

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING**Côte d'Ivoire Briefing September 2020**

Côte d'Ivoire Summary 22 September 2020

Cote d'Ivoire's opposition calls for the organisation of a national civil disobedience campaign until President Alassane Ouattara (2010-present) withdraws as presidential candidate in the October 2020 elections. Economy and finance minister Adama Coulibaly reports that the government has disbursed 35 billion FCFA (\$62.4m) in financial support to businesses since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic but members of Cote d'Ivoire's largest business lobby, the Confédération Générale des Entrepreneurs de Cote d'Ivoire (CGECI), say it is not enough. The government and private investors announce measures to support the development of the cashew nut sector.

Opposition calls for civil disobedience campaign ...

Leading members of **Cote d'Ivoire's** opposition have said they will carry out a national civil disobedience campaign until President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present) withdraws his candidature for the 31 October presidential elections. The situation has increased concern among international stakeholders about political violence leading up to, during and following the October elections.

The **Cour Constitutionnelle** (constitutional court) announced on 14 September that it had approved only four of 44 presidential candidacy files as eligible to participate in October's electoral contest.¹ President Ouattara's candidacy received the green light despite opposition complaints that he was not eligible to stand for a third term by virtue of already having undertaken two presidential mandates.² However, constitutional court president **Mamadou Koné** ruled that the adoption of the new constitution in 2016 signalled the establishment of the third republic and did not entail the revision of a constitutional amendment.³ As a result, President Ouattara's candidacy does not violate Article 55 of the constitution, which permits the head of state to complete a maximum of two terms.⁴

Koné's ruling came as no surprise. Koné was a member of Ouattara's party, the **Rassemblement des Republicains (RDR)**, and is a known ally of Ouattara.⁵ Koné served as justice minister from 2006 until Ouattara appointed him **Cour Supreme** (supreme court) president in 2011 and constitutional court president in 2015.⁶

The constitutional court also approved the candidacies of former president **Henri Konan Bedié** (1993-1999) of the **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)**, former prime minister **Pascal Affi N'guessan** of the **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)**, and member of parliament **Kouadio Konan Bertin**, popularly known as "KKB", a defector from the PDCI.⁷ Unsurprisingly, the court ruled against the candidacies of the exiled duo of former **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Soro** and former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010).⁸ The court dismissed Soro's application on the grounds that his name did appear on the electoral register and therefore he could

¹ RFI, 14 Sep 2020

² Jeune Afrique, 14 Sep 2020

³ Jeune Afrique, 14 Sep 2020

⁴ Jeune Afrique, 14 Sep 2020

⁵ Jeune Afrique, 14 Sep 2020

⁶ Jeune Afrique, 14 Sep 2020

⁷ RFI, 14 Sep 2020

⁸ France24, 14 Sep 2020

not be a candidate.⁹ Soro lost his status as a voter after being sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment and a 4.5 billion FCFA (\$7.4m) fine for money laundering and concealment of public funds (see *ARC Briefing Cote d'Ivoire May 2020*).¹⁰ The court rejected Gbagbo's candidacy on the grounds that he had not signed his application, which the **Ensemble pour la Démocratie et la Souveraineté (EDS)** party had submitted on his behalf.¹¹ The court also stated that Gbagbo had not renounced his position as an ex-officio member of the Constitutional Court accorded to him as a former head of state.¹²

Other unsuccessful would-be candidates include former higher education minister and president of the opposition **Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI)**, **Abdallah Albert Mabri Toikeusse**, former foreign affairs minister **Marcel Amon Tanoh**, and opposition **Lider** party president **Mamadou Coulibaly**.¹³ The court denied their candidacies because they failed to obtain the required number of candidate sponsorships from all regions.¹⁴

Sporadic protests took place in the **Abidjan** commune of **Yopougon**, a pro-Gbagbo stronghold, and **Bangolo** in the centre-west region of Cote d'Ivoire both before and after the constitutional court's pronouncements.¹⁵ The EDS and the pro-Gbagbo faction of the FPI held a press conference on 16 September, in which they described the rejection of Gbagbo's presidential bid as "*political*" and a violation of his rights, calling for protests against Ouattara's bid for a third term.¹⁶ Soro organised a similar press conference in **Paris (France)** where he lives in exile.¹⁷ Soro criticised the court's decision and said elections should not take place.¹⁸ Soro called on the most prominent opposition leaders to establish a coalition and mobilise support from across the country to boycott the October race.¹⁹ Soro indicated that he would take steps to meet presidents **Mohammadou Issoufou** of **Niger** (2011-present), **Muhammadu Buhari** of **Nigeria** (2015-present) and **Umaro Emablo** (2020-present) of **Guinea-Bissau**, who have all voiced their opposition towards regional leaders pursuing third presidential terms.²⁰ The **African Court for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)** issued an order on 15 September for the government to reinstate Soro's political rights, to ensure his participation in the upcoming elections.²¹ However, the ACHPR's ruling is not binding, as Cote d'Ivoire ceased to recognise the court's jurisdiction in April.²²

In line with Soro's call for a united opposition front, members of the EDS, UDPCI, Lider, the **Union Republicain pour la Démocratie (URD)** and Soro's **Génération et Peuples Solidaires (GPS)** movement attended a meeting on 20 September at the PDCI's headquarters in Abidjan.²³ Konan Bedié chaired the meeting and announced that the organisations present had agreed to organise a civil disobedience campaign until the following demands are met:

- Ouattara withdraws his presidential candidature;
- The Constitutional Court is dissolved;
- Political and military prisoners are released;
- Exiles from abroad are permitted to return; and
- A profound reform of legislative and institutional electoral frameworks is carried out.²⁴

⁹ France24, 14 Sep 2020

¹⁰ Koaci.com, 28 Apr 2020

¹¹ RFI, 14 Sep 2020

¹² RFI, 14 Sep 2020

¹³ RFI, 14 Sep 2020

¹⁴ RFI, 14 Sep 2020

¹⁵ France24, 14 Sep 2020

¹⁶ Koaci.com, 16 Sep 2020

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 17 Sep 2020

¹⁸ Jeune Afrique, 17 Sep 2020

¹⁹ Jeune Afrique, 17 Sep 2020

²⁰ Jeune Afrique, 17 Sep 2020

²¹ RFI, 15 Sep 2020

²² RFI, 15 Sep 2020

²³ Koaci.com, 20 Sep 2020

²⁴ Koaci.com, 20 Sep 2020

Ouattara is facing international pressure in regard to the increasingly tense political climate resulting from his plan to stand for re-election. Ouattara and France's President **Emmanuel Macron** (2017-present) met at the **Elysée** (French presidency) on 4 September but no official statements were released after the meeting.²⁵ To date, neither the Elysée nor the **Quai d'Orsay** (French foreign affairs ministry) has officially stated France's position with respect to Ouattara standing for election. The lack of comment is significant given that France has explicitly expressed its stance in relation to the socio-political crises afflicting Cote d'Ivoire's regional partners, **Guinea** and **Mali**.²⁶ France-based publication **Jeune Afrique** reports, however, that President Macron has expressed his concern over the increasing socio-political tensions and suggested the postponement of elections, in order for Ouattara and Bedié to withdraw their candidacies and pursue dialogue. Ouattara reportedly refused the proposal, assuring that the elections will be peaceful.²⁷ The **United States**, through its embassy in Cote d'Ivoire,²⁸ and the **European Union (EU)** have respectively called for all actors to engage in dialogue and for the organisation of free, fair and inclusive elections.²⁹ The US and the EU have called for investigations into the violent protests that took place in August (see *ARC Briefing Cote d'Ivoire August 2020*).³⁰

Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the special representative for the **United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)**, commenced a weeklong visit to Cote d'Ivoire on 21 September to meet political leaders and heads of elections-related institutions ahead of the presidential contest.³¹ Ibn Chambas called on all actors to exercise restraint in the lead-up to 31 October presidential election.³² As Cote d'Ivoire edges closer to elections, the ruling camp and opposition have become increasingly hard-line in their positions, as ARC predicted in previous Cote d'Ivoire reports (see *ARC Briefing Cote d'Ivoire July and August 2020*). The establishment of an increasingly formidable opposition coalition, made up of several of the individuals directly responsible for the political violence and instability of the 2000s, has exacerbated an already tense political situation.³³ Catholic Archbishop of Abidjan **Cardinal Jean Pierre Kutwa** has implored political leaders to respect the constitution and pursue appeasement and dialogue ahead of the October elections.³⁴

Business leaders denounce lack of financial support during Covid-19 pandemic

Cote d'Ivoire's largest business lobby, the **Confédération Générale des Entrepreneurs de Cote d'Ivoire (CGECI)**, has criticised the government's support measures for the private sector in response to the economic fallout from the **Covid-19** pandemic.³⁵ During a meeting with prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** on 17 September, CGECI president **Jean-Marié Ackah** outlined the difficulties facing the private sector as a result of Covid-19.³⁶ Ackah said businesses had only been able to access 15 billion FCFA (\$26.7m) of the 250 billion FCFA (\$417.3m) guarantee fund that the government established to enable businesses to access credit during this period.³⁷ Ackah criticised the government's refusal to renew the tax payment suspension in July, especially for companies involved in medical equipment procurement.³⁸ Ackah called on the government to ensure the acceleration of Value Added Tax (VAT) credit payments, which amount to 39 billion FCFA (\$69.6m) and would improve businesses' cash flow.³⁹

²⁵ RFI, 5 Sep 2020

²⁶ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

²⁷ Jeune Afrique, 7 Sep 2020

²⁸ VOA Afrique, 25 Aug 2020

²⁹ Agence Ecofin, 18 Sep 2020

³⁰ Agence Ecofin, 18 Sep 2020

³¹ Le Monde, 22 Sep 2020

³² Le Monde, 22 Sep 2020

³³ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

³⁴ RFI, 1 Sep 2020

³⁵ Koaci.com, 17 Sep 2020

³⁶ Koaci.com, 17 Sep 2020

³⁷ Koaci.com, 17 Sep 2020

³⁸ Koaci.com, 17 Sep 2020

³⁹ Koaci.com, 17 Sep 2020

Economy and finance minister **Adama Coulibaly** gave an overview on 24 August of the financial support initiatives that the government has provided for businesses and vulnerable persons since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁴⁰ The assistance measures are part of the government's 1,700 billion FCFA (\$2.8 billion) plan to support the national economy, which it revealed in March (see *ARC Briefing Cote d'Ivoire April 2020*). Coulibaly said the government has disbursed 35 billion FCFA (\$62.4m) to large businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), informal sector operators and the most vulnerable since the crisis started.⁴¹ The sum of 10 billion FCFA (\$17.8m) was paid to 29 large enterprises and 3 billion FCFA (\$5.3m) to 68 SMEs.⁴² The **Fonds d'Appui au Secteur Informel** (informal sector support fund) ensured payment for 16,500 informal sector operators working as artisans, traders and restaurant owners. Artisans and traders received 200,000 FCFA (\$355) each, while restaurant owners were allocated 300,000 FCFA (\$533).⁴³ Through the **Fonds de Solidarité Covid-19** (Covid-19 solidarity fund), 17 billion FCFA (\$30.2m) was disbursed to 113,000 individuals, while the fund had also assisted 253 homeless children.⁴⁴ Coulibaly concluded that the government had provided 20,000 people who had lost their jobs as a result of the crisis with financial assistance.⁴⁵

Cote d'Ivoire's economy has experienced a severe downturn as a result of the pandemic. A joint study by the transport ministry and the EU's technical commission, released on 18 September, revealed that the road transport sector has recorded losses of 110.9 billion FCFA (\$197.9m) since the onset of the crisis.⁴⁶ The passenger transport sub-sector was hit hardest, registering an 84.5 billion FCFA (\$150.8m) loss, due primarily to the imposition of a lockdown in **Greater Abidjan** from 29 March to 15 July, while operators involved in the transport of goods lost 26.4 billion FCFA (\$47.1m).⁴⁷ The road transport sector contributes 9% to Cote d'Ivoire's gross domestic product.⁴⁸

While Cote d'Ivoire's initial growth projection of 7.2% has been reduced to 1.8%, as a result of Covid-19,⁴⁹ the **World Bank** forecasts growth of 8.2% in 2021.⁵⁰ The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** will conclude its combined seventh and eighth reviews of the **Extended Credit Facility** and **Extended Mechanism Credit** virtually from 15 September to 1 October, giving a clearer indication of the state of the Ivorian economy.⁵¹

Government and private investors seek to boost cashew nut sector

The Ivorian government and foreign investors have committed to improving the state of the cashew nut industry, which may attract greater investment to the sector. Agriculture and rural development minister **Kobenan Kouassi Adjoumani** announced on 25 August a disbursement of 45 billion FCFA (\$80.3m) in the form of a subsidy towards the purchase 105,600 tonnes of cashew nut from producers.⁵² Adjoumani said the financial support aims to curb illicit marketing and export of cashew nut. Cashew nut producers hold up to 106,600 tonnes of raw cashew nut stocks, while buyers hold 56,000 tonnes, totalling 162,600 tonnes of unsold stock in production areas.⁵³

United Kingdom-based **Dekel Agri-Vision** (formerly **Dekel Oil**) announced on 2 September its plans to increase cashew nut processing capacity through the establishment of a cashew nut processing unit at **Tiébissou**.⁵⁴ Dekel, a branch of **Israel**-based **Rina** involved in the Ivorian oil palm industry,

⁴⁰ Abidjan.net, 26 Aug 2020

⁴¹ Abidjan.net, 26 Aug 2020

⁴² Abidjan.net, 26 Aug 2020

⁴³ Abidjan.net, 26 Aug 2020

⁴⁴ Abidjan.net, 26 Aug 2020

⁴⁵ Abidjan.net, 26 Aug 2020

⁴⁶ Agence Ecofin, 21 Sep 2020

⁴⁷ Agence Ecofin, 21 Sep 2020

⁴⁸ Agence Ecofin, 21 Sep 2020

⁴⁹ Agence Ecofin, 27 Aug 2020

⁵⁰ World Bank, 8 Jun 2020

⁵¹ Koaci.com, 19 Sep 2020

⁵² Koaci.com, 25 Aug 2020

⁵³ Koaci.com, 25 Aug 2020

⁵⁴ Sika Finance, 3 Sep 2020

reported that it had received material for the industrial unit. Construction of the unit began in March 2018 and the unit is expected to be operational by the second semester of 2021.⁵⁵ The transformation plant will have an initial transformation capacity of 10,000 tonnes with the possibility of expanding to 30,000 tonnes.⁵⁶

The cashew nut industry is one of Cote d'Ivoire's most important economic activities. Cashew nuts are the third highest source of export revenue in Cote d'Ivoire after cocoa and petroleum, generating \$800m in 2017, according to the World Bank (see *ARC Briefing Cote d'Ivoire April 2018*).⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the sector has faced many challenges over the past years. Despite Cote d'Ivoire being the largest cashew nut producer globally, production has steadily declined from the 761,000 tonnes during the 2017/18 harvest season to 654,000 tonnes in 2018/19, a 17% drop.⁵⁸ Illegal smuggling of cashew nut produce to **Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea** and Mali has compounded the problem. Adjoumani estimates illegal smuggling to be around 150,000-200,000 tonnes in total.⁵⁹

The Covid-19 pandemic has also caused the price of cashews to drop globally. **Conseil Coton et Anacarde (CCA)** (cotton and cashew nut council) director **Adama Coulibaly** reports the price has dropped from \$1,400 per tonne to \$900 per tonne as a result of a drop in demand from **Asian** export markets.⁶⁰ Cote d'Ivoire exports the majority of its produce to **Brazil, India** and **Vietnam**.⁶¹ These countries transform the cashew nut and export the final product to consumer markets across Asia and Western **Europe**.⁶² Adjoumani acknowledges the need to strengthen Cote d'Ivoire's cashew nut processing capacity, as it currently only transforms one fifth of its output.⁶³ The government obtained a \$200m loan from the World Bank in April 2018 to support the **Projet d'Appui à la Compétitivité de la Chaîne de Valeur de l'Anacarde** (cashew nut value chain competitiveness project).⁶⁴ The initiative aims to benefit the estimated 225,000 cashew nut producers through the installation of mini-transformation units as well as the improvement of value chains.⁶⁵ The Ivorian government has also hired the UK-based **Tony Blair Global Institute** to assist its efforts to promote cashew nut transformation.

At the virtually organised 10th **African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF)** on 10 September, CCA information systems and planning director **Simplice Gué** reported that cashew nut production is set to reach a record 906,000 tonnes in 2020 despite the Covid-19 pandemic.⁶⁶ Gué encouraged businesses to invest in the sector, noting that 30 firms are already involved in processing activities.⁶⁷

⁵⁵ Sika Finance, 3 Sep 2020

⁵⁶ Sika Finance, 3 Sep 2020

⁵⁷ World Bank, 10 Apr 2018

⁵⁸ La Tribune Afrique, 4 May 2020

⁵⁹ The Africa Report, 2 Sep 2020

⁶⁰ La Tribune Afrique, 4 May 2020

⁶¹ The Africa Report, 2 Sep 2020

⁶² The Africa Report, 2 Sep 2020

⁶³ The Africa Report, 2 Sep 2020

⁶⁴ World Bank, 10 Apr 2018

⁶⁵ World Bank, 10 Apr 2018

⁶⁶ Farmers Review Africa, 13 Sep 2020

⁶⁷ Farmers Review Africa, 13 Sep 2020

Planner

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

Chronology

22 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Le Monde*. **United Nations** special representative for **West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas**, calls on all actors to exercise restraint in the 31 October presidential election;

21 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Cote d'Ivoire will launch a two-tranche bond loan issue on 17 and 30 September, where it intends to raise 135 billion FCFA (\$240.9m);

20 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Former president **Henri Konan Bédié** announces that Ivorian opposition and civil society groups will carry out a national civil disobedience campaign, until President **Alassane Ouattara** renounces his decision to stand for re-election;

18 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. A joint study by the transport ministry and the **European Union (EU)** technical commission reveals that Cote d'Ivoire's road transport sector has recorded losses 110.9 billion FCFA (\$197.9m) since the onset of the **Covid-19** crisis.

16 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Mining Review*. **United Kingdom**-and **Canada**-listed **Altus Strategies** sign a definitive purchase and sales agreement and Net Smelter Return royalty agreements with **Canada**-listed **Stellar Africa Gold** in respect of Altus' **Prikro** and **Zenoula** gold projects in Cote d'Ivoire;

16 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Creamer Media's Mining Weekly*. Natural resources organisation **Impact** and the **European Union** implements a traceability and due diligence system from mine site to the international market for artisanal gold from Cote d'Ivoire as part of the **Just Gold** project;

15 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. The **African Court for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)** issues a judgement calling on the Ivorian government to reinstate the political rights of exiled former **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Soro**, to allow him to participate in the October presidential elections;

14 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. The **Cour Constitutionnelle** (constitutional court) validates the candidatures of President **Alassane Ouattara** and former President **Henri Konan Bédié** for the 31 October presidential election, but disqualifies the applications of exiled former President **Laurent Gbagbo** and former **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Soro**;

14 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Brewing company **Solibra**, a subsidiary of **France**-based **Castel Group**, registered net profit of 13.09 billion FCFA (\$23.7m) during the 2019 financial year, compared to 1.3 billion FCFA (\$2.3m) in 2018, a 903.45% increase;

14 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Cote d'Ivoire raises 33 billion FCFA (\$59.7m) on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market through a treasury bond issue;

12 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. President **Alassane Ouattara** announces during a state visit to **Bongouanou** that government will ensure an increase in the price per kilo of cocoa for the 2020/21 harvest season which begins 1 October;

10 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The government has reached a mutual agreement with **Canada**-based **Westbridge Mortgage Reit** to cancel the planned privatisation of **Banque de l'Habitat de Côte d'Ivoire (BHCI)** and the government will take control of all its assets;

10 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The government has granted **Yams Mining SA**, owned by prominent **Ivorian-Lebanese** businessman **Pierre Fakhoury**, three gold mining

exploration permits for four years;

7 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. **France's** President **Emmanuel Macron** reportedly advises President **Alassane Ouattara** to postpone the 31 October elections due to the ongoing tensions and violence surrounding his proposed third term of office;

5 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. **France's** President **Emmanuel Macron** meets President **Alassane Ouattara** in **Paris** (France) but makes no public statement on France's position on Ouattara pursuing a third presidential term;

4 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Morocco-based OCP Africa** signs an agreement with the rice production promotion ministry to assist Cote d'Ivoire to attain rice production sufficiency by 2030;

3 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Bluebird Finance and Projects** and **Germany-based KfW-Ipex** have secured a 70.84 billion FCFA (\$127.4m) loan from **Netherlands-based** export agency **Atradius**, to finance the development of four agricultural development projects at **Guiembe, Guitri, Kong and Zikisso**;

3 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Dekel AgriVision** (formerly **Dekel Oil**) indicates that the cashew nut transformation plant under construction at **Tiebissou** will be operational by 2021;

1 Sep 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. Cardinal **Jean Pierre Kutwa**, Catholic Archbishop of Abidjan, calls for respect of the constitution, appeasement and dialogue to be pursued ahead of the October elections;

31 Aug 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The consortium of **France-based Bolloré** and **Netherlands-based APM Terminals (APMT)**, which operates **Abidjan Port**, has selected **China Harbour Engineering Co. (CHEC)** to build the second port terminal, **Côte d'Ivoire Terminal (CIT)**, at the port of Abidjan for a reported cost of 262.4 billion FCFA (\$475m);

27 Aug 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. President **Alassane Ouattara** says Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth is expected to decline to 1.8% of GDP in 2020 against initial projections of 7.2%, due to the impact of the **Covid-19** pandemic;

27 Aug 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Cote d'Ivoire's mining sector brought in \$170m in tax revenue in 2019, a 43% increase compared to the 2018 figure of \$118m (65.8 billion FCFA);

27 Aug 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Investment promotion minister **Essis Emmanuel** announces that 110 companies were approved for 407 billion FCFA (\$736.7m) investment from January to June, half of the amount during the same period in 2019;

26 Aug 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Three new industrial economic zones will be set up in **Akoupé Zeudji** (Abidjan), **San Pedro** (South-West) and **Ferkessedougou** (North) following the signature of an agreement between the Ivorian government and **Arise Ivoire** group, for the development of three industrial economic zones for an investment estimated at 1,000 billion FCFA (\$1.8 billion)

25 Aug 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *VOA*. The **United States** government through its embassy has called on Ivorian authorities to investigate the deaths in protests following President **Alassane Ouattara's** decision to seek a new term;

25 Aug 2020 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Agriculture and rural development minister **Kobenan Adjoumani** announces the disbursement of 45 billion FCFA (\$81.4m) in the form of subsidies for the purchase of 106,600 tons of cashew nuts from producers;

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