

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Côte d'Ivoire Briefing October 2021

Côte d'Ivoire Summary 26 October 2021

Former president Laurent Gbagbo (2000-2010) officially launches the Parti des Peuples Africains-Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI) and is voted party president. Côte d'Ivoire's council of ministers adopts the draft finance bill, which sets the 2022 budget at 9,901 billion FCFA (\$17.5 billion). The proposed budget, the country's second under the programmed budget model, entails a 17.9% increase from the 2021 figure of 8,621.1 billion FCFA (\$15.2 billion), making it the largest budget in the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA) (West African economic and Monetary Union), ahead of Senegal's. Economic growth for 2022 is projected at 7.1%. Côte d'Ivoire has administered more than 3 million Covid-19 vaccines and has emerged from its third wave of Covid-19 infections.

Gbagbo heads new PPA-CI party ...

Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010) has officially launched the **Parti des Peuples Africains-Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI)**.¹ The party elected Gbagbo as its president at its constitutive congress from 16-17 October, ending speculation on whether he would retire or return to politics following his return to Côte d'Ivoire in June following 10 years of imprisonment and exile.² Gbagbo voluntarily terminated his membership with the opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** in August, intending to create a new party.³

Gbagbo's departure from the FPI, which he founded in 1982, stemmed from disagreements with the legally recognised leader of the FPI, former prime minister and 2020 presidential election candidate **Pascal Affi N'Guessan**.⁴ Despite a widespread assumption that N'Guessan would cede the party leadership to Gbagbo on the former head of state's return from exile, N'Guessan appeared unwilling to relinquish his position. After attempts to establish rapprochement between Gbagbo and N'Guessan failed, Gbagbo announced at an FPI central committee meeting on 7 August his desire to leave the party.⁵ Gbagbo said he did not want to engage in a legal battle with N'Guessan, whom he accused of "taking the party hostage"⁶ and said he intended to "create a new instrument of struggle in accordance with our ideology and ambitions".⁷

At the August meeting, Gbagbo appointed a consultative committee tasked with ensuring that activities for the new party commenced by October.⁸ Committee members included long-time Gbagbo loyalists, such as **Assoa Adoa**, secretary general of the pro-Gbagbo faction of the FPI; former national reconciliation minister **Sébastien Djano Djédé**; and **Hubert Oulaye**, member of parliament (MP) and president of the opposition **Ensemble pour la Démocratie et la Souveraineté (EDS)** parliamentary group.⁹ Notably absent from the committee was former first lady and Gbagbo's ex-wife, **Simone Ehivet Gbagbo**, one of the founding leaders of the FPI.¹⁰ Simone Gbagbo decided instead to attend an

¹ Koaci.com, 14 Oct 2021

² Koaci.com, 17 Oct 2021

³ Africanews, 10 Aug 2021

⁴ Jeune Afrique, 9 Aug 2021

⁵ RFI, 10 Aug 2021

⁶ RFI, 10 Aug 2021

⁷ Africanews, 10 Aug 2021

⁸ DW, 10 Aug 2021

⁹ Jeune Afrique, 9 Aug 2021

¹⁰ Jeune Afrique, 9 Aug 2021

Evangelical movement celebration in **Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (DRC)**, where she met with DRC President **Félix Tshisekedi** (2019-present).¹¹ In a communique issued on 16 October, Simone Gbagbo noted she had taken a decision to distance herself from the initiative,¹² a clear indication of her displeasure at being given a minor role in the establishment of the new party.¹³

Gbagbo established two commissions on 7 September, one to develop the party manifesto, and the other to draw up statutes and internal rules, and propose a name and logo.¹⁴ An enlarged reflection commission, made up of 91 members, saw the inclusion of Simone Gbagbo.¹⁵ Conference president **Djano Djédé** predicted that 1,650 attendees would be present at the launch, noting that “*only those who share Laurent Gbagbo’s vision will be invited to the congress*”.¹⁶

The PPA-CI constitutive congress launched on 16 October at the **Palais des Congrès de l’Hôtel Ivoire** in **Abidjan**.¹⁷ Gbagbo spokesperson **Justin Koné Katinan** said the party aimed to unite the left and reignite political and opposition activity in Côte d’Ivoire.¹⁸ Katinan also revealed that the party would have a socialist and **Pan-Africanist** ideological orientation, and promote human rights, democracy, justice and sovereignty:¹⁹

“We want to build a normal political opposition party that brings criticism, so that the debate isn’t violent and becomes essentially political.”²⁰

On the second day of the congress, Djano Djédé announced Gbagbo as candidate for the party’s presidency.²¹ After Gbagbo was confirmed to the position by acclamation, Djano Djédé proposed a list of 68 people as members of the PPA-CI’s control committee.²² Gbagbo concluded the congress by paying tribute to the late **Abdourahmane Sangaré**, who died in November 2018.²³ Sangaré was an FPI founder who served as Gbagbo’s foreign affairs minister and led the EDS, a platform comprising the “*Gbagbo ou Rien*” (Gbagbo or nothing) cohort of Gbagbo supporters while Gbagbo was imprisoned and in exile.²⁴ Gbagbo called for the release of all civilians and military personnel who were still in detention because of their support for him. Gbagbo had made a similar appeal to President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present) during their 27 July meeting (see *ARC Briefing Côte d’Ivoire August 2021*).

The 76-year-old former president reminded attendees that individuals older than him are still active in political circles, a clear reference to 79-year-old Ouattara and 87-year-old former president and opposition **Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire (PDCI)** leader **Henri Konan Bedié** (1993-1999).²⁵ Gbagbo nevertheless assured his supporters that he will take steps to pass leadership of the party to the next generation.²⁶

The congress appeared to be a resounding success for Gbagbo and his allies. EDS MP **Georges Ouégnin**, who oversaw the organisation of the congress, described the event as a “*new start*” for Gbagbo.²⁷ Other political parties were represented at the event. PDCI vice president **George Philippe Ezaley** attended on behalf of the party and read a message of encouragement sent by Bedié.²⁸

¹¹ Jeune Afrique, 19 Oct 2021

¹² Koaci.com, 16 Oct 2021

¹³ ARC Côte d’Ivoire analyst

¹⁴ Abidjan.net, 7 Sep 2021

¹⁵ Abidjan.net, 7 Sep 2021

¹⁶ RTI, 8 Oct 2021

¹⁷ RFI, 16 Oct 2021

¹⁸ Jeune Afrique, 16 Oct 2021

¹⁹ RFI, 16 Oct 2021

²⁰ Jeune Afrique, 16 Oct 2021

²¹ Koaci.com, 17 Oct 2021

²² Koaci.com, 17 Oct 2021

²³ Koaci.com, 17 Oct 2021

²⁴ 7info.ci, 17 Oct 2021

²⁵ ARC Côte d’Ivoire analyst

²⁶ 7info.ci, 17 Oct 2021

²⁷ Le Monde, 16 Oct 2021

²⁸ FratMat.info, 16 Oct 2021

Surprisingly, the ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** honoured the PPA-CI's invitation by dispatching executive director **Adama Bictogo**, who was accompanied by six RHDP MPs.²⁹ Congress attendees applauded Bictogo, a well-known hardliner in the ruling coalition, as he called on Ivorians to preserve peace and fraternity.³⁰ Bictogo also expressed President Ouattara's desire to strengthen ties with the new party.³¹

Gbagbo confirmed on 25 October the top leaders of the PPA-CI. Hubert Oulaye is the party's executive director and head of the 17-member executive council; Assoa Adoa is president of the strategic political council; **Damana Pickass** is secretary general and Djano Djédé is the first vice president.³²

Ivorian political analyst **Geoffrey-Julien Kouao** claims Gbagbo's decision to create a new political party aims to fill a political vacuum that has existed in Côte d'Ivoire since the end of the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis.³³ Gbagbo, who is still very popular, is aware that beyond ideological concerns, Ivorians follow individuals when it concerns political affiliation and will thus try to capitalise on this to derive support and possibly use the party as a platform for a 2025 presidential election bid.³⁴ **Université de Bouaké** professor **Francis Akindés** argues that Gbagbo created the party in order to sideline Affi N'Guessan and his ex-wife.³⁵ Although Gbagbo's intentions remain unclear, Ouattara and the RHDP will no doubt be watching Gbagbo's next moves closely. Gbagbo has apparently already made an alliance with Bedié, which could be formalised with the establishment of the PPA-CI.³⁶

2022 budget projects 7.1% growth

The Ivorian council of ministers has adopted the draft finance bill, which sets the 2022 budget at 9,901 billion FCFA (\$17.5 billion).³⁷ The proposed budget, the second under the programmed budget model,³⁸ entails a 17.9% increase from the 2021 figure of 8,621.1 billion FCFA (\$15.2 billion). This makes it the largest budget in the **Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)** (West African economic and Monetary Union), ahead of **Senegal**.³⁹ The trend is expected to continue, as the budget will increase to 10,555.8 billion FCFA (\$18.6 billion) and 11,616.6 billion FCFA (\$20.5 billion) in 2023 and 2024 respectively.⁴⁰

Cabinet approved the 2022 budget on 20 October, during a council of ministers' session chaired by President Alassane Ouattara.⁴¹ Prime minister **Patrick Achi** noted that the budget was formulated in the context of the gradual resumption of economic activity, following the contraction of the global economy due to **Covid-19**:

*"It aims in particular, to strengthen and optimise the gains recorded thanks to government efforts to curb the impact of Covid-19."*⁴²

The 2022 budget aims to stimulate economic activity and pursue development objectives such as the improvement of living conditions, through the implementation of the **Plan National de Développement (PND) 2021-2025**, the country's national economic development agenda, and the **Programme Social du Gouvernement (PSGouv2)** (government social programme), amongst

²⁹ Koaci.com, 16 Oct 2021

³⁰ Koaci.com, 16 Oct 2021

³¹ Koaci.com, 16 Oct 2021

³² Jeune Afrique, 25 Oct 2021

³³ DW, 10 Aug 2021

³⁴ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

³⁵ Jeune Afrique, 23 Oct 2021

³⁶ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

³⁷ Abidjan.net, 20 Oct 2021

³⁸ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

³⁹ Jeune Afrique, 20 Oct 2021

⁴⁰ Abidjan.net, 20 Oct 2021

⁴¹ Abidjan.net, 20 Oct 2021

⁴² Abidjan.net, 20 Oct 2021

others.⁴³ Revenue collection for 2022 is estimated at 8,566.3 billion FCFA (\$15.1 billion), while expenditure has been earmarked at 8,678.3 billion FCFA (\$15.3 billion).⁴⁴ The budget deficit amounts to 112.1 billion FCFA (\$198m) which Coulibaly attributes to expenses incurred as a result of Covid-19.⁴⁵

In order to address the budget shortfall, the government will solicit funding from the international financial market through **Eurobond** issues, syndicated loans and treasury bond issues on the UEMOA regional financial markets, amongst others.⁴⁶ Côte d'Ivoire undertook two Eurobond operations in November 2020 and February (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire December 2020 and February 2021*) and is reportedly preparing to carry out a third issue in the coming months. Côte d'Ivoire also hopes to conclude negotiations that will enable it to derive \$925m **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)** issued by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, as part of the IMF's efforts to support Côte d'Ivoire's Covid-19 recovery efforts (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire September 2021*).⁴⁷ The government hopes to sign another economic assistance package with the IMF, following the conclusion of the previous programme in 2020.⁴⁸ Despite increased spending, Coulibaly indicates that improvements in budgetary control and management will see the deficit fall from 5.6% in 2021 to 4.7% in 2022, which is still above the UEMOA threshold of 3%.⁴⁹

The 2022 budget projects economic growth of 7.1% for Cote d'Ivoire in 2022, an improvement from 2% in 2020 and 5.6% in 2021.⁵⁰ Higher growth in 2021 is due to increased activity in the food industry, construction and public works, as well as rising demand for petroleum products and increased consumption and investment.⁵¹ In 2022, growth is expected to be generated from agricultural production, energy, manufacturing, mining, transport, telecommunications and commerce.⁵² Coulibaly indicates that the government will enact reforms to support the private sector by improving the business climate, reviving small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME's) and building the capacity of the agriculture sector, the pillar of the Ivorian economy.⁵³

The **World Bank's** bi-annual **Africa Pulse**, released on 6 October, has similar growth projections for Côte d'Ivoire, estimating 6.2% growth in 2021.⁵⁴ The government forecasts an average of 7.65% growth during the 2021-2025 timeframe, an improvement from 5.9% achieved during the period from 2016-2020.⁵⁵

Covid cases drop

Côte d'Ivoire is slowly emerging from a third wave of Covid-19 infections that was mostly prevalent in September. **Institut National de l'Hygiène Publique (INHP)** (national institute for public hygiene) director **Joseph Béné Bi Vroh** said Côte d'Ivoire experienced 183 Covid-19 related deaths in September, amounting to nearly a third of all Covid-19-related deaths since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.⁵⁶

Bi Vroh encouraged Ivorians to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, describing it as the "*best mechanism*" to protect the population from the virus. Bi Vroh reported that Côte d'Ivoire had received 5 million of the

⁴³ AIP, 20 Oct 2021

⁴⁴ AIP, 20 Oct 2021

⁴⁵ AIP, 20 Oct 2021

⁴⁶ Jeune Afrique, 20 Oct 2021

⁴⁷ Agence Ecofin, 25 Aug 2021

⁴⁸ Jeune Afrique, 20 Oct 2021

⁴⁹ Abidjan.net, 20 Oct 2021

⁵⁰ Agence Ecofin, 21 Oct 2021

⁵¹ Agence Ecofin, 21 Oct 2021

⁵² Agence Ecofin, 21 Oct 2021

⁵³ Agence Ecofin, 21 Oct 2021

⁵⁴ Africa Pulse, 6 Oct 2021

⁵⁵ Abidjan.net, 20 Oct 2021

⁵⁶ Gouv.ci, 12 Oct 2021

12 million Covid-19 vaccine doses it had ordered and had available stock of 2 million vaccines.⁵⁷ As of 22 October, 3,005,741 Covid-19 vaccine doses had been administered, to over 13% of the Ivorian adult, with over 2 million having received at least one dose, the second highest amongst **Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS)** member states after **Nigeria**.⁵⁸ The government has set a target of vaccinating 70% of the population of Abidjan, the epicentre of the coronavirus.

The health ministry reported that as of 22 October, it had recorded a total of 461 new Covid-19 cases from 9-22 October. As of 22 October, Cote d'Ivoire has confirmed 61,152 positive cases of Covid-19 in its population of roughly 26 million, with 689 Covid-19-related deaths and 59,707 recoveries.⁵⁹

Planner

17-19 Dec 2021 **Istanbul (Turkey). Turkey-Africa Summit**
2025 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) Presidential elections

Chronology

25 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** has appointed the executive leadership of his newly launched political party, the **Parti des Peuples Africains-Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI)**;

22 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** inaugurates the \$53.1m **Centre Hospitalier Régional (CHR)** (regional hospital centre) **d'Aboisso**;

20 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The council of ministers has adopted the draft finance bill, which sets the 2022 budget at 9,901 billion FCFA (\$17.5 billion), a 17.9% increase from 8,621.1 billion FCFA (\$15.2 billion) in 2021;

20 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AIP*. Hydrocarbons firm **Société Nationale d'Opérations Pétrolières de Côte d'Ivoire (Petroci Holding)** officially becomes an entirely state-owned firm;

17 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Newly created **Parti des Peuples Africains de Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI)** elects Cote d'Ivoire's former president, **Laurent Gbagbo**, as its president following the party's first consultative congress;

12 Oct 2021 **Paris (France)** *Jeune Afrique*. **Côte d'Ivoire and France** are on the verge of concluding the third **Contrat de Désendettement et de Développement (C2D)** (debt reduction and development contract), which will see France grant Côte d'Ivoire an estimated \$ 1.145 billion in development aid, covering the period from 2021-2025;

9 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Direction Générale des Impôts (DGI)** (general tax directorate) director general **Sié Abou Ouattara** reports Côte d'Ivoire collected 743.6 billion FCFA (\$1.3 billion) in taxes during the third term, above the targeted 660.2 billion FCFA (\$1.1 billion);

8 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Australia-based Tietto Minerals** says it aims to produce five tonnes of gold annually at the **Abujar** gold mine in centre-west Côte d'Ivoire during its first six years of operation, with production set to begin during the last quarter of 2022;

7 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. The Ivorian government has granted **B2Gold Côte d'Ivoire SARL**, a subsidiary of **Canada-based B2Gold**, two gold exploration permits in the departments of **Soubré** and **Gagnoa**;

⁵⁷ Gouv.ci, 12 Oct 2021

⁵⁸ Gouv.ci, 12 Oct 2021

⁵⁹ AIP, 23 Oct 2021

7 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Côte d'Ivoire will undertake its fifth **Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat (RGPH)** (national population census) from 1-21 November, its first since 2014;

6 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. Former presidents **Henri Konan Bédié** and **Laurent Gbagbo** hold their second face-to-face meeting since Gbagbo's return from exile in June;

4 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The **International Consortium of Investigative Journalists** reveals in its latest report about tax evasion, the **Pandora Papers**, that Ivorian prime minister **Patrick Achi** served as a consultant in 2006 for an offshore company registered in the **Bahamas**, which it has identified for tax evasion;

3 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. The **Ligue des Droits des Femmes** (Women's rights league) has called for an independent investigation into reconciliation minister **Kouadio Konan Bertin**, whom a local female musician alleges sexually assaulted her;

1 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. **Banque Nationale d'Investissement (BNI)** director general **Issouf Fadiga** announces the firm will allocate 125 billion FCFA (\$221m) to cocoa sector actors during the 2021/22 harvest campaign;

1 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. **Italy**-based petroleum firm **Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI)** CEO **Claudio Descalzi** thanks Ivorian President **Alassane Ouattara** for improving the country's business climate, during an audience following ENI's discovery of an estimated 1.5-2 billion barrels of oil in Côte d'Ivoire in September;

30 Sep 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The Ivorian treasury raises 117 billion FCFA (\$206.8m) through a bond issue launched on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

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