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## **Thirty-seventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire**

### **I. Introduction**

1. By its resolution 2226 (2015), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) until 30 June 2016 and requested me to provide a midterm report on the situation on the ground and the implementation of the resolution, as well as recommendations for the implementation by 31 March 2016 of the military drawdown referred to in paragraph 65 of my report of 15 May 2014 ([S/2014/342](#)).

### **II. Political situation**

2. The reporting period was dominated by the preparations for and holding of the 25 October presidential election, which led to the re-election of President Alassane Ouattara, who was sworn in for a second and final term on 3 November. The polls were conducted peacefully, although the political environment in the country remained highly charged.

3. In the period leading up to the election, political divisions became more antagonistic, while at the same time political parties and actors formed alliances in an effort to mobilize support. On 15 May, 13 opposition parties and personalities, including Liberté et démocratie pour la République (LIDER), the dissident faction of the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI) and three dissident members of the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), established the Coalition nationale pour le changement (CNC) political coalition. Among the demands of CNC were an updated and credible voter's list, a secure environment, a reformed Independent Electoral Commission and respect for article 35 of the Constitution, which sets out the eligibility criteria for presidential candidates, including the requirement that both parents be Ivorian citizens by birth.

4. Meanwhile, my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire continued her efforts aimed at facilitating an environment conducive to a peaceful electoral process. On 22 May, political dialogue between the Government and 16 opposition parties, including the former ruling party FPI, resumed in the context of the permanent framework for dialogue launched in 2012. Discussions were focused on the requirements for a peaceful and transparent presidential election, including the financing of political parties, access to State media, the security of candidates and



freedom of expression, as well as the unfreezing of bank accounts and the right of return for persons affiliated with the previous regime living outside the country.

5. On 22 May, FPI held its fourth congress in Abidjan, during which it decided to participate in the presidential election and endorsed its leader, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, as its candidate. However, the dissident faction led by Aboudramane Sangaré continued to oppose Mr. Affi N'Guessan and also called on its supporters to refrain from participating in the electoral process. This contributed to fractures within the opposition coalition led by Mr. Affi N'Guessan, the Alliance des forces démocratiques de Côte d'Ivoire, with four parties defecting to join CNC on 2 September. Meanwhile, Mr. Affi N'Guessan pursued his efforts aimed at reuniting FPI in order to create a strong opposition to President Ouattara in the elections, convening a consultative forum for that purpose on 17 September. However, the dissident wing persisted in its efforts to denounce Mr. Affi N'Guessan, calling on its supporters to boycott the election.

6. On 2 September, CNC and four political parties signed a joint declaration stating that its signatories would build a coalition aimed at restoring freedom and democracy. However, CNC was not able to put forward a single presidential candidate, as proposed by the President of LIDER, Mamadou Koulibaly, and experienced internal disagreements as a result of the decision of three of its members to contest the presidency, including its President, Charles Konan Banny, the former Prime Minister and head of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who was replaced on 19 October by Jean-Enoc Bah as President of the coalition.

7. Meanwhile, the ruling coalition Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP) remained united around its support for President Ouattara as its sole candidate in the election, notwithstanding the decision of three PDCI members to contest the presidency as independent candidates within CNC. On 1 August, the Parti ivoirien des travailleurs convened an extraordinary congress in Abidjan, during which its former Secretary-General, Joseph Séka Séka, who was elected as the party's President, reaffirmed the party's alliance with RHDP and its support for President Ouattara's candidacy. On 4 September, during an RHDP event in Bouaké, Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan invited PDCI dissidents to reunite behind the party's leadership.

### **The electoral process**

8. From 1 to 30 June, the Independent Electoral Commission conducted voter registration, opening some 2,000 registration centres throughout the country, as well as 53 centres in 19 foreign countries where voting would take place. Owing to communication challenges, the Commission extended the registration process for 12 days to provide more people with the opportunity to register. On 30 September, the final list of 6.3 million voters was published, of whom 49 per cent were women, reflecting an increase of 10 per cent compared with 2010. On the same day, the Government adopted a decree establishing 10,335 voting stations and 19,841 polling stations across the country, as well as in 19 foreign locations.

9. On 9 June, the Coalition nationale de la jeunesse pour le changement (CNJC) organized unauthorized demonstrations in five cities across Côte d'Ivoire demanding changes in the electoral process and the release of detained opposition members, which resulted in the killing of one individual and the wounding of others. The

Minister of the Interior and Security, Hamed Bakayoko, reaffirmed that the Government would not allow protests that disrupted public order. On 10 June, the Government and opposition parties, including CNC, condemned the demonstrations.

10. Meanwhile, on 18 August, the Independent Electoral Commission met with the national media regulatory bodies, the National Press Council and the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication, in order to address concerns raised by opposition members and to ensure equitable access to State media during the electoral period. From 21 July to 30 September, the National Press Council carried out a campaign to inform political parties and civil society groups about media regulations and procedures.

11. Candidate nominations were held from 3 to 25 August. Thirty-three individuals registered with the Independent Electoral Commission, 14 of whom paid the approximately \$40,000 registration fee. Meanwhile, the Government made some efforts to meet the demands of the opposition, including with respect to providing security for presidential candidates, as well as in the areas of financing political parties and ensuring equitable access to State media. On 26 August, the High Authority of Audiovisual Communication convened the National Press Council and the State broadcasting service, Radiodiffusion Télévision Ivoirienne, to agree on measures to guarantee equal access to State media for presidential candidates during the campaign period. However, some opposition actors, in particular CNC, continued to criticize the Government, requesting a direct dialogue with President Ouattara. On 2 September, the President reaffirmed his commitment to political dialogue, although he indicated that issues related to the electoral code and the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission, among other electoral parameters, would not be “renegotiated”. The Minister in the presidency in charge of political dialogue, Jeannot Ahoussou-Kouadio, met opposition parties on 9 September in the context of the permanent framework for dialogue to discuss the election. However, members of CNC did not participate, as their coalition was not formally registered and their candidacies had not yet been endorsed by the Constitutional Council.

12. In a ruling made public on 9 September, the Constitutional Council determined that 10 of the 33 registered candidates met the requirements for contesting the election, and also rejected a complaint made by CNC member and former Minister for Foreign Affairs Essy Amara challenging the President’s eligibility under article 35, on the grounds that he did not meet the nationality requirements. The 10 official candidates were President Ouattara; Messrs. Affi N’Guessan, Banny, Amara and Koulibaly; Henriette Lagou Adjoua of the party *Renouveau pour la paix et la concorde*; and independent candidates Jacqueline-Claire Kouangoua, Kacou Gnanbo, Bertin Konan Kouadio and Siméon Konan Kouadio.

13. In reaction to the validation of President Ouattara’s eligibility by the Constitutional Council, CNJC called for nationwide protests to be held on 10 September, which the Government banned. Despite the ban, unauthorized protests were held, including in Bonoua, Gagnoa and Yopougon. Clashes between protesters and security forces resulted in three deaths, several injuries and the burning of property in Bayota, Logouata and Ouragahio. On 23 September, my Special Representative led a delegation comprising government and United Nations representatives to the areas to defuse tension and initiate dialogue, which she followed up on 13 November.

14. On 26 September, the police dispersed demonstrators at a banned meeting called by CNC in the Yopougon neighbourhood of Abidjan. In reaction to the 10 and 26 September protests, 51 individuals were arrested, most of whom were charged with disturbing public order, including prominent members of CNC and CNJC, 9 of whom were subsequently convicted; the remaining 42 are awaiting trial. Reports were also received about the incommunicado detention of several individuals by the National Surveillance Directorate, reportedly at the request of the Abidjan prosecutor. On 12 October, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire issued a statement calling on the authorities to respect freedom of assembly in a non-discriminatory manner and to release anyone arrested for demonstrating peacefully. In total, the Ivorian authorities banned or dispersed 19 political meetings and demonstrations organized by opposition political parties and civil society, including trade unions and student associations.

15. On 1 October, the Government announced the allocation of \$200,000, on an exceptional basis, to the 10 presidential candidates to fund their electoral campaigns, pending the adoption of legislation on the public funding of political parties. However, independent candidate Siméon Kouadio refused the funds, explaining that the measure had no legal basis.

16. On 7 October, Mr. Affi N'Guessan, Ms. Kouangoua, Ms. Adjoua and President Ouattara signed a code of conduct, committing to refraining from hate speech and adhering to electoral rules and procedures. On the same day, the other six candidates participated in an authorized political rally convened by CNC in Yopougon, during which they publicly expressed concern about the fairness and transparency of the electoral and dialogue processes.

17. The official presidential election campaign period, which took place from 9 to 23 October, proceeded without incident. Campaign strategies varied among the candidates, with some concentrating their efforts in their respective strongholds and others making an effort to rally support throughout the country. Meanwhile, the distribution of voter cards, initially scheduled to take place from 7 to 17 October, was extended until 21 October by the Independent Electoral Commission owing to the low collection rate; cards were subsequently made available at polling stations. During the campaign period, Messrs. Koulibaly, Amara and Banny withdrew on 9, 13 and 23 October, respectively, claiming that the conditions required for a credible, transparent and fair election were not in place. On 13 October, Mr. Koulibaly called for a boycott of the election, which was supported by other leaders within CNC. Meanwhile, on 22 October the National Press Council temporarily suspended the publication of three opposition newspapers for having undermined social cohesion by publishing a call for a boycott of the election.

18. Côte d'Ivoire held its presidential election on 25 October in a peaceful atmosphere and without any major incidents. In general, the conduct of the election proceeded smoothly, although delays in the arrival of electoral materials resulted in the late opening of approximately 5 per cent of polling stations; there were also challenges in using the biometric systems at roughly 30 per cent of polling stations. On 28 October, the Independent Electoral Commission published provisional results revealing that President Ouattara had obtained more than 83.6 per cent of the vote, followed by Mr. Affi N'Guessan, who had received approximately 9.3 per cent, and independent candidate Bertin Kouadio, who had received some 3.9 per cent. No other candidate received a significant percentage of the votes cast. Voter turnout

stood at approximately 52 per cent, with some 3.3 million participants out of the 6.3 million registered voters. On the same day, Mr. Affi N'Guessan, Bertin Kouadio, Siméon Kouadio and Ms. Kouangoua publicly conceded defeat and congratulated President Ouattara on his re-election; the President welcomed those gestures as a sign of democratic maturity. The Sangaré faction of FPI rejected the electoral outcome, denouncing irregularities. The Constitutional Council announced the final results, confirming the re-election of President Ouattara on 2 November, and the following day he was sworn in for a second and final five-year term.

19. On 4 November, President Ouattara convened his Cabinet and announced that he would not make any changes to his Government, which would continue to be headed by Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan. The President also announced that legislative elections would take place after the holding of a constitutional referendum aimed at changing the eligibility requirements for contesting the presidency, and not before December 2016, as the Constitution does not provide for the early dissolution of the legislature before the end of its five-year term.

### **Support for the electoral process**

20. The United Nations provided support to the national authorities responsible for the electoral process. My Special Representative made an effort to convene Ivorian political stakeholders and partners with a view to ensuring that disputes would be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the law, while also encouraging the Independent Electoral Commission to enhance its efforts to sensitize voters and political stakeholders regarding electoral preparations. On 1 July, UNOCI facilitated a platform bringing together 26 traditional rulers, which was also supported by the National Programme for Social Cohesion, the National Democratic Institute and the Peacebuilding Fund.

21. The Ivorian authorities, with support from UNOCI, prepared and implemented a comprehensive election security plan that involved the deployment of 28,000 Ivorian police, gendarmerie and military personnel to secure the electoral process, as well as the establishment of 12 command posts across the country and 1 main post in Abidjan to coordinate security actions in collaboration with prefects and electoral authorities. Activities to strengthen trust between the defence and security forces were also conducted with support from the Peacebuilding Fund.

22. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) mobilized \$6.45 million in electoral assistance, including from the Ivorian Government, Japan and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which financed the promotion of women's participation in the election, the training of experts, the sensitization of the population and logistical support for the Independent Electoral Commission. The Peacebuilding Fund also provided support for the participation of youth and women's groups.

23. UNOCI provided logistical support to the Independent Electoral Commission, facilitating the delivery of electoral materials to the 108 departments across the country. UNOCI and UNDP also assisted the Commission in the retrieval of electoral results.

24. The election was observed by several organizations, including the African Union, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union, the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie. According to the Independent Electoral Commission, 115 international

and national electoral observation missions deployed some 5,000 observers throughout the country. Ivorian civil society, with support from the Peacebuilding Fund, UNDP and other partners, established three separate situation rooms, including a women's and youth situation room, to monitor the election and provide early warning to prevent electoral violence. In addition, a contact group of eminent persons led by the former Presidents of Mali and Mauritania, Dioncounda Traoré and Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, respectively, also contributed to an environment conducive to a peaceful election. Following the election, international and national observers issued positive public statements, all of them noting that the election had been generally free, fair and transparent.

#### **National and international justice**

25. Progress in bringing to justice alleged perpetrators of crimes committed during the post-electoral crisis of 2010 remained slow, although some officers of the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), including former members of the Forces armées des forces nouvelles, were summoned by the Special Investigation and Examination Cell in the context of its investigation of serious human rights violations committed during the crisis. At least two FRCI commanders were subsequently charged.

26. On 4 August, the military court in Abidjan sentenced Anselme Séka Yapo, formerly in charge of the protection of former First Lady Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, to 20 years of imprisonment for murder, assault and battery. The court also convicted Jean-Noël Abéhi, former commander of the armoured gendarmerie squadron in Abidjan, to five years of imprisonment for desertion. Both have appealed the court's decision.

27. On 27 May, the International Criminal Court rejected the appeal presented by Côte d'Ivoire, challenging the decision of December 2014 regarding the admissibility of the case against Ms. Gbagbo before the Court. The Court stated, *inter alia*, that the crimes investigated domestically, namely, economic crimes and crimes against the State, were of a nature different from that of the charges before the Court, which relate to alleged crimes against humanity, sexual violence, persecution and other inhumane acts. The authorities have provided assurances that they are completing the investigations into "blood crimes" committed during the crisis, with a view to bringing to justice alleged perpetrators on both sides of the conflict.

28. On 25 October, the International Criminal Court denied a request from the defence team of former President Laurent Gbagbo to hold his trial in Abidjan or Arusha, citing security and logistics challenges. On 28 October, the Court announced that the joint trial of the former President and Charles Blé Goudé, the former Minister of Youth and former Young Patriots leader, would be postponed from 10 November 2015 to 28 January 2016 so that the physical ability of Mr. Gbagbo to stand trial could be evaluated.

#### **National reconciliation and social cohesion**

29. The final report and recommendations of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission presented to President Ouattara on 15 December 2014 had not been released publicly as at 1 December. On 3 July, the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims announced that between 15 May and 30 June it had registered 158,238 victims of the crisis that had begun in 1990, who

would be considered for reparations. On 4 August, the President launched the Government's reparations programme for victims of the conflict and/or their beneficiaries. As at 1 December, more than 2,100 family members of persons killed during the conflict had received \$2,000 per family under the compensation scheme. On 3 October, national stakeholders validated the national strategy on reconciliation and social cohesion developed by the National Programme for Social Cohesion, with support from UNOCI. Governmental approval of the strategy is pending.

30. Intercommunal conflicts remained a challenge, particularly in the west, primarily as a result of land issues, chieftaincy disputes, evictions from protected forests and the exploitation of natural resources. UNOCI activities were focused on encouraging reconciliation and strengthening social cohesion, as well as preventing local conflicts from escalating before the presidential election. To that end, the mission engaged more than 3,900 individuals through 14 intercommunal meetings throughout the country. Another 12 activities sensitized 1,203 youths, including 118 women, with respect to the importance of peaceful elections. In addition, my Special Representative led a campaign at six universities and institutions of higher learning to promote a culture of peace, which reached more than 5,000 students, 870 of whom were certified as conflict mediators.

31. The Government continued efforts, with UNOCI support, to build the capacity of local administrators and village councils to collect and analyse data regarding local conflicts to prevent and mitigate threats to social cohesion. The mission organized three workshops involving 52 administrative officials and 134 traditional chiefs from the Abidjan, Grands-Ponts and Sud-Comoé regions. It also implemented 64 quick-impact projects to support local-level reconciliation and social cohesion. Meanwhile, the Committee for the Restitution of Illegally Occupied Public or Private Sites continued to make progress, with 740 properties vacated out of the 1,315 claims received as at 1 December.

### **III. Security situation**

32. The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire remained generally stable but fragile. While a decrease in security incidents at the border areas with Liberia was reported, owing mainly to an enhanced presence of national security and defence forces, the incidence of violent crimes such as armed robbery, banditry and home invasions in Abidjan and other parts of the country remained high.

33. The electoral period concluded without any major incidents despite unsubstantiated rumours of imminent attacks from Ghana and Liberia. There were, however, violent demonstrations following the publication of the candidate list, as detailed in paragraphs 13 and 14 above. National police used force to disperse 19 unauthorized demonstrations.

34. Following attacks carried out on 10 and 28 June on the towns of Misseni and Fakola, respectively, in Mali near the border with Côte d'Ivoire, responsibility for which was claimed by Ansar Dine on 30 June, the Government announced a series of security measures, including the redeployment of Ivorian security forces along the border with Mali. UNOCI also deployed elements from its quick-reaction force in June and July to support military operations along the border. The events raised serious concern about the potential for terrorist groups to increase attacks in the border areas or, eventually, to operate from Côte d'Ivoire in order to launch attacks in Mali.

35. On the night of 8 and 9 November, intercommunal clashes between members of the Dida and Malinké communities in the village of Neko, near Gagnoa, resulted in the death of one person, injuries to four and the displacement of civilians. The local police responded, with the support of UNOCI military and police personnel, to bring the situation under control.

36. On 18 and 19 November, clashes broke out between two student unions, the Federation of Students and Scholars of Côte d'Ivoire and the General Association of Pupils and Students of Côte d'Ivoire, at University Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Abidjan, resulting in the death of one student and injuries to several others. The police intervened to restore order.

37. In the early morning of 2 December, 15 armed assailants launched successive attacks against two FRCI camps in Olodio, near Tabou in the south-western part of the country, exchanging gunfire with FRCI for an hour before fleeing towards the villages of Podoué and Fété. Eleven FRCI soldiers were killed and 10 injured, 4 of them seriously, during the attack. Four assailants were also killed and one was injured. FRCI arrested eight assailants and reinforced its presence in the area. The UNOCI force also enhanced its air and ground patrols in the area, in coordination with FRCI.

#### **Protection of civilians**

38. UNOCI revised its strategy for the protection of civilians to reflect high-risk areas in the context of the electoral process, and issued guidance to strengthen civilian protection. Training was conducted for 162 United Nations personnel and 120 members of the national security forces.

### **IV. Regional issues**

39. Côte d'Ivoire's borders with Guinea and Liberia remained closed as a precautionary measure against Ebola virus disease. As a consequence, joint security operations involving the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNOCI, as well as the Liberian and Ivorian security agencies, remained suspended, although information-sharing between the two missions continued. In September, representatives of UNOCI and UNMIL met in Liberia to discuss ways to support the efforts of both Governments and civil society groups to strengthen and monitor border security. Liberian security personnel, with support from UNMIL, enhanced border security in the context of the Ivorian election.

40. Pursuant to resolution 2226 (2015), UNOCI continued to coordinate with the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, including with respect to the monitoring of the arms embargo, and also worked closely with Ivorian customs authorities.

### **V. Reform of security institutions**

41. Progress was made in the implementation of the national security sector reform strategy. At the national level, the secretariat of the National Security Council reinforced its capacity. Gains were also made with respect to decentralization and the local ownership of service delivery in the area of security. In June, a pilot phase of the establishment of security committees charged with



implementing security sector reform at the local level was launched with support from the Peacebuilding Fund. Committees were established in Béliér, Comoé, Gbêkê, Hambol, Haut-Sassandra, Indénié-Duablin, Marahoué, Mé, Nawa, N'zi and Poro following a national security assessment and mapping of security sector reform stakeholders conducted by the National Security Council to support the establishment of security committees and boost implementation at the local level.

42. The police and the gendarmerie continued to lack adequate equipment, including non-lethal weapons and transportation, to effectively perform law enforcement tasks and carry out other core responsibilities throughout the country. UNOCI provided technical expertise and mentoring to improve the operational capacity of law enforcement and security institutions, with particular emphasis on crowd control and management. During the reporting period, 12 dialogue platforms, with the participation of key security stakeholders, were held throughout the country to improve confidence within and among the security forces and within the population. In addition, UNOCI quick-impact projects supported the rehabilitation of community infrastructure and agricultural initiatives in the villages of Drayo-Dagnoa, Gnagbodougnoua, Siéguékou and Zahibohio, in the Goh region in western Côte d'Ivoire, and the rehabilitation and installation of sanitary facilities for military cadets.

43. In the lead-up to the presidential election, UNOCI provided training and technical support to members of the Security and Defence Commission of the National Assembly as well as civil society and security forces, with respect to parliamentary oversight, the promotion of political dialogue, confidence-building and national reconciliation. On 24 August, a joint mechanism was established by FRCI and UNOCI to enhance information-sharing and prompt action regarding human rights violations allegedly committed by FRCI soldiers.

44. During the 5 November meeting of the National Security Council, President Ouattara announced his intention to put draft legislation on military planning and internal security before the National Assembly during its current session. This is an important step forward with regard to strengthening parliamentary oversight of the security sector and could potentially accelerate defence reform.

45. The United Nations Mine Action Service continued to enhance the capacity of the national authorities to manage explosive threats, through the construction of nine weapon and ammunition storage sites, the provision of training to 65 members of the police, gendarmerie and FRCI on the management of unexploded improvised explosive devices, and the sensitization of 7,167 persons, including 2,596 women, regarding weapons collection.

## **VI. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration**

46. On 30 June, the mandate of the National Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration came to an end. To address residual tasks and coordinate reinsertion activities, the Government established a dedicated cell in charge of coordination, monitoring and reinsertion, which will operate under the auspices of the National Security Council. On 4 November, the Government announced that 69,506 former combatants, including 6,105 women, had been disarmed and demobilized, 58,920 of whom had received reinsertion support, while 10,586 others were enrolled in or waiting to participate in reinsertion activities,

which would continue until June 2016. Between 1 May and 1 December, national authorities conducted 88 disarmament and demobilization operations with support from UNOCI and the Mine Action Service, during which 5,501 former combatants, including 421 women, handed over 1,462 weapons, 382,400 rounds of small arms ammunition and 2,015 items of explosive ordnance.

47. UNOCI assisted the Government's reinsertion efforts by providing vocational training for up to 20,000 former combatants, providing 6,000 reinsertion kits, processing the payment of transitional safety allowances to 31,212 former combatants and coordinating HIV/AIDS and gender training for former combatants taking part in resocialization activities. The mission also implemented 88 community-based reinsertion and social cohesion projects focused on the enhancement of community safety and social cohesion.

48. Nine incidents were reported involving former combatants, who claimed that their allowances had not been paid or complained about a lack of reintegration opportunities, notably in Abidjan, Bouaké and Daloa. The Government, with support from UNOCI, worked to address their concerns, including by increasing sensitization on reinsertion opportunities.

49. The National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the support of UNOCI and the Mine Action Service, conducted 11 operations.

## **VII. Human rights**

50. On 25 September, the National Human Rights Commission of Côte d'Ivoire, which had been established in December 2012, presented to President Ouattara its first annual report, covering 2014. Among the human rights concerns underscored in the report were the eviction of civilians from some urban sites, juvenile criminality and restrictions on freedom of assembly. In October, the Commission, with support from UNOCI, adopted its five-year strategic plan for the period 2016-2020, which is aimed at ensuring the implementation of its protection and promotion functions. In addition, the Commission continued to inaugurate regional human rights commissions, which now number 15 in the country, and established a platform for monitoring the human rights situation during the electoral period.

51. On 7 July, a new law on the repression of terrorism was promulgated, which defines acts of terrorism in a very broad manner that could undermine the protection of fundamental civil and political rights, as political or protest activities could fall under the definition of terrorism according to the law. It also places restrictions on certain due process guarantees for those suspected of having committed terrorism-related offences.

52. Between 1 May and 1 December, UNOCI documented 101 human rights violations, including the killing of 8 persons; the torture and other violations of the physical integrity of 38 persons, including 1 woman, 2 boys and 1 girl; the illegal and/or arbitrary arrest and detention of 199 persons, including 12 women, 3 boys and 2 girls; 6 violations of the right to property; and 26 violations of freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly. Only three alleged perpetrators were convicted in connection with those human rights violations. The persistently low prosecution rate is due mainly to the fact that victims fear that the trial will not be fair and transparent and could prompt reprisals.

**Child protection**

53. Between 1 May and 1 December, UNOCI documented the arbitrary and illegal detention of 5 minors, including 2 girls, as well as a number of incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence against 81 girls, one of which allegedly had been perpetrated by a State agent. UNOCI also recorded two cases of forced marriage and one case of attempted forced marriage against three girls.

54. The Ivorian authorities, in coordination with the United Nations and other partners, continued to work on finalizing a national judicial policy for the protection of children and youth, which would encourage reinsertion rather than imprisonment for juvenile offenders.

**Sexual violence**

55. During the reporting period, UNOCI documented 98 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual abuse. Of the 130 perpetrators involved in those cases, 2 were State agents, at least 61 were arrested and at least 20 were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 1 to 10 years. Most victims continued to resort to traditional mechanisms to settle cases, resulting in a low rate of prosecution of alleged perpetrators. On 27 August, a tribunal in Séguéla sentenced eight women to three years of imprisonment for female genital mutilation.

56. On 2 June, FRCI adopted a sexual violence code of conduct for Ivorian soldiers, which was disseminated to all FRCI units. On 18 and 19 June in Agboville, 47 FRCI commanders signed a commitment to take action against sexual violence and to ensure that all units under their command would respect international human rights and humanitarian law.

57. The Ministry of Solidarity, Family, Women and Children, with support from the United Nations, initiated a mapping of activities throughout the country to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, in order to strengthen the implementation of the national strategy for preventing such violence. Among the recommendations of the Ministry resulting from the exercise was the inclusion of the national strategy in the draft national development plan for the period 2016-2020.

**Gender**

58. To enhance the participation of women in the electoral process, UNOCI organized six workshops and awareness-raising sessions throughout the country, bringing together stakeholders, including leaders of political parties, electoral officials, women and youth representatives. In Daloa and Bouaké, women political leaders and civil society representatives were encouraged to actively engage in the electoral process, including by participating in the upcoming local and legislative elections. On 18 May, President Ouattara launched a handbook on women's skills, which is intended to support the Government's outreach and its efforts to appoint and promote women to decision-making and leadership positions in the private and public sectors.

**HIV/AIDS**

59. Between 1 May and 1 December, UNOCI conducted 74 HIV awareness and prevention workshops, sensitizing 1,748 of its civilian and uniformed personnel, including 41 women. An additional 6,947 individuals, including community members

and 5,201 former combatants, 323 of whom were women, were sensitized regarding HIV/AIDS and sexual violence. Voluntary and confidential counselling and testing services were provided to 1,070 local community members, including 1,024 ex-combatants, 82 of whom were women. The mission also trained 45 members of civil society groups, including 12 women, on HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence.

## **VIII. Media**

60. The early warning mechanism established by the Ivorian media regulatory bodies with support from UNOCI was reactivated for the electoral period. UNOCI also intensified efforts to strengthen professionalism, media ethics and responsible journalism with a view to promoting an environment conducive to peaceful elections. During the electoral period, ONUCI FM radio broadcast special programmes, including a 15-minute-long “election news” segment, as well as sensitization spots regarding the importance of a peaceful process. The mission also advocated a more open media space. However, some media outlets continued to disseminate incendiary information and hate speech.

## **IX. Economic situation**

61. In 2015, economic growth in Côte d’Ivoire reached 8.4 per cent, benefiting from a reformed business environment, the implementation of a public investment programme and an increase in household incomes. Inflation stood at 1.5 per cent. As a result, the 2015 living standards measurement survey revealed that poverty had decreased from 48.9 per cent in 2008 to 46.3 per cent in 2015.

62. On 1 October, the Government approved the national budget for the 2015/16 fiscal year, in the amount of \$11.8 billion, reflecting an increase of some 12 per cent compared with the previous fiscal year. The country’s fiscal position was improved through increased revenue collection, tight expenditure controls and a decline in energy subsidies. Côte d’Ivoire continued to enjoy a surplus trade balance, with cocoa exports offsetting falling oil exports. There was a deep service deficit owing to the importation of services for mining and infrastructure projects.

63. On 29 September, the International Monetary Fund concluded the final review of its Côte d’Ivoire economic and financial programme supported by the extended credit facility, and noted strong macroeconomic performance in the first half of 2015. Consequently, the country qualified to receive \$700 million in credits and loans from the International Development Association and \$1.77 billion in loans from the International Finance Corporation, as well as \$800 million in guarantees from the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency for the period 2016-2019.

64. The Government closed 158 illegal mining sites in May and June, and also worked with local communities to mitigate the resumption of illegal mining in their areas of responsibility.

## **X. Humanitarian situation**

65. As at 1 December, 37,951 Ivorian refugees registered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) remained in Liberia,

while 21,315 were in other countries in West Africa, including Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Togo. On 5 November, the Ivorian authorities informed UNHCR that facilitated voluntary repatriations from Guinea and Liberia, suspended at the request of the Ivorian Government since July 2014 as a preventive measure in the light of the Ebola outbreak, could resume. Practical modalities for the resumption of repatriation operations will be developed in consultation with the three Governments. More than 11,000 refugees living in Liberia have expressed interest in returning to Côte d'Ivoire.

66. In June, the Government, supported by the United Nations, completed a national disaster risk reduction capacity assessment to enhance national capacity, including preparedness for emergency response. Additionally, a five-year interministerial action plan for disaster risk reduction was developed from June to November, in compliance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

## **XI. Deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire**

### **Military component**

67. As at 1 December, the strength of the UNOCI military component stood at 5,412 personnel out of an authorized strength of 5,437, including five infantry battalions, two task force units, a quick-reaction unit and enablers, as well as 88 staff officers and 185 military observers. Women represent 1.7 per cent of the force. More than half of the UNOCI force is deployed in the west.

68. To be more proactive and responsive during the electoral period, the force had been reconfigured to a more mobile posture, with enhanced situational awareness and early warning capabilities. The force conducted several operations in support of FRCI, including at the borders with Liberia and Mali, as well as coordinated operations with FRCI in high-risk areas in the lead-up to the election. The 650-strong quick-reaction force was fully operational for multiple, simultaneous deployments, with one motorized company deployed to Korhogo from 22 to 30 October as part of the force's security reinforcement during the presidential election, to support Government security forces, while the remaining battalion was based in Yamoussoukro to rapidly respond to incidents across Côte d'Ivoire as needed.

69. In my report of 15 May 2014 ([S/2014/342](#)), I indicated that it would be possible to reduce the UNOCI force to a residual strength after the 2015 presidential election, which has concluded peacefully. It is therefore recommended that the drawdown of the military component proceed, leaving a residual presence of 4,000 military personnel by 31 March 2016. The force would continue to prioritize its deployment in the west and other high-risk areas.

70. Further to my letter dated 17 November to the President of the Security Council ([S/2015/894](#)) and the response dated 19 November ([S/2015/895](#)), a 250-strong detachment of the UNOCI quick-reaction force was temporarily deployed to Bangui, Central African Republic, on 26 November for a temporary period not to exceed eight weeks, for the purpose of temporarily reinforcing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic during the referendum and the first round of elections, as well as during the visit of Pope Francis. During the temporary deployment to Bangui, the unit will not be

available to reinforce UNMIL in keeping with Security Council resolution 2162 (2014) and subsequent resolutions.

#### **Police component**

71. As at 1 December, the strength of the UNOCI police component stood at 1,480 personnel, out of an authorized strength of 1,500, including 486 police officers and six formed police units, deployed in Abidjan (two units), Bouaké, Daloa, Guiglo and Korhogo. Women represented 12 per cent of the component.

72. Throughout the reporting period, UNOCI police supported and advised national law enforcement and security forces, including through the conduct of joint patrols and mentoring, training and co-location activities at police stations and gendarmerie brigades throughout the country. In preparation for the electoral period, UNOCI police supported national law enforcement and security forces by conducting two seminars on crowd control for local authorities, training 5,372 police officers and gendarmes on their electoral security role, and conducting joint exercises with police and gendarmerie intervention units to enhance their operational capacities.

#### **Conduct and discipline**

73. UNOCI continued to strengthen its efforts to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse by its uniformed and civilian personnel, with a particular emphasis on the prevention of misconduct through a proactive communications strategy and a network for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. My Special Representative emphasized my zero-tolerance policy to all UNOCI military and police contingent commanders. Pursuant to my report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse ([A/69/779](#)) and related guidance, the mission established a task force that provides my Special Representative with advice on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, and also in accordance with my report, UNOCI adopted a new community-based complaint reception mechanism aimed at engaging local leaders and non-governmental organizations in proactive efforts to facilitate the reporting of complaints in a confidential manner. Between 1 May and 1 December, nine category 1 allegations were reported and referred for investigation, including three allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

## **XII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel**

74. Between 1 May and 1 December, 17 criminal incidents were perpetrated against United Nations personnel, including 3 armed robberies, 1 assault and 4 residential break-ins. During the electoral period, mitigating measures were put in place in accordance with the security risk assessment to protect United Nations personnel.

## **XIII. Future of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire**

75. In March 2016, at the conclusion of the drawdown proposed in paragraph 69 above, UNOCI will reach a residual strength of 4,000 troops, down from its peak authorized strength of 9,792 troops in 2011, at the height of the post-electoral crisis of 2010. In accordance with resolution 2226 (2015), I intend to deploy a strategic

team that will consult with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations country team and other partners concerned, including ECOWAS, in order to develop by 31 March 2016 options and timelines for the eventual withdrawal of UNOCI. Such recommendations would be informed by a thorough assessment of the political and security situation in the country, including the capacity of the Ivorian security forces to maintain stability independently of UNOCI.

#### **XIV. Observations**

76. With the successful holding of the presidential election on 25 October, Côte d'Ivoire has reached a critical milestone in consolidating its long-term peace and stability. I wish to commend the people of Côte d'Ivoire, who have demonstrated, through their peaceful participation in the democratic process, that they have indeed turned the page on a tumultuous chapter in Ivorian history, ushering in a new era.

77. The important role played by the Independent Electoral Commission in planning and conducting an election that national and international observers found to be generally free, fair and transparent is to be commended. I also wish to express appreciation for the support provided by international and regional partners, as well as Ivorian civil society, whose efforts helped to enhance perceptions regarding the legitimacy of the electoral process. Maintaining a peaceful environment during an electoral process, which is inherently contentious, is a shared responsibility. I therefore welcome the commitment of all Ivorian political stakeholders to maintaining dialogue throughout the electoral period, thereby facilitating the peaceful environment that prevailed. I commend the efforts by the Government to accommodate the demands of the political opposition, as well as the conciliatory gestures made under the leadership of President Ouattara, including with respect to dialogue, equitable access to the State media, campaign financing and security for the presidential candidates. Furthermore, while it is regrettable that some of those who contested the presidency engaged in discourse counterproductive to an inclusive electoral process, including calls for a boycott, all political actors are to be commended for pursuing grievances and disputes through appropriate channels.

78. Notwithstanding the successful conclusion of the election, protests and other calls questioning the eligibility of President Ouattara to contest the election on nationality grounds demonstrate that Côte d'Ivoire must still tackle the divisive issue of who is an Ivorian, which has contributed to conflict in the recent past. While most of the media conducted themselves professionally throughout the electoral period, I am concerned about inflammatory rhetoric published in some newspapers. So long as references to "*ivoirité*" remain part of the public discourse, national reconciliation and social cohesion cannot be fully achieved.

79. In the five years since the post-electoral crisis of 2010, Côte d'Ivoire has made considerable progress. Going forward, sustaining those gains will require continued efforts to reconcile a still-divided population, heal the wounds of the past and create a social environment in which all Ivorian citizens, irrespective of their ethnic or other backgrounds, are equal participants in the political, social and economic life of the country. Such a transformation would require that the people and the Government redouble their efforts with respect to national reconciliation. I commend President Ouattara's commitment to compensate victims of the crisis; however, reparations cannot be the sole response to heal the wounds of the past. I urge the Government to

publicly release the report of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and engage in broad and inclusive consultations on how to take forward all its recommendations in a comprehensive reconciliation process.

80. Reconciliation is also undermined by perceptions of impunity for human rights violations. In that regard, I remain concerned about slow progress in bringing to justice alleged perpetrators of crimes committed during the post-electoral crisis, irrespective of their political affiliation. While I welcome efforts made by the Special Investigation and Examination Cell, I would also call for more determined action to take forward investigations and prosecutions of all those alleged to have committed crimes.

81. I welcome the issuance of the first report of the National Human Rights Commission, and encourage the Government to take measures to empower the Commission to serve as an independent body in full conformity with the Paris Principles. I am, however, deeply troubled by continued reports of sexual violence, often against young girls. While I welcome the creation of a special structure for the protection of children within the judicial system as a positive development, I am concerned that prosecution rates for perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses remain far too low, underscoring the need for the Government to take steps to strengthen the independence and effectiveness of the judicial system. I also call on the Ivorian authorities to pursue efforts to overcome perceptions of victor's justice by addressing disparities of treatment by the judiciary that are not conducive to genuine reconciliation.

82. The stability prevailing in Côte d'Ivoire is welcome, although continued high rates of criminality remain a source of concern and instability. I commend the important role played by the Ivorian security forces during the electoral period. An effective security sector must be able to secure a sensitive political event while also protecting the population and their right to free political expression. Overall, the Ivorian security institutions demonstrated their ability to effectively strike that balance, despite operational shortcomings and shortfalls in equipment facing the police and the gendarmerie. It is highly regrettable that violent demonstrations following the publication of the candidate list led to the loss of life and the destruction of property. I encourage additional efforts aimed at enhancing the non-lethal response capabilities of those responsible for maintaining public order and protecting the population.

83. Encouraging progress has been made in reforming the security sector, including with respect to measures taken to eventually reduce the gender gap in the national security and defence forces. National ownership of this priority issue is essential, as are measures to rebuild confidence between the security forces and the population. Going forward, it could be important to maintain this momentum by promulgating the legislation adopted by the National Assembly on 9 March, to enhance the professionalism and accountability of the defence forces.

84. I congratulate the Government on concluding its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme as scheduled, by 30 June. However, the durable reintegration of tens of thousands of former combatants will require close attention to mitigate the risk of remobilization and a potential return to violence. The Government and its partners must also be prepared to provide assistance to the residual caseload of former combatants currently in the reinsertion process, and to



consider options for accommodating the expectations of Ivorian former combatants living outside the country who may return to Côte d'Ivoire.

85. I take note that an investigation has resulted in the arrest of one individual alleged to have been involved in the killing of seven United Nations peacekeepers in Para, near the border with Liberia, in June 2012. I would also expect further progress with respect to the identification of the perpetrators of the 2012 attack on a camp for internally displaced persons in western Côte d'Ivoire. I wish to remind the Governments concerned of their responsibility to bring to justice all of those who are responsible for these international crimes.

86. During the reporting period, there was a welcome decline in the number of reported incidents in the western part of the country and along the border with Liberia, which demonstrates the positive impact of a reinforced security presence and intensified patrols, as well as the ability of the national authorities to mitigate threats and protect the population. However, as the deadly attack of 2 December against the FRCI camps in Olodio demonstrates, it is crucial to remain vigilant with respect to addressing latent pockets of insecurity in the area.

87. Now that the Ebola outbreak has been brought under control in the countries most affected, it is important that Côte d'Ivoire reopen its borders, allowing for the voluntary return of Ivorian citizens living as refugees in Guinea and Liberia. I also urge the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to resume their bilateral security cooperation, including within the framework of the quadripartite mechanism involving UNOCI and UNMIL.

88. Impressive progress has been made on the macroeconomic front under President Ouattara's leadership. Côte d'Ivoire now has the second-largest economy in West Africa. However, it is important to ensure that growth is inclusive, benefiting the entire population, including those traditionally marginalized, such as women and youth. Moreover, to ensure the durable consolidation of peace and stability, many other important tasks identified above, including political dialogue, improvements in the security sector, the reintegration of former combatants and efforts to address impunity, particularly for human rights violations, must be equally prioritized. I would also emphasize that intercommunal conflicts, particularly in the west, continue to undermine social cohesion and stability, and I call on national authorities to maintain a focus on that area, especially to address land-related conflicts, which are a root cause of localized violence.

89. The successful conduct of the presidential election is the most powerful demonstration of the progress made in Côte d'Ivoire, and I am optimistic about the country's future. However, there remain challenges that must be addressed in order to consolidate the hard-won gains. I anticipate the need for UNOCI to continue to accompany Côte d'Ivoire through the legislative elections and the solidification of the political dispensation in the country thereafter, including through the good offices and political support of my Special Representative. Moreover, there are also emerging threats confronting Côte d'Ivoire, including violent extremism and terrorism, which have taken root in too many countries in the region, devastating civilians, destroying communities and undermining State authority. It is therefore important that the United Nations continue to support the region, including through the continuation of the quick-reaction force established within UNOCI pursuant to resolution 2162 (2014) as a tool for peace and stability in the region, to ensure that the gains made by peacekeeping over more than a decade in West Africa are

sustained. Nevertheless, the successful conclusion of the electoral period and the prevailing stability would warrant the reduction of UNOCI to a residual strength, as detailed in paragraph 69 above. In my special report in March 2016, I will provide recommendations on the future of UNOCI, pursuant to resolution 2226 (2015).

90. I wish to express my deep appreciation to my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her excellent leadership throughout the electoral period, and my gratitude for the role of the United Nations family in contributing to the successful conduct of the presidential election. I also extend my sincere gratitude to all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel, troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and other regional organizations, multilateral and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support for peace in Côte d'Ivoire.

## Annex I

## United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire: military and police strength

(As at 1 December 2015)

Country	Military component			Total	Police component	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops		Formed police units	Police officers
Argentina	–	–	–	–	–	3
Bangladesh	13	9	1 411	1 433	180	–
Benin	9	6	369	384	–	60
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	–	–	3	–	–
Brazil	4	3	–	7	–	–
Burkina Faso	–	–	–	–	–	67
Burundi	–	–	–	–	–	45
Cameroon	1	–	–	1	–	14
Central African Republic	–	–	–	–	–	1
Chad	6	–	–	6	–	23
China	6	–	–	6	–	–
Democratic Republic of the Congo	–	–	–	–	–	13
Djibouti	–	–	–	–	–	14
Ecuador	2	–	–	2	–	–
Egypt	–	1	174	175	–	–
El Salvador	3	–	–	3	–	–
Ethiopia	2	–	–	2	–	–
France	–	6	–	6	–	7
Gambia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Ghana	6	7	97	110	–	5
Guatemala	5	–	–	5	–	–
Guinea	2	–	–	2	–	–
India	9	–	–	9	–	–
Ireland	2	–	–	2	–	–
Jordan	8	10	–	18	485	13
Kazakhstan	2	–	–	2	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	2
Malawi	3	2	–	5	–	–
Mali	–	1	–	1	–	–
Mauritania	–	–	–	–	140	–
Morocco	–	4	714	718	–	–
Namibia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Nepal	3	1	–	4	–	–

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military component</i>				<i>Police component</i>	
	<i>Military observers</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Formed police units</i>	<i>Police officers</i>
Niger	4	3	865	872	–	43
Nigeria	4	–	–	4	–	3
Pakistan	12	14	277	303	189	–
Paraguay	1	1	–	2	–	–
Peru	1	–	–	1	–	–
Philippines	3	–	–	3	–	–
Poland	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Korea	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Moldova	3	–	–	3	–	–
Romania	6	–	–	6	–	–
Russian Federation	10	–	–	10	–	–
Rwanda	–	–	–	–	–	41
Senegal	4	6	733	743	–	17
Serbia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Spain	–	1	–	1	–	–
Switzerland	–	–	–	–	–	1
Togo	7	6	465	478	–	30
Tunisia	7	3	–	10	–	40
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	5
Uganda	4	2	–	6	–	–
Ukraine	–	3	31	34	–	10
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2	–	4	–	–
Uruguay	2	–	–	2	–	–
Vanuatu	–	–	–	–	–	14
Yemen	9	–	–	9	–	15
Zambia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Zimbabwe	3	–	–	3	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>3 136</b>	<b>5 412</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>486</b>

# Annex II

