



SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT

UPDATE REPORT



1 December 2005 No.1

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Recent Developments and Expected Council Action

On 30 November the Council adopted a Presidential Statement urging the parties in Côte d'Ivoire to comply promptly with previous Council decisions, in particular, that a compromise candidate should be selected for the position of Prime Minister as soon as possible.

The Council was in effect issuing a last warning to the Ivorian parties. There can be no doubt that sanctions against individuals will follow very soon if there is not a rapid change of heart amongst the parties.

Key Facts

The ongoing conflict in Côte d'Ivoire has been of increasing concern in recent months. Despite sustained effort by the African Union, by the United Nations – which has deployed a large and costly peacekeeping mission (UNOCI) – and by countries with close ties to Côte d'Ivoire, the parties continue to play for time and the risk of renewed violence has grown.

The problem has its roots in an increasingly rigid set of policies and attitudes towards the large section of the population whose national origin, albeit in many cases several generations previously, is non Ivorian. This situation has become entwined with the political interests of various players. It has also been exacerbated by more recent tendencies on all sides to use violence to advance political agendas.

The parties, under intense regional and international pressure have signed successive peace agreements, culminating in the April 2005 Pretoria Peace Agreements. But the presidential elections originally scheduled under those agreements for 30 October 2005 were postponed due to the delays caused by the parties.

30 October was a key date because of the expiry on that day of the constitutional term of office of President Gbagbo. The resulting crisis led to action by both the AU and the Security Council. It was decided that:

- President Gbagbo would remain in power for a maximum of twelve months after his term ended.
- A new Prime Minister acceptable to all parties would be appointed to exercise executive powers.

- A road map supervised by an International Working Group (IWG) responsible for the evaluation and monitoring of the peace process would be set up.
- A new type of mediation, would be conducted daily by a sub-group of the IWG composed of the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Côte d'Ivoire, the Secretary-General's High Representative for the elections, ECOWAS and the AU.
- The threat of sanctions against individual spoilers would be strengthened.
- All this was endorsed by Security Council resolution 1633 on 21 October 2005.

In addition, the Council Members decided to emphasise the importance of getting the peace process back on track through a visit to Côte d'Ivoire by Ambassador Vassilakis of Greece, the Chairman of the sanctions committee. On his trip, he met with the parities and made them aware of the impatience building up. He saw all the signatories of the agreements. On 16 November, he briefed the Council.

Another visit of significance, which underlines the seriousness with which the Cote d'Ivoire situation is viewed, is by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Juan Méndez, currently underway.

The sanctions lever has been controversial. Sanctions against individuals found to be obstructing the peace process, violating human rights, publicly inciting hatred and violence and violating the arms embargo are provided for by resolution 1572 (2004). But, while the Council authorised targeted sanctions in 2004, these have not come into effect for specific individuals because of differences within the sanctions committee and because the AU mediator has up till now believed that this might be counterproductive.

The Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, established pursuant to resolution 1584 (2005), has reviewed a range of issues relevant to implementing the sanctions regime and its report is now before the Council. The Group urges the Council to call upon the Ivorian government to submit a breakdown of defense expenditures and to commission an audit of cocoa production, and to call on the rebels to provide a weapons inventory. The report also urged the sanctions committee to now proceed to list individuals for asset freezes and travel bans.

On 25 November, the General Assembly adopted without a vote a resolution raising the amount appropriated for the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) by \$51.28 million, in addition to \$386.89 million already approved for the 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 period.

Key Issues

The main issue for the Council is the behaviour of the parties in Côte d'Ivoire who are delaying the peace process. A secondary issue has been the fact that the Council has chosen to follow the lead of the AU on Côte d'Ivoire and consensus within the AU has not always been easy to achieve.

The Council has expressed its view that the time has come for it to further pressure the Ivorian parties to reach a consensus on a candidate.

The question is whether all other reasonable options have now been fully explored and whether sanctions against individuals found to be obstructing the peace process, violating human rights, publicly inciting hatred and violence and violating the arms embargo should now be imposed.

A further issue, especially in the light of a more robust approach by the UN, is whether ONUCI's capacity is sufficient.

Council Dynamics

It seems that previous differences within the Council about the level and timing of additional Council involvement have evaporated in the face of ongoing delays in the negotiation between the parties.

It seems that the Council's patience has worn thin. And it also appears there are understandings that, thereafter, sanctions would follow in case of a flagrant violation of one of the four criteria. The worsening security situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the need to revive the Marcoussis peace process, combined with an increasing willingness on the part of the AU to support the application of sanctions if necessary have had an impact amongst Council members who were previously uncertain about sanctions.

Options

The Council is clearly seized of the significance of targeted sanctions such as a travel ban on the parties. Many in the Ivorian elite have interests in France and enjoy regular visits to Paris. A travel ban is therefore an option with considerable bite.

Another option is for the Council to request Special Adviser Juan Méndez to brief them on his findings on his return to New York. This would not only provide very useful first hand information but also send a further signal to the parties that the United Nations system is going to great lengths to integrate its approach to the overall situation.

Underlying Problems

The underlying roots of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire are largely economic. However, because the debate has been primarily framed in ethno-nationalist terms, and the stimulation of xenophobic attitudes, the situation now manifests a serious risk of transformation into a dangerous conflict based on national origin.

After experiencing an impressive economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s centered on coffee and cocoa export, the deterioration of the economic situation at the end of the 1980s exacerbated political tensions and led to increasing hostility against parts of the population of non Ivorian origin. This developed into a form of xenophobia based on the concept of "ivory". In 1996, this was popularised by late President Henri Bédié, with the goal of eliminating his main rival in the presidential race, late Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara, of foreign parentage. The concept's initial objective was to forge a common culture for all those living on Ivorian soil. However, it has subsequently been exploited by political leaders in a nationalist and xenophobic manner, and led to a questioning of most foreigners' identity and the denial of their land rights. It also threatens any person holding a Muslim name and originating from the north of the country or from neighboring states. Indeed, the concept was included in article 35 of the 2000 Ivorian constitution, allowing only those born in Côte d'Ivoire of Ivorian parents to stand for presidential elections. It had the effect of banning several candidates and parties from the 2000 presidential race, including Ouattara.

Therefore, the question of citizenship and the status of foreign nationals is a central flashpoint in the conflict, fomenting nationalist sentiment, impeding the registration of voters and leading to inter-ethnic violence and persistent media broadcasts inciting hatred and violence.

In addition to ethnic tensions, the option of using force in politics became accepted after the successful coup of General Robert Gueï in December 1999. Since that date, the deterioration of political life led to a gradual increase in physical and psychological public violence, which gave rise to the civil war in 2002.

The rebellion that began in September 2002 was launched by former army officers recruited by General Gueï during his military regime, in order to protest their demobilisation. Although the security forces loyal to the President (the Forces armées nationales Ivoiriennes, FANCI) regained control of the south and Abidjan, the rebels kept the northern region, and other dissatisfied soldiers and civilians progressively joined their ranks. The *de facto* situation also led to a proliferation of rebel groups seeking to capture the state spoils.

The main rebel group Forces nouvelles (FN) is led by Guillaume Soro and is composed of three rebel movements: Mouvement patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), Mouvement justice et paix (MJP) and Mouvement populaire ivoirien du Grand Ouest (MPIGO). They have representatives in the current National Reconciliation Government headed by Prime Minister Seydou Diarra. FN calls for the resignation of President Gbagbo now that his term ended and would like to see changes in the constitution.

The current problem lies in the disagreement between the Presidential party (the Front populaire ivoirien, FPI) and the rest of the opposition gathered in the Group of Seven (G-7), which is composed of opposition parties with a directorate including the FN, on the designation of a new Prime Minister who has to be acceptable to all signatories of the Marcoussis Agreements. FPI and the G-7 proposed a list of 16 names. Presidents Osulegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa selected two names out of this list, but both parties rejected them.

There has been little or no progress on disarming rebels who seized the northern half of the country, or on removing weapons from the hands of the militiamen who support President Gbagbo in the south.

Human rights violations, obstruction of the work of UN peacekeepers and intimidation of political opponents have contributed to a dangerous deterioration of the security situation.

UN Documents

Most recent resolutions

- S/RES/1633 (21 October 2005)
- S/RES/1632 (18 October 2005)
- S/RES/1609 (24 June 2005)
- S/RES/1603 (3 June 2005)
- S/RES/1600 (4 May 2005)
- S/RES/1594 (4 April 2005)
- S/RES/1584 (1 February 2005)
- S/RES/1572 (15 November 2004)
- S/RES/1528 (27 February 2004)

Most recent Presidential Statements

- S/PRST/2005/58 (30 November 2005)
- S/PRST/2005/28 (6 July 2005)
- S/PRST/2004/48 (16 December 2004)

Most recent Secretary-General's reports
• S/2005/604 (26 September 2005)
• S/2005/398 + Add.1 (17 June 2005)
• S/2005/186 (18 March 2005)
• S/2005/135 (2 March 2005)
Reports of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire
• S/2005/699 (7 November 2005)
• S/2005/470 (20 July 2005)
Selected letters to the President of the Council
• S/2005/707 (9 November 2005) letter from the Secretary-General
• S/2005/696 (3 November 2005) letter from the Secretary-General
• S/2005/639 (11 October 2005) letter from Nigeria
• S/2005/598 (21 September 2005) letter from Nigeria
• S/2005/584 (13 September 2005) letter from the Secretary-General

Historical Background

23 November 2005 After a one day visit, Presidents Obasanjo of Nigeria, Mbeki of South Africa and Tandja of Niger were still unable to secure consensus by Ivorian parties over two potential Prime Ministers.

8 November 2005 The first meeting of the newly established International Working Group was held.

30 October 2005 President Gbagbo's term ended.

18-21 October 2005 The chairman of the sanctions committee for Côte d'Ivoire led consultations in the country in order to determine if individuals could be subjected to sanctions.

6 October 2005 The AU's Peace and Security Council decided to postpone Gbagbo's mandate by twelve months. The Council endorsed on 13 October.

1 August 2005 The Forces nouvelles announced that they were not ready to move to the next stage in the disarmament process, despite legal reforms made by President Laurent Gbagbo on *15 July*.

29 June 2005 The Declaration on the Implementation of the Pretoria Agreement on the peace-process in Côte d'Ivoire was signed in Pretoria under the auspices of the AU.

24 June 2005 The Council approved resolution 1609, which extended UNOCI's mandate and increased the mission's military and civilian police contingents.

11 April 2005 Pretoria Peace Agreement was signed by all Ivorian parties. The Agreement reinforced the terms of the previous two agreements and stipulated that elections would be held in October 2005.

15 November 2004 The Council approved resolution 1572, which imposed an arms embargo as well as sanctions restricting travel and freezing assets of all persons designated by the sanctions Committee who pose a threat to the peace process.

9 November 2004 AU mediation initiative led by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa began.

6 November 2004 The national armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire attacked the French Licorne forces. The Council condemned the attacks and confirmed that French forces and UNOCI were authorized to use all necessary means to fully carry out their mandate.

30 July 2004 Accra III Agreement, which consolidated the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, was signed.

27 February 2004 The Council adopted resolution 1528 establishing UNOCI. The authority was transferred from MINUCI and ECOWAS forces to the mission.

13 May 2003 The Council adopted resolution 1479 establishing the UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) with a mandate to facilitate the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and of the ceasefire.

March 2003 A government of national reconciliation was formed with members from the rebel ranks and a "consensus" Prime Minister, Seydou Diarra.

24 January 2003 The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement (S/2003/99) was signed between the Ivorian Government and all political forces, under French initiative.

19 September 2002 A mutiny in Abidjan by army officers grew into full-scale rebellion. The rebels seized control of the north.

March 2001 Ouattara's party won local elections, which led to a call for fresh presidential and legislative elections.

October 2000 Presidential elections were held. Ouattara was banned from running on the basis that he was of foreign descent. Gueï proclaimed himself President after announcing that he had won the elections but was forced to flee in the wake of a popular uprising. Laurent Gbagbo, believed to be the real winner, was declared President. Fighting erupted between Gbagbo's mainly southern Christian supporters and Ouattara's mainly northern Muslim followers.

December 1999 Bédié was overthrown in a military coup led by General Robert Gueï.

1996 The concept of Ivority appeared during a forum held in Abidjan on the theme "Ivority or the new spirit of the social contract of President Bédié".

1993 Henri Bédié became President.

1960 France granted independence to Côte d'Ivoire under President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, who held power until he died in 1993.

Other Relevant Facts

Special Representative of the Secretary General
Pierre Schori (Sweden)
High Representative for the Elections
Antonio Monteiro (Portugal)
Size and Composition of Mission
Current Strength (24 June 2005 - 24 January 2006): Up to 7,090 military

personnel and up to 725 civilian police officers

Key Troop Contributing Countries: Togo, Senegal

Cost

1 July 2005 - 30 June 2006: \$438.17 million

Useful Additional Sources

Côte d'Ivoire: Threats hang heavy over the future. Amnesty International 26 October 2005

Côte d'Ivoire: Halfway Measures Will Not Suffice, ICG report No. 33, 12 October 2005

Cote d'Ivoire: the Worst May be Yet to Come, ICG report No. 90, 24 March 2005