

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING**Côte d'Ivoire Briefing February 2021**

Côte d'Ivoire Summary 24 February 2021

The Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI) (independent electoral commission) validates 1,266 candidatures for 255 parliamentary seats in the 6 March legislative elections, which will see the participation of Côte d'Ivoire's three leading political parties in the same election for the first time since 2010. Supporters of exiled former president Laurent Gbagbo (2000-2010) call on the government to take more concrete steps to facilitate his return to Côte d'Ivoire. The government raises €850m (\$1.03 billion) in a re-opened Eurobond sale, which was oversubscribed by 3.4 times the economy and finance ministry's target, obtaining its lowest ever interest rate, a 4.3% yield. Côte d'Ivoire rises two places to 104th out of 180 countries in Germany-based Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), improving its score from 35 to 36.

Political parties ready for 6 March legislative elections

The stage is set for **Côte d'Ivoire** to hold legislative elections on 6 March.¹ This will be the first election since the 2010 presidential contest in which the three leading political parties – the ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)**, opposition **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)**, and both factions of the **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** – are participating.² Since the 2010 elections, only the government-recognised wing of the FPI has taken part in elections, with the faction aligned to exiled former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2010) having boycotted all the elections since then. The participation of leading opposition parties may help to restore some of the legitimacy lost as a result of the opposition's boycott of the 31 October presidential elections.³

The **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) announced on 31 January that it had validated 1,266 candidates to contest elections across 255 constituencies.⁴ Government spokesperson and communications minister **Sidi Tiémoko Touré** declared on 3 February that election campaigning would run from 26 February to 4 March.⁵ Campaigning is taking place despite the decision by the **Conseil National de Sécurité (CNS)** (national security council) to implement a national health state of emergency across the country from 21 January to 28 February, due to rising **Covid-19** cases.⁶

After Côte d'Ivoire's leading opposition parties announced their decision in December to participate in the legislative elections, **Ensemble pour la Démocratie et la Souveraineté (EDS)** president **Georges-Armand Ouégnin** said the opposition planned to adopt a common electoral strategy (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire January 2021*).⁷ However, rather than establishing a broad-based opposition alliance, the PDCI and EDS, which represents the FPI faction supporting Gbagbo, formed a partnership

¹ Abidjan.net, 4 Feb 2021

² ARC Côte d'Ivoire analyst

³ Abidjan-based researcher

⁴ Abidjan.net, 1 Feb 2021

⁵ Abidjan.net, 4 Feb 2021

⁶ AA, 21 Jan 2021

⁷ BBC, 7 Jan 2021

to the exclusion of the FPI's government-recognised faction led by former prime minister **Pascal Affi N'Guessan**.⁸

Despite their collaboration, the PDCI and EDS will present multiple candidates in certain localities.⁹ In total, the EDS will field 103 candidates while the PDCI will present 136 candidates. PDCI executive secretary **Maurice Guikahué** will challenge former MP and FPI vice president **Odette Lorougnon** for his **Gagnoa** seat.¹⁰ Despite his reluctance to join the PDCI-EDS alliance, Affi N'Guessan ensured the FPI would remain relevant in the elections by establishing a coalition with the **Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI)**, led by **Abdallah Albert Mabri Toikeusse**; the **Congrès Panafricain des Jeunes et des Patriotes (COJEP)** led by **Charles Blé Goudé**; and **Agir**, led by **Martial Ahipeaud**.¹¹ Affi N'Guessan described this alliance as a "*troisième voie*" (third way) that will present 100 candidates, including 60 from the FPI.¹² Affi N'Guessan will be a candidate in **Bongouanou**.

The RHDP's electoral launch was less dramatic. President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present) presided over a candidate investiture ceremony on 16 February in **Abidjan**.¹³ The RHDP is fielding 254 candidates in 204 of 205 constituencies.¹⁴ Ouattara called on RHDP members to mobilise voters to assure the party's victory:

*"I am sure that we will win with a large majority. You have my blessing and support. I know the Assemblée Nationale (national assembly) will be in the colours of the RHDP."*¹⁵

The RHDP currently holds 148 of 255 seats in the national assembly and aims to build on or at least maintain its absolute majority, which requires winning at least 128 seats.¹⁶ The RHDP has deployed several cabinet ministers to run in their respective constituencies in order to improve the RHDP's chance of reaching its goal.¹⁷ Prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko**, who is currently on medical leave in **France**, will run in **Séguéla**.¹⁸ Other noteworthy candidates include:

Cabinet minister and position	Contested Constituency
Kandia Camara (national education)	Abobo
Patrick Achi (secretary general)	Adzopé
Adama Bictogo (RHDP executive director)	Agboville
Ally Coulibaly (foreign affairs)	Dabakala
Sidi Touré (communication and media)	Béoumi

The opposition's inability to establish a common strategy against the RHDP will significantly benefit the ruling party.¹⁹ However, the return of the pro-Gbagbo faction to the electoral scene may see the RHDP lose seats in traditional FPI strongholds in western Côte d'Ivoire and certain communes of Abidjan.²⁰ The PDCI will look to consolidate its position in country's central and eastern regions.²¹

⁸ Jeune Afrique, 1 Feb 2021

⁹ Koaci.com, 26 Jan 2021

¹⁰ Koaci.com, 26 Jan 2021

¹¹ Jeune Afrique, 1 Feb 2021

¹² Jeune Afrique, 1 Feb 2021

¹³ Abidjan.net, 17 Feb 2021

¹⁴ Abidjan.net, 17 Feb 2021

¹⁵ Abidjan.net, 17 Feb 2021

¹⁶ Jeune Afrique, 10 Feb 2021

¹⁷ Jeune Afrique, 10 Feb 2021

¹⁸ Jeune Afrique, 10 Feb 2021

¹⁹ Abidjan-based researcher

²⁰ Abidjan-based researcher

²¹ Abidjan-based researcher

Gbagbo supporters mobilise for former president's return from exile

Members of the **Gbagbo ou Rien** (Gbagbo or nothing) faction of the opposition Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) have called on the government to take concrete steps towards facilitating the return of former president Gbagbo from exile.²² **Assoa Adou**, secretary general of the FPI's Gbagbo-aligned faction, decried the perceived lack of progress with respect to Gbagbo's return to Côte d'Ivoire.²³ Adou, whom Gbagbo has mandated to handle the logistics of his long-awaited return, said there has been no significant progress since a 6 January meeting with prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** to discuss Gbagbo's return.²⁴ In December, Gbagbo obtained copies of his ordinary and diplomatic passport and a trip to Côte d'Ivoire was earmarked for the same month.²⁵ However, President Ouattara has not yet given authorisation for him to return. Ouattara reportedly wants Gbagbo to return after the conclusion of the appeal procedure lodged against him at the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** at **The Hague (Netherlands)**.²⁶ Adou called on the government to create the necessary conditions within a reasonable period of time to ensure Gbagbo's return and announced the creation of a national reception committee to prepare for this. The committee's first meeting was set to take place on 24 February.²⁷

The ICC acquitted Gbagbo in January 2019 of charges related to crimes committed during the 2010-2011 Ivorian post-electoral crisis. Since his acquittal, Gbagbo has been resident in **Brussels (Belgium)** (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire February 2019*)²⁸ but has expressed his desire to return to Côte d'Ivoire. However, Gbagbo received a 20-year jail sentence for his alleged role in the robbery of the Ivorian branch of the **Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO)** (central bank of West African states) during the 2010-2011 post-election crisis.

Gbagbo's potential return has long been a thorn in the side of the Ivorian ruling camp, as Ouattara maintains that the right conditions need to be in place.²⁹ In a speech to the diplomatic corps on 5 February Ouattara noted that consolidation of peace, security, reconciliation and social cohesion are his priorities for his presidential mandate.³⁰ However, these cannot be achieved unless the Gbagbo question is resolved.³¹ Gbagbo's son, **Michel Gbagbo**, has accused Ouattara of purposely stalling the end of his father's exile.³² Leading Ivorian opposition leaders share the same sentiment; PDCI executive secretary **Maurice Guikahué** during a 9 February meeting with Bakayoko reiterated the need for all the country's major political figures to come together in dialogue to promote reconciliation.³³

Reconciliation minister **Kouadio Konan Bertin** (popularly known as **KKB**) stated on 18 February that he would meet Ivorian exiles in **Accra (Ghana)** and Gbagbo in Brussels.³⁴ Konan did not provide a date for the two trips, but said Ouattara had given him the green light to do so.³⁵ Konan described Gbagbo as a "*major figure*" in Ivorian politics "*whose opinion counts*" and believes Gbagbo's return will be a major step towards consolidating peace.³⁶

²² Koaci.com, 11 Feb 2021

²³ Koaci.com, 11 Feb 2021

²⁴ RFI, 11 Feb 2021

²⁵ RFI, 11 Feb 2021

²⁶ Koaci.com, 11 Feb 2021

²⁷ Koaci.com, 11 Feb 2021

²⁸ RFI, 15 Jan 2019

²⁹ Abidjan-based researcher

³⁰ RFI, 5 Feb 2021

³¹ Abidjan-based researcher

³² Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2021

³³ Abidjan.net, 10 Feb 2021

³⁴ Africanews, 18 Feb 2021

³⁵ Africanews, 18 Feb 2021

³⁶ Africanews, 18 Feb 2021

Eurobond sale nets €850m

The economy and finance ministry confirmed on 8 February that Côte d'Ivoire has raised €850m (\$1.03 billion) in a re-opened **Eurobond** sale. The sale was oversubscribed 3.4 times the target set by the economy and finance ministry and in the process, Côte d'Ivoire obtained its lowest ever interest rate, a 4.3% yield.³⁷ This is Côte d'Ivoire's second successful Eurobond operation since the start of the **Covid-19** pandemic following the €1 billion (\$1.2 billion) Eurobond issue carried out in November 2020 (see *ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire December 2020*).³⁸ Côte d'Ivoire's ability to attract financial debt market investors and obtain low interest rates is testament to the attractiveness of Ivorian Eurobonds.³⁹

The Eurobond is divided into two tranches.⁴⁰ The first tranche saw Côte d'Ivoire derive €600m (\$729.9m) worth of bonds, with a yield of 4.3% and maturity in 2032. The second tranche, worth €250m (\$304.1m) obtained a yield of 5.75% and will mature in 2048.⁴¹

The bond issue forms part of the government's public debt and medium-term debt management strategy, in line with previous **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** recommendations.⁴² Although the government had planned the Eurobond sale to take place in 2021, it reconsidered the timeframe due to cash flow issues related to challenges in the cocoa sector and the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.⁴³ Multinational investment bank **Rothschild & Cie** advised the government that favourable rates made this the ideal time to carry out a bond issue.⁴⁴ The government was also keen to conclude the operation before recommencing negotiations with the IMF on the implementation of a new economic reform programme.⁴⁵ The government appointed the trio of France-based **BNP Paribas**, **United States**-based **JP Morgan Chase** and **United Kingdom**-based **Standard Chartered** to manage the Eurobond sale,⁴⁶ which was subsequently issued in **Dublin (Ireland)** and **Luxembourg**.⁴⁷

The economy and finance ministry said the 4.3% yield was the lowest Côte d'Ivoire had derived from a Eurobond sale, surpassing the 5% yield obtained during the 2020 issue.⁴⁸ The ministry noted the reduction of the yield for the reopened 2048 bond, which fell from 6.625% to 5.75%, was an indication of investors' appetite for long-term maturities.⁴⁹ The Eurobond funds will be used to finance the 8,400 billion FCFA (\$15.5 billion) 2021 budget, which the Ivorian government intends to partially finance by contracting 2,000 billion FCFA (\$3.7 billion) in debt.⁵⁰

Côte d'Ivoire's ability to consistently attract investors for regional and international bond issues is due in large part to the country's positive macroeconomic indicators. The country experienced economic growth above 7% from 2012-2019.⁵¹

Côte d'Ivoire improves two places in corruption rankings

Côte d'Ivoire has experienced its first ranking improvement since 2017 in **Germany**-based **Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)**.⁵² The index is designed

³⁷ Reuters, 9 Feb 2021

³⁸ Sika Finance, 25 Nov 2020

³⁹ RFI, 13 Feb 2021

⁴⁰ Bloomberg, 8 Feb 2021

⁴¹ Bloomberg, 8 Feb 2021

⁴² Koaci.com, 10 Feb 2021

⁴³ Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2021

⁴⁴ Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2021

⁴⁵ Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2021

⁴⁶ Bloomberg, 8 Feb 2021

⁴⁷ Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2021

⁴⁸ Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2021

⁴⁹ Bloomberg, 8 Feb 2021

⁵⁰ Jeune Afrique, 12 Feb 2021

⁵¹ Sika Finance, 17 Feb 2021

⁵² Corruptions Perception Index, 28 Jan 2021

to give a sense of public sector corruption, rating countries on a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).⁵³ In the latest CPI rankings, Côte d'Ivoire placed 104th out of 180 countries, compared to 106th in 2019. Côte d'Ivoire's score increased for the first time since 2017, rising from 35 out of 100 in 2019 to 36 in 2020.⁵⁴

Transparency International CPI rankings: Cote d'Ivoire							
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ranking	115/175	106/168	108/176	103/180	105/180	106/180	104/180
Score	32	32	34	36	35	35	36

Transparency International describes Côte d'Ivoire as one of **sub-Saharan Africa's** best performers over the last decade, improving its score by nine points since 2013.⁵⁵ In the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, only Senegal has made a similar improvement during the timeframe.⁵⁶ The 2019 CPI report, released in January 2020, acknowledged that Côte d'Ivoire had made significant legal, institutional and policy reforms in order to address corruption since the end of the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis.⁵⁷ Some noteworthy measures include:

- Establishment in 2013 of **Plan Nationale de Bonne Gouvernance et de Lutte Contre la Corruption** (national plan for good governance and the fight against corruption);
- Establishment in 2013 of the **Haute Autorité pour la Bonne Gouvernance** (higher authority for good governance);
- Establishment in 2012 of the **Brigade de Lutte Contre la Corruption** (anti-corruption brigade), which oversees the asset declaration of 4,600 high-ranking officials.⁵⁸

Other organisations have also noted Côte d'Ivoire's improvement in fighting corruption since 2013. Côte d'Ivoire was the only African country to have improved in all 14 sub-categories of the **Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)** from 2013 to 2018.⁵⁹ The 2019 **African Governance Report**, produced by the UK-based **Mo Ibrahim Foundation**, indicates that from 2014 to 2017 Cote d'Ivoire registered the third-highest improvement in the sub-category of transparency and accountability, obtaining 33.3 points out of 100 throughout that period.⁶⁰ However, the 2016 **World Bank Enterprise Survey** noted that 73.6% of business people interviewed, identified corruption as a major constraint to doing business in Côte d'Ivoire, which was above the sub-Saharan African average of 41.6%.⁶¹

Côte d'Ivoire fares worse than some of its ECOWAS counterparts such as Ghana and **Senegal**, which have a similar size economy and similar governance model.

TI 2020 CPI Rankings: Regional comparison					
Cape Verde	Senegal	Ghana	Cote d'Ivoire	Guinea	Nigeria
41/180	67/180	75/180	104/180	137/180	149/180
58	45	43	36	28	25

⁵³ Corruptions Perception Index, 28 Jan 2021

⁵⁴ Corruptions Perception Index, 23 Jan 2020

⁵⁵ Corruptions Perception Index, 28 Jan 2021

⁵⁶ Corruptions Perception Index, 28 Jan 2021

⁵⁷ Corruptions Perception Index, 23 Jan 2020

⁵⁸ Transparency International Cote d'Ivoire, 23 May 2018

⁵⁹ The Africa Report, Dec 2018

⁶⁰ 2019 African Governance Report

⁶¹ Transparency International Cote d'Ivoire, 23 May 2018

Planner

6 Mar 2021 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) *Jeune Afrique*. Legislative elections;

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

Chronology

22 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire will launch a 65 billion FCFA (\$120.6m) "*obligation de relance*" (ODR) (stimulus bond) on the **West African Economic Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

22 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Orange Bank Africa (OBA)**, a branch of **France**-based telecoms company **Orange**, has registered 350,000 new members since the launch of activities in July 2020, according to CEO **Jean-Louis Mennan**;

22 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. **United States**-based legal group **International Rights Advocates (IRAdvocates)** launches a court case against Côte d'Ivoire's eight largest cocoa producers on behalf of eight **Malian** nationals who accuse the companies of employing them as underage plantation workers from 2009-2011;

21 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Conseil du Coton et de l'Anarcade** (cotton and cashew nut council) director general **Adama Coulibaly** has set a cashew nut production target of 850,000 tonnes for Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest cashew nut producer, which recorded output of 848,700 tonnes in 2020;

20 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Jeune Afrique*. Prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** travels to **France** on medical leave;

19 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Former prime minister and opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** leader **Pascal Affi N'Guessan** says the opposition platform established by former president **Henri Konan Bédié** in the lead up to the October 2020 presidential elections, no longer exists;

19 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. The **World Bank** signs the "**COVID-19** Emergency Budget Support Credit", agreement with the Ivorian government to provide the latter with a 166 billion FCFA (\$308m) loan;

19 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. State-owned airline **Air Côte d'Ivoire** receives **Airbus A320Neo**, its third aircraft obtained from the **France**-based aircraft manufacturer;

19 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Reuters*. **United States**-based environmental group **Mighty Earth** reports Côte d'Ivoire lost 47,000 hectares (116,000 acres) of forest in its cocoa-growing regions in 2020;

18 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AIP*. The **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) will distribute voting cards from 20-27 February ahead of 6 March legislative elections;

17 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. President **Alassane Ouattara** authorises 254 candidates to represent the ruling **Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix (RHDP)** in the 6 March legislative elections;

13 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Economy and finance ministry deputy cabinet director **Vassogbo Bamba** reports Côte d'Ivoire raised 1,000 billion FCFA (\$1.8 billion) on the **Bourse Régionale des Valeurs Mobilières (BRVM)** (regional stock market) in 2020;

12 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire intends to raise 71.5 billion FCFA (\$132.2m) through a treasury bill issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** regional financial market;

12 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) president **Ibrahime Coulibaly-Kuibiart** says the CEI is ready for the 6 March legislative elections;

12 Feb 2021 Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) *RFI*. Opposition **Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI)** secretary general **Assoa Adou** announces the creation of a welcome committee in anticipation of exiled former president Laurent Gbagbo's return to Côte d'Ivoire;

11 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Exiled opposition **Congrès Panafricain pour la Justice et l'Égalité des Peuples (Cojep)** president and former minister **Charles Blé Goudé** denies claims that he will accept a cabinet appointment after the 6 March legislative elections;

9 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Government launches 108 billion FCFA (\$200m) project to improve water access in the economic capital, Abidjan;

9 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Reuters*. Finance ministry reports Côte d'Ivoire has raised €850m (\$1.03 billion) in a re-opened **Eurobond** sale that was oversubscribed 3.4 times the target amount;

9 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AIP*. Opposition **Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)** executive secretary **Maurice Guikahué** meets prime minister **Hamed Bakayoko** and expresses desire for dialogue to take place between Côte d'Ivoire's main political leaders;

9 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. **Direction Générale des Impôts (DGI)** (general tax directorate) head **Abou Sié Ouattara** reports Côte d'Ivoire raised 2,352.1 billion FCFA (\$4.3 billion) in taxes in 2020, compared to 2,295.9 billion FCFA (\$4.2 billion) in 2019, indicating a 56.2 billion FCFA (\$103.9m) year-on-year improvement;

6 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Le Nouveau Réveil*. **Canada**-based gold miner **Barrick Gold** CEO **Mark Bristow** reports the company had invested \$1.2 billion in the **Tongon** gold mine by the end of 2020;

6 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *RFI*. The **Tribunal Correctionnel d'Abidjan** (Abidjan criminal court) sentences four **Italian** nationals to four years' imprisonment and 100m FCFA (\$183,718) fines after finding them guilty of drug trafficking;

5 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Mining Review Africa*. **Canada**-based gold miner **Barrick Gold's Tongon** mine produced a total of 284,863 ounces (8.076 tonnes) of gold in 2020;

5 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. The **Banque d'Investissement et de Développement de la CEDEAO (BIDC)** (**ECOWAS** Investment and Development Bank) grants Côte d'Ivoire a \$25m loan to construct 11 metal bridges that will allow farmers to transport their products to consumer markets;

4 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** says Côte d'Ivoire could raise 360 billion FCFA (\$661.3m) through the application of a carbon tax;

4 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. Government spokesperson **Sidi Tiémoko Touré** announces campaigns for the 6 March legislative elections will run from 26 February to 4 March;

2 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. Ivorian cocoa producer consortium **Groupement des Négociants Ivoiriens (GNI)** has addressed a complaint to the country's cocoa regulator, the **Conseil Café Cacao (CCC)** (cocoa and coffee council), regarding the monopoly of multinational corporations over the purchase of Ivorian cocoa;

2 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Financial Afrik*. Côte d'Ivoire raises 71.5 billion FCFA (\$131.3m) through a treasury bill issue on the **West African Economic and Monetary Union**

(**WAEMU**) regional financial market;

1 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Koaci.com*. **Commission Nationale Droits de l'Homme (CNDH)** (national human rights commission) suggests that perpetrators of electoral violence should be judged in a court of law in order to discourage future outbreaks of such violence;

1 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire and **Mali** become the first two **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** members to receive an extension under the **Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI)**;

1 Feb 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. Petroleum, energy and renewable energy minister **Abdourahmane Cissé** announces that the government will issue a tender for the exploration of three oil wells in 2021;

31 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Laurent Lokou** is appointed director general of state-owned air carrier, **Air Côte d'Ivoire**;

31 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA*. The **Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI)** (independent electoral commission) validates the candidatures of 1,266 individuals who will run in the 6 March legislative elections;

29 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Businessman **Bernard Koné Dossongui** has inaugurated a 50 billion FCFA (\$92.1m) cement factory in the **Akoupé-Zeudji PK24** industrial zone outside of Abidjan, which will have an annual production capacity of 1.5m tonnes;

26 Jan 2021 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Abidjan.net*. **Fonds de Garantie des Crédits aux PME (FGPME)** (SME credit and guarantee fund) president **Marcellin Zinsou** announces the government will dedicate 110 billion FCFA (\$202.3m) to improve the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

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