

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

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### Côte d'Ivoire Summary 23 July 2021

*The Cour d'Assises d'Abidjan (Abidjan criminal court) sentences exiled former prime minister and Assemblée Nationale (national assembly) president Guillaume Kigbafori Soro to life imprisonment on charges of endangering national security. The economy and finance ministry reports cashew nut export revenue of 487.68 billion FCFA (\$874.2m) in 2020, a 14% improvement on 428.17 billion FCFA (\$767.5m) in 2019, with production of over 800,000 tonnes making Côte d'Ivoire the third largest producer of cashew nut globally. Prime minister Patrick Achi launches an agricultural training programme that targets 500,000 youths. Despite low case numbers of Covid-19 and the commencement of an intensive vaccination campaign, the Conseil National de Sécurité (national security council) has extended the national health state of emergency until 30 September.*

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### Guillaume Soro sentenced to life imprisonment

An **Abidjan** court has sentenced former prime minister and **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Guillaume Kigbafori Soro** to life imprisonment on charges of “*endangering national security*”.<sup>1</sup> The conviction could effectively end the political career of the 49-year-old Soro, who has been in exile in **Europe** since May 2019. The **Cour d'Assises d'Abidjan** (Abidjan criminal court) delivered a guilty verdict against Soro on 23 June, and handed him a life sentence at the recommendation of state prosecutor **Richard Adou**.<sup>2</sup> Soro's lawyer, **Souleymane Diallo**, has lodged an appeal at the **African Court for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)** at **Arusha (Tanzania)** against Soro's conviction and sentence.<sup>3</sup> Diallo claimed that the trial was held in contempt and in violation of the regulations and several decisions of the **African** court:

*“Côte d'Ivoire has distinguished itself in the worst possible way in the eyes of the court.”*

Soro's legal troubles date back to December 2019, when he was issued with an international warrant of arrest for allegedly “*undermining state security*” and “*embezzling state funds*” (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire January 2020*).<sup>4</sup> At the time the warrant was issued, Soro was on a flight to Abidjan and requested the pilot to reroute the plane to **Accra (Ghana)** so he could avoid arrest.<sup>5</sup> Soro had stepped down as **Assemblée Nationale** president in February 2019, at the culmination of several months of deteriorating relations between him and his mentor, President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present). Soro reportedly did not appreciate Ouattara's efforts to sideline him from potentially succeeding him as president (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire February-March 2019*). Soro spent several months in Europe following his decision to step down as **Assemblée Nationale** president.

The state prosecution declared in May 2020 that it had discovered a weapons stockpile as well as military communication equipment and confidential documents at the Abidjan headquarters of the **Général et Peuples Solidaires (GPS)**, the political movement that Soro created in July 2019 (see

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<sup>1</sup> Koaci.com, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>2</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>3</sup> Jeune Afrique, 1 Jul 2021

<sup>4</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Dec 2019

<sup>5</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire May 2020).<sup>6</sup> The prosecution also stated that it had obtained phone recordings in which Soro planned to mobilise soldiers to undertake an armed revolt.<sup>7</sup>

The ACHPR on 23 April 2020 ordered the Ivorian government to suspend Soro's international arrest warrant on the basis that it would compromise his participation in the 2020 presidential elections. The Ivorian government ignored the judgement and on 28 April 2020 the **Tribunal de Première Instance d'Abidjan (TPI)** (tribunal of first instance) found Soro guilty of money laundering and concealment of public funds in relation to the purchase of his personal residence in Abidjan, sentencing him to 20 years' imprisonment and a 4.5 billion FCFA (\$7.4m) fine.<sup>8</sup> Côte d'Ivoire then announced on 30 April that it had withdrawn from the ACHPR (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire May 2020*).<sup>9</sup>

Soro's former chief of protocol, **Souleymane Kamagaté**, aka "Soul to Soul", his lawyer and former minister, **Affousiata Bamba Lamine**, and political communications head **Moussa Touré** were all tried and convicted in absentia, with each receiving 20-year prison sentences.<sup>10</sup> Former minister **Alain Lobognon**, alongside Soro's siblings **Rigobert Soro** and **Simon Soro**, was sentenced to 17 months' imprisonment for "*disturbing public order*" and "*spreading false news*".<sup>11</sup> However, they were released having served the equivalent of the jail time during their pre-trial detention. In total, 19 of the 20 accused, including six soldiers, received prison terms and were each fined 1 billion FCFA (\$1.7m).<sup>12</sup> The court also dissolved Générations et Peuples Solidaires.

In a press release issued on 23 June, Soro rejected the "*unfair verdicts*", describing the case as another example of the extent to which the Ivorian judiciary has become compromised and suggesting it was taking orders from the executive arm of government.<sup>13</sup> Soro accused the government of using the trial to "*bring to a halt the political project of which I am a bearer*" and to prevent him from being a key actor in Ivorian politics, stating he would not give up his fight.<sup>14</sup> Defence lawyer **Raoul Goh Bi** described the proceedings as a "*political trial*" that lacked evidence, indicating he would appeal on behalf of his clients.<sup>15</sup>

Former president **Henri Konan Bedié** (1993-1999), in a statement issued on 24 June, called for the organisation of inclusive national dialogue to establish the path to forgiveness and reconciliation led by Ouattara.<sup>16</sup> Bedié and Soro established a political alliance in December 2018 (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire January 2019*), after becoming close during Soro's stint as Assemblée Nationale president.<sup>17</sup> At the time, Bedié was at loggerheads with Ouattara after he had officialised the withdrawal of the opposition **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** from the ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** coalition in October 2018.<sup>18</sup>

Soro's legal troubles have effectively curtailed his political ambitions, at least for now. Before getting into politics, Soro was leader of Côte d'Ivoire's largest university student union, the **Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire (FESCI)**, and commander of the **Forces Nouvelles de Côte d'Ivoire** rebel group. While Bedié has shown tacit support for Soro, it is unlikely any of the major power brokers within the RHDP will advocate for Soro to be given presidential

<sup>6</sup> Abidjan.net, 5 May 2020

<sup>7</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>8</sup> Koaci.com, 28 Apr 2020

<sup>9</sup> Africanews, 30 Apr 2020

<sup>10</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>11</sup> Jeune Afrique, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>12</sup> Koaci.com, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>13</sup> RFI, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>14</sup> RFI, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>15</sup> BBC, 23 Jun 2021

<sup>16</sup> DW, 24 Jun 2021

<sup>17</sup> Jeune Afrique, 31 Dec 2018

<sup>18</sup> Jeune Afrique, 31 Dec 2018

amnesty. Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010) has had frosty relations with Soro and cannot be considered as someone to rally support for Soro.<sup>19</sup> Several of Soro's former supporters have switched alliance from their former leader or appear likely to do so. Former MP **Kanigui Soro** (no relation), who was the head of the opposition **Rassemblement pour la Côte d'Ivoire (RACI)** and in February 2019 called for Soro to run for president in 2020,<sup>20</sup> has joined the RHDP.<sup>21</sup> Lobognon met with transport minister **Bruno Koné** shortly after his release, indicating his desire to reconcile Soro and Ouattara, a move he said Soro supported. However, Soro's head of communication, Moussa Touré, refuted these claims.<sup>22</sup> Soro has maintained his innocence, claiming that the charges against him are politically motivated.<sup>23</sup>

### Cashew nut sector sees exponential Q1 growth

The economy and finance ministry reports that cashew nut production and export sales during the first quarter (Q1) of activity in 2021 increased significantly from the same time frame in 2020.<sup>24</sup> Cashew nut activities are increasingly becoming a staple activity in the Ivorian economy, which has enabled Côte d'Ivoire to become one of the world's largest producers and exporters of the product.

According to the economy and finance ministry, cashew nut exports from January to April amounted to 311,191 tonnes, compared to 174,094 tonnes during the same period in 2020, denoting a 78.7% increase in export volume.<sup>25</sup> During this period, cashew exports generated 196.4 billion FCFA (\$352.4m), compared to 125.7 billion FCFA (\$225.7m) in the same time frame in 2020, a 56.2% year-on-year improvement. Cashew production rose from 345,626 tonnes in Q1 2020 to 707,760 in Q1 2021, a 104.8% year-on-year increase.

The economy and finance ministry noted that cashew nut export revenue amounted to 487.68 billion FCFA (\$874.2m) in 2020, a 14% improvement on the 2019 figure of 428.17 billion FCFA (\$767.5m).<sup>26</sup> Cashew sales volume increased to 691,289 tonnes in 2020 from 609,073 tonnes in 2019, an 82,216 tonnes difference. Overall output rose from 634,631 tonnes in 2019 to 878,400 tonnes in 2020, a 33% year-on-year improvement. This has made cashew nut Côte d'Ivoire's fifth largest export crop, immediately after coffee, making it the third largest exporter globally after **Vietnam** and **India**.<sup>27</sup> **Conseil du Coton et de l'Anarcade** (cotton and cashew nut council) director general **Adama Coulibaly** stated in February that Côte d'Ivoire had captured 22.33% of the global cashew nut market with a 2021 production target of 850,000 tonnes.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the positive figures several issues prevent the cashew nut sector from having optimal impact on the Ivorian economy.<sup>29</sup> Lack of local processing is a major hurdle, as the current cashew nut trade cycle sees raw nuts harvested from Africa exported to Indian and Vietnamese factories, from where they are sent for roasting, salting and packaging in the **European Union (EU)** and **United States**. Nevertheless, African agri-food sector advisory firm **N'Kalo** says Côte d'Ivoire has improved its cashew nut transformation capacity over the years, increasing from 30,000 tonnes in 2013 to 41,000 tonnes in 2015 and 45,000 tonnes in 2017.<sup>30</sup> N'Kalo estimates Côte d'Ivoire's current cashew nut processing capacity at 90,000 tonnes. The steady increase can be attributed to manifested political will from the Ivorian government, which has provided tax incentives and exemptions on customs

<sup>19</sup> ARC Côte d'Ivoire Analyst

<sup>20</sup> RFI, 17 Feb 2019

<sup>21</sup> RFI, 4 Jul 2021

<sup>22</sup> RFI, 4 Jul 2021

<sup>23</sup> Source, ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

<sup>24</sup> Sika Finance, 2 Jul 2021

<sup>25</sup> Sika Finance, 2 Jul 2021

<sup>26</sup> Sika Finance, 4 Jul 2021

<sup>27</sup> Sika Finance, 22 Feb 2021

<sup>28</sup> Sika Finance, 22 Feb 2021

<sup>29</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Jun 2021

<sup>30</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Jun 2021

duties and Value Added Tax (VAT) on equipment purchases as well as spare parts over five years. Producers have used these tax credits to modernise existing facilities. In addition, the government has set a 15% minimum quota for cashew nut processing. Coulibaly says the government has set a target of 50% local transformation by 2023, which it will support by creating industrial processing zones dedicated to cashew nuts in the towns of **Bondoukou, Bouaké, Korhogo** and **Séguéla**, with the Bondoukou zone set to be operational in 2022.<sup>31</sup> The **United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** claims that increased local transformation will improve the livelihoods of cashew nut producers, as the export price of processed cashew nuts from India to the EU fetches 3.5 times more than that received by Ivorian products.<sup>32</sup>

Another challenge facing the cashew nut sector is illegal sale of the product. Coulibaly estimates that in 2020 between 150,000-200,000 tonnes of cashew nut were sold illegally to **Burkina Faso** and **Ghana**, an increase from 100,000 tonnes in 2019.<sup>33</sup> Coulibaly said the government is doing “*everything possible*” to limit the departure of Côte d’Ivoire’s wealth to neighbouring countries.<sup>34</sup> Measures outlined by the government to address the problem include imprisonment of up to 10 years for offenders, a 50m FCFA (\$89,000) fine and seizure of harvest of those caught smuggling cashew nuts.<sup>35</sup> However, the effectiveness and implementation of these measures has been called into question, as Coulibaly admits that cashew nut prices in neighbouring countries are more attractive.<sup>36</sup> A kilogram of cashew nut in Côte d’Ivoire fetches from 400-500 FCFA (\$0.71-0.89), while in Burkina Faso, it costs between 800-1,500 FCFA (\$1.43-\$2.69).<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, N’Kalo chief analyst **Pierre Ricaud** believes Côte d’Ivoire can capitalise further on the recent success of the cashew nut sector.<sup>38</sup> Ricaud suggests that Côte d’Ivoire should make better use of its proximity to importers based in the EU and US who source cashew nuts from Africa.<sup>39</sup> Ricaud also suggests that diversifying the export market to the **Middle East**, especially **Lebanon** and **Turkey**, and to **China**, would be a positive development for the sector.<sup>40</sup>

Greater collaboration with the private sector would also propel the cashew nut sector.<sup>41</sup> **BGFI Côte d’Ivoire** a branch of **Gabon**-based financial holdings **BGFI**, signed an agreement on 10 June with the **Banque Ouest-Africaine de Développement (BOAD)** (West African Development Bank), for a 10 billion FCFA (\$18m) loan to BGFI Côte d’Ivoire to enable the bank to purchase 80,400 tonnes of cashew nuts from local producers.<sup>42</sup> Côte d’Ivoire also obtained assistance from international stakeholders, receiving a \$200m, loan from the **World Bank** in 2018 to improve the competitiveness and processing capacity of the cashew nut sector.<sup>43</sup> The **United Kingdom (UK)**-based **Tony Blair Global Institute** is also advising the Ivorian government on how to improve the cashew nut sector (see *ARC Briefing Côte d’Ivoire April 2018*)

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<sup>31</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Jun 2021

<sup>32</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Jun 2021

<sup>33</sup> Le Monde, 15 Feb 2021

<sup>34</sup> Le Monde, 15 Feb 2021

<sup>35</sup> Le Monde, 15 Feb 2021

<sup>36</sup> Le Monde, 15 Feb 2021

<sup>37</sup> Le Monde, 15 Feb 2021

<sup>38</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Jun 2021

<sup>39</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Jun 2021

<sup>40</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Jun 2021

<sup>41</sup> Agence Ecofin, 18 Jun 2021

<sup>42</sup> Agence Ecofin, 1 Jul 2021

<sup>43</sup> World Bank, 10 Apr 2021

## Prime minister Patrick Achi launches agricultural training scheme

Prime minister **Patrick Achi** has announced the creation of an agriculture training programme that aims to enrol 500,000 youths between the ages of 15 and 25 as part of the national youth and civic service project.<sup>44</sup> Achi announced the programme on 5 July after meeting with sectoral professionals in the domains of livestock, fishery and food crops.

Achi claims the initiative will contribute to Côte d'Ivoire achieving its goal of fostering structural economic transformation by making workers in the agriculture sector better trained and more competitive.<sup>45</sup> Participants will be deployed to various domains including cocoa, mango and pineapple production.<sup>46</sup> The government will also set up research centres, establish partnerships with the private sector and seek new markets in order to improve the agriculture value chain.<sup>47</sup> Achi hopes the training programme will be incorporated into the **Plan National de Développement (PND)** (National Development Plan) 2021-2025, Côte d'Ivoire's short-term economic development agenda.<sup>48</sup>

## Health ministry starts mobile Covid-19 vaccination campaign

Côte d'Ivoire has initiated an intensive vaccination campaign in order to increase the pace of inoculation against **Covid-19**, which has been fairly slow.<sup>49</sup> The public health ministry reported on 18 July that Côte d'Ivoire had vaccinated 898,247 of its population of roughly 26 million against Covid-19 since beginning its vaccination rollout on 1 March.<sup>50</sup> **Institut National de l'Hygiène Publique de Côte d'Ivoire** (Ivorian public hygiene institute) director **Joseph Bri Vroh Bénié** said reluctance to get vaccinated can be attributed to fake news reports, which have suggested that various Covid-19 vaccines are being used to experiment on Africans.<sup>51</sup> Bénié noted that as more people get vaccinated and the population realises they are not experiencing major side effects, there will be greater adherence to the roll out.<sup>52</sup>

Bénié said Côte d'Ivoire's vaccination administration capacity has significantly increased. There are now over 400 vaccination sites and 12 mobile vaccination units.<sup>53</sup> The health ministry began a mobile vaccine roll out on 5 July, aiming to inoculate 1 million of Abidjan's 5 million inhabitants in busy areas such as open-air markets.<sup>54</sup> The government has also introduced innovative measures to encourage people to get inoculated, including offering free tickets to football matches for vaccinated individuals.<sup>55</sup> However, is still far from attaining its goal of vaccinating 20 million individuals, or 70% of the population, in order to attain herd immunity.<sup>56</sup>

The health ministry has also taken steps to acquire more vaccines. The **Conseil National de Sécurité** (national security council) reported on 1 July that Côte d'Ivoire had received a donation of 100,000 doses of the China-manufactured **Sinopharm** vaccine on 26 June as well as 100,000 doses of the UK-manufactured **Oxford/AstraZeneca** vaccine from **Mali** on 28 June.<sup>57</sup> The CNS said Côte d'Ivoire

<sup>44</sup> Koaci.com, 5 Jul 2021

<sup>45</sup> Koaci.com, 5 Jul 2021

<sup>46</sup> Abidjan.net, 5 Jul 2021

<sup>47</sup> Abidjan.net, 5 Jul 2021

<sup>48</sup> Abidjan.net, 5 Jul 2021

<sup>49</sup> Source, ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

<sup>50</sup> FratMat.info, 22 Jul 2021

<sup>51</sup> VOA, 25 Jun 2021

<sup>52</sup> VOA, 25 Jun 2021

<sup>53</sup> VOA, 25 Jun 2021

<sup>54</sup> Reuters, 5 Jul 2021

<sup>55</sup> VOA, 25 Jun 2021

<sup>56</sup> AIP, 24 May 2021

<sup>57</sup> Presidence.ci, 1 Jul 2021

would receive 1 million vaccines by the end of July.<sup>58</sup> Health minister **Pierre Dimba N’Gou** received a donation of 268,000 doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine as a donation from **France** on 18 July.<sup>59</sup>

As of 17 July, Côte d’Ivoire had registered 49,125 positive cases, 48,905 recoveries and 320 deaths.<sup>60</sup> The CNS on 1 July extended the national health state of emergency to 30 September.<sup>61</sup> While acknowledging that Côte d’Ivoire was faring significantly better than many of its African counterparts, the CNS called on the population to remain vigilant, adhere to social distancing, wear masks and get vaccinated, especially with the emergence of Covid-19 variants.<sup>62</sup>

## Planner

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

## Chronology

19 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. President **Alassane Ouattara** receives former **United Kingdom (UK)** prime minister **Tony Blair**, as they review the activities of the UK-based **Tony Blair Institute for Global Change** in Côte d’Ivoire;

17 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Primature.ci*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** reveals that Côte d’Ivoire will receive \$300m from the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)** in order to support firms operating in Côte d’Ivoire’s healthcare and medical sector;

17 Jul 2021 **The Hague (The Netherlands)** *Jeune Afrique*. Former minister **Charles Blé Goudé** receives his passport from the **Ivorian** embassy at The Hague, boosting the possibility of his return to Côte d’Ivoire for the first time since his arrest and transfer to **the International Criminal Court (ICC)** in 2011;

16 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The **Haute Autorité pour la Bonne Gouvernance (HABG)** (high authority for good governance) reports the indictment of 473 people for corruption, illicit enrichment, money laundering;

16 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Fruit and vegetable processing company **Transformation de Fruits et Legumes (TRAFRULE)** has launched activities at its 6 billion FCFA (\$10.7m) factory in the locality of **N’douci**, 113 km northwest of Abidjan;

16 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *AIP*. The **Organisation Interprofessionnelle Agricole de la filière Coton de Côte d’Ivoire** (interprofessional organisation of Ivorian cotton producers) reports Côte d’Ivoire produced 550,000 tonnes of cotton during the 2020/21 harvest season, making it the second largest producer in Africa, behind **Benin** and ahead of **Mali**;

14 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *APA*. The **World Bank** has signed an agreement to lend the Ivorian government 110.9 billion FCFA (\$199.1m) aimed at supporting employment;

12 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *AIP*. **Conseil du Coton et de l’Anacarde** (cotton and cashew nut council) director general **Adama Coulibaly** says the institution aims to create an industrial cotton zone in Côte d’Ivoire’s second largest city **Bouaké** in collaboration with the trade and industry ministry;

11 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *APA*. Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** describes his visit to former president **Henri Konan Bédié** in the latter’s hometown of **Daoukro** as an “act

<sup>58</sup> *Presidence.ci*, 1 Jul 2021

<sup>59</sup> *FratMat.info*, 22 Jul 2021

<sup>60</sup> *AIP*, 18 Jul 2021

<sup>61</sup> *Presidence.ci*, 1 Jul 2021

<sup>62</sup> *Presidence.ci*, 1 Jul 2021

of reconciliation and recognition”;

8 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. **Occidental Gold Sarl**, Ivorian subsidiary of Australia-based **Perseus Mining**, has obtained a gold mining licence in the departments of **Tengréla, Madinani** and **Kouto** and will initially invest 3.36 billion FCFA (\$6m) in the project;

7 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Prime minister **Patrick Achi** announces the creation of a programme aiming to provide skills and training in various agricultural domains to 500,000 youths aged 15-25;

7 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. **United States**-based credit ratings agency **S&P Global Ratings** predicts Côte d’Ivoire will attain 6% economic growth rate in 2021;

7 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. Côte d’Ivoire raises 33 billion FCFA (59.6m) through a treasury bond issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

7 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Gouv.ci*. Transport minister **Amadou Koné** announces that the 311 billion FCFA (\$562.5m) second container terminal at the **Port Autonome d’Abidjan** (Abidjan autonomous port) will be complete by October 2022;

7 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Government spokesperson **Amadou Coulibaly** says the **Port Autonome d’Abidjan** (Abidjan autonomous port) has increased its capital from 16 billion FCFA (\$28.9m) to 100 billion FCFA (\$180.8m);

7 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Government spokesperson **Amadou Coulibaly** states former president **Laurent Gbagbo** has not had contact with state authorities since his return in June from 10 years of imprisonment and exile;

4 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The economy and finance ministry reports cashew nut exports generated 487.68 billion FCFA (\$881m) for Côte d’Ivoire in 2020, a 14% increase from 428.17 billion FCFA (\$773.4m) in 2019;

3 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *APA*. Mines, petroleum and energy minister **Thomas Camara** announces the end of the national electricity rationing exercise initiated in May following a drop in electricity production due to water supply shortages to hydroelectric dams;

2 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Cashew nut production from January to April 2021 reached 311,191 tonnes, a 78.7% year-on-year increase from 174,094 tonnes in 2020;

2 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. **France**-based real estate firm **Groupe Duval** has signed an agreement with the **Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Abidjan** to build a 22,000-m<sup>2</sup> real estate complex in Abidjan, which will cost €60m (\$71m) and whose funding will be supported by France-based development finance agency **Proparco** and France-based bank **Société Générale**;

1 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. The **Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement** (West African Development Bank) and **BGFI Côte d’Ivoire** have signed a 10 billion FCFA (\$18m) loan agreement that will enable the latter to purchase 80,400 tonnes of cashew nuts from Ivorian producers;

1 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. **Souleymane Diallo**, lawyer for exiled former prime minister and **Assemblée Nationale** (National Assembly) president **Guillaume Soro**, says he will appeal the life imprisonment sentence served on Soro, at the **African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)**;

1 Jul 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Budget minister **Moussa Sanogo** states that Côte d’Ivoire has lost 10 billion FCFA (\$18m) in revenue since the implementation of the

Economic Partnership Agreement in 2019;

30 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*. Planning minister **Nialé Kaba** says the **Programme National du Développement (PND)** (national development plan) 2021-2025 will see 59,000 billion FCFA (\$106.5 billion) invested in the economy;

29 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. The government announces the construction of two solar plants at **Laboa** and **Touba**, in the **Bafing** region of Côte d'Ivoire, which will have a combined production capacity of 60 megawatts (MW);

28 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The **Conseil du Cafe-Cacao (CCC)** (Cocoa and Coffee Council) reports that cocoa export sales have reached 1.18m tonnes, putting Côte d'Ivoire on track to reach its 2020/21 harvest season target of 1.6m tonnes;

27 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** makes his first appearance outside of Abidjan since his return from 10 years of exile, visiting his village of **Mama** in the **Gagnoa** district of western Côte d'Ivoire;

25 Jun 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. The **Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement (BOAD)** (West African Development Bank) approves a 52 billion FCFA (\$94.2m) loan to the Ivorian government to carry three projects in the energy, transport and agriculture domains;

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