

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING Côte d'Ivoire Briefing January 2021

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### Côte d'Ivoire Summary 20 January 2021

*Civil society organisations (CSOs), opposition political parties and the government conclude dialogue with commitment to continue talks and promote peace as President Alassane Ouattara (2010-present) echoes the need to foster reconciliation. Opposition parties and the ruling party commence preparations for 6 March legislative elections. President Ouattara provides a review of Côte d'Ivoire's 2020 economic performance during his end of year national address. The Ivorian rice promotion ministry signs several Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with private firms and multilateral financial institutions to support the rice industry in line with the 150 billion FCFA (\$276.6m) Stratégie Nationale de Développement de la Riziculture (SNDR 2020-2030) (national strategy for rice production development).*

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### Opposition and government conclude dialogue

Ivorian civil society organisations (CSOs), opposition political parties and the government have concluded a dialogue aiming to ease tensions and end the socio-political crisis following President **Alassane Ouattara's** (2010-present) re-election to a controversial third term.<sup>1</sup> Prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** presided over the tripartite discussions, which saw the participation of leading opposition parties including the **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)**, the government-recognised branch of the **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)**, and **Ensemble pour la Démocratie et la Souveraineté (EDS)**, the FPI faction aligned to exiled former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010).<sup>2</sup>

At the conclusion of the talks on 29 December, the opposition agreed to participate in upcoming legislative elections, while all parties committed to denouncing the use of violence and expressed the desire to continue organising dialogue sessions to promote peace and reconciliation.<sup>3</sup> Ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** executive director **Adama Bictogo** said the dialogue demonstrated there was no need for international assistance to resolve Côte d'Ivoire's socio-political crisis.<sup>4</sup> PDCI leader and former president **Henri Konan Bédié** (1993-1999) had earlier suggested that the **United Nations (UN)** facilitate inclusive dialogue with all societal stakeholders (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire December 2020*).<sup>5</sup>

The first day of discussions on 21 December focused on analysing the current Ivorian political environment and reform of the **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission), based on suggestions made by the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** before the 31 October presidential elections.<sup>6</sup> Opposition representatives asked for the release of opposition leaders and supporters who had been arrested during the presidential electoral period.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Koaci.com, 18 Dec 2020

<sup>2</sup> RFI, 21 Dec 2020

<sup>3</sup> Abidjan.net, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>4</sup> Africanews, 22 Dec 2020

<sup>5</sup> RFI, 9 Dec 2020

<sup>6</sup> RFI, 21 Dec 2020

<sup>7</sup> RFI, 21 Dec 2020

The final report, presented on 29 December, outlined that the government, CSOs and opposition parties had reached consensus on the organisation of elections, which will take place in March 2021, as well as strengthening the security of the electoral process.<sup>8</sup> All sides also agreed to end the campaign of civil disobedience enacted by the opposition in the lead-up to the presidential elections and unanimously condemned the use of violence.<sup>9</sup> The organisation of high-level face-to-face talks between Ouattara and Bédié was suggested, as well as the initiation of discussions with Gbagbo.<sup>10</sup> However, the parties reached no formal agreement, with PDCI interim executive secretary **Niamkey Koffi** highlighting that the opposition still had some reservations and wanted the release of political prisoners.<sup>11</sup> Koffi acknowledged the dialogue is on-going and the opposition will continue to be involved in the process.<sup>12</sup>

Ouattara pledged to pursue talks with Bédié and undertake further appeasement measures in accordance with the law.<sup>13</sup> In line with this, FPI president and former prime minister **Pascal Affi N'Guessan** was released on 30 December after two months of imprisonment.<sup>14</sup> Affi N'Guessan was arrested during the night of 6-7 November, and faced 30 charges of undermining state authority in connection with his role as spokesperson of the **Conseil National de Transition (CNT)** (national transition council) (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire November 2020*).<sup>15</sup> The CNT did not recognise Ouattara's eligibility to participate in the 31 October election.<sup>16</sup> Despite his release, Affi N'Guessan remains under judicial supervision and is required to appear before a judge once a month.<sup>17</sup> FPI secretary general **Issiaka Sangaré** nevertheless described Affi N'Guessan's release as a positive step towards political appeasement.<sup>18</sup>

Ouattara reiterated his desire to end Côte d'Ivoire's on-going political impasse during his traditional New Year's Eve national address. Ouattara stressed the importance of promoting forgiveness and national harmony, noting the responsibility of all citizens to renounce violence and unite for the construction of a peaceful country.<sup>19</sup> Ouattara promised justice for the victims of the political violence that took place from August to November and left an estimated 87 individuals dead and more than 500 injured.<sup>20</sup> Ouattara welcomed the recent release of political prisoners and announced the release of 2,000 people incarcerated for minor offences.<sup>21</sup> Konan Bédié repeated his call for the release of political prisoners, describing the 31 October presidential elections as a "*sham election*".<sup>22</sup>

The organisation of dialogue and its attendance by Côte d'Ivoire's leading political parties has significantly helped to ease tensions.<sup>23</sup> The release of political prisoners, including most recently, PDCI executive secretary **Maurice Guikahué**, who is under medical observation in **France**, as well as the return of **Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI)** president **Abdallah Albert Mabri Toikeusse** from hiding are welcome developments.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Abidjan.net, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>9</sup> Abidjan.net, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>10</sup> Abidjan.net, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>11</sup> RFI, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>12</sup> RFI, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>13</sup> Jeune Afrique, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>14</sup> Koaci.com, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>15</sup> Abidjan.net, 7 Nov 2020

<sup>16</sup> Koaci.com, 3 Nov 2020

<sup>17</sup> RFI, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>18</sup> RFI, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>19</sup> Jeune Afrique, 1 Jan 2021

<sup>20</sup> Jeune Afrique, 1 Jan 2021

<sup>21</sup> Jeune Afrique, 1 Jan 2021

<sup>22</sup> Jeune Afrique, 1 Jan 2021

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

<sup>24</sup> Abidjan-based CREFDI Researcher

### ... as opposition and ruling party prepare for legislative elections

A major breakthrough of the 21-29 December dialogue was the opposition's commitment to participate in legislative elections, which are set to take place on 6 March.<sup>25</sup> The **Gbagbo ou Rien** (Gbagbo or nothing) faction of the FPI announced its participation on 23 December through its secretary general, **Assoa Adou**.<sup>26</sup> Adou said the decision was made with Gbagbo's approval and that the FPI will cooperate with the PDCI during the elections.<sup>27</sup> Gbagbo's eldest son, **Michel Gbagbo**, has declared his candidacy in the **Abidjan** commune of **Yopougon**, historically an FPI stronghold but controlled by the RHDP since 2011.<sup>28</sup> The Affi N'Guessan-led faction of the FPI confirmed its participation in the elections on 4 January.<sup>29</sup>

FPI-EDS faction president **Georges-Armand Ouégnin** said on 7 January that the opposition parties would adopt a common strategy in order to obtain as many seats as possible.<sup>30</sup> **Nouvelle Côte d'Ivoire (NCI)** president **Gnamien Konan** said only one opposition candidate would contest each seat.<sup>31</sup>

CEI president **Coulibaly Kuibiart** announced on 16 January that the deadline to submit candidatures for the March legislative elections was 20 January, and that campaigns will run from 26 February to 4 March.<sup>32</sup> The opposition has asked the CEI to amend the electoral calendar and postpone the elections, claiming that the time frame does not allow for proper preparation.<sup>33</sup> In response, the CEI has extended the candidature submission deadline to 22 January.

Some parties have announced they will no longer be part of the electoral process.<sup>34</sup> Opposition **Génération et Peuples Solidaires (GPS)** spokesperson **Habib Sanogo** announced on 15 January that GPS, the party of exiled former **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Soro**, will not participate in the 6 March legislative elections.<sup>35</sup> Sanogo justified the boycott on the basis that several party members are still imprisoned.<sup>36</sup> Blé Goudé's **Congrès Panafricain des Jeunes et des Patriotes (COJEP)** decided on 19 January that it, too, would boycott electoral proceedings and called for the postponement of elections in order to save lives.<sup>37</sup> Friction has emerged between the parties that still intend to participate. The FPI has accused the EDS and PDCI of failing to collaborate with them with respect to their common strategy, which may lead the proposed coalition to fall apart.<sup>38</sup>

The ruling RHDP has already set its objectives and validated candidatures.<sup>39</sup> The party tasked Bictogo, and party vice presidents Bakayoko and presidency secretary general **Patrick Achi** with arbitrating the candidate selection process.<sup>40</sup> Ouattara confirmed the party's legislative candidates on 17 January, with the RHDP setting a target of obtaining at least 160 out of 255 seats in order to hold a comfortable majority.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Abidjan.net, 30 Dec 2020

<sup>26</sup> Koaci.com, 23 Dec 2020

<sup>27</sup> RFI, 24 Dec 2020

<sup>28</sup> Koaci.com, 5 Jan 2021

<sup>29</sup> Koaci.com, 4 Jan 2021

<sup>30</sup> APA, 7 Jan 2021

<sup>31</sup> APA, 7 Jan 2021

<sup>32</sup> RFI, 16 Jan 2021

<sup>33</sup> APA, 7 Jan 2021

<sup>34</sup> Abidjan.net, 19 Jan 2021

<sup>35</sup> RFI, 15 Jan 2021

<sup>36</sup> RFI, 15 Jan 2021

<sup>37</sup> APA, 19 Jan 2021

<sup>38</sup> AIP, 19 Jan 2021

<sup>39</sup> L'Intelligent d'Abidjan, 18 Jan 2021

<sup>40</sup> Jeune Afrique, 6 Jan 2021

<sup>41</sup> Jeune Afrique, 6 Jan 2021

The organisation of legislative elections is significant to both the ruling coalition and the opposition. Ouattara and the RHDP hope the elections will help restore some of the legitimacy they lost as a result of the controversial presidential contest.<sup>42</sup> Ouattara also intends to name his next cabinet after the elections.<sup>43</sup> For the opposition parties, following its boycott of the presidential elections, the legislative elections are their last chance to gain representation until the 2023 local elections.<sup>44</sup> However, the opposition faces an uphill task amid internal differences and failure to embrace the solidarity it demonstrated during and in the immediate aftermath of the presidential elections.<sup>45</sup>

### Ouattara reviews 2020 economic performance

During his 31 December New Year's Eve address, President Ouattara outlined Côte d'Ivoire's economic performance in 2020 as well as some of its economic prospects for 2021.<sup>46</sup> Ouattara acknowledged that 2020 was an extremely challenging year, with Covid-19 posing a significant threat to Côte d'Ivoire's economic stability. Economic growth fell to 1.8%, compared to the initially projected figure of 7.2%.<sup>47</sup> Côte d'Ivoire nonetheless fared better than most countries and avoided economic recession.

Ouattara highlighted the government had initiated several key projects despite the unfavourable economic climate, including works at the **Port Autonome de San Pedro** and the second terminal at the **Port Autonome de Abidjan**.<sup>48</sup> Ouattara noted that efforts to reduce poverty have seen the country's poverty level reduce to 35% in 2020 from 55% in 2011.<sup>49</sup> Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita rose from \$1,213 in 2010 to \$2,286 in 2019, the highest in the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**.<sup>50</sup> The **World Bank** in its *World Economic Outlook* released on 5 January expects 5.5% economic growth in Côte d'Ivoire in 2021.<sup>51</sup> This is above the estimated figure of 2.7% for **sub-Saharan Africa** in 2021. Côte d'Ivoire is tied with **Guinea** and **Tanzania** for the sixth highest growth prospects on the continent for 2021 and will fare better than most of its regional counterparts.<sup>52</sup>

	2020 Growth Rate	2021 Projected Growth Rate <sup>53</sup>
Guinea	5.2%	5.5%
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
Cape Verde	-11%	5.2%
Benin	2%	5%
Niger	1%	5%
Senegal	-0.7%	3.5%
Togo	0%	3%
Ghana	1%	1.4%
Nigeria	-4.1%	1.1%

<sup>42</sup> Abidjan-based CREFDI Researcher

<sup>43</sup> Abidjan-based CREFDI Researcher

<sup>44</sup> Abidjan-based CREFDI Researcher

<sup>45</sup> Abidjan-based CREFDI Researcher

<sup>46</sup> [Presidence.ci](http://Presidence.ci), 31 Dec 2020

<sup>47</sup> [Presidence.ci](http://Presidence.ci), 31 Dec 2020

<sup>48</sup> [Presidence.ci](http://Presidence.ci), 31 Dec 2020

<sup>49</sup> [Presidence.ci](http://Presidence.ci), 31 Dec 2020

<sup>50</sup> [Presidence.ci](http://Presidence.ci), 31 Dec 2020

<sup>51</sup> *La Tribune Afrique*, 8 Jan 2021

<sup>52</sup> *La Tribune Afrique*, 8 Jan 2021

<sup>53</sup> *Agence Ecofin*, 11 Jan 2021

Covid-19 vaccine procurement is expected to boost Côte d'Ivoire's economic upswing as economic activity picks up.<sup>54</sup> Increased foreign and domestic investment commitments are also expected as socio-political tensions calm in the aftermath of presidential elections.<sup>55</sup> Côte d'Ivoire's commercial agriculture sector will continue to play an important role in fostering this growth.<sup>56</sup>

### Rice promotion ministry MOUs to boost sectoral development

The rice promotion ministry has signed several agreements with private firms and multilateral financial institutions to improve the rice industry in line with the **Stratégie Nationale de Développement de la Riziculture (SNDR 2020-2030)** (national strategy for rice production development). Rice promotion minister **Gaoussou Touré** signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on 6 January with **Callivoire**, a subsidiary of **India**-based agro-industrial firm **UPL**.<sup>57</sup> In terms of the MOU, Callivoire will assist rice farmers to obtain finance for the purchase of inputs and seeds as well as access to other forms of support to improve productivity.<sup>58</sup> This includes the teaching of post-harvest treatment solutions. Callivoire director general **Messotigui Diomandé** said 40% of rice produced is lost after harvest.<sup>59</sup>

Touré also signed MOUs on 14 January with **Yara Côte d'Ivoire**, a branch of **Norway**-based chemical firm **Yara**, and **Bayer West-Central Africa**, a branch of **Germany**-based pharmaceutical company **Bayer**.<sup>60</sup> In terms of the tripartite agreement, Yara and Bayer will support efforts to provide sustainable agriculture solutions to local farmers.<sup>61</sup> The farmers will be trained in new production techniques and provide inputs with the aim of increasing productivity and yields.<sup>62</sup> The agreement aims to establish the structures that will foster the emergence of a rice value chain.<sup>63</sup>

Subsequently, Touré signed a framework agreement with the **Banque d'Investissement et de Développement de la CEDEAO (BIDC)** on the sidelines of a workshop BIDC organised from 15-16 January in **Lomé (Togo)**.<sup>64</sup> The agreement aims to provide financing for irrigation and the development of plots, mechanisation towards plot exploitation, and financing of construction of rice processing factories and warehouses.<sup>65</sup> BIDC vice president **Mabouba Diagne** commended the Ivorian government's steps to promote rice production activities.<sup>66</sup>

SNDR 2020-2030, which was adopted in March 2020,<sup>67</sup> is a 150 billion FCFA (\$276.6m) programme that aims to make Côte d'Ivoire self sufficient in rice production by 2025 and a net exporter of rice by 2030.<sup>68</sup> Côte d'Ivoire currently produces only half of its rice consumption total and imports the 1m-1.5m tonnes to cover its production deficit. Imports amount to 300 billion FCFA (\$553.3m), with most coming from **China** and **Vietnam**.<sup>69</sup> SNDR 2020-2030 aims to address the shortcomings of the first SNDR, launched in 2012 and which had earmarked 2020 as the year Côte d'Ivoire would attain rice production self sufficiency. SNDR 2020-2030 will see 55,000 hectares of rice growing land rehabilitated.<sup>70</sup> In September, the rice promotion ministry signed an MOU with **Morocco**-based **OCP Africa**, as part of a **Public-Private Partnership** (PPP) that will see OCP assist the Ivorian government

<sup>54</sup> Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

<sup>55</sup> Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

<sup>56</sup> Abidjan-based African Development Bank analyst

<sup>57</sup> Sika Finance, 7 Jan 2021

<sup>58</sup> Sika Finance, 7 Jan 2021

<sup>59</sup> Sika Finance, 7 Jan 2021

<sup>60</sup> Koaci.com, 14 Jan 2021

<sup>61</sup> Koaci.com, 14 Jan 2021

<sup>62</sup> Koaci.com, 14 Jan 2021

<sup>63</sup> Koaci.com, 14 Jan 2021

<sup>64</sup> Koaci.com, 18 Jan 2021

<sup>65</sup> Koaci.com, 18 Jan 2021

<sup>66</sup> Koaci.com, 18 Jan 2021

<sup>67</sup> L'Intelligent d'Abidjan, 20 Jan 2021

<sup>68</sup> Sika Finance, 3 Dec 2020

<sup>69</sup> Sika Finance, 3 Dec 2020

<sup>70</sup> Sika Finance, 3 Dec 2020

with fertiliser research and development support and promote the use of digital techniques in rice farming.<sup>71</sup>

### Planner

6 Mar 2021 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) *Jeune Afrique*. Legislative elections;  
Jul 2021 **Montpellier (France)** Africa Intelligence. **France-Afrique** summit

### Chronology

18 Jan 2021 **Lomé (Togo)** *Koaci.com*. Rice promotion minister **Gaoussou Touré** signs an agreement with the **Banque d'Investissement et de Développement de la CEDEAO (BIDC)** for BIDC to finance rice sector activities;

18 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Leading Ivorian opposition parties will no longer present joint candidatures for the 6 March legislative elections;

16 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Ivorian opposition groups sign the final report for the dialogue that took place with the government in December;

15 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Leading opposition parties call on the **Commission Électorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) to postpone the 6 March elections to a later date, in order to “better prepare” for the contest;

15 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. **Habib Sanogo**, spokesperson for the opposition **Génération et Peuples Solidaires (GPS)** of exiled former **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Soro**, announces the party will not participate in the 6 March legislative elections;

14 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. **Commission Électorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) president **Coulibaly Kuibiart** announces the deadline to submit candidatures for the March legislative elections is 20 February and campaigns will run from 26 February to 4 March;

14 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*. The **Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale (CNPS)** (national social security fund) signs an agreement with **France-based Eranove** to acquire a 15% stake for 10 billion FCFA (\$18.4m), in the 390 MW **Atinkou** gas power plant, which is currently under construction;

14 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. **Direction Générale des Impôts** (general directorate for taxation) director general **Sié Abou Ouattara** reports Côte d'Ivoire collected 2,346.5 billion FCFA (\$4.3 billion) in taxes in 2020, a 2% year-on-year increase compared to the total of 2,295.5 billion FCFA (\$4.2 billion);

14 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The rice promotion ministry has signed a tripartite agreement with **Yara Côte d'Ivoire**, a branch of **Norway-based Yara**, and **Bayer West-Central Africa SA**, a branch of **Germany-based Bayer**, to support the implementation of the **Stratégie Nationale de Développement de la Riziculture (SNDR 2020-2030)** (national development strategy for rice cultivation);

13 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. The government plans to pay 620.2 billion FCFA (\$1.2 billion) to some 20 international private creditors which are either banks or private investment institutions;

13 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Trade and industry minister **Souleymane Diarrassouba** announces the suspension of price increases for cooking oil and wheat products;

<sup>71</sup> Agence Ecofin, 7 Sep 2020

11 Jan 2021 **London (United Kingdom)** *Financial Times*. Former **Switzerland**-based **Credit Suisse** chief executive and **Ivorian** national **Tidjane Thiam** is raising a \$250m special purpose acquisition vehicle to invest in financial services businesses in the developed and developing world;

7 Jan 2021 **Paris (France)** *RFI*. The **Chambre Correctionnelle de Paris** (Paris Correctional Court) dismisses a case of defamation lodged by the **Ivorian** government in 2017 against **France**-based publication, **La Lettre du Continent**, for an article claiming President **Alassane Ouattara** had increased the budget of a national sovereign wealth fund that his younger brother managed;

7 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. By 30 September, the government had received 67.55 billion FCFA (\$114.21m) in oil and gas revenue, indicating a 14.27% year-on-year decrease; Daily oil production was 29,078 barrels per day, a 22.46% year-on-year drop;

7 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Leading opposition parties have announced they will formulate a common strategy in order to prevent the ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** from obtaining a majority during the March legislative elections;

6 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Government spokesperson **Sidi Touré** reports that Côte d'Ivoire has ordered 200,000 doses of the **Covid-19** vaccine through the **Covax** mechanism and vaccination will commence on 15 February;

6 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. The rice promotion ministry signs a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with **Callivoire**, a subsidiary of **India**-based agro-industrial firm **UPL**, to assist rice farmers to access finance, as part of Côte d'Ivoire's plan to attain rice production sufficiency by 2025 and become a net exporter by 2030;

6 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AIP*. President **Alassane Ouattara** calls on cabinet ministers to demonstrate greater humility towards the Ivorian public in order to promote reconciliation;

5 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. President **Alassane Ouattara** says the government plans to construct 1,313 km of tarred roads in Côte d'Ivoire in 2021;

2 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Exiled former **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president and opposition **Génération et Peuples Solidaires (GPS)** party leader **Guillaume Soro** announces that the GPS will participate in March legislative elections;

1 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. President **Alassane Ouattara** expresses his desire to continue the government's dialogue with the opposition and to meet former president and opposition **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** leader **Henri Konan Bédié** during his New Year's address;

30 Dec 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The **Banque d'Investissement et de Développement de la CEDEAO (BIDC)** signs loan agreement with Ivorian government, to provide 6.05 billion FCFA (\$11.3m) to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);

30 Dec 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire's trade surplus decreased by 25.77% at the end of September to 533.24 billion FCFA (\$997m) compared to 718.37 billion FCFA (\$1.3 billion) in 2020;

29 Dec 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Former prime minister and opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** leader **Pascal Affi'N'Guessan** receives conditional release from detention, after his 7 November arrest for involvement in the opposition's national civil disobedience campaign;

29 Dec 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** announces that the government and opposition have agreed on the organisation of legislative elections in March following the conclusion of the third phase of the political dialogue;

29 Dec 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire raises 108.5 billion FCFA (\$203m) through a treasury bond issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

28 Dec 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The **Banque d'Investissement et de Développement de la CEDEAO (BIDC)** grants Côte d'Ivoire a \$36.7m (19.73 billion FCFA) loan to rehabilitate the 99-km **Korhogo-Kanawolo** road;

23 Dec 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. The **Laurent Gbagbo**-aligned branch of the opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** will participate in the March 2021 legislative elections;

22 Dec 2020 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. Opposition leaders call for the release of political prisoners arrested during the presidential electoral period;

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Please contact us by email [info@africariskconsulting.com](mailto:info@africariskconsulting.com) or call + 44 (0) 20 7078 4080

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