

# CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Type of crisis: **FOOD CRISIS, INSECURITY** NO SEVERITY

## OUTLOOK

### **CIVIL CONFLICT AMONG DIVIDED ARMED FORCES AND DEMOBILISED OPPOSITION FIGHTERS** Latest update: 14/09/2017

#### PROBABILITY



#### OUTLOOK FOR SEPTEMBER—FEBRUARY

Mutinies and protests indicate a potential return to civil strife and armed violence in Côte d'Ivoire. Soldiers and former opposition forces have been involved in mutinies and protests against the government. The cohesion of the army and control over its factions appears to be weakening. In May, an arms cache was discovered in the home of an ally of the president of the national assembly, and the arms had been used during the mutinies. There is an increasing likelihood of civil conflict, particularly in Ouattara's northern strongholds of Bouaké and Yamoussoukro, Daloa, Abidjan, and San Pedro.

#### An uneasy peace

Tensions between the predominantly Muslim north of the country and the predominantly Christian south have aggravated by political rivals since 1993, resulting in civil war in 2002 and months of armed violence in 2010-2011. Recent events suggest violence may soon erupt again.

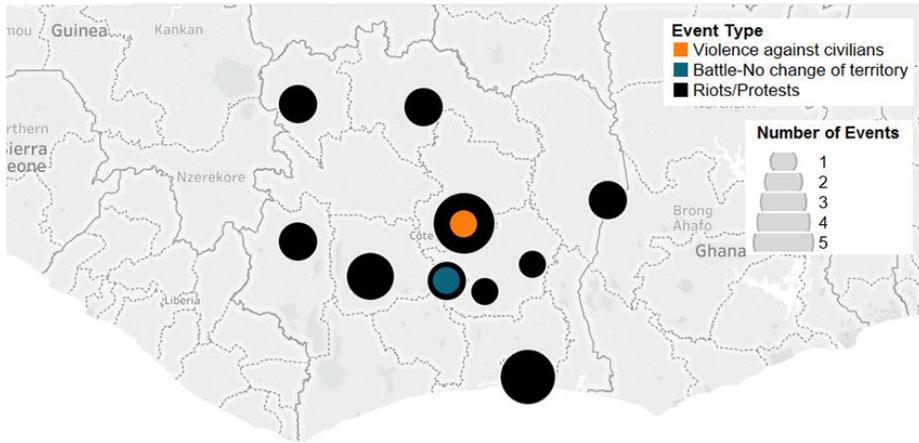
National identity was a major factor in the first presidential election campaign after the 33-year rule of President Houphouët-Boigny. Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim from the north with family links to Burkina Faso, was excluded on grounds relating to nationality. In the run-up to the next election, tensions relating to identity led to a military coup, with General Robert Gueï taking power, and introducing a new constitution that excluded Ouattara from running for president. Ethnic and religious polarisation continued under the winner of the 2000 election, Laurent Gbagbo, a Christian from the west of the country. Frustrations peaked and in 2002, northern leaders formed the Forces Nouvelles de Côte d'Ivoire (FNCI) and took control of the northern half of Côte d'Ivoire. Civil war between supporters of Gbagbo and the FNCI lasted five years.

As part of the peace in 2007, an exception was made to allow Ouattara to run for election in 2010. He won, but Gbagbo refused to cede power. He was forcibly removed by the FNCI, with the help of UN and French troops. The official death toll from this conflict, sometimes referred to as the 'Second Ivorian Civil War', was 3,000, with 300,000 people internally displaced, and 220,000 fleeing to Liberia. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/10/05/they-killed-them-it-was-nothing/need-justice-cote-divoires-post-election-crimes> After Ouattara took the presidency, some FNCI forces were supposed to follow a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme, while others were integrated into the state armed forces. Today ex-FNCI fighters make up more than one-third of the country's 22,000 active personnel. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39933868> However, the army remains fragmented, and deep divisions persist, both within the country and among political leaders. <http://africanarguments.org/2017/05/17/cote-divoire-the-mutiny-may-be-over-but-the-armys-problems-are-not/>

#### Mutinies and protests

Mutinies had protests have been held in previous years, but they have become more frequent, and more violent, in 2017. On 6 January 2017, ex-FNCI soldiers in Ouattara's stronghold of Bouake mutinied, demanding salary increases and bonus payments. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/ivory-coast-170106102552934.html> Soldiers fired rifles and rocket launchers into the air. A day later, the unrest spread to Abidjan and surrounding towns. The government partly settled the dispute with a one-time payment of five million CFA francs (USD 8,500) to each mutineer, and promised a further payment at the end of June. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ivorycoast-military-exclusive-idUSKBN18L2HP> President Ouattara replaced the military chief of staff, the senior commander of the national gendarmerie, and the director general of the police. Nonetheless, in the following weeks, soldiers and gendarmes in Yamoussoukro, and troops responsible for guarding the president, all protested over pay and bonuses. <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN15M1GK>

Figure 1: Mutiny Events by Event Type in Ivory Coast, from January - February 2017.



Source: ACLED

<http://www.crisis.acleddata.com/ivory-coast-february-2017-update/>

In May, mutineers protested with even greater force, after the mutineers' spokesman said the troops had dropped their remaining demands for payment and the pay deal was scrapped. Gunfire was heard in Bouake –the centre of the mutiny – Abidjan, Daloa, and San Pedro. Roads were barricaded, and schools and businesses forced to close. Soldiers were deployed, but refrained from advancing towards Bouake. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39933868> The government eventually agreed to pay all bonuses to all mutineers by the end of June.

The concern over the likelihood of armed violence is fuelled by the availability of arms. The DDR programmes that were implemented after the 2010–2011 civil war have not been wholly successful: according to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), at least 16,000 ex-combatants have not demobilised, while large amounts of weapons and ammunition remain unaccounted for by the Ivorian authorities. [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2016\\_254.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_254.pdf) FNCI commanders are reported to have acquired some 300 metric tons of weapons during the violence of 2010–11. [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2016\\_254.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_254.pdf) In May, mutineers seized arms from a cache in a house owned by an ally of Guillaume Soro, former leader of the FNCI and current president of the national assembly. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ivorycoast-military-idUSKBN18R1XL>

Soro is thought to be aiming for the presidency in 2020, when Ouattara will reach his two-term limit. Rather than portray himself as Ouattara's natural successor, it appears that he is placing himself in opposition. On 10 August this year, Soro announced the establishment of a new political party, L'Amicale des Forces Nouvelles, and there are suggestions that he is exploiting grievances among former FNCI, both within and outside the army, in order to gain support. <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/465298/politique/cote-divoire-des-partisans-de-guillaume-soro-annoncent-la-creation-de-lamicale-des-forces-nouvelles/> The army appears to be divided, with the loyalty of the former FNCI forces in doubt.

## PREDICTED DEVELOPMENTS

Former FNCI forces are highly likely to continue to protest, resulting in violent clashes with forces loyal to the government. Military discipline is likely to weaken further. Support for the government will fall as these signs of weakness grow, and Ouattara's rivals are likely to capitalise on divisions within the army in their attempts to gain power. The situation will spiral, with the government's weakening control over the armed forces bolstering the opposition's claim that President Ouattara cannot maintain stability in the country.

## Political divisions leading to armed confrontations

Armed violence is likely, as mutinies will receive political support, and there are parts of the country where former FNCI forces who did not join the army remain relatively organised and armed. There is a slight risk that the government will resort to direct confrontation in its attempts to control protests and mutiny. Intercommunal tensions make it likely that violence spreads beyond the military to directly involve the population.

## IMPACT



→ Roadblocks and the takeover of port cities will prevent the free movement of both civilians and humanitarian actors. National borders are likely to be closed if violence occurs in border areas – this happened at the border with Burkina Faso in May. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ivorycoast-military-burkina-idUSKCN18B25X>



There is a likelihood of displacement of civilians internally and into neighbouring communities and countries in the event that violence escalates into factional violence between supporters of President Ouattara and supporters of former President Gbagbo. Over 200,000 people were displaced during the 2010-2011 civil war. <http://www.unhcr.org/4d70cc209.html>



Displaced people will need shelter: those without relatives or friends to reside with may seek shelter in churches and communal places. <http://www.unhcr.org/4d70cc209.html>



Restricted access could put food security at risk in Bouaké, Yamoussoukro, and Abidjan initially. Blockades put up by soldiers on roads could prevent the movement of food supplies to markets. People who are fleeing are likely to suffer from food shortages and have little or restricted access to food. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-11916590> Host communities could have their food stocks depleted.



Access to affected populations could be hindered, due to barricaded roads and insecurity limiting access to health facilities. [https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia\\_57312.html](https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia_57312.html) Civilians risk being caught in crossfire, especially those protesting at the violence. Women risk being victims of sexual violence and rape as rape is used as a weapon in conflict. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unoci/elections.shtml> Violence will lead to the separation of children as families flee fighting, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and recruitment into armed groups.