

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Côte d'Ivoire Monthly Briefing January 2022

Côte d'Ivoire Summary 26 January 2022

State prosecutor Richard Adou presents findings of the report on the 2020 presidential electoral violence, which blames several prominent opposition figures, including former president Henri Konan Bédié (1993-1999), for instigating the events. President Alassane Ouattara (2010-present) outlines the government's priorities for 2022 in his New Year's Eve address. Prime minister Patrick Achi launches a \$55.1m anti-terrorism plan in the country's northeast regions. Côte d'Ivoire inaugurates the 45 billion FCFA (\$77.5m) Iveco Daily Ivoire vehicle assembly plant in the Koumassi district of Abidjan, which state-owned urban transport firm Société des Transports d'Abidjan (SOTRA) will operate. Côte d'Ivoire experiences a significant rise in Covid-19 cases due to the confirmed presence of the omicron variant and the influx of international travellers during the holiday period.

State prosecutor releases 2020 election violence report...

State prosecutor **Richard Adou** has presented the findings of a report on the violent attacks surrounding the 2020 presidential election.¹ The report alleges that several prominent opposition figures, including former president **Henri Konan Bédié** (1993-1999), share responsibility for the election-related violence that led to the deaths of 85 people and injured an estimated 500 others.² Adou has pledged that all those cited in the report for their roles in the events will be prosecuted.³ The publication of the report has raised concerns that it may lead to an opposition boycott of the fifth phase of the government-coordinated dialogue with the opposition and civil society.⁴

During a 26 December press conference, Adou presented the report compiled by **Unité Spéciale d'Enquête sur les violences liées à la présidentielle de 2020** (special investigative unit on violence related to 2020 presidential elections).⁵ President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present) created the investigative unit, which falls under the national police and gendarmerie, on 25 November 2020, following the election-related violence from August-November.⁶

The climax of these events was the creation of a parallel opposition platform, the **Conseil National de Transition** (CNT) (national transition council), headed by Bédié. The CNT refused to acknowledge the election results, which resulted in further violence and arrests (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire Nov 2020*).⁷ Violence erupted in **Abidjan** and localities across eight regions, including **Sud-Comoé (Bonoua)**, **Grands Ponts (Dabou)**, **Lôh-Djiboua (Divo)**, **Iffou (Daoukro)**, **Moronou (Bonvounou, M'Batto)**, **Béliér (Toumodi)**, **Lacs (Yamoussoukro)** and **Indenié-Djuablin (Abengourou, Niablé)**.⁸ The report noted that 233 persons were involved in varying degrees of violence, while security authorities are searching for 40 individuals due to their direct participation.⁹

Adou noted that the majority of those arrested have been released on bail, including **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** president **Pascal Affi N'Guessan** and **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)**

¹ APA, 27 Dec 2021

² APA, 27 Dec 2021

³ APA, 27 Dec 2021

⁴ ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

⁵ APA, 27 Dec 2021

⁶ APA, 27 Dec 2021

⁷ RFI, 2 Nov 2020

⁸ APA, 27 Dec 2021

⁹ Abidjan.net, 27 Dec 2021

executive secretary **Maurice Kakou Guikahué**.¹⁰ However, 11 people remain in preventive detention for their alleged involvement in the most serious crimes, including the beheading of an individual in the locality of **Daoukro**.¹¹

According to the report, several prominent opposition members manipulated youths and used ethnic, religious and political affiliations to foster violence while serving as financiers of the events.¹² The report also mentions the involvement of the following high-level figures:

- Former prime minister and **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Soro**;
- **Union pour la Démocratie et pour la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire** (UDPCI) president **Abdallah Toikeusse Mabri**;
- **Parti des Peuples Africains-Côte d'Ivoire** (PPA-CI) political strategy council president **Assoa Adou**; and
- Former first lady **Simone Gbagbo**.¹³

The state prosecutor promised that all individuals mentioned in the report would be judged before a court of law, regardless of their status.¹⁴ Adou said Bedié would not be protected by the 2005 law on the status of former heads of states, which would normally grant him immunity from prosecution.¹⁵ Adou suggested that the timing of the report's release was a mere coincidence and had no link with the resumption of the government-coordinated political dialogue.¹⁶

The PDCI responded swiftly on 29 December, blaming President Ouattara's decision to pursue a third presidential term as the main cause of the violence, which resulted in the arrest of several PDCI members.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the PDCI reaffirmed its desire to participate in the political dialogue despite its opposition to the contents of the report, claiming that the dialogue will "*erase all seeds of conflict*".¹⁸ The PDCI communique reiterated Bedié's contribution to the climate of peace and stability prevailing in Côte d'Ivoire through his November 2020 meeting with President Ouattara.¹⁹

The timing of the release of the electoral violence report could be considered inopportune.²⁰ Analysts speculate that the possibility of legal action against opposition leaders may result in the opposition boycotting the proceedings.²¹ Adou is regarded as a hard-line figure in the Ivorian judiciary; he is well-known for issuing Soro's arrest warrant in December 2019, which has kept him in exile ever since (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire Jan 2020*).²² The Ivorian judiciary has been accused of being weaponised by the government against its opponents during both the Gbagbo presidency and during Ouattara's term in office.²³ Although Ouattara has denied such allegations in the past, such a politically sensitive move could not have been carried out without authorisation from the highest echelons of power.²⁴

However, it is unlikely that the government will arrest any prominent opposition leaders cited in the report, given the likelihood that this could lead to violence.²⁵ Nonetheless, Ouattara could leverage the threat of prosecution against opposition leaders participating in the dialogue, to moderate their

¹⁰ Abidjan.net, 27 Dec 2021

¹¹ Abidjan.net, 27 Dec 2021

¹² 7info.ci, 28 Dec 2021

¹³ 7info.ci, 28 Dec 2021

¹⁴ RFI, 27 Dec 2021

¹⁵ RFI, 27 Dec 2021

¹⁶ RFI, 27 Dec 2021

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 29 Dec 2021

¹⁸ Jeune Afrique, 29 Dec 2021

¹⁹ Jeune Afrique, 29 Dec 2021

²⁰ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

²¹ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

²² ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

²³ DW, 29 Dec 2021

²⁴ DW, 29 Dec 2021

²⁵ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

demands, particularly with respect to granting amnesty, the release of political prisoners and the return of exiles.²⁶

... as political dialogue resumes

Following a council of minister's session on 15 January, government spokesperson and communications minister **Ally Coulibaly** announced that the government-led political dialogue would resume on 20 January.²⁷ The previous session was suspended in December to allow the participants time to confirm the topics for discussion.²⁸ Prime minister **Patrick Achi** chaired the first meeting upon resumption of the dialogue on 20 January. The agenda focussed on themes related to the organisation of the 2023 local elections, such as the easing of the socio-political environment, reconciliation, new electoral lists, a new **Commission Électorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) and electoral code reform.²⁹

In his traditional New Year's Eve address to the nation, President Ouattara made little reference to national reconciliation and social cohesion,³⁰ causing the PDCI and PPA-CI to issue a joint statement on 5 January questioning the government's sincerity in promising non-violent political participation.³¹ The PDCI and PPA-CI expressed concern about the government's willingness to properly conduct the dialogue, but reiterated their intention to participate.³² The ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** responded to these allegations on 6 January through party spokesperson and agriculture minister **Kobenan Kouassi Adjoumani** and executive secretary **Adama Bictogo**.³³ The RHDP representatives expressed surprise at the PDCI and PPA-CI declaration, reminding the public that the dialogue was in its fifth phase and that Achi was the third prime minister to coordinate these proceedings.³⁴ Adjoumani said there had been noteworthy progress in unfreezing assets, the return of exiles, granting of amnesty, victim compensation, and reform of the electoral code and the CEI. Adjoumani said high-level meetings between Ouattara, Bedié and former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010) would serve as a platform to help restore confidence between the government, opposition and civil society.³⁵

Ouattara delivers state of the nation address...

In his New Year's address on 31 December, President Ouattara acknowledged the significant progress made in 2021, giving particular focus to peace and stability which, he said, had been consolidated through the participation of all political parties during the March 2021 legislative elections. Ouattara reaffirmed his commitment to pursuing constructive dialogue to help to calm the political climate, and promised to increase the strength of Côte d'Ivoire's defence and security apparatus to better address terrorism and other security threats.³⁶

Ouattara said he aims to consolidate the achievements attained in the past 10 years by accelerating Côte d'Ivoire's structural economic transformation, by continuing to increase investment in socio-economic infrastructure. Ouattara promised to increase infrastructure investment in **Greater Abidjan** and to ensure rural areas are connected with regional capitals, and that all department capitals have paved roads. Ouattara pledged the construction of eight interchanges in Abidjan and the start of work on the **San Pedro-Abidjan** motorway, amongst other projects. The president also declared that all localities would have access to electricity by 2025, noting that 205,000 households were connected to grid electricity in 2021, raising the overall number to 1,230,000 households.

²⁶ ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

²⁷ RFI, 15 Jan 2022

²⁸ APA, 19 Jan 2022

²⁹ RFI, 20 Jan 2022

³⁰ 7info.ci, 5 Jan 2022

³¹ 7info.ci, 5 Jan 2022

³² 7info.ci, 5 Jan 2022

³³ Koaci.com, 6 Jan 2022

³⁴ Koaci.com, 6 Jan 2022

³⁵ Koaci.com, 6 Jan 2022

³⁶ FratMat.info, 31 Dec 2021

Ouattara also pledged to increase access to water, currently at 80% in urban areas and 70% in rural zones.

Ouattara highlighted Côte d'Ivoire's positive economic growth trajectory, stating that the country had improved its gross domestic product (GDP) growth from 2% in 2020 to 6.5% in 2021, and projected that growth would see a further rise to 7% in 2022. To build on this foundation, government action will prioritise three policy areas in 2022.³⁷ Firstly, modernisation of agriculture and increased agriculture processing activities aim to boost economic transformation and improve industrial capacity. This will be accompanied by the implementation of the **PSGouv2** initiative, which will serve as a social-spending programme to support the fight against poverty and inequality. The 3,182.4 billion FCFA (\$5.479 billion) programme will run from 2022-2024.³⁸

The second area of focus is the employment of women and youth. Ouattara suggested that the private sector will play a large role in job creation through the establishment of programmes to support and finance small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as start-ups created by youths. Ouattara hopes that national champions will be fostered through the oil and gas sector. Training opportunities will be made available in 2022 to unemployed graduates alongside youths without qualifications to ensure their integration into the job market. The 25 billion FCFA (\$43m) **Fonds d'appui aux Femmes de Côte d'Ivoire** (assistance fund for women of Côte d'Ivoire), initiated by first lady **Dominique Ouattara**, aims to assist 300,000 women.³⁹

Finally, Ouattara said his government will continue to lead the fight against corruption and promote good governance, ending his speech by announcing the release of 2,500 prisoners, who were detained for petty crimes.⁴⁰ Although he provided details about planned infrastructure projects and socio-economic programmes, he was less clear about how he plans to continue the fight against corruption.⁴¹ However, the ongoing **Opération Mains Propres** anti-corruption campaign could see further acceleration in 2022.⁴²

... and PM launches anti-terrorism plan

Prime minister Patrick Achi visited the northeast localities of **Tougba, Kafolo** and **Kong** on 22 January to launch the **Programme spécial d'insertion des jeunes des régions frontalières des pays en proie au terrorisme** (special programme for the integration of young people from border regions of countries plagued by terrorism).⁴³ The programme, which is part of the PSGouv2 initiative, aims to discourage youths from the northern regions of **Bagoué, Bounkani, Folon, Kabadougou, Poro** and **Tchologo** from joining extremist groups that operate in this part of Côte d'Ivoire.⁴⁴

The programme will run from 2022-2024 and has a total budget of 32 billion FCFA (\$55.1m).⁴⁵ For 2022, the budget has been set at 8.6 billion FCFA (\$14.8m), with the Ivorian state contributing 6.6 billion FCFA (\$11.3m).⁴⁶ The remaining 1.8 billion FCFA (\$3m) will come from **Contrat de Désendettement et de Développement (C2D)** (debt reduction and development contract) funds provided by the **Agence Française de Développement (AFD)** (French development agency).⁴⁷

The northeast border regions with **Burkina Faso** have become increasingly vulnerable to extremist group attacks and recruitment, especially after the June 2020 attack on the Kafolo by the **Al-Qaeda**-affiliated **Katiba Macina** group (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire June 2020*). The government aims to

³⁷ FratMat.info, 31 Dec 2021

³⁸ FratMat.info, 31 Dec 2021

³⁹ FratMat.info, 31 Dec 2021

⁴⁰ FratMat.info, 31 Dec 2021

⁴¹ ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

⁴² ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

⁴³ Jeune Afrique, 22 Jan 2022

⁴⁴ Sika Finance, 22 Jan 2022

⁴⁵ Jeune Afrique, 22 Jan 2022

⁴⁶ Jeune Afrique, 22 Jan 2022

⁴⁷ Sika Finance, 22 Jan 2022

complement its military approach with development efforts, aiming to provide 19,812 youths with professional opportunities.⁴⁸ The **European Union (EU)** and **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** have expressed their desire to support this plan of action.⁴⁹

Côte d'Ivoire inaugurates first automobile assembly plant

Prime minister Patrick Achi commissioned the **Iveco Daily Ivoire** vehicle assembly plant in Abidjan's **Koumassi** district on 10 January.⁵⁰ Achi said the assembly plant will help Côte d'Ivoire to become a logistics and industrial hub in the region.⁵¹ The factory was built by **French-Italian** firm **Iveco**, which has a 40% stake in the 45 billion FCFA (\$77.5m) plant.⁵² The agreement to build the factory was signed in January 2018 and construction commenced in August 2019.⁵³

Transport minister **Amadou Koné** said the plant is part of President Ouattara's plan to modernise the transport sector and develop the country's manufacturing industry.⁵⁴ State-owned urban transport firm **Société des Transports d'Abidjan (SOTRA)** will operate the factory, which aims to produce 500 minibuses in its first year of operation, and 1,000 per year by the third year. The factory will employ 500 people initially, and 1,500 in the long term. The minibuses produced will supply the local market and also exported to **West, Central** and **East Africa**.⁵⁵

The Iveco Daily Ivoire plant is the not the only automobile assembly plant set to operate in Cote d'Ivoire. In August 2019, the government signed an agreement with **Japan**-based automotive and industrial group **Toyota** to build a vehicle assembly plant in Cote d'Ivoire on the side lines of the **Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)** (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire Sep 2019*).⁵⁶ While the Toyota project has yet to materialise, Koné suggested that by 2025, an industrial zone will be set up at **San Pedro**, aiming to host multiple car manufacturers.⁵⁷ The newly established **Akoupé-Zeudji** industrial zone outside of Abidjan could also serve as a location for these activities.⁵⁸

Covid-19 infections spike

Côte d'Ivoire saw its highest spike in Covid-19 cases in December since the virus was first detected in March 2020.⁵⁹ The **Conseil Nationale de Sécurité (CNS)** confirmed 1,578 new cases on 30 December, a record daily figure.⁶⁰ The CNS noted that 9,274 cases were registered in December, compared to 427 in November, with a noteworthy increase from 21 December.⁶¹ The influx of overseas-based Ivorians, returning home for the December holidays, may have been a major contributor to the higher rate of infection.⁶² However, **Institut Pasteur d'Abidjan** director general **Dosso Mireille** confirmed on 4 January that the omicron variant had been detected in Côte d'Ivoire and was possibly the cause of the high number of Covid infections.⁶³ As of 24 January, Côte d'Ivoire has recorded 80,363 cases of Covid-19 in its population of roughly 26 million, with 77,067 recoveries and 782 Covid-19-related deaths.

⁴⁸ Jeune Afrique, 14 Dec 2021

⁴⁹ Sika Finance, 22 Jan 2022

⁵⁰ Abidjan.net, 10 Jan 2022

⁵¹ Abidjan.net, 10 Jan 2022

⁵² Jeune Afrique, 11 Jan 2022

⁵³ La Tribune Afrique, 4 Aug 2019

⁵⁴ Afrique-sur7.ci, 10 Jan 2022

⁵⁵ Abidjan.net, 10 Jan 2022

⁵⁶ Reuters, 29 Aug 2019

⁵⁷ L'infodrome, 10 Jan 2022

⁵⁸ Jeune Afrique, 11 Jan 2022

⁵⁹ ARC Côte d'Ivoire Analyst

⁶⁰ RFI, 31 Dec 2021

⁶¹ AIP, 14 Jan 2022

⁶² Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

⁶³ AIP, 5 Jan 2022

Ivorian health authorities have initiated compulsory Covid-19 tests for travellers arriving at the country's airports.⁶⁴ At a CNS meeting on 13 January, President Ouattara instructed health minister **Pierre Dimba** to ensure that 70% of the population is vaccinated against Covid-19 by the end of 2022.⁶⁵ The government has acquired 16.5 million vaccine doses, sufficient to vaccinate the population throughout 2022.⁶⁶ The CNS expressed satisfaction with the pace of the nationwide vaccine rollout. As of 24 January, 7,938,788 million doses had been administered.⁶⁷

Planner

16-18 Feb 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** 7th World Cashew Convention (WCC)
 2023 **(Côte d'Ivoire)** Local elections
 2025 **(Côte d'Ivoire)** Presidential elections

Chronology

24 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** launches the construction of seven technical and vocational education centres across the country, which will cost 146.5 billion FCFA (\$252.5m);

22 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** launches an 8.6 billion FCFA (\$14.8m) support plan for vulnerable youths resident in areas affected by terrorist activity in northern Côte d'Ivoire;

21 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The Ivorian state has obtained 19.9 billion FCFA (\$34.3m) from the **African Development Bank (AfDB)**, which it will use to improve household living conditions;

20 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The fifth phase of the government-coordinated dialogue with the opposition resumes;

17 Jan 2022 **(West Africa)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Toronto (Canada)**-listed **Endeavour Mining**, announces discovery of 3 million ounces of measured and indicated mineral resources and 0.9 million ounces of inferred resources in 2021 at its **Tty (Côte d'Ivoire)**, **Fetekro (Côte d'Ivoire)**, **Houndé (Burkina Faso)** and **Sabodala-Massawa (Senegal)** projects;

17 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. President **Alassane Ouattara** undertakes a friendly visit to **Gabon**, where he is set to meet President **Ali Bongo Ondimba**;

13 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The health ministry says Côte d'Ivoire registered 9,274 Covid-19 cases in December, compared to 427 in November, attributing the increase to the presence of the Omicron variant of Covid-19;

13 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The interior and security ministry announces that the fifth session of the government-coordinated political dialogue with political parties and civil society organisations will resume on 20 January;

12 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. Côte d'Ivoire has raised 66 billion FCFA (\$114.7m) through a treasury bond issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

11 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Côte d'Ivoire has launched its first minibus assembly line, the **Daily Ivoire** factory, located in the Abidjan commune of **Koumassi**, with

⁶⁴ RFI, 31 Dec 2021

⁶⁵ AIP, 14 Jan 2022

⁶⁶ AIP, 14 Jan 2022

⁶⁷ AIP, 25 Jan 2022

annual production capacity of 1,000 minibuses and to be operated by state-owned urban transport firm **Société des Transports d'Abidjan (SOTRA)**;

6 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The government plans to borrow 2,215 billion FCFA (\$3.8 billion) from financial markets in order to finance its 2022 budget deficit;

6 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** has accused the **opposition Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** and the **Parti des Peuples Africains-Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI)** of using the ongoing political dialogue as an avenue to avoid possible prosecution for alleged involvement in the 2020 presidential electoral period violence;

3 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The amount of 13 billion FCFA (\$22.m) will be allocated towards the construction of the **Marché Gourou** food market in the Abidjan commune of **Adjamé**, which will host an estimated 3,500 traders;

1 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. President **Alassane Ouattara** says in his traditional end of year speech that the government will prioritise transformation of the economy, employment of young people and women, good governance and the fight against corruption in 2022;

1 Jan 2022 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. President **Alassane Ouattara** says government will allocate 3,182.4 billion FCFA (\$5.479 billion) towards the **PSGouv** programme, from 2022-2024, which aims to reduce poverty and inequality in the country;

31 Dec 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. President **Alassane Ouattara** confirms the release of 2,500 prisoners and individuals held in detention;

30 Dec 2021 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan Net*. **Association des exportateurs de cajou de Côte d'Ivoire (AEC-CI)** (association of cashew exporters) deputy secretary general **Issa Traoré** announces that Abidjan will host the 7th **World Cashew Convention (WCC)** on 16-18 February;

27 Dec 2021 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. State prosecutor **Richard Adou** presents findings related to the 2020 presidential electoral violence, which accuses opposition leaders including **Pascal Affi N'guessan**, **Simone Gbagbo**, **Maurice Kakou Guikahué**, **Assoa Adou**, **Toikeusse Mabri**, **Guillaume Soro** and former president **Henri Konan Bédié** of instigating the violence that led to an estimated 85 deaths, and calls for their prosecution;

24 Dec 2021 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *France24*. **French** far-right presidential candidate **Eric Zemmour** undertakes visit to meet French community in Abidjan;

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