

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Côte d'Ivoire Monthly Briefing July 2024

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Angola's President João Lourenço (2017-present) makes a state visit to Côte d'Ivoire between 26 June and 28 June, at the invitation of President Alassane Ouattara (2010-present). The arrest of 13 suspected jihadist extremists in the north highlights once again the volatile situation at the border, as tensions with Burkina Faso continue to mount. Extreme rainfall in Abidjan and elsewhere during June and July kills at least 30 people and exposes the deficiencies in the government's approach to the recurring problem.

Angola's President João Lourenço arrives for state visit

Angola's President **João Lourenço** (2017-present) made a state visit to **Côte d'Ivoire** between 26 June and 28 June, at the invitation of President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present).¹ In the course of this visit, the two countries concluded 14 bilateral agreements that cover a wide range of areas and sectors, including agriculture, mining, energy, oil extraction, security, natural resource management and culture.² There were also 50 business representatives in Lourenço's delegation, who Ouattara invited to assess opportunities during a business forum.³

The visit comes at a time when these important economic and geopolitical actors in their respective regions - **Southern Africa** and **West Africa** – seek to match their ambitions and learn from each other's expertise. Notably, the two countries also sit at either end of the **Gulf of Guinea**, where piracy is a relatively small but growing problem. The security agreement between Côte d'Ivoire and Angola intends to intensify cooperation in this area as well, with the objective to contain the problem.

Being **Sub-Sahara Africa's** second largest oil producer after **Nigeria**, Angola has had decades of experience in offshore oil extraction, promoting local content and the employment of nationals at all levels in the sector. Côte d'Ivoire is set to become an important oil producer from its offshore fields and is emphasising the importance of local content and job creation. Côte d'Ivoire wants Angola's input in all these areas.

In addition, Angola's state oil company **Sonangol** holds a 20% share in Côte d'Ivoire's refinery, **Société ivoirienne de raffinage (SIR)**, that it does not want. The presidential summit has been effective in de-blocking the situation, with Côte d'Ivoire agreeing that Sonangol can withdraw its capital, and opened the way to cooperation in different areas.⁴

Angola, meanwhile, is seeking to diminish its excessive dependency on oil revenue and diversify its economy. Angola wants to develop commercial agriculture, and with its fertile land now largely free of landmines from the 1961 – 2002 wars, it can pursue this. The country wants to understand how to transform agricultural produce and promote agriculture-related scientific research, areas where Côte d'Ivoire has a competitive edge.⁵

The first bilateral cooperation agreement between Côte d'Ivoire and Angola was signed in 1985 between the then presidents **Félix Houphouët-Boigny** (1960-1993) and **José Eduardo dos Santos**

¹ Fraternité Matin, Abidjan, 26 June

² Diario Independente, Luanda, 27 June 2024; Agence ivoirienne de presse, Abidjan, 27 June 2024

³ RTI, Abidjan, 30 June 2024

⁴ Jeune Afrique, 4 July 2024

⁵ Agence ivoirienne de presse, Abidjan, 29 June 2024

(1979-2017) but they have been largely dormant until now. This state visit and the agreements signed signal that both countries' governments want that to change.

Arrests of presumed jihadist extremists highlight continued border insecurity

Local media reported on 13 July the arrest and subsequent transfer to **Abidjan** of more than a dozen suspected jihadist extremists, who had been apprehended during the preceding weeks along the northern border with **Burkina Faso**, a known hotspot for jihadist extremist presence and activity.⁶ The report added that the suspects would be brought before a judge and that the entire case rested under the personal supervision of defence minister **Téné Birahima Ouattara** and army chief of staff General **Lassina Doumbia**, suggesting that it was a serious operation.⁷ There is no known trial date. The arrests coincided with the deportation of 164 presumed refugees back to Burkina Faso, a measure the Ivorian authorities have described as "*isolated*".⁸

The arrests come amidst ever growing tensions with Burkina Faso and its junta under **Captain Ibrahim Traoré**, who continues to accuse Côte d'Ivoire of harbouring dissidents that want to destabilise Burkina Faso.⁹ Defence minister Ouattara has now formally denied all of the accusations in a 19 July declaration, qualifying them as "*nonsense*".¹⁰ Côte d'Ivoire is home to an estimated eight million migrants who originate from the **Sahel** zone - four million from Burkina Faso, three million from **Mali** and one million from **Niger**. In addition, the country hosts an estimated 64,000 refugees who have fled violence in Burkina Faso.¹¹

As Côte d'Ivoire continues to strengthen their own defence forces, there are also reports that both **Germany** and the **United States (US)** could be relocating their forces away from Niger, where they are no longer wanted, to Côte d'Ivoire.¹² The US were supposed to have been allocated space for a base near the northern town of **Odienné (Kabadougou Region)**.¹³ There has been no official confirmation or denial of these reports. In the case of **Germany**, the indications are a little clearer. German foreign minister **Annalena Baerbock** used the occasion of a mid-July official visit to Côte d'Ivoire, during which she held talks with Ouattara, to announce that Germany was ending its military cooperation with Niger.¹⁴ But no official information concerning a relocation to Côte d'Ivoire has been forthcoming.

The German and earlier US visits strengthen Côte d'Ivoire's position as a major actor in the international fight against terrorism and their presence would help bolster Côte d'Ivoire's defences. Tense relations between Côte d'Ivoire and its two northern neighbours Burkina Faso and Mali complicate the fight against jihadist terrorist or insurgents, who have come across the border and entered the northern regions of Côte d'Ivoire on several occasions and may do so again.

Extreme rainfall kills at least 30

Exceptional rainfall in June and July, principally in Abidjan but also in other urban centres like **Korhogo (Poro Region)**, has killed at least 30 people and led to large-scale material damage in the lower parts of the economic capital Abidjan, where the collapse of several multi-storey buildings was reported. As of late June, the rainfall had destroyed or damaged approximately 3,000 homes, leaving 16,000 people homeless.¹⁵

⁶ AfrikSoir, Abidjan, 17 July 2024

⁷ ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire analyst

⁸ Africanews, 19 July 2024

⁹ AfrikSoir, Abidjan, 19 July 2024

¹⁰ AfrikSoir, Abidjan, 19 July 2024

¹¹ Reliefweb, 22 July 2024. The numbers may still increase.

¹² L'Infodrome, Abidjan, 22 July 2024; Le Monde, 9 July 2024, Deutsche Welle, 12 July 2024

¹³ Le Monde, 9 July 2024

¹⁴ Deutsche Welle, 17 July 2024

¹⁵ Reliefweb, 24 June 2024; Le Monde, 11 July 2024

Estimates hold that one in five of the city dwellers in Abidjan, approximately 1.2 million people, live in areas prone to flood risks.¹⁶ Government responses have consisted of providing material assistance to the victims, but it has so far not commented on assessments about the effectiveness of its information campaigns prior to the rains informing inhabitants to free culverts, avoid blocking drains and vacating low-lying areas.¹⁷ Billboards carrying these messages had been placed on the streets as early as May. One aspect of this campaign was also the removal of structures deemed dangerous or illegal, such as a popular area in the **Yopougon** suburb that was razed to the ground amidst great controversy.¹⁸ A similar area was removed in the **Cocody-Angré** area, while another removal operation caused widespread riots in the **Port Bouët** area.

The origin of the resistance to government preventive actions is due to a number of factors, including poor communication and a mismatch between what the government intends to do and what it actually does¹⁹. In a typical scenario, people receive a warning, ignore it, bulldozers arrive, and riots begin. As a result, all communication coming from the authorities gets to be considered dishonest or suspect and thus ignored. Inhabitants also point out that areas that have been razed because of flood danger were never flooded in the first place.²⁰

The problem will persist and those planning on establishing homes and businesses in Abidjan and elsewhere will have to make a careful assessment of where they should and should not do so.

Planner

2025 (Côte d'Ivoire) African Development Bank (AfDB) annual meetings

2025 (Côte d'Ivoire) Presidential elections

Chronology

17 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA News*. The ruling **Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP)** spokesperson **Adjoumani Kouassi Kobenan** hosts a weekly press conference on the theme "*Why the RHDP will win the next presidential election*";

17 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Mining Weekly*. **China's Zijin Mining Group** announces it will take a 9.9% stake in **Canadian** miner **Montage Gold** through its brokered private placement;

11 Jul 2024 **Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)** *APA News*. Junta leader Captain **Ibrahim Traoré** says he has proof that there is a centre of operations in **Côte d'Ivoire** which aims to destabilise Burkina Faso while also alleging that he has proof that two **French** military bases exist in **Benin**;

10 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA News*. President **Alassane Ouattara** removes the director generals of **Cotton-Cashew Council** and the national broadcaster, **Radiodiffusion télévision ivoirienne (RTI)**, citing management and governance problems;

10 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Council of ministers authorises the construction of Côte d'Ivoire's largest gold mine, to be built by **Canada's Montage Gold**;

8 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Bloomberg*. The ruling **Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP)** continues rallying support for President **Alassane Ouattara** to run for a controversial fourth term in the 2025 election, despite Ouattara not confirming if he will run;

4 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Côte d'Ivoire raises 80 billion FCFA (\$132.07m) on the **Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UMOA)** (West African monetary union) public securities market;

¹⁶ Africanews, 11 July 2024

¹⁷ ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire analyst, Abidjan based

¹⁸ Abidjan.net, 22 Feb 2024; ARC Briefing Côte d'Ivoire analyst

¹⁹ Le Monde, 10 July 2024

²⁰ Le Monde, 11 July 2024

3 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Mining.com*. Environment ministry says a leak of toxic substance from **Canada**-headquartered **Endeavour Mining**'s operations in the south sickened people and killed fish;

2 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **Canada**-headquartered **Endeavour Mining** confirms it poured its first gold at its **Lafigué** mine;

2 Jul 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Mines minister **Mamadou Sangafowa Coulibaly** confirms again that the government is moving towards a revision of the mining code adopted in 2014;

28 Jun 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA News*. **Angola** and Côte d'Ivoire host an economic forum in Abidjan, signing three memoranda of understanding aimed at boosting bilateral trade;

27 Jun 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Agence Ecofin*. Council of ministers grants nine mining research permits to various companies lasting four years each;

27 Jun 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA News*. President **Alassane Ouattara** and **Angola's** President **João Lourenço** sign 14 bilateral agreements;

26 Jun 2024 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *APA News*. Council of ministers ratifies an agreement establishing a mortgage bank to provide financing for housing projects across **Africa**;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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