

CÔTE D'IVOIRE: DEFUSING TENSIONS

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COTE D'IVOIRE: DEFUSING TENSIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A volatile security situation and mounting political tensions are threatening Côte d'Ivoire's recovery. In the last few months the country has been subjected to a series of deadly attacks, whose targets have included: a police station, an important military base, several army positions and a power station, in addition to an outbreak of violence in the west. Although these incidents do not pose a direct threat to stability, they reveal that for some groups the war is not yet over. Other signs are also worrying: security sector reform has been slow, political dialogue is stalled, the ruling coalition appears weak, violent discourses have returned, coup plots have been devised and uncovered and there is a clear lack of political will to promote national reconciliation. Given this state of affairs, President Alassane Ouattara and his new government should not solely be relying on economic recovery and the tightening of security measures to consolidate peace. International attention should not be diverted away from Côte d'Ivoire's stabilisation, which has become all the more crucial given the descent of its neighbour, Mali, into a deep and lasting crisis.

Eighteen months after the end of a post-election conflict which caused over 3,000 deaths and which was merely the epilogue of a decade-long political and military crisis, no one could have expected a complete return to normalcy. Côte d'Ivoire has to cope with the numerous challenges commonly faced by post-war countries. For one, the security apparatus is struggling to get back in order and, despite some progress, the Ivorian forces remain unstable and divided between the former members of the Gbagbo-era Forces de défense et de sécurité (FDS) and the former rebels of the Forces armées des forces nouvelles (FAFN). Both attitudes surrounding, and the modalities of, their expected integration within the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), are posing an impediment to reconciliation. Moreover, the former FAFN still remain the dominant force, with the police and gendarmerie continuing to be sidelined.

A further security issue lies in the over 18,000 traditional hunters, known as Dozos, deployed across the territory, who helped secure the country but now continue to play a security role for which they have neither the legitimacy nor

skills to do so. This military and militia apparatus working for the government is unpopular, especially among supporters of former President Laurent Gbagbo, who is now in detention at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, the Netherlands and who could soon be joined by his spouse, Simone Gbagbo, against whom the ICC unsealed an arrest warrant on 22 November. This configuration of the security sector aggravates tensions, particularly in the west, where intercommunal land issues are adding up. Furthermore the slow progress in reintegrating the tens of thousands of youths who participated in the conflict back into civilian life causes yet more security-related problems through increasing the frustration of this section of the population and encouraging them to keep their weapons as a guarantee of their economic survival.

Dialogue between the government and the opposition – a vital component of reconciliation – is stalled and does not go beyond statements of intent. The Front populaire ivoirien (FPI), former President Gbagbo's party, has chosen isolation by withdrawing from the electoral process and basing its return to the political game on unrealistic conditions. The FPI's moderate wing has not been able to distance itself from the exiled hardliners who nourish hope of regaining military power. Political dialogue and reconciliation prospects have been paralysed since the uncovering in June, September and October 2012 of a number of coup plots orchestrated by Ghana-based former ministers of Gbagbo, his family members and close associates. These plots have convinced hardliners from the other side of the political sphere – members of the Rassemblement des républicains (RDR), the presidential party, and the Forces nouvelles (FN), the former rebellion – of the need to consolidate their military victory and maintain a repressive stance toward all representatives of the old regime, including the moderates.

This political turmoil is accompanied by a return of hateful and dangerous discourses relayed by the partisan press. In this climate of polarisation, the government is making decisions that are gradually moving it away from its campaign promises of better governance and a break with the past, which was key to Ouattara's victory in the November 2010 presidential election.

The judicial system is also adding to tensions, due to its biased stance: not a single FRCI member has been charged, either for crimes committed during the post-election crisis or for those committed since. Arbitrary arrests have been taking place in the pro-Gbagbo media and have been widely carried out by the powerful Direction de la surveillance du territoire (DST) and military police.

In the administration and public companies, some appointments have been made on regional or political criteria, in the name of an “adjustment policy” – a form of reverse discrimination – that contradicts promises of improving governance. The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR) is still struggling to start its work. The establishment of its local committees is proving difficult. More worrying is that the commission does not seem to be supported by the political power that established it last year, amid wide media coverage. The government has still not provided it with the necessary financial resources, and the personalised management style of its president, Charles Konan Banny, remains under sharp criticism.

In this context, the ruling coalition has been showing signs of fragility, which culminated in the dissolution of the government on 14 November, a decision which exposed the cleavages between the RDR and its main ally, the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI). The appointment on 21 November of a senior PDCI member, Daniel Kablan Duncan, as prime minister replacing Jeannot Ahoussou-Kouadio, who is also from that party, should abort the crisis within the coalition and ensure stronger unity in the new government, which has hardly been changed. Kablan Duncan, who had previously served as prime minister from 1994 to 1999 and was the incumbent foreign minister, is a respected member of his party, a personal friend of President Ouattara and, like him, an economist. The clear priority given to the promotion of strong economic growth to reduce unemployment and poverty is welcome, but it cannot be a substitute for political gestures dedicated to national reconciliation.

It appears as if the political class has not learned the vital lessons from the post-electoral crisis, and consequently it is now repeating the very attitudes that previously led the country to the brink. It is urgent that President Ouattara, the new government and the entire ruling political class resist the temptation of abusing power, which has already cost many lives in Côte d'Ivoire. It is also time for the African organisations and the wider international community to publicly and firmly denounce the current Ivorian regime's errors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve security of the state and the populations

To the Government of Côte d'Ivoire:

1. Encourage and increase initiatives to promote coexistence between former members of the Forces de défense et de sécurité (FDS) and the Forces armées des forces nouvelles (FAFN), including training, public utility work or joint exercises.
2. Speed up the redeployment of the police and gendarmerie, and provide them with a significant budget for equipment, focused on transport, communications and working conditions, as well as with the weapons necessary to perform their tasks.
3. Organise a nationwide conference, which would include the main Dozo leaders, in order to define their role within society and the security apparatus, as well as the type of weapons they are allowed to have; and start identifying, disarming and reinserting into civilian life the “fake Dozos”.
4. Declare publicly a deadline for the Autorité pour le désarmement, la démobilisation et la réinsertion (ADDR) to identify and reinsert former combatants; and encourage the ADDR to determine available economic opportunities and provide them to a matching, realistic number of former combatants.

To the Governments of Ghana and Togo:

5. Execute, within their national legal framework, the arrest warrants issued by Côte d'Ivoire against exiled former leaders or close associates of the Gbagbo regime.

To International Partners, notably France, the U.S. and the European Union:

6. Ask the Ivorian authorities to define short-term objectives for security sector reform, based on immediate problems, and direct assistance to this reform mainly toward fulfilling these objectives.

To promote dialogue and normalise political life

To the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and leaders of the ruling coalition:

7. Include the FPI and other parties that are not represented in the National Assembly in the most important debates of the president's five-year term, notably concerning institutional reforms and rural land reform.
8. Modify the composition and functioning of the Electoral Independent Commission (CEI) ahead of the 2013 regional and local elections, in order to ensure a

more balanced representation of different political forces, while waiting for an overhaul of the electoral system through broader constitutional reform.

To the leaders of the Front patriotique ivoirien (FPI) and close associates of the Gbagbo former regime:

9. Condemn unequivocally all activities seeking to destabilise the government and generate insecurity; distance themselves from all individuals – civilians and military – linked to the Gbagbo regime, who are currently in exile and nurture hopes of military revenge; and accept government proposals to join political dialogue.

To promote justice and reconciliation

To the President of Côte d'Ivoire:

10. Call all political leaders whose parties have elected representatives to gather and publicly and collectively ask for forgiveness from the Ivorians for all the suffering inflicted on them since the December 1999 coup.

To the justice minister:

11. Clarify the judicial situation of some Gbagbo associates who are detained in Côte d'Ivoire, including his son Michel Gbagbo and the former FPI president, Pascal Affi N'Guessan; and release members of the old regime and Gbagbo associates who are detained on insufficient grounds.
12. Follow-up quickly, through impartial judicial proceedings, on the conclusions of the report released last August by the National Inquiry Commission on human rights and international humanitarian law violations that were committed in Côte d'Ivoire during the post-election crisis, ie, from 31 October 2010 to 15 May 2011.

To the President of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

13. Establish quickly, with civil society support, the CDVR's local committees, without, however, conditioning the beginning of their work to simultaneous opening of the 36 committees, which should be gradually established, primarily in priority zones such as Duékoué in the west.

To the UN Secretary General and his Special Representative in Côte d'Ivoire:

14. Reinforce the human rights division of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) to enable it to improve its follow-up work on violations across the territory and to increase its capacity to respond adequately.

To Regional and International Partners:

15. Condemn publicly, regularly and more strongly the repeated human rights violations and remind President Ouattara and the government of their commitments to fair justice and national reconciliation.

To the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court:

16. Continue her investigations, pursuant to the October 2011 ruling by the ICC judges, including on crimes that could fall under the court's jurisdiction and that have allegedly been committed between 2002 and 2010.

Dakar/Brussels, 26 November 2012

CÔTE D'IVOIRE: DEFUSING TENSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

On 26 June 2012, Côte d'Ivoire reached the completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, allowing it to obtain a reduction of more than FCFA 4,090 billion (around \$7.5 billion) on its total external debt of FCFA 6,396 billion (around \$13 billion) from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Government revenue allocated to servicing this heavy debt could henceforth be used for the development of the country. Since it came to power, the government has had financial support from the international community¹ and has made economic recovery its main goal during remedy to the long and painful crisis.

The government's promoted policy of recovery is rendered necessary due to the tens of thousands of unemployed young people who, as such, are perceived as particularly sensitive and vulnerable to extreme discourses and manipulation. However, economic recovery will not by itself resolve the country's profound political and social crisis. Despite a decade of political and military conflict and the tragic aftermath of the November 2010 presidential election, the country is not bankrupt and has remained wealthier than several of its peaceful neighbours. But, as demonstrated by the major wave of armed violence in August 2012, good growth forecasts alone² cannot guarantee stability for Côte d'Ivoire. With this in mind, the five-year presidential term of office (2010-2015) must aim for strong economic growth, but it must also strive to correct the political, ethnic, land and institutional imbalances that have characterised the country for two decades. The Ouattara presidency must also build a defence and security apparatus that serves the country and its citizens rather than just the government or a particular clan.³ Without this crucial reform, the armed forces will remain a destabilis-

ing element, as they have been since the December 1999 coup. It is also essential that the government evades the trap set by pro-Gbagbo hardliners, who are trying to provoke the authorities to respond to their attacks with the kind of indiscriminate repression that resolves nothing. Finally, symbolic gestures of appeasement, such as the release of some of the former regime's leading figures, detained without solid legal grounds, and the construction of an independent judiciary are indispensable for reconciliation.

¹ See Crisis Group Africa Report N°83, *Côte d'Ivoire: Continuing the Recovery*, 16 December 2011, p. 7.

² According to the Ivorian government, economic growth will be 8.1 per cent in 2012. "Visite du Président de la Banque mondiale en Côte d'Ivoire: l'allocution de SEM Alassane Ouattara, Président de la République de Côte d'Ivoire", Ivorian presidential communiqué, 5 September 2012.

³ Crisis Group Report, *Côte d'Ivoire: Continuing the Recovery*, op. cit., p. 7-13.

II. INTERNAL TENSION, EXTERNAL THREATS

A. A DISORGANISED SECURITY SYSTEM

During the first half of 2012, some progress was made in security sector reform (SSR), mainly administrative aspects. In both the former government led by Jeannot Kouadio-Ahoussou which was dissolved on 14 November and in the new one that was announced on 22 November, President Ouattara has acted as the defence minister.⁴ On 6 April, a presidential order established an SSR working group, merging the various bodies dealing with the issue, which until then lacked centralisation and coordination.⁵ This working group is responsible for providing a long term vision and clear guidelines on the future role of the security forces.⁶

On 27 June 2012, former members of the FDS were appointed to senior positions,⁷ with responsibility for defence and the navy-inspectorate,⁸ providing a counter-weight to the powerful non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the ex-rebel Forces nouvelles (FN).⁹ Sidelined for almost a year, some of these senior officers have skills which were lacking in the new Ivorian army, but their numbers are still small in relation to the FRCI's enormous needs and they are not very influential. In the same spirit, a National Security Council, responsible for coordinating "security issues" and the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Authority (ADDR), responsible for supervising all DDR operations, were created on 8 and 23 August respectively.

However, these administrative changes have not had the anticipated positive effects in the field. The first ten months of the year closed with a noticeable deterioration in the security situation. The period of relative calm that began in March was followed by a three-month period of unrest,

violence and tension. On 8 June, an attack led by about one hundred Liberian mercenaries and pro-Gbagbo Ivorian militiamen left at least fifteen dead on the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border.¹⁰ On 20 July, the destruction of a refugee camp in the town of Duékoué left an official death toll of six. This attack was reportedly led by FRCI soldiers, Dozo auxiliaries and angry civilians.¹¹ It was followed a few days later by clashes between Dozos and residents of the town of Sinfra,¹² leaving one dead. Furthermore, between 4 and 25 August, a series of deadly attacks targeted FRCI positions in the south and west of the country.¹³

Attacks against President Ouattara's government have since then taken place every month. On the night of 21-22 September, the town of Noé was the scene of violent combat between Ivorian attackers based in Ghana and FRCI forces. At least nine people were killed in this clash, which lasted several hours.¹⁴ On the same day, two police stations and a gendarmerie post were attacked in Port-Bouët, to the south of Abidjan.¹⁵ On 15 October, further attacks targeted the strategically important Azito power plant in the Yopougon district of Abidjan and police and gendarmerie positions in Bonoua, near the border with Ghana, although there were no casualties.¹⁶ The death toll for the incidents between June and October 2012 was at least 47.

¹⁰ See footnote 91.

¹¹ On 20 July 2012, FRCI soldiers, Dozo hunters and Duékoué residents reportedly attacked a displaced people's camp in Nahibly and killed several people. This camp, supervised by UN-OCI, housed 5,000 people. It was completely demolished. The attack was presented as a violent reaction to the presence in the camp of armed men responsible for many robberies in Duékoué. In the absence of a judicial investigation, the exact circumstances and number of victims of the attack are still unknown. Crisis Group telephone interviews, government officials, July 2012.

¹² See "Sinfra: Dozo et population s'affrontent", *Le Nouveau Réveil*, 2 August 2012.

¹³ On 5 August, a police station was attacked in the district of Yopougon, Abidjan, leaving five dead, all FRCI personnel. A few hours later, a barracks was attacked at Abengourou, in the east of the country, although there were no casualties. The day after, an attack targeted the Akouédo military base in Abidjan, leaving seven dead, including six soldiers and one of the attackers. On 13 August, attackers fired on a checkpoint on the Liberian border, killing one FRCI soldier. On 16 August, in Dabou, 50km from Abidjan, a FRCI position was attacked. On 24 August, the town of Irobo, 150km to the south west of Abidjan, was the scene of another attack, which left six dead.

¹⁴ Tirs à Noé après de nouvelles attaques contre les forces de sécurité à Abidjan", Radio France internationale (RFI), 21 September 2012.

¹⁵ "Nouvelles attaques en Côte d'Ivoire", RFI, 21 September 2012.

¹⁶ "Côte d'Ivoire: tirs sur une centrale thermique à Abidjan, police attaquée dans le sud", Agence France-Presse (AFP), 15 October 2012.

⁴ Paul Koffi Koffi, assistant minister for defence in the previous government, kept his job.

⁵ Crisis Group interview, UN official, Abidjan, June 2012.

⁶ The Ivorian authorities have yet to present a long-term plan defining the army's role. Most of the plans proposed to the international community have been requests for funding to re-equip the armed forces with sophisticated equipment, notably helicopters. Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Abidjan, July 2012.

⁷ See "De nouveaux patrons nommés hier, dans l'armée", *L'Expression*, 28 June 2012.

⁸ Considered to be pro-Gbagbo, Colonel-Major Konan Boniface, who returned from exile in July 2011, was appointed to this post. Formerly in the FDS, renowned for his efficiency and knowledge of military affairs, Colonel Patrice Kouassi was appointed director of defence. See "Les dessous de la nomination de Konan Boniface", *L'Expression*, 3 July 2012 and Crisis Group interviews, Ivorian officials, Abidjan, June and July 2012.

⁹ Crisis Group interview, Ivorian military official, Abidjan, June 2012.

These attacks revealed the existence of determined, well-organised pro-Gbagbo forces and the weakness of a still fragmented and disorganised army. The attacks in August, especially that on the Akouédo military camp, would have only been possible with the aid of insiders, and some members of the former FN loyal to the memory of Ibrahim Coulibaly,¹⁷ are strongly suspected of having joined pro-Gbagbo militia in this attack.¹⁸ Following the attacks on the Azito power station and the security forces in Bonoua, two gendarmes, two police officers and three seamen, all members of the FRCI, were arrested.¹⁹

This situation is a direct result of the Ivorian army's implosion during the post-electoral crisis. Fifteen months after the end of the "war of the dual presidency", it would be unrealistic to hope that the army would have totally recovered from the shock or that it would be a perfectly well-behaved and coherent republican force. However, the government is not showing any sense of urgency in terms of achieving such objectives. In fact, these continuing attacks testify to the FRCI's inability to impose order on the country. Meanwhile, the forces hostile to President Ouattara are incapable of retaining positions on Ivorian territory or overthrowing the government.

1. Too many hunters, too few gendarmes

One of the main problems facing the security apparatus is the role of the gendarmerie and the police force. The re-deployment and equipping of these two forces is slow and uneven. Deployment has been partly achieved in big cities like Abidjan and Bouaké, but elsewhere, police officers and gendarmes still have only limited access to arms and ammunition, particularly in small and medium-sized communities.²⁰ This often forces them to request support from the FRCI, which have "too many arms",²¹ and this reduces the speed of investigations and sometimes places them in a humiliating position.

In some sensitive regions, such as along the western border with Liberia, it seems that every effort is made to ensure that police officers and gendarmes do not have all the equipment they need to do their job: they either have ve-

hicles and no arms or vice-versa.²² In some extreme cases, the local authorities house and feed the gendarmes.²³ Police officers and gendarmes are no longer forced to share their accommodation with the FRCI nor to work under their orders, as was the case immediately after the war ended. However, many police stations and gendarmerie posts still have no furniture, computers or desks. Their inability to conduct judicial investigations or intervene quickly hinders the fight against crime, especially in the north, where road-banditry – especially by the so-called *coupeurs de route* – has become considerably more active in the last six months.²⁴

It is clear that the gendarmes, police officers and ex-FN soldiers do not trust each other. Rightly or wrongly, the political and military personnel that backed the rebellion see the gendarmerie as potential or declared supporters of the former regime²⁵ and believe the police force has neither the "material capacity" nor the "courage" to stand up to the military threat posed by the extremists loyal to the former regime.²⁶ Attempts to work together are still very limited and often take the form of NCOs working in pairs, while ordinary soldiers have so far been rarely involved. Some ex-rebel leaders responsible for ensuring security in sensitive regions and districts even refuse categorically to integrate gendarmes or countenance the creation of a mixed force to promote trust.²⁷

Given the lack of gendarmes and police officers, much of the day-to-day work of ensuring security also falls to the Dozos (traditional hunters), an auxiliary force that has taken on considerable importance since the end of fighting in Abidjan in March 2011.²⁸ The FN and the Dozos do

¹⁷ A historic leader of the FN rebellion, Ibrahim Coulibaly was a long-time opponent of Guillaume Soro before being killed in April 2011 in Abidjan, in circumstances that remain obscure.

¹⁸ Crisis Group telephone interviews, diplomats, academics, September 2012. Also see "Côte d'Ivoire: des attaques soigneusement préparées?", *Jeune Afrique*, 4 September 2012.

¹⁹ "Les assaillants mis en déroute", *Nord Sud*, 16 October 2012.

²⁰ In May 2012, eight gendarmes in the town of Man were briefly placed under arrest after refusing to obey orders to join a mission to the Liberian border with only four weapons between them. Crisis Group interview, civil society leader, Abidjan, June 2012.

²¹ Crisis Group interview, international military official, Abidjan, June 2012.

²² Crisis Group interview, civil society leader, Abidjan, June 2012.

²³ Crisis Group interview, general adviser, Abidjan, June 2012.

²⁴ Active throughout West Africa, road-bandits are armed gangs that attack motor vehicles and bikes. See Human Rights Watch (HRW) report, "Côte d'Ivoire: lethal crime wave, security vacuum in Bouaké", 5 March 2012.

²⁵ During his ten years in power, Laurent Gbagbo "ethnicised" and politicised the gendarmerie and police forces by recruiting hundreds of officers from his home region or from ethnic groups that supported him. These recruits were called "promotion Blé Goudé", in reference to the leader of the "young patriots", Charles Blé Goudé. Crisis Group interviews, academics, Ivorian security and political officials, Abidjan, May and October 2011.

²⁶ Crisis Group interview, ex-FN official, Abidjan, June 2012.

²⁷ Crisis Group interview, international military official, Abidjan, June 2012.

²⁸ The use of militias and auxiliary forces is not new in Côte d'Ivoire. The Félix Houphouët-Boigny regime relied on "hooligans" and "strong-arms" recruited from among Abidjani criminals to counter the expansion of the Côte d'Ivoire Student and School Federation at the beginning of the 1990s. Robert Gueï recruited especially violent members of the army into unofficial

not, however, have the training required to conduct judicial investigations and are not trusted by certain sectors of the population, particularly in the regions where a majority voted for Laurent Gbagbo in the last presidential election. This is not the first time that the Dozos have played the role of police auxiliaries at the national level. They were first given this role at the beginning of the 1990s to help deal with an upsurge of crime in the north,²⁹ but they have never been so numerous and ubiquitous as they are now.

The Dozos are now deployed throughout the national territory. Originally from the north of the country, they currently have a greater presence in the south than in the north. In February 2012, the UN Police (UNPOL) counted 10,167 Dozos south of the former demarcation line and 8,132 to the north of this line.³⁰ They are stationed in all towns in the south that have a strategic economic or political importance: the Abidjan area; the political capital, Yamoussoukro; the town of Daloa and the port of San Pedro, which are the nerve centres of the cocoa trade; and the conflict-ridden Moyen-Cavally region.

The government exercises a certain amount of control over these armed elements, but the Dozos have their own command structure and are organised at the national and regional levels.³¹ They have close relations with the FN and to a lesser degree with some sectors of the presidential party, the RDR.³² Their behaviour and the way they are perceived by the local population varies from region to region. In the north, they are seen as a positive force that protects citizens and willingly works with the police force, where one exists. In some parts of the west, they fill the security vacuum by controlling the most dangerous roads, such as the one linking Bangolo and Man. However, in

other parts of the south, their reputation or previous actions inspire fear.³³

In the west, the human rights division of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) holds them responsible for 20 per cent of the human rights violations attributable to the FRCI and their auxiliary forces. The presence among their ranks of "fake Dozos"³⁴ makes it an even more complex task to define their role and assess their responsibility for perpetuating community tensions, but disarming them would be a complicated operation because they have unwritten cultural and traditional rights to handle and carry weapons. Although most of them are still equipped with hunting rifles, some now have war weapons such as AK-47 rifles and rocket-launchers.³⁵

2. The challenge of reintegrating ex-combatants

The "fake Dozos" are the latest in a long list of combatants requiring reintegration into civilian life. According to the former president of the National Assembly, Mamadou Koulibaly,³⁶ 97,000 armed men are awaiting demobilisation. They are divided into three groups: the first is composed of 32,000 ex-FN soldiers who, at one time or another, were in the rebel forces; the second is composed of 36,000 auxiliaries recruited by the FN during the post-electoral crisis; and the third is composed of 38,000 members of militias and self-defence groups created under the former regime. These estimates are in line with other Ivorian and international sources, but there are no exact figures of how many men require demobilisation.

Since the war ended, the demobilisation and reintegration of the thousands of men who participated in the conflict has stagnated.³⁷ Despite repeated requests from the international community and Ivorian officials for a coordi-

organisations like the "Red Brigades" and "Cosa Nostra" to eliminate or harass his opponents. Laurent Gbagbo and the "refounders" (*les refondateurs*) used the "young patriots" to control Abidjan. It is surprising that the new government, which presents itself as modern and in favour of improving governance, should adopt the same model.

²⁹ See Joseph Hellweg, *Hunting the ethical state* (Chicago, 2011), p. 5 and 51.

³⁰ See "Draft report prepared by Political Affairs Division (PAD)", February 2012. This internal UNOCI twelve-page report, seen by Crisis Group, exposes and analyses the problem posed by the Dozos since the end of the post-electoral crisis.

³¹ Organised around several spiritual leaders in Katiola and Korogho, and a president living in Bouaké, the Dozos have regional and departmental organisations led by the "Dozo-Ba".

³² A unit of 1,500 Dozos called "warriors of the light" fought alongside the FN at the beginning of the armed rebellion in 2002. The former head of the military police and ex-zone commander, Zacharia Koné, is also a high-ranking Dozo leader. Crisis Group observation in the field, November 2002 and Crisis Group interview, Zacharia Koné, Abidjan, March 2012.

³³ "Draft report prepared by PAD", op. cit.

³⁴ UNOCI counted 2,000-3,000 men who could be placed in this category. They have not been initiated into the organisation and only take orders from their self-proclaimed leaders. See "La réponse de l'Onuci sur la question des dozos", internal note, undated.

³⁵ The 500 Dozos stationed around Yamoussoukro have AK-47 and Mas-36 rifles and RPG rocket-launchers. "Draft report prepared by PAD", op. cit.

³⁶ "Diagnostic de la situation sécuritaire, Mamadou Koulibaly révèle: '97000 guérilleros menacent'", *L'Inter*, 14 August 2012.

³⁷ Reintegration efforts have had poor results: 3,000 ex-combatants were given jobs in labour-intensive sectors, such as construction and infrastructure maintenance. In the west, 1,000 men were given training courses but failed to find stable jobs afterwards. See "Réinsertion des ex-combattants: une structure unique pour gérer le processus", *L'Expression*, 4 November 2011.

nated solution,³⁸ reintegration has, for several years, been plagued by its organisation by an array of different unconnected and unpredictable bodies.³⁹ For example, the army general staff has had no access to the database held by one of the main programs, the National Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Program (PNRRC).⁴⁰ Furthermore, the lack of information from the PNRRC means that the minister responsible for ex-combatants and war victims is often forced to work with information provided by associations of former combatants.

The work of conducting a census of ex-combatants has been underway for many years but has never been completed.⁴¹ The number of men concerned,⁴² the random criteria used to select them and poor cooperation between those dealing with this issue make it difficult to produce credible figures. A new census was launched in July but almost immediately abandoned following the creation of the ADDR, which started the job again.

SSR started several years ago but has made little progress. It is in the interests of national and international actors to discard this ineffective long-term reform in its current form and instead identify short- and medium-term priorities. This must be followed by measures to deal with the immediate problems experienced by the defence and security forces. For example, the lack of a gendarmerie and police force, especially in the south west of the country hampers the promotion of good community relations and leaves a

vacuum that is filled by forces perceived as hostile by a large sector of the population and whose presence in the field exacerbates antagonisms. Gendarmerie and police forces must be quickly re-equipped and reestablished throughout national territory and efforts to promote trust between former members of the FDS and the FN should be boosted by working together, for example, on training, joint exercises and public works projects.

The government should also take action to convene a national seminar to discuss the situation of the Dozos, identify them, define their role in the security apparatus and decide what weapons they are allowed to carry. Such a seminar, which should build on the 1 November 2012 meeting between the interior minister and Dozo leaders,⁴³ may be able to rely on the desire of some Dozo leaders to preserve the image and identity of their co-fraternity. Finally, the armed forces must deploy all the skills available to them and reincorporate as many senior officers as possible into the military hierarchy and SSR work, especially those who have received advanced training.

Created at the end of August, the ADDR must break with the past and set a realistic and short-term deadline for completing the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, a process that is almost as old as the Ivorian crisis itself. Managers of preceding agencies given responsibility for this task, who have been conspicuous in their failure, must be removed from their posts. Counting ex-combatants seems to be a difficult, even impossible task,⁴⁴ and so a new approach must be adopted, which should focus on identifying the immediate reintegration opportunities offered by the economy and provide jobs for young ex-combatants.

The reintegration program, which will depend on the health of the economy as well as on the competence of the agencies responsible for organising it, also runs the risk of being undermined by an increase in frustration and tension and the exploitation of such a situation by proponents of violence. The north is already a focus for a major increase in crime by ex-FRCI elements.⁴⁵ Moreover, in a country where all alliances are possible, there could be an increasing num-

³⁸ In an interview with the daily *Fraternité Matin* on 4 July 2012, the ex-combatants and war victims minister, Mathieu Badaud Darret, said: "The existence of many actors dealing with ex-combatants without any real synergy or coordination is bound to produce an unsatisfactory result . . . Reintegration is going so slowly because each body is working in its own way". During the 3 November 2011 meeting, the social affairs and solidarity minister, Gilbert Koné, called for the creation of a single body to handle reintegration. See "Réinsertion des ex-combattants", op. cit.

³⁹ In addition to government agencies, there are also NGOs and associations of ex-combatants involved.

⁴⁰ Crisis Group interview, UN official, Abidjan, June 2012. Created by the 2007 Ouagadougou Political Agreement and attached to the prime minister's office, the PNRRC's main mission is "to achieve the social and economic reintegration of demobilised ex-combatants".

⁴¹ Chapter 7 of the 23 January 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Accords underlined that the "Government of National Reconciliation shall ensure the social reintegration of military personnel of every origin with the help of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRRR) type programmes". At least three reference documents have since dealt with DDR: the Grand-Bassam roadmap, the Joint Operations Plan (PCO) and the PNDDR/RC.

⁴² The PNRRC estimates the number of men to be reintegrated at 109,000. See "Nouveau recensement des ex-combattants en Côte d'Ivoire", RFI, 10 July 2012.

⁴³ See "Hamed Bakayo à la confrérie dozo: aidez-nous à chasser les brebis galeuses de vos rangs", *Le Patriote*, 2 November 2012.

⁴⁴ Many pro-government militiamen have told their families that they would avoid the census because of fears for their personal security. Crisis Group telephone interview, academic, September 2012.

⁴⁵ According to Vassikiri Traoré, prefect of Ferkessédougou, a town in the north, "80 per cent of road-bandits arrested are Ivoirians, usually ex-combatants or young people who were involved in the fighting in some way. The others are from Burkina Faso and Mali". "Côte d'Ivoire: la menace des anciens mercenaires", *Le Pays*, 24 May 2012.

ber open to the idea of joining forces with pro-Gbagbo extremists to oppose a government that they feel has let them down. If this were to happen, a lengthy and possibly unsuccessful census of ex-combatants would increase the frustration of thousands of young people who still dream of a military career that now seems very unlikely.

B. MONROVIA, ACCRA, ABIDJAN

1. Agitation in the east

The recruitment of ex-FRCI soldiers is one of the many fantasies that excite the pro-Gbagbo hardliners in exile in Ghana and other countries in the region. After his arrest in March 2012, Colonel Katé Paulin Gnatoa, speaking on behalf of the group of officers and NCOs who prepared "Operation Red Falcon" against the government of President Ouattara,⁴⁶ said:

[The minister] told me to contact demobilised FRCI soldiers with whom he had been in contact for a long time. So I met Yeo in Elubo (Ghana) towards the end of December 2011,... At this meeting, Yeo revealed that he and his demobilised friends were able to participate in military action to overthrow the government.⁴⁷

This statement echoed another account published in the French daily *Le Monde* in mid-June.⁴⁸ A former member of the "invisible commando"⁴⁹ said he had established contact with pro-Gbagbo insurgents: "One of my colleagues was recently in Ghana to meet Abéhi.⁵⁰ Another went to speak to people in the Taï [region]", he said. The wave of attacks in August involving FRCI soldiers confirmed these suspicions.

During a televised interview on 22 June 2012, the interior minister, Hamed Bakayoko, claimed that military and civilian personnel in the immediate entourage of former

President Gbagbo had tried to organise a coup from exile in Ghana.⁵¹ Attacks in August were also reportedly orchestrated from Ghana as part of "Operation Spider", aimed at destabilising the country.⁵² A report by the UN panel of experts mandated by the Security Council indicated that several leaders of the former regime met in Takoradi (Ghana) on 12 July 2012⁵³ to prepare a unified strategy to retake power in Côte d'Ivoire. In particular, it discussed possible bases from which to conduct operations from neighbouring countries, such as Mali.⁵⁴

These plans to destabilise the country again raised the question of the threat represented by senior leaders of the former regime who had found refuge abroad following Laurent Gbagbo's arrest in April 2011. Their activities are more radical than the aggressive positions adopted by the Abidjan "blue press".⁵⁵ From Ghana and Togo, the two countries where they are most numerous, they are suspected of organising destabilisation operations, propaganda, funding and mobilisation of the hardline wing of the former Ivorian regime. They are determined but their capacity to overthrow the government remains weak and certainly poses less of a threat than is claimed by the Ivorian authorities. Colonel Gnato's statement revealed amateurism and the rivalries and rantings of the exiles and a lot of information gathered by the Ivorian security services about

⁴⁶ A former member of the presidential guard, then military sub-prefect of the Duékoué region, Colonel Gnatoa was arrested in the company of three other soldiers in Grand-Bassam on 8 March 2012.

⁴⁷ Transcript no. 036-1 drawn up by the director of intelligence in Diomande Inza territory. Crisis Group had access to this document.

⁴⁸ See "Paix impossible en Côte d'Ivoire", *Le Monde*, 15 June 2012.

⁴⁹ Name given to a group who carried out the first military actions against the Gbagbo regime during the post-electoral crisis. The circumstances of the creation of this group, which operated in the residential district of Abobo, in Abidjan, its personnel, the identity of its leaders and its exact motivations remain unknown to this day.

⁵⁰ A pro-Gbagbo officer, Jean-Noël Abéhi was former head of the national gendarmerie's armoured unit.

⁵¹ Operation Red Falcon involved a triple incursion from the Ghanaian and Liberian borders into Côte d'Ivoire. Seven officers implicated in this plan recorded a video for broadcast if the operation succeeded. In addition to Colonel Gnatoa, two other colonels, two majors, a lieutenant and a staff sergeant appear on the video, which was broadcast on Ivorian television on 12 June. Two of them were arrested: Colonel Gnatoa and Sergeant Serge Brou. Two others accompanying them, a staff sergeant and a merchant navy trainee officer were also arrested. In June, three officers and nine soldiers were arrested during investigations into destabilising operations conducted from Ghana. During a televised interview, the interior minister mentioned another plan, known as "Isaiah 60", which sought to free the Gbagbo couple during their detention in northern Côte d'Ivoire. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwiPmjEEBfE and "Dix militaires pris à Daloa", *L'Inter*, 2 July 2012.

⁵² "Côte d'Ivoire: des attaques soigneusement préparées", *op. cit.*

⁵³ See "Mid-Term Report of the Group of Experts on the Côte d'Ivoire submitted in accordance with paragraph 16 of Security Council Resolution 2045 (2012)", 15 October 2012.

⁵⁴ Pro-Gbagbo exiles in Mali reportedly established contact with Captain Sanogo and a leader of Ansar Dine. See "Mid-Term Report of the Group of Experts", *op. cit.*, p. 8. For an analysis of the crisis in Mali and a description of armed groups, including Ansar Dine, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°187, *Mali: Avoiding Escalation*, 18 July 2012 and Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°90, *Mali: the Need for Determined and Coordinated International Action*, 24 September 2012.

⁵⁵ The "blue press" is the group of pro-Gbagbo newspapers. Their titles are inlaid with a light blue block.

their activities does not tally with information gathered by Western intelligence services.⁵⁶

However, it would be wise not to underestimate their capacity to harass the new government or the negative impact of their actions on the political climate. Attacks on Ivorian territory currently have two main objectives: first, to test the FRCI's capacity to respond and, second, to attack strategic infrastructure, such as the Azito power station and the installations of the Ivorian Refinery Company (SIR),⁵⁷ in order to undermine the Ouattara government's efforts to revive the economy.⁵⁸ In this context, there is concern that the next potential targets of pro-Gbagbo exiles could be the port of San Pedro and the roads used to transport cocoa from production areas to the port.⁵⁹

Some of the exiled hardliners have both contacts in Côte d'Ivoire and large financial resources.⁶⁰ According to the UN group of experts, Nadiatou Bamba, whose accounts have been frozen by the European Union,⁶¹ as well as those of "Marcel Gossio (former Chief Executive Officer of Abidjan seaport), Alphonse Mangly (former Customs Director General), Pastor Moïse Koré (former spiritual adviser to President Gbagbo), Justin Koné Katinan (former Minister of Budget) and Charles Blé Goudé (former Minister of Youth, who has been under UN sanctions since 2006), have reportedly been involved in financing the military and political network that planned and carried out several important attacks in various parts of Côte d'Ivoire in 2012".⁶² Nadiatou Bamba and the other people mentioned in the report have firmly denied the accusations

against them and any involvement in the alleged destabilisation plans.⁶³

However, it remains difficult to assess the quantity and location of such funds. They are scattered across a labyrinth of bank accounts opened by front-men or circulated in the form of liquid assets that are difficult to identify. For example, Charles Blé Goudé⁶⁴ reportedly kept a network of "small hands" in Côte d'Ivoire, which has responsibility for transferring money around several of the region's countries. To maximise secrecy, he is said to have chosen his collaborators from within the junior members of the "young patriots", civilian supporters of former President Gbagbo during the years of crisis.⁶⁵ He is also reported to have received help from circles close to the FN in return for payment.⁶⁶

The activities of these exiles have led to a deterioration in relations between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Since the death of President John Atta Mills in July 2012 and the arrival

⁵⁶ Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Paris, October 2012.

⁵⁷ The 20 September attacks on a gendarmerie brigade and police station in Port-Bouët were a diversion. The main objective was the SIR and its hydrocarbon depots. This attack probably failed due to a lack of coordination. Crisis Group email correspondence, diplomat, October 2012.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Crisis Group telephone interviews, company director, September 2012 and diplomat, October 2012.

⁶⁰ Crisis Group interview, UN official, New York, June 2012. See "Mid-Term Report of the Group of Experts", op. cit.

⁶¹ On 8 June 2011, the European Court of Justice, passing judgment in the first instance, annulled the sanctions placed in January 2011 against Nadiatou Bamba, including the freezing of her financial assets. However, on 15 November 2012, the court confirmed the sanctions, which had been taken against her for "obstruction of the peace and reconciliation processes through public incitement to hatred and violence and through participation in disinformation campaigns in connection with the 2010 presidential election". "La justice de l'UE confirme les sanctions contre l'une des épouses de Gbagbo", AFP, 15 November 2012.

⁶² See "Mid-Term Report of the Group of Experts", op. cit., p. 8.

⁶³ For example, see "Communiqué de presse : Accusée de déstabilisation : Nady Bamba fait des précisions, Paris, le 11 octobre 2012", IvoirTV.net, 18 October 2012; and "Coup d'Etat supposé contre le régime Ouattara : L'avocat de Nady Bamba porte plainte", *Le Temps*, 19 June 2012. She said that "she had never given any assistance to military operations or attempts to destabilise the government". Marcel Gossio has denied the veracity of this report and his participation in the 12 July meeting at Takoradi, "Accusation de RFI: Marcel Gossio réagit", *Le nouveau courrier*, 6 October 2012. Charles Blé Goudé has denounced the UN report, saying that it contains "vicious and deliberate lies by those who want to prevent his return to public service". See "UN report: Gbagbo allies reached out to Islamists", Associated Press, 8 October 2012.

⁶⁴ An important figure in the Ivorian crisis, Charles Blé Goudé began his political career in the Student Federation of Côte d'Ivoire (FESCI). He became its secretary general in 1998. In 2002, he founded the Alliance of Young Patriots. Now called the "young patriots", it organised violent and xenophobic demonstrations throughout the politico-military crisis. In February 2007, the UN adopted sanctions on Blé Goudé accusing him of "repeated public statements advocating violence against United Nations installations and personnel, and against foreigners; direction of and participation in acts of violence by street militias, including beatings, rapes and extrajudicial killings ...". Following the November 2010 presidential election, Laurent Gbagbo appointed Blé Goudé to the post of youth, professional training and employment minister. After the assault on Laurent Gbagbo's presidential palace by the forces of Alassane Ouattara on 11 April 2011, he fled into exile.

⁶⁵ Crisis Group interview, academic and expert on the patriot movement, Abidjan, June 2012.

⁶⁶ Crisis Group telephone interview, international official, August 2012. At the end of the 2000s, Charles Blé Goudé had friendly relations with at least one senior FN leader, the ex-commander of the Issiaka Ouattara zone, known as Wattao. Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, journalists, academics, Abidjan, Bouaké, February 2010 and October 2011.

of his successor, John Dramani Mahama, Ghana has made several promises.⁶⁷ Justin Koné Katinan and two groups of former Ivorian militia have been arrested,⁶⁸ but that has not been enough to improve relations between the two neighbours. After the attacks against the border town of Noé, Côte d'Ivoire closed its border with Ghana for two weeks. Côte d'Ivoire would like Ghana to act more forcefully and rapidly execute international arrest warrants issued against members of the former Gbagbo regime. In the absence of an extradition treaty, it is difficult for Ghana to execute international arrest warrants and return Ivorians to their country. It is therefore for the Ghanaian courts to decide what to do with pro-Gbagbo exiles, on a case-by-case basis. For the moment, they have only charged Justin Koné Katinan, as part of very complex proceedings.⁶⁹

Leaving aside legal issues, the good relations between some close associates of the former Ghanaian President John Atta Mills, deceased on 24 July 2012, and several exiles, explains Ghana's relative benevolence. According to a senior figure in the Ivorian government, former minister Richard Kouamé Secr  is the half-brother of a leading figure in the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the ruling party in Accra.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the wife of the former Ghanaian president reportedly has a strong friendship with the wife of the last Ivorian ambassador to Accra, Emmanuel Aka.⁷¹ In addition, Ghana would like to keep the issue as a bargaining counter in negotiations on the dispute between the two countries about demarcation of the maritime border, where oil reserves are located.⁷² The pro-Gbagbo exiles also have the support of Ghanaian pentecostal and evan-

gelical churches, which count key leaders of the former Ivorian regime among their followers.⁷³

Finally, some influential Ghanaian politicians support the anti-imperialist discourse of the former Ivorian president and still regret his forced departure from power. Former President John Jerry Rawlings has reportedly made several visits to Gbagbo supporters who now live in Accra.⁷⁴ In a recent private interview, a Ghanaian minister used the word "overthrow" to describe what had happened to the Gbagbo government after the November 2010 presidential elections.⁷⁵ Parts of the Ghanaian security apparatus, loyal to former President Rawlings, also support Gbagbo's ideas.⁷⁶ According to a diplomat, Anselme Seka Seka Yapo, Simone Gbagbo's aide-de-camp, reportedly benefited from favourable treatment after being questioned in Abidjan in October 2011.⁷⁷

2. The west: a devastated region

It is also possible that Ghana has not fully appreciated the potential of exiled pro-Gbagbo supporters to make a nuisance of themselves. These exiles have established or reactivated contacts with Liberian warlords. Three of the military officers implicated in Operation Red Falcon – Colonel Alphonse Gouanou, former commander of the western military region; police superintendent Loba Patrice and Sergeant Serge Brou – visited the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border several times. According to the Ivorian security services, they contacted several Liberian warlords, including former members of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (Mouvement uni pour la démocratie au Libéria, ULIMO) and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (Libériens unis pour la réconciliation et la démocratie, LURD).⁷⁸

⁶⁷ "Le Ghana promet que son pays ne servira pas à déstabiliser la Côte d'Ivoire", AFP, 5 September 2012.

⁶⁸ Katinan was arrested on 24 August 2012 on his return from Johannesburg. On 13 September, the Ghanaian police arrested 43 Ivorians in a refugee camp. On 17 September, 25 of them were released. "Le Ghana libère 25 Ivoiriens arrêtés dans un camp de réfugiés", AFP, 17 October 2012.

⁶⁹ On 5 September, the High Court of Ghana refused a request to release Justin Koné Katinan and announced it would study a request for his extradition to Côte d'Ivoire. He was then released on 25 September before being questioned again three days later. At first, the Ivorian authorities issued an international arrest warrant against him for economic crimes. They later issued another warrant for a double murder in which Katinan was implicated. The Ghanaian court has since several times postponed a hearing to consider the extradition request. "Côte d'Ivoire-Ghana: Justin Koné Katinan, un Gbagbo Boy en sur-sis ?", *Jeune Afrique*, 17 October 2012.

⁷⁰ Crisis Group interview, Abidjan, June 2012.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² The two countries are in dispute over who owns an oil field located off their coasts. The discovery of the oil field was announced in February 2010 by Lukoil and Vanco Energy. "Côte d'Ivoire-Ghana: querelle de voisinage autour du magot pétrolier", *L'Expansion*, 28 April 2010.

⁷³ Crisis Group interview, academic, Abidjan, June 2012.

⁷⁴ See "Gbagbo's Ghana connection", *Africa Confidential*, 19 October 2012.

⁷⁵ Crisis Group email correspondence, journalist, October 2012.

⁷⁶ Crisis Group interviews, diplomat and Ivorian officials, Abidjan, October 2011 and June 2012. In a 2 November interview published in the daily *Nord Sud*, the president of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro, pointed the finger at the Ghanaian army, saying: "With regard to Ghana, I think that, as President Mills was ill and therefore, he no longer exercised full control over the army, the latter became involved in regrettable things". However, he also said he hoped for "much better relations" with President Mahama, who succeeded Mills.

⁷⁷ Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Abidjan, October 2011.

⁷⁸ These include Ama Yalo and Roméo Tarlue, former members of ULIMO; "Junior Gbagbo", who fought on the Ivorian president's side in 2003; Ofori Diah of LURD; Jetty Julu and Nehzee Banway. Crisis Group interview, Ivorian security official, Abidjan, July 2012.

Questioned by Human Rights Watch (HRW) investigators, Liberian militiamen said one of their generals, Augustine Vleyee, alias Bush Dog, was a key figure in recruiting and training Liberian mercenaries on the Ivorian border.⁷⁹ The recent UN report on Liberia reveals that this man commanded a group of Ivorian rebels that crossed the Liberian border several times and violently attacked their country of origin.⁸⁰ More generally, the report highlighted “that certain networks of Liberian mercenaries and Ivorian militias with interlinked allegiances, and who are in constant communication, could be a threat to peace and stability in the border region”.⁸¹

This constant communication takes place at rank-and-file and command levels. For example, Colonel Gnatoa said that Loba and Brou visited Buduburam refugee camp, 44km from Accra,⁸² to meet a certain “Amos”, leader of the Liberian refugees at the camp. Amos later went to Liberia with Serge Brou “to make contact with his combatants in that country”.⁸³ In their most recent report, UN experts noted that “military actions that have been conducted since early 2012 in Côte d’Ivoire were planned in Ghanaian territory, funds were transferred from Ghana to Liberia (physically or via bank transfers) and recruitment took place in Liberia”. They added that “Didier Goulia, alias Roger Tikouai (an Ivorian national, former customs officer), conveyed funds from Ghana to Liberia on repeated occasions”.⁸⁴

Contacts between Liberians and Ivorians exiled in Ghana have operated in both directions. Two Liberian generals, “Junior Gbagbo” and Roméo Tarlue, reportedly visited Ghana several times. According to the Ivorian security services, they had local telephone numbers.⁸⁵ Colonel Gnatoa said that the Liberian militiaman Thomas Yaya and two of his close colleagues attended a meeting in Accra at the home of Colonel Gouanou on 23 February 2012, in the presence of Loba and two other Ivorian officers.⁸⁶ Although it has been established that Liberians met with pro-Gbagbo exiles, there is no proof that these meetings

were used to plan attacks on Ivorian territory, such as the one that cost the lives of seven blue-helmets from Niger on 8 June 2012. For the moment, the circumstances of the June 2012 attack, which UNOCI says involved approximately 100 combatants, remains unknown, as do the identities of the attackers.⁸⁷ However, this incident was neither the first, nor the most deadly to occur in the Taï region since the change of government in Abidjan, having been preceded by a number of attacks against camps and villages since 15 September 2011.⁸⁸

Despite praiseworthy efforts,⁸⁹ neither the Ivorian authorities nor UNOCI have managed to restore security to this region, which a UNOCI official described to Crisis Group in October 2011 as being “in a permanent state of insecurity”.⁹⁰ Attempts between September 2011 and June 2012 by the Ivorian authorities to conduct the necessary in-depth investigations serving as a prerequisite to any identification of the authors of the first attacks have encountered difficulties, partially due to a lack of gendarmerie personnel.

The Ivorian government’s decision to send a 1,300-strong FRCI force on a wide-ranging search operation on 17 June 2012 failed to restore security to this unstable part of the

⁷⁹ Crisis Group email correspondence, HRW researchers, June 2012.

⁸⁰ See “Midterm Report of the Panel of Experts on Liberia Submitted Pursuant to Paragraph 5 (f) of Security Council resolution 2025 (2011)”, 15 June 2012.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² This refugee camp was opened by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1990. It received Liberians, then Sierra Leoneans, displaced by the Mano River War. The UNHCR stopped supporting the camp in June 2010, but many of the 40,000 people living in the camp stayed there. Crisis Group telephone interviews, experts on Liberia, June 2012.

⁸³ Transcription 036-1, op. cit.

⁸⁴ See “Midterm Report of the Group of Experts”, op. cit., p. 9.

⁸⁵ Undated Ivorian security services note entitled “Projet des radicaux à partir du Libéria” (Plans of radicals in Liberia).

⁸⁶ Transcription 036-1, op. cit.

⁸⁷ UNOCI conducted an investigation into this deadly attack against the peacekeepers. A confidential report was sent to the UN headquarters in New York. The report says the soldiers died in an ambush prepared by combatants from Liberia. The group of attackers numbered 100. On 7 June, they crossed the Cavally River, which flows along the Liberia-Côte d’Ivoire border and carried out a raid on the village of Saho. A detachment of three vehicles, including an armoured car sent from Tabou, in southern Côte d’Ivoire, went to the location. The convoy was attacked as it left that location. The first two vehicles managed to reverse but the last one was machine-gunned. After the exchange of fire, some UN soldiers were shot at point blank range. “Côte d’Ivoire: les sept casques bleus nigériens sont tombés dans une embuscade”, RFI, 28 June 2012.

⁸⁸ On 15 September 2011, an armed commando unit from Liberia killed 23 people in Ziriglo, 37km from Taï. On 20 February 2012, six people were killed in the Konankro camp, 8km from Ziriglo. On 24 April, eight people were killed in similar circumstances in Sakré, a village located 27km from Taï. “Venu du Libéria: un commando attaque l’ouest”, *Soir Info*, 17 September 2011; “Frontière ouest: six morts dans l’attaque d’un campement”, *Fraternité Matin*, 21 February 2012; “Des morts dans une attaque, dans la nuit de mardi à mercredi, d’un village de Taï”, Agence ivoirienne de presse, 25 April 2012.

⁸⁹ The Liberian police questioned 70 people at the end of January 2012 on suspicion of wanting to destabilise the Abidjan government. Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia are both supported by UNOCI, which has set up four military bases along the border and uses its helicopters to conduct surveillance operations. “Libéria: arrestation de plus de 70 ‘mercenaires’ anti-Ouattara présumés”, AFP, 31 January 2012; and “Côte d’Ivoire: l’ONU ouvre huit nouveaux camps militaires à l’ouest du pays”, UN News Centre, 30 June 2011.

⁹⁰ Crisis Group interview, Abidjan, October 2011.

country. It may even have had a counter-productive effect,⁹¹ due to the fact that the force was led by Commander Losseni Fofana, who is suspected of playing a role in the massacres at Duékoué.⁹² Far from being resolved, the problems of this region have increased in recent months. The search operation commanded by Losseni Fofana did not prevent another attack in the area, this time against a military post at Toulepleu on 14 August. One of the results of this continuing violence has been the exodus of thousands of villagers,⁹³ only adding to the number of internally displaced people in Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, there is increasing competition over land due to the arrival of Burkina Faso nationals who have illegally occupied protected forests or land abandoned by the indigenous people with the complicity of the local military, administrative or community authorities.⁹⁴

Peace cannot be restored to this region unless the deployment of the security forces is accompanied by the restoration of local administration, a minimum of public services, resolution of the refugee issue and progress in the review or implementation of the land code approved on 23 December 1998. The scope of these issues facing the west is so extensive that it could remain an unstable area for years, prone to waves of recurring violence even if peace is restored to the rest of the country. Therefore, it is the duty of all actors to avoid aggravating the situation in the west through imposing a politicised, repressive security apparatus on local communities or tolerating discriminatory practices and trafficking activities.

The problem of western Côte d'Ivoire has become a regional question that also concerns Liberia and Guinea.⁹⁵ Equipped with a security apparatus that is still very weak, Liberia perhaps does not have the means to provide an adequate security response on its eastern border. This inability must be compensated by strengthening the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). However, Monrovia could join its Ivorian neighbour in a co-development project in this untamed and relatively ungoverned area.⁹⁶ The discovery of the links between former members of Liberian rebel groups and associates of Gbagbo living in Accra also poses the question of the role that Ghana might play in resolving this question. Ghana must accept responsibility and no longer tolerate the preparation on its soil of actions designed to destabilise its neighbour and it must at the least execute the international arrest warrants issued by Côte d'Ivoire.⁹⁷

⁹¹ This force's action has been criticised by several international officials. It worked without a clear and coherent plan, did not have enough logistical support and reportedly acted with brutality against the population, which it assumed was colluding with the Liberian militias and pro-Gbagbo combatants that it was trying to neutralise. Crisis Group interviews, diplomat, journalist, international military officers, Abidjan, June 2012.

⁹² In a report published on 6 October 2011 entitled "They Killed Them Like It Was Nothing", Human Rights Watch accused four FN officers of actively participating in atrocities during the post-electoral crisis. Captain Eddie Médi, ex-commander of the Danané sector reportedly led the military offensive in February and March 2011 in Zouan-Hounien in Guiglo, in the west of the country. HRW says that his men killed many people, raped at least twenty women and burned down more than ten villages. Losseni Fofana, ex-commander of the Man zone, was Eddie Médi's commanding officer. The soldiers under his command took control of Duékoué on the morning of 29 March and are suspected of participating in the massacre of hundreds of people.

⁹³ 13,000 people were displaced following the 8 June attack. "Côte d'Ivoire: détérioration de la situation des civils déplacés dans l'ouest du pays", UN News Centre, 21 June 2012.

⁹⁴ Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, journalists, June 2012.

⁹⁵ In an internal note, the Ivorian security services expressed concern about the willingness of Ofori Diah, former deputy chief of staff of LURD, an armed Liberian group active during the civil war in that country, to organise attacks against Côte d'Ivoire from Guinea.

⁹⁶ See Crisis Group report, *Côte d'Ivoire: Continuing the Recovery*, op. cit., p. 2.

⁹⁷ The Ivorian authorities issued 34 international arrest warrants against key figures of Laurent Gbagbo's regime. Press release, public prosecutor, Abidjan, 6 July 2012.

III. A STALLED POLITICAL DIALOGUE

Fifteen months after the arrest of President Gbagbo, the political dialogue essential for reconciliation has barely started. So far, it has mainly involved the presidential coalition, the Houphouëtistes Rally for Democracy and Progress (Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et le progrès, RHDP)⁹⁸ and the small opposition groups formed from the Presidential Majority (La majorité présidentielle, LMP),⁹⁹ as well as the parties created by FPI dissidents.¹⁰⁰ However, the wave of attacks during the last three months has stalled this dialogue.

A. MARGINALISATION OF THE FORMER REGIME'S SUPPORTERS

Despite being the main opposition party, the FPI has hardly been involved in this vital dialogue. Its exchanges with the government during the first half of 2012, were tentative. At the end of March, the party leaders met the president of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR) and agreed to resume participation in the reconciliation process,¹⁰¹ but not in the political dialogue. In April, the government invited the FPI to take part in a two-day meeting of all political forces, the first of its kind, in Grand-Bassam,¹⁰² but in the end the party did not participate directly in and instead sent five observers who then only attended for the first day. Next, on 13 July, an FPI delegation met the former prime minister, Jeannot Kouadio-Ahoussou, but, once more, this meeting did not result in any significant progress in the political dialogue.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Created in May 2005, the RHDP includes four political parties: the Rassemblement des républicains (RDR), the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), the Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI) et the Mouvement des forces d'avenir (MFA).

⁹⁹ Created prior to the 2010 presidential election, the LMP grouped several pro-Gbagbo parties, including the FPI, le Rassemblement pour la paix, le progrès et le partage (RPP) et l'Union pour la république et la démocratie (URD).

¹⁰⁰ Former FPI member and former president of the National Assembly, Mamadou Koulibaly created Liberté et démocratie pour la Côte d'Ivoire (LIDER) in August 2011. A former spokesperson for President Gbagbo, Gervais Coulibaly has been the leader of Cap-Unir pour la démocratie et le développement (Cap-UDD) since October 2011.

¹⁰¹ "Le FPI donne son OK à Banny", *L'Inter*, 29 March 2003.

¹⁰² Organised at the government's request, this meeting that took place on 27 April at the seaside town of Grand Bassam, 20km from Abidjan, was attended by a delegation from the RHDP and representatives from several pro-Gbagbo opposition parties.

¹⁰³ On 18 July, the RDR daily, *Le Patriote*, reported this meeting under the headline: "FPI, l'impossible rêve" (FPI, the impossible dream), confirming the failure of the meeting.

Unable to distance themselves from the exiled hardliners in Ghana, the FPI leaders in Côte d'Ivoire have adopted an exaggerated victim mentality and have sought to stir up tensions. The party continues to base its return to the political game on the release of Laurent Gbagbo, but the ability to do this lies with the International Criminal Court (ICC), not with the Ivorian authorities. This hope for Gbagbo's release remain firmly anchored in the minds of many FPI activists close to protestant and evangelical churches who believe that their deposed leader is innocent, that he was robbed of an election victory due to a foreign-backed plot and thus he should be released by the ICC.¹⁰⁴ The continuation of the image of Gbagbo as a paternal figure is essential in the current state of the party, which is now led by much lower-level figures and lacks in charismatic personalities mainly because the historic leaders of the FPI are either in prison in Côte d'Ivoire or in exile. Furthermore, the FPI has not admitted responsibility for any of the crimes of which its leaders are guilty.

Nonetheless, many of the actual FPI leaders no longer believe that President Gbagbo will be released,¹⁰⁵ but to admit this publicly would be impossible without attracting the wrath of both the ordinary party members and the hardliners. However, the FPI's leaders all have an additional motive in keeping alive this idea of Gbagbo's future return. It enables them to hold onto their own positions and thus facilitates their political ascendancy when it becomes clear that he will never return to political life. Due to these factors the political dialogue may remain stalled until the ICC decides whether to proceed with the charges against Gbagbo.¹⁰⁶ If the accusations against him are confirmed, the FPI leadership will have to create a future without the former president and make a clear choice between a return to institutional life or enduring marginalisation. This dilemma will be apparent soon enough for those who have

¹⁰⁴ To the question "Are you among those who still believe that Laurent Gbagbo will be back on the political scene, including as head of state ...?", Patrick Yao Kouamé, ex-leader of PDCI students and now an LMP member, replied: "I believe in God ... I continue to pray and I observe". See "Nous reviendrons bientôt avec Laurent Gbagbo", *Le Jour*, 2 July 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Crisis Group interview, former FPI member, Abidjan, June 2012.

¹⁰⁶ Scheduled for 18 June, the opening of the hearing to confirm the charges against Laurent Gbagbo was postponed until 13 August. However, on 3 August, the ICC announced it had postponed the hearing until a medical examination could determine the ex-president's fitness to stand trial. On 2 November, the Court judged that Laurent Gbagbo was able to appear. After the hearing, the date of which has not yet been set, the judges will have 60 days to confirm the charges. "CPI: report de l'audience de confirmation des charges contre Laurent Gbagbo", AFP, 3 August 2012; "Laurent Gbagbo apte à être jugé par la CPI à la Haye", Reuters, 2 November 2012; Crisis Group interview, ICC representative, Abidjan, July 2012.

the opportunity to participate in the next local elections, scheduled for February 2013.¹⁰⁷

B. DANGEROUS POLITICAL POLARISATION

The discovery of attempted coups and the increase in armed attacks have had a disastrous effect on political dialogue and more broadly on the reconciliation process. The discovery of the Red Falcon and Spider Operations¹⁰⁸ strengthened the discourse of the RDR and FN hardliners and gave them the perfect excuse for increasing surveillance and repression against Gbagbo supporters and justifying the dominant position of the former rebel forces within the FRCI. The attempts that have been made to destabilise the government have helped perpetuate the idea that pro-Gbagbo elements are still at war and that strong government is needed to end the crisis, further hardening positions on both sides. The idea that the FPI is beyond redemption and that the government should impose “an absolute victory”¹⁰⁹ is popular within the FN, the RDR and even the PDCI.¹¹⁰ Many leaders of these parties are privately pleased that they do not have to face real political opposition.¹¹¹ As a result, the public appeals for reconciliation and dialogue launched at the end of August by the FPI, the RDR and the president of the CDVR were not followed by concrete developments.

This political polarisation is manifested in the return to verbal violence by both sides of the political chessboard. There has been a revert to using “words as arms”, one of the main weapons in the Ivorian crisis. While the RDR’s secretary general spoke of “decontaminating the west”, the daily *Notre Voie* published an article comparing Alasane Ouattara to Adolf Hitler and the prisons holding FPI leaders to “death camps”.¹¹² The incidents in August perpetuated this use of violent and dangerous language. While one FN leader used the verb “to eradicate” when referring to the FPI, *Le Patriote*, the official paper of the RDR, spoke of the need to “hunt down all those resisting the government”.¹¹³

The tone of the local press, the main vehicle of this verbal violence, is a fairly accurate indicator of the level of political debate, which remains poisoned by a culture of brutality that is first expressed in the newspapers before translating into isolated, but repeated acts of violence. The continuation of such practices is particularly worrying as it indicates that politicians have not learned the vital lessons of the recent conflict. However, it is important to note that the press is fortunately not a mirror of Ivorian society as a whole: millions of citizens, tired of years of crisis, have nothing to do with this detrimental polarisation.

The political landscape is not only characterised by a stalled dialogue with the opposition but also by increasingly open disagreements within the ruling coalition. The recent dissolution of the government on 14 November was the culmination of this disagreement so far. Officially, the dissolution was decreed by the president to respond to “a problem of solidarity within the alliance” between the RDR and the PDCI.¹¹⁴ He intervened after the PDCI group’s refusal to vote for a government bill changing the law on marriage. However, there is no doubt that the dissolution had more profound causes than a simple disagreement over a piece of legislation which is far from crucial in political terms, despite its importance in the daily lives of Ivorians. The real reasons for this presidential intervention is his attempt to pressure PDCI leaders into clearly reaffirming their party’s support for him and clearly to replace the prime minister, Ahoussou-Kouadio.

The PDCI and the RDR have been squabbling for several months about sharing power and their respective influence in government decision-making. There is a certain logic to this disagreement. The two main parties in the RHDP have for a long time remained united because of the need to confront a common enemy. However, now, without Gbagbo as an opponent, their alliance has become fragile. Strengthened by the absolute majority won in the recent legislative elections, some leading figures in the RDR think that they can govern alone and abstain from fully respecting the agreements concluded with their PDCI partners.¹¹⁵ In this belief they make the same mistake as Gbagbo, who thought a party could govern alone without allying itself with one of the country’s two other main political forces.

¹⁰⁷ “Côte d’Ivoire: élections régionales et les municipales le 24 February 2013”, AFP, 27 September 2012.

¹⁰⁸ According to the Ivorian intelligence services, some of the attacks in August were part of this operation planned in Ghana. Crisis Group telephone interview, diplomat, September 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Crisis Group interview, FN official, Abidjan, June 2012.

¹¹⁰ Crisis Group interview, PDCI official, Abidjan, June 2012.

¹¹¹ Crisis Group interviews, politicians, Abidjan, June 2012.

¹¹² “Motion de protestation contre une collaboration entre l’Etat d’Israël et le régime Ouattara”, *Notre Voie*, 29 June 2012.

¹¹³ “Un post du blog de Guillaume Soro appelle à ‘éradiquer’ le FPI qualifié d’organisation terroriste!”, *Jeune Afrique*, 21 August 2012 and “Administration, armée, régies financières ... pour-

quoi le gouvernement doit mener la chasse aux “résistants”, *Le Patriote*, 27 August 2012.

¹¹⁴ That is how the secretary general of the presidential cabinet, Amadou Gon Coulibaly, justified dissolution of the government. See “Il s’agit de nous entendre sur le fonctionnement du Rhdp”, *Nord Sud*, 16 November 2012.

¹¹⁵ Crisis Group interviews, RHDP and opposition politicians, Abidjan, June and July 2012.

Despite the 14 November dissolution, the coalition remains solid because, for the moment, each party has too much to lose by leaving it. The president has dismissed the prime minister, Ahoussou-Kouadio, a close associate of the PDCI leader, Henri Konan Bédié, but he consulted the latter on 21 November before appointing another leading figure in the PDCI, Daniel Kablan Duncan, who is a personal friend of his and someone he has held in high esteem for years. Duncan, an economist, aged 69 and therefore of the same generation as Ouattara, will have to ensure that PDCI leaders, especially the deputies, are less hesitant about supporting the president's initiatives. Overall the composition of the new government is very close to the previous one, thus it appears that the president's main objective was to change the prime minister.

However, the government will again be severely tested when the time comes to resolve crucial problems, such as land reform. The two parties currently hold different positions on this issue. On the one hand, the PDCI favours maintaining the position set out in law in December 1998, which considerably limits the acquisition of rural land by foreigners, while on the other, some in the RDR are in favour of liberalising the rural land market. If it is badly managed, this matter could cause one of two problems: an open break within the RHDP or inaction on an essential issue for the sake of preserving the alliance and maintaining a consensus.

In such a context, the forthcoming regional and municipal elections will be difficult to organise. If they take place without the FPI, they will have little political legitimacy and will further poison the debate. Although the forthcoming elections are local polls, they are significant because they signal the beginning of work on institutional reform, with a revision of the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), which is a legacy of the Linas-Marcoussis Accords,¹¹⁶ but has become obsolete. Also the electoral list used for the November 2010 presidential election and the December 2011 legislative elections must be revised, if only to include the many new voters (young citizens who have reached voting age).

It is essential that these elections also mark the FPI's return to the political scene. A relaunch of political dialogue will however require an immense joint effort from both the FPI and the ruling coalition and president. To work, the FPI must not only return to the negotiating table with realistic demands but it must also realise that it runs the risk of marginalisation if it deliberately remains outside insti-

tutional life. The FPI should seize the opportunity offered by the forthcoming local elections and exploit the political space. It retains a strong electoral base that could be swelled by all those disillusioned with the current government.

Concurrently, the ruling coalition and President Ouattara must not be afraid of making significant concessions to their opponents. They have three options: abandon proceedings against FPI leaders whose role in the post-electoral crisis was only political; create a forum for discussion to allow the FPI to contribute to the major reforms that need attention during this presidential term of office; make the necessary adjustments to the CEI. The political choices that are made in the coming months will influence the 2015 polls, as without a genuine political opposition, the next presidential election will make little sense and will tarnish the legitimacy of the elected or re-elected president. Finally, considering the seriousness of the post-electoral crisis, the political parties and ex-FN rebels must agree to an exceptional step that will increase their stature and rehabilitate them in the eyes of a largely disillusioned population: to gather in a solemn ceremony and publicly and collectively ask Ivorians to forgive them for all the crimes and mistakes committed since the December 1999 coup.

The government urgently needs to make such concessions in order to lower the political temperature. As, in this current, tense atmosphere it is difficult, if not impossible, for the government to focus on the huge challenges it is facing. In the absence of a minimum consensus and in a still tense security context, the Ouattara government will find it difficult to act effectively on such crucial and sensitive issues as rural property and constitutional reform. The president only has three years remaining of his term in office to carry out these major tasks, which cannot be put on hold until the end of his mandate. Besides, the current instability weakens a country that is subject to changing circumstances. The heavy and tense atmosphere that has prevailed for the last three months only needs one unexpected event to plunge the country back into a serious crisis.

¹¹⁶ These agreements were signed at the end of a meeting held on 15-26 January 2003 at Linas-Marcoussis, France. They sought to end the civil war. The FNs and other political parties reached agreement on several points, including the formation of a government of "national reconciliation".

IV. JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION: A WORRYING DRIFT

A. ONE-WAY JUSTICE

Since President Ouattara took office no progress has been made on the crucial issue of justice, which is essential for the stabilisation and reconciliation process. The arguments put forward by the authorities during the last year to justify this lack of progress – the need for time and patience – are becoming less and less convincing as the weeks and months go by. It has been over a year now since Ouattara was sworn in, and still not a single member of the FRCI has been charged, either for the crimes committed during the post-electoral crisis or for those perpetrated during the following year.

Although Abidjan's military prosecutor has opened 77 cases implicating FRCI soldiers, these mainly concern minor offences, such as racketeering.¹¹⁷ In contrast, proceedings against members of the former regime are well under way: General Brunot Dogbo Blé was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment in the first major trial after the post-electoral crisis¹¹⁸ and eight close associates of Laurent Gbagbo were charged with "genocide".¹¹⁹ However, the Ivorian judiciary's decision to charge these eight with such an offence does not seem appropriate considering the nature of their crimes, particularly in the case of political leaders like the former president of the FPI, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, and Gbagbo's last prime minister, Gilbert Aké N'Gbo.

As well as the inept charges brought against them in an attempt to exaggerate crimes that are already sufficiently serious, there is a clear lack of will on the part of the authorities to promote more balanced justice. For example, two individuals strongly suspected of participating in the Duékoué massacres, the ex-zone commander Losseni Fofana and the militia leader, Amédé Ouérémi,¹²⁰ have not been questioned or asked to give evidence at any hearing. These individuals are still on active service in the sensitive western region and Losseni Fofana was even entrusted

with an important military mission, which could be construed as promotion. In fact, the deadly events at the Nihably displaced people's camp, which was burned to the ground, were not even initially the subject of a judicial investigation. It was only after six bodies had been retrieved from a well in Duékoué that the judiciary finally launched an inquiry to determine the circumstances of the deaths of these six people, who may have been killed during the attack on the camp.¹²¹

Meanwhile, the FPI secretary general, Laurent Akoun, was also sentenced to six months imprisonment without parole on 31 August, having been found guilty of comments that "threatened public order".¹²² However, these comments were no less dangerous than those used by *Le Patriote* and some FN leaders, as mentioned above. This partial justice is a considerable obstacle to reconciliation, allowing Gbagbo's electorate and others to feel the government is imposing "justice of the victors" and heaping further humiliation on the defeated side. This feeling of injustice also exasperates the FPI leadership, which uses it as a pretext for justifying its refusal to dialogue.

This situation is exacerbated by the government's failure to follow-up the national commission of inquiry report submitted to President Ouattara on 9 August 2012.¹²³ The report confirmed that forces loyal to the prime minister, Guillaume Soro, who rallied to the side of President Ouattara from the start of the conflict, committed crimes during the post-electoral crisis.¹²⁴ Its authors recommended "the opening of judicial proceedings against the alleged perpetrators of violations, irrespective of their social status". Three months after the report was published, this important recommendation has still not been implemented, even though President Ouattara himself called for this commission of inquiry.¹²⁵

¹²¹ "Ouverture d'une enquête sur les morts de la fosse commune de Duékoué", RFI, 13 October 2012.

¹²² At a meeting with activists, Akoun accused President Alasane Ouattara of "lying" and wanting "to kill Gbagbo". "Le numéro deux du parti de Gbagbo condamné à six mois de prison", AFP, 31 August 2012.

¹²³ This document entitled "Rapport d'enquête sur les violations des droits de l'Homme et du droit international humanitaire survenues dans la période du 31 October 2010 au 15 May 2011 July 2012" is available at: <http://news.abidjan.net/h/438749.html>.

¹²⁴ The commission recorded 3,248 killings during the crisis. The pro-Gbagbo armed forces were responsible for the death of 1,452 people (including 1,009 extrajudicial executions), while Ouattara's Republican Forces (FRCI) killed 727 people (including 545 extrajudicial executions).

¹²⁵ President Ouattara asked for this commission to be set up on 15 June 2011. In his speech on the release of the report on 9 August 2012, he said: "I would like to end by repeating our firm will to fight impunity and reaffirm that all those who carried out reprehensible acts during the post-electoral crisis will

¹¹⁷ Crisis Group interview, jurist, Abidjan, July 2012.

¹¹⁸ Ex-commander of the Republican Guard, General Brunot Dogbo Blé, was found guilty of sequestration of goods and complicity in the assassination of Colonel-Major Adama Dosso. Four other NCOs were sentenced to prison terms for their part in the affair. "Dogbo Blé condamné à 15 ans de prison ferme", *Nord Sud*, 12 October 2012.

¹¹⁹ "Huit proches de Gbagbo désormais inculpés de génocide", AFP, 10 July 2012.

¹²⁰ Leader of the Burkinabè militia installed in the Mont Péko region in the far west, Amadé Ouérémi and his men have been identified by many witnesses as being among the perpetrators of the 29 March 2011 massacre in Duékoué. "Amadé Ouérémi, planteur ou combattants", *Fraternité Matin*, 15 September 2011.

The ICC still holds out the hope, a priori, of justice that is more independent than national proceedings. This hope was strengthened by the decision of the court judges to authorise the prosecutor to investigate crimes committed since the 19 September 2002 attempted coup and not only those committed in the 2010-2011 post-election crisis.¹²⁶ The international arrest warrant against Simone Gbagbo unsealed by the ICC on 22 November may mean she will soon be joining her husband and ex-president, in the Hague.¹²⁷ In the coming months, the ICC should also open an office in Abidjan. If it is careful to avoid any political interference, it could quickly make the Ivorian authorities face up to their responsibilities and correct the imbalances in what is a dangerously partisan judiciary. The page of Côte d'Ivoire's history describing the violent rift in its society can only be turned when each side is brought to justice for the most major of the mass crimes committed over the last ten years.

Since the exposure of plans to destabilise the country from Ghana and the attacks that accompanied these discoveries, there has been an increasing number of arrests, accompanied by accusations of ill-treatment and human rights violations.¹²⁸ Before the publication of the Amnesty International and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) reports, denouncing these serious violations, the daily *Notre Voie* of 4 July 2012 published a statement from a man who said he had been tortured in a detention centre in the Yopougon district of Abidjan. Despite the partisan character of this newspaper,¹²⁹ the statement included many worrying details and gave a coherent account, therefore giving credence to accusations that cruel treat-

be brought to justice". See "Remise officielle du Rapport de la Commission nationale d'enquête: l'allocation de SEM Alassane Ouattara, Président de la République", Presidency, 9 August 2012.

¹²⁶ See "Entre progrès réels, insécurité persistante et incertitudes judiciaires, la Côte d'Ivoire toujours fragile", Crisis Group blog, www.crisisgroupblogs.org/africanpeacebuilding, 19 March 2012.

¹²⁷ "The ICC puts its seal on a mandate for the arrest of Simone Gbagbo", ICC press release, 22 November 2012.

¹²⁸ "Human Rights Watch dénonce des détentions 'arbitraires' après les attaques dans l'ouest de Côte d'Ivoire", Xinhua, 20 June 2012. The attacks in August were reportedly followed by more than 300 arrests and a number of extrajudicial executions. Crisis Group telephone interview, journalist, October 2012. Also see "Côte d'Ivoire: il est temps de mettre fin au cycle de représailles et de vengeance", Amnesty International, 26 October 2012 and "Ivory Coast: Justice to combat human rights violations and insecurity", FIDH, 30 October 2012.

¹²⁹ The report talked of "concentration camps" and illustrated the article with archive photographs with captions that suggested they were taken very recently. It insisted that the torturers were of Burkina and Dioula origin. See "Silence, on torture sous Ouattara", *Notre Voie*, 4 July 2012.

ments are inflicted on pro-Gbagbo activists. These abuses result from the fact that sectors of the security apparatus operate outside the law or without clear guidelines. In the name of state security, the all-powerful DST detains individuals, denies them access to a lawyer and does not provide any information on their whereabouts.¹³⁰

In addition, the military police act without a clearly defined and delimited mission.¹³¹ Created in December 2011 to deal with the security problems posed by members of the FRCI and their associates, the military police have arrested civilians for posing a "threat to the stability of the state".¹³² Its activities raise the question of how much control President Ouattara exercises over the vast security apparatus created from the ranks of the FN. It appears as if the security forces are able to act as they please and conduct themselves in the same manner as they did during the rebellion. It was only when accusations against military police atrocities reached a critical point¹³³ that the unit's leader, Zacharia Koné, was relieved of his functions.¹³⁴ However, the government's authoritarian drift is also manifested in other ways, beyond the fields of justice and security. Many interlocutors, including supporters of President Ouattara, told Crisis Group they denounced the continued use of practices prevalent during the previous regime, including administrative appointments based on ethnic criteria.¹³⁵

B. RECONCILIATION AT A STANDSTILL

At the end of June 2012, the arrest of a member of the opposition provoked a strong reaction from the CDVR. At a press conference held on 20 June, the commissioner in charge of the, Karim Ouattara, highlighted the incompatibility between the CDVR's reconciliation work and

¹³⁰ Crisis Group interview, lawyer close to the RDR, June 2012.

¹³¹ Interviewed by Crisis Group, two senior officers were unable to clearly define their mission. Crisis Group interviews, Abidjan, March 2012.

¹³² Crisis Group interview, diplomat, July 2012.

¹³³ Several diplomats unofficially alerted the Ivorian authorities about the practices of the military police even before Amnesty International published its report. Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, Abidjan, June 2012.

¹³⁴ At the beginning of November, Zacharia Koné was transferred to the air-to-surface artillery battalion stationed at the Akouédo military camp on the edge of Abidjan. "La hiérarchie des FRCI se réorganise", *Jeune Afrique*, 8 October 2012.

¹³⁵ Crisis Group interviews, jurist, politician, army officer, senior official, opposition politicians, Abidjan, June and July 2012. In January 2012, during a visit to France, President Ouattara justified the appointment of northerners to positions of responsibility in the administration and the government on the grounds that an "adjustment" was needed in response to the regional criteria used by the previous administration. "Ouattara veut protéger les minorités", *L'Express*, 25 January 2012.

the arrest “without respect for legal standards” of young opposition activists, including Martial Yavo, interim president of the Pan African Congress of Youth and Patriots (COJEP), a pro-Gbagbo organisation led by Charles Blé Goudé. Yavo claimed he was questioned by armed civilians and taken to a military camp in the district of Adjamé, the headquarters of the military police. Karim Ouattara also highlighted the increasing number of arbitrary arrests by the Ivorian security services:

There is a hunt going on for young members of the opposition I take exception to that. I cannot understand why young opposition leaders are tracked down and taken away when in Côte d'Ivoire we are in a period of reconciliation. I'm not going to mention their names. They are already well-known.¹³⁶

This statement from a member of the CDVR, the first of its kind, provoked a virulent response from the press close to the presidential party, the RDR. “Banny [CDVR president] defends the coup promoters in the FPI”, appeared as the headline of *L'Expression* three days later, giving further proof of the aggressive nature of Ivorian politics. The commission, chaired by Charles Konan Banny, faces an immense task and has found it difficult to start work; so far it has been restricted to taking a few symbolic top-down initiatives.¹³⁷ The CDVR is reportedly under-funded, having not received any grants from the government that created it as the main instrument for affirming its desire for reconciliation. However, it has obtained several external grants, including one of FCFA 2 billion (\$3.9 million) from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA).¹³⁸

The CDVR moved into its Abidjan office in January 2012. Its 60 staff were then only recruited in March and still it has not really begun its work. The lack of resources is only one of the causes of this delay. It has also been criticised for its president's centralised management style, its inability to listen and its failure to pay much attention to suggestions from others.¹³⁹ The CDVR has so far had little impact on the reconciliation process. On 1 October, President Ouattara asked Charles Konan Banny to make

new proposals with a view to breathing new life into the CDVR.¹⁴⁰

In the field, the work of reconciliation has begun without the commission. Local religious, traditional and local authority leaders and NGOs have taken their own initiatives in several regions.¹⁴¹ It is important that this work quickly receives support from the CDVR, which is supposed to promote forums for dialogue through local delegations. It planned to create 36 committees in five geographical areas in November 2012, but¹⁴² by the middle of the month, the various CDVR departments were still not in a position to start work.

However, it is not the CDVR's job alone to reconcile Ivorians. Imperfect, it is nevertheless the organisation appointed by the government to take the lead on this enormous but indispensable task. The government must make a financial contribution to this work and provide the commission with the resources necessary to fulfil its mandate, or risk having to concede claims that there is a lack of political will, at the highest level, for reconciliation. The CDVR must act now. Instead of trying to simultaneously set up a costly infrastructure in the form of 36 local offices, it would do well to work with civil society to gradually set up local committees, prioritising the regions that suffered the most during the conflict.

The town of Duékoué, which is still experiencing deadly tensions, and some districts of Abidjan certainly have greater need for reconciliation than, for example, the regions on the border with Ghana, which have not experienced the same extent of violence. However, while waiting for the CDVR to begin its work, the international community must support local reconciliation initiatives, and the CDVR's president himself, who appealed for reconciliation after the events of August and warned of the dangers that threaten the Ivorian nation, must also back these local initiatives.

The CDVR's work must also be strengthened by promoting a general environment favourable to reconciliation through the existence of a judiciary that respects the equality of victims. The Ivorian authorities' decision to adopt a repressive stance in recent months has led to an impasse: this policy is encouraging an increasing number of people to adhere to the radical ideas of Gbagbo's supporters in exile. Thus, it is essential that Ivorian justice, as well as the ICC, quickly send clear signals of a change in direction. Only the scheduling of judicial hearings or the placing of charges

¹³⁶ See “Un conseiller de Banny exprime son indignation”, *L'Inter*, 21 June 2012.

¹³⁷ One of the most spectacular of these actions was the launch of a period of national mourning and purification on 17 March 2012 in Abidjan. On that occasion and before 4,000 people, Charles Konan Banny knelt to ask for pardon. “Journées de deuil et de purification/Banny au Chef de l'Etat: ‘Monsieur le Président, n'ayons pas peur du dialogue’”, *L'intelligent d'Abidjan*, 19 March 2012.

¹³⁸ In addition to this funding, the CDVR has received donations from international organisations and regularly sends representatives abroad to try and raise funds. See “Coup de froid avec Washington”, *La Lettre du Continent*, 28 June 2012.

¹³⁹ Crisis Group interview, Abidjan, July 2012.

¹⁴⁰ “Ouattara et Banny en quête de solutions”, *Jeune Afrique*, 12 October 2012.

¹⁴¹ Crisis Group interviews, academic, politicians, civil society leaders, Abidjan, June and July 2012.

¹⁴² Crisis Group interview, civil society leader, Abidjan, June 2012.

against members of the forces associated with the government and implicated in past violence would be able to counter the feeling of injustice and general malaise present among sectors of the population. Without such action it will be difficult to engage with one's enemies. The ICC must not be satisfied with initiating proceedings against the former president for being the "indirect co-perpetrator" of crimes against humanity,¹⁴³ it must also lay charges against the high-ranking soldiers on both sides suspected of giving the orders to commit crimes of this nature. Furthermore, the UNOCI's human rights department must be given the resources it needs to improve its monitoring of violations throughout the country and to increase its response capacity.

Finally, France, the U.S. and the European Union, which have so far largely avoided public criticism of Ouattara's government, must be more explicit and publicly condemn human rights violations perpetrated by FRCI units. Twenty months after helping the president and his allies reestablish their electoral legitimacy, the leading members of the international community must not be afraid of criticising the Ivorian government if it goes off-track, as it has done on human rights and on a long list of other issues including corruption, reconciliation and the separation of political and judicial powers.

V. CONCLUSION

Little by little, the Ivorian government is distancing itself from its electoral commitment to improve governance. Although there has been unquestionable progress and improved management of the economy, which is showing a promising recovery, there has also been a worrying tendency by the government to duplicate some of the defects of previous regimes in Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere in West Africa. If it continues in this direction, the legitimate government that emerged as the victor from the post-electoral crisis risks losing some of its credibility inside the country as well as the trust it enjoys from the international community on both the political and financial fronts. It also risks recreating the conditions that favour another period of tension potentially followed by yet more violence. There is still time to reverse this trend and instead to promote a policy of détente which would enable the major reforms that the country so desperately needs and that Ouattara promised during his presidential campaign.

Dakar/Brussels, 26 November 2012

¹⁴³ "Mandat d'arrêt à l'encontre de Laurent Koudou Gbagbo", International Criminal Court, Pre-Trial Chamber III, 23 November 2011.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE



APPENDIX B

ACRONYMS

ADDR	Autorité pour le désarmement, la démobilisation et la réinsertion/Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Authority
Cap-UDD	Cap-Unir pour la démocratie et le développement/Cap-Unir for Democracy and Development
CEI	Commission électorale indépendante/Independent Electoral Commission
CDVR	Commission dialogue, vérité et réconciliation/Truth, Dialogue & Reconciliation Commission
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration
DST	Direction de la surveillance du territoire/Directorate of Territorial Surveillance
FAFN	Forces armées des Forces nouvelles/Armed Forces of the New Forces
FDS	Forces de défense et de sécurité/Defence and Security Forces
FN	Forces nouvelles/New Forces
FPI	Front populaire ivoirien/Ivorian Popular Front
FRCI	Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire/Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
LIDER	Liberté et démocratie pour la Côte d'Ivoire/Liberty and Democracy for Côte d'Ivoire
LURD	Libériens unis pour la réconciliation et la démocratie/Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
LMP	La majorité présidentielle/The Presidential Majority
MFA	Mouvement des forces d'avenir/Movement of the Forces of the Future
NDC	National Democratic Congress
PDCI	Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire/Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire
PNRRC	Programme national de réinsertion et de réhabilitation communautaire/National Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Program
RDR	Rassemblement des républicains/Rally of Republicans
RHDP	Rassemblement des houphouétistes pour la démocratie et le progrès/Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace
RPP	Rassemblement pour la paix, le progrès et le partage/Rally for Peace, Progress and Sharing
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SIR	Société ivoirienne de raffinage/Ivorian Refinery Company
UDPCI	Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire/Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire
UEMOA	Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine/West African Economic and Monetary Union
ULIMO	Mouvement uni pour la démocratie au Libéria/United Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
URD	Union pour la république et la démocratie/Union for the Republic and Democracy

APPENDIX C

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

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Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

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November 2012

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