

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Côte d'Ivoire Briefing November 2021

Côte d'Ivoire Summary 26 November 2021

Prime minister Patrick Achi announces the resumption of political dialogue between the government and political parties, with deliberations set to begin in December. The boards of two state agencies, the Fonds d'Entretien Routier (FER) (road management fund) and the Agence Nationale du Service Universel des Télécommunications-TIC (ANSUT) (national agency for the universal telecommunications service) have dismissed their directors general as part of "Opération Mains Propres" (operation clean hands), the government's anti-corruption drive, which has focused on activities at state parastatals and agencies. Mines and petroleum minister Thomas Camara leads an Ivorian delegation to the African Oil Week in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) from 8-11 November to showcase investment opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire's hydrocarbons and energy sectors. Health minister Pierre Dimba reports his ministry has administered over 4.2 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines as of 23 November.

Achi announces resumption of political dialogue

Prime minister **Patrick Achi** has announced the resumption of political dialogue between the government and political parties, with deliberations set to begin on an unspecified date in December.¹ Achi made the announcement on 8 November, during a press conference in which he outlined that the government's action would fall within the framework of national reconciliation.² Achi said late prime ministers **Amadou Gon Coulibaly** and **Hamed Bakayoko** had initiated the political dialogue sessions, which intensified in the lead up to, and after, the October 2020 presidential elections. A civil disobedience campaign organised by the opposition and electoral violence led to an estimated 85 deaths (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire December 2020*).³ Achi praised the conduct of the March legislative elections as transparent and inclusive. The legislative elections involved the participation of all major political parties for the first time in almost two decades, which Achi said would help to reinforce national cohesion.⁴

Achi underscored that dialogue is an ongoing process and had never ceased.⁵ Achi noted that President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present) had met with former president and opposition **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** leader **Henri Konan Bedié** (1993-1999) in November 2020 (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire November 2020*),⁶ at the height of the electoral cycle violence.⁷ Achi also cited the audience between Ouattara and former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010) on 27 July, the first time the two former political foes had been face to face since November 2010 (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire August 2021*).⁸ Ouattara met former prime minister and leader of the opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)**, **Pascal Affi N'Guessan**, on 28 October.⁹ Affi N'Guessan was a candidate for the 2020 presidential elections but boycotted the elections and was subsequently

¹ Abidjan.net, 8 Nov 2021

² Abidjan.net, 8 Nov 2021

³ Anadolu Agency, 8 Nov 2021

⁴ Abidjan.net, 8 Nov 2021

⁵ Anadolu Agency, 8 Nov 2021

⁶ Jeune Afrique, 11 Nov 2020

⁷ Abidjan.net, 8 Nov 2021

⁸ Africanews, 27 Jul 2021

⁹ Koaci.com, 28 Oct 2021

arrested and detained for his role in the national civil disobedience campaign (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire December 2020*).¹⁰

Côte d'Ivoire's leading political parties have applauded the news of the recommencement of political dialogue. Konan Bedié has appointed former mayor of the **Abidjan** commune of **Plateau, Noël Akossi Bendjo**, as the party's representative during the deliberations. Bendjo serves as Bedié's special adviser in-charge of reconciliation.¹¹ The **Parti des Peuples Africains-Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI)**, the newly created party launched by Gbagbo in October, will also participate.¹² PPA-CI secretary general **Damana Pickass** describes the dialogue as a positive move that is necessary to ease tensions and restore Ivorian confidence in the political process.¹³

While there appears to be consensus that political dialogue is valuable, there seems to be less agreement with respect to the organisation of the discussions. PPA-CI executive secretary and **Guiglo** constituency MP **Hubert Oulaye** says dialogue should take the form of a national meeting.¹⁴ However, political affairs minister-adviser **Ibrahima Cissé Bacongo**, who is also mayor of the Abidjan commune of **Koumassi** for the ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** and regarded as a party moderate,¹⁵ said the meetings are unnecessary, given that the national meetings in 2001 did not bear positive results.¹⁶

Political dialogue stakeholders will also need to decide the subjects for deliberation. Pickass says the issue of political prisoners and exiles must be central to the conversations.¹⁷ Pickass, who resided in exile in **Ghana** after the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis and only returned to Côte d'Ivoire in April (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire May 2021*),¹⁸ said returnees must be allowed to return without threat of legal action so they can contribute positively to nation-building.¹⁹ Bendjo, who lived in exile in **France** from 2018-2021, agreed with the need to facilitate the return of political exiles to Côte d'Ivoire. Gbagbo presented a list of 110 individuals to Ouattara in July (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire August 2021*)²⁰ whom he wished to see released from detention. Côte d'Ivoire-based political analyst **Geoffroy Julien Kouao** suggests that upcoming local elections, scheduled to take place in 2023, should also feature as a topic of discussion.²¹ Elections have been the core source of violence in the country since 1995, and stakeholders will need to discuss the legal, institutional and operational framework within which subsequent elections take place.²²

Coordination of the political dialogue will be a baptism of fire for Achi, a well-regarded technocrat.²³ However, as the main strategist and Ouattara's spokesperson during the 2020 presidential campaign as well as president of the **Mé** region, he is no political novice. Achi is also considered a moderate with the ability to foster consensus with the opposition in a manner similar to his predecessor, Bakayoko.²⁴

State agency heads sacked in anti-corruption drive

Two heads of state agencies have lost their jobs in the government's anti-corruption drive, "**Opération Mains Propres**" (operation clean hands), which has focused on activities at state

¹⁰ Abidjan-based CREFDI researcher

¹¹ Jeune Afrique, 9 Nov 2021

¹² Jeune Afrique, 9 Nov 2021

¹³ Jeune Afrique, 9 Nov 2021

¹⁴ Jeune Afrique, 9 Nov 2021

¹⁵ Abidjan-based African Development bank analyst

¹⁶ Jeune Afrique, 9 Nov 2021

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 9 Nov 2021

¹⁸ RFI, 30 Apr 2021

¹⁹ Jeune Afrique, 9 Nov 2021

²⁰ Africanews, 27 Jul 2021

²¹ Ivoire Soir, 8 Nov 2021

²² Ivoire Soir, 8 Nov 2021

²³ Abidjan-based African Development bank analyst

²⁴ Abidjan-based African Development bank analyst

parastatals and agencies.²⁵ Before his departure for France on 10 November, Ouattara instructed that heads of institutions where preliminary audits which identified cases of financial mismanagement should be replaced in order to allow more in-depth investigations to be carried out.²⁶

The board of the **Fonds d'Entretien Routier (FER)** (Road Management Fund) took a decision at an extraordinary board meeting on 11 November to remove **Laciné Diaby** as director general and replace him with **Annick Tohé Lasmel**, who had served as director of quality at FER before her appointment.²⁷ FER is responsible for financing services related to studies and routine maintenance of the national road network and project management.²⁸ Diaby had held the position of director general since August 2017 after replacing **Siandou Fofana**, who was promoted to tourism minister in January 2017.²⁹

Agence Nationale du Service Universel des Télécommunications-TIC (ANSUT) (national universal telecommunications service agency) head **Jean Euloge Soro-Kipeya** was dismissed in similar circumstances when the ANSUT board voted at a 12 November extraordinary board meeting to remove him.³⁰ ANSUT is a government agency that provides the population with access to basic technological services in both urban and rural areas.³¹ Soro-Kipeya is replaced by **Ibrahim Konaté**.³²

While the reason for the dismissals was not revealed, local reports suggest they were ordered after preliminary audits discovered cases of financial misappropriation at both institutions.³³ The audits were ordered by Ouattara and form part of the government's "Opération Mains Propres" anti-corruption and good governance campaign.³⁴ In June, following the release of preliminary audit findings, four directors general of state agencies and enterprises were suspended on allegations of financial misappropriation, a rare occurrence in Côte d'Ivoire:

- **Désiré Ange Yapi - La Nouvelle Pharmacie de la Santé Publique (NPSP)** (state pharmacy);
- **Youssef Ouattara - L'Agence de Gestion et de Développement des Infrastructures Industrielles (AGEDI)** (infrastructure development agency);
- **Diéméleou Bile - L'Autorité de Régulation des Télécommunications/TIC de Côte d'Ivoire (ARTCI)** (telecoms regulatory agency);
- **Lamine Coulibaly - L'Agence de Gestion Foncière (AGEF)** (land management agency).³⁵

To date, only Coulibaly has been arrested and has been in detention since 14 June. Youssef Ouattara is charged with fraud involving 998m FCFA (\$1.7m), illicit enrichment and money laundering and in February, the **Cour des Comptes** (audit bench) ordered him to pay 3 billion FCFA (\$5.3m) (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire August 2021*).³⁶ An ARC source based at the Abidjan-based **African Development Bank (AfDB)** suggested in August that Diaby could be the subject of corruption-related investigations, a hypothesis that has since come to fruition (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire August 2021*).³⁷

²⁵ Koaci.com, 12 Nov 2021

²⁶ Jeune Afrique, 16 Nov 2021

²⁷ Sika Finance, 11 Nov 2021

²⁸ NordSud.info, 11 Nov 2021

²⁹ NordSud.info, 11 Nov 2021

³⁰ APA, 12 Nov 2021

³¹ APA, 12 Nov 2021

³² APA, 12 Nov 2021

³³ Koaci.com, 13 Nov 2021

³⁴ Jeune Afrique, 16 Nov 2021

³⁵ Ivoire Soir editor André Silver Konan quoted in DW, 8 Jul 2021

³⁶ Ivoire Soir editor André Silver Konan quoted in DW, 8 Jul 2021

³⁷ ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

The government has recently demonstrated its willingness to fight corruption and promote good governance. In April, Ouattara established a new ministry dedicated to the fight against corruption, which complements the **Haute Autorité pour la Gouvernance (HAG)** (higher governance authority) created in 2015.³⁸ Prime minister Patrick Achi reaffirmed the government's desire to fight corruption and promote good governance during his presentation of government action on 8 November.³⁹ However, it appears that pressure from France and the **United States (US)**, which both appealed to Ouattara to ensure greater transparency in the management of projects they have funded, might have contributed to the latest purge.⁴⁰ FER had received funding from the US-managed **Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)** since May 2019 and questions had arisen regarding FER's use of the funds.⁴¹ The **Direction Générale du Portefeuille de l'Etat (DGPE)** (General Directorate for State Portfolio), which falls under the budget ministry, had given clean audits for the state agencies and companies concerned.⁴²

The recent dismissals also demonstrate that Ouattara and the government are ready to set aside personal and political affiliations in carrying out the anti-corruption campaign.⁴³ Diaby was a protégé of late former prime minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly and is mayor and MP for **Samatiguila** district of **Denguéle**, the home region of President Ouattara's mother.⁴⁴ In addition, Diaby was the RHDG official in charge of the diaspora. Soro-Kipeya hails from **Tchologo**, Ouattara's home region, where his younger brother and current defence minister **Téné Birahima Ouattara** is regional president.

It is unlikely this will be the last set of dismissals. Sources indicate that at least 30 audits of state agencies and enterprises are currently underway.⁴⁵ The directors general of the **Société de Développement des Forêts (Sodefor)** (forestry development company) and **Sotra** (urban transport company) may also face dismissal; Sotra was one of 10 state firms that posted cumulative losses amounting to 56.6 billion FCFA (\$101.1m) during the 2020 financial year.⁴⁶

Côte d'Ivoire woos investors at Africa Oil Week

Petroleum and mines minister **Thomas Camara** led an Ivorian delegation to the **African Oil Week in Dubai (United Arab Emirates)** from 8-11 November, where he presented the investment opportunities available in Côte d'Ivoire's hydrocarbons and energy sectors, including those in the sedimentary basin.⁴⁷ Camara highlighted the country's attractive petroleum code, a favourable business climate and requisite public institutions such as the **Direction Générale des Hydrocarbures (DGH)** (general directorate for hydrocarbons) and state-owned **Société Nationale des Opérations Pétrolières (Petroci-Holdings)**.⁴⁸ Petroci head of mapping and promotion of oil blocks **Mireille Aka** and DGH director of hydrocarbon monitoring and regulation **Patrick Danho** presented 32 oil blocks available to investors.⁴⁹ In September, Camara announced the discovery by **Italy-based Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI)** of crude oil reserves estimated at 1.5 billion to 2 billion barrels located at the CI-101 offshore block in the **Whale** deposit (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire September 2021*).⁵⁰ This was Côte d'Ivoire's first oil discovery since 2001 and Camara says there will be similar discoveries in the future.⁵¹ ENI CEO **Claudio Descalzi**, during an audience

³⁸ DW, 8 Jul 2021

³⁹ APA, 8 Nov 2021

⁴⁰ Jeune Afrique, 16 Nov 2021

⁴¹ L'Infodrome.com, 12 Nov 2021

⁴² Jeune Afrique, 16 Nov 2021

⁴³ Abidjan-based African Development bank analyst

⁴⁴ Abidjan-based African Development bank analyst

⁴⁵ Koaci.com, 13 Nov 2021

⁴⁶ Sika Finance, 17 Jun 2021

⁴⁷ APA, 11 Nov 2021

⁴⁸ APA, 11 Nov 2021

⁴⁹ Afrik Presse, 12 Nov 2021

⁵⁰ APA, 1 Sep 2021

⁵¹ Afrik Presse, 12 Nov 2021

with Ouattara on 2 October, said production for the newly discovered oil deposits could begin in 2024.

Camara described Côte d'Ivoire's policy for production of different sources of electricity, which grant tax and customs exonerations to participating companies.⁵² Camara said Côte d'Ivoire aims to produce 1,492 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy from 2022-2030.⁵³ This includes 490 MW of solar, 691 MW of hydro and 311 (MW) of biomass energy.⁵⁴ Côte d'Ivoire plans to derive 42% of its energy mix from renewable sources by 2030.⁵⁵

Ouattara and his government are counting on the newfound oil to help improve the country's development prospects and make Côte d'Ivoire an energy hub in Africa.⁵⁶ However, Côte d'Ivoire must reconcile its development objectives with environmental protection.⁵⁷ At the **Conference of Parties to Climate Change (COP26)** in **Glasgow (United Kingdom, UK)**, environment and sustainable development minister **Jean-Luc Assi** said Côte d'Ivoire has set a target of reducing its greenhouse emissions by 30.41% by 2030 by promoting the use of renewable energy.⁵⁸

Côte d'Ivoire surpasses 4 million Covid-19 vaccine doses administered

Côte d'Ivoire has significantly ramped up its Covid-19 vaccination rollout, due in large part to the donation of vaccines by several donor nations. On 1 November, **The Netherlands** donated 355,200 doses of the UK-manufactured **AstraZeneca** vaccine,⁵⁹ while **Finland, Iceland** and **Spain** made a joint contribution of 423,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine on 3 November.⁶⁰ The **United States (US) Embassy** issued a communique on 11 November stating that the US had donated 1,173,510 doses of its **Pfizer** Covid vaccine through delivery of two consignments on 8 and 10 November.⁶¹ US ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire **Richard Bell** noted that the US has donated 2,727,270 vaccines to Côte d'Ivoire since August.⁶² The Ivorian government also announced on 3 November that it had purchased 346,800 doses of the **China**-manufactured **Sinopharm**.⁶³

Côte d'Ivoire has won praise for its vaccination campaign. **World Bank** regional director for human development in Africa, **Dena Ringold**, congratulated the government on the quality of its Covid-19 vaccination campaign strategy.⁶⁴ Health minister **Pierre Dimba** said his ministry had administered 4,213,463 vaccines as of 23 November.⁶⁵ The government intends to obtain a further 12 million Covid-19 vaccines doses by the end of the year and vaccinate 70% of its adult population.⁶⁶ Dimba encouraged all those above the age of 18 to get vaccinated, reminding the population that vaccination is voluntary and administered free of charge.⁶⁷

As of 26 November, Côte d'Ivoire had confirmed 61,665 cases of Covid-19 in its population of roughly 26 million, with 704 Covid-19-related deaths.⁶⁸

⁵² APA, 11 Nov 2021

⁵³ APA, 11 Nov 2021

⁵⁴ APA, 11 Nov 2021

⁵⁵ Koaci.com, 12 Nov 2021

⁵⁶ L'Infodrome.com, 12 Nov 2021

⁵⁷ ARC Côte d'Ivoire Analyst

⁵⁸ APA, 10 Nov 2021

⁵⁹ AIP, 2 Nov 2021

⁶⁰ AIP, 5 Nov 2021

⁶¹ Abidjan.net, 11 Nov 2021

⁶² Abidjan.net, 11 Nov 2021

⁶³ AIP, 3 Nov 2021

⁶⁴ AIP, 4 Nov 2021

⁶⁵ Abidjan.net, 26 Nov 2021

⁶⁶ AIP, 3 Nov 2021

⁶⁷ Abidjan.net, 26 Nov 2021

⁶⁸ Johns Hopkins University of Medicine Coronavirus Resource Centre, accessed 26 Nov 2021

Planner

17-19 Dec 2021 **Istanbul (Turkey)**. **Turkey-Africa Summit**

1-3 Dec 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** **Africa Investment Forum**

29-30 Nov 2021 Dakar (Senegal) **8th Edition of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)**

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

Chronology

23 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. President **Alassane Ouattara** announces the recruitment of 3000 soldiers in 2022, as the first phase of the 10,000 soldiers to be integrated in the army by 2024;

23 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. **Côte d'Ivoire** raises 49 billion FCFA (\$84.1m) on the **West African Economic Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market through a treasury bill issue;

22 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. State-owned **Air Côte d'Ivoire** denies reports that an Airbus A319 type aircraft belonging to the firm was seized at the **Aéroport international de Bamako (Mali)** based on a verdict delivered by the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice**;

22 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. **Australia**-based miner **Tietto Minerals** announces that its **Abujar** gold project is fully funded after receiving binding commitments for a two-tranche equity placement to raise AU\$85m (\$61.69m) on the **Australian Stock Exchange (ASX)**;

20 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The **African Development Bank (AfDB)** has approved a 19.82 billion FCFA (\$33.9m) loan to the Ivorian government, to be allocated towards ensuring that vulnerable segments of the population have access to basic social infrastructure;

18 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** president **Ibrahime Coulibaly-Kuibiart** announces that voter register revision will take place in 2022;

17 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AIP*. **AfriEximbank** announces Côte d'Ivoire will host the third edition of the **Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2023)**, scheduled for 2023;

15 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Youth minister **Mamadou Touré** announces that the government will allocate 460 billion FCFA (\$797.3m) from 2021-2025 towards professional integration initiatives focused on youth

13 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** holds its first congress since the resignation of the party's founder, former president **Laurent Gbagbo**;

11 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Lanciné Diaby** is removed as director general of the **Fonds d'Entretien Routier (FER)** (road management fund), which had confirmed debt of 208.4 billion FCFA (\$361.3m) at the end of 2020;

11 Nov 2021 **Dubai (United Arab Emirates)** *APA*. Mines, energy and petroleum minister **Thomas Camara** confirms the **Ivorian** government's desire to sell 32 oil blocks, during a meeting with potential investors at the **Africa Oil Week**, which took place from 8-11 November in **Dubai**;

11 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The **United States (US)** donates 1,173,510 doses of the US-manufactured **Pfizer Covid-19** vaccine to Côte d'Ivoire;

11 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Justice minister **Sansan Kambilé** refutes rumours that the government intends to legalise homosexuality, after its amendment of article 226 of the **Code Penale**, which now recognises discrimination based on sexual orientation;

10 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. The government has approved a loan of 8.53 billion FCFA (\$14.7m) contracted with the **Banque d'Investissement et de Développement de la Cedeao (BIDC) (ECOWAS Investment and Development Bank)** for the acquisition of two aircrafts for the security of the territory;

8 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** denies allegations contained in the **Pandora Papers** that he established an offshore company registered in **The Bahamas, Allstar Consultancy Services Limited**, while he was a member of cabinet;

8 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. A collective of 264 small and medium-sized businesses claims the Ivorian state owes it €300m (\$347.7m) for road maintenance work carried out since 2018;

8 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** announces the recommencement of the national political dialogue established after the 2020 post-electoral crisis in which an estimated 85 people died in election-related violence;

7 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *FratMat.info*. Côte d'Ivoire and **Nigeria** sign nine bilateral agreements and a military protocol during the second Nigeria-Côte d'Ivoire mixed commission, which took place from 4-6 November in **Abidjan**;

5 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. President **Alassane Ouattara** expresses interest during a session of the **Conseil National de Sécurité (CNS)** (national security council) in Côte d'Ivoire producing a **Covid-19** vaccine;

4 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. The council of ministers has adopted the amended financial law, which increases the 2021 budget from \$14.8 billion to \$16 billion;

2 Nov 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. **United States**-based agro-industrial giant **Cargill** officially commissions the increase in its cocoa transformation capacity at its **Yopougon** (Abidjan) plant from 110,000 to 160,000 tonnes, involving a 56 billion FCFA (\$98.9m) investment;

28 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Opposition **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** MP and former minister **Jean-Louis Billon** reiterates that he will stand as a candidate in the 2025 presidential elections;

27 Oct 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. Côte d'Ivoire has raised 49 billion FCFA (\$86.7m) on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market, through the issue of a *bon de soutien de resilience* (support and resilience bond);

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