

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Côte d'Ivoire Briefing October 2020

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#### Côte d'Ivoire Summary 24 October 2020

*President Alassane Ouattara (2010-present) assures local stakeholders and the international community that Côte d'Ivoire's 31 October presidential elections will go ahead as scheduled and without violence. Leading opposition parties have called for a boycott of elections due to government's failure to respond to their demands for electoral reform. The government-initiated dialogue and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)-led preventive diplomacy mission have both failed to ease tensions amidst increasing acts of violence in the lead-up to the elections. The council of ministers adopts the 2021 draft budget of 8,621.1 billion FCFA (\$15.5 billion), a 6.9% increase over 2020. Construction begins on the second terminal at the Port Autonome d'Abidjan (PAD) (autonomous port of Abidjan). The 596 billion FCFA (\$1,077 billion) project aims to position the port as the region's largest in terms of traffic.*

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#### Opposition calls for election boycott ...

Violence and uncertainty have dominated the build-up to Côte d'Ivoire's 31 October election. The opposition has scaled up its civil disobedience campaign and called for an outright boycott of the election.<sup>1</sup> However, the ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** and its candidate, President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present), insist on holding elections as scheduled. International mediation attempts have so far failed to break the stalemate between both sides, although the government's recent willingness to address some opposition demands may reduce tensions.

The hard-line opposition is led by **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** presidential candidate and former president **Henri Konan Bédié** (1993-1999), and opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** presidential candidate and former prime minister **Pascal Affi N'Guessan**. Affi N'Guessan announced on 24 September that he was joining the civil disobedience movement that Bédié had announced a few days earlier.<sup>2</sup> The leaders cited their motivation for civil disobedience as the ruling coalition's failure to comply with several demands, including:

- President Ouattara's withdrawal from the presidential race;
- Reforming the composition of the **Conseil Constitutionnel** (Constitutional Court) and **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission);
- Revising the electoral list and electoral code;
- Release of all political and military prisoners;
- Return of political exiles from abroad.<sup>3</sup>

The two leaders called on their supporters not to participate in election-related activities such as the collection of voter cards.<sup>4</sup> On 10 October, the PDCI, in tandem with other opposition parties aligned with the civil disobedience campaign, organised a political rally at the **Stade Félix Houphouët-Boigny** in **Abidjan** to demonstrate public support for their action.<sup>5</sup> An estimated 30,000 people

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<sup>1</sup> Jeune Afrique, 15 Oct 2020

<sup>2</sup> RFI, 24 Sep 2020

<sup>3</sup> RFI, 24 Sep 2020

<sup>4</sup> RFI, 24 Sep 2020

<sup>5</sup> France 24, 11 Oct 2020

attended, including opposition coalition leaders **Abdallah Albert Mabri Toikeusse** of the **Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI)**, former foreign affairs minister **Marcel Amon Tanoh**, and opposition **Lider** party president **Mamadou Coulibaly**.<sup>6</sup> The Constitutional Court rejected the presidential candidatures of Mabri Toikeusse, Tanoh and Coulibaly, as well as that of former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010).<sup>7</sup>

Bédié called on **United Nations (UN)** secretary general **Antonio Guterres** to intervene and prevent President Ouattara from pursuing a third presidential term, and to ask Ivorian officials to reform the various electoral institutions.<sup>8</sup> Opposition leaders accused the government and security forces of preventing opposition supporters from attending the rally and using juvenile delinquents known as “*microbes*” to harass them.<sup>9</sup>

During a 15 October press conference, Bédié and N’Guessan declared they were officially boycotting the electoral process.<sup>10</sup> N’Guessan instructed opposition supporters not to collect their voter cards or participate in any campaigns, and to ensure that President Ouattara does not undertake a third term.<sup>11</sup> N’Guessan described the boycott as the “*active phase*” of the civil disobedience plan, due to the government’s refusal to address opposition grievances related to electoral institutional reform, the withdrawal of Ouattara’s candidature and the validation of the presidential candidatures of Gbagbo and exiled former **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Soro**.<sup>12</sup>

### ... as political violence increases ..

A notable spike in politically motivated violence followed the start of electoral campaigns. Clashes erupted on 16 October in the locality of **Bongouanou**, N’Guessan’s hometown and the capital of the **Moronou** region (Centre), where N’Guessan is regional council president.<sup>13</sup> Two people died in the clashes and N’Guessan’s residence was set on fire.<sup>14</sup> Further violence broke out in the locality of **Dabou** (Southeast) on 21 October, resulting in an estimated seven deaths.<sup>15</sup> Violent incidents also saw the destruction and vandalism of local CEI offices in **Bonoua** (West), **Bongolo** (West) and **Kpèbo** (Centre).<sup>16</sup> President Ouattara’s decision to run for a potential third term led to a wave of violence in August and September during which 14 people died.<sup>17</sup> The government imposed a ban on protests in August, which helped to contain the violence.<sup>18</sup>

The politically motivated violence has ethnic undertones. Inter-communal clashes have taken place between indigenous residents who purportedly support opposition groups, and migrant **Dioula** and **Malinké**, who are traditionally aligned to the ruling RHPD. The conflict stems from longstanding grievances between these groups, although there is palpable frustration at Ouattara’s attempts to retain power.

Abidjan-based thinktank **Centre de Recherche et de Formation sur le Développement Intégré (CREFDI)** and pollster **Afrobarometer** released results of a survey in July, reporting that:

- 40% (4 out of 10) of Ivorians believe the elections will not be peaceful;
- 40% of Ivorians do not believe that membership of the CEI is consensual;

<sup>6</sup> France 24, 11 Oct 2020

<sup>7</sup> France 24, 11 Oct 2020

<sup>8</sup> France 24, 11 Oct 2020

<sup>9</sup> Koaci.com, 10 Oct 2020

<sup>10</sup> Jeune Afrique, 15 Oct 2020

<sup>11</sup> Jeune Afrique, 15 Oct 2020

<sup>12</sup> BBC Afrique, 15 Oct 2020

<sup>13</sup> Al Jazeera, 17 Oct 2020

<sup>14</sup> Al Jazeera, 17 Oct 2020

<sup>15</sup> Koaci.com, 21 Oct 2020

<sup>16</sup> Koaci.com, 19 Oct 2020

<sup>17</sup> International Crisis Group, 29 Sep 2020

<sup>18</sup> International Crisis Group, 29 Sep 2020

- 61% of Ivorians have no or very little confidence in the CEI's independence;
- 83% of Ivorians agree that competition between political parties is usually or always a source of conflict.<sup>19</sup>

The violence from August until now has been concentrated in areas with strong opposition support or those with direct ties to leading opposition figures:

- Bonoua – Simone Gbagbo (former first lady) hometown;
- Bongouanou – Affi N'Guessan's hometown;
- **Daoukro** – Konan Bédié's hometown;
- **Gagnoa** – Laurent Gbagbo's hometown.

The potential for large-scale violence is significantly lower compared to the 2010 presidential race, largely due to the absence of organised armed groups, the significantly polarised political climate, and the noteworthy absence of Soro, Gbagbo and **Charles Blé Goudé**, president of the FPI-aligned **Congrès des jeunes patriotes (COJEP)**.<sup>20</sup> However, towns such as **Lakota, Boulo, Bingerville, Grand Bassam** and **Port-Bouet**, which saw violence that led to a five deaths during the 2018 local elections,<sup>21</sup> are also potential flashpoints.<sup>22</sup> The working class Abidjan communes of **Youpougon**, which is historically aligned to the FPI, and **Abobo**, which is pro-RDR, are similarly at risk for violence.<sup>23</sup>

A potential source of violence are the “*microbes*”, which security forces have reportedly used to break up opposition protests,<sup>24</sup> and “*casseurs*”, urban juvenile delinquents with no known affiliation, but who have been used to carry out politically-oriented violence in the past.

President Ouattara and the RHDP have been largely dismissive of the opposition's civil disobedience campaign. During a head to head with **France's** President **Emmanuel Macron** (2017-present) in September, Ouattara provided assurances that there would not be a repeat of violence, accusing Simone Gbagbo and Bédié of orchestrating the August violence (see *ARC Briefing Cote d'Ivoire September 2020*).<sup>25</sup> Ouattara also assured an **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, the **African Union (AU)** and **United Nations (UN)** tripartite delegation that elections would be held in a peaceful manner.<sup>26</sup> During an 8 October visit to Cote d'Ivoire's third largest city, **Korhogo**, hometown of late former prime minister **Amadou Gon Coulibaly**, Ouattara encouraged his supporters to vote “*massively*”<sup>27</sup> and told traditional leaders that the elections would not be postponed to avoid a constitutional violation.<sup>28</sup>

### ... and the international community attempts to establish a rapprochement ...

International stakeholders have expressed significant concern about the political impasse in Côte d'Ivoire. ECOWAS has been at the forefront of attempts to broker an appeasement of tensions between the ruling coalition and the opposition. An ECOWAS-led tripartite preventive diplomacy mission took place from 4 to 7 October, led by **Ghana's** foreign minister, **Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey**.<sup>29</sup> ECOWAS commission chairman **Jean Claude Brou**, a former Ouattara adviser and cabinet minister, was excluded from the delegation.<sup>30</sup> President Ouattara was initially unenthusiastic

<sup>19</sup> CREFDI/Afrobarometer, July 2020

<sup>20</sup> Abidjan-based CREFDI analyst

<sup>21</sup> FratMat.info, 19 Oct 2018

<sup>22</sup> Abidjan-based CREFDI analyst

<sup>23</sup> Abidjan-based CREFDI analyst

<sup>24</sup> International Crisis Group, 29 Sep 2020

<sup>25</sup> RFI, 5 Sep 2020

<sup>26</sup> Koaci.com, 7 Oct 2020

<sup>27</sup> Koaci.com, 8 Oct 2020

<sup>28</sup> FratMat.info, 10 Oct 2020

<sup>29</sup> Koaci.com, 5 Oct 2020

<sup>30</sup> Jeune Afrique, 9 Oct 2020

about international mediation efforts, but agreed to accept the tripartite mission, as it was led by ECOWAS.<sup>31</sup>

Ghana's President **Nana Akufo Addo** (2016-present), in his capacity as ECOWAS president, has led the mediation efforts, receiving Bédié during his trip to Ghana from 12-13 October.<sup>32</sup> The meeting resulted in the establishment of direct contact between Bédié and Ouattara for the first time in several months. ECOWAS heads of states have increased their involvement in the stalemate between Bédié and Ouattara. **Senegal's** President **Macky Sall** (2012-present), **Niger's** President **Mahamadou Issoufou** (2011-present) and Togo's President **Faure Gnassingbé** (2005-present) have also contacted Bédié.<sup>33</sup> A second ECOWAS-led delegation arrived in Abidjan on 18 October, which encouraged all opposition parties to participate in the government-organised political dialogue.<sup>34</sup>

The ECOWAS mediation efforts appear to have borne fruit. Under ECOWAS supervision, the government has agreed to include an additional opposition member to the CEI and local CEI bureaus, and to appoint a PDCI member as CEI vice president.<sup>35</sup> The government also expressed its willingness to host a meeting between President Ouattara and Bédié in an attempt to reduce tensions ahead of the 31 October elections.<sup>36</sup> The FPI and PDCI have continued to reject the government's proposition to join the talks.<sup>37</sup>

France has not made any declarations with respect to the current situation in Côte d'Ivoire. French foreign affairs minister **Jean-Yves Le Drian**, while appearing before the French National Assembly foreign affairs committee, said on 7 October that commenting on and taking a position on President Ouattara's pursuit of a third presidential term would amount to "*meddling*" in Côte d'Ivoire's domestic affairs.<sup>38</sup> France's public "*hands off approach*" with respect to Côte d'Ivoire is in contrast to its active involvement during **Guinea** and **Mali's** political crises.<sup>39</sup> The **Elysée** (French presidency) reportedly wants a postponement of the elections,<sup>40</sup> but is likely to let ECOWAS take the lead in coordinating negotiation efforts.

### ... as Ouattara focuses on a third term

To kick off his re-election campaign, Ouattara hosted a "*Strategic Council*" meeting at his residence on 13 October, comprising 45 ministers and 55 members of the RHDP, to outline the ruling coalition's electoral strategy.<sup>41</sup> Ouattara officially launched his campaign on 16 October, in Côte d'Ivoire's second largest city, **Bouaké**.<sup>42</sup> Ouattara has delegated his campaign coordination to prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** and presidency secretary general **Patrick Achi** with plans to organise another 'mega-meeting' on 29 October at Abobo (Abidjan).<sup>43</sup>

Despite the confidence the government has displayed since the start of the electoral period, there appears to be growing concern about the opposition's increasingly hard-line stance as well as the rising violence. Bakayoko announced on 17 October that the government had initiated dialogue with opposition parties in a bid to reduce tensions with the ruling coalition.<sup>44</sup> However, the leading

<sup>31</sup> Jeune Afrique, 9 Oct 2020

<sup>32</sup> Jeune Afrique, 15 Oct 2020

<sup>33</sup> Jeune Afrique, 15 Oct 2020

<sup>34</sup> Abidjan.net, 18 Oct 2020

<sup>35</sup> FratMat.info, 22 Oct 2020

<sup>36</sup> FratMat.info, 22 Oct 2020

<sup>37</sup> Abidjan.net, 22 Oct 2020

<sup>38</sup> Koaci.com, 7 Oct 2020

<sup>39</sup> Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

<sup>40</sup> RFI, 5 Sep 2020

<sup>41</sup> FratMat.info, 13 Oct 2020

<sup>42</sup> Jeune Afrique, 17 Oct 2020

<sup>43</sup> Jeune Afrique, 17 Oct 2020

<sup>44</sup> Gouv.ci, 17 Oct 2020

opposition parties, the FPI, PDCI and EDS, did not send their representatives, and continue to hold fast to their intention to boycott the dialogue proceedings and the entire electoral process.<sup>45</sup>

There is still significant uncertainty whether elections will go ahead. A best-case scenario would be a postponement to rectify issues related to electoral commission membership, the electoral code and voting list. However, if Ouattara goes ahead with the elections without opposition involvement, it will reduce his leadership legitimacy, deepen the political crisis and possibly lead to Cote d'Ivoire's diplomatic isolation from regional and international partners.

### Cabinet adopts \$15.5 billion 2021 draft budget

Côte d'Ivoire adopted its 2021 draft budget during a council of ministers' meeting on 30 September.<sup>46</sup> The proposed budget for 2021 is 8,621.1 billion FCFA (\$15.5 billion), a 6.9% increase over the 2020 budget of 8,061 billion FCFA (\$14.5 billion).<sup>47</sup> The amount adopted was lower than the initially proposed target of 8,629.1 billion FCFA (\$15.6 billion) in the "*Document de Programmation Economique Pluriannuel 2021-2023*" (multi-year economic planning document) published in June.<sup>48</sup> This was attributed to the additional expenditure government incurred for **Covid-19** related interventions.<sup>49</sup>

The government also presented the proposed budgets for 2022 and 2023, set at 9,129.8 billion FCFA (\$16.3 billion) and 9,916.3 billion FCFA (\$17.7 billion) respectively.<sup>50</sup> Government spokesperson and communication minister **Sidi Touré** said the increased budget aims to revive economic activities that were deeply affected by the pandemic and to "*pursue the development of objectives of the government, oriented towards improving the living conditions of the population*".<sup>51</sup> The government recorded a budget surplus of \$115m in 2019, due to higher than expected revenue, which allowed it to increase its 2021 budget.<sup>52</sup>

The government intends to borrow 3,321.9 billion FCFA (\$6 billion) to finance the 149 budget programmes in the 2021 budget, possibly by raising money on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market.<sup>53</sup> Senegal-based **UMOA-Titres**, which coordinates bond issue operations in the region, noted that Côte d'Ivoire raised 976 billion FCFA (\$1.764 billion) (44%) of the 2,244 billion FCFA (\$4,057 billion) issued to member states through bond issues during Q3 of 2020, the highest amount amongst the WAEMU member states that have used the initiative.<sup>54</sup> However, the economy and finance ministry says Cote d'Ivoire does not intend to issue a **Eurobond** to finance its budget due to currently unfavourable interest rates.<sup>55</sup>

Côte d'Ivoire is in the process of identifying a group of international banks that can provide a syndicated loan to this end.<sup>56</sup> However, Côte d'Ivoire's admission to the **Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI)** and the possibility of its debt being restructured may delay negotiations with the private banks.<sup>57</sup> Although cabinet has adopted the budget, it still has to pass before the **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) and it is likely to be the subject of discussions during the upcoming **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** mission.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Le Nouveau Reveil, 19 Oct 2020

<sup>46</sup> Sika Finance, 30 Sep 2020

<sup>47</sup> Sika Finance, 30 Sep 2020

<sup>48</sup> Sika Finance, 30 Sep 2020

<sup>49</sup> Sika Finance, 30 Sep 2020

<sup>50</sup> Agence Ecofin, 1 Oct 2020

<sup>51</sup> Agence Ecofin, 1 Oct 2020

<sup>52</sup> Agence Ecofin, 1 Oct 2020

<sup>53</sup> Koaci.com, 14 Oct 2020

<sup>54</sup> Koaci.com, 14 Oct 2020

<sup>55</sup> Jeune Afrique, 5 Oct 2020

<sup>56</sup> Jeune Afrique, 5 Oct 2020

<sup>57</sup> Jeune Afrique, 5 Oct 2020

<sup>58</sup> Jeune Afrique, 5 Oct 2020

## Construction launched for \$1 billion second Abidjan Port container terminal

President Ouattara launched construction work at the second terminal of the **Port Autonome d'Abidjan (PAD)** (autonomous port of Abidjan) on 5 October.<sup>59</sup> The 596 billion (\$1,077 billion) project aims to position the PAD as the region's largest port in terms of port traffic. **China Harbour and Engineering Company (CHEC)** will undertake construction of the second container terminal known as **Cote d'Ivoire Terminal (CTI)**, with **China EximBank** providing 334 billion FCFA (\$603.9m) in financing.<sup>60</sup> The port concession operators, France-based **Bolloré Ports** and **APM Terminals**, a branch of **Denmark**-based shipping firm **Maersk**, will contribute 262 billion FCFA (\$473.7m) towards the project.<sup>61</sup> The project will take 18 months to complete and create 450 direct jobs.<sup>62</sup>

The new terminal will be built across an area of 37.5 hectares and aims to increase annual container handling capacity from 1 million to 2.5 million containers.<sup>63</sup> The new terminal will have the ability to accommodate ships that hold upwards of 15,000 containers, compared to the 3,500-container ships that can currently be accommodated.<sup>64</sup>

The initiation of the CTI construction is in line with the **Plan National de Développement (PND)** (national development plan) from 2012-2015 and 2016-2020, which earmarked the establishment of the Abidjan port as a regional transport hub to foster broad-based development.<sup>65</sup> Although port traffic fell by 6% in 2019 to 25.7 million tonnes, Côte d'Ivoire's previously robust economic growth, which has averaged 8% over the last decade, contributed significantly to an increase in economic activity, which supported the growth of port traffic.<sup>66</sup> From 2012-2019, imports to Côte d'Ivoire increased by 25% from 12 million tonnes to 15 million tonnes, while exports rose from 6 million tonnes to 8 million tonnes during the same period.<sup>67</sup>

Abidjan port is a pillar of Côte d'Ivoire's economy, accounting for 85% of its foreign trade and 75% of customs revenue.<sup>68</sup> However, despite its status as the second busiest sea port in the region in terms of overall traffic after **Lagos (Nigeria)**, **United Kingdom**-based **Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC)**<sup>69</sup> and **Netherlands**-based maritime analyst **Dynamar** have identified **Tema (Ghana)** and **Lomé (Togo)** ports as more attractive than Abidjan port.<sup>70</sup> In February 2019, late prime minister **Amadou Gon Coulibaly** announced that the government would allocate \$1.4 billion to the extension, development and modernisation of Abidjan port by 2020.<sup>71</sup> Completion in February 2019 of the \$255m rehabilitation of the **Vridi Canal** leading to the Abidjan port, which widened the canal from 200m to 350m and deepened it from 14m to 22m, signalled that modernisation of the port is a priority for the government (see *ARC Briefing Cote d'Ivoire March 2019*).<sup>72</sup>

Bolloré Ports CEO **Philippe Lebonne** highlighted that the new terminal will help to create a logistics ecosystem that will stimulate other sectors of the economy.<sup>73</sup> These include agriculture, mining and construction, which host companies that are some of the port's biggest clients.<sup>74</sup> Given the reliance of

<sup>59</sup> Abidjan.net, 5 Oct 2020

<sup>60</sup> Abidjan.net, 1 Oct 2020

<sup>61</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Oct 2020

<sup>62</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Oct 2020

<sup>63</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Oct 2020

<sup>64</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Oct 2020

<sup>65</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Oct 2020

<sup>66</sup> Jeune Afrique, 9 Oct 2020

<sup>67</sup> Jeune Afrique, 9 Oct 2020

<sup>68</sup> Agence Ecofin, 28 Feb 2019

<sup>69</sup> Jeune Afrique, 4 Apr 2018

<sup>70</sup> Agence Ecofin, 28 Feb 2019

<sup>71</sup> Agence Ecofin, 28 Feb 2019

<sup>72</sup> Jeune Afrique, 21 Feb 2019

<sup>73</sup> Financial Afrik, 6 Oct 2020

<sup>74</sup> Jeune Afrique, 9 Oct 2020

landlocked countries such as **Burkina Faso**, Mali and Niger on the Abidjan port for the import and export of goods and services as well as the enactment of the **African Continental Free Trade Act (AfCTA)** the port extension will make a positive contribution to improving intra-African trade.<sup>75</sup>

## Planner

31 Oct 2020 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) *Abidjan.net*. Scheduled presidential elections;

## Chronology

23 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. Territorial administration and decentralisation minister **Sidiki Diakité** passes away, following a heart attack;

22 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *FratMat.info*. The government says it is willing to host a meeting between President **Alassane Ouattara** and opposition **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** presidential candidate **Henri Konan Bédié** in a bid to reduce tensions ahead of the presidential elections;

22 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AIP*. The opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** and the **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** call on the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** to continue their mediation efforts between the opposition and government ahead of presidential elections;

22 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. Inter-communal violence in the locality of **Dabou** leads to a reported seven deaths and several injured;

21 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Under supervision of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, the government agrees to add an additional opposition member to the **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission), reconstitute the local CEI commissions and appoint a member of the **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** as CEI vice president;

21 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire will launch two separate bond issues on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market, in order to raise 100 billion FCFA (\$180.7m) and 50 billion FCFA (\$90m);

20 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire has raised 33 billion FCFA (\$59.6m) through a treasury bond issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial markets;

20 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Delivery of **Air Côte d'Ivoire's** first **Airbus A320neo**, which will be used for the **Abidjan-Johannesburg** route set to open in April 2021, is postponed "for a few days";

19 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** ends its three-day preventive diplomacy mission calling on the opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** and **Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** to end their boycott of electoral activities and pursue dialogue in order to find consensus on electoral process issues;

18 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. **Ghana's** foreign minister, **Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey**, will lead another **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** preventive diplomacy mission and will meet Côte d'Ivoire's four presidential candidates in a bid to appease escalating tensions ahead of the election;

17 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *FratMat.info*. Prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** hosts meeting with opposition parties to assess concerns related to the organisation of the 31 October

<sup>75</sup> ARC Cote d'Ivoire analyst

presidential elections, calling on all parties to participate, but the opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** and **Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** fail to send representatives to the meeting;

17 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Al Jazeera*. Two individuals die during inter-communal violence in **Bongouanou** and opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** presidential candidate **Pascal Affi N'Guessan's** private residence is set on fire;

16 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. President **Alassane Ouattara** launches his presidential re-election campaign in Cote d'Ivoire's second largest city, **Bouaké**;

16 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. An August **World Bank** study indicates that 37.7% of Ivorian businesses stopped activities during the **Covid-19** pandemic, of which 2.4% have closed permanently;

15 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Campaigns are officially underway for the 31 October presidential elections;

15 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Presidential candidates for the opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** and **Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)**, **Pascal Affi N'Guessan** and **Henri Konan Bédié**, call on their supporters to boycott the 31 October presidential elections as campaigns get underway;

15 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. France-based news outlet **Jeune Afrique** reports **Ghana's** President **Nana-Akufo Addo** and **Ashanti** king **Otumfuo Nana Osei Tutu II** are attempting to broker discussions between President **Alassane Ouattara** and **Henri Konan Bédié** in order to reduce tensions between the leaders ahead of elections;

15 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Presse Africaine*. Prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** commissions two electricity distribution stations in the Abidjan communes of **Anani** and **Bingerville**, which involved an investment cost of 12.4 billion FCFA (\$22.4m);

14 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Director general of national treasury **Assahoré Jacques** reports Côte d'Ivoire raised 976 billion FCFA (\$1.746 billion) through treasury bond issues on **Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine (UEMOA)** (West African Economic and Monetary Union) regional financial market during the third quarter, the highest amount in the region;

14 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire intends to raise 238 billion FCFA (\$425.9m) through treasury bond issues on the **Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine (UEMOA)** (West African Economic and Monetary Union) regional financial markets during the final quarter of 2020;

13 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Opposition **Parti Democratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** presidential candidate **Henri Konan Bédié** will undertake a 48-hour visit to **Ghana** to inform Ghanaian stakeholders about Côte d'Ivoire's socio-political situation;

13 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Health and public hygiene minister **Eugène Aka Aouele** indicates Côte d'Ivoire has registered 20,183 confirmed **Covid-19** cases, with 19,860 people recovered, 120 deaths and 203 active cases;

12 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. A **World Bank** report ranks Côte d'Ivoire 158<sup>th</sup> out of 174 countries in the 2020 **Human Capital Index**;

11 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. State-owned airline **Air Côte d'Ivoire** reports that it lost 48 billion FCFA (\$86.4m) during the period 23 March to 15 July, due to the ban on international and domestic flights, as part of the Ivorian government's **Covid-19** restrictive measures;

11 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. President **Alassane Ouattara** inaugurates the

131-km **Odienné-Boundiali** highway in the **Bagoué** and **Kabadougou** regions;

10 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. Thousands attend an opposition rally at the **Stade Félix Houphouët Boigny** where opposition **Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** presidential candidate **Henri Konan Bédié** called on **United Nations (UN)** secretary general **Antonio Guterres** to prevent President **Alassane Ouattara** from pursuing a third presidential term and to ask Ivorian officials to reform the various electoral institutions;

10 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The government announces it will recommence economic and financial transactions with **Mali** after the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** lifted sanctions imposed on Mali after the August military coup;

9 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. On conclusion of a two-week review mission, the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** projects that Côte d'Ivoire will experience 1.8% GDP economic growth in 2020;

9 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *FratMat.info*. Côte d'Ivoire and the **United Kingdom (UK)** will sign an interim **Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)** on 15 October;

8 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. Former **Switzerland**-based **Credit Suisse** and **United Kingdom**-based **Prudential** CEO **Tidjane Thiam** issues a statement through his spokesperson, **Marc-Arthur Gaulithy**, calling on Ivorians to remain united, and pursue peace and dialogue during the electoral period;

8 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Times*. **United Kingdom (UK)**-based **Financial Times** report suggests that the **French** presidency (**Elysée**) intends to lobby for former **Switzerland**-based **Credit Suisse** and **UK**-based **Prudential** CEO **Tidjane Thiam** to be appointed as a member of cabinet, if President **Alassane Ouattara** wins the 31 October presidential election;

7 Oct 2020 **Paris (France)** *Koaci.com*. France's foreign affairs minister, **Jean-Yves Le Drian**, appearing before the French **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) foreign affairs committee, declares that commenting on and taking a position on President **Alassane Ouattara's** pursuit of a third presidential term would amount to "meddling" in Cote d'Ivoire's domestic affairs;

7 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire registered a trade surplus of 763.98 billion FCFA (\$1.3 billion) at the end of June 2020, a 14.24% decrease compared to 890.82 billion FCFA (\$1.5 billion) at the same period in 2019;

7 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire's budget deficit increased by 126.46% to 823.4 billion FCFA (\$1.4 billion) at the end of June 2020, compared to 363.6 billion FCFA (\$652m) at the same period in 2019;

7 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Mining Review Africa*. **Australia**-based **Mako Gold** has received binding commitments for a two-tranche placement to raise \$10m, which will go towards exploration activities at the **Napié** gold project;

7 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The small and medium sized enterprises (SME) ministry signs an agreement with the **Fonds de Garantie des Crédits aux PME** (SME guarantee fund) to provide 51 billion FCFA (\$91.5m) to support SMEs that have been negatively affected by the **Covid-19** pandemic;

7 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** launches activities for the construction of a 23 billion FCFA (\$41.2m) butane gas stockage unit in Abidjan, which will be built by **SAPET Energy**, a joint venture company comprised of state-owned **Petroci Holding** and **Nigeria**-based **Sahara Energy**;

6 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. State prosecutor **Adou-Richard Christophe** indicates that following investigations, exiled former **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Soro** and 19 of his supporters will be charged for conspiracy and attack against the authority of the state, dissemination and publication of false news;

6 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *FratMat.info*. President **Alassane Ouattara** declares during the launch of construction of the 600 billion FCFA (\$1.075 billion) second container terminal at the **Port Autonome d'Abidjan (PAA)** (Abidjan Autonomous Port), that the project signals investor confidence in the Ivorian economy and the country's stability;

6 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Nigeria**-based hydrocarbons firm **Sahara Energy** announces it has invested more than \$450m to facilitate the supply of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to Côte d'Ivoire over the past six years;

5 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire intends to raise 30 billion FCFA (\$53.7m) through a two-tranche treasury bond issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

4 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire raised 187 billion FCFA (\$335m) through treasury bond loan issues on the **West African Economic and Monetary (WAEMU)** regional financial market in September;

1 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. **Jean-Christophe Belliard** is appointed as the new **French** ambassador to Abidjan, following the recall of his predecessor, **Gilles Huberson**, on allegations of sexual harassment;

1 Oct 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The **Fédération Ivoirienne des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (FIPEM)** (federation of Ivorian small and medium enterprises) announces the establishment of an 18 billion FCFA (\$32.2m) support fund for its members;

30 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The government announces a draft budget of 8,621.1 billion FCFA (\$15.3 billion) for 2021, a 7% increase compared to the 2020 budget of 8,061 billion FCFA (\$14.3 billion);

29 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire successfully raises 60.5 billion FCFA (\$107.9m) on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market in a treasury bond loan issue;

29 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *FratMat.info*. The **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) finalises the electoral register, which has 7.5 million voters for the 31 October presidential race;

24 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. Opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** candidate **Pascal Affi N'Guessan** agrees to adhere to the call for an opposition civil disobedience campaign with the aim of obtaining reforms at the **Conseil Constitutionnel** (Constitutional Court) and **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) ahead of the 31 October presidential elections;

24 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Agriculture and rural development minister **Kobenan Kouassi Adjoumani** notes that the government redistributed 12,905 billion FCFA (\$23m) to cocoa producers during the period from 2012 to 2020;

### About Africa Risk Consulting

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