

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Côte d'Ivoire Monthly Briefing June 2026

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President Alassane Ouattara (2010-present) hosts his Beninese counterpart, Romuald Wadagni (2026-present) on 4 June to discuss peace and security in the region. Both countries have concerns about threats emanating from the three military-run neighbours to the north, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Mass demolition campaigns in the middle of the rainy season that may have left 160,000 people homeless in Abidjan raises humanitarian concerns and energise the political opposition. Partners in the Baleine offshore oil project, namely Italy's ENI, state-owned PETROCI and Netherlands-headquartered Vitol, approve a new phase of development, expected to increase oil production by 150% and gas production by 50%. The China Bridge and Road Corporation is building a \$208m theme park in Abidjan, which will contribute to an overall government strategy to make domestic and international tourism another vital building block of the national economy.

Ouattara meets his newly elected Beninese counterpart Romuald Wadagni

President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present) on 4 June [met](#) Benin's recently elected president, **Romuald Wadagni** (2026-present), at the presidential palace in **Abidjan** to discuss issues of mutual concern, including [commerce](#) and [other forms](#) of bilateral cooperation. Both sides [billed](#) the visit as one of "friendship and work".

Wadagni, [elected](#) as president of Benin on 24 May, was on a [first tour](#) of the region as the new head of state in a clear bid to reinforce friendships and mend ties with a variety of countries, principally divided into two blocks: the three military-run states of the **Alliance of the Sahel States (AES)**, namely **Mali, Burkina Faso** and **Niger**, and the 12-member regional bloc, the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, which the three Sahel states left in January 2025.

Relations between Benin and Côte d'Ivoire have been cordial, as have the personal exchanges between Ouattara and his Beninese counterparts, be they former presidents **Thomas Yayi Boni** (2006-2016) or **Patrice Talon** (2016-2026); Wadagni [wants](#) this cordial relationship to continue.

However, the two countries have very [low levels](#) of bilateral trade, with Côte d'Ivoire only ranking eighth on the 2024 list of countries Benin imports wares from and not at all on its export destination list. Rather, the overarching themes of their relationship are peace and security. Benin and Côte d'Ivoire both have concerns about the security situation in the north of their countries, which have been to a greater or lesser extent faced armed [incursions](#) by non-state [jihadist groups](#) from Niger and Burkina Faso in the case of Benin and from Burkina Faso in the case of Côte d'Ivoire. The hostility of the AES juntas against [Benin](#) and [Côte d'Ivoire](#) is a matter of record and Wadagni's [tour](#) is clearly designed to take the poison out of these strained relations. The [message](#) on his **Facebook** page pointed in this direction:

"...our future will be shaped by dialogue, trust and cooperation... The work continues."

The December 2025 [failed coup attempt](#) in Benin, allegedly backed by one or more of the AES juntas (and thus, by association, **Russia**-backed), brought a swift response from ECOWAS with **Nigeria** and Côte d'Ivoire playing [leading roles](#) in terms of bringing the putschists to heel and stabilising the situation on the ground after it had become clear that the coup had failed. Côte d'Ivoire will continue to be implicated in Benin's efforts to keep the country relatively stable and, eventually, counter the

jihadist threat, while Wadagni will continue his delicate balancing acts between keeping his country inside ECOWAS while fending off the threats and challenges coming from the juntas and the jihadists.

Large-scale demolition campaigns in Abidjan backfire politically

After a pause that lasted roughly a year, the authorities in Abidjan have re-started their large-scale demolition campaign in early June, [justifying](#) it, as they routinely do, with the claim that they are “restoring urban order” and moving families away from dangerous and/or inhabitable areas.

The demolitions started in the **Vridi** zone, near the port, where an area known popularly as ‘Zimbabwe’ was razed to the ground on 2 June, rendering an estimated 40,000 people homeless and destroying their businesses. The operations [continued](#) in the **Port Bouët** area, of which Vridi is a part, and in a zone called **Koumassi Campement**, also in southern Abidjan, and in the **Yopougon** suburb, last year among the principal targets of the demolitions. There are estimates that up to 160,000 people [may have lost](#) their homes in the operations. Numerous observers have [pointed](#) out that these demolitions took place [in the middle of the rainy season](#), leaving people on the streets in the worst weather of the year. Residents have told the [media](#) they feel they have been treated “*worse than animals*”.

The force behind these actions is a very senior political operator within the ruling **Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP)**, **Ibrahim Cissé Baongo**, [governor](#) of the Autonomous District of Abidjan with the rank of minister and the executive secretary RHDP. Cissé Baongo has a long-standing and deeply-rooted loyalty to the party and Ouattara. One political commentator told ARC Briefing that the party must prepare itself for the end of Ouattara’s reign as the jockeying for position has begun. Being one of the most senior operators within the RHDP, Cissé Baongo is using these operations to assert his authority, not only within the Abidjan district but also and emphatically so, within the RHDP. The commentator added:

“There is no one to stop him, except the president, who has made no pronouncements on this issue. So, Cissé Baongo feels vindicated to proceed; he knows there are no more guardrails.”

His view is further confirmed by the fact that to date, Ouattara, who is on top of all matters political, [has not found it necessary](#) to comment on the issue. The government limits itself to [repeatedly stating](#) that the aim is “*to restore order in our cities*”.

While the objective in and of itself (settling people in safe and liveable conditions) are not called into question, [the methods are](#). There are indeed areas in the city that have been built up inappropriately or in the [wrong place](#). They could be in areas that are prone to flooding and/or erosion, under high-tension power lines or in areas that have been designated to give way for roads, bridges, the new city light railway system or new and better housing projects. However, public opinion simply [dismisses](#) government claims that all of the 176 areas designated for demolition are precarious or dangerous and is [sceptical](#) about government claims that all families previously dislodged have received the promised CFA 250,000 FCFA (\$432) compensation per family and have been re-housed. Instead, the new wave of demolitions has prompted certain unscrupulous businessmen to [engage](#) in some illegal demolition of their own; police have [arrested](#) some suspects who are awaiting trial.

Several civil society organisations have [demanded a temporary halt](#) to the demolitions, and [warned against](#) creating a new humanitarian crisis, especially in the current extremely adverse weather conditions. But it is opposition political parties that have attempted to make political capital out of the crisis. **Alain Adja**, the member of parliament (MP) representing Port Bouët for the **Parti démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire (PDCI)**, went to the site in Vridi and stated, “*fighting poverty does not mean fighting the poor*”.

Charles Blé Goudé of **Congrès panafricain pour la justice et l’égalité des peuples (Cojep)** visited the demolition sites in Koumassi to express his solidarity and [question](#) the legal basis for these operations. **Nady Gbagbo**, wife of former president **Laurent Gbagbo** (2000-2011) and an increasingly prominent figure in his **Parti des peuples africains – Côte d’Ivoire (PPA-CI)**

[denounced](#) the government's actions. As is the case with its handling of the cocoa crisis, the RHDP comes out of the demolition crisis looking aloof and detached from the mass of the people it still expects to vote for its politicians. The party will likely continue to sustain political damage because of this.

Baleine project attracts \$4 billion worth in investment

The three partners in the **Baleine** oil project, **Italy's** energy multinational **ENI**, Côte d'Ivoire's state oil company **PETROCI** and the **Netherlands**-based energy and commodities trader **Vitol**, [confirmed](#) on 25 May plans to with the Baleine Phase 3 development, which will significantly expand Côte d'Ivoire's oil and gas production. The partners [announced](#) their Final Investment Decision in the presence of mines, oil and energy minister **Mamadou Sangafowa-Coulibaly**. The project will be completed in three years and [cost](#) \$4 billion. Vitol [acquired](#) 30% of the Baleine project in September 2025, making it the second-largest stakeholder after ENI, which retains 47.25% of the project, while PETROCI holds 22.75%.

Baleine is the largest oil and gas deposit discovery ever made offshore Côte d'Ivoire. ENI [says](#) the new development will increase Côte d'Ivoire's oil production from the current level of around 60,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 150,000 bpd. Gas production will increase from 80 million to 120 million cubic feet.

These new figures tally fairly well with government projections and support a standing government policy to reduce import dependency. [According](#) to the **Plan National de Développement (PND) 2026 – 2030** (national development plan), which has now been made available to the public, petrol production should increase to just under 200,000 bpd by 2030, produced in nine operational oil fields. Refining capacity should also increase, with the state-run **Société ivoirienne de raffinage (SIR)** [having begun work](#) on its second refinery in October 2025. The government also wishes to see gas production increase to nearly 600 million cubic feet, which, given the pace of development, looks more difficult to attain. Nevertheless, the prediction is that any offshore gas [will serve](#) the domestic market.

The government [reports](#) that in 2024, sales from SIR covered 57.48% of the domestic market in terms of petrol products. Overall consumption of liquid petroleum products [nearly doubled](#) between 2015 and 2024. Current oil and gas discoveries and the newly projected production levels go a long way towards further reducing import dependency, although it is unclear whether the entire domestic market can eventually be served from domestic production.

China Road and Bridge Corp invests \$208m in an Abidjan theme park to boost tourism

Tourism minister **Siandou Fofana** [attended a ceremony](#) on 12 June launching the **Songon Parc Oriental**, located in a new western suburb of Abidjan, **Songon-M'brathé**, which **China Road and Bridge Corp (CRBC)** has invested \$208m in. The project which is still under construction, features a theme park, a hotel and public transport infrastructure. There are also plans for a school, a medical facility and a youth centre. The complex is expected to create approximately 3,000 jobs. CRBC was previously involved in building the city's [Fifth Bridge](#) (called '**Pont ADO**', after the president) and part of the new motorway near **Bouaké**, the country's second city. Songon Parc Oriental will open in October 2028.

The presence of the tourism minister indicates not only government support for the project itself but places the projected leisure park within the framework of the government's overall strategy to expand tourism and make it a more significant contributor to the national GDP. The minister developed these policy themes further on 17 June during a [meeting](#) at the prestigious **Sofitel** hotel (also known as the **Hôtel Ivoire**) in Abidjan, which marked the return to work of the **Conseil national du tourisme (CNT)** (national tourism council), the body tasked with developing the government's tourism strategy; the minister is the CNT's president. Selling the country as a major destination and promoting both domestic and international tourism, making the sector an economic engine and a job creator is an integral part of the government's PND.

During the 17 June meeting, Fofana noted that the goal is to bring Côte d'Ivoire up to the level of other tourism destinations on the continent, specifically highlighting **Morocco**. He told the meeting that tourism already represents 8.7% of GDP, bringing in 1.1 trillion FCFA (\$1.9 billion) in revenue and creating 675,000 jobs. He repeated the claim, frequently repeated in Ivorian media, that the country [received](#) between 6.3 million and 6.5 million visitors but the problem with this figure is that it has not been disaggregated; it is not possible to ascertain who came for business, family or leisure. The ministry's [own website](#) in November 2025 maintained the same revenue figure but put the job creation figure at 560,000 and stated that four million tourists had visited Côte d'Ivoire that year so far, which includes the estimated one million that came to the country at the start of the year for the **African Nations Cup** Côte d'Ivoire hosted.

Since the end of the 2010/2011 post-electoral crisis, the tourism sector has recovered. Attraction points also suffered a major setback following the March 2016 terrorist attack on the principal seaside resort of **Grand Bassam**. The government's strategy is to ensure that there is a broader appeal, making the country [attractive](#) because of its food, culture, music and the arts, its hospitality and its potential for ecotourism. Investments since 2011 have [resulted](#) in [more than 20,000 rooms](#) being added to the hotel sector and tourism, coming from a very low base, has been steadily expanding at the rate of an estimated 6% year-on-year. [Investing in infrastructure](#) has played an important part in this, as has the international promotion campaign **Sublime Côte d'Ivoire**, which the government launched in 2018 in a bid to [elevate](#) the country into the top five African tourist destinations.

Planner

8-10 Sep 2026 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) **Salon international de l'énergie, de l'électricité et des technologies en Côte d'Ivoire** (power and electricity expo)

18-22 Nov 2026 (**Côte d'Ivoire**) Second edition of **Salon Internationale des Ressources Extractives et Energétiques (SIREXE)** (international exhibition of extractive and energy resources)

Chronology

19 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *France24*. Côte d'Ivoire faces growing instability along its volatile border due to both the **Sahelian** jihadist threat and violent incursions by **Burkina Faso's** state-backed auxiliary militia, the **Volontaires pour la Défense de la Patrie (VDP)**, seeking to claim ownership of Ivorian villages;

17 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. Defence minister **Téné Birahima Ouattara** meets with **French** prime minister **Sébastien Lecornu** in **France** during the **Eurosatory 2026** defence exhibition to strengthen their long-standing strategic partnership;

15 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. **China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC)** plans to invest more than 120 billion FCFA (\$200m) in the development of a new tourism hub in Abidjan as part of efforts to expand the city's tourism and leisure infrastructure;

10 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. **Assemblée Nationale** (national assembly) president **Patrick Achi**, meets with his **French** counterpart, **Yaël Braun-Pivet**, in **Paris (France)** to strengthen bilateral relations and explore new avenues of cooperation;

6 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. The **African Development Bank (AfDB)** approves over 67 billion FCFA (\$112m) to expand electricity access in Côte d'Ivoire;

4 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. President **Alassane Ouattara** receives his **Beninese** counterpart, **Romuald Wadagni**, in Abidjan for a high-level working visit aimed at reinforcing bilateral cooperation and regional integration;

3 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Fratmat*. During the Council of Ministers, the government ratifies several funding agreements for climate change adaptation in the **Niger Basin**, approves an expansion of the **Northern Highway**, and grants new gold exploration permits;

2 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Reuters*. Côte d'Ivoire sells around one million metric tonnes of cocoa in export contracts for the 2026–27 main crop but is now slowing down sales due to concerns over a looming **El Niño** weather pattern;

2 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. Government exercises its option for an early buyback of the remaining \$153m of its **Eurobond** maturing in 2032, with the final payment scheduled for 30 June;

1 Jun 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *AFDB*. **African Development Bank Group** will host its 7th **Development Evaluation Week** from 15 – 17 June in Abidjan and online under the theme 'Catalysing Development Impact Across Africa's Borders';

28 May 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Africa Intelligence*. Ivorian security officials are currently developing a new military programming law for the 2026–2030 period to define the strategic framework for the country's armed forces;

26 May 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *Sika Finance*. A corporate consortium comprising state-owned oil firm, **Société Nationale d'Opérations Pétrolières de la Côte d'Ivoire (PETROCI)**, Italian multinational energy company, **Eni SpA**, and Netherlands-headquartered global energy commodities trading house, **Vitol Group**, approves a \$4 billion final investment decision for the third phase of the **Baleine** offshore oil and gas field development in Côte d'Ivoire;

23 May 2026 **Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)** *UNDP*. The **Business4Peace** regional consultation convenes in Abidjan, with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Mano River Union (MRU)** bringing government, civic and private sector leaders together to leverage regional trade and innovation as tools for peacebuilding;

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