister par le gbonhi, February 2017, [url](#) p. 60

⁴⁸³ CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, [url](#), p. 7; La Dépêche d'Adidjan, CÔTE D'IVOIRE - Lutte contre la criminalité : lancement de l'opération Epervier III à Yopougon, 22 September 2017, [url](#); APA, Côte d'Ivoire/Opération Epervier 2 : 580 personnes interpellées, 40 fumoirs détruits, 300 armes à feu saisies (Hamed Bakayoko), 8 June 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁴ CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, [url](#) p.7Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire : un « microbe » déféré il y a trois semaines, interpellé à Yopougon avec son gang, 17 July 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁵ France 24, Côte d'Ivoire : des milices pour contrer la violence des "microbes", 15 September 2017, [url](#); France Info, Côte d'Ivoire: malgré les renforts de police, les « microbes » sévissent toujours, 4 April 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁶ Jean-Claude N'Guia & Koko Lucie N'Goran, Psychosocial impact of the crisis post-election in Ivory Coast on girls and boys youth in Abidjan : The phenomenon of germs and academicians, 30 November 2016, p. 1017 In: IJDR Vol. 06, Issue 11, [url](#); CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, [url](#) p. 7

⁴⁸⁷ AFP, Côte d'Ivoire : le phénomène des « microbes » délinquants en recul, 13 October 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁸ Akody.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Biankouma, les microbes auteurs d'attaque à Biankouma condamnés, 17 May 2018, [url](#); Le Patriote, Côte d'Ivoire - Insécurité en Côte d'Ivoire – 122 « microbes » arrêtés, 20 ans de prison pour « Tonneau » et Yacou « l'Ecomog », 14 August 2014, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁹ CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, p.8, <http://www.cndh.ci/download/180326052534.pdf>

Besides repressive measures, some reintegration measures were taken in favour of minors in conflict with the law. Youths who fought during the post-electoral crisis were not taken into account by the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) Program, as none of the fighting parties admitted to having relied on minors as combatants or auxiliaries.⁴⁹⁰ In 2018, a pilot rehabilitation program allowed approximately 700 youths from Abidjan to undergo detoxification and to learn working skills.⁴⁹¹ The first resocialisation pilot program for juvenile offenders was implemented in 2014-2015 and some dozens of youths participated.⁴⁹²

The population of the neighbourhoods where violent juvenile gangs operate, exasperated by the inefficiency of the police operations, reacted by setting up self-defence militias, thus creating the risk of mob justice.⁴⁹³ Gang youths and children are victims of retaliation and some have been lynched.⁴⁹⁴ The CNDHCI also expressed concerns about the generalised suspicion towards youths and children.⁴⁹⁵

4.1.2 Challenges related to the defence forces

The Ivorian army is heterogeneous – though often viewed as a northern army –⁴⁹⁶ and politicised, as several presidents integrated supportive groups into it.⁴⁹⁷ The *Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* [Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire] (FRCI) were created in the midst of the post-electoral crisis of 2010-2011 from the amalgam of the old rebel forces from the north of the country called *Forces armées des Forces nouvelles* (FAFN), who supported the current President Alassane Ouattara during the crisis, and the army serving former President Laurent Gbagbo (*Forces de défense et de sécurité*; FDS).⁴⁹⁸ The former Zone Commanders of the FAFN, called Comzones, were also integrated into the army and currently hold important positions in the Ivorian security apparatus (see [Section 4.1.2](#)).⁴⁹⁹

The overall opinion is that the Ivorian army, which is composed for more than 50 % of officers and sub-officers, is overstaffed. Estimations show that by the end of 2017 almost 90 % of the army budget was allocated to the payment of wages. A voluntary redundancy plan was set up within the framework of the 2016 military programming law in order to reduce the army staff from 23 000 at the end of 2016 to less than 19 000 by 2020.⁵⁰⁰ Besides cutting the costs, this downsizing aims at rejuvenating and professionalising the staff, as well as reorganising the chain of command.⁵⁰¹ However, the reform

⁴⁹⁰ Mahier Jules-Michel Bah & Jean Louis Niamke, Socialisation à la violence en Côte d'Ivoire : Des enfants soldats aux « Microbes » dans le district d'Abidjan, p.25, in : International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development, Volume 3, Issue 4, 4 April 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁹¹ TV5Monde, Côte d'Ivoire : comment réinsérer les gangs de jeunes surnommés les 'microbes' ?, 23 July 2018, [url](#); LEBŒUF Aline, « La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne », IFRI, March 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁹² Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Réinsertion des mineurs délinquants, Abidjan annonce la création de centres de résocialisation pour microbes et talibets, 18 December 2015, [url](#)

⁴⁹³ France 24, Côte d'Ivoire : des milices pour contrer la violence des "microbes", 15 September 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁴ CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, [url](#) p.8; AFP, La vie de "microbe" des enfants-bandits d'Abidjan, 16 August 2017, [url](#); AFP, Scandale: Psychose des "microbes" à Abidjan, 18 October 2017, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁵ CNDHCI, Rapport sur les phénomènes des « Gnambro » et « des mineurs en conflit avec la loi », August-September 2017, [url](#) p.8.

⁴⁹⁶ Azoumana Ouattara, Rebuilding the army of Côte d'Ivoire: problems and prospects, December 2011, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁷ Aline Leboeuf, Qu'est-ce qu'une bonne réforme du secteur de sécurité ?, December 2017, [url](#), p.19; Anadolu Agency, Côte d'Ivoire: De quoi souffre l'armée ivoirienne ? 19 January 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁸ Moussa Fofana, Des Forces nouvelles aux Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire, June 2011, [url](#); Aline Le Boeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) pp. 27-28.

⁴⁹⁹ Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour..., 23 July 2018, [url](#); Anadolu Agency, Côte d'Ivoire: De quoi souffre l'armée ivoirienne ? 19 January 2018, [url](#); Aline Le Boeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p. 34.

⁵⁰⁰ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : un plan pour sécuriser les départs volontaires de militaires, 23 February 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : comprendre les récentes tensions militaires à Bouaké, 12 January 2018, [url](#); Le Patriote, Côte d'Ivoire: Loi de programmation militaire - Les enjeux et les objectifs d'une réforme, 27 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁰¹ RFI, La Côte d'Ivoire a commencé le dégraissage de son armée, 11 December 2017, [url](#); APA, Côte d'Ivoire : remise officielle de chèques aux soldats retenus pour le départ volontaire des forces armées, 4 May 2018, [url](#)

of the security sector is regarded by media as risky since it might trigger tensions within the army.⁵⁰² The voluntary retirement plan reportedly did not meet the expectations of a more professional army, as many well-trained staff decided to leave.⁵⁰³

In 2015, the UN expert group on the Côte d'Ivoire deplored the lack of cohesion within the army.⁵⁰⁴ The divisions between ex-rebels and former loyalist soldiers, but also between different units remain⁵⁰⁵, as evidenced by the mutinies that took place in 2017 and 2018.⁵⁰⁶ In July 2017, during a mutiny in Korhogo, different factions within the same battalion shot at each other and killed three soldiers.⁵⁰⁷ In January 2018, soldiers and members of the *Centre de coordination des opérations décisionnelles* (CCDO) – a mixed force including members of the army, the police, and the gendarmerie – opened fire on each other in Bouaké causing intense strains within the army.⁵⁰⁸

In November 2016, the Defence Minister announced that the FRCI had been renamed *Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire* [Armed Forces of Ivory Coast] (FACI), as already foreseen by the security sector reform (RSS) law.⁵⁰⁹

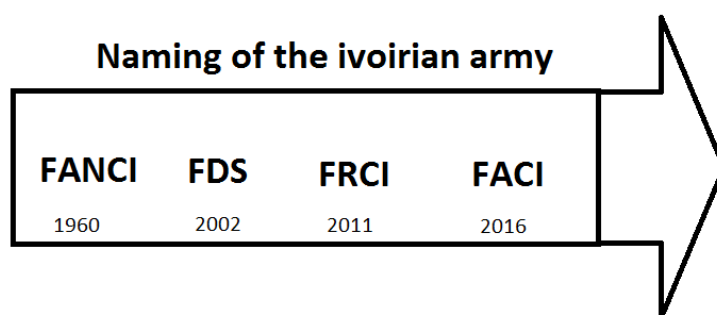


Figure 3 Naming of the Ivorian army

Former Comzones

After the partition of the country in 2002, the north of the country was controlled by the FN rebel forces, which supported Alassane Ouattara during the post-electoral crisis. They divided their territory in 10 zones, each one led by a zone commander of the FAFN, called 'Comzones'.⁵¹⁰ They functioned as a kind of political-military governor, not only overseeing military issues, but also supposed to provide basic services for the population.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰² Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: comprendre les récentes tensions militaires à Bouaké, 12 January 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁰³ Jeune Afrique, La Côte d'Ivoire confrontée à une fuite de ses élites militaires, 22 March 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁴ United Nations Security Council, Final report of the Group of experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution 2153 (2014), 13 April 2015, [url](#), p.15.

⁵⁰⁵ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: comprendre les récentes tensions militaires à Bouaké, 12 January 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁶ Le Monde, Côte d'Ivoire : « Il est clair que notre armée n'est pas réunifiée », 13 April 2018, [url](#); IPI Global Observatory, Rebel Networks' Deep Roots Cause Concerns for Côte d'Ivoire Transition, 12 October 2017, [url](#) pp.2-3.

⁵⁰⁷ Jean-Jacques Konadje, Côte d'Ivoire, le prix de la paix positive, October 2017, [url](#) p.12; See also Schiel, R. et al., Mutiny in Côte d'Ivoire, 2017, <https://journals.sub.uni-hamburg.de/giga/afsp/article/view/1051>

⁵⁰⁸ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: comprendre les récentes tensions militaires à Bouaké, 12 January 2018, [url](#) Deutsche Welle, Côte d'Ivoire, vers une réforme de l'armée ?, 15 January 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁹ Koaci, Côte d'Ivoire: Après cinq années d'existence, les FRCI deviennent les FACI, 14 November 2016, [url](#)

⁵¹⁰ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Le règne des seigneurs du Nord, 15 December 2009, [url](#)

⁵¹¹ IPI Global Observatory, Rebel Networks' Deep Roots Cause Concerns for Côte d'Ivoire Transition, 12 October 2017, [url](#) pp. 2-3.

After the post-electoral crisis, most of the Comzones were integrated into the army, where they still hold important positions within the Ivorian security apparatus.⁵¹² They lead critical units, as the Republican Guard, the Special Forces and some of the best-equipped units of the ground army (see [below](#)).⁵¹³

Some former Comzones still retain significant control over the combatants they used to supervise during the decade in which the rebels controlled the northern half of the country.⁵¹⁴ Recent mutinies proved their centrality within the current army, as they were indispensable during negotiations with the mutineers.⁵¹⁵ The situation was a rather complex one to solve, because many former rebels integrated into the army felt betrayed by their former leaders who accessed wealth and high functions whereas they did not seem to care about their former combatants.⁵¹⁶ Nevertheless this parallel chain of command still poses an obstacle to the cohesion of the army.⁵¹⁷

Furthermore, the majority of former Comzones are reportedly implicated in illegal lucrative activities (e.g. illegal goldmining) and so have access to considerable economic resources. They also maintain personal ties with local traditional leaders in the zone that previously was under their command, as well as with not totally reintegrated ex-combatants and with some politicians. Moreover, some have still access to private stocks of arms.⁵¹⁸

Though some former Comzones have been indicted⁵¹⁹, none of them has been prosecuted, neither by the Ivorian justice nor the international one for the exactions perpetrated during the 10-years' crisis.⁵²⁰ They also benefit from the amnesty promulgated by President Ouattara in August 2018.⁵²¹

The list below shows the former zones of influence of the former Comzones, as well as their current position as far as this is known.

- Zone 1: Bouna

Comzone: Morou Ouattara, alias Atchengué.⁵²²

Current position: Commander of the Eastern security battalion.⁵²³

- Zone 2: Katiola

⁵¹² Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour..., 23 July 2018, [url](#); Anadolu Agency, Côte d'Ivoire: De quoi souffre l'armée ivoirienne ? 19 January 2018, [url](#); Aline Le Bœuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p. 34.

⁵¹³ IPI Global Observatory, Rebel Networks' Deep Roots Cause Concerns for Côte d'Ivoire Transition, 12 October 2017, [url](#), p. 2

⁵¹⁴ Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour..., 23 July 2018, [url](#); Anadolu Agency, Côte d'Ivoire: De quoi souffre l'armée ivoirienne ? 19 January 2018, [url](#); Aline Le Bœuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p. 34.

⁵¹⁵ Assemblée nationale française, Rapport d'information sur la Côte d'Ivoire, février 2017, [url](#) p.116.; IPI Global Observatory, Rebel Networks' Deep Roots Cause Concerns for Côte d'Ivoire Transition, 12 October 2017, [url](#) p.4.

⁵¹⁶ Le Monde, Côte d'Ivoire : comment les mutins ont fait plier le gouvernement, 26 May 2017, [url](#)

⁵¹⁷ IPI Global Observatory, Rebel Networks' Deep Roots Cause Concerns for Côte d'Ivoire Transition, 12 October 2017, [url](#) p. 2

⁵¹⁸ IPI Global Observatory, Rebel Networks' Deep Roots Cause Concerns for Côte d'Ivoire Transition, 12 October 2017, [url](#); France, OFPRA, « Côte d'Ivoire : les anciens com'zones dans l'armée ivoirienne », 11 September 2017, [url](#)

⁵¹⁹ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: les réactions aux inculpations d'ex-chefs rebelles, 8 July 2015, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, « Côte d'Ivoire : inculpations tous azimuts dans l'armée », 30 June 2015. [url](#)

⁵²⁰ FIDH, Côte d'Ivoire : choisir entre la justice et l'impunité, 11 December 2014, [url](#); FIDH, Les victimes oubliées de la Côte d'Ivoire, 7 March 2018, [url](#)

⁵²¹ Dr Adou Djané Phone interview, 13 September 2018; L'Express, Côte d'Ivoire: Ouattara joue son va-tout, 17 August 2018, [url](#); APR & AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: Pourquoi Ouattara a-t-il amnistié Simone Gbagbo et les politiques?, 11 August 2018, [url](#)

⁵²² Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009. [url](#); APR & AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: Pourquoi Ouattara a-t-il amnistié Simone Gbagbo et les politiques?, 11 August 2018, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p. 47/ Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour... , 23 July 2018, [url](#)

⁵²³ Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour... , 23 July 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Ange Kessi ne lâche toujours pas Morou Ouattara, 7 June 2018. [url](#)

Comzone: Hervé Touré, alias Vétcho.⁵²⁴

Current position: unclear. In September 2017, while he was Commander of the third infantry battalion, he successfully passed the entry exams for the Ivorian National administration school. After completion of this course he might engage in diplomacy or pursue his military carrier.⁵²⁵

- Zone 3: Bouaké (former rebel capital)

Comzone: Chérif Ousmane, alias Papa Guépard.⁵²⁶

Current position: Commander of the first battalion of commandos and paratroopers.⁵²⁷

- Zone 4: Mankano

Comzone: Zoumana Ouattara, alias Zoua.⁵²⁸

Current position: No current information found. In 2015, he was Commander of the first infantry battalion in Akouédo.⁵²⁹

- Zone 5: Vavoua-Séguéla

Comzone: Koné Djakaridja, alias Koné Zakaria until June 2008, he was then ousted after internal conflict between rebels and flew to Burkina Faso for a while.⁵³⁰ Replaced by Issiaka Ouattara, alias Wattao.⁵³¹

Current positions: Koné Zakaria is Commander of the Command and Support Unit of the land forces.⁵³² Wattao is Commander of the Republican Guard.⁵³³ According to Afrique sur 7, he could be the next Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire.⁵³⁴

- Zone 6: Man

Comzone: Losseni Fofana, alias Loss or Cobra.⁵³⁵

Current position: Commander of Western Security Battalion based in Man.⁵³⁶

- Zone 7: Touba

⁵²⁴ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p.47.

⁵²⁵ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Touré Hervé dit Vétcho, le Comzone major de sa promotion à l'ENA, 25 September 2017, [url](#); Le 360 Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire. Rébellion du Nord : 16 ans après, que sont devenues les grandes figures des Forces Nouvelles ?, 23 September 2018, [url](#)

⁵²⁶ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p.47.

⁵²⁷ Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour... , 23 July 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Guéguerre Ouattara-Soro, les ex-Com'zones se rangent..., 27 July 2018, [url](#)

⁵²⁸ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p.48.

⁵²⁹ Aline Leboeuf, Paris. La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p.48.

⁵³⁰ L'Inter, Forces Nouvelles : Après deux ans d'exil, Koné Zakaria de retour en zone CNO, 15 March 2011, [url](#)

⁵³¹ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p. 48. On Zakaria Koné, see : [url](#)

⁵³² Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour... , 23 July 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Nouvelles nominations dans l'armée, la liste complète ! 28 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵³³ Afrique sur 7, CIV : Après Touré Hervé dit Vétcho à l'ENA, Wattao décroche un Master, 22 May 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour... , 23 July 2018, [url](#)

⁵³⁴ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Wattao attend (impatiemment) son grade de général, 24 July 2018, [url](#)

⁵³⁵ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p.49.

⁵³⁶ Connection Ivoirienne. La Bataillon de sécurisation de l'ouest (BSO) de la Côte-d'Ivoire montre ses muscles, 23 May 2018. [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour... , 23 July 2018. [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Nouvelles nominations dans l'armée, la liste complète ! 28 January 2017, [url](#)

Comzone: Daouda Doumbia alias Big,⁵³⁷ then replaced by Dramane Traoré.⁵³⁸

Current positions: Daouda Doumbia is the President of the Taekwondo Ligue of Abobo⁵³⁹ and the Head of the Army Sports Bureau (Bsa).⁵⁴⁰ Between 2015 and 2016, he has been Commander of the Command and support Battalion.⁵⁴¹

Dramane Traoré: Commander of the fourth Infantry Battalion (January 2017).⁵⁴²

- Zone 8: Odienné

Comzone: Ousmane Coulibaly, alias Ben Laden⁵⁴³, then, after June 2011, Ben le Sage (Ben the Wise).⁵⁴⁴

Current Position: Prefect of San Pedro since September 2012.⁵⁴⁵

- Zone 9 : Boundiali

Comzone: Koné Gaoussou, alias Jah Gao.⁵⁴⁶

Current position: Commander of the Command and support Battalion (January 2017).⁵⁴⁷

- Zone 10: Korhogo

Comzone: Martin Kouakou Fofié.⁵⁴⁸

Current position: Deputy Commander of the second military region (Daloa) since 2016.⁵⁴⁹

Mutinies and contestations

During 2017, various branches of the Ivorian security and defence forces launched mutinies, which, in some cases, spread to several cities. In addition, former rebel combatants demonstrated to obtain demobilisation benefits. In this section, a chronology of events is presented.

January 2017: in the night of 5/6 January, former rebels integrated in the army and some demobilised soldiers attacked several police positions in Bouaké and blocked the city's main streets. They demanded the payment of bonuses and other benefits. The following day the revolt spread to other

⁵³⁷ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p.49; AIP, Côte d'Ivoire; Armées : Les nouveaux chefs de la GR et du BCS installés, 2 February 2017, [url](#)

⁵³⁸ See France, OFPRA, Les anciens com'zones dans l'armée ivoirienne, 11 September 2017, [url](#) p.19

⁵³⁹ FITKD, "Brillants à la President'S Cup Africa à Agadir (Maroc), Les Eléphants Taekwondo ins ont regagné Abidjan, mardi", April 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁰ ZAMA Alain, Jeu de dame : Le Camp Galliéni abrite la 1ère édition du championnat militaire et paramilitaire. Fraternité Matin, June 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁴¹ Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p.49.; AIP, Armées : Les nouveaux chefs de la GR et du BCS installés, 2 February 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁴² Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Nouvelles nominations dans l'armée, la liste complète ! 28 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁴³ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p. 49; Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, "Ils les ont tués comme si de rien n'était". Le besoin de justice pour les crimes post-électorales en Côte d'Ivoire, October 2011, [url](#) p. 125

⁵⁴⁵ Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour... , 23 July 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : Ouattara nomme trois anciens chefs de guerre de la rébellion à la tête de régions sensibles, 26 September 2012, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁶ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p. 50

⁵⁴⁷ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Nouvelles nominations dans l'armée, la liste complète ! 28 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁸ Jeune Afrique, Les dix commandants qui gênent Abidjan, 7 April 2009, [url](#); Aline Leboeuf, La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne, March 2016, [url](#) p. 49

⁵⁴⁹ Jeune Afrique, Anciens comzones en Côte d'Ivoire : rebelles un jour... , 23 July 2018, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Nouvelles nominations dans l'armée, la liste complète ! 28 January 2017, [url](#)

cities, including Abidjan, Korhogo, Daloa and Man. The mutineers negotiated with the Defence Minister who accepted to pay the demanded allowances to approximately 8 400 soldiers.⁵⁵⁰

A few days later, gendarmes and prison wards, who were not included in the aforesaid agreement, also protested in Abidjan, Bouaké, Yamoussoukro, Odienné and Bouaflé to receive bonus payments.⁵⁵¹

February 2017: members of special forces of various towns (Adiaké, Olodio, Tengrela, etc.) demonstrated their dissatisfaction by shooting in the air. They also demanded payment of bonuses and better living conditions.⁵⁵²

May 2017: At the beginning of the month, demobilised ex-combatants, who were not integrated into the army, also protested and demanded bonus payments. They suspended their protest after talks with the prefect of the city.⁵⁵³

The mutineers of Bouaké had received only the first instalment of the bonuses agreed on in January when a representative of the military announced on television that they had renounced their financial claims. This statement was the spark that ignited the fire. A new mutiny began in Bouaké in the night of 11-12 May 2017. The protests spread rapidly to Abidjan, San Pedro, Bondoukou, Korhogo and Man.⁵⁵⁴

At the end of May 2017, more than 6 000 demobilised former rebels demonstrated and blocked a trunk road south of Bouaké. A clash between security forces and the demobilised ex-combatants killed at least four demonstrators.⁵⁵⁵ Eventually an agreement between ex-rebels and the government was reached: the Ivorian authorities agreed to pay the rest of the promised sums and peace was restored.⁵⁵⁶

June 2017: The Ivorian government declared that CFA 10 million (about EUR 15 200) had already been remitted to the mutineers, adding that the final payment would be made before the end of the month.⁵⁵⁷

July 2017: On 9 July, some demobilised combatants again blocked the road accesses to Bouaké in order to obtain a war's end bonus. The police quickly dispersed the protesters.⁵⁵⁸

Disgruntled soldiers fired gunshots in the night of 14 to 15 July, in two military camps in Abidjan (Abobo municipality) and Korhogo. Security and defence forces reacted promptly. Three persons died, three were injured, six were arrested and three corporals were dismissed from the army.⁵⁵⁹

August 2017: The Council of ministers passed an ordinance making it easier to dismiss soldiers.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁰ Aline Leboeuf, Les mutineries de janvier 2017 en Côte d'Ivoire: scénarios & options, 8 February 2017, [url](#); La Tribune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : le gouvernement trouve un accord avec les militaires mutins, 14 January 2017, [url](#) ; GRIP, Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'ouest – janvier à mars 2017, 11 April 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵¹ Le Monde; AFP; Reuters, En Côte d'Ivoire, la grogne des militaires s'étend à d'autres corps de sécurité, 18 January 2017. En Côte d'Ivoire, la grogne des militaires s'étend à d'autres corps de sécurité, [url](#); RFI, Mutineries en Côte d'Ivoire: le gouvernement annonce un plan d'urgence, 18 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵² Le Monde, Côte d'Ivoire : tirs en l'air de forces spéciales à Adiaké, à l'est d'Abidjan, 7 February 2017, [url](#); VOA Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : retour au calme à Adiaké mais la ville reste sous tension, 7 February 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵³ Abidjan Daily News, Des ex-combattants manifestent encore à Bouaké, 8 May 2017, [url](#); BBC News, Côte d'Ivoire: les ex-rebelles "débloquent" Bouaké, 8 May 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁴ GRIP, Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'ouest, avril à juin 2017, 11 July 2017, [url](#); Le Monde, Côte d'Ivoire : comment les mutins ont fait plier le gouvernement, 26 May 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁵ Le Monde, Côte d'Ivoire: les « démobilisés » en colère comptent leurs morts à Bouaké, 23 May 2017, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: les démobilisés de Bouaké à la croisée des chemins, 25 May 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁶ Le Figaro, En Côte d'Ivoire, le lourd bilan politique des mutineries, 29 May 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁷ APA, Côte d'Ivoire : le reliquat de 2 millions FCFA sera payé fin juin aux mutins (PM Gon Coulibaly), 15 June 2017, [url](#); Afrique sur 7, « Côte d'Ivoire : Bouaké, décès de Diomandé Mègbè, leader des ex-combattants », 20 December 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁸ Burkina 24, Côte d'Ivoire : « Des démobilisés » de Bouaké ont bloqué une nouvelle fois la circulation, 10 July 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁹ AFP, Côte d'Ivoire : trois soldats radiés après des tirs dans un camp militaire (armée), 17 July 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁰ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: une ordonnance pour mettre fin aux mutineries, 10 August 2017, [url](#)

The National Security Council adopted the *opération ceinture* [operation belt] to tackle the attacks and mutinies of the previous months. This operation was aimed at securing several towns, among others Bouaké, Korhogo, Fresco, Adzopé.⁵⁶¹

October 2017: Several hundreds of demobilised former rebels claimed war premiums in Man; approximately 20 others did the same in Bouaké.⁵⁶²

January 2018: The army apologised for the mutinies of 2017 and announced the dismissal of 230 soldiers and gendarmes involved in the mutinies.⁵⁶³

May 2018: The army reinforced its vigilance after former rebels, integrated in the security and defence forces, called for a demonstration. The initiators were said to be a group of 600 men who had been deployed alongside the UNOCI during the post-electoral crisis and who asserted that they had not received any salary nor premiums for their mission. The demonstration did not take place.⁵⁶⁴

September 2018: The 600 gendarmes and police officers mentioned above continued claiming their premiums. Approximately 300 soldiers who did not receive the bonus promised in January 2017 joined them. They expressed their commitment to dialogue and did not announce any demonstration.⁵⁶⁵

Attacks on security forces' positions

From July 2017, attacks on military positions were regularly reported. Most of the times the assailants also stole weapons.⁵⁶⁶

On 19 July 2017, assailants attacked the police schools of Cocody and Yopougon in Abidjan and requisitioned vehicles. Shoot-outs with the security forces caused one death. Several military officers were discharged because of their implication in the attacks. Documents found on one of the attackers seemed to indicate that they planned a military coup.⁵⁶⁷ A few days later, the police brigade of the city of Azaguié (in the south of the country) was attacked and weapons were stolen.⁵⁶⁸

Two other similar attacks were perpetrated in Adzopé and Songon in August and September 2017 but did not result in any casualties.⁵⁶⁹ As mentioned before, at the end of August 2017 *opération ceinture* [operation belt] was initiated to restore security in Bouaké, Korhogo, Fresco and Adzopé amongst others.⁵⁷⁰

Furthermore, the authorities accused pro-Gbagbo followers living in exile of instigating these attacks. The President mentioned arrest warrants, adding that the Ivorian government would send proof to the host countries of the 'disrupters'. One of the accused and other political allies of Gbagbo refuted the allegations they called 'ridiculous'.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶¹ Côte d'Ivoire, Sécurité : L'« opération ceinture » en réponse aux attaques et mutineries, 29 August 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁶² Jeune Afrique; AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: nouvelles manifestations d'anciens rebelles démobilisés à Man et Bouaké, 2 October 2017, [url](#); AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: mouvements d'humeur d'anciens rebelles dans deux villes, 2 October 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁶³ La Tribune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: 230 soldats radiés, le prix des mutineries de 2017, 5 January 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁴ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: les forces de sécurité en alerte par « mesure de précaution », 5 May 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁵ Ivoire Matin, Côte d'Ivoire : Le feu couve - Près de 1000 policiers, gendarmes et militaires menacent, 17 September 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁶ GRIP, Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'ouest — juillet à septembre 2017, 17 October 2017, [url](#), p. 8

⁵⁶⁷ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: ce que tramaient les assaillants de l'École de police d'Abidjan, 5 September 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁸ Le Monde/AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: un commissariat d'Abidjan attaqué par des hommes à moto, 27 September 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁹ Le Monde/AFP, Côte d'Ivoire : un commissariat d'Abidjan attaqué par des hommes à moto, 27 September 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁰ Côte d'Ivoire, Sécurité : L'« opération ceinture » en réponse aux attaques et mutineries, 29 August 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁷¹ Atooci, Des inconnus attaquent un commissariat à Abobo et emportent des armes, 26 September 2017, [url](#); Le Monde/AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: un commissariat d'Abidjan attaqué par des hommes à moto, 27 September 2017, [url](#); AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: les proches de Gbagbo réfutent les accusations de complot, 8 September 2017, [url](#)

At the end of September 2017, a police station in Abobo (Abidjan) was attacked and weapons were stolen.⁵⁷² From the end of 2017 until the beginning of 2018, several attacks targeted security forces in the western part of the country near Liberia. Members of the security forces were killed and weapons were reportedly robbed.⁵⁷³ In April 2018, assailants armed with stolen weapons assaulted a checkpoint in western Côte d'Ivoire.⁵⁷⁴ A few days later, assailants attacked a police station in Abidjan, freed detainees and stole ammunitions.⁵⁷⁵ No other similar attacks were reported until the end of the reference period (see [Introduction](#)).⁵⁷⁶

Weapons proliferation

After the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process had ended in June 2015, a large number of weapons and ammunitions remained unaccounted for.⁵⁷⁷ The *Commission Nationale de lutte contre la prolifération et la circulation illicite des armes légères et de petit calibre* [National Commissions to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms] (ComNat-ALPC) continued to collect and destroy weapons. In July 2017, a member of this commission declared that the amount of arms still in circulation was unknown, which made the task even more difficult.⁵⁷⁸

The UN Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire considers that this situation is the result of approximately ten years of crisis during which arms have been widely distributed without any control on civilians conscripted as auxiliary forces.⁵⁷⁹ Besides the moderate achievements of the DDR process, after the wars in neighbouring countries (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and the fall of Muammar Kaddafi in Libya, a large number of weapons were brought into the country.⁵⁸⁰ While Côte d'Ivoire was parted in rebel and loyalist zones, Burkina Faso reportedly provided arms to the FN forces despite the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations.⁵⁸¹ In addition, a number of weapons were stolen during several attacks on military and police bases, as mentioned in the previous section.⁵⁸²

In April 2016, the UN Security Council decided to lift the sanctions imposed on Côte d'Ivoire since 2004.⁵⁸³ These sanctions included the embargo on lethal weapons, but allowed some exceptions for supporting the security sector reform. Nevertheless, specific categories of lethal weapons, such as missiles, still required advance approval of the UN Sanction Committee.⁵⁸⁴

In May 2017, during the mutinies (see [above](#)), an weapons cache containing tons of weapons was found in Bouaké, in the residence of Souleymane Kamaraté Koné, alias Soul-to-Soul. Koné was the Director of protocol of Guillaume Soro, former rebel leader, former Prime Minister under Gbagbo

⁵⁷² Le Monde/AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: un commissariat d'Abidjan attaqué par des hommes à moto, 27 September 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁷³ GRIP, Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'ouest, janvier à mars 2018, 9 April 2018, [url](#); Fraternité Matin, Axe Bangolo-Kouibly: Un assaillant tué dans l'attaque d'un poste de contrôle des Faci, 6 April 2018, [url](#); Ivoire Soir, Attaque de Daloa : La bande à Gnana Bi démantelée, 2 militaires parmi les assaillants, 1 May 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁴ Fraternité Matin, Axe Bangolo-Kouibly: Un assaillant tué dans l'attaque d'un poste de contrôle des Faci, 6 April 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁵ L'infodrome, Abidjan : Un commissariat de Police encore attaqué, 14 April 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁶ GRIP, Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'ouest, avril à juin 2018, 5 July 2018, [url](#); GRIP, Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'ouest, juillet à septembre 2018, 15 October 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁷ United Nations Security Council, Final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution 2219 (2015), 17 March 2016, [url](#), p.3.

⁵⁷⁸ Jeune Afrique, Circulation d'armes en Côte d'Ivoire : l'artillerie en sous-sol, 18 October 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁹ United Nations Security Council, Final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution 2219 (2015), 17 March 2016, [url](#) p.3..

⁵⁸⁰ Jeune Afrique, Circulation d'armes en Côte d'Ivoire : l'artillerie en sous-sol, 18 October 2017. [url](#)

⁵⁸¹ UNODC, Trafic d'armes à feu en Afrique de l'Ouest, no date (February 2013 ?), [url](#)

⁵⁸² GRIP, Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'ouest, janvier à mars 2018, 9 April 2018, [url](#); Fraternité Matin, Axe Bangolo-Kouibly: Un assaillant tué dans l'attaque d'un poste de contrôle des Faci, 6 April 2018, [url](#); Ivoire Soir, Attaque de Daloa : La bande à Gnana Bi démantelée, 2 militaires parmi les assaillants, 1 May 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁸³ UN Security Council, Resolution 2283 (2016), 28 April 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁴ Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies, Le Conseil de sécurité proroge les sanctions imposées à la Côte d'Ivoire jusqu'au 30 avril 2016, 28 April 2015, [url](#)

after the Marcoussis Agreement and President of the National Assembly until February 2019.⁵⁸⁵ In a phone call the Ivorian authorities intercepted, Koné had indicated the location of the cache to the mutineers so that they could resist the army's assault by arming themselves.⁵⁸⁶

In September 2017, a weapons storing place was discovered in Abidjan. Besides rocket launchers, Kalashnikovs, and other weapons and ammunitions, it contained military uniforms, communication devices and cards with the stamp of an armed group that supported the FN during the post-electoral crisis.⁵⁸⁷

Investigators think that at least three more hidden weapon storing places must exist, probably located in the western, northern and eastern parts of the country.⁵⁸⁸

4.1.3 Terrorism

Côte d'Ivoire experienced one terrorist attack in March 2016. Assailants armed with Kalashnikovs opened fire on the beach of the sea resort of Grand Bassam, approximately 40 kilometres from Abidjan. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the attack that caused the death of 19 persons.⁵⁸⁹

Security forces reacted swiftly and killed several assailants. Côte d'Ivoire had been aware of being a likely terrorist target and had prepared for such an attack by setting up security and anticipation strategies.⁵⁹⁰

Sources disagree on the potential existence of Islamist sleeping cells in Côte d'Ivoire. While the Ivorian government did not identify dormant terrorist cells within the country⁵⁹¹, some media sources state that jihadist sleeper cells had already been dismantled previously in Bouaké and Abidjan.⁵⁹²

Investigations on the Grand-Bassam attack suggest international terrorist connections with Mali.⁵⁹³ Indeed, while most suspects were arrested on Ivorian ground, one of the masterminds of the attack was intercepted in Mali and other suspects were arrested in Senegal and Burkina Faso.⁵⁹⁴ Two years after the attack, one of the presumed masterminds was still on the run.⁵⁹⁵ Reportedly, none of the assailants was Ivorian.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁸⁵ Le Figaro, L'ex-rebelle ivoirien Soro forme son gouvernement, 15 October 2007, [url](#); BBC News, Guillaume Soro, le président de l'Assemblée nationale, démissionne en Côte d'Ivoire, 11 February 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁶ Jeune Afrique, Armes découvertes à Bouaké, : comment « Soul to Soul » s'est trahi, 14 August 2017, [url](#); François Conradie, NKCAfrican Economics, Ivory Coast – Arrest of Soro ally Kone is risk-negative, 13 October 2017, [url](#); Africanews, Côte d'Ivoire - Affaire cache d'armes : le chef de protocole de Soro Guillaume coïncé, 14 August 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁷ Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : des armes de guerre découvertes à Abidjan, 27 July 2017, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Circulation d'armes en Côte d'Ivoire: l'artillerie en sous-sol, 18 October 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁸ Jeune Afrique, Circulation d'armes en Côte d'Ivoire : l'artillerie en sous-sol, 18 October 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁹ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: un an après l'attentat de Grand-Bassam, où en est l'enquête ?, 13 March 2017, [url](#); RFI, Attaque à Grand-Bassam: la Côte d'Ivoire, cible des jihadistes, 14 March 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁰ L'Express, Côte d'Ivoire: ce que révèle l'assaut meurtrier de Grand-Bassam, 14 March 2016, [url](#); RFI, Attaque à Grand-Bassam: la Côte d'Ivoire, cible des jihadistes, 14 March 2016, [url](#); Setal.net. Dakar. Attaques terroristes : Dakar et Abidjan prochaines cibles, selon Paris et Washington, 20 January 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁹¹ Assemblée nationale française, Rapport d'information sur la Côte d'Ivoire, February 2017, [url](#) p.119.

⁵⁹² L'Express, Côte d'Ivoire: ce que révèle l'assaut meurtrier de Grand-Bassam, 14 March 2016, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Terrorisme : la Côte d'Ivoire en état de vigilance maximum, 10 February 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁹³ Jeune Afrique/AFP, Mali: un des organisateurs présumés de l'attaque de Grand-Bassam arrêté, 12 January 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁴ RFI, Mali: arrestations liées à l'attaque de Grand-Bassam, 12 January 2017, [url](#); L'Intelligent d'Abidjan, 2 ans de l'attentat de Grand-Bassam - Hamed Bakayoko : « L'enquête a permis l'arrestation du principal suspect », 14 March 2018, [url](#); L'infodrome, Abidjan. Attentat de Grand-Bassam: Les commanditaires arrêtés au Sénégal, 9 July 2018, [url](#); RTI, Attentat Grand Bassam : Le point sur les enquêtes, 14 March 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁵ Eburnie Today, Attentats de Grand-Bassam : où en est l'enquête ?, 15 March 2018, [url](#); Jeune Afrique Côte d'Ivoire : un an après l'attentat de Grand-Bassam, où en est l'enquête ?, 13 March 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁶ Assemblée nationale française, Rapport d'information sur la Côte d'Ivoire, February 2017, [url](#) p.119.

After several terrorist attacks in countries of the region, member States of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) reinforced their cooperation to combat terrorism.⁵⁹⁷ Thanks to the West Africa Police Information System (WAPIS), national security services of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states should be able (once national information systems are set up) to share data. WAPIS is an electronic platform connected to Interpol, whose aim is to combat transnational crime affecting the region, such as drug trafficking, human smuggling and terrorism.⁵⁹⁸

In January 2018, the Ivorian Defence Minister and the French Ambassador in Côte d'Ivoire announced the forthcoming creation of an international academy against terrorism near Abidjan.⁵⁹⁹ Besides with France, the Ivorian government also established partnerships with the United States and Canada in order to strengthen the operational capacities of the Ivorian defence and security forces.⁶⁰⁰

Risks of terrorist attacks in Côte d'Ivoire still exist, according to several sources.⁶⁰¹ Ivorian authorities consider that threats originate principally from outside Côte d'Ivoire. The potential existence of an internal radicalisation threat remains difficult to appreciate.⁶⁰²

4.2 Security situation in the west of Côte d'Ivoire

The ICRC closed its Man office in 2014. In 2018, it also closed its Guiglo office and explained that the Cavally region had recovered stability (see [Map 3](#)). The ICRC only keeps a regional office in Abidjan whose activities focus on the Sahel region.⁶⁰³ In July 2017, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) also ended its operations in western Côte d'Ivoire after eleven years because of the 'relative socio-economic stabilisation' and 'normalisation of population movements'.⁶⁰⁴

Though cross-border attacks from Liberia reportedly have almost stopped after the 2015 presidential election, sporadic attacks on positions of the security forces did occur.⁶⁰⁵ Several attacks on security forces resulting in fatalities were reported at the beginning of 2018 in the west of Côte d'Ivoire, particularly near the Liberian border. Weapons may have been stolen during these attacks.⁶⁰⁶

After a gendarme was lynched in Bloléquin at the beginning of 2018, the government announced several measures, including the dismantlement of all illegal roadblocks, the upholding of the 'enhanced security arrangements' in this zone, a search operation in order to retrieve weapons obtained unlawfully and the forthcoming opening of a police station in Bloléquin.⁶⁰⁷ It is not clear whether the above mentioned security apparatus corresponds to the enhanced arrangements set up

⁵⁹⁷ RFI, Terrorisme: 15 mesures préconisées pour renforcer la coopération de l'UEMOA, 28 May 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁸ AFP, Coopération policière régionale en Afrique de l'ouest contre la criminalité transnationale, 25 June 2018, [url](#); Interpol, WAPIS Programme, no date, [url](#); Interpol, Regional security leaders support INTERPOL programme to reinforce West African policing, 26 June 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁹ Ambassade de France, Abidjan. Création d'une Académie internationale de lutte contre le terrorisme, 11 June 2018, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire: fin du colloque de l'Académie de lutte contre le terrorisme, 21 November 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁰ Afrique sur 7, Côte d'Ivoire : Terrorisme, l'armée se prépare à toutes éventualités, 6 February 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁰¹ Gov.UK, Foreign travel advise Côte d'Ivoire, updated 15 January 2019, still current at 3 May 2019, [url](#), DFAE, Berne. Conseils aux voyageurs – Côte d'Ivoire, 31 August 2018, [url](#); Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, 2 August 2018, [url](#); Koaci.com, Côte d'Ivoire: Rumeurs d'attaques terroristes, les forces armées ivoiriennes se préparent à toutes éventualités, 24 September 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁰² Assemblée nationale française, Rapport d'information sur la Côte d'Ivoire, February 2017, [url](#) p.119-120.

⁶⁰³ Le Point sur, Côte d'Ivoire : le CICR ferme son bureau de la région du Cavally#Guiglo, 18 April 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁴ DRC, DRC exits from Côte d'Ivoire after 11 years, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁵ AFP, Côte d'Ivoire: attaque d'un commissariat dans l'ouest, des armes emportées, 31 October 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁶ GRIP, Monitoring de la stabilité régionale dans le bassin sahélien et en Afrique de l'ouest, janvier à mars 2018, 9 April 2018, [url](#); Fraternité Matin, Axe Bangolo-Kouibly: Un assaillant tué dans l'attaque d'un poste de contrôle des Faci, 6 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁷ Côte d'Ivoire, Communiqué du Conseil des Ministres du 21 February 2018, [url](#)

after the prefecture of Guiglo was ransacked at the end of 2017, which raised the number of policemen, gendarmes and soldiers affected to this zone to 1 000.⁶⁰⁸

4.2.1 Land disputes

Conflicts linked to land disputes in Côte d'Ivoire are ancient and long-lasting. Even though these conflicts also concern other regions in the country, the west is particularly affected.⁶⁰⁹

According to customary law, land belongs to a community (village, family, lineage) considered to be the first occupants of the site. Land cannot be alienated or sold; only the right of use can be ceded. In this context 'owners' consider themselves to be 'managers' of the land. The colonial power confiscated the land and this rule was extended after independence: successive governments benefitted from having control of the soil, and settled agricultural workers according to their political and economic interests.⁶¹⁰

The roots of land disputes

Land management has been insecure because of the legal uncertainty that the state maintained. Indeed, several attempts at land reform were initiated by the colonial and the postcolonial states. Sometimes, land laws recognised the customary rights (decree of 20 May 1955), sometimes they ignored them (law of 1962 and 1964, speech of President Houphouët-Boigny in 1963).⁶¹¹

In the 1960s and 1970s, Ivorian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny planned that cocoa farming would boost the Ivorian economy. He urged foreign workforce to come and settle in the country and encouraged Ivorian farmers to move to zones they did not necessarily originate from. His maxim was: 'land belongs to those who develop it.'⁶¹² Pressure was put on local communities so that they would give access to land to Ivorian and non-Ivorian settlers.⁶¹³ Migration to the forest areas in the south and the west of the country was massive.⁶¹⁴ This migration met primarily the 'autochthones'⁶¹⁵ (see also [Glossary](#) and [Chapter 1](#)) need for labour force and allowed them to benefit from land rents by transferring their land parcels to migrants.⁶¹⁶ Indeed, under the *tutorat* [tutorship] system, the 'landowners' (tutors) delegate their land rights to the migrants who then owe their tutors constant gratitude. This gratitude is mostly expressed through donation of a share of the harvest to the tutor. The terms of these cessions (duration, geographical limits) are not always clear.⁶¹⁷

In the 1990s, demographic pressure - the Ivorian population quadrupled between 1960 and 1998 - and migration flows led to a scarcity of land resources. Autochthones openly began to call the validity of cession contracts into question, causing tensions between rural communities. The collapse of cacao

⁶⁰⁸ Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁹ ICG, Côte d'Ivoire: le Grand Ouest, clé de la réconciliation, 28 January 2014, [url](#) pp. 1-2; RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : la bombe à retardement du foncier rural, 16 March 2018, [url](#)

⁶¹⁰ IDMC, Whose land is this ?, October 2009, [url](#), pp.13-17.

⁶¹¹ KONÉ Mariatou, Foncier rural, citoyeneté et cohésion sociale en Côte d'Ivoire : la pratique du tutorat dans la sous-préfecture de Gboguhé, 2006, [url](#)

⁶¹² Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#)

⁶¹³ Jean-Pierre Chauveau, The land tenure question in Côte d'Ivoire: A lesson in history, 2000, [url](#)

⁶¹⁴ Koffi Justin Kouassi, Les Conflits fonciers ruraux en Côte d'Ivoire, March 2017, [url](#)

⁶¹⁵ In Côte d'Ivoire, the following terms are used: autochthones, allochthones, foreigners (allogènes). Autochthones are people belonging to a social group considered to be the first occupants of the place they live in. Allochthones are Ivorian citizens belonging to a community which is not autochthon in the place they live. For example Baoulé (originating from the centre of Côte d'Ivoire) are considered allochthons in western Côte d'Ivoire. Foreigners (allogènes) are non-Ivorian citizens, for example Burkinabé. Some of them have been living in Côte d'Ivoire for several generations but are still considered allogènes. See Ghabé Roch Yao, La production d'une identité autochtone en Côte d'Ivoire, footnote 1, 2008, [url](#)

⁶¹⁶ Kouakou Jérôme et al., Quand la question foncière sape les actions humanitaires de cohésion dans les régions du Guémon et du Cavally en Côte d'Ivoire, January 2016, [url](#), p. 4

⁶¹⁷ Alfred Babo & Yvan Droz. Conflits fonciers. De l'ethnie à la nation. Rapports interethniques et « ivoirité » dans le sud-ouest de la Côte-d'Ivoire. In : Cahiers d'études africaines 2008/4, n° 192, [url](#) p. 745.

prices, followed by the succession war after the death of Houphouët-Boigny in 1993, added to the tension.⁶¹⁸ It was also during that period that the concept of *Ivoirité*, which introduced a distinction between Ivorians of origin (belonging to an ethnic group native to the country) and non-Ivorians was created.⁶¹⁹ In the countryside, this political context contributed to widening the gap between Ivorian and Burkinabé, but also between local Ivorian communities and Ivorian migrants stemming from the northern part and from the central part (here mostly Baoulé) of the country, which also led to conflicts.⁶²⁰

In 1998, the law on rural land tenure (*loi no 98-750 du 23 décembre 1998*), strongly influenced by the ideology of *Ivoirité*⁶²¹, was passed in order to resolve these conflicts. Under customary law, land does not have a market value, but this changed when the 1998 law recognised indigenous customary rights over land in rural areas.⁶²² The application for the registration of a piece of land requires the possession of customary rights on that land. This provision gives indigenous landowners a central role that they never had before.⁶²³

Customary land rights has to be secured through the registration of property titles within ten years. However, given the complexity of the situation and the delays linked to the Ivorian crises, this deadline has been extended to 2023.⁶²⁴ Upon expiry of this deadline, the land parcel is registered as property of the state and the person exploiting it becomes tenant.⁶²⁵ Most customary landowners find the registration procedure complex and expensive and, thus, prefer to avoid it.⁶²⁶ Moreover, while some do not know the laws⁶²⁷, others prefer to ignore them and go on selling the land to the highest bidder.⁶²⁸ Women also are still marginalised in the process of acquiring access to land.⁶²⁹ Recent estimates showed that the law remains poorly enforced. Currently, less than 4 % of rural land parcels hold a land certificate, whereas customary law rules the remaining 96 %.⁶³⁰

⁶¹⁸ Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#); RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : la bombe à retardement du foncier rural, 16 March 2018, [url](#); Koffi Justin Kouassi, Les Conflits fonciers ruraux en Côte d'Ivoire, March 2017, [url](#); Kouakou Jérôme et al., Quand la question foncière sape les actions humanitaires de cohésion dans les régions du Guémon et du Cavally en Côte d'Ivoire, janvier 2016., [url](#), p.4.

⁶¹⁹ Koffi Justin Kouassi, Côte d'Ivoire. Les Conflits fonciers ruraux en Côte d'Ivoire, March 2017, [url](#); The World Bank, Local governance and national crisis in Côte d'Ivoire (DRAFT), April 2008, [url](#) p. 9

⁶²⁰ Kouakou Jérôme et al., Bouaké. Quand la question foncière sape les actions humanitaires de cohésion dans les régions du Guémon et du Cavally en Côte d'Ivoire, January 2016. [url](#), p.6; Chauveau Jean-Pierre, La réforme foncière de 1998 en Côte d'Ivoire à la lumière de l'histoire des dispositifs de sécurisation des droits coutumiers, 2006, [url](#), p. 19

⁶²¹ Alfred Babo & Yvan Droz. Conflits fonciers. De l'ethnie à la nation. Rapports interethniques et « ivoirité » dans le sud-ouest de la Côte-d'Ivoire 2008., [url](#) p. 753.

⁶²² KOUASSI Koffi Justin, Côte d'Ivoire. Les Conflits fonciers ruraux en Côte d'Ivoire, March 2017. [url](#)

⁶²³ KOUADIO Zéphyrin, « Côte d'Ivoire : le partage des terres, source de palabres interminables », (volet 1), RFI, 5 June 2017. [url](#) ; KOUASSI Koffi Justin, « Les conflits fonciers ruraux en Côte d'Ivoire », Irénées.net, March 2017. [url](#)

⁶²⁴ RFI, Paris. Côte d'Ivoire : la bombe à retardement du foncier rural, 16 March 2018. [url](#); Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#)

⁶²⁵ Kouakou Jérôme et al., Bouaké. Quand la question foncière sape les actions humanitaires de cohésion dans les régions du Guémon et du Cavally en Côte d'Ivoire, January 2016, [url](#); Chauveau Jean-Pierre, Question foncière et construction nationale en Côte d'Ivoire : les enjeux silencieux d'un coup d'Etat, June 2000, [url](#), p. 97.

⁶²⁶ Dr Adou Djané Phone interview, 13 September 2019 ; Kouakou Jérôme et al., Quand la question foncière sape les actions humanitaires de cohésion dans les régions du Guémon et du Cavally en Côte d'Ivoire, January 2016, [url](#)

⁶²⁷ Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement rural, Déclaration de politique foncière rurale de la Côte d'Ivoire, January 2017, [url](#) p.8.

⁶²⁸ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : la bombe à retardement du foncier rural, 16 March 2018, [url](#)

⁶²⁹ IDMC, Whose land is this ?, October 2009, [url](#), pp. 15-16.

⁶³⁰ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : la bombe à retardement du foncier rural, 16 March 2018, [url](#) ; Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement rural, Déclaration de politique foncière rurale de la Côte d'Ivoire, January 2017, [url](#) p. 8 ; NGA Armelle, « Côte d'Ivoire : les terres de l'ouest, sources de conflits », AFP, 10 November 2016, [url](#)

Furthermore, the law on rural land tenure forbids foreigners to access property⁶³¹, which in some cases led to expropriation of foreigners.⁶³² As soon as it entered into force in 1999, about 15 000 Burkinabé were chased from the plantations in Tabou (south-western Côte) after a dispute between autochtones and migrants.⁶³³ The new Ivorian Constitution promulgated in 2016 reiterated the prohibition for foreigners to access rural property. However, it specifies, 'acquired rights are guaranteed.'⁶³⁴

Clandestine gold mining, often practiced by migrants (foreigners or Ivorians originating from another region, including former combatants), appears to be widespread throughout the country and can give rise to land or intercommunity conflicts. Indeed, gold mining makes the neighbouring land unsuitable for agriculture. Nevertheless, some village chiefs receive vast sums in order to let gold miners go on with their activity, despite the opposition of part of the local community.⁶³⁵

Rural land is the object of nationalist and xenophobic claims since several decades. As a source of conflicts, it remains a central issue to achieve social stability, especially in western Côte d'Ivoire.⁶³⁶

Situation specific to western Côte d'Ivoire

The western part of the country, especially the regions Guémon and Cavally, are particularly affected by land conflicts.⁶³⁷

Indeed, in addition to the agrarian migration described above, this region was the scene of several waves of population displacement during the last decades: the influx of Liberian refugees during the Liberian civil war (1989-2003), then internal displacement, the departure of Ivorian refugees and the arrival of Liberian mercenaries during the Ivorian crises (2002-2011) and more recently, the return of Ivorian refugees from Liberia.⁶³⁸ Many displaced/refugees found their land occupied upon return. Thousands of complaints were filed for dispossession of land.⁶³⁹

Land conflicts do not only oppose exclusively autochthonous Ivorians to foreigners, but also distinguish Ivorians from autochthonous ethnic groups and Ivorians from allochthonous ethnic groups.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³¹ Chauveau Jean-Pierre, et al. Côte d'Ivoire : la question foncière à l'épreuve de la paix. In : Léonard Eric et al. (ed.), Enjeux fonciers et dynamiques des rapports sociaux en milieu rural ouest-africain. Territoires d'Afrique (4), 2012, p. 53-59; Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#); KOUASSI Koffi Justin, Côte d'Ivoire. Les Conflits fonciers ruraux en Côte d'Ivoire, March 2017, [url](#); Loi No 98-750 du 23 décembre 1998 relative au domaine foncier rural modifiée par la loi no 2004-412, du 14 août 2004, art.1, [url](#)

⁶³² BABO Alfred & DROZ Yvan, Conflits fonciers. De l'éthnie à la nation. Rapports interethniques et « ivoirité » dans le sud-ouest de la Côte-d'Ivoire, 2008, [url](#) p. 753.

⁶³³ Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#)

⁶³⁴ Côte d'Ivoire, LOI n° 2016-886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, 8 November 2016, [url](#)

⁶³⁵ Dr Adou Djané, researcher at the Swiss Center for scientific research in Côte d'Ivoire, expert in governance, reconciliation and conflict management. Phone interview, 13 September 2019.

⁶³⁶ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : la bombe à retardement du foncier rural, 16 March 2018. [url](#); IDMC, Déplacements internes en Côte d'Ivoire: une crise de protection, 7 November 2005, [url](#) p.4; Kouassi N'goran François & N'drin Beugré Anselme, Conflits Fonciers Intercommunautaires Et Fracture Sociale Dans Les Régions Du Guémon Et Du Cavally À L'ouest De La Côte d'Ivoire, May 2016, [url](#) p.260.

⁶³⁷ Kouakou Jérôme et al., Quand la question foncière sape les actions humanitaires de cohésion dans les régions du Guémon et du Cavally en Côte d'Ivoire, January 2016, [url](#)

⁶³⁸ Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#)

⁶³⁹ RFI, Côte d'Ivoire : la bombe à retardement du foncier rural, 16 March 2018. [url](#); France 24, Difficile retour au pays pour les Ivoiriens réfugiés au Libéria, 19 February 2013, [url](#); Claire Rainfroy, Près de 20 000 réfugiés ivoiriens devraient regagner la Côte d'Ivoire en 2017, 20 June 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁰ Le Monde, Dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, une terre trop convoitée, 7 December 2017, [url](#); L'Infodrome, Conflits intercommunautaires: Des morts et plusieurs blessés à l'ouest, 8 December 2018, [url](#); Dr Adou Djané, researcher at the Swiss Center for scientific research in Côte d'Ivoire, expert in governance, reconciliation and conflict management. Phone interview, 13 September 2018.

During the decade of crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, migrants settled down in the protected forests (*forêts classées* – land owned by the state set aside for conservation), mostly to plant cocoa.⁶⁴¹ From the nearly four million hectares of protected forest in the country, almost half has been transformed illegally in agricultural land. Approximately 30 % to 40 % of the national cocoa production comes from protected forests (e.g. Mount Peko National Park).⁶⁴²

During the 10-year crisis, armed groups took advantage of the security vacuum and took control of protected areas to enrich themselves unlawfully, for example by selling land parcels. Despite the decision of the authorities to remove the inhabitants of protected forests and parks⁶⁴³, many former combatants who had infiltrated the protected forests after 2002 or during the post-electoral crisis are still there. They consider this land as their salary or war booty for the services they rendered.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ Yao Sadaïou, Sabas Barrima et al. Cocoa crops are destroying the forest reserves of the classified forest of Haut-Sassandra (Ivory Coast) In: Global Ecology and Conservation (vol. 8), October 2016, [url](#); Human Rights Watch, Côte d'Ivoire : Expulsions arbitraires d'habitants de forêts classées, 13 June 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁴² Human Rights Watch, Côte d'Ivoire : Expulsions arbitraires d'habitants de forêts classées, 13 June 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁴³ Human Rights Watch, Côte d'Ivoire : Expulsions arbitraires d'habitants de forêts classées, 13 June 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁴ Dr Adou Djané, Phone interview, 13 September 2018.

Les forêts classées de Cavally, Goin-Débé, et Scio en Côte d'Ivoire



Map 4 The protected forests of Western Côte d'Ivoire, © Human Rights Watch, June 2016⁶⁴⁵

In 2013, the transitional period of the rural land law was extended by 10 years before the State can exercise its pre-emptive right on 'land without owners'.⁶⁴⁶ Four million plots remained to be identified (representing as many land titles to be issued) and 10 000 rural villages to be delimited out of 11 000.⁶⁴⁷

Asked about the issue of land conflicts in western Côte d'Ivoire, the sociologist Adou Djané explained that there is no steady antagonism between determined ethnic groups or communities. Conflicts erupt often after a precipitating event, like a fight between members of different communities (autochthones vs migrants). Given the tense context, these quarrels may lead to disputes on land issues and cause an intercommunity conflict, sometimes with forced displacement.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, Côte d'Ivoire: Expulsions arbitraires d'habitants de forêts classées, 13 June 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁶ ABOA Ange, « Ivory Coast lawmakers pass critical land, nationality laws », Reuters, 23 August 2013, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁷ Initiatives Côte d'Ivoire, « Gestion du foncier rural en Côte d'Ivoire, Comment réussir la réforme ? », January 2014, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁸ Dr Adou Djané, Phone Interview, 13 September 2018.

Measures aimed at curtailing land conflicts

The current Ivorian government considers that recurring rural land conflicts is harming social cohesion and peace. It also recognises the complexity of the litigations that sometimes involve several issues (intercommunity disputes, intergeneration disputes, forced displacement, civil laws /customary rights).⁶⁴⁹

Hence, the Ivorian government took steps in order to reduce land disputes and conflicts, promoting the delimitation and marking of village territories, setting up land management village committees under the authority of the sub-prefects.⁶⁵⁰ Moreover, the *Agence foncière rurale* [Rural land agency] (AFOR) was established in 2017.⁶⁵¹ It is responsible inter alia for the identification of privately owned land parcels.⁶⁵²

The authorities also launched a 10-year land tenure political strategy (2017 to 2027), which foresees a revision of the legislative framework (conflicting provisions), a simplification and a reduction in cost of the rural land securing procedure, as well as appropriate incentives.⁶⁵³

Dr Djané stated that in his opinion, the balance was restored: the chieftaincies – which are the local traditional authorities – are autochthonous (even though they might be a minority group and/or do not have the highest financial weight on their territory), the autochthones allow the migrants to use the land. In return, the migrants donate a share of their harvest to the landowner.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁴⁹ Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement rural, Déclaration de politique foncière rurale de la Côte d'Ivoire, January 2017, [url](#), p. 9.

⁶⁵⁰ Dr Adou Djané, Phone interview, 13 September 2018.

⁶⁵¹ Agence Ecofin, Côte d'Ivoire : l'Agence foncière rurale désormais opérationnelle, 13 September 2017, [url](#); Foncier rural, Délimitation des territoires des villages, no date, [url](#)

⁶⁵² Dr Adou Djané, Phone interview, 13 September 2018.

⁶⁵³ Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement rural. Déclaration de politique foncière rurale de la Côte d'Ivoire, January 2017, [url](#), p. 9.

⁶⁵⁴ Dr Adou Djané, Phone interview, 13 September 2018.

5. Specific human rights issues

5.1 General overview

In a January 2017 report on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the UN Secretary General reported: 'The human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire is, in general, improving. Human rights violations decreased from the post-election crisis of 2010 and 2011.'⁶⁵⁵

From April 2016 to January 2017, the UNOCI documented 88 cases of human rights violations, including violations of the right to life, to physical integrity, unlawful and arbitrary arrest and detention, violations of the right of peaceful assembly and of property rights. UNOCI also documented 34 cases of sexual violence from May 2016 to April 2017.⁶⁵⁶

Death penalty abolition, already stated in Article 2 of the Constitution of 2000 adopted by referendum⁶⁵⁷, was reaffirmed with Article 3 of the Constitution of 2016.⁶⁵⁸

Starting from the independence of the Country in 1960, death penalty sentences were issued but never applied.⁶⁵⁹

5.1.1 Prisons

A study by the *Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme de Côte d'Ivoire* [National Commission for the Human Rights in Côte d'Ivoire] (CNDHCI) carried out from January to April 2018 reveals that all the prisons in Côte d'Ivoire hosted a total of 15 025 inmates in May 2017, having a theoretical capacity of 7 970 inmates.⁶⁶⁰ A reason for overcrowding includes the frequent use of pretrial detention.⁶⁶¹ Medical care for prisoners is inadequate; they also experience extortion by prison guards and other detainees.⁶⁶² In 2017, arbitrary arrests and detention took place⁶⁶³, even if decreased in number. Abusers were rarely investigated and prosecuted.⁶⁶⁴

5.1.2 Corruption

In 2018's Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Côte d'Ivoire scored 35 out of 100 on the perceived level of public sector corruption (zero representing highly corrupt and 100 very clean).⁶⁶⁵ Between 2013 and 2018, Côte d'Ivoire was among the few countries that significantly improved their CPI score,⁶⁶⁶ moving from 27 points in 2013 to 35 points in 2018.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁵⁵ UN Security Council, Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2017/89, 31 January 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁶ HRC – UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the enhancement of capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights*, 19 May 2017, A/HRC/35/43 [url](#)

⁶⁵⁷ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n°2000-513 Du 1er Août 2000 portant Constitution De La Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁸ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 2016-886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁹ Amnesty International, 40 années de lutte pour abolir la peine de mort, 27 September 2017, N° 2, ACT 50/7151/2017, [url](#); AIP, La peine de mort jamais appliquée en Côte d'Ivoire depuis 1960 (ministre de la justice), 9 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁰ CNDHCI, De visite des maisons d'arrêt et de correction de Côte d'Ivoire, Rapport, January-April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶¹ HRC – UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the enhancement of capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights*, A/HRC/35/43, 19 May 2017, [url](#)

⁶⁶² Human Rights Watch, World Report 2018, Côte d'Ivoire, Events of 2017, 18 January 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶³ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2018, Côte d'Ivoire, Events of 2017, [url](#). More information on prison conditions can be found in Le Marcis, Frédéric, Le destin de Yacou « le Chinois », Carrière criminelle et devenir de la Côte d'Ivoire au prisme de la prison, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁵ TI, Corruption Perceptions Index 2018, n.d. , [url](#)

⁶⁶⁶ TI, How corruption weakens democracy, 29 January 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁷ TI, Sub-Saharan Africa: Undemocratic regimes undermine anti-corruption efforts, 29 January 2019, [url](#)

The World Bank Data's 2017 rates Côte d'Ivoire '3' in the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), that measures transparency, accountability, and corruption in the public sector (with 1 rating as low and 6 rating as high). The country has maintained the same rating since 2013.⁶⁶⁸

The TI-CPI indicates that the current administration under President Ouattara has placed anti-corruption measures in the political agenda and has taken steps in order to combat systemic corruption, although it is premature to assess their effectiveness.⁶⁶⁹

According to TI reporting in 2016, 'corruption remains endemic, systemic, permeating all levels of society. Corruption in the judiciary, police and security forces is an area of particular concern, fuelling a climate of impunity for corruption'.⁶⁷⁰ Similarly, Freedom House's 2019 Report refers that 'corruption and bribery remain endemic', with the police, the judicial system, the government contracting operations being particularly affected.⁶⁷¹

Corruption and impunity are also present in the *Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire* [Armed Forces of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire] (FACI), the police and the gendarmerie.⁶⁷²

On a micro-level, corruption or petty and bureaucratic corruption hampers the citizens' general access to services, from issuing a birth certificate to claiming goods from customs.⁶⁷³ Grand and political corruption - specifically in the area of public procurement - translates into forms of nepotism and money laundering.⁶⁷⁴

Sources agree that perpetrators are rarely prosecuted,⁶⁷⁵ although the Bertelsmann Stiftung (BTI) indicates that it is more likely that petty crime is prosecuted; generally, perpetrators 'do not face any significant adverse publicity from civil society, the media or opposition parties'.⁶⁷⁶

According to the Freedom House 2019 Report, neither the *Loi No 2013-867 du 23 Décembre 2013 relative à l'accès à l'information d'intérêt public* [Law no. 2013-867 of 23 December 2013 related to the access of information of public interest]⁶⁷⁷ nor the requirement by the *Haute Autorité pour la Bonne Gouvernance* [High Authority for Good Governance] (HABG)⁶⁷⁸ for public officials to submit asset declarations are consistently enforced.⁶⁷⁹

According to the Human Rights Watch 2016 World Report, extortion by security forces at illegal checkpoints was an ongoing issue at the country, particularly at rural areas. Additionally, the security forces continued illegally benefiting from the country's revenues through smuggling and parallel taxation of natural resources, including diamonds, cocoa, timber and diamonds.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁶⁸ World Bank, the World Bank data, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁶⁹ Those steps include the launching in 2013 of the 'National Plan on Good Governance and the Fight Against Corruption' as well as the creation of new institutions aiming at combatting corruption and of reporting mechanisms. TI, Côte d'Ivoire: Overview of corruption and anti-corruption, 18 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 7-10

⁶⁷⁰ TI, Côte d'Ivoire: Overview of corruption and anti-corruption, 18 April 2016, [url](#), p. 1

⁶⁷¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁷² United States, USDOS, Côte d'Ivoire 2017 Human Rights Report, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁷³ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#); TI, Côte d'Ivoire: Overview of corruption and anti-corruption, 18 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 3-5

⁶⁷⁴ TI, Côte d'Ivoire: Overview of corruption and anti-corruption, 18 April 2016, [url](#), pp. 3-5

⁶⁷⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung, Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, Rule of Law, 17 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung, Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, Rule of Law, 17 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁷ Côte d'Ivoire, CAIDP, *Loi No 2013-867 du 23 Décembre 2013 relative à l'accès à l'information d'intérêt public*, 23 December 2013, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁸ The High Authority for Good Governance is a body for the prevention and punishment of acts of corruption and related offenses, an anti-corruption body, has the aim to combat official corruption. Source: Côte d'Ivoire, HABG, Présentation, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁷⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁸⁰ HRW, World Report 2016: Côte d'Ivoire, 27 January 2016, [url](#)

5.1.3 Freedom of press

The freedom of the press in the country have overall been improving ever since the end of the 2010-2011 conflict.⁶⁸¹ In the 2019 World Press Freedom Index, Ivory Coast is ranked 71st out of 180 countries with regard to press freedom, an improvement from 2018's ranking as 82nd.⁶⁸²

Journalists still face intimidation and even violence by the security forces in relation to their profession,⁶⁸³ especially if they are associated with the opposition and during electoral campaigns. The state controlled media is highly scrutinised by the government,⁶⁸⁴ but there are multiple private media outlets highly critical to the government.⁶⁸⁵

In February 2017, six journalists were arrested and detained for covering army mutinies. Their charges included the publication of fake news, defamation and inciting soldiers to mutiny. After two days, they were released but remained under police investigation.⁶⁸⁶ In August 2017, two *Le Quotidien* journalists were arrested due to an article they wrote concerning the National Assembly President's finances.⁶⁸⁷

In 2018, fewer press freedom violations were registered in the country; although the Conseil National de la Presse [National Council for the Print Media] (CNP) still acts stricter on opposition newspapers than on pro-government ones, journalists are no longer subjected to outright abuses.⁶⁸⁸ Nevertheless, there were still incidents of police attacks against journalists, especially during demonstrations.⁶⁸⁹ For instance, in March 2018, journalist and blogger Daouda Coulibaly was assaulted and arrested by the police while attempting to cover an opposition protest and later was not permitted to file a formal complaint about the incident.⁶⁹⁰

The government operates the media outlets (radio, television and newspaper) with the widest reach in the country,⁶⁹¹ with the *Haute Autorité de la Communication Audiovisuelle* [High Audiovisual Communications Authority] (HACA) in charge of overseeing the regulation and operation of radio and television stations.⁶⁹²

In December 2017, the National Assembly adopted a new media law. Article 89 states that custody, pre-trial detention, and imprisonment are excluded for offenses committed by way of press or other media.⁶⁹³ According to Amnesty International, the law still contains provisions that violate the right to freedom of expression. While detention and prison term are excluded for press offenses, they are also subject to other applicable laws, such as the Criminal Code, which has provisions of a jail sentence for instance for offending the head of state.⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁸¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁸² RWB, 2019 World Press Freedom Index, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁸³ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung, Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, Political participation, 17 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung, Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, Political participation, 17 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung, Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, Political participation, 17 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁶ AI, Côte d'Ivoire: Arbitrary arrests, crackdown on dissent and torture ahead of Presidential election, 11 February 2019, [url](#); AI, Amnesty International Report 2017/18, 22 February 2018, [url](#), pp. 136-137

⁶⁸⁷ AI, Amnesty International Report 2017/18, 22 February 2018 [url](#), pp. 136-137

⁶⁸⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, Political participation, 17 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁹ RWB, 2019 World Press Freedom Index, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁹⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#) ; AI, West and Central Africa: Attacks on journalists reach alarming levels, 2 May 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁹¹ BBC, Ivory Coast profile – Media, 21 November 2017, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom of the Press 2017, Côte d'Ivoire Profile, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁹² Côte d'Ivoire, HACA, Missions et Pouvoirs de la Haca, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁹³ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 2017-867 du Decembre 2017 Portant Régime Juridique de la Presse, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁹⁴ AI, Côte d'Ivoire: A fragile human rights situation, May 2019, [url](#), p. 10

The law also sets fines in case of insult, in case of publishing, broadcasting, divulging or reproducing fake news and in case of defamation against the authorities or the armed forces.⁶⁹⁵ According to Amnesty International, due to the vagueness of the law, the defamation provision could also apply for statements as old as ten or more years ago. In such cases, journalists working on crimes that took place during the election crisis in 2010-2011 are also at risk by individuals involved in the crisis and now positions in the government.⁶⁹⁶

5.1.4 Freedom of association, of religion, of expression

The Ivorian Constitution protects freedom of assembly and association, but peaceful protests during the year were repressed and in some cases led to arrests.⁶⁹⁷

The Constitution guarantees freedom of religious belief and worship, it prohibits religious discrimination in employment and stresses the importance of religious tolerance for the welfare of the State.⁶⁹⁸ All religious groups have to register with the Interior Ministry Department in charge of cults.⁶⁹⁹ The Government generally protects legal warranties of religious freedom.⁷⁰⁰

In February 2017, the Council of Ministers issued a decree promulgated by President Ouattara on the modalities of application of Law No 2014-388 of 20 June 2014 for the promotion and protection of human rights defenders in the country. The decree specifies the rights of defenders and their freedom to carry out their work; they cannot be prosecuted, investigated, arrested or detained for opinions expressed and reports published in the course of their activities.⁷⁰¹ However, the mechanism by which the State intends to protect human rights defenders is not clear⁷⁰², nor is the way through which law's implementation is controlled.⁷⁰³

5.1.5 People with disabilities

People with disabilities (visual, motor, hearing, mental), and children in particular, are disadvantaged, marginalised and often excluded by the community.⁷⁰⁴ The law requires to train and educate persons with disabilities, but in 2017 they were discriminated both in the fields of education and employment.⁷⁰⁵ In 2015, the Ivorian Government employed 300 persons with disabilities as civil servants. In April 2018, the Minister in charge of Communication announced that the State would hire— by way of derogation – 158 more persons with disabilities.⁷⁰⁶

⁶⁹⁵ AI, Côte d'Ivoire: A fragile human rights situation, May 2019, [url](#), p. 10; United States, USDOS, 2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Côte d'Ivoire, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁶ AI, Côte d'Ivoire: A fragile human rights situation, May 2019, [url](#), p. 10

⁶⁹⁷ AI, Côte d'Ivoire 2017/2018, 22 February 2018, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 March 2018, [url](#); United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁸ United States, USDOS, 2017 Report on International Religious Freedom - Côte d'Ivoire, 29 May 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁹ Côte d'Ivoire, Décret n° 2011-388 du 16 novembre 2011 portant organisation du Ministère d'Etat, Ministère de l'Intérieur, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 March 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁰¹ Côte d'Ivoire, Décret n°2017-121 du 22 Février 2017 portant modalités d'application de la loi n° 2014-388 du 20 juin 2014 portant promotion et protection des défenseurs des droits de l'homme, [url](#)

⁷⁰² ISHR (International Service for Human Rights), Côte d'Ivoire - Civil society welcomes government decree to protect defenders, urges adequate resourcing, 22 May 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁰³ HRW, World Report 2018, Côte d'Ivoire, Events of 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁴ Fratmat.info, Côte d'Ivoire: Condition de vie des personnes handicapées - Une pétition lancée par une ONG, 30 October 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁵ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018 [url](#)

⁷⁰⁶ Portail officiel du Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Emploi : le Gouvernement va recruter 158 personnes en situation de handicap a la fonction publique, 4 April 2018, [url](#)

5.2 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender persons (LGBT)

Côte d'Ivoire does not specifically criminalize homosexuality or same-sex acts.⁷⁰⁷ The Ivorian Penal Code indeed does not explicitly condemn LGBT practices.⁷⁰⁸

Article 360 of the Ivorian Penal Code provides that whoever commits public indecency is liable to imprisonment from three months to two years and a fine from CFA 50 000 to 500 000 (about EUR 75 to 750) . The provision adds that if the public indecency is an indecent act or an act against nature with an individual of the same gender, the term of imprisonment will be six months to two years and the fine shall be CFA 50 000 to 300 000 (about EUR 75 to 460).⁷⁰⁹

NGOs such as LIDHO and Front Line Defenders in 2014 stated that it was difficult to determine if the aforementioned article was actually repressing homosexuals in the country, and if court decisions resulted from that provision.⁷¹⁰

The National Commission for the Human Rights in Côte d'Ivoire underlines that there is no discriminatory legal regime in the Ivorian law, but also that there are neither dispositions providing for specific State protection of sexual minorities nor 'tolerance' of the State towards the issue of sexual orientation.⁷¹¹

The anti-discrimination provision of the 2016 Constitution does not envisage protection against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.⁷¹²

Erasing 76 crimes, an international blog focusing 'on the human toll of 76+ countries' anti-LGBTI laws and the struggle to repeal them', stated in 2016 that 'it is difficult to discern the government's actual position on LGBT issues'. President Ouattara had requested the CNDHCI to intervene after Alternative CI, an NGO fighting homophobia and defending the rights of LGBTI people living with HIV, was attacked (see below in this section), but on the other hand, the government voted against two UN Human Rights Council resolutions intended to enhance the protection of LGBT people.⁷¹³

Amnesty International states that the situation of LGBTI persons has deteriorated since 2014.⁷¹⁴

In 2014, NGOs such as Alternative CI and LIDHO confirmed that homophobia was present in the country and LGBTI persons had to hide their homosexuality to avoid discrimination, violence, insults, and humiliation; also, they could suffer from family rejection and loss of support networks. Alternative CI and LIDHO affirmed that sexual minorities are more accepted in urban than in rural areas.⁷¹⁵

Alternative CI maintains that homophobic and transphobic behaviours are present at all levels of the administration. The number of LGBT persons working in public and private administrative services is not known, as they hide their sexual orientation for fear of being dismissed and fall into precariousness.⁷¹⁶

⁷⁰⁷ Reuters, Jailing of gay Ivorian men stokes fears in LGBT safe haven, 22 March 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁸ CNDHCI, Rapport Alternatif Sur La Situation Des Droits De L'homme En Côte d'Ivoire, September 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁹ Côte d'Ivoire, Code Penal, A LOI N° 81-640 Du 31 Juillet 1981 Instituant Le Code Penal, [url](#)

⁷¹⁰ Canada, IRB, Côte d'Ivoire: Application of article 360 of the Penal Code against sexual minorities (2014), CIV105029.FE, 22 December 2014, [url](#)

⁷¹¹ CNDHCI, Rapport Alternatif Sur La Situation Des Droits De L'homme En Côte d'Ivoire, September 2016, [url](#)

⁷¹² HRW, World Report 2018, Côte d'Ivoire, Events of 2017, 18 January 2018, [url](#)

⁷¹³ Erasing 76 crimes, Ivory Coast as LGBT sanctuary? Except when it's not, 12 July 2016, [url](#)

⁷¹⁴ AI, Côte d'Ivoire: a Fragile Human Rights Situation, October 2018, [url](#)

⁷¹⁵ Canada, IRB, Côte d'Ivoire: Treatment of sexual minorities by society and the authorities, including legislation; state protection and support services (2006-February 2014), CIV104784.FE, 27 February 2014, [url](#)

⁷¹⁶ Alternative CI, ONG, Rapport alternatif sur le droit des personnes Lgbt en Côte d'Ivoire 2014- June 2018, E-mail, 27 December 2018.

In January 2014, after days of anti-gays protests⁷¹⁷, a large mob attacked and pillaged the offices of the NGO Alternative CI.⁷¹⁸ Three days before the attack, the Executive Director and his collaborators were locked up in the NGO premises. Alternative CI reported that police of the 22nd district refused to intervene.⁷¹⁹ No one has ever been brought to justice for that attack.⁷²⁰

In June 2016, two gay men were assaulted after a photo was published in which they were in the US Embassy signing a book of condolences for victims of a shooting at a gay nightclub in Orlando (Florida).⁷²¹ The two assaulted men, and four other men who were also pictured, have been forced to flee their homes under pressure.⁷²²

According to an Afrobarometer dispatch of 2016, a survey in 33 African countries in 2014/2015, the percentage of tolerance for homosexuals in Côte d'Ivoire was 18 % (indicating the percentage of respondents who did not deem living next to homosexuals a problem).⁷²³ In 2016, members of sexual minorities had to conceal their sexual orientation in order to avoid insults, discrimination, humiliations and violence.⁷²⁴

In 2017, discrimination and violence against LGBT persons were still a social problem.⁷²⁵ One part of the population considers homosexuality as a kind of depravity and subversion of the social order⁷²⁶, or 'a crime'⁷²⁷, while another part of it has no prejudices about the sexual orientation of LGBT people.⁷²⁸ Security forces were at times slow and inefficient in their response to societal violence against the LGBT community.⁷²⁹ LGBT people faced violence and harassment by State security forces.⁷³⁰

Alternative CI states that people whose sexual orientation or gender identity are not considered 'normal', can be victims of inhuman treatment sometimes also in presence of the FACI.⁷³¹

Although transgender people are neither criminalised nor persecuted⁷³², according to the NGO Alternative CI they continue to be victims of repeated attacks, and are sometimes rounded up and violently arrested by the police in the Marcory zone in Abidjan; they sometimes have to pay money to their torturers to be freed.⁷³³

⁷¹⁷ Reuters, Jailing of gay Ivorian men stokes fears in LGBT safe haven, 22 March 2017, [url](#); Erasing 76 crimes, Ivory Coast: Activists under attack by anti-gay mobs, 24 January 2014, [url](#)

⁷¹⁸ AI, Shut Down For Speaking Out, ACT 30/6170/2017, [url](#); Jeune Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire : les locaux d'une ONG défendant les droits des homosexuels saccagés, 6 February 2014, [url](#)

⁷¹⁹ Alternative CI, ONG, Rapport alternatif sur le droit des personnes Lgbt en Côte d'Ivoire 2014- June 2018, E-mail, 27 December 2018.

⁷²⁰ AI, Shut Down For Speaking Out, ACT 30/6170/2017, [url](#)

⁷²¹ HRW, Human Rights Watch Country Profiles: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, 23 June 2017, [url](#)

⁷²² Reuters, Gay men in Ivory Coast attacked for showing support to Orlando victims: rights group, 29 June 2016, [url](#); Le Monde, « Orlando : des homosexuels menacés en Côte d'Ivoire pour avoir participé à un hommage », 29 June 2016, [url](#)

⁷²³ Afrobarometer, Good neighbours? Africans express high levels of tolerance for many, but not for all, Dispatch No. 74, 1 March 2016, [url](#)

⁷²⁴ CNDHCI, Rapport Alternatif Sur La Situation Des Droits De L'homme En Côte d'Ivoire, September 2016, [url](#)

⁷²⁵ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷²⁶ Alternative CI, Changeons De Regard Envers Les Minorites Sexuelles, 27 March 2018, [url](#)

⁷²⁷ Alternative CI, Rapport alternatif sur le droit des personnes Lgbt en Côte d'Ivoire 2014- June 2018, E-mail, 27 December 2018.

⁷²⁸ Alternative CI, Changeons De Regard Envers Les Minorites Sexuelles, 27 March 2018, [url](#)

⁷²⁹ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷³⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 March 2018, [url](#); Alternative CI, ONG, Rapport alternatif sur le droit des personnes Lgbt en Côte d'Ivoire 2014- June 2018, E-mail, 27 December 2018.

⁷³¹ Alternative CI, Rapport alternatif sur le droit des personnes Lgbt en Côte d'Ivoire 2014- June 2018, E-mail, 27 December 2018.

⁷³² UNAIDS, Data 2018, [2018], [url](#)

⁷³³ Alternative CI, Rapport alternatif sur le droit des personnes Lgbt en Côte d'Ivoire 2014- June 2018, E-mail, 27 December 2018.

In October 2016, two gay men were arrested and jailed in a city in the southwest for reasons that are not clear, but apparently for 'public indecency'. Activists said 'if indecency law was applied it would be [the] first known instance of it being used to jail gay people'. The men were released three months later.⁷³⁴

LGBT people prefer to avoid presenting themselves in health centres for fear of being stigmatised by health services.⁷³⁵ USAID reports that in 2017 '22 % of gay men and other men who have sex with men reported avoiding health-care services due to stigma and discrimination.'⁷³⁶ Many health care centres deny access to LGBT persons.⁷³⁷

Côte d'Ivoire has made considerable improvements in controlling the HIV epidemic in the past ten years.⁷³⁸ According to UNAIDS DATA, there were an estimated 460 000 people living with HIV in Côte d'Ivoire in 2016⁷³⁹; in 2017 there were 500 000.⁷⁴⁰ However, there is social resistance to treat homosexuals affected with HIV; many doctors refuse to treat them. In 2014, only three clinics in Abidjan were considered safe places where gay men with HIV could feel hopeful in seeking treatment.⁷⁴¹ The Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene, however, operated a program to help population at high risk of contracting HIV, including men who have sex with men.⁷⁴²

5.3 Women: violence, domestic violence, FGM/C, forced and early marriage

Côte d'Ivoire has ratified a number of international instruments enshrining the free exercise by women of the fundamental rights of human beings, some of which are The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The Charter of the United Nations, etc.⁷⁴³

At a national level, Article 6 of the Ivorian Constitution of 1960 states that the Republic guarantees everyone equality before the law without distinction of origin, race, sex or religion.⁷⁴⁴ The equality principle is reaffirmed in Article 30 of the Constitution of 1 August 2000; Article 3 also prohibits any form of torture or physical or psychological violence, injury or degradation.⁷⁴⁵ The principle of gender equality is enshrined again in Articles 35, 36, 37 of the 2016 Constitution.⁷⁴⁶

The principle of equality in the education field is laid down in Law No 2015-635 modifying law No 95-696 of 7 September 1995. Law No 2013-35 of 25 January 2013 on marriage abolished the notion of 'head of the family' in favour of co-management and the empowerment of women.⁷⁴⁷

⁷³⁴ The Guardian, Ivory Coast officials refuse to explain why two gay men were jailed, 26 January 2017, [url](#); Reuters, Jailing of gay Ivorian men stokes fears in LGBT safe haven, 22 March 2017, [url](#)

⁷³⁵ Alternative CI, Rapport alternatif sur le droit des personnes Lgbt en Côte d'Ivoire 2014- June 2018, E-mail, 27 December 2018.

⁷³⁶ UNAIDS DATA 2018, [2018], [url](#)

⁷³⁷ USAID, LGBT Health Care in Côte d'Ivoire: Finding a Voice in Social Media, December 2017, [url](#)

⁷³⁸ PEPFAR, Côte d'Ivoire Country Operational Plan (COP) 2017, Strategic Direction Summary, March 2017 [url](#)

⁷³⁹ UNAIDS DATA 2017, [July 2017], [url](#)

⁷⁴⁰ UNAIDS DATA 2018, [2018] [url](#)

⁷⁴¹ Independent Observer of the Global Fund, Resistance in Côte d'Ivoire to funding of programmes for men who have sex with men, 21 January 2014, [url](#)

⁷⁴² United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁴³ UN Human Rights Committee, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant, par. 131, 21 May 2013, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁴ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N° 60-356 Du 3 Novembre 1960 (1) Portant Constitution De La Republique, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁵ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi N°2000-513 du 1er AOÛT 2000 Portant Constitution De La Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#).

⁷⁴⁶ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 2016-886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁷ CNDHCI, Rapport Alternatif Sur La Situation Des Droits De L'homme En Côte d'Ivoire, September 2016, [url](#)

Since 2011, Côte d'Ivoire made progress from an economic and political point of view, and also on the engagement of women in leading sectors.⁷⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the female gender is still under-represented in decision-making positions.⁷⁴⁹ As the US Department of State in its 2017 report notes, Ivorian laws do not limit the participation of women in the political process, but tradition and culture have so far limited the role of women.⁷⁵⁰ At the 2016 parliamentary elections, 27 female members were elected out of 255 seats (10.9 %)⁷⁵¹; the female candidates at the elections were 166 against 1 170 men (12.4 %).⁷⁵² Eight women of the 66 current members (12.1 %) were elected for the Senate in March 2018.⁷⁵³

The 2018 statistical update of the United Nations states that Côte d'Ivoire ranked 155 out of 160 countries in the Gender Inequality Index for 2017. Women participating in the labour market were 48.1 % compared to 66.2 % of men. Adult women who reached at least a secondary level of education were 17.8 %, compared to 34.1 % of men.⁷⁵⁴ According to a 2017 World Bank report, women are still discriminated in the labour market, and on average are paid half of men's salaries. This disparity can partly be explained by differences in education level, but also by an unequal access to modern inputs and equipment, business networks and financing; a heavy work burden on women plays a role as well.⁷⁵⁵ According to a 2018 study, 26 % of the surveyed households are headed by a woman.⁷⁵⁶

The Ivorian law allows women to purchase land, but in practice this right is exercised only by women living in urban areas⁷⁵⁷, while in rural areas the discriminatory customs and lack of knowledge of the laws limit women to become landowners.⁷⁵⁸

A recent joint study by the European Union and the Ivorian Ministry responsible for women on gender equality in the country is meant to guide the government policy on gender issues, in order to promote women empowerment and rights.⁷⁵⁹

In November 2017, the Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme de Côte d'Ivoire (CNDHCI) started a campaign in Bouaké (capital of Gbêkê region) in order to raise awareness amongst the population on violence against women. Gbêkê region, which receives many complaints by women, is leading the fight towards violence against women. The President of CNDHCI invited victims and witnesses of violence to address its local offices which are available to help women and make known the mechanisms of protection of rights of all the peoples.⁷⁶⁰

5.3.1 Sexual violence

The crisis of 2010-2011 brought about 3 000 deaths and the rape of more than 150 women.⁷⁶¹ Usually, perpetrators were men (or youth) in arms but also individuals not affiliated with armed groups were

⁷⁴⁸ International Alert, Côte d'Ivoire election: Gender parity is possible, but it needs political will, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁴⁹ Portail Officiel du Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Promotion De La Femme : La Ministre Mariatou Kone Propose Un Avant Projet De Loi Sur La Parité Du Genre Dans Les Assemblées Elues, 2 August 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁰ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁵¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union, Côte d'Ivoire, Assemblée nationale (National Assembly), General Information about the Parliamentary Chamber, [url](#)

⁷⁵² Inter-Parliamentary Union, Côte d'Ivoire, Assemblée nationale (National Assembly), last elections, [url](#)

⁷⁵³ Inter-Parliamentary Union, Côte d'Ivoire, Sénat (Senate), [url](#)

⁷⁵⁴ UNDP, Human Development Indicators and Indices: 2018 Statistical Update Team, Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁵ The World Bank, Are Women the Key to Unlocking Economic Emergence in Côte d'Ivoire? Key Messages, 24 July 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁶ Bymolt, R., et al., Demystifying the cocoa sector in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, 2018, [url](#), p. 24.

⁷⁵⁷ AFC, Agence Française de Développement, Profil Genre Côte d'Ivoire, Dernière modification le 14/12/2016, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁸ AFC, Agence Française de Développement, Profil Genre Côte d'Ivoire, Dernière modification le 14/12/2016, [url](#); Social Institutions and Gender Index, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁵⁹ Portail Officiel du Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Égalité Du Genre: Le Gouvernement Résolu À Promouvoir Les Droits Économiques Et Sociaux Des Femmes, 13 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁰ Abidjan.net, La CNDHCI appelle à l'amplification de la sensibilisation contre les violences faites aux femmes, 30 November 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁶¹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 20 April 2016, S/2016/361, [url](#);

involved.⁷⁶² The Security Council report provides a list of political parties credibly suspected of being responsible for rape or other forms of sexual violence in situation of armed conflicts. The parties named for Côte d'Ivoire are the *Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* [Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire] (FRCI) (since 2016 called FACI) and several former militia groups, such as the *Alliance patriotique de l'ethnie Wè*, the *Front pour la libération du Grand Ouest*, the *Mouvement ivoirien de libération de l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire* and the *Union patriotique de résistance du Grand Ouest*.⁷⁶³

Despite the calm and stabilisation of institutions after the end of hostility in 2011, rapes committed mainly by private individuals continue at an alarming rate. The *Division des droits de l'homme* [Division of Human Rights] (DDH) of the UNOCI documented 1 129 rape cases on 1 146 victims between January 2012 and December 2015; most of the victims were women and girls, no adult men, and 12 boys. More than 93 % of the total numbers of perpetrators of rape during this period were private persons with no function in the Ivorian State, while 7 % were state agents.⁷⁶⁴

The United Nations verified 381 rape cases during 2013.⁷⁶⁵

In 2014, UNOCI documented 325 cases of rape.⁷⁶⁶ In 2015, women and girls continued to suffer from diffuse sexual and gender-based violence. UNOCI documented 176 cases of rape.⁷⁶⁷ From January to December 2016, UNOCI recorded 62 cases of rape; it verified 7 cases of sexual violence committed by FACI soldiers.⁷⁶⁸

The final report of the Secretary-General on the UNOCI, issued in January 2017, stated that sexual and gender-based violence and violence against minors were persistent. However, cases of sexual and gender-based violence have gradually decreased.⁷⁶⁹

In 2017, not having received accusations of sexual violence committed by Ivorian security forces, the United Nations removed the *Forces Armées de Côte d'Ivoire* from the Security Council list.⁷⁷⁰

The commitment of the UNOCI and UN partners to address the issue with the Ivorian military, communities and schools was of significant importance. On 3 June 2016, President Ouattara signed Decree 2016-273, authorising the creation of a National Committee on CRSV which would coordinate the government's efforts to combat conflict-related sexual violence.⁷⁷¹ In June 2017, the Committee adopted an act, signed by FACI Chief of Staff, the General Directors of key ministries, the Superior Commander of the *Gendarmerie Nationale*, the Prosecutor of the First Instance Tribunal of Abidjan, committing to fight acts of conflict-related sexual violence.⁷⁷² Although the government gave general compensations within the framework of transitional justice, it delivered no specific reparations in cases of sexual violence.⁷⁷³

FIDH, Les victimes oubliées de la Côte d'Ivoire, 7 March 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁶² CMI-WANEP, Côte d'Ivoire Gender-Based Violence, Conflicts, And The Political Transition, A Case Study Report, February 2013, [url](#)

⁷⁶³ UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence Report of the Secretary-General, 13 March 2014, S/2014/181, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁴ ONUCI, HCDH, Rapport Sur Les Viols Et Leur Repression En Côte d'Ivoire, July 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁵ UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence Report of the Secretary-General, 13 March 2014, S/2014/181, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁶ UN Security Council Conflict-related sexual violence, Report of the Secretary-General, 23 March 2015, S/2015/203, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁷ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 20 April 2016, S/2016/361, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁸ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, 15 April 2017, S/2017/249, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁹ UN Security Council, Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2017/89, 31 January 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, S/2018/250, 16 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁷¹ UN Security Council, Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, S/2017/89, 31 January 2017, [url](#); UNDP, UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict August 2014-December 2016 [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁷² UNDP, Ninth Consolidated Annual Progress Report on Activities Implemented under the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Fund Report of the Administrative Agent of the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Fund for the period 1 January –31 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁷³ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, S/2018/250, 16 April 2018, [url](#)

According to data collected by DDH, investigations during the period 2012-2015 were initiated in 1 012 cases, 18 % of which were subject to judgment, but only after rape was reclassified in indecent assault and other offenses, and submitted to a correctional court instead of a court for criminal matters.⁷⁷⁴

In 2017, social stigma and diffuse impunity prevented many victims from reporting abuses. There were some trials and convictions for rape, but many sexual assaults were reclassified as lesser offenses or settled out of court.⁷⁷⁵

In 2017, the Ministry of Justice issued two circulars inviting judicial authorities to avoid reclassifying rape as a lesser crime and reminding the law enforcement that medical certificates are not mandatory for rape victims to lodge a legal complaint.⁷⁷⁶ In fact, in many cases these were requested as fundamental evidence.⁷⁷⁷ Their cost varies from CFA 30 000 to 50 000 (about EUR 45 and 75) a sum out of reach for the majority of the victims.⁷⁷⁸

Of the 500 000 people living with HIV in Côte d'Ivoire in 2017, 270 000 were women over 15 years of age.⁷⁷⁹ The armed conflict since 2002 and the continuous insecurity contributed to a high prevalence of HIV in the country, especially among women in the western area of the Liberian border; many of them were infected as a consequence of sexual violence during the conflict⁷⁸⁰, others after becoming sex workers to flee the extreme poverty.⁷⁸¹ The Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene in 2017 ran a program to help part of the population at risk of contracting HIV, including sex workers.⁷⁸²

The Pavvios centre (*prévention et d'assistance aux victimes de violences sexuelles*) located in Man, set up in 2008 by the UNDP and under the institutional authority of the Ministry of Solidarity, of Women, and Child Protection, helped to improve the socio-economic conditions of women affected by the war in the western Montagnes Department.⁷⁸³

5.3.2 Domestic violence

Article 345 of Law No 1981-640 of 31 July 1981, instituting the Penal Code, modified by Law No 1995-522 of July 1995, states that 'Anyone who voluntarily beats or injures or commits any other violence or assault is punished...' When wounds cause death, the penalty is imprisonment of five to twenty years; for minor damages, less imprisonment years and various fines are foreseen. Article 354 states that 'Rape is punishable by imprisonment of five to twenty years.'⁷⁸⁴ However, it does not mention marital rape.⁷⁸⁵ Article 356 provides for imprisonment of one to three years and a fine for sexual harassment.⁷⁸⁶ There is no specific law on domestic violence in Côte d'Ivoire.⁷⁸⁷ Article 346 of the Criminal Code concerning aggravating circumstances does not contain any provision for cases of

⁷⁷⁴ ONUCI, HCDH, Rapport Sur Les Viols Et Leur Repression En Côte d'Ivoire, July 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁵ HRW, Côte d'Ivoire, Events of 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁶ UNDP, Ninth Consolidated Annual Progress Report on Activities Implemented under the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Fund Report of the Administrative Agent of the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Fund for the period 1 January –31 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁷ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#); ONUCI, HCDH, Rapport Sur Les Viols Et Leur Repression En Côte d'Ivoire, July 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁸ ONUCI, HCDH, Rapport Sur Les Viols Et Leur Repression En Côte d'Ivoire, July 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁹ UNAIDS, Data 2018, [2018], [url](#)

⁷⁸⁰ Aidspan, On the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, a challenge in supporting HIV-positive women, 18 September 2014, [url](#)

⁷⁸¹ Aidspan, On the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, a challenge in supporting HIV-positive women, 18 September 2014, [url](#); Namey, E. et al., Understanding the financial lives of female sex workers in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2018, [url](#), 30: sup 3, 6-17

⁷⁸² United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁸³ PNUD en Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan. Egalité des sexes en Côte d'Ivoire – Rôle du PNUD 2010-2017, July 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁴ Côte d'Ivoire, Code Penal, A LOI N° 81-640 Du 31 Juillet 1981 Instituant Le Code Penal, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁵ UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Côte d'Ivoire*, 28 April 2015, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁶ Côte d'Ivoire, Code Penal, A LOI N° 81-640 DU 31 Juillet 1981 Instituant Le Code Penal, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁷ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#); Canada, IRB, Côte d'Ivoire: domestic violence, including legislation, state protection and available support services (2012-December 2015) [CIV105345.FE], [url](#)

domestic violence.⁷⁸⁸ The only provisions that can be invoked for this type of violence are the general provisions on assault in the Criminal Code.⁷⁸⁹

Still, domestic violence is a widespread and serious problem⁷⁹⁰; among all forms of violence against women, conjugal violence is the most common.⁷⁹¹ There are no official data on domestic violence; however, a survey carried out in ten communes of Abidjan by the *Association ivoirienne pour la défense des droits de la femme* [Ivorian Association for the Defense of Women] (AIDF) showed in 2017 that 70 % of women are victims of domestic violence.⁷⁹² The coordinator of the 'Case de la paix' in Abobo reported during a meeting with WANEP-CI (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding), held in December 2017, that cases of domestic violence are the highest in number.⁷⁹³ There is a total silence around this kind of violence⁷⁹⁴; women rarely report it because of cultural reasons⁷⁹⁵ and because of police tending to ignore women who report it.⁷⁹⁶

Data collected in the *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples 2016* on the situation of women and children in Côte d'Ivoire, show that the percentage of women who declare that their husbands have the right to hit or beat them for certain reasons is 41.1 %; the percentage of men who declare the same is 23.5 %.⁷⁹⁷

Perpetrators are rarely prosecuted.⁷⁹⁸ In 2017, the Ministry of Women, Child Protection and Social Affairs assisted women victims of domestic violence and rape, including advice service at centres operated by the government.⁷⁹⁹

The Pavvios centres (*prévention et d'assistance aux victimes de violences sexuelles*) located in Attecoubé (in Abidjan) and in Man, set up in 2008 by the UNDP and under the institutional authority of the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, and Child Protection, are centres of excellence in the fight to the gender-based violence. Their mission, in particular, is to help victims of violence from 2 to 35 years of age, from a psychological, medical, security and legal point of view.⁸⁰⁰ The Pavvios centre in Attecoubé offers accommodation for a maximum of 3 days.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Côte d'Ivoire*, 28 April 2015, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁹ UN Human Rights Committee, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant, par. 131, 21 May 2013, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁰ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#); RFI, Violences faites aux femmes: l'ONU Femme brise le silence à Abidjan, 11 November 2015, [url](#)

⁷⁹¹ RFI, Violences faites aux femmes: l'ONU Femme brise le silence à Abidjan, 11 November 2015, [url](#); UN Human Rights Committee, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant, par. 131, 21 May 2013, [url](#); PNUD en Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan. Egalité des sexes en Côte d'Ivoire – Rôle du PNUD 2010-2017, July 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁹² CODAP, Violences sexuelles et conjugales faites aux femmes et aux filles : quel regard porté sur la société ivoirienne ?, 8 March 2018, [url](#).

⁷⁹³ Abidjan.net, Violences basées sur le genre : plus de 300 cas de violences conjugales à Abobo (WANEP-CI), 14 December 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁴ RFI, Violences faites aux femmes: l'ONU Femme brise le silence à Abidjan, 11 November 2015, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁵ United States, USDOS (US Department of States) Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁶ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#); IRB, Côte d'Ivoire: domestic violence, including legislation, state protection and available support services (2012-December 2015) [CIV105345.FE], 10 December 2015 [url](#)

⁷⁹⁷ Ministère du Plan et du Développement - Côte d'Ivoire, La Situation Des Femmes Et Des Enfants En Côte d'Ivoire, enquête à Indicateurs Multiples 2016 - Mics5, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁸ RFI, Violences faites aux femmes: l'ONU Femme brise le silence à Abidjan; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2018, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 March 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁹ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁰ PNUD en Côte d'Ivoire, Abidjan. Egalité des sexes en Côte d'Ivoire – Rôle du PNUD 2010-2017, July 2017. [url](#)

⁸⁰¹ Lea Paccaud (UNWOMEN), Abidjan. Le Centre intégré PAVVIOS, 08.12.2016, [url](#)

5.3.3 Forced and early marriage

In 1995, Côte d'Ivoire acceded to the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages of 1962 (which entered into force in 1964).⁸⁰²

Law No 64-375 of 7 October 1964, modified by Law No 83-800 of 2 August 1983, inserted in the Civil Code, provides that a man must be twenty years old and a woman eighteen years old to contract marriage; minors cannot marry without the consent of their father and mother who exercise the rights of paternal power.⁸⁰³ The age of majority in Côte d'Ivoire is set at 21.⁸⁰⁴

Article 378 of the Ivorian Penal Code, as modified by Law No 98-756 of 23 December 1998, states that one who forces a person under the age of 18 to enter into a customary or religious marital union is punished by imprisonment of one to five years and a fine of CFA 360 000 to 1 000 000 (About EUR 550 and 1 520).⁸⁰⁵

The Ivorian Penal Code does not contain provisions prohibiting levirate, sororate marriages⁸⁰⁶ and discriminatory inheritance rights; the revision to include these issues is still ongoing.⁸⁰⁷ Both levirate and sororate marriages were still practiced in 2017.⁸⁰⁸ However, courts do rule in favour of women who oppose these practices. Women can inherit from their husband under the succession law.⁸⁰⁹

In the *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples 2016 – MICS 5*, it is reported that 7.7 % of women, aged 15 to 49, were in a union for the first time before the age of 15, and 32.1 % of women aged 20 to 49 before the age of 18. It also indicates that the prevalence of early marriages in rural areas is higher than in urban areas and among the poorest and less educated strata of the population. The Gur ethnic group presents the highest percentage of women married before the age of 18 (43.2 %), followed by Southern Mandé (38.3 %), Northern Mandé (31.6 %), Krou (27.6 %), while the Akan has the lowest (20.2 %).⁸¹⁰ The previous *Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples 2011-2012* reported that 12 % of women aged 25-49 had got married before the age of 15 and 36 % before the age of 18.⁸¹¹

Despite the joint efforts of the Ivorian Government, the UN system and the civil society to end the incidence of forced marriages, these still exist.⁸¹²

⁸⁰² United Nations Treaty Collection, Convention on consent to marriage, minimum age for marriage and registration of marriages, 10 December 1962, [url](#)

⁸⁰³ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 64-375 du 7 Octobre 1964, relative au mariage, modifiée par la loi n° 83-800 du 2 Aout 1983, Chap.1 : Des conditions requises pour pouvoir contracter mariage [url](#)

⁸⁰⁴ Côte d'Ivoire, Le Code Civil, Livre premier, des personnes, Titre XI, chap. 1 : De la majorité, art. 448. [url](#); Buzz d' Abidjan, 18 ou 21 ans, à quel âge est-on majeur en Côte d'Ivoire ?, 28 August 2017, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁵ Côte d'Ivoire, Code Penal, LOI N° 81-640 Du 31 Juillet 1981 Instituant Le Code Penal, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁶ Levirate is the custom or law decreeing that a widow should, or in rare cases must, marry her dead husband's brother. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Levirate, n.d. [url](#); Sororate is the custom or law decreeing that a widower should, or in rare cases must, marry his deceased wife's sister. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Sororate, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁰⁷ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Fourth periodic report submitted by Côte d'Ivoire under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2015*, 11 July 2018, CEDAW/C/CIV/4, [url](#), p. 35

⁸⁰⁸ United States, USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁹ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Fourth periodic report submitted by Côte d'Ivoire under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2015*, 11 July 2018, CEDAW/C/CIV/4, [url](#), p. 35

⁸¹⁰ Ministère du Plan et du Développement - Côte d'Ivoire, La Situation Des Femmes Et Des Enfants En Côte d'Ivoire, enquête à Indicateurs Multiples 2016 - Mics5, tableau CP.7, [url](#)

⁸¹¹ INS, Côte d'Ivoire, Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples EDS-MICS 2011-2012, [url](#), p. 62

⁸¹² Agence française de développement (AFD), Profil genre Côte d'Ivoire, 14 December 2016, [url](#); Fraternité matin, Mariage forcé: 40% des filles mariées avant l'âge de 18 ans en Côte d'Ivoire, 29 November 2017, [url](#); Commission africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples (CADHP), Observations conclusives et Recommandations relatives au Rapport périodique de la République de Côte d'Ivoire sur la mise en œuvre de la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples (2012 -2015), February 2018, [url](#)

There are no exact figures on the prevalence of forced marriages. During the period from April 2016 to January 2017, UNOCI documented two forced marriages.⁸¹³ In June 2017, the executive director of the AIBEF (*Association ivoirienne pour le bien-être familial*) called the practice of forced marriages in Côte d'Ivoire 'alarming' and stated that 'most girls of childbearing age are forced into marriage'.⁸¹⁴ According to the NGO Girls not Brides, 'many girls are obliged to marry when they become pregnant, to mitigate the shame.' In 2016, 4 471 cases of adolescent pregnancy were recorded, of which 1 153 girls were aged 9-14.⁸¹⁵

Women refusing forced marriage may suffer from social pressure; family pressure could include being disinherited, chased away, and, in worst cases, killed. Women forced into a marriage can resort to State social services, police and gendarmerie. They very rarely resort to the court system, preferring to rely on social services to attempt mediation with their families.⁸¹⁶ The Muslim NGO 'Fondation Djigui', which fights against HIV and violence against women, offers such a mediation service.⁸¹⁷ Most cases of child marriage are indeed managed by social centres, which are often coordinated with the '*centre d'accueil*', and provide a number of services. Nevertheless, the government does not provide them with sufficient funds, according to Save the Children.⁸¹⁸

The State carried out a national strategy to end early marriage through campaigns to raise awareness.⁸¹⁹ Students were urged to report attempts to force a girl into a marriage, being it at home or at school, to the police, the school administration, and the social centres.⁸²⁰ In 2014, for the first time, a man was condemned to one year in prison and to a fine of CFA 360 000 for marrying his 11-year-old daughter off to an older cousin.⁸²¹ Law enforcement on child marriage is often weak.⁸²² A national campaign against early marriage was launched in Abidjan in December 2017.⁸²³

5.3.4 Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

Legal provisions

Côte d'Ivoire signed and ratified various international conventions containing provisions to eliminate harmful traditional practices such as FGM/C - such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Children. Côte d'Ivoire also ratified The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which also condemns the practice of FGM/C, and the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa adopted in 2003 by the African Union.⁸²⁴

The 5th article of the Constitution forbids '*les mutilations génitales féminines*' (FGM).⁸²⁵ In 1998, Côte d'Ivoire adopted a national law (98/757, 23.12.1998) prohibiting and punishing FGM/C. Article 2 of

⁸¹³ UN Security Council, Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, 31 January 2017, S/2017/89, [url](#).

⁸¹⁴ AIP, Côte d'Ivoire / L'AIBEF dénonce la pratique du mariage forcé en Côte d'Ivoire, 23 June 2017, [url](#)

⁸¹⁵ Girls not Brides, Côte d'Ivoire, n.d. [2018], [url](#)

⁸¹⁶ Canada, IRB, Côte d'Ivoire: Forced marriage, including among the Malinke; the prevalence of forced marriage and state protection available; the possibility for a young woman to refuse the man arranged for her (2014-March 2016), 24 March 2016, [url](#)

⁸¹⁷ Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA: COI Focus; Côte d'Ivoire, Le mariage forcé, 25 October 2018, [url](#)

⁸¹⁸ Save the Children, Child Marriage in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d, [url](#)

⁸¹⁹ UN Human Rights Council, National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*, Côte d'Ivoire, 3 February 2014, A/HRC/WG.6/19/CIV/1, [url](#)

⁸²⁰ Fraternité matin, Mariage forcé: 40% des filles mariées avant l'âge de 18 ans en Côte d'Ivoire, 29 November 2017, [url](#)

⁸²¹ France24, En Côte d'Ivoire, un père jugé pour avoir marié sa fille de 11 ans, 29 October 2014, [url](#); Afriknow, Journée contre les violences faites aux femmes: premier procès pour mariage précoce en Côte d'Ivoire, 25 November 2014, [url](#)

⁸²² Save the Children, Child Marriage in Côte d'Ivoire, n.d, [url](#)

⁸²³ AIP, La Côte d'Ivoire en campagne contre les mariages précoces des enfants, 6 December 2017, [url](#)

⁸²⁴ UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire, APRIL 2007, FACT SHEET Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, [url](#)

⁸²⁵ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 2016-886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#), art. 5

the Law stipulates that whoever commits a female genital mutilation is liable to imprisonment from 1 to 5 years and a fine from CFA 360 000 to 2 000 000 (about EUR 550 and 3 060). The penalty is from 5 to 20 years if the victim dies of related consequences.⁸²⁶ In 2000, the Ivorian State created a National Committee within the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs in order to fight violence against women and children. The Committee implemented an Action Plan for Women 2003-2007 to protect women and children from violence.⁸²⁷

In 2013, the Government launched the Tolérance zéro aux MGF campaign, and initiated actions aimed at reinforcing the application of Law No 98-757 of 23 December 1998 on FGM, in support of legal professionals and prefectural authorities work.⁸²⁸

The 2011-2012 *Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples* indicates that 38 % of the women aged 15-49 declared to have been excised and 11 % of girls aged 0-14. Nearly all women, 97 % of the daughters and 95 % of the mothers, were excised by a traditional (nearly all female) practitioner. The most prevalent form of FGM/C in the country is 'flesh removed'.⁸²⁹ As of 2016, according to MICS, 36.7 % of the women aged 15-49 years had undergone some kind of FGM/C in Côte d'Ivoire; 10.9 % of the girls aged 0-14 years had been subjected to FGM/C.⁸³⁰

The percentage of women who underwent FGM/C is higher in the north-west, north and west regions. It is more widespread in rural rather than in urban areas. Prevalence is higher among Muslim population and among poorest and less educated people. The Northern Mandé ethnic group shows the highest percentage of excised women (60.7 %), followed by the Gur (59.1 %), the Southern Mandé (43 %), the Krou (14.1 %), while the Akan has the lowest one (2.7 %). Non-Ivorian ethnic groups have 58 % of excised women, other Ivorian groups 53 %.⁸³¹

Reasons justifying FGM

UNICEF indicates four main reasons for justifying FGM/C in Côte d'Ivoire, namely: it is a way to test the courage and endurance of young girls, it is a guarantee for the wife's faithfulness, a ritual of purification and social integration, and it is seen as a religious requirement.⁸³² However, while FGM/C prevalence is highest among Muslim population, it is to be noted that Imam Cissé Djiguiba, President of the NGO Fondation Djigui, which fights violence against women, is a most vocal opponent of excision.⁸³³ He states that female excision is not even mentioned in the Koran, that FGM/C is a practice linked to the tradition and it is not to be attributed to any religion. He also urges to have courage to denounce it.⁸³⁴

The APDH declared that usually the grandmother is in charge of ensuring the girl's excision, but in case of absence of a grandmother, the most powerful woman in the family is charged, such as an aunt, both from mother or father side.⁸³⁵ This is corroborated by a report by the Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA), stating that the father usually is not involved in the

⁸²⁶ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n° 98-757 du 23 décembre 1998 portant répression de certaines formes de violence à l'égard des femmes, [url](#)

⁸²⁷ France, OFPRA, Les mutilations génitales féminines (MGF) en Côte d'Ivoire, 21 February 2017, [url](#)

⁸²⁸ Abidjan.net, « Tolérance zéro » face aux MGF en Côte d'Ivoire (Dossier), 6 February 2018, [url](#)

⁸²⁹ INS, Côte d'Ivoire, Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples EDS-MICS 2011-2012, Rapport de synthèse, [url](#)

⁸³⁰ Ministère du Plan et du Développement - Côte d'Ivoire, La Situation Des Femmes Et Des Enfants En Côte d'Ivoire, enquête à Indicateurs Multiples 2016 - Mics5, [url](#)

⁸³¹ Ministère du Plan et du Développement - Côte d'Ivoire, La Situation Des Femmes Et Des Enfants En Côte d'Ivoire, enquête à Indicateurs Multiples 2016 - Mics5, [url](#)

⁸³² UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire, Fact Sheet Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, April 2007, [url](#)

⁸³³ Fondation Djigui, Missions et Objectifs, n.d. [url](#)

⁸³⁴ AIP, Tolérance zéro face aux MGF en Côte d'Ivoire (Dossier), 6 February 2018, [url](#)

⁸³⁵ APDH, email with SEM, 7 February 2018.

decision-making and only is informed about his daughter's FGM/C in case of difficulties or medical complications.⁸³⁶

According to MICS 2016, 79.4 % of Ivorian women aged 15-49 years think that the practice of FGM/C should end.⁸³⁷ UNICEF indicates this percentage at 82 %; it also indicates 82 % of boys and men aged 15 to 49 years think the practice should end.⁸³⁸ Nonetheless, the social pressure remains strong. Refusing the excision in a community where the prevalence is strong can bring stigmatization and loss of social status.⁸³⁹

Enforcement of the law

In 2012, for the first time a conviction was issued on FGM; nine women in Katiola were sentenced to one year in prison and to a fine of CFA 50 000 [about EUR 75] for the excision of about thirty girls; four of them were convicted for FGM/C and four for complicity. In the past, according to a representative of the UNFPA, there were cases of arrests of women who performed excisions, but these cases never resulted in judgments and convictions.⁸⁴⁰

Some other cases of conviction and fines for performing excision were reported, for example in 2013 in the western region of Tonkpi.⁸⁴¹

In 2015, the mother of an excised girl was convicted in Katiola to one year in prison and a fine of CFA 360 000 [approximately EUR 550] for 'complicity in excision' and so was a relative who had accompanied her to an '*exciseuse*'. The prosecutor Hamed Diomandé stated that it was the second time they had condemned *exciseuses*, but the phenomenon was persistent.⁸⁴²

NGO's activities and state protection

Several local associations in the country, mainly in the northern and western regions and in Abidjan, operate in the field to fight against FGM, supported by international organisations such as UNICEF and UNOCI. Some of them are the *Organisation Nationale pour l'enfant, la femme et la famille* (ONEF), the above-mentioned *Fondation Djigui la Grande Espérance*, *l'Association ivoirienne pour la défense des droits des femmes* (AIDF), *l'Association de femmes juristes de Côte d'Ivoire* (AFJCI).⁸⁴³

The APDH declared that the two centres Akwaba and Pavvios located in Attecoubé (in Abidjan), help girls in difficulty, including but not specifically, girl victims of FGM.⁸⁴⁴

The activities by the state and the NGOs operating in the country to fight FGM/C seem to be complementary, but according to an OFPRA report of a mission to Côte d'Ivoire in 2012, all observers agree that the state is a minor player in the fight against FGM.⁸⁴⁵

During the 2017 World Day against Female Genital Mutilation, the Minister for Women, Child Protection and Solidarity, Mariatou Koné, reaffirmed the government's will to fight the practice of

⁸³⁶ France, OFPRA, Les mutilations génitales féminines (MGF) en Côte d'Ivoire, 21 February 2017, [url](#), p. 8

⁸³⁷ Ministère du Plan et du Développement - Côte d'Ivoire, La Situation Des Femmes Et Des Enfants En Côte d'Ivoire, enquête à Indicateurs Multiples 2016 - Mics5, Tableau CP.12,[url](#)

⁸³⁸ UNICEF, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Global Concern, 2016, [url](#)

⁸³⁹ France, OFPRA, Les mutilations génitales féminines (MGF) en Côte d'Ivoire, 21 February 2017, [url](#); Canada, IRB, Côte d'Ivoire: The practice of excision among the Malinke, including the frequency and age at which the excision is practiced; whether it is customary for a young woman to be excised before marrying; legislation on excision; the possibility of refusing excision and the consequences of such refusal; recourse available (2014-2016), CIV105478.FE, 24 March 2016,[url](#)

⁸⁴⁰ Le Monde Afrique, Côte d'Ivoire: pour la première fois, neuf femmes ont été condamnées pour excision, 19 July 2012, [url](#)

⁸⁴¹ Abidjan.net, Quatre personnes condamnées pour pratique d'excision à Danané, 1 March 2013, [url](#)

⁸⁴² Abidjan.net, Côte d'Ivoire : une mère condamnée à un an de prison ferme pour "complicité d'excision", [url](#)

⁸⁴³ France, OFPRA, Les mutilations génitales féminines (MGF) en Côte d'Ivoire, 21 February 2017, [url](#), pp. 9-10

⁸⁴⁴ APDH, Abidjan, Email with SEM, of 7 February 2018.

⁸⁴⁵ France, OFPRA-CNDA, Rapport de mission en République de Côte d'Ivoire, 26 novembre au 7 décembre 2012, May 2013, [url](#), pp. 169-170 ; France, OFPRA, Les mutilations génitales féminines (MGF) en Côte d'Ivoire, 21 February 2017, [url](#)

FGM. At the same time, this day gave the opportunity to recall that, despite the efforts made, the practice of excision persists.⁸⁴⁶

On 28 August 2018, the Ministry responsible for women gave four girls medical and psychological support, out of 14 girls who underwent excision in a camp in the south-eastern department of Adiaké. The other 10 had gone back to their encampment. The Ministry condemned the excisions and promised sanctions against the perpetrators and their accomplices.⁸⁴⁷

The government successfully prosecuted some FGM/C cases both during 2016 and 2017.⁸⁴⁸ In 2017, a tribunal in the western Department of Zouan Hounien condemned a woman and her four brothers for excision to three years of prison each; the woman was also condemned to a fine of CFA 500 000, and each of the four men to a fine of CFA 170 000.⁸⁴⁹

5.4 Trafficking in human beings

Human trafficking in West African countries has both a domestic and transnational aspect; victims from West Africa arrive in Western Europe via the Balkans and Eastern Europe.⁸⁵⁰

The central geographical position of Côte d'Ivoire in West Africa and the permeability of its borders make it a country of origin, transit and destination of various kinds of illicit trafficking, including human trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation.⁸⁵¹ As in the rest of the countries in the Gulf of Guinea, forced labour mainly concerns children, and sexual exploitation mainly involves women and young girls.⁸⁵² The majority of identified victims of trafficking are children⁸⁵³, but the fight against internal child trafficking may cause underreporting of prevalence of adult trafficking.⁸⁵⁴

Article 5 of the 2016 amended Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire prohibits human trafficking.⁸⁵⁵ In December 2016, the government adopted Law No 2016-1111 on the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons, which supplements the 2010 Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law. The 2016 law criminalises labour and sex trafficking, and establishes penalties for offenders and protection for victims; penalties range from 5-10 years imprisonment and a fine for adult trafficking, and from 20-30 years imprisonment and a fine for child trafficking. The penalty is more severe in case of trafficking in minors under 18 years, with penalties ranging from 10-20 years and fines ranging from 10-20 million francs.⁸⁵⁶ Article 2 of the 2016 law establishes a National Committee against trafficking in persons⁸⁵⁷, which was created in April 2017. It is in charge of trafficking prevention efforts, including the implementation of the 2016-2020 anti-trafficking national action plan.⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁴⁶ Portail Officiel du gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Les mutilations genitales feminines : le gouvernement ivoirien reaffirme sa volonte de lutter contre le phenomene, 6 February 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁷ Portail Officiel du gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, Protection sociale : le ministere de la femme prend en charge 4 filles victimes de mutilations genitales, 2 September 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁸ United States, USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 - Côte d'Ivoire, 3 March 2017, [url](#); USDOS Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Côte d'Ivoire, 20 April 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁹ Koaci.com, Abidjan. Côte d'Ivoire: Zouan Hounien, Cinq membres d'une famille écopent de trois ans de prison ferme pour mutilation génitale, 17.07.2017, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁰ France Diplomatie, Fight against human trafficking, Updated: April 2017, [url](#)

⁸⁵¹ UNODC, UNODC commits to supporting the Government of Côte d'Ivoire against transnational organized crime and terrorism, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁵² France Diplomatie, Fight against human trafficking, Updated: April 2017, [url](#)

⁸⁵³ USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2017 - Côte d'Ivoire, 12 July 2017, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁴ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁵ Côte d'Ivoire, LOI n° 2016-886 du 8 novembre 2016 portant Constitution de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁶ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n°2010-272 du 30 septembre 2010 portant interdiction de la traite des pires formes de travail des enfants, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁷ Côte d'Ivoire, Loi n°2016-1111 du 8 décembre 2016, relative à la lutte contre la Traite des personnes, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁸ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#).

In 2017 the government identified 57 victims of trafficking and 167 victims of child labour or child trafficking.⁸⁵⁹ In 2016, the identified trafficking victims reported were 106, and 62 were the potential victims of trafficking, including children from other West African countries.⁸⁶⁰

According to the US Department of State, the Ivorian Government did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in 2017, but it showed increasing efforts compared to the past. It convicted more traffickers, also under the new 2016 Law, and provided emergency shelters, for example orphanages or education centres, and assistance to some victims. However, funds deployed for law enforcement and NGOs, main providers of assistance to victims, were not enough, and in many cases NGOs had to fund and provide care to victims. There was no institutionalised system to identify adult trafficking victims and address them to care services. The government failed to convoke the Committee.⁸⁶¹

In April 2018, the Children of Africa Foundation, presided over by First Lady Dominique Ouattara, opened a children's transit centre in the city of Soubré, the aim of which is to help children victims of trafficking by providing them assistance and protection until they rejoin their families. A project of the foundation entails the construction of two more centres in Ferkessédougou and Bouaké.⁸⁶²

The government increased anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, but due to the lack of a system to collect and share data between ministries, these efforts were not fully optimised or reported. Data collected from Abidjan and 33 departments showed 59 cases of investigation, 27 prosecutions of suspects and the conviction of 20 traffickers in 2017, with an increase from the previous year (35 investigations, 19 prosecutions, eight convictions). Among the investigations reported by government entities, 32 were on sex trafficking and 12 on labour trafficking, while for the remaining investigations they did not report the types of trafficking. Convictions for traffickers under 2010 and 2016 anti-trafficking laws and the criminal code included 'trafficking, pimping, solicitation, exploitation of minors, and the worst forms of child labor'. Sometimes judges convicted traffickers for two of the above-said crimes. Convictions varied from two months to 11 years imprisonment; more than half of the convicted traffickers received at least five years imprisonment.⁸⁶³

The 2010 law was the primary law used to prosecute child trafficking; penalties imposed for child sex trafficking ranged from five to 20 years imprisonment and a fine, and child labour trafficking with 10 to 20 years imprisonment and a fine.⁸⁶⁴

5.4.1 Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation

Many women from five countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria) or more distant countries are victims of sexual exploitation in cities along the trade corridor from Abidjan to Lagos or at the borders.⁸⁶⁵ Some Ivorian women and girls are exploited in sex trafficking. Nigerian traffickers also exploit Nigerian women and girls in sex trafficking in Côte d'Ivoire. The Government did not show attempts to reduce the demand for commercial sex.⁸⁶⁶

Children from neighbouring countries are also trafficked in Côte d'Ivoire for sexual exploitation.⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁵⁹ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#).

⁸⁶⁰ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#).

⁸⁶¹ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#).

⁸⁶² Fondation Children of Africa, n.d., [url](#).

⁸⁶³ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#).

⁸⁶⁴ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#).

⁸⁶⁵ UNODC, Stratégie régionale de lutte contre la traite des personnes et le trafic illicite de migrants 2015-2020, [url](#).

⁸⁶⁶ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#).

⁸⁶⁷ United States, USDOL, Côte d'Ivoire, 2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, [url](#).

5.4.2 Trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation

Some Ivorian women and girls are subjected to forced labour in domestic service and restaurants. Traffickers, sometimes relatives of the victims, 'bring girls from eastern Côte d'Ivoire and other West African countries to Abidjan ostensibly to send them to school or to professional training but then subject them to domestic servitude'. The country is also a source for men in forced labour. Some members of the Ivorian community and some religious leaders also recruit women and girls for work in the Middle East and Europe, but they force them to work in North Africa and countries of the Gulf, mainly Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Tunisia.⁸⁶⁸

The majority of identified victims of trafficking are children⁸⁶⁹; they are subjected to human trafficking within Côte d'Ivoire, but they are also taken from Côte d'Ivoire for exploitation in other countries. Children who are subjected to the worst forms of child labour in the harvesting of cocoa and coffee have sometimes been trafficked.⁸⁷⁰ Ivorian boys are forcedly working in the agricultural and service industries, especially cocoa production. Boys from West African countries trafficked in Côte d'Ivoire may be forced into labour in agriculture, mining, carpentry, construction, and begging.⁸⁷¹

In 2015, within a series of operations in cooperation with Interpol against child trafficking and labour in West Africa⁸⁷², Ivorian police arrested 22 alleged traffickers and exploiters and freed 48 child slaves in the country's western cocoa plantations. The children, aged 5-16, came from Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire.⁸⁷³

The government made some efforts to reduce the demand for child labour and forced labour in the cocoa sector.⁸⁷⁴

⁸⁶⁸ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁹ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁰ US DoL, Côte d'Ivoire, 2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, [url](#)

⁸⁷¹ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#) ; US DoL, Côte d'Ivoire, 2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, [url](#)

⁸⁷² IOM, L'OIM s'unit à Interpol pour combattre la traite des enfants en Côte-d'Ivoire et au Ghana, 26 June 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁷³ Reuters, Ivory Coast frees 48 child slaves, arrests traffickers, 23 June 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁴ United States, USDOS, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report , Tier 2, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 June 2018, [url](#)

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

Reference Period: Events last 2 years (September 2016-September 2018)

1. Historical background

- From the death of Felix Houphouët-Boigny (7 December 1993) (including the concept of 'Ivoirité')
- Civil wars (2002-2003 – splitting of the country between rebel and loyalist zones and post electoral crisis 2010-2011)

2. Security situation

- 2.1 Western Region (most affected regions)
 - Inter-ethnic conflicts related to land disputes
 - Com-zones (including where are they now, what do we know about their recent activities – official and non-official? How influent are they at the moment?)
- 2.2 Abidjan (microbes)

3. Political situation

- 3.1 Political parties (overview, including list of existing parties, alliances, divisions, specific electorate – ethnic group, region, ...)
 - Elections - Senate election process March 2018
- 3.2 Situation of Gbagbo supporters (including state of play of detention, fair trial, family members, return to CI, high-profiles vs low profiles, ...)

4. Ethnic groups

- Overview (including which groups are where, percentage of the population, languages, ...). [Conflicts involving specific ethnic groups are addressed in 2.1]

5. Human rights

- Introduction, including an overview of the general human rights situation in the country
- 5.1 Specific issues
 - LGBTI
 - Women: GBV, including domestic violence, FGM/C, forced and early marriage
 - Trafficking in human beings (for the purpose of sexual exploitation and labour exploitation; M.O., organised crime; victims, ...)



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