

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Côte d'Ivoire Briefing June 2021

Côte d'Ivoire Summary 24 June 2021

Former president Laurent Gbagbo (2000-2010) returns to Côte d'Ivoire, 10 years after his arrest on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity and his subsequent transfer to the International Criminal Court at The Hague (Netherlands) in April 2011. President Alassane Ouattara (2010-present) appoints "ministre gouverneurs" (minister-governors) to head newly created "districts autonomes" (autonomous districts), supra-regional bodies that will supervise government action across the country's 33 regions. Côte d'Ivoire inaugurates the 15 billion FCFA (\$27.3m) Académie Internationale de Lutte Contre le Terrorisme (AILCT) (international academy for the fight against terrorism). Côte d'Ivoire has vaccinated 733,375 of its population of roughly 26 million as of 21 June, since beginning its national Covid-19 vaccination campaign on 1 March.

Gbagbo returns to Côte d'Ivoire after 10-year absence

Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010) has returned to **Côte d'Ivoire**, 10 years after his arrest on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity and his subsequent transfer to the **International Criminal Court at The Hague (Netherlands)** in April 2011.¹ The ICC's confirmation in March of Gbagbo's acquittal of the crimes allegedly committed during the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis reignited the possibility of his return from exile (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire April 2021*). However, despite President **Alassane Ouattara's** (2010-present) declaration in April that he would like Gbagbo to return, it was uncertain whether the former head of state would make the trip to Côte d'Ivoire,² With Gbagbo back in the country, Côte d'Ivoire has the opportunity to pursue real reconciliation and normalise its political scene, which has been characterised by the routine use of violence over the past 25 years.³

Following months of speculation, **Assoa Adou**, secretary general of the **Gbagbo ou Rien** (Gbagbo or nothing) faction of the opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)**, announced on 31 May that Gbagbo would return to Côte d'Ivoire on 17 June.⁴ The announcement, made at an FPI-organised ceremony attended by close to 400 people, coincided with Gbagbo's 76th birthday. The confirmation of Gbagbo's arrival date came as a surprise, as the government and the organising committee for his return were working together to establish the requisite formalities. The inability to finalise a date revolved around differing viewpoints on the nature of Gbagbo's return – his supporters wanted a triumphant return, while the government favoured a low key ceremony.⁵ Gbagbo's spokesperson, **Justin Koné Kahinan**, noted that, while the former president's bank account had been unfrozen and the government had provided assurance that he would be granted benefits as a former head of state, the nature of his return had not been finalised.⁶ Government spokesperson and communication minister **Amadou Coulibaly** said Gbagbo's organising committee had unilaterally decided for him to come back on 17 June.⁷ Reconciliation minister **Kouadio Konan Bertin** said the government would do everything to

¹ Abidjan.net, 17 Jun 2021

² ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

³ ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

⁴ Koaci.com, 31 May 2021

⁵ RFI, 31 May 2021

⁶ RFI, 1 Jun 2021

⁷ RFI, 1 Jun 2021

ensure a peaceful return.⁸ Adou said at a press conference on 15 June that Ouattara had authorised the use of the presidential pavilion at the **Aéroport international Félix-Houphouët-Boigny** for Gbagbo's reception ceremony.⁹

Despite the inevitability of Gbagbo's return, the **Collectif des Victimes en Côte d'Ivoire (CVC)** (collective of Ivorian victims) were strongly opposed to the move.¹⁰ The CVC comprises an estimated 16,000 members who describe themselves as victims of the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis. CVC president **Issiaka Diaby** called for Gbagbo's arrest upon arrival, noting the group's fight against impunity, "*so that everyone is answerable before justice*".¹¹ Diaby hoped that the Ivorian judiciary would launch proceedings against Gbagbo for the crimes with which the ICC did not charge him.¹² The CVC had organised protests since mid-May in opposition to Gbagbo's planned arrival and on 11 June met with interior and security minister Gen. **Diomandé Vagondo** to further express their discontent.¹³

Before Gbagbo's arrival from **Brussels (Belgium)** on 17 June, clashes took place between his supporters and security forces, who dispersed the crowds using teargas.¹⁴ FPI deputy spokesperson **Franck Kouassi** claimed that 40 individuals were arrested,¹⁵ while eyewitness reports suggest several were injured.¹⁶ Gbagbo was accompanied by his second wife, **Nady Bamba**. Although the government had authorised just over 100 people to welcome Gbagbo, the crowd far surpassed this number.¹⁷ At the arrivals hall, where former first lady **Simone Gbagbo** was also present, Gbagbo made his first public statement in the country since 2011, and only his second statement after granting **France-based TV5** an interview in October 2020.¹⁸

While Gbagbo has not outlined his immediate plans, he attended mass in the **Plateau** commune of Abidjan on 20 June, where he met Cardinal **Jean-Pierre Kutwa** of the **Roman Catholic Church**.¹⁹ Gbagbo was expected to visit his village of **Mama**, in the **Gagnoa** district of western Côte d'Ivoire within days of his arrival.²⁰

After the violent electoral period from August-November in which 85 people were killed, Ouattara understood that he had to take concrete steps to pursue reconciliation. Gbagbo's return is an important step. Ouattara needed to be sure of Gbagbo's intentions, including any plans to seek revenge for his imprisonment.²¹ On the other hand, Gbagbo's camp sought assurance that the former head of state would not be arrested upon his arrival and would receive his due benefits as an ex-president. Former president **Henri Konan Bédié** (1993-1999) expressed satisfaction with Gbagbo's return, saying it gives him and Ouattara the opportunity to establish together a "*new dawn*" in Ivorian politics, void of the politically inspired violence characteristic of the last 25 years.

Despite Gbagbo's apparent desire to promote reconciliation, he is unlikely to retreat from the political scene, especially after the renaissance the FPI experienced following the March legislative elections.²²

⁸ Abidjan.net, 2 Jun 2021

⁹ Africanews, 15 Jun 2021

¹⁰ RFI, 1 Jun 2021

¹¹ Jeune Afrique, 15 Jun 2021

¹² RFI, 1 Jun 2021

¹³ Jeune Afrique, 15 Jun 2021

¹⁴ VOA, 17 Jun 2021

¹⁵ Africanews, 15 Jun 2021

¹⁶ France24, 17 Jun 2021

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 17 Jun 2021

¹⁸ ARC Côte d'Ivoire Analyst

¹⁹ FratMat.info, 19 Jun 2021

²⁰ FratMat.info, 19 Jun 2021

²¹ Abidjan-based CREFDI researcher

²² Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

Gbagbo is likely to take steps towards uniting the party's factions and to capitalise on his popularity to regain support for the FPI.²³

Ouattara creates 12 new autonomous districts

President Ouattara has created 12 new “*districts autonomes*” (autonomous districts) across the national territory and appointed “*ministre gouverneurs*” (minister-governors) to head all 14 districts. The autonomous districts are supra-regional bodies that will supervise government action across the country's 33 regions.²⁴ Côte d'Ivoire previously had just two autonomous districts, the economic capital **Abidjan** and the political capital **Yamoussoukro**.²⁵

Ouattara said the creation of the new administrative units aimed to improve coordination, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of government action across the different regions.²⁶ The autonomous districts also aim to ensure equitable transfer and distribution of resources, improving efficiency in coordinating government action at the regional level.²⁷ Ouattara added that the autonomous districts would help to pursue a balanced and diversified national development agenda.²⁸

Ouattara said the minister-governors heading the autonomous districts would include former members of government as well as individuals with significant experience and proximity to the population.²⁹ Although they will have the rank of cabinet ministers, minister-governors will not attend cabinet meetings. However, Ouattara pledged to meet with them at least once a year.³⁰ Ouattara instructed prime minister **Patrick Achi** to start consultations with potential appointees, who will take up their positions by the end of June.³¹

Minister governor	Autonomous district
Jean Claude Kouassi	Vallée du Bandama
Albert Flindé	District des Montagnes
Philippe Legré	Bas Sassandra
Pascal Kouakou Abinan	Comoé
Moussa Dosso	Woroba
Raymonde Goudou Coffie	District des Lacs
Gaoussou Touré	Denguélé
Louis André Dacoury Tabley	Goh Djiboua
Vincent Lohoues	District des Lagunes
Mathieu Babau Darret	Sassandra Marahoué
Souleymane Touré	Zanzan
Robert Beugré Manbé	Abidjan
Augustin Thiam	Yamoussoukro

²³ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

²⁴ AIP, 18 Jun 2021

²⁵ Koaci.com, 9 Jun 2021

²⁶ AIP, 9 Jun 2021

²⁷ AIP, 9 Jun 2021

²⁸ Financial Afrik, 9 Jun 2021

²⁹ AIP, 9 Jun 2021

³⁰ Financial Afrik, 9 Jun 2021

³¹ Financial Afrik, 9 Jun 2021

Although **Law 2014-451**, adopted in August 2014, provides for the creation of autonomous districts,³² the timing of Ouattara's decision and his choice of individuals have raised many eyebrows. Ouattara's selection of minister-governors has given the impression that the creation of autonomous districts was to compensate his long-time supporters, rather than to improve government action.³³ Several of the new appointees were former members of cabinet who failed to retain their positions in the 6 April government formed by Achi.^{34, 35} These include **Raymonde Goudou Coffie** (arts and culture), **Gaoussou Touré** (rice promotion) **Moussa Dosso** (livestock and fisheries) **Jean Claude Kouassi** (mines and geology) and **Albert Flindé** (African integration), who reportedly lost their cabinet positions as a result of losing in their respective constituencies during the March legislative elections.³⁶ An ARC source at the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** suggested in April that, after their dismissal from government, the former ministers might receive appointments as *ministres-conseillers* (minister-advisers).³⁷ However, the minister-governor nominations appear to be Ouattara's reward for his supporters instead.³⁸ Former cabinet ministers from prior governments such as **Philippe Legré** (sports) and **Pascal Kouakou Abinan** were also appointed.³⁹

While the new units aim to promote decentralisation and facilitate local administration,⁴⁰ there are also questions regarding the responsibilities of the minister-governors.⁴¹ Each of Côte d'Ivoire's 33 regions has an elected regional council president and an appointed administrative prefect to oversee and coordinate regional activities. The minister-governors rank above the council president and prefect, whose future roles are unclear, and this may result in a clash of responsibilities.⁴² Political analysts have also questioned why the position of minister-governor is not an elected position, particularly in view of Ouattara's indication that minister-governors would be individuals who are close to the local populace.⁴³

Côte d'Ivoire inaugurates first anti-terrorism academy

Côte d'Ivoire has inaugurated the **Académie Internationale de Lutte Contre le Terrorisme (AILCT)** (international academy for the fight against terrorism) at a ceremony presided over by prime minister Patrick Achi.⁴⁴ The new institution aims to bolster the capacity of Côte d'Ivoire and its regional partners to address growing terrorist threats. Activities at the AILCT, located in **Jacqueville**, 40 km west of Abidjan, were officially launched on 10 June.⁴⁵

Defence minister **Téné Birahima Ouattara** said the AILCT will have three main activities. It will serve as a training centre for military, defence and special intervention units involved in anti-terrorist activities; train senior public administration officials, military officers and magistrates in conducting terrorism-related intelligence and investigations; and serve as a strategic research unit.^{46 47} Achi said the academy allowed Côte d'Ivoire to give the sub-region "*a cutting edge tool in terms of strategic analysis, intelligence and training of special forces*".⁴⁸ Achi described the institution as a concrete

³² AIP, 9 Jun 2021

³³ Abidjan-based CREFDI researcher

³⁴ RFI, 19 Jun 2021

³⁵ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

³⁶ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

³⁷ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

³⁸ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

³⁹ Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

⁴⁰ Koaci.com, 9 Jun 2021

⁴¹ Abidjan-based CREFDI researcher

⁴² Abidjan-based CREFDI researcher

⁴³ Abidjan-based CREFDI researcher

⁴⁴ APA, 10 Jun 2021

⁴⁵ Anadolu Agency, 10 Jun 2021

⁴⁶ Anadolu Agency, 10 Jun 2021

⁴⁷ APA, 10 Jun 2021

⁴⁸ FratMat.info, 10 Jun 2021

response to the “*scourge of terrorism*” and an initiative to “*protect our people and their future*”, as “*the vanguard of the response to a free and conscious West Africa*”.⁴⁹

Ouattara and his French counterpart, President **Emmanuel Macron** (2017-present), formulated the idea to establish the AILCT during the **African Union-European Union Summit** in Abidjan in November 2017.⁵⁰ Construction of the academy, whose first phase cost 15 billion FCFA (\$27.3m), commenced in November 2018. Its development was overseen by late prime minister and defence minister **Hamed Bakayoko**.⁵¹ ⁵² France’s foreign affairs minister, **Jean Yves Le Drian**, noted the responsibility to fight “*this common enemy whose actions in the Sahel concern us directly*”.⁵³ Le Drian said France and **African** states will contribute financial and technical resources:

*“The fight against terrorism is a threat we must combat, as we will continue to do it in the Sahel and we will do here together.”*⁵⁴

President Ouattara echoed the view that the institution must become a regional centre of expertise and competence in the fight against terrorism for the benefit of promoting the security and stability of states.⁵⁵ Foreign partners include the **European Union (EU)**, France and **Norway**. The **Netherlands** and **United States (US)** have also participated in the realisation of the project and training of academy participants.⁵⁶ Over the last 18 months, an estimated 300 trainees passed through the academy before it became fully operational.⁵⁷

The launch of the AILCT is timely not only for Côte d’Ivoire, but the whole sub-region. There is a greater sense of urgency for regional partners to build up their capacity in counter-terrorism following Macron’s announcement on 10 June that the France-led **Operation Barkhane** military mission, which has undertaken anti-terrorism operations in the Sahel since 2014, is coming to an end.⁵⁸ In addition to longstanding violent extremist activity in the Sahel, **Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure** (external intelligence agency) director general **Bernard Emie** presented evidence in February that extremist groups such as **Al Qaeda in the Sahel** were devising strategies to expand their activities southward to **Gulf of Guinea** countries.⁵⁹ Violent extremist groups have repeatedly attacked Côte d’Ivoire, which suffered its first and deadliest terrorist attack in March 2016 when 19 people were killed at the resort town of **Grand Bassam**.⁶⁰ On 8 June, army chief of staff **Gen. Lassina Dombia** announced that three soldiers had been killed and four injured after their vehicle drove over an explosive device in the **Tehimi** region in north-east Côte d’Ivoire.⁶¹ This was the fourth attack on Ivorian armed forces in four months.⁶² In March, three soldiers died after attacks on two army positions at **Kafolo** and **Kolobougou**.⁶³ An attack in June 2020 at Kafolo killed 14 people (see *ARC Briefing Côte d’Ivoire June 2020*).

While no groups have claimed responsibility for these deadly attacks, Ivorian security officials believe they were perpetrated by a **Burkinabe** national, **Sidibé Abdramani** alias “*Hamza of the Itof Koufa*” terrorist group. Abdramani is a suspected protégé of **Malian** jihadist **Amadou Kouffa**, the head of the

⁴⁹ FratMat.info, 10 Jun 2021

⁵⁰ Anadolu Agency, 10 Jun 2021

⁵¹ Jeune Afrique, 9 Jun 2021

⁵² APA, 10 Jun 2021

⁵³ RFI, 10 Jun 2021

⁵⁴ APA, 10 Jun 2021

⁵⁵ FratMat.info, 10 Jun 2021

⁵⁶ FratMat.info, 10 Jun 2021

⁵⁷ FratMat.info, 10 Jun 2021

⁵⁸ Al Jazeera, 10 Jun 2021

⁵⁹ Jeune Afrique, 2 Feb 2021

⁶⁰ Jeune Afrique, 9 Jun 2021

⁶¹ RFI, 8 Jun 2021

⁶² RFI, 8 Jun 2021

⁶³ Jeune Afrique, 29 Mar 2021

Katiba Macina terrorist cell, which is affiliated to **Al Qaeda**.⁶⁴ Ivorian security expert **Arthur Banga** believes such attacks will continue and will emanate predominantly from **Burkina Faso**, from where attacks can be easily launched. The **Comoé National Park**, which straddles the Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire border, is a grey area from which extremist groups can easily operate.⁶⁵

Côte d'Ivoire ramps up Covid-19 vaccination campaign

The public health ministry reports that Côte d'Ivoire has vaccinated 733,375 of its population of roughly 26 million against Covid-19 as of 21 June, since the start of its national vaccination campaign on 1 March.⁶⁶ Health minister **Pierre Dimba** said the consignment of 100,000 doses of the US-manufactured **Pfizer** Covid-19 vaccine received on 16 June will be reserved to vaccinate residents of the 10 districts of Greater Abidjan aged 18 and older.⁶⁷ The distribution of the Pfizer vaccine in Abidjan began on 21 June. **Institut National de l'Hygiène Publique de Côte d'Ivoire** (Ivorian public hygiene institute) director **Joseph Bénié** said 50,000 individuals will receive two doses of the vaccine.⁶⁸

Côte d'Ivoire also obtained a donation from France of 25,000 doses of the **United Kingdom**-manufactured **Oxford/AstraZeneca** vaccine on 29 May and 100,000 doses of the same vaccine through the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**-led **Covax** initiative on 30 May.⁶⁹ Dimba announced on 22 May that the government had ordered 2 million additional vaccines in a bid to reach its objective of vaccinating 20 million individuals, 70% of the population, in order to attain herd immunity.⁷⁰ Dimba said the vaccines were safe and efficient and free of charge to receive. Dimba called on the media to spread awareness about the necessity of receiving the vaccine.⁷¹

Côte d'Ivoire has seen the number of people vaccinated increase by 400,000 since 14 May.⁷² As of 21 June, Côte d'Ivoire had recorded 48,047 positive Covid-19 cases, 47,487 recoveries and 308 deaths since confirming its first case on 11 March 2020.⁷³ The national health state of emergency continues in effect until at least 30 June.⁷⁴

⁶⁴ Jeune Afrique, 9 Jun 2021

⁶⁵ RFI, 8 Jun 2021

⁶⁶ AIP, 21 Jun 2021

⁶⁷ AIP, 17 Jun 2021

⁶⁸ AIP, 21 Jun 2021

⁶⁹ AIP, 17 Jun 2021

⁷⁰ AIP, 24 May 2021

⁷¹ AIP, 24 May 2021

⁷² ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

⁷³ ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

⁷⁴ ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

Planner

Oct 2021 **Montpellier (France)** Africa Intelligence. **France-Afrique** summit

Chronology

23 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. An Abidjan court (**Cour d'Assises d'Abidjan**) sentences exiled former **Assemblée Nationale** president and ex-prime minister **Guillaume Soro** *in absentia* to life in prison on charges of "endangering national security";

22 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** states Côte d'Ivoire will register the highest economic growth amongst member states in 2021, with growth estimated at 6%;

21 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. Côte d'Ivoire has raised 38.5 billion FCFA (\$71.5m) through an **Obligations de Relance (ODR)** (stimulus bond issue) on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

21 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The economy and finance ministry reports that cocoa generated 2,971 billion FCFA (\$5.3 billion) in export revenue in 2020 for Côte d'Ivoire, with total exports amounting to 1.486 million tonnes, an 8.4% decrease from the 2019 figure;

21 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com* Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** has reportedly requested a divorce from former first lady **Simone Ehivet Gbagbo**;

17 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com* Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** returns to Côte d'Ivoire for the first time since 2011, following his acquittal by the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** on charges of committing crimes against humanity during the 2010/11 post-electoral crisis;

16 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AIP*. **Qatar Airways** undertakes first direct flight from **Doha (Qatar)** to Abidjan;

15 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. Côte d'Ivoire raises 65 billion FCFA (\$117.9m) through an **obligations de relance (ODR)** (stimulus bond) issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)**;

13 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. Army chief of staff Gen. **Lassina Doumbia** reports three Ivorian soldiers were killed and four wounded during an attack by presumed jihadists in the locality of **Tehini**, near the border with **Burkina Faso**;

9 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. **Jean-Louis Menann-Kouamé**, director general of Côte d'Ivoire-based **Orange Bank**, a branch of **France**-based telecoms firm **Orange**, says the bank, which was launched in July 2020, has registered 600,000 customers and granted loans totalling 45 billion FCFA (\$83.2m);

9 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** predicts that Côte d'Ivoire, the leading producer of rubber in **Africa**, will transform 100% of its rubber output locally by 2025;

8 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. Côte d'Ivoire raises 71.5 billion FCFA (\$132.3m) through the issue of **Obligations de Relance (ORD)** (stimulus bonds) issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

7 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Digital economy and telecommunications minister **Roger Adom** says Côte d'Ivoire has lost 20 billion FCFA (\$37.1m) over the last decade to cybercrime activities;

4 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The economy and finance ministry reports that Côte d'Ivoire's public debt stock stood at 17,676.1 billion FCFA (\$32.8 billion) at the end of March, compared to 13,993 billion FCFA (\$25.9 billion) at the end of March 2020;

4 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *World Bank*. The **World Bank**, through the **International Development Association (IDA)**, has approved \$250m in financing for the **Projet de Développement des Chaînes de Valeur Vivrières (PDC2V)** (Agri-food sector development project), which aims to promote the growth of the agri-food sector and spur development of more inclusive, resilient and competitive agri-food value chains;

4 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Budget and state portfolio minister **Moussa Sanogo** reports that state enterprises registered a combined turnover of 56 billion FCFA (\$103.9m) in 2021, compared to 28 billion FCFA (\$51.9m) in 2019 and 6.4 billion FCFA (\$11.8m) in 2018;

4 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Investment promotion and private sector development minister **Esmel Essis** calls on investors to help Cote d'Ivoire close its 200 MW energy deficit during a **France-Cote d'Ivoire** mini economic forum;

4 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. The **German** government has agreed to contribute 48 billion FCFA (\$89m) towards the **Plan National du Développement (PND)** (national development plan) 2021-2025, following inter-governmental talks with Ivorian counterparts that focused on bilateral economic cooperation and development;

2 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. Reconciliation minister **Kouadio Konan Bertin** confirms that the government has taken note of 17 June as the date of former president **Laurent Gbagbo's** return to Côte d'Ivoire, despite government spokesperson **Amadou Coulibaly's** claim that the government had not been consulted regarding the matter;

1 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** signs an agreement with **Banque Publique d'Investissement de l'Etat Français (BpiFrance)** (French public investment bank) for the latter to support the development of Ivorian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);

31 May 2021 **Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** secretary general **Assoa Adou** announces that former president **Laurent Gbagbo** will return to Cote d'Ivoire on 17 June after 10 years in exile;

28 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The economy and finance ministry says a total of 13,475 formal jobs were created in January and February, increasing the total to 1,120,838 from 1,107,000 at the end of 2020;

27 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The **Conseil National de Sécurité (CNS)** (national security council) confirms one death, 39 injured and 38 arrests following clashes between **Nigerien** migrants and Ivorians which resulted from a "fake news" video circulated by an Ivorian social media influencer, that accused Nigeriens of attacking Ivorians resident in Niger;

27 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AIP*. The government deems "satisfactory" the mobilisation of financial resources in the first quarter of 2021, estimated at 2,189.8 billion CFA (\$4.08 billion) for a forecast of 2.236.3 billion FCFA (\$4.2 billion) or an achievement rate of 97.9%;

27 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *CNBC Africa*. Government decree mandates that a fifth of cocoa purchases by multinational companies in Côte d'Ivoire must be fulfilled by local firms;

26 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Director general of electricity at the energy and petroleum ministry **Sabati Cissé** says the state lost 40 billion FCFA (\$74.5m) in revenue in 2020 as a result of electricity fraud;

26 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Energy and petroleum minister **Thomas Camara** suggests that electricity rationing currently implemented by the government may end by mid-July;

25 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire has raised 38.5 billion FCFA (\$71.5m) through an **Obligations de Relance (ODR)** (stimulus bond issue) on the **West African**

Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) regional financial market;

25 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The economy and finance ministry reports Côte d'Ivoire imported 1.11 million tonnes of rice in 2020 at a cost of 317 billion FCFA (\$592m), a reduction from 1.34 million tonnes and 354 billion FCFA (\$661m) in 2019;

25 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The **African Development Bank (AfDB)** says Côte d'Ivoire has the best performing and fastest growing industrial sector in **West Africa**, as its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) expanded from 8% in 2012 to 25% in 2019;

22 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Nouveau Reveil*. Opposition **Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** executive secretary **Maurice Kakou Guikahué** announces that the government has authorised the return from exile of former **Plateau (Abidjan central business district commune)** mayor **Noël Akossi Bendjo**, who has been out of the country since 2018;

18 May 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. The **Direction Générale du Trésor et de la Comptabilité Publique (DGTCP)** (general directorate of the treasury and public accounts) raises 59.5 billion FCFA (\$111.5m) on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market through a treasury bond issue;

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