



# Security Council

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## Role of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

### Special report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. In a statement by the President of the Security Council dated 30 June 2017 ([S/PRST/2017/8](#)) marking the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the Council requested me to provide a comprehensive study of the role of UNOCI in settling the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The present report takes into account the contributions of political mediation, the sanctions regime, and other relevant factors that allowed for the successful completion of the Operation's mandate. It draws on the findings of research conducted by an external consultant, commissioned by the Secretariat, and is based on broad consultations with Ivorian, regional and international stakeholders and United Nations officials, among other involved entities. It contains lessons learned and recommendations from the United Nations peacekeeping experience in Côte d'Ivoire, and identifies successes and the challenges outstanding at the time of the departure of UNOCI, with the overall aim of enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping in the future.

#### II. Background and context

##### The evolution of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

2. UNOCI deployed to Côte d'Ivoire on 4 April 2004, pursuant to Security Council resolution [1528 \(2004\)](#), in which the Council authorized it to subsume, as from that date, the responsibilities of the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), a political mission, and the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which were "re-hatted" and absorbed within the United Nations peacekeeping operation.

3. Both ECOWAS and France had dispatched armed forces following the failed coup of September 2002 against the Government of President Laurent Gbagbo, effectively freezing the armed conflict by creating a buffer between the rebel-held north and the Government-controlled south. The mandate of UNOCI was based on the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement of 23 January 2003, which provided for the establishment of a government of national reconciliation, and in which the United Nations was requested to support the holding of elections following a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. In its early years UNOCI served primarily as an interposition force, with regional actors playing a leading role with respect to



the political process while the host Government's lack of cooperation impeded its operations.

4. A significant turning point for UNOCI occurred with the signing, on 4 March 2007, of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, brokered by the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré. Following successive peace agreements mediated by regional partners, the Ouagadougou Agreement paved the way for elections, while reinforcing the United Nations electoral certification role. This brought UNOCI into the heart of the political process and provided the mission with leverage to move the political and electoral processes forward.

5. After the resolution of the post-electoral crisis of 2011, UNOCI activities shifted to accompanying the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire in rebuilding their deeply divided country, with a focus on longer-term stabilization efforts such as national reconciliation and social cohesion, institutional reforms, and facilitating an environment conducive to the return of the tens of thousands of Ivorians displaced within the country and region during the crisis. The mission's final turning point aligned with the presidential elections of 2015, at which point planning for the downsizing of UNOCI and the eventual transition from peacekeeping, which had begun in 2013, was expedited. The consolidation of the political gains in 2016, through the peaceful conduct of legislative elections and the holding of a constitutional referendum that addressed, *inter alia*, the identity issue at the root of the Ivorian crisis, provided the backdrop for the transformation of the United Nations engagement in Côte d'Ivoire in 2017 and the withdrawal of UNOCI effective 30 June 2017.

6. Arguably the most significant contributing factor to the success of UNOCI was its clear mandate, backed by a unified Security Council, at the second decisive moment in its deployment: the contested presidential election of 2010. The unanimous adoption of resolution [1975 \(2011\)](#) on 30 March 2011 paved the way for a resolution of the post-electoral crisis, which was made possible with the collaboration of ECOWAS and the African Union. They, together with the United Nations, recognized Alassane Ouattara as the democratically elected president and urged the defeated incumbent to relinquish power.

7. The principles of subsidiarity and complementarity, which govern relations between the regional economic communities, the African Union Peace and Security Council, and the United Nations Security Council, were mostly upheld throughout the life of UNOCI. ECOWAS initially deployed its peace operation to Côte d'Ivoire in April 2003 without seeking authorization from the Security Council. After the establishment of UNOCI in 2004, the renewal of the mandates of the United Nations operation in Côte d'Ivoire was initiated by ECOWAS and subsequently endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Council before being put forward to the Security Council. Such a practice contributed to the enhancement of national and regional perceptions about the legitimacy of actions taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations with regard to the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

8. Follow-up mechanisms also played an important role in sustaining the engagement of regional and international partners, in particular the ministerial-level International Working Group, which helped to align subregional, regional and international views. Created by the African Union Peace and Security Council in October 2005 and subsequently endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution [1633 \(2005\)](#), the Working Group comprised Benin, France, Ghana, Guinea, the Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union, the World Bank and the International Organization of la Francophonie, and was co-chaired by the African Union and UNOCI, the presidency

alternating between the African Union and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCI. The secretariat of the Working Group was coordinated by the United Nations. The Working Group ceased to exist after the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement in 2007.

### **Certification of elections**

9. At Pretoria, on 6 April 2005, the Ivorian parties entrusted the United Nations with a unique election certification mandate aimed at providing an additional safeguard to guarantee the credibility of the Ivorian elections. On the basis of the Pretoria Agreement on the Peace Process in Côte d'Ivoire and in accordance with Security Council resolution [1603 \(2005\)](#), the Secretary-General appointed a High Representative for the Elections in Côte d'Ivoire, to assist the Independent Electoral Commission and the Constitutional Council, with a mandate to verify that all stages of the electoral process provided necessary guarantees for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections. The mandate of the High Representative for the Elections was subsequently strengthened by resolution [1721 \(2006\)](#), in which the Council designated him as the sole authority authorized to arbitrate with a view to preventing or resolving any problems or disputes related to the electoral process, in liaison with the Mediator.

10. After the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement in March 2007, some adjustments were made to the United Nations role in supporting the electoral process. Subsequently, in order to preserve the essence of the certification of the electoral process by the United Nations, a compromise solution was found. This entailed the transfer, under Security Council resolution [1765 \(2007\)](#), of the certification of all stages of the electoral process from the High Representative for the Elections to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. In order to deliver on this new mandated task, the Special Representative was supported by a small certification cell within his office, distinct from the political or electoral assistance sections. This decision strengthened the political role and good offices functions of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. UNOCI and the Secretariat established the criteria for certifying all stages of the electoral process, which were agreed with the ECOWAS Facilitator and endorsed by the Security Council in resolution [1865 \(2009\)](#).

11. The importance of the certification of the elections held in 2010 was clearly demonstrated during the post-electoral crisis when the Special Representative of the Secretary-General certified the results that were tabulated by the mission. Both UNOCI and the Independent Electoral Commission declared Mr. Ouattara the winner on 2 December 2010, whereas the Constitutional Council had proclaimed the incumbent, President Gbagbo, the winner. In order to generate political support for the way forward, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa (UNOWA) and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire undertook a tour of African capitals to explain to key African stakeholders the importance of the certification mandate of UNOCI during the post-electoral crisis. The same effort was undertaken with key international stakeholders, particularly members of the Security Council.

### **Use of force in support of the mandate**

12. ECOWAS and the African Union recognized the electoral outcomes as certified by the United Nations and provided a strong basis for decisive action by the Security Council, but the political impasse continued despite the efforts of the High-level Panel of the African Union. On 17 March 2011, Mr. Ouattara issued a decree, by which the former rebel group Forces nouvelles and members of the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces were symbolically unified to create the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire. Soon after, the former Forces nouvelles members of the Forces républicaines began their advance on Abidjan and the fighting against the Defence and Security

Forces, which resulted in significant fatalities and forced displacement of the civilian population.

13. On 30 March 2011, in resolution [1975 \(2011\)](#), the Security Council recalled its authorization of UNOCI to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, within its capabilities and its areas of deployment, including to prevent the use of heavy weapons against the civilian population. While UNOCI already had such authority, the resolution was a further demonstration of the Council's unity behind the mission's mandate and its right to use force, including against Ivorian defence and security forces. It also clarified the debate on whether the context was still one of peacekeeping or had transitioned to the need for peace enforcement.

14. As fighting in Abidjan intensified, and following the use of heavy weapons again against the population on 3 April 2011, UNOCI undertook a military operation to stop further attacks and threats, including against United Nations personnel. On 9 April, Mr. Gbagbo's forces launched an attack on the Golf Hotel, the temporary residence of President Ouattara's Government, prompting a response by the international forces. Two days later, forces loyal to President Ouattara arrested Mr. Gbagbo, as well as those who supported him.

### **III. Host country consent and quality of mission leadership**

15. The basic principles of peacekeeping, which include the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence or in defence of the mandate, all came to the fore at various points during the Ivorian crisis. The consent of the host country proved particularly relevant in this context. It needs to be maintained throughout the lifespan of a peacekeeping operation to ensure the mission's effectiveness and the safety of its personnel. Initially, President Gbagbo consented to the deployment of UNOCI, seeing that it could serve as a buffer against the rebels to the north. However, he quickly challenged the mission by erecting obstacles to its operations including by disputing the provisions of the status-of-forces agreement, refusing to provide the mission with a frequency for its radio station, and impeding troop rotations.

16. Creating a separate High Representative for the Elections responsible for certification was an effort to preserve perceptions about the impartiality of UNOCI. Judging the function of the High Representative to be intrusive, President Gbagbo sought and obtained the departure of the then High Representative for the Elections, Gérard Stoudmann of Switzerland, in 2007. He also raised objections to candidates for the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOCI, following the departure of Special Representative Pierre Schori of Sweden in February 2007, and the transfer of the certification mandate to the Special Representative (effectively merging the functions of the High Representative for the Elections and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General). He finally consented, after eight months, to the appointment of Young-Jin Choi, of the Republic of Korea, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

17. After the Special Representative of the Secretary-General certified the results of the election on 3 December 2010, President Gbagbo's Government sent a letter to the Secretary-General, on 17 December, calling for the immediate departure of UNOCI. Mr. Gbagbo alleged that the mission was no longer impartial. He also refused the mission access to vital supplies, denied customs clearance for supplies at the port, cut off fuel supplies, revoked the landing rights of uniformed contingents rotating by air, denied UNOCI freedom of movement and prevented United Nations personnel from accessing the Golf Hotel where Mr. Ouattara and his Government were located.

18. Once ECOWAS, the African Union and the Security Council, after the certification by the Special Representative, recognized Mr. Ouattara as the legitimately elected president of the country, even if not yet sworn in, UNOCI required the consent of the new Government to continue operating in Côte d'Ivoire. The United Nations obtained the host Government's consent in writing from Mr. Ouattara on 18 December 2010.

19. At the same time, UNOCI made adjustments to its operations so that it could continue operating in a viable manner in the country. It had to airlift critical supplies, such as fuel, since most suppliers operating within the country had withdrawn their services as a result of threats made by forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo. With support from United Nations Headquarters, UNOCI put in place arrangements to overcome these restrictions and ensure the delivery of supplies to mission personnel, as well as to the Golf Hotel. It did so by undertaking supply runs by air, establishing an alternative logistics base at Bouaké, and opening up alternate supply routes by road and air through neighbouring countries, among other measures. UNOCI and the Secretariat held different views regarding the continuing presence of a United Nations mission in the country under these circumstances. There were difficult discussions and decisions within the Council. In the end, the Secretary-General, on the advice of his senior officials, took a principled position that the United Nations must do all it could to stay.

20. One of the most crucial factors determining the success or failure of a mission is its leadership and its ability to communicate with and positively influence the behaviour of all key stakeholders and to manage the often difficult but always crucial consent of the host Government. Throughout the life cycle of UNOCI, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General maintained lines of communication with the host Government, including the President and/or his close advisers, and with key Ivorian political stakeholders, even during some of the most challenging times. Regardless of the perceptions of their relations with the host Government, Special Representatives extensively used their political role and good offices functions, particularly during the post-electoral crisis and from the start of the transition until the withdrawal of the mission. They worked closely with the region, and their work was complemented by the Secretariat's outreach with Member States in New York and in the capitals. Informed by advice from Headquarters and guided by United Nations principles, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General took calculated political risks. A key lesson learned is that Special Representatives play a political role for which they must have the personality, political profile, experience, and communication skills to undertake difficult diplomatic démarches. It is also important that Special Representatives have the judgment to know which issues must be swiftly brought to the attention of Headquarters, including emerging dynamics among regional players that could be utilized by national actors to impede the peace process.

#### **IV. Uniformed components and security posture**

21. From 2004 to 2008, UNOCI faced several challenges that tested its posture and credibility. The Operation's first test as an interposition force came in October 2004, when Government forces launched a military operation against the Forces nouvelles. Several hundred Ivorian troops crossed the zone of confidence into the north, despite the efforts of UNOCI to prevent their campaign. Those Government forces also engaged in air bombings, one of which killed nine French soldiers in Bouaké, thereby triggering a response by the French forces of Operation Licorne, which destroyed, inter alia, all Ivorian military aircraft. This episode, which led to the death of civilians and soldiers, was a serious blow to the peace process, and raised fundamental questions about the purpose of the peacekeeping force. However, even in the face of

those challenges, UNOCI successfully protected fleeing civilians in Bouaké. Together with Operation Licorne, it also secured the Golf Hotel and protected United Nations personnel and installations.

22. Managing violent demonstrations was a persistent challenge faced by UNOCI. Three formed police units were added to UNOCI to reinforce existing crowd control capacities and to protect United Nations personnel installations and equipment, particularly in Abidjan. Notwithstanding the linguistic barriers among non-francophone formed police units, they helped to facilitate crowd control, and proved essential in January 2006 when massive demonstrations against the Working Group's proposal to dissolve the Ivorian parliament were staged in Abidjan and other cities. However, the additional police units were insufficient to overcome the lawlessness in the zone of confidence, which was patrolled by the impartial forces. International forces had no authority to either arrest or detain the perpetrators.

23. During that same period, unprofessional behaviour and allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by some peacekeepers negatively affected the mission's image. An important lesson learned is the need to ensure that efforts are sustained throughout a mission's life cycle to prevent incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse and provide necessary assistance to victims of abuse, in line with the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy.

#### **Protecting political stakeholders**

24. UNOCI provided security for senior officials of the transitional Government and signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, notwithstanding the Government's primary responsibility for protecting its citizens. In a context of trust-building, this arrangement helped to enhance the security and confidence of key actors in the peace process. Specifically, it facilitated the return to Abidjan of Force nouvelles personalities such as Guillaume Soro and opposition presidential candidates, including the former President, Henri Konan Bédié, and Alassane Ouattara in 2005. UNOCI also provided security to financial institutions and other Ivorian personnel to facilitate the restoration of administration and public services in the north of the country. The UNOCI special protection group was reinforced with an additional 76 personnel, bringing it to 282 all ranks, in addition to 135 Ivorian gendarmes and Forces nouvelles elements that received close protection training from the Government of South Africa.

25. Preserving the democratic will of the Ivorian people during the post-electoral crisis of 2010/2011 included ensuring the adequate protection of Mr. Ouattara at the Golf Hotel. The mission progressively reinforced its deployments of troops and formed police units around the hotel and its premises. As a consequence, UNOCI successfully repelled the attack launched on 9 April 2011 by pro-Gbagbo forces on the Golf Hotel.

#### **Security strategy supported by a parallel international force, inter-mission arrangements and an innovative quick reaction capability**

26. The French force Operation Licorne was authorized by the Security Council in resolution [1528 \(2004\)](#). In a unique arrangement, the independent operation under national command was mandated to use all necessary means to support UNOCI. The French force was critical throughout the deployment of UNOCI owing to its solid knowledge of the terrain, good tactical and strategic intelligence, and firepower that included air support. UNOCI thus benefited from the sustained political engagement of France as a permanent member of the Security Council. Operation Licorne served as an enabling force and a force multiplier for UNOCI. The two forces largely complemented one another, which facilitated operations such as rescuing stranded diplomats and neutralizing heavy weapons during the post-electoral crisis. At the



same time, there may have been an over-reliance on the French forces because UNOCI lacked professional reserve or quick reaction capabilities. There also was a need for better coordination, as shown by the response of Operation Licorne to the Bouaké bombing in 2004.

27. Inter-mission cooperation among the contiguous missions in West Africa was also envisaged to maximize strategic and operational interdependence. The Security Council in resolution [1609 \(2005\)](#) provided for the temporary redeployment of police and military units from one mission to another to address challenges that could not be managed within the authorized personnel ceiling of the receiving mission, subject to the consent of the host country and the troop- or police-contributing country and the approval of the Security Council. Accordingly, UNOCI was reinforced on several occasions by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL): in January 2006 after violent disturbances in Abidjan and during the 2010 presidential and 2011 legislative elections. Late in 2010 and early in 2011, three infantry companies and aviation assets from UNMIL were temporarily redeployed to UNOCI. They provided critical reinforcement that initially played an important rapid reaction and dissuasion role. They had a decisive role when using force under resolution [1975 \(2011\)](#) to prevent the use of heavy weapons against the civilian population. UNOCI, in turn, reinforced UNMIL during the presidential and legislative elections in Liberia in October and November 2011.

28. Owing to cross-border instability, UNOCI and UNMIL launched a series of cross-border activities such as joint air patrols, concurrent border patrols and coordinated border operations. They also undertook civilian cross-border activities and quadripartite meetings that brought together actors from the missions and the host Governments. Their cooperation measures included a wide range of substantive cross-border stabilization activities, in support of national and local authorities, which continued until the closure of UNOCI. Such activities included information-sharing on small arms and light weapons, including for embargo monitoring, and cooperation on human rights, child protection and rule of law issues, public information campaigns and humanitarian action. The two missions, together with UNOWA, also supported ECOWAS and the Mano River Union in developing and implementing a regional strategy for addressing cross-border threats through local reconciliation projects that were supported by the Peacebuilding Fund.

29. In view of the ongoing drawdown of the peacekeeping operations in West Africa, the establishment of a regional quick reaction force was proposed to the Security Council on the basis of the joint strategic review of UNOCI and UNMIL conducted in February 2014. The force would serve as a rapid response capability within the existing resources of the missions and as a mitigation measure to address potential crises under the framework of inter-mission cooperation, with the added flexibility that the Secretariat could, in extremis, take the decision to deploy the unit outside of its parent mission. A battalion of 650 personnel was considered credible and would be deployed on the basis of threat assessment, mandated tasks and resources available. It would comprise two motorized infantry companies, one mechanized infantry company and the necessary support elements, including air assets, to undertake military operations across the missions' areas of responsibility.

30. The Security Council by resolution [2162 \(2014\)](#) authorized the establishment of the quick reaction force within UNOCI. Pursuant to that resolution, the Secretary-General proceeded with the deployment of the unit to Liberia for up to 90 days without further permission from the Council. Previously, the Council had also authorized the missions to share military aviation assets, without prejudice to their respective areas of responsibility, an arrangement that continued until the closure of UNOCI. These innovations were a significant demonstration of the Council's trust in the Secretariat and were facilitated by the cooperation of the host countries and the

readiness of the troop-contributing countries to assume additional responsibilities. Senegal, which was selected to form the quick reaction force owing to its peacekeeping experience in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, proactively upgraded its capabilities as necessary for the success of the experiment. Although it was never required to deploy in Liberia, a portion of the quick reaction force was sent to the Central African Republic in 2015. By resolution [2295 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council authorized the transfer of the quick reaction force to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), where it retained its responsibility to respond in Liberia, in extremis, until the closure of UNMIL in 2018.

31. The structure and composition of the quick reaction force have been identified as good practices and should be considered a model for such units. Identified shortcomings pertain to the need for adequate readiness and the ability of the recipient mission to absorb reinforcements. There is a need for future quick reaction forces to undergo regular exercises as part of the planning process, raising the challenge of how to cover the cost of such exercises given the nature of mission budgeting. Further refinements of the concept are required to address, inter alia, the respective financial responsibilities of the missions and contributing countries involved and the minimum detachable strength, as well as to shorten the timeframe for the rapid response. It is also important to avoid any caveats that could hamper the quick reaction force's operational employability: where possible, the framework should prioritize military rather than civilian aviation and other enabling assets.

## **V. Other substantive engagement of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire Extension of State authority**

32. An important part of the early mandate of UNOCI pertained to the restoration of State authority of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire throughout the country and helping to prepare for the future reunification of the country. This involved accompanying the redeployment of the administration, including judiciary and police. After the post-electoral crisis, a major challenge became unifying the tax collection system and State treasury, as the Forces nouvelles had been collecting revenues and selling resources in the north for years.

### **Rule of law and security institutions**

33. The protracted Ivorian crisis eroded the confidence of the Ivorian population in its justice and security providers. Following the crisis of 2010/2011, the justice system practically ceased to function, and serious violations threatened social cohesion and reconciliation efforts throughout the country. More than half of the prisons in the country were destroyed and more than 12,000 inmates escaped.

34. UNOCI played a critical role in extending State authority throughout the country. It helped to deploy judicial personnel and to reopen courts of first instance, appeals courts and new tribunals. UNOCI also supported the reopening of some prisons, including the main prison in Abidjan, which had ceased to function during the crisis. In partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations, the mission contributed to notable improvements in the Ivorian prisons, leading to more humane conditions of detention. The mission also supported the Government in developing prisoner data management systems as well as a national justice sector strategy and helped to implement justice reform projects financed by international partners. In addition, as part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, 2,000 ex-combatants were integrated into the prison system as prison officers.



35. UNOCI support for the reform and restructuring of the national security institutions and the capacity-building of the two national law enforcement agencies contributed to the redeployment of the police and the gendarmerie nationwide. In addition, joint patrols of UNOCI and Ivorian police helped to rebuild public trust in the police and gendarmerie and contributed to the wider reconciliation process. UNOCI also supported, through mentoring, training-of-trainers and co-location, the development and implementation of basic and specialized training plans for the police, including on gender-responsive policing. The training resulted in the enrolment of the first female cadets in the gendarmerie academy and the establishment of specialized resources to assist victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

36. The protracted crisis resulted in factionalism within the military, police and gendarmerie and eroded the legitimacy of statutory security institutions. It also witnessed the emergence of other security providers, sometimes non-statutory ones, with multiple and unclear loyalties. However, UNOCI received its first security sector reform mandate only in 2011, from Security Council resolution 2000 (2011), which focused on helping the Government to elaborate a national security strategy. The mission supported the creation of the National Security Council and the development of its national strategy (adopted in 2012), which provided a nationally owned security sector framework. Its support to security sector reform was focused on preventive measures, including confidence-building initiatives, dialogue between security institutions, advice and training in “soft skills” such as human rights and child protection for security providers, and drafting of strategies and legislation in support of the parliamentary defence and security commission. In the latter stage of the mission, a stronger focus on defence sector reform led to the adoption of an important defence organization law and a military programming law for 2016–2020.

37. UNOCI benefited from a strong mandate for coordination of security sector reform, including coordination with international and bilateral partners. The mission facilitated strategic discussions with donors to pool resources, thereby ensuring the full transition of security responsibilities from UNOCI to national security forces as well as continuity of support by the United Nations country team after the mission’s closure. The strong coordination led to positive outcomes, including the mission’s partnership with the Peacebuilding Fund in support of the national security sector reform strategy and gender-responsive security sector reform efforts.

38. The two-year disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme that ended on 30 June 2015 was unique in that it was nationally owned: the Government financed 62 per cent of the \$130 million programme and it benefited from strong political will and leadership. The programme also received financial support and technical expertise from UNOCI and factored in some of the lessons from previous failed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts that had been marred by institutional rivalries. One challenge in the new disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process was the need for more transparency with regard to the list of 65,472 ex-combatants reintegrated out of a total of 69,506 demobilized. According to 2016 data from the Ivorian authorities, at least 16,500 ex-combatants were not demobilized, and large quantities of weapons and ammunition remain unaccounted for. The 1,000 micro projects initiated by UNOCI and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Côte d’Ivoire in 2008 with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund constituted a useful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration stopgap measure to support longer-term socioeconomic reintegration. The incomplete transformation of some former combatants into a constructive force for economic development continued to challenge peacebuilding gains, however.

39. While it was anticipated that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme alone could not eradicate the circulation of small arms and light weapons,

the Government's follow-up programme on civilian disarmament also remained underfunded. The prevention of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons remained a significant challenge for the stability of the country at the time of the closure of UNOCI, taking into account the relatively high number of former combatants yet to be demobilized and repatriated.

40. The support of the United Nations Mine Action Service to national authorities for safe weapons and ammunition management has been praised as a good practice. During the mutinies, the comprehensive measures put in place prevented massive break-ins at ammunition depots and armouries, although a limited number of weapons did disappear. UNOCI, through its partnership with the Mine Action Service, enhanced the capacity of Ivorian authorities to manage safely and securely their stock of weapons and ammunition. Expired and dangerous stockpiles of ammunition were destroyed; armouries and ammunition depots across the country were rehabilitated; legislative frameworks and corresponding standards were developed; technical training on managing weapons and ammunition stores was implemented; and the organizational structure to coordinate between different entities was established. These efforts contributed to the complete lifting of the arms embargo by the Security Council in April 2016.

#### **Electoral assistance**

41. At its establishment, UNOCI was mandated to provide oversight, guidance and technical assistance to the Government of National Reconciliation, with the assistance of ECOWAS and other international partners, in order to prepare for and assist in the conduct of free, fair and transparent electoral processes linked to the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, in particular the presidential election (Security Council resolution [1528 \(2004\)](#)). This objective was reaffirmed in subsequent resolutions, even as the presidential elections initially planned for 2005 were postponed, until they were finally held late in 2010.

42. The Ivorian crisis had been fuelled by notions of identity, or *ivoirité*, and nationality. Expedited mobile court hearings conducted from 2006 to 2008 were the first step in the identification process for the populations in the country. The hearings focused on people born in Côte d'Ivoire without identification papers, allowing them to register to vote. The United Nations country team supported the participation of women in voter registration, which was close to reaching parity. In addition to identifying potential voters, the process also addressed the problem of the lack of identity documents. The civil registry dating to 2000 was reconstituted and a new electoral register was created in the first half of 2009. The involvement of a private company in the biometric identification process was a confidence-building measure called for by the opposition to counterbalance the involvement of State institutions, which were not perceived as impartial.

43. Among the challenges for United Nations technical electoral assistance was the lack of integration between the support provided by UNOCI and the electoral work done by UNDP, which had raised \$70 million for this purpose. Part of the issue was structural: UNOCI was responsible for certification and electoral assistance and reported to the political pillar of the mission, whereas the UNDP electoral assistance programme fell under the purview of the triple-hatted Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Notwithstanding ample time for joint planning due to the election postponements, each component worked separately without integrating efforts to deliver electoral assistance as one United Nations, although information was shared. The quality of United Nations electoral assistance has been praised by Ivorian stakeholders across the political spectrum. Members of the Independent Electoral Commission however lamented the practice of the United Nations "parachuting" into the country electoral consultants who had limited understanding

of the local context, and inflexible rules and procedures that impede adequate responses to unforeseen events.

### **Human rights and transitional justice**

44. Since its establishment within UNOCI in 2004, the Human Rights Division has monitored and reported on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and contributed to the overall protection of human rights throughout the Ivorian territory. Violations were occurring throughout the country, in particular in the west, the north and the former zone of confidence, where armed individuals and members of militia groups operated with impunity. Abductions, rapes and violence against girls and women were of particular concern. Delays in the effective redeployment of judicial services and the limited cooperation, and at times hostility, of the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces, posed particular challenges to the efforts of UNOCI to prevent and address impunity and violence during the first phase of the mission.

45. Nonetheless, UNOCI informed both the public and the Security Council of human rights violations. In its regular reports, the mission denounced the persistence of politically motivated and arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, rape, confiscation of private property, and intimidation of opposition leaders and their followers. It reported violations committed, with impunity, by elements of the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces, the Forces nouvelles and militias associated with both forces, as well as incidents of ethnically motivated human rights abuses such as killings, rape and destruction of dwellings, which were also committed by ethnic and community-based militias.

46. The actions of the Security Council on human rights were limited. Despite resolution [1572 \(2004\)](#), in which the Council authorized sanctions on, among others, individuals responsible for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, no individuals were listed by the Committee established pursuant to that resolution until February 2006. The report of the international commission of inquiry on serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Côte d'Ivoire, covering the period from 19 September 2002 to 16 October 2004 and transmitted to the Security Council on 23 December 2004, was not considered by the Council. This led to a discrepancy between the Council's official resolutions and presidential statements against impunity and its reluctance to take concrete actions against the perpetrators of human rights violations and the actors who encouraged them.

47. The Ouagadougou Agreement of 2007 did not explicitly address the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire, despite the fact that serious human rights violations were one of the root causes of the Ivorian crisis. UNOCI nonetheless continued to support the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as to monitor, investigate and report on human rights abuses committed in the country. The mission also continued to assist the Government in the formulation and implementation of a national human rights action plan, in the preparation and submission of outstanding country reports to United Nations human rights treaty bodies and in the effective functioning of the newly established National Human Rights Commission.

48. As violations became rampant during the post-electoral crisis of 2010/2011 and in the immediate aftermath, the human rights focus of the mission became investigations, including of conflict-related sexual violence and other violations allegedly committed by the Forces républicaines. The International Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council on 25 March 2011 visited the country in May of that year and concluded that serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law were committed during the 2010/2011 crisis. It further stressed that national reconciliation without justice would not be sustainable and

recommended that the Government conduct complete, impartial and transparent investigations of human rights violations and bring those responsible to justice.

49. Claims about one-sided or victor's justice in Côte d'Ivoire in the years following the post-electoral crisis pointed to the fact that national and international judicial processes focus exclusively on violations committed by Mr. Gbagbo and his supporters and have yet to hold to account perpetrators on the Forces nouvelles side. UNOCI support to the investigations of the International Criminal Court and national judicial processes had an impact on perceptions about the impartiality of the mission. There also remained throughout its deployment a reticence on the part of the Government to embrace human rights efforts, including public reporting, and a tension or conflict at times between the requirement to publicly identify and correct human rights shortcomings and the good offices efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

50. An important innovation was the establishment, during the post-electoral crisis, of a call centre for victims of sexual violence, staffed by international personnel to limit bias and preserve confidentiality. In response to Security Council resolution [1888 \(2009\)](#), in 2014, UNOCI deployed an adviser on women's protection, who contributed to mainstreaming and reinforcing the capacity of the mission to address such violence in its monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements, and in its engagement with the Government. The Government showed a clear commitment to ending sexual violence and adopted several concrete measures such as a national strategy on gender-based violence and a code of conduct for Ivorian soldiers against sexual violence. Gender-based and sexual violence remained a nationwide scourge, however, and even though some initial positive steps were taken by the Government to address this problem the effects on the ground remained largely unseen. The national strategy to combat gender-based violence was adopted by the Government in 2014, but an independent assessment commissioned by the United Nations country team showed an insufficient level of implementation of the strategy.

51. An interesting initiative supported by UNOCI was a joint mechanism bringing together the Forces républicaines, the National Human Rights Commission and the human rights and police components of UNOCI, which helped to ensure accountability for human rights violations by elements of the national armed forces. They met on a monthly basis, including in the field offices, to review allegations of human rights violations and determine appropriate action. By facilitating direct discussions with the Government, the mechanism helped to reduce the number of cases of violations, including sexual violence, attributed to the Forces républicaines, which, in 2017, were delisted as a party to conflict from the annex to the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence, after being added in January 2012.

52. A main priority for UNOCI was supporting the national human rights organ, the National Human Rights Commission, to ensure that it would have the requisite capacity to perform key human rights protection and promotion functions after the closure of UNOCI. Although the Commission adopted a four-year strategic document, building on the assessment and recommendations of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, by the time UNOCI ceased its human rights work, shortcomings remained with respect to the Commission's independence and institutional capacity, as well as logistical challenges, and actions required to align it with the Paris Principles, a set of international standards which frame and guide the work of national human rights institutions.

53. On transitional justice, UNOCI assisted the Government with the creation of the Commission dialogue, vérité et réconciliation in 2011 and the Commission nationale pour la réconciliation et l'indemnisation des victimes des crises survenues en Côte

d'Ivoire in 2015. It provided technical advice, with support from the Peacebuilding Fund and other partners. Early in August 2018, President Ouattara announced amnesties, in the name of national reconciliation, for around 800 people prosecuted or sentenced for offences related to the post-electoral crisis or State security offences committed after 21 May 2011, including the former First Lady, Simone Gbagbo. However, inequalities, land conflicts and the existence of a disgruntled opposition, composed mainly of pro-Gbagbo supporters who accuse the Government of promoting victor's justice and ethnic privileges and arbitrarily detaining opposition supporters, are other destabilizing factors that may hinder a durable peace. In addition, reconciliation and transitional justice processes relating to the violence and the conflict of the past have yet to be fully implemented. While the Commission dialogue, vérité et réconciliation finalized its report in December 2014, the report was never made public and the public hearings held were never broadcast, weakening any potential impact of the process.

### **Social cohesion and community-level dialogue**

54. During the final period of its deployment, UNOCI prioritized efforts to prevent local conflicts and promote reconciliation and social cohesion through local mediation. The shift towards local-level reconciliation and social cohesion followed a stalled national reconciliation and came amid continuing intercommunal violence. Strategically, these prevention initiatives were directly linked to the good offices and political mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Aïchatou Mindaoudou. The mediation activities and intercommunal dialogues were means to address some of the social and intercommunal tensions exacerbated by the Ivorian crisis such as displacement and the resulting conflicts over land. From 2013 to 2017, the mission, together with the United Nations country team and other partners, organized some 100 intercommunal dialogues at the regional and local levels, helping communities to identify and sustain prevention and resolution initiatives among themselves. The presence of UNOCI civilian staff, including national staff and women, in field offices throughout the country, and the active engagement of mission leadership were key to these prevention efforts.

55. On the basis of an analysis of local mediation and intercommunal dialogue initiatives, UNOCI also identified small-scale projects that could help to unite communities. Approximately 1,025 quick-impact projects focused on national reconciliation and social cohesion were implemented over the lifespan of UNOCI. They supported the renovation of health centres, schools, sport facilities, administrative buildings, and infrastructure for tradesmen, traditional and religious authorities, and women's and youth groups. They were important for strengthening local peacebuilding mechanisms and building trust among Ivorians, according to interviews with local stakeholders by the assessment team for this lessons-learned exercise. Although short-term and limited in scale, such projects facilitated peaceful coexistence by providing an essential first step to social cohesion. Activities funded by quick-impact projects on cohesion and cross-border issues were among the most effective contributions made by UNOCI to local mediation processes.

### **Strategic communication**

56. In June 2004, the ONUCI FM radio station was established and filled a gap in information, especially outside Abidjan. Throughout its existence, ONUCI FM provided impartial news, informing the public about the peace process and other developments, promoting peace and reconciliation, and organizing political debates. The radio station broadcast 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for more than 13 years, reaching approximately 76 per cent of the country, with programming in French and five major Ivorian languages. While the radio was particularly useful in the run-up to

the elections and during the electoral crisis, it also greatly contributed to preserving stability in the post-election phase, and to promoting the work of UNOCI across all of its components.

57. With the closure of UNOCI on the horizon, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire requested that it retain ONUCI FM, which has become the Radio de la paix, and is operated by the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for Peace in the context of its partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the culture of peace. A memorandum of understanding concluded with the Government stipulates that the latter is responsible for covering the costs of operation, and that equal access by all segments of Ivorian society, impartiality and editorial independence should be guaranteed. An important lesson from the handover of the radio station of the mission was that continuity is important, and it was preserved in this example by the decision of the Government to hire former ONUCI FM personnel, including on-air personalities.

## VI. Embargo and sanctions regime

58. The arms embargo was imposed on Côte d'Ivoire late in 2004, in response to Government attacks on UNOCI. The Security Council by resolution [1572 \(2004\)](#) imposed an immediate arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire and placed travel restrictions on individuals involved in the conflict and froze their assets. The Council also established a sanctions Committee to oversee the implementation of the resolution. By resolution [1584 \(2005\)](#) the Council subsequently authorized UNOCI and Operation Licorne to monitor the arms embargo and requested that the Secretary-General establish a Group of Experts to monitor the arms embargo. At the end of 2005, the mandate to monitor the production and illicit export of rough diamonds was added under resolution [1643 \(2005\)](#).

59. A good practice and innovation was the establishment, as advised by the Group of Experts, of an embargo cell within the structure of UNOCI, which reported to the Committee established pursuant to resolution [1572 \(2004\)](#) through the Department of Political Affairs. This integrated cell was initially established in 2005 with four civilian personnel, two military officers and two United Nations police officers. Its mandate was to provide substantive and logistical support for the work of the Group of Experts. The cell was located in different sections of the mission until 2008, when it became a stand-alone cell responding directly to mission leadership. It contributed to reinforcing the capacities of the Group of Experts with collection, analysis and the institutional memory such groups often lack. It also supported UNOCI in fulfilling its mandate to monitor the embargo, by formulating guidelines for mission sections for this purpose.

60. The creation of the embargo cell resulted in a tangible improvement in the methodology, quality and number of inspections carried out by the mission and the creation of databases, as well as in better coordination between the mission and the Group of Experts (see [S/2006/964](#)). It also helped in liaising with the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme as well as with Operation Licorne on monitoring and enforcement. The cell also helped to advise the UNOCI leadership on issues such as organized crime and trafficking. The cell required specialized staff, however, as consultants were required to cover gaps in areas such as customs, as well as dedicated funding. There was also a need to improve confidentiality in the context of information management within the peacekeeping operation.

61. The sanctions regime involved an element of media monitoring. During the violence of late 2004, some Ivorian media outlets were directly targeted by the Young Patriots, transmitters of foreign radio stations were sabotaged, and there was a



demonstrable, disconcerting upsurge in language hostile to foreigners and the United Nations in the media. By its resolution [1572 \(2004\)](#), the Security Council demanded that the Ivorian authorities stop all radio and television broadcasts inciting hatred, intolerance and violence, and requested UNOCI to strengthen its monitoring of local media. By resolution [1739 \(2007\)](#) the Council expanded the public information mandate of UNOCI to include the monitoring of Ivorian mass media, in particular with regard to any incidents of incitement by the media to hatred, intolerance and violence, and to keep the Committee regularly informed of the situation in this regard.

62. Tasking UNOCI to report to the sanctions Committee on its media monitoring, as well as its human rights monitoring, was a particular innovation at the time and it has since been replicated in other peacekeeping contexts. UNOCI also supported the Ministry of Communication in establishing an early warning unit on hate media that included representatives of the Government, media regulatory bodies, the national journalists' association and UNOCI, and strengthened its collaboration with media regulatory bodies (see [S/2007/133](#)).

### **Impact of sanctions**

63. Although an arms embargo is an important tool that can complement peacekeeping, its impact on actual arms transfers was mixed in Côte d'Ivoire, for several reasons. In one report, the Group of Experts stated that despite its best effort and the above-mentioned embargo cell, it was of the view that neither the modus operandi established by the impartial forces and the Ivorian parties, nor the instruments available to UNOCI and Operation Licorne for the monitoring of the implementation of the embargo on supplies of arms and related materiel, were very effective (see [S/2007/611](#)). The first set of challenges related to the limited access the Group of Experts had in the south, which was controlled by a defiant host Government, or in the north, which was controlled by Forces nouvelles rebels. Inspections at airports, seaports, military bases, border crossings and diamond mines were almost systematically refused, even though the Security Council had clearly stated that UNOCI should be able to carry them out anywhere without prior notification.

64. The second set of challenges related to the limited cooperation of neighbouring States, which made it almost impossible to monitor transfers of small arms and light weapons. The Group of Experts reported that, despite the arms embargo, the Ivorian parties in both the north and the south were able to rearm and re-equip themselves (see [S/2009/521](#)). That said, the sanctions regime may have proved useful in preventing the entry of heavy weapons such as attack helicopters, which are more difficult to conceal and easier to trace than small arms and light weapons. In the case of defiant parties and uncooperative neighbours, stronger pressure from the Security Council might help to render a sanctions regime more effective.

65. "Smart sanctions" also had a limited impact in Côte d'Ivoire, as they were difficult to implement. Sanctions targeting individuals were more effective, particularly when dealing with members of an elite political class that owned assets abroad, even though it did not stop them from travelling to countries that failed to comply with the sanctions regime. The combined effect of sanctions, including the freezing of assets by the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and the Central Bank of West African States, progressively constrained Mr. Gbagbo's ability to pay his defence and security forces and civil servants, and may have had some influence on his entourage. However, the sanctions were not decisive during the post-electoral crisis. Rather, Mr. Gbagbo continued to generate revenue by taxing the Abidjan port and nationalizing the cocoa and coffee industries, in addition to receiving funds from supportive Governments.

66. The democratically elected Government sought the lifting of the embargo shortly after the post-electoral crisis ended in 2011 but the process unfolded gradually. The sanctions were a tool for the Security Council to encourage progress on an action plan for the Kimberley Process and to set up an internal control system for trade in rough diamonds, and to encourage progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform, national reconciliation and the fight against impunity. Moreover, given that the Forces républicaines initially had serious fragilities, including in terms of weapons management, the gradual lifting of the arms embargo had an important structural effect in that exemptions granted for equipping certain units had to be requested in a coordinated manner by the National Security Council.

67. The Security Council lifted all sanctions on Côte d'Ivoire in April 2016, just before deciding to terminate the mandate of UNOCI, but serious challenges remained unaddressed. In its final report (S/2016/254), the Group of Experts had documented the acquisition, in violation of the arms embargo, of some 300 tons of materiel by former elements of the Forces nouvelles after the post-electoral crisis, warned about the dysfunctional condition of the Ivorian security forces, and expressed concerns about border control operations and customs administration, cross-border movements of natural resources and persons and diamond smuggling.

## VII. Transformation of the United Nations engagement

68. The transition planning process in Côte d'Ivoire was initiated after the Security Council, in its resolution 2062 (2012), requested that the Secretary-General prepare benchmarks for transition planning and provide recommendations for possible adjustments to the structure and strength of UNOCI. In 2013, UNOCI worked closely with the Government and the United Nations country team on two strategic transition-related processes, namely, a comparative advantage exercise and a benchmarking exercise with timelines for handing over the mission's mandated tasks. Those processes revealed that the country team lacked the personnel and financial resources to assume additional responsibilities from the peacekeeping operation, leading to the risk that critical tasks would be discontinued after the closure of the mission.

69. The transition planning process gathered further momentum in 2015, following the peaceful presidential election and the Council's subsequent requests in its resolutions 2226 (2015) and 2260 (2016) for proposals on the possible termination of UNOCI on the basis of the improvement of security conditions on the ground and the national capacity to assume the mission's security role. That year, UNOCI developed an internal transition plan focusing on staff drawdown and how to prioritize mandate implementation. The Security Council began the gradual closure of UNOCI as the Government was restoring the country's position as a regional leader amid a backdrop of considerable economic growth.

70. The requested recommendations to close UNOCI were based on a multidisciplinary strategic review led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and were set out in a special report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/297). No United Nations successor mission was seriously considered, owing primarily to the position of the Government and given the country's relatively strong national institutions. Although recommended, no stand-alone human rights office was established within the country team. The Government considered that it was not necessary. Building on a lesson learned from UNMIL, it was also recommended that UNOCI should hand over security responsibilities to the Ivorian authorities while still deployed in the country, with a mandate to protect civilians in extremis. By its resolution 2284 (2016), the Security Council extended the mission's mandate for a final period until 30 June

2017, and decided that from 1 May to 30 June 2017 the mandate would be to complete the mission's closure and to finalize the transition process to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations country team.

71. As the security situation in the country began to improve following the post-electoral crisis in 2011, the mandate and posture of UNOCI underwent several reviews and downward adjustments. Subsequent exercises to develop and refine strategic benchmarks as well as to carry out a civilian staffing review ensured that UNOCI tracked strategic priorities and that civilian staffing structures and capacities allowed the mission to respond effectively to residual challenges until the electoral cycle of 2015 and beyond. The gradual drawdown of the mission as well as the timing of its closure in June 2017, which ensured a security presence throughout the presidential and legislative elections in 2015 and 2016 to address any potential tensions, should be seen as best practice that can inform future transitions elsewhere.

### **Implementing the transition**

72. The cost of the final transition plan resulting from the mission's closure was estimated at some \$500 million, \$50 million of which was expected to be covered by the United Nations country team. A diversified resource mobilization approach was adopted that also included \$3 million of assessed contributions to UNOCI. Owing to the bureaucratic processes involved and the late approval of the budget by the General Assembly in December 2016, however, the project implementation period was significantly condensed and the catalytic and strategic value of the funds reallocated from UNOCI to the country team was limited. The Peacebuilding Fund committed \$5 million on the understanding that the Government would match those funds with \$10 million in support of residual activities over 18 months. The commitment by the Government to peacebuilding was an important signal but the pledged funds have yet to be transferred.

73. Bilateral donors committed \$8.5 million of voluntary contributions. Higher donor commitment did not materialize for a number of reasons, including the perception that the plan was a fundraising tool for the United Nations country team rather than for Côte d'Ivoire. Some donors also indicated the need for longer lead times for committing funds. More fundamentally, however, and due to the fact that Côte d'Ivoire has made great strides since 2011, donors either disengaged from the country or focused on transitional socioeconomic development initiatives instead of residual governance and security challenges. Overall, the United Nations country team managed to mobilize \$25 million of the required \$50 million to support the consolidation of peacebuilding gains. While this is a significant shortfall, it still compares favourably to other recent transition processes and illustrates the difficulty of maintaining political and financial engagement beyond mission withdrawal.

### **Liquidation**

74. UNOCI was in existence for 13 years and was present at 64 locations throughout the country. In addition to its sizeable footprint, at the point of downsizing its operations in preparation for liquidation, the mission was supporting 3,500 uniformed personnel with nearly 18,000 assets, all of which made the start of liquidation planning and the closure of the mission proper a challenge of immense proportions. Prior to the official transition and liquidation period, UNOCI commenced a drawdown of civilian staff as early as October 2015 and February 2016. On 28 April 2016, the Security Council by resolution [2284 \(2016\)](#) determined that UNOCI was to be operational until 30 April 2017 and complete its full closure and liquidation by 30 June 2017. These were mutually exclusive deadlines, as the liquidation of a peacekeeping mission of this size, with due regard to the processes of the Organization and its rules and regulations, could not have been achieved in 60 days.

75. In order to achieve the deadline of 30 June 2017 for the completion of liquidation, UNOCI and the Secretariat agreed that substantive activities in the sectors would cease by the end of December 2016. This would allow UNOCI to complete the early drawdown of uniformed personnel by 15 February 2017 and the phased reductions in substantive activities by 30 April 2017. This strategy was based on an analysis conducted by the mission on “best case” lead times for major liquidation activities and the timelines within the mission support operations transition, and on the liquidation plan drafted in August 2016 and amended in March 2017.

76. UNOCI repatriated, redeployed or separated 5,585 staff, including international and national staff, United Nations Volunteers, military observers, military contingents, United Nations police and formed police units. By 30 June 2017, the mission successfully completed its liquidation and closed. All premises were handed back, designated assets were disposed of and records were archived.

77. Towards the end of the liquidation process, to avoid distorting the Ivorian economy and to generate some revenue, UNOCI sold functioning equipment that was not transferred to other peacekeeping missions on the local market, in accordance with United Nations procedures. Initially, equipment that was not sold was destroyed, a process that was discontinued once it was clear that this had a negative impact on the mission’s image. The equipment that remained to be transferred to the United Nations country team or the Government and its partners was limited and nearing the end of its useful life. The handover process was conducted over the course of one week, leaving little time for United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to plan. The handing-over of vehicles to the Government and non-governmental organizations posed significant challenges in terms of unforeseen additional costs for customs clearance, number plates and repair.

78. An additional lesson from UNOCI is that the human rights due diligence policy applies to the handover of equipment to national defence and security institutions in the context of mission liquidation, a procedure the mission carefully followed but which frustrated Ivorian counterparts. A good practice was the involvement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and substantive staff in the screening of local actors to ensure that the handover of tasks did not fuel conflicts. Another good practice was factoring in environmental sustainability, including through systematic soil decontamination, before returning UNOCI sites to their owners.

### **Sustaining engagement**

79. After the closure of UNOCI, the responsibility for sustaining United Nations engagement in Côte d’Ivoire rests with the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations country team, who rely on voluntary contributions. A positive precedent was the retention of the triple-hatted Deputy Special Representative as the Resident Coordinator, at the level of Assistant Secretary-General, to facilitate the transition and provide senior leadership continuity. There were however no complementary enhancements of the Office of the Resident Coordinator, limiting the important convening role of the United Nations.

80. An important lesson is that the Resident Coordinator must be fully empowered with the requisite capacities, authority and resources to ensure that the United Nations country team is able to continue relevant peacebuilding activities after the closure of a peacekeeping mission. The absence of a mechanism to ensure the deployment of a peace and development adviser or a human rights adviser led to extensive delays in enabling the Resident Coordinator with such capacity. The Peacebuilding Fund has funded a transition and peacebuilding adviser since January 2018. A country-specific pooled fund for the transition could have empowered the Resident Coordinator and the country team, while improving integration and reassuring donors. Côte d’Ivoire

was added to the agenda of the Secretary-General's Executive Committee, under the item on transitions, in 2017 and remains under review. After the closure of UNOCI and the transfer of lead responsibilities within the Secretariat from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Department of Political Affairs, a task force co-chaired by the Department of Political Affairs and UNDP was established, linking Headquarters in New York, the Resident Coordinator in Abidjan and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in Dakar.

## VIII. Conclusions and reflections

81. I assumed my responsibilities as Secretary-General in January 2017, at a period when the imminent closure of UNOCI, one of our peacekeeping success stories in West Africa, helped to shape the context in which the United Nations was adjusting its peacekeeping footprint in the subregion. The review of the 13-year experience of UNOCI, including its challenges and successes, is an important endeavour especially in view of my efforts to reform the peace and security architecture of the United Nations, and to enhance the political effectiveness and operational performance of peacekeeping operations. I therefore welcome the opportunity provided by the Security Council in the statement by its President dated 30 June 2017 (S/PRST/2017/8), in which it requested me to provide a comprehensive study of the role of UNOCI in settling the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

82. As emphasized in the present report, the Ivorian experience highlights some significant lessons, which pertain to the primacy of politics, the performance of United Nations peacekeeping operations at strategic and operational levels, sustainable partnerships with a wide array of stakeholders, close ties with the host Government and nation, and the need to embark as early as possible on a path focused on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This study provides a welcome opportunity to extract constructive lessons which could inform our ongoing efforts to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping, in the context of the Action for Peacekeeping agenda that I presented to Member States in March 2018.

83. In my ongoing efforts to reform the peace and security architecture of the United Nations, and to enhance the political effectiveness and operational performance of our peacekeeping operations, revisiting the complex trajectory of UNOCI and the many challenges and successes it encountered throughout its 13 years of existence was for me an important endeavour that I am pleased to present to the Security Council in this report.

84. Early in 2004, when Secretary-General Kofi Annan recommended to the Security Council the deployment of UNOCI, Côte d'Ivoire was divided between the north and the south by a militarily enforced zone of confidence and was mired in a complex and volatile political and social ecosystem. Moving from that turmoil to the promising prospects of political and national reconciliation, combined with impressive socioeconomic progress since the aftermath of the 2010/2011 post-electoral crisis, has been the result of a combination of factors, at the global, regional, national and local levels. This confluence of factors is well captured in this study and can be presented as a "success story" amidst a generally grim environment of protracted conflicts and peace to keep in many parts of the world.

85. The signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, in January 2003, under the auspices of the Government of France and the joint facilitation of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations, paved the way for the deployment of an African-led peace operation, weeks later, alongside a United Nations political mission, MINUCI. The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement offered an inclusive foundation for a political framework for the stabilization of the country. It was followed by

several other agreements, including those signed in Accra in 2004, Pretoria in 2005, and then Ouagadougou in 2007. The peace process launched by those agreements was further sustained by the engagement of the subregion, the African Union, the United Nations and Ivorian stakeholders.

86. The Ivorian experience demonstrated that, when political strategies pursued by peacekeeping operations are supported by a united and cohesive international community and the good offices of the Special Representatives, they stand a better chance of achieving results that are consistent with the priorities set out in the peace agreements. The 2010 post-electoral crisis brought the international community to the brink of a divide over the need to uphold the results of the presidential elections as certified by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The unity of purpose displayed by regional and international partners with regard to the deployment of UNOCI contributed to creating a more conducive environment and better acceptance by the host Government of the peacekeeping operation.

87. The Ivorian experience has also demonstrated that, when peacekeeping operations are given clear mandates by the Security Council, supported by regional and continental stakeholders and adequately resourced, they can be successful and can lead to a swift exit strategy. By all accounts, the presidential election of 2010 triggered a major turning point for UNOCI. Its management of the ensuing post-electoral crisis ultimately set the mission on a path to a successful completion of its mandate. UNOCI positively influenced the course of Ivorian history by upholding the results of democratically held presidential elections through its certification mandate, by engaging politically at the field and capital levels, and by taking robust security action on the ground together with the French force Operation Licorne to protect civilians and restore democratic order.

88. Furthermore, leadership constitutes an essential factor, and peacekeeping operations can better fulfil their mandated objectives in contexts where the host Government is a responsible partner and has an unwavering commitment to delivering on its responsibilities to the citizens it serves. No peacekeeping operation can substitute for national political will or national efforts to overcome the root causes of conflict. In the final six years of the deployment of UNOCI, significant progress was made on all fronts in Côte d'Ivoire. At the same time, a united mission leadership team, backed by a coherent political strategy, was essential to effectively manage crisis and to accompany needed reforms. While this was not always the case throughout the multiple lives of UNOCI, the Ivorian experience overall has confirmed that maintaining a cohesive leadership is a critical success factor for United Nations peacekeeping operations. Such leadership also positively influenced relations with the host Government, as seen in the final years of the mission's life.

89. Another significant lesson drawn from the Ivorian experience is that maintaining open channels of communication with the parties and conducting joint operations in their respective areas of responsibility, as well as outreach to civil society actors, can serve to prevent, inter alia, violent demonstrations or ceasefire violations.

90. The trajectory of the relationship between UNOCI and the Ivorian authorities has illustrated the fact that the consent of the host country is rarely absolute or constant. It has the potential to erode or evolve over time and remains inextricably linked to perceptions about a mission's mandate, role and responsibilities. In the Ivorian context, the certification of all stages of the electoral process with which the Special Representative was entrusted to some extent contributed to a strained relationship between former President Gbagbo and the United Nations.

91. In a period prior to the departure of UNOCI, several political and security reforms and reconciliation and transitional justice processes were delayed. In many



instances, the mission's leadership also found it difficult to raise contentious issues, including the urgently needed reform of the security sector, with the country's leadership. The mutinies staged early in 2017 by elements of the Forces armées (formerly Forces républicaines) de Côte d'Ivoire attest to the complex challenges that remain incompletely addressed ahead of the presidential elections of 2020. A key lesson to note from the Ivorian context is that a mission should endeavour to anticipate and prepare to mitigate the possible withdrawal of a host country's consent. The issue of consent should be managed from the start of the mission, both at the level of the mission leadership and at the Secretariat level. The Security Council should also be actively involved in support of peacekeeping missions as a host Government's consent changes.

92. Peacekeeping operations, in particular their leadership, ought to be more accountable and fit for purpose in order to sustain their legitimacy, the confidence of the host nations and Governments, and the continuing support of regional and international stakeholders, including the Security Council. It is in that spirit that, learning from the experience of several peace operations, including UNOCI, I decided to undertake independent reviews of several United Nations peace operations over the course of 2018. I am committed to keeping peacekeeping operations under regular review to ensure that they are delivering on priority tasks in accordance with the mandates given by the Security Council.

93. In the case of UNOCI, the Secretariat dispatched more than a dozen strategic assessment teams to Côte d'Ivoire over its lifespan. These assessments informed recommendations to the Security Council on the appropriateness of the mandate and posture of the mission. In addition, the Secretariat had a multi-year strategy for the transition and eventual withdrawal of UNOCI. The strategy was linked to UNMIL in order to have a regional approach to crises in the West African region. Furthermore, as members of the Security Council will recall, upon the completion of the UNOCI mandate, my predecessor, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, recommended the transfer of the Senegalese-manned regional quick reaction force, which was operating out of Côte d'Ivoire, to MINUSMA.

94. The Ivorian experience further served as a laboratory for United Nations peacekeeping operations. The mission had a sound and clear articulation of political strategies and use of force, especially in the context of the post-electoral crisis to enforce the verdict of the certification of the election results. The security strategy pursued by UNOCI combined a robust deterrent posture, particularly against armed groups and self-defence militias threatening civilians in the areas of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The deployment of UNOCI alongside an international force, the French Operation Licorne, also played an important role in helping the mission to fulfil its security obligations. Furthermore, with the adoption of resolution [1609 \(2005\)](#), the Security Council stipulated guidelines that for the first time allowed peace operations in West Africa to support each other through the time-bound deployment of surge capacities in the form of uniformed personnel and other assets. As mentioned earlier in this report, during the post-electoral crisis in 2010/2011 some UNMIL troops and police elements were deployed to Côte d'Ivoire in support of an overstretched military component of UNOCI. However, while I am in favour of this experiment, including ways to ensure that redeployed troops and police elements are adequately sustained by the receiving mission, inter-mission cooperation cannot be a substitute for efforts to endow missions with adequate capabilities.

95. As emphasized in my presentation on the Action for Peacekeeping initiative to the Security Council on 28 March, I remain convinced that it is essential to prioritize the improvement of the performance of troops and police. This can be facilitated by memoranda of understanding with contributing countries that go beyond logistics to include the outcome expected from the unit in a specific context. The same lesson

would apply to the quick reaction force, which was among the last of the UNOCI troops to be repatriated as the mission closed, prior to its transfer to MINUSMA. That well-equipped and well-trained unit played the role of enabler by providing security coverage for the civilian work of the mission. There was however over-reliance on such units to perform routine duties and substitute for underperforming contingents when national actors were already increasingly assuming responsibility for the stability of the country and the protection of civilians.

96. It is equally important to emphasize the effective support of the United Nations to institution-building, primarily in the areas of rule of law and security institutions. Security transitions and exit strategies conducted prior to the departure of UNOCI from Côte d'Ivoire and the departure of UNMIL from Liberia have reconfirmed the necessity of gradually adjusting the military footprint and posture of United Nations peace operations in response to changing circumstances on the ground, including the evolution of the responsibility and capabilities of national security institutions. In the experience of UNOCI, engaging from the early stages in the elaboration of the national security sector reform strategy, immediately after the end of the 2011 post-electoral crisis, allowed the mission to adequately factor in the nexus between disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform in Government-led strategies. The implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme remains incomplete to date, however. It has shown that sustaining gains achieved with the support of the peacekeeping operation require continuing and considerable efforts from the Government and its partners long after the closure of UNOCI.

97. Closely linked in a way to the incomplete reform of the rule of law security institutions, the unrest witnessed in several garrisons early in 2017 attested to the fragile republican and democratic nature of the Ivorian security institutions. The unrest also further fuelled the overall perception of a “victor’s justice” system that prevailed until the departure of UNOCI at the end of June 2017.

98. The reconciliatory gestures made by President Ouattara in recent weeks are commendable. At the same time, I wish to underline that measures of political amnesty and pardon should be accompanied by a robust accountability mechanism to address long-standing demands by Ivorian civil society and citizens for the prosecution of members of the Forces nouvelles, now integrated within the Forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire, who were involved in grave human rights violations in the context of the post-electoral crisis of 2010/2011.

99. On the one hand, I applaud my last Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her tireless efforts — through good offices — in fostering local political dialogue and reconciliation and in supporting the national strategy for reconciliation and social cohesion. On the other hand, the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General can be sustained in the long run only through a comprehensive and inclusive reconciliation strategy that places human rights principles and obligations in the forefront and that provides for an effective transitional justice strategy. An important consideration that emerges from the experience in Côte d'Ivoire is the need for continuing encouragement to a host Government to remain open to human rights interventions, even as the situation in the country stabilizes and the Government increasingly asserts its responsibilities. For many observers, the human rights efforts of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire concluded prematurely, given the fragility of national human rights institutions. Although the Government was not willing to consider the establishment of a stand-alone human rights office within the United Nations country team after the closure of UNOCI, the continuing engagement of an independent human rights expert could have played a useful role in advising the Ivorian authorities as they build stronger human rights and transitional justice mechanisms.

100. With regard to peacebuilding, President Ouattara played a proactive role in fostering a transformative agenda for his country, in which the United Nations own transition plan and transfer of residual tasks and responsibilities was anchored. A good practice in that regard was the joint planning involving UNOCI, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations country team and international partners. That exercise sought to develop a transition plan focused on consolidating the achievements of the mission and reaching a common understanding among responsible entities of the residual challenges and priorities. The final transition plan outlined the outcomes of the consultative process, and was formally signed by UNOCI, the Government and its partners on 17 October 2016. The residual challenges identified in the transition plan were further mainstreamed into the national development programme for the period from 2016 to 2020 and into the peacebuilding support programme. In addition, the United Nations system identified the need for truly integrated transition planning earlier in the UNOCI drawdown planning process and successfully proposed that the triple-hatted Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, under the strategic guidance of the Special Representative, should assume a leadership role with respect to the technical aspects of transition planning beyond the closure of the mission. This transition model has, since then, been replicated in Liberia, which benefited from the participation of a broader range of national stakeholders, including civil society.

101. Just over a year after the closure of UNOCI, Côte d'Ivoire remains on the path to enduring peace and stability, as well as economic prosperity. Instead of being on the agenda of the Security Council, Côte d'Ivoire is serving the first year of a two-year term as a non-permanent member of the Council. Rather than hosting a peacekeeping operation, Côte d'Ivoire is contributing peacekeepers to MINUSMA. However, in an environment where terrorism and violent extremism have significantly tested the resilience of West African nations, preserving the hard-won peace dividends gained by the Ivorian people and Government on the path to stability should remain our primary goal.

102. In this context, I welcome the continuing, determined efforts of the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire to address the root causes of the Ivorian crisis, which continue to contribute to the fragility of the nation. Ultimately, their resolve will shape the stability of Côte d'Ivoire. Political dialogue, security reforms, national reconciliation, social cohesion, promotion of human rights, and reduction of socioeconomic inequalities must be at the heart of their efforts. In this regard, the development reform under way and the new profile attached to the role of United Nations Resident Coordinator will contribute to addressing, hand in hand with the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire, existing sources of fragility.

103. I wish to commend the tireless efforts of the Resident Coordinator for Côte d'Ivoire, Babacar Cissé, and my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohammed Ibn Chambas. Both have been actively engaged in supporting the path to sustainable peace since the closure of UNOCI in June 2017.

104. My deep gratitude also goes to all the civilian and uniformed personnel who served with UNOCI over the course of its deployment, as well as their families. I pay a particular tribute to the peacekeepers who lost their lives in pursuit of peace in Côte d'Ivoire. I also wish to express appreciation to all those appointed in the senior leadership who served in UNOCI since its establishment, including my last Special Representative, Aïchatou Mindaoudou. Ms. Mindaoudou and her predecessors, Albert Gerard (Bert) Koenders, Young-Jin Choi, Pierre Schori and Albert Tévoédjrè, and the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Said Djinnit, who helped to bring the mandate of UNOCI to a successful conclusion.

105. My appreciation also goes to the countries that contributed troops and police to UNOCI. I wish to recognize in particular the role of ECOWAS, whose green helmets paved the way for UNOCI, the parallel French forces, the African Union, the Mano River Union, the European 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 contributions.

106. I also wish to express my appreciation to the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire, who were the decisive factor in overcoming the crisis and whose continuing, determined efforts are sustaining the peace.

107. Finally, I wish to commend the leadership of my predecessors, Secretaries-General Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-moon, and the members of the Security Council, who, in their respective capacities, have continuously extended the required leadership and attention to the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and its potential impact across West Africa.

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