

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Côte d'Ivoire Monthly Briefing July 2025

Côte d'Ivoire Summary 23 July 2025

President Alassane Ouattara (2010-present) continues to postpone making a formal declaration of his candidacy, increasing political uncertainty in Côte d'Ivoire, as his most prominent opponents continue to campaign for reintegration in the electoral lists. Ouattara meets with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron (2017-present) to discuss economic cooperation, the election process and regional issues. A new cocoa processing plant on the outskirts of Abidjan signals government commitment to having at least the first stages of cocoa transformation entirely done on Ivorian soil, while its Chinese partners regard the new venture as confirmation of their ambition to play a higher profile role in the Ivorian economy. The mines, oil and energy ministry, World Gold Council and World Bank sign a partnership for a project to bring artisanal, and often illegal gold mines, in Côte d'Ivoire into the realm of legitimate economic activity.

Build-up to October election continues

Political uncertainty has persisted in Côte d'Ivoire as President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present) continues to postpone a definitive declaration of his candidacy for the October presidential election, while his most prominent opponents continue to campaign for their reintegration in the electoral register.¹ **Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** leader, **Tidjane Thiam**, and **Parti des peuples africains – Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI)** leader, former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2011), officially launched their **Font commun** (common front) on 16 June, whose principal aim it is to have their names put back on to the electoral register and allow them to participate in the October election as candidates.²

The two also share opposition demands, including reforming the **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (national election commission) and the revision of the electoral register to include the maximum number of voters, in conformity with – as the two parties say – electoral law. CEI chairman **Ibrahim Coulibaly-Kuibert** has consistently refused to give in to any of these demands or simply ignored them, contributing, according to the opposition, to an ever tenser pre-electoral climate in the country.

The creation of the Font commun also marks the definitive fragmentation of the opposition into two camps - one around Gbagbo and Thiam and the other, called **Coalition pour l'alternance pacifique en Côte d'Ivoire (CAP-CI)**, around Gbagbo's former wife **Simone Ehivet Gbagbo** and **Charles Blé Goudé**, also two erstwhile political allies of the PPA-CI leader. The frequently postponed dialogue between CAP-CI and the ruling **Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP)** finally got under way on 16 July, without the parties in the Front commun, who had declared a boycott of such a dialogue. RHDP executive secretary **Ibrahima Cissé Bacongo** and CAP-CI leader and spokesperson **Simone Ehivet Gbagbo** led the discussions, which only served to mark the beginning of efforts to ease political tensions.³

Candidates are also engaged in meeting two other legal requirements - gathering declarations of support in at least half of all the regions in the country and the deposit of financial guarantees for all candidates. Candidates must have proof of support, known as parrainage, from at least 1% of the

¹ Africa Confidential, 16 Jul 2025

² L'Infodrome, 16 and 17 Jul 2025

³ L'Infodrome, 17 Jul 2025

population in various districts and regions around the country to merit running for office.⁴ Candidates are also legally required to deposit CFA50m (\$90,000) at the **Caisse des dépôts et des consignations de Côte d'Ivoire (CDC-CI)**, the state bank that handles official deposits, payable by cheque only. Candidates who obtain 10% of the vote in the event of an election will have their money returned to them.

Given the increasingly volatile political climate and the potential for election-related violence that may be expected, the government on 18 July launched an information campaign, calling for non-violence during and after the presidential election. The campaign will consist of message on mass and social media, travelling shows and meetings with at-risk communities. Tellingly, the campaign was launched by interior and security minister **Vagondo Diomandé**, indicating that security forces will be on alert to quell trouble if and where it may occur.⁵

Ouattara meets with Macron

Ouattara spent 16 July in **Paris (France)** as a guest of his French counterpart **Emmanuel Macron** (2017-present), during which they reportedly discussed economic cooperation, the electoral process in Côte d'Ivoire - with Ouattara promising that they would be peaceful and institutional stability would be maintained - and regional issues.⁶ Reports noted that the candidacy of the candidates excluded from the electoral register was not discussed.⁷

In the regional context two issues stood out: the mounting insecurity coming from the **Alliance des États du Sahel (AES)** (alliance of Sahel states) member states – **Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger** - and the refusal, on the part of Côte d'Ivoire and other coastal states, to accept Burkina Faso's presidency of the **West African Monetary Union (WAMU)**. WAMU is the association of countries that have the CFA Franc in common. Opposition to the Burkinabè presidency is based on the fact that the junta has abandoned all pretence to be working towards a transition towards constitutional rule and civil-led democracy and Macron expressed support for Côte d'Ivoire in that respect.

On 11 July, the delegations of the three AES members – Burkina Faso, **Mali** and **Niger** - walked out of a ministerial WAMU meeting where the issue came to a head.⁸ While the AES has repeatedly announced its departure from the WAMU, there is also the acute realisation that abandoning the CFA Franc would lead to very severe socio-economic problems, if only because millions of citizens from the AES states live and work in Côte d'Ivoire and send money home.⁹

A new cocoa processing plant opens in the Akoupé-Zoudji industrial zone

Vice president **Tiémoko Meyliet Koné** officially opened the **Transcao PK 24** facility on 27 June, a cocoa grinding plant that is the result of a joint investment by the state and the **China Light Industry Nanning Design Engineering Co (CNDC)**. The entire project is said to be worth CFA132 billion (\$235m) but the exact size of each partner's contribution has not been reported.¹⁰ CNDC, a 51-year-old civil engineering firm, contributed technical assistance and technology.¹¹

The Transcao PK 24 complex is located at **Akopé-Zeudji**, a new industrial zone just north of the economic capital **Abidjan**.¹² Processing capacity is 50,000 tonnes per year, which can be scaled up to 100,000 tonnes per year. Côte d'Ivoire now has 14 grinding plants with widely varying capacities. The

⁴ connectionivoirienne.net, 4 Jul 2025

⁵ infoexpress.com, 19 Jul 2025

⁶ Afrik Soir, 18 Jul 2025

⁷ L'Infodrome, 19 July 2025; Afrik Soir, 18 July 2025

⁸ Afrik Soir, 18 Jul 2025

⁹ The Migration paradox in Côte d'Ivoire, 23 Jan 2023

¹⁰ L'Infodrome, 26 Jun 2025;

¹¹ welcomeafrica.com, 15 Jul 2025

¹² L'Infodrome, 26 Jun 2025

government's goal is to grind half of all raw cocoa in-country by 2027 and all of it by 2030. However, given the levels of investment needed, it is doubtful whether these objectives can be achieved.¹³

Koné and agriculture minister **Kobenan Kouassi Adjoumani**, who was also present at the opening ceremony, stressed the importance of this facility as the government wants the Ivorian economy on a trajectory that elevates it from a pure commodities exporter to a place, where at the very least, this first transformation phase is conducted in-country. Most unprocessed cocoa currently goes to the **Netherlands, Belgium, Malaysia** and the **United States (US)** for processing. With 750,000 tonnes now being processed in Côte d'Ivoire itself, it is on the way of surpassing the Netherlands as the world's premier cocoa grinder. Total installed capacity is 850,000 tonnes but not all of it is utilised.¹⁴ The country produced 1.7 million tonnes of raw cocoa in the 2023/24 harvesting season.¹⁵

Adjoumani reiterated his wish to see Côte d'Ivoire turn into a major producer of chocolate, drinks and cocoa-based cosmetics but the chances of this actually happening are remote, since existing supply chains are dominated by major multinational companies whose processing facilities are in **Europe, Asia** and **North America** and who will be disinclined to invest in similar facilities in Côte d'Ivoire itself.¹⁶

The inauguration of the new plant is also important from a Chinese perspective. At the 2024 edition of the **Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)**, China and Côte d'Ivoire elevated their relations to the level of strategic partners. China also expressed its wish to increase its investment footprint in Côte d'Ivoire and would like to be regarded as a reliable investor.¹⁷ Currently, China represents only 5% of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Côte d'Ivoire but the opening of Transcao PK 24 fits a trend that sees Chinese investment expand to include manufacturing, energy, mining, the hospitality industry and construction.¹⁸

Government signs partnership to regulate artisanal gold mining and reduce smuggling

The mines, oil and energy ministry, **World Gold Council** and **World Bank** are embarking on a project to bring artisanal, and often illegal gold mines, in Côte d'Ivoire into the realm of legitimate economic activity, signing a **Multistakeholder Partnership for Responsible and Sustainable Small-scale Mining (MSPI)** partnership on 11 July in the political capital **Yamoussoukro**. The MSPI aims to formalise small-scale mining, promote legal gold markets and put an end to smuggling. Figures from 2022 estimate that between 30 and 40 tonnes of gold from artisanal mines was smuggled out the country, costing the country an estimated \$4 billion at current prices.¹⁹ Other participants in the project include two commercial gold miners, **Canada**-headquartered **Endeavour Mining** and **Australia**-headquartered **Perseus Mining**, and the Ivorian **Chamber of Mines**.

The new model, as the project envisages, involves the creation of a system where artisanal mines are legalised, work with permits that bring them above board and produce traceable gold. In addition, these mines should have miners who have received training so they can maintain environmental and social standards. Finally, and crucially, there should be a system of equitable distribution of revenues in place. Current estimates indicate that of all the revenue coming from artisanal gold mining, only 7% remains in the community, while most of the rest disappears into the cross-border criminal networks that smuggle the gold.²⁰ Much of the violence in gold mining communities can be traced to these unfair practices. The project believes that these measures should help an estimated 500,000 people who work in the industry.²¹

¹³ Economist Intelligence Unit, 14 Jul 2025

¹⁴ L'Infodrome, 26 Jun 2025

¹⁵ projetafriquechine.com, 1 Jul 2025

¹⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit, 14 Jul 2025

¹⁷ Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, 7 Apr 2025; projetafriquechine.com, 1 Jul 2025

¹⁸ Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, 7 Apr 2025; Agence Ecofin, 18 Nov 2024

¹⁹ Agence Ecofin, 14 Jul 2025

²⁰ Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, 10 Jul 2025

²¹ Sika Finance, 15 Jul 2025

The project ties in with two other initiatives. The first is to build a refinery that will accept gold from industrial and artisanal mines, which also implies the creation of a centralised procurement system that should reduce the illegal mining problem. The refinery will seek certification from the World Gold Council and the **London Bullion Market Association**, the two key certification agencies in the international gold market.²² The other initiative is to employ drones equipped with state-of-the-art technology that will enable the authorities to identify, locate and shut down illegal mining sites. Thirty such drones, reportedly already present in the country, will be employed to this effect.²³

Mines, oil and energy minister **Mamadou Sangafowa-Coulibaly** toured the country this past month to present this agenda and stressed the three-pronged strategy of sensibilisation, incentivisation and repression as means to do away with illegal artisanal gold mines.²⁴ Sangafowa especially warned communities that while the government preferred legalising existing mining sites to the largest extent possible, it would not shy away from taking repressive measures against those who persist in mining gold without a license. A special unit to combat illegal mining, **Groupement special de lutte contre l'orpillage illegal (GS-LOI)**, has been in place since 2021 and has dismantled 1,760 illegal mining sites, arresting 700 individuals.²⁵ This is especially because the negative effects of illegal gold mining are considerable and range from widespread land and water pollution to communal conflicts over land rights, violence over revenue distribution and insecurity.²⁶

Planner

25 Oct 2025 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) Presidential elections

2025 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) **African Development Bank (AfDB)** annual meetings 2025

2026 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) Second edition of **Salon Internationale des Ressources Extractives et Energétiques (SIREXE)** (international exhibition of extractive and energy resources)

Chronology

19 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. A high-level meeting in Abidjan brings together the chiefs of staff from Côte d'Ivoire, **Benin** and **France** to establish the foundations of a strategic military partnership, with France offering technical and logistical support;

16 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. President **Alassane Ouattara** meets with **France's** President **Emmanuel Macron** to discuss security in **West Africa**, especially the **Sahel**;

11 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Government signs an agreement with the **World Bank** and **World Gold Council** to build the capacity of small-scale gold mining stakeholders as part of a wider strategy to combat gold smuggling, with the country losing between 30 and 40 tonnes per annum to illegal smuggling

10 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. **West African Elders Forum**, led by former **Beninese** president **Boni Yayi** and former **Nigerian** president **Goodluck Jonathan**, meets with **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) stakeholders to discuss election preparations

9 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Canadian** miner **Fortuna Mining** reports that its **Séguéla** mine produced two tonnes of gold in the first half of 2025

9 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. Water and forestry minister **Laurent Tchagba** is on a mission to **Brazil** focused on strengthening Côte d'Ivoire's forest restoration strategy through agroforestry collaboration

²² investafrique.info, 6 May 2025; Sika Finance, 15 Jul 2025

²³ Sika Finance, 15 Jul 2025

²⁴ Government website (www.gouv.ci), 16 Jul 2025

²⁵ Agence Ivoirienne de Presse, 10 Jul 2025

²⁶ Afrik Soir, 18 Jul 2025

7 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. Former human rights minister **Joël N'Guessan** is released on bail after police arrested him on 18 June for "bringing discredit to the judicial system" after he denounced the exclusion of opposition candidates from the October presidential election

3 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. The sponsorship collection process for the 2025 presidential election begins, requiring candidates to gather support from at least 1% of the electorate in over half of the country's districts and regions

2 Jul 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. Council of ministers ratifies the **African Energy Bank Agreement** to support sustainable energy projects, and approves other decrees related to maritime law, gold research permits, and a digital vehicle registration system

30 Jun 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. During **African Border Day** celebrations, **Commission Nationale des Frontières de la Côte d'Ivoire** (national border commission) executive secretary **Diakalidia Konaté** highlights the strong economic potential of **Pogo**, a strategic tri-border town between Côte d'Ivoire, **Burkina Faso** and **Mali**, and calls for intensified cross-border cooperation

29 Jun 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. As part of his 2025 presidential campaign, former Ivorian commerce minister **Jean Louis Billon** tours the towns **Tanda**, **Kouassi-Datékré** and **Sandégué** to rally sponsorship and connect with local populations

28 Jun 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. Côte d'Ivoire and **Switzerland** hold their fourth bilateral political dialogue meeting in Abidjan, during which Côte d'Ivoire invites **Swiss** President **Karin Keller-Sutter** for a visit

27 Jun 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. The **African Union's (AU)** human rights court rejects petitions by former Ivorian president **Laurent Gbagbo** and former prime minister **Guillaume Soro** to overturn bans on their running in the country's upcoming presidential election

26 Jun 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan Net*. Presidential election candidates **Assalé Tiémoko Antoine** and **Vincent Toh Bi Irié** launch the **Alliance pour la Justice, la Nation et l'Alternance (AJUNA)** to unite their efforts and promote a new political dynamic in Côte d'Ivoire

25 Jun 2025 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *IMF*. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** executive board completes the latest reviews of Côte d'Ivoire's **Extended Fund Facility (EFF)**, **Extended Credit Facility (ECF)** and **Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF)**, approving an immediate disbursement of \$758m

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