



Cote d'Ivoire - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on the 5 December 2012

Information on the DOZOs including: Detentions/imprisonment carried out by them; Camps operated by this group including treatment of detainees

A report issued in June 2012 by the *United Nations Security Council* states:

“On 24 May, one person was killed when dozOs (traditional hunters) clashed with civilians in Ouragahio in the west. Meanwhile, dozOs reportedly continued to exercise security responsibilities in the west” (United Nations Security Council (29 June 2012) *Thirtieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire*, p.3).

This document also notes:

“Elements of FRCI and dozOs (traditional hunters) were also involved in cases of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention, sexual violence and rape” (ibid, p.8).

In June 2012 the *UNHCR* notes in a report that:

“Civilians in the west of the country belonging to ethnic groups which are, or are perceived to be, supportive of former President Gbagbo may still be at risk of illtreatment by elements of the FRCI, DozOs and unidentified armed men” (UNHCR (15 June 2012) *Interim Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Côte d'Ivoire*, p.19).

A report issued in March 2012 by the *United Nations Security Council* points out that:

“The situation with respect to the dozOs has become a matter of concern as a result of the recent crisis and the proliferation of weapons. Reportedly, there now are some 10,000 elements claiming to be or perceived as dozOs, while prior to the crisis there were only 1,000, creating fear and confusion among the local population. Some posing as dozOs use automatic weapons, while traditionally, dozOs were armed only with spears or long hunting rifles” (United Nations Security Council (29 March 2012) *Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire*, pp.5-6).

This document also states:

“Serious human rights violations, including: summary executions; torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; rape; arbitrary arrest and illegal detention; extortion and the seizure of private properties; and illegal occupation of private premises, continue to be committed by armed elements, including from FRCI and associated untrained armed elements, dozOs and other armed elements” (ibid, p.9).

Commenting on events of 2011, a report published in May 2012 by the *United States Department of State* notes:

“Dozos, or traditional hunters, and pro-Ouattara militia groups participated in reprisal killings, primarily in the western region of the country; although there was no confirmation of allegations that the Ouattara government provided financial, material, or logistical support to militia groups that were sympathetic to Ouattara and the FRCI, although investigations continued at year’s end” (United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, Cote d'Ivoire*, Executive summary).

In August 2011 *IRIN News* notes:

“They are dozos: a brotherhood of initiated traditional hunters renowned for their mystical powers, and to be found in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Mali. In Côte d'Ivoire in the 1990s the dozos began to assume a role of unofficial neighbourhood police - called in by some communities and authorities to control worsening crime amid inadequate state police protection” (IRIN News (1 August 2011) *Cote d'Ivoire: Dozo as protector, dozo as assailant*).

This document also points out that:

“There are currently 20,000 dozos in Côte d'Ivoire, according to Balla Dembélé, a dozo leader based in Duékoué” (ibid).

A report issued in July 2011 by *Amnesty International* notes:

“Amnesty International has also documented extensive crimes under international law and human rights violations committed by the Dozos, who have now taken on the character of a state-sponsored militia. These traditional hunters have become increasingly involved in the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire over the past decade. This has included providing security to Dioula populations that have been threatened and attacked during the last decade by security forces and militias loyal to former President Laurent Gbagbo” (Amnesty International (28 July 2011) *Côte d'Ivoire: "We want to go home, but we can't": Côte d'Ivoire's continuing crisis of displacement and insecurity*, p.23).

A report published by *Human Rights Watch* in October 2010 states:

“The security assistance provided by the Dozo is formalized through signed contracts, or selfdefense agreements, made between the Dozo and local authorities. Town chiefs, planters' and youth representatives, and others sign the agreement on behalf of a village providing compensation to the Dozo in exchange for their armed defense and policing of the village and its surrounding roads” (Human Rights Watch (22 October 2010) *Afraid and Forgotten, Lawlessness, Rape, and Impunity in Western Côte d'Ivoire*, p.55).

A report released in December 2012 by the *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* notes:

"In Man, Guiglo and Duekoue in the west, civil society representatives and community members expressed concern about unresolved land disputes, illicit circulation of arms and activities of Dozos, traditional hunters that have become a paramilitary group" (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (1 December 2012) *UN official urges "quick, thorough and credible" inquiries into serious human rights crimes in Côte d'Ivoire*).

In an article on displacement *IRIN News* in April 2012 states:

"Most displaced families told IRIN they could not return to their homes because they were destroyed, or because their farms were taken over by other groups and are now being guarded by armed guards or "dozos"" (*IRIN News* (26 April 2012) *Cote d'Ivoire: Displaced in west feel "forgotten"*).

No further information on these issues could be found among sources available to the RDC

References

Amnesty International (28 July 2011) *Côte d'Ivoire: "We want to go home, but we can't": Côte d'Ivoire's continuing crisis of displacement and insecurity*
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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

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Refugees International
Reliefweb
Reuters
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
UNHCR Refworld
World Organisation Against Torture/OMCT