

CÔTE D'IVOIRE:

IDPs face deepening protection crisis as political tensions rise again

A profile of the internal displacement situation

9 October, 2006

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OVERVIEW

IDPs face deepening protection crisis as political tensions rise again

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With the impossibility of holding elections by 31 October as scheduled, and the unwillingness of politicians to unblock the deepening impasse in the peace process, Côte d'Ivoire's 750,000 IDPs are increasingly in need of protection and assistance. Tensions have been rising across the country since the key processes of disarming both rebels and militia, and identifying and registering millions of voters, have failed to make progress amid violent protests and political wrangling. While President Laurent Gbagbo recently boycotted a meeting in New York aimed at putting the peace process back on track, and told UN peacekeepers that they should leave Côte d'Ivoire, it remains unclear what will happen at the end of October when his mandate runs out. At the same time both pro-government militia and rebels have been continuing to commit serious abuses against civilians with impunity, causing ongoing low-level displacement and hampering return, particularly in the volatile west of the country where ethnic tensions and violent inter-community clashes remain rife. The humanitarian situation of IDPs and other vulnerable groups has continued to deteriorate, particularly in the west and north of the country where access to basic social services is extremely limited. In rebel-held areas many public services are virtually non-existent, although in March 2006 school exams did take place in some districts for the first time in over three years. While the Ivorian government has taken encouraging first steps towards realising its responsibilities to IDPs – for example by assigning a focal point role to the Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims and the drafting of an IDP Action Plan – few concrete results have been achieved so far. Indeed the plight of IDPs will only begin to be addressed in a meaningful way once both government and rebels demonstrate genuine commitment to advancing the peace process and addressing the root causes of Côte d'Ivoire's conflict, which goes well beyond the mere holding of elections.

“Ivoirité” a root cause of the conflict

For more than three decades after independence from France in 1960, Côte d'Ivoire was a beacon of peace and stability in West Africa. The autocratic but tactical rule of the country's first President, Felix Houphouët-Boigny, ensured religious and ethnic harmony as well as economic prosperity until after his death in 1993. Houphouët-Boigny's successor, Henri Konan Bédié, sowed the seeds of ethnic discord in 1995 when he introduced the concept of “Ivoirité”, or “Ivorian-ness”. This was used to deny Ivorian citizenship to his main political rival, Alassane Ouattara, and thereby exclude him from running in elections held that year. Bédié insisted that Ouattara, a Muslim from the north of the country, was actually from Burkina Faso. Since that time there have been an increasing number of attacks on people of foreign descent (HRW, August 2001). About one quarter of Côte d'Ivoire's population of 16 million are immigrants, or descended from immigrants, many from neighbouring Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana and Niger.

The start of protracted political crisis was assured when the military, under the leadership of General Robert Gueï, overthrew the elected government of Konan Bédié in the country's first ever coup d'état, staged on Christmas Eve 1999. Although the coup was ostensibly prompted by soldiers' unhappiness over pay and conditions, it soon became apparent that, like Bédié, General Gueï was also ready to incite ethnic and religious rivalries in order to remove political opposition. Continuing the theme of “Ivoirité”, Gueï introduced even stricter eligibility requirements for presidential elections held in October 2000.

General Gueï was however forced to flee by a popular uprising after he fraudulently claimed that he had won these elections. This left Laurent Gbagbo as the winning candidate. But the elections were marred by violence against civilians by all sides, and by “state-sponsored human rights violations, with a clear ethnic and religious focus” (HRW, 20 December 2000). Victims of the violence were, initially, supporters of both Gbagbo’s Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) and Ouattara’s Rally of the Republicans (RDR), but once Gueï had fled the country the main victims were suspected members of the RDR, foreigners and Muslims (HRW, August 2001). Gbagbo, just like his predecessors, made the issue of nationality central to his political agenda.

A regional displacement crisis

President Gbagbo failed to resolve the growing ethnic and religious divisions across the country. Then in September 2002, a failed coup by disaffected soldiers – the second attempt in just over a year – marked the beginning of the worst crisis in Côte d’Ivoire’s post-independence history. Hundreds of thousands of Ivoirians were displaced by fighting which left the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d’Ivoire* (MPCI) rebels in control of much of the predominantly Muslim north of the country, and government forces holding the largely Christian south. At least 200,000 people were estimated to have fled the rebel-held northern town of Bouaké, and several thousand were made homeless in the economic capital Abidjan by a government demolition policy aimed at rooting out dissidents (UN OCHA, 15 October 2002; UNHCR, 8 October 2002). The main targets of the demolition policy were West African immigrants whom the authorities accused of supporting the rebellion, although many Ivoirians as well as refugees from neighbouring countries were also displaced, creating population movements that threatened the stability of the entire region.

At the end of November 2002 two new rebel factions emerged in western Côte d’Ivoire – the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP) and the *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirienne du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) – who said they were not linked with the MPCI rebels but were fighting to avenge the death of former junta leader, General Robert Gueï. These troops included both Liberians and Sierra Leoneans, providing a chilling “déjà vu” of the brutal civil wars that wrecked both of those countries (BBC, 30 November 2002). Fierce fighting between the rebel groups and government forces and systematic human rights abuses against civilians displaced more than one million people, including some 150,000 who fled to neighbouring countries (IRIN, 29 January 2003).

The violence, in varying degrees, has so far eluded all military and diplomatic efforts to end it – including the deployment in 2004 of a 6,000-strong UN peacekeeping mission (UNOCI) on top of an existing contingent of 4,000 French peacekeepers, and a total of three peace agreements brokered from 2003-2005. Opposition parties, including rebel leaders (united into the *Forces nouvelles*) have consistently accused President Gbagbo of not fulfilling his obligations under the peace accord.

Political tensions erupted into violence in March 2004, when at least 120 people were killed by government troops and their allied militia during an opposition march in Abidjan. A UN report blamed government security forces for indiscriminately killing innocent civilians, and for specially targeting individuals from the north of the country and immigrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger (IRIN, 4 May 2004). Then in November 2004 government warplanes bombed the rebel stronghold of Bouaké in an operation to take the north, killing nine French peacekeepers. The ensuing violence spread to Abidjan, and thousands of foreigners were evacuated (IRIN, 7 November 2004). The UN Security Council subsequently imposed a 13-month arms embargo on Côte d’Ivoire, later renewed until December 2006 (UN SC, 15 December 2005). There have been several further violations of the ceasefire, such as the attack in March 2005 by pro-government militia against rebel positions in the northwestern town of Logouale (IRIN, 2 March 2005). Inter-ethnic clashes, particularly in the cocoa-growing western region, have continued to cause death and displacement, notably around the town of Duekoué which saw a series of massacres in May

and June 2005 (HRW, 3 June 2005), and in the zone of confidence near the town of Bangolo, where the security situation deteriorated sharply in September 2006, according to UN OCHA.

The seemingly intractable political impasse deepened yet further when it became clear that elections scheduled for 30 October 2005 could not go ahead. Disarmament of both rebel forces and pro-government militia failed to get underway; the parties continued to wrangle over key legislative reforms relating to citizenship and land tenure (although President Gbagbo did issue a decree that would permit his main rival, Alassane Outtara, to stand against him in elections); and the opposition and rebel leaders rejected South African mediation on the grounds of bias towards the government (UN SC, 26 September 2005). Disagreement too on the transition period after 30 October further fuelled tension on the ground. The UN Security Council supported African Union proposals to allow Gbagbo to remain in power for up to 12 months beyond the end of his mandate, delegating certain powers to a new and more powerful prime minister – who was finally named as Charles Konan Banny, governor of West Africa's central bank, in December 2005. After weeks of wrangling, Banny formed a transitional government that was faced with the formidable task of organising disarmament, identification and elections within just ten months (ICG, 17 May 2006).

In January 2006, pro-government militia were largely responsible for orchestrating a wave of anti-UN violence which caused several deaths and widespread damage, and resulted in the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers from the west of the country and the evacuation of humanitarian agencies (IRIN, 18 January 2006). The UN Security Council subsequently imposed sanctions on three key Ivorian political figures found to constitute a “threat to peace” in the country (IRIN, 8 February 2006). While Prime Minister Banny did well to ease tensions in the wake of the violence, the clear failure of both the disarmament and identification processes ahead of elections scheduled for 31 October 2006 once again caused tensions to rise (ICG, 7 September 2006). In September, the UN confirmed that elections would not take place as scheduled, although it remained unclear what would happen when President Gbagbo's mandate expires (BBC, 21 September 2006). At the same time the government resigned (and later reformed with few changes) over a toxic waste dumping scandal in Abidjan, which led to several deaths and tens of thousands of people seeking medical treatment, exacerbating political tensions yet further (IRIN, 18 September 2006).

IDP survey in government zones

A UNFPA-funded survey, carried out by a governmental statistics institute (ENSEA) in late 2005 and published in March 2006, put the total number of IDPs in five government-held areas at around 700,000. This was later revised to 750,000 in the UN's mid-year review of the Consolidated Appeal (UN, 18 July 2006). Key findings of the survey include the fact that more than 90 per cent of IDPs live with host families, with only some 7,000 living in an established IDP camp in the western town of Guiglo. The commercial capital Abidjan hosts almost 70 per cent of IDPs included in the survey, for the most part West African immigrants or northern Ivorians, many of them living in deplorable conditions in shanty towns. Each host family has on average six IDPs living with them, putting an enormous strain on their resources (ENSEA, March 2006).

Yet the survey still does not give a full picture of internal displacement across the country, especially as it was not extended to rebel-held areas. Furthermore, the ongoing cases of new displacement combined with small-scale spontaneous return have resulted in highly complex patterns of displacement. For example, the displaced Burkinabés and other “allogènes” (settlers) living in the Guiglo IDP camp say their plantations around the western town of Blolequin are now occupied by indigenous (or “autochtone”) ethnic Gueré, who were in turn displaced from their land in the Zone of Confidence by other “allogènes” from the north. This makes the overall situation of displacement fluid and difficult to monitor effectively.

A protection crisis

Both the UN and human rights organisations have reported continuing human rights abuses against civilians, committed by government forces and their allied militia as well as *Forces Nouvelles* rebels, mostly with impunity. Abuses documented by the UN mission, UNOCI, include summary executions, disappearances and death threats, rape and sexual exploitation, human trafficking, torture, as well as interference with freedom of expression, freedom of movement and freedom of association (UN, 18 July 2006; UNOCI, February 2006). According to Human Rights Watch, government security forces routinely subject civilians – mainly nationals of neighbouring states and Ivorians from the north of the country – to extortion, robbery and physical attack, particularly at road blocks. *Forces Nouvelles* rebels are similarly guilty of extortion and harassment. The breakdown of the judicial system in the north of the country has exacerbated the problem of impunity that exists across the country (HRW, 25 May 2006).

Sexual and gender-based violence, particularly against displaced women and girls, is of major concern. Repeated displacement and lack of access to education has resulted in rising levels of prostitution and domestic slavery. Sexual exploitation of displaced girls by the “impartial forces” (covering both UNOCI and French peacekeepers) has also been reported by humanitarian agencies in Côte d’Ivoire. More than one reliable source has given detailed information about the “procurement” of displaced girls for sex by peacekeeping troops, including inside temporary IDP centres (Interviews, Côte d’Ivoire, September 2005).

Due to the ongoing inflammation of ethnic and religious tensions, displaced Ivorians have been particularly vulnerable to abuse at the hands of armed fighters as well as local communities, particularly in the cocoa-rich western region. There, UNOCI’s Human Rights Division reports almost constant inter-community clashes and displacements, particularly where IDPs no longer have access to their plantations. More than 4,000 people were displaced in June 2006 by ethnic disputes near the town of Bangolo in the zone of confidence (UN SC, 17 July 2006). Militant youth groups continue to be particularly active between Guiglo and Bolequin, towards the Liberian border, which saw an upsurge of violent attacks in September 2006, according to UN OCHA in Cote d’Ivoire.

Important protection issues have also been raised by the premature return of IDPs to their areas of residence in the western region. Although landowners have in some cases encouraged the return of IDPs to prepare for the start of the agricultural season, local populations have reportedly been alarmed and frightened by the return of “non-native” settlers. Likewise, some IDPs are unwilling to return before disarmament takes place. In some cases where return has been encouraged, for example by the UN’s pilot return project in the village of Fengolo, returnees have found their plantations occupied, resulting in dangerous inter-community tensions and urgent calls for local peace and reconciliation work (Interviews, Fengolo, 23 September 2005).

Humanitarian situation deteriorates further

Inter-ethnic violence and crime caused the humanitarian situation in the west of the country, particularly within the zone of confidence, to deteriorate yet further in mid-2006. The UN reports that while internal displacement continues, IDP return has been impeded by poor security conditions and the absence of public social services and utilities in areas of return. Meanwhile the overall level of poverty continues to grow (UN, 18 July 2006).

In the north and west of the country basic social services are particularly inadequate if not non-existent. The main issues for concern include the lack of potable water, food insecurity, lack of access to health services and lack of access to education. Public infrastructure in the rebel-held north has deteriorated to the point that the region is at severe risk of epidemics caused by water-borne diseases, according to the UN (IRIN, 29 September 2006). An estimated 60 per cent of the

general population has no access to basic healthcare facilities, according to UNICEF (IRIN, 5 September 2006). Malnutrition rates remain high, increasing to a high of 15 per cent in the northern region in late 2005 (UN, 18 November 2005). Poor nutrition and disease monitoring, and reduced immunisation coverage has contributed to a serious increase in child and infant mortality rates (UNICEF, 27 March 2006). Curable diseases have been on the increase, while the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate has reached at least 7 per cent – the highest in West Africa – which may increase further in the event of renewed population displacements (UN, 18 November 2005).

In rebel-held areas, many schools have not been functioning since the outbreak of the crisis in 2002, not least because large numbers of teachers (and other civil servants) remain displaced in major towns in the south. The UN estimated in 2005 that more than 700,000 Ivorian children, mostly girls, had been denied access to primary education since 2002 due to a lack of teachers and worsening living conditions (UN SC, 26 September 2005). This situation began to be addressed in February 2006, when the government announced a plan to allow more than 90,000 students in rebel-held territory to sit key exams for the first time in three years (UN, 18 July 2006; IRIN, 16 February 2006).

In and around the economic capital Abidjan, as many as 500,000 IDPs (according to the March 2006 IDP survey) are living an extremely precarious existence, many of them in shanty towns housing West African immigrants as well as Ivorians of predominantly northern ethnic groups. In the “Boribana” shanty town bordering the lagoon in the north of the city, more than 30,000 people (with an unknown number of IDPs among them) are crammed into a maze of squalid shelters separated by streams of open sewage. Families live with an average of ten to a room. According to residents, some of whom have lived in the shanty town all their lives, the situation was bad enough before the crisis in 2002 but became much worse afterwards (Interviews, Boribana, 20 September 2005). Some estimates indicate that the overall population of Abidjan has grown by up to one million since the conflict began in 2002, making a total of nearly four million – completely overwhelming social and health services (IRIN, 5 September 2006).

With the destruction of many shanty towns in Abidjan by government forces and their allied militia in 2002-2003, the arrival of new IDPs added to the burden of making ends meet, while Boribana itself was only narrowly saved from destruction by the advocacy efforts principally of Save the Children (Sweden). Protection concerns remain high, with shanty town dwellers particularly vulnerable to abuse and targeting as political scapegoats during times of crisis. While Save the Children clearly focuses on child protection activities in Boribana and other shanty towns, primarily through developing the capacity of local social workers and supporting child protection committees in various activities, it is the only NGO active in these urban areas. Following some immediate albeit ad hoc emergency assistance by various agencies in the aftermath of shanty town destruction in 2002 and 2003, the longer term humanitarian needs of the urban displaced in areas like Boribana have been completely overlooked.

Constrained response

Since the start of Côte d'Ivoire's civil conflict in September 2002, the state response to the situation of internal displacement in the country has been hampered by the fact that at both the policy and operational levels there is little knowledge or experience in tackling humanitarian crises in general. While several government ministries have worked in varying degrees on issues related to displaced persons – including the Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims, the Ministry of National Reconciliation and Institutional Relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Reconstruction and Reintegration – the lack of a focal point at the central level has greatly hampered OCHA-led efforts to put in place a coordinated IDP response structure. By mid-2006, the Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims officially took the lead role on IDP issues, and drafted an action plan for IDP return which was discussed with international humanitarian agencies at the

end of August 2006. While this may be a heartening first step, such a plan is still a long way from being implemented.

At the international level, UN response to the humanitarian crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is headed by the Humanitarian Coordinator, who is also the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, and is supported by UN OCHA based in Abidjan and other strategic locations. A key pillar of coordination is the inter-agency humanitarian coordination committee (IAHCC), consisting of numerous UN agencies, the Red Cross movement, IOM and international NGOs.

In the past year, a certain measure of progress has been made in terms of IDP protection and assistance by the international humanitarian community in Côte d'Ivoire. The UNFPA-funded IDP survey, carried out in five government priority zones, fills an important information gap and may serve as a basis for improved response to IDPs' protection and assistance needs (ENSEA, March 2006). Various protection fora now exist, with varying levels of focus on IDPs. OCHA's Protection Network, developed in July 2005, has been an important advocate for IDP protection and assistance in line with the UN Guiding Principles, and has been coordinating the development of an inter-agency IDP strategy (OCHA-CI, 11 July 2006). The more recently created IDP Protection Cluster – under the leadership of UNHCR – is intended to bring greater accountability and predictability to overall IDP response, in line with global reform giving UNHCR sectoral responsibility for IDP protection, camp management and emergency shelter. So far, one of its main activities has been to develop a monitoring system to collect information on IDPs who wish to return to their areas of origin. Small-scale return of IDPs had already been facilitated to a number of locations in the west of the country on the basis of the UN Guiding Principles, including measures on social cohesion and reconciliation (UN, 18 July 2006). However, there still appears to be some scepticism about the implementation of the “cluster approach” – particularly by international NGOs in Côte d'Ivoire – some of whom see it as further encroachment on their humanitarian space.

Various constraints have hampered the response of international agencies to the needs of IDPs in Côte d'Ivoire. The lack of information about IDPs' numbers, needs and locations has been a fundamental obstacle to response, one which the UNFPA-funded evaluation should help to alleviate although it was only carried out in five areas in the government-held south of the country (ENSEA, March 2006). Humanitarian access has also been limited to varying degrees by the endemic insecurity in some areas of the country. Following orchestrated attacks against UN offices in various parts of Côte d'Ivoire in January 2006, which caused widespread destruction and forced the evacuation of hundreds of peacekeepers from the western town of Guiglo as well as most humanitarian agencies, IDPs and other vulnerable populations were left without assistance for several weeks (UN News, 26 January 2006; UN OCHA, 9 February 2006). Likewise, following the resumption of hostilities in November 2004, many humanitarian agencies were forced to suspend operations and personnel were temporarily evacuated. Agencies have at various times been harassed, blocked in their movements, or deliberately targeted with violence. Furthermore, the poor state of roads, particularly in the rainy season, has made access to remote areas in the north and west of the country practically impossible, according to WFP.

Another major constraint has been the acute lack of funding for humanitarian programmes, largely as a result of the belligerence of the parties to the Ivorian conflict and the lack of tangible progress in the peace process. A UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP) 2006 for Côte d'Ivoire was launched in November 2005, requesting just over \$40.5 million in order to respond to the humanitarian needs of more than 3.5 million vulnerable people, including some 500,000 IDPs (as estimated at the time). According to the UN's financial tracking service at the end of June 2006, only 31 per cent of the requested amount had been received, with the education, health and water/sanitation sectors particularly under-funded (the latter with 0 per cent funding). In July 2006, the UN carried out a mid-year review of the CAP, reiterating the primary goal of providing adequate protection and support to IDPs as well as relief assistance to vulnerable populations

including host communities (UN, 18 July 2006). The chronic funding shortfall resulted in some immediate funds being allocated to IDP and refugee programmes in western Côte d'Ivoire from the new UN central emergency response fund, or CERF, in March 2006 (IRIN, 14 March 2006). The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, who manages the CERF, allocated a further \$3million to Côte d'Ivoire in August 2006 (ERC, 17 August 2006).

Indeed, Jan Egeland's visit to Côte d'Ivoire in February 2006 helped to focus international attention on the humanitarian situation in the country, albeit briefly. Condemning the anti-UN violence in the country, Mr. Egeland said that "the humanitarians are hanging on by their fingernails in many areas due to decreasing humanitarian space" and that "international support is desperately needed if we are going to continue to help the Ivorian people" (UN OCHA, 17 February 2006).

High level advocacy on the situation of IDPs was also undertaken by Walter Kälin, the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, following a visit to the country in April 2006. Describing the situation in Côte d'Ivoire as "a protection crisis in terms of the human rights of the internally displaced", Kälin called on the authorities and humanitarian organisations to draft without further delay a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges of internal displacement in the country as well as a detailed plan of action to improve the current situation of the internally displaced. He also requested the donor community to support a long term strategy, which is the only option for durable solutions to the internal displacement crisis. Kälin further recommended that a law providing for indemnities be adopted as soon as possible (OHCHR, 25 April 2006).

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND

Background

A chronology of key events (2006)

BBC News, 6 September 2006

“1842 - France imposes protectorate over coastal zone.

1893 - Ivory Coast made into a colony.

<p>FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY Post-independence president, in power until his death in 1993 1945: Elected deputy to French National Assembly 1946: Founds Ivory Coast Democratic Party 1960: Elected as president 1990: Wins first contested presidential election</p>

1904 - Ivory Coast becomes part of the French Federation of West Africa.

1944 - Felix Houphouet-Boigny, later to become Ivory Coast's first president, founds a union of African farmers, which develops into the inter-territorial African Democratic Rally and its Ivorian section, the Ivory Coast Democratic Party.

1958 - Ivory Coast becomes a republic within the French Community.

Independence

1960 - France grants independence under President Felix Houphouet-Boigny. He holds power until he dies in 1993.

1990 - Opposition parties legalised; Houphouet-Boigny wins Ivory Coast's first multiparty presidential election, beating Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI).

1993 - Henri Konan Bedie becomes president following the death of Houphouet-Boigny.

1995 October - Bedie re-elected in a ballot that is boycotted by opposition parties in protest at restrictions imposed on their candidates.

1999 - July - Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim, leaves job at International Monetary Fund and returns to run for president in 2000; his plan to challenge Bedie splits country along ethnic and religious lines. Opponents say he is national of Burkina Faso, not Ivory Coast.

Coup

1999 - Bedie overthrown in military coup led by Robert Guei. Bedie flees to France.

2000 October - Guei proclaims himself president after announcing he has won presidential elections, but is forced to flee in the wake of a popular uprising against his perceived rigging of the poll.

2000 October - Laurent Gbagbo, believed to be the real winner in the presidential election, is proclaimed president. Opposition leader Alassane Ouattara, excluded from running in the poll, calls for a fresh election.

2000 October - Fighting erupts between Gbagbo's mainly southern Christian supporters and followers of Ouattara, who are mostly Muslims from the north.

2000 December - President Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) emerges as the biggest single party in parliamentary elections.

2001 January - Attempted coup fails.

2001 March - President Gbagbo and opposition leader Ouattara meet for the first time since violence erupted between their supporters in October 2000 and agree to work towards reconciliation.

2001 - Reports of child slave ship off Africa's west coast spark allegations of child slavery in cocoa plantations, straining international relations. Government moves to tackle the issue.

2001 March - Calls for fresh presidential and legislative elections after Alassane Ouattara's party gains majority at local polls.

2001 June - Amnesty International criticises government's human rights record over alleged extra-judicial killings of 57 northerners during presidential election campaign in October 2000. Eight gendarmes accused of the killings are cleared in August.

2001 October - President Gbagbo sets up National Reconciliation Forum. General Guei refuses to attend in protest against the arrest of his close aide Captain Fabien Coulibaly.

2001 November - Opposition leader Alassane Ouattara returns, ending year-long exile in France and Gabon.

2002 August - Ouattara's RDR opposition party given four ministerial posts in new government.

Rebellion

2002 19 September - Mutiny in Abidjan by soldiers unhappy at being demobilised grows into full-scale rebellion, with Ivory Coast Patriotic Movement rebels seizing control of the north.

2002 October-December - Short-lived ceasefire in October gives way to further clashes and battle for key cocoa-industry town of Daloa. Previously unknown rebel groups seize towns in west.

2003 January - President Gbagbo accepts peace deal at talks in Paris. Deal proposes power-sharing government.

Power-sharing

2003 March - Political parties, rebels agree on new government to include nine members from rebel ranks. "Consensus" prime minister, Seydou Diarra, tasked with forming cabinet.

2003 May - Armed forces sign "full" ceasefire with rebel groups to end almost eight months of rebellion.

2003 July - At presidential palace ceremony military chiefs and rebels declare war is over.

2003 August - Group of suspected mercenaries and their backers detained in France; said to have planned to assassinate President Gbagbo.

2003 September - Rebels accuse President Gbagbo of failing to honour peace agreement and pull out of unity government.

2003 December - 19 killed in armed attack on state TV building in Abidjan.

Rebels rejoin government of national unity.

2004 March - Deadly clashes during crackdown on opposition rally against President Gbagbo in Abidjan.

The former ruling party - the Ivory Coast Democratic Party (PDCI) - pulls out of the government, accusing President Gbagbo of "destabilising the peace process".

First contingent of UN peacekeeping force deployed.

2004 May - UN report says March's opposition rally was used as pretext for planned operation by security forces. Report says more than 120 people were killed and alleges summary executions, torture.

2004 November - Outbreak of hostilities: Ivorian air force attacks rebels; French forces enter the fray after nine of their soldiers are killed in an air strike. Violent anti-French protests ensue. UN imposes arms embargo.

2004 December - Parliament passes key reforms envisaged under 2003 peace accord, including abolishing need for president to have Ivorian mother and father.

2005 April - Government, rebels declare an "immediate and final end" to hostilities. The move follows talks in South Africa.

2005 June - Massacres in western town of Duekoue: President Gbagbo says more than 100 people were killed, but contradicts widely-held view that ethnic rifts lay behind violence.

Poll called off

2005 October - Planned elections are shelved as President Gbagbo invokes a law which he says allows him to stay in power. The UN extends his mandate for a further year.

2005 December - Economist Charles Konan Banny is nominated as prime minister by mediators. He is expected to disarm militias and rebels and to organise elections.

2006 January - Supporters of President Gbagbo take to the streets over what they see as UN interference in internal affairs.

2006 February - Main political rivals meet on Ivorian soil for the first time since the 2002 rebellion and agree to hold more meetings to iron out their differences.

2006 June - Militias loyal to President Gbagbo miss disarmament deadlines.

2006 September - Political, rebel leaders say they've failed to make any breakthrough on the main issues standing in the way of elections - principally voter registration and disarmament.

The government resigns over a scandal involving the dumping of toxic waste in Abidjan. Fumes from the waste kill three people and make many more ill.”

Since 1995 Ivorian politicians have incited a violent xenophobia that ultimately destabilised the country

- Since former President Henri Konan Bedie introduced the concept of 'Ivoirité' in 1995, successive leaders have manipulated issues of nationality and ethno-religious divisions to further their political aims
- Human Rights Watch report describes atrocities committed during presidential and parliamentary elections in October and December 2000, including more than 200 killings, as well as torture, rape and arbitrary detention
- Flawed election of President Laurent Gbagbo in 2000, based on a blatantly racist agenda, laid the ground for the eventual division of the country into distinct ethnic and religious zones in 2002

HRW, August 2001

“The 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections in Côte d'Ivoire in October and December were marred by political violence which left over 200 people dead and hundreds wounded. In the months preceding the October presidential and December parliamentary elections, political leaders exploited ethnic divisions to oust rivals, used the state apparatus to repress opponents, and incited hatred and fear among populations which had for decades lived in relative harmony. Their actions culminated in two unprecedented waves of violence which shocked Ivoirians and members of the international community alike, as well as grimly highlighting the danger of manipulating ethnic loyalties and latent prejudice for political gain. The legacy of the heightened suspicion and intolerance generated during the election period will take determined action to overcome; action which has so far been seriously lacking.

The violence shattered Côte d'Ivoire's hopes of rapidly regaining its status as francophone West Africa's economic powerhouse and a regional beacon of stability. This was lost a year earlier when a coup d'état against the corrupt government of incumbent elected president Henri Konan Bédié installed General Robert Guei as a military head of state in December 1999. General Guei had promised to return Côte d'Ivoire to civilian rule, and scheduled elections to do so, but had manipulated the process to such an extent that the legitimacy of the elections was already in doubt before they were held. A new constitution introduced by General Guei and approved by a July 2000 referendum required both parents of any Ivorian wishing to contest the presidential election to have been born in Côte d'Ivoire. This amendment was transparently designed to exclude Alassane Ouattara, the leader of the Rally of Republicans party (*Rassemblement des Républicains*, RDR), the largest opposition party, from the contest. On October 6, 2000, a controversial Supreme Court decision disqualified fourteen of the nineteen presidential candidates, including Ouattara, on citizenship grounds, and former president Bédié for not submitting a proper medical certificate. The Supreme Court, headed by General Guei's then legal adviser, was widely believed to have been hand picked by Guei himself.

On October 24, 2000, after early results showed Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the Ivorian Popular Front (*Front Populaire Ivoirien*, FPI), leading in the presidential poll, General Guei dissolved the National Electoral Commission and proclaimed himself the winner. Just two days later, he fled the country, in the midst of violence surrounding protests at his attempts to rig the elections. Laurent Gbagbo was left as the leading presidential candidate.

Despite the very serious concerns surrounding the legitimacy of the elections-both the widespread violence and the exclusion of Alassane Ouattara from the contest-Gbagbo was installed as president. Gbagbo then used the same methods as his predecessor during the December parliamentary elections, in particular to ensure that Ouattara was once again not allowed to run. Since assuming office, he has failed to acknowledge the flawed manner in which he became head of state, to promise new elections, to seek accountability for the violence, or to take adequate steps to ensure that, under his leadership, Côte d'Ivoire would be characterized by the rule of law, not by ethno-religious tension and military impunity.”

Warring parties involved in the post-September 2002 crisis: an overview

AFP, 12 January 2003

“Following are details of the rebel groups [...] operating in the country:

Ivory Coast Patriotic Movement (MPCI):

The best known of the three groups which started the conflict with a well-synchronised rebellion on September 19 by disgruntled soldiers facing demobilisation.

Although the MPCI was defeated in the country's main city Abidjan on the first day, they occupied the northern half of the world's top cocoa producer in a lightning campaign.

This movement is headquartered in Ivory Coast's second city Bouake, the main economic hub after the economic capital Abidjan. Its other stronghold is the northern town of Korhogo.

The group now has tens of thousands of fighters in its ranks, which have swelled due to voluntary enlistment by youths living in occupied territory.

The MPCI insists it is not a political movement and claims that none of the country's main political leaders are backing it.

However, it says it is fighting for the rights of the Muslim-majority northerners who have been discriminated against by the government of President Laurent Gbagbo, a Christian based in the south.

The best-known public faces of the MPCI are two soldiers -- Tuo Fozie and Sherif Usman -- but the leaders of their political wing remain shadowy.

Another of the leaders of the political movement is Louis Dakoury-Tabley, ironically one of Gbagbo's closest friends when the latter was an opposition figure and often forced to go into hiding.

The MPCI says it is determined to remove Gbagbo and usher in a new government after holding fresh elections.

It has strenuously denied claims that it is backed by neighbouring Burkina Faso, fingered by the government as the shadowy mastermind of the rebellion, or that it has any links with exiled opposition leader Alassane Ouattara, Gbagbo's arch-foe.

The MPCI signed a West African brokered ceasefire on October 17 which was "accepted" by Gbagbo as well but the truce was shattered late last month when fighting resumed in the country's west, where two new rebel groups emerged at the same time.

The MPCI and the Ivorian government began peace talks in the Togolese capital Lome on October 30 but the negotiations have been deadlocked for weeks.

Far West Ivory Coast People's Movement (MPIGO):

The group, which has now pulled out of the Paris talks, made a dramatic appearance on November 28 by taking the key western town of Danane near the Liberian border.

Its fighters are often armed with old-fashioned rifles and essentially comprise soldiers and men close to former military ruler General Robert Guei, killed in Abidjan on the first day of the September uprising.

The MPIGO claims to have around 6,000 fighters and controls a vast swathe of the west including Guei's native village of Gouessesso, where Guei withdrew after Gbagbo defeated him in presidential elections in 2000.

The MPIGO accuses the government of killing Guei and says it wants to avenge his murder and to secure a place for Guei's Yakuba ethnic group in Ivory Coast's pluralist society.

The group has repeatedly denied roping in Liberian fighters although witnesses have reported the presence of "English-speaking" combatants who loot and terrorise locals in sharp contrast to the MPCI forces.

Most of their men do not wear uniforms -- another major difference between the MPIGO and the two other rebel groups.

In December, French troops fired on the MPIGO to prevent them from taking the strategic town of Duekoue, on the route to Ivory Coast's cocoa capital Daloa, prompting the insurgents to threaten all-out war against the peacekeepers.

But like the MJP (see below) they have since signed a ceasefire, despite vowing to continue to fight the government forces.

Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP):

Surfaced on the same day as the MPIGO, with which it later concluded an alliance, when it took the key western town of Man on November 28.

Also based in western Ivory Coast, the MJP is thought to group some 250 soldiers of whom about one-fifth are traditional 'dozo' hunters who are reputed to possess magical powers.

Its leaders claim the group is a breakaway faction of the main MPCI rebel movement, whom they oppose for agreeing to enter into peace talks with the Ivorian government under the aegis of Togolese President Gnassingbe Eyadema.

The MJP however insists it has no links whatsoever with the MPCI despite maintaining "cordial relations" with the MPCI top brass including Tuo Fozie."

Mercenaries and refugees from Liberia recruited by all parties to the conflict (end 2002-2003)

- . MJP and MPIGO and Ivorian government forces accused of using Liberian fighters
- . Civilians displaced after attacks by presumed Liberian fighters in the west of war-torn Côte d'Ivoire
- . Ivorian and Liberian authorities reported attacks on their common border by groups from each other's territory

- Liberia accuses Côte d'Ivoire government to back armed groups, which launch attacks from Toulepleu on the Ivorian side of the border
- Côte d'Ivoire asks France to activate bilateral defence pact following alleged raids by Liberian soldiers

UN OCHA, 3 March 2003

"Defence authorities in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia have reported attacks by groups from each others' territory on locations on either side of their border. However, the claims could not be immediately confirmed by third parties.

Defence authorities in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, said that heavy fighting continued on Monday between Liberian government troops and insurgents in Toe Town, close to the Ivorian border. The town was captured on Friday by the Liberians United for Reconciliation (LURD) rebel group, according to the Liberian government.

Liberian Defence spokesman Philibert Browne told IRIN on Monday that Liberian government troops were "engaging the rebels to regain control of the town" which, prior to the attack, was a transit point for Ivorian refugees and Liberians fleeing armed conflict in Cote d'Ivoire.

Liberian Defense Minister Daniel Chea had told a news conference in Monrovia on Saturday that Toe Town had been attacked by two platoons of insurgents "armed and backed by the Ivorian government". He said the attack had been launched from the town of Toulepleu, on the Ivorian side of the border.

"For the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire to encourage Liberian mercenaries fighting alongside their own troops in their civil crisis to cross the border into Liberian territory is tantamount to a declaration of war," Chea said. "[...] those who want to continue this wave of violence against our people must understand that we reserve the right to self-defense."

However, Cote d'Ivoire's armed forces denied Chea's claims. The armed forces "would like to indicate that no foreign mercenary is fighting alongside it and that the statements of the minister of defence of Liberia constitute groundless accusations," Armed Forces spokesman Lt Col Jules Yao Yao said on Sunday.

"On the other hand," he continued, the Ivorian armed forces "recognise that the situation in the west of Cote d'Ivoire remains worrying since the different actors intervening in the conflict are difficult to identify."

Two rebel groups, the Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (MJP) and the Mouvement patriotique du Grand Ouest (MPIGO), operate on the Ivorian side of the border between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. The MJP has its headquarters in the town of Man, while MPIGO's territory is farther south, around the town of Danane. Like the Ivorian government, both groups have been accused of using Liberian fighters."

AFP, 24 January 2003

"They speak English and they kill," said Madeleine Ga Ahou, one of several thousand people displaced after attacks by presumed Liberian fighters in the west of war-torn Ivory Coast.

"Some were in uniform, the others in civvies. We don't know if they were rebels or others," she told AFP in the town of Guiglo, about 120 kilometres (75 miles) east of Toulepleu, the scene of bitter fighting on Wednesday and Thursday.

Ga Ahou arrived in Guiglo on Friday with her two children and was lodged at a camp run by the Red Cross.

She cannot say with certitude, like the Ivorian military, that the attackers were regular soldiers from neighbouring Liberia who went on the rampage alongside two rebel movements based in western Ivory Coast.

"All that we saw is that they had guns and they kill people," she said simply.

The Ivorian military has accused soldiers from the Liberian army of fighting alongside Ivorian rebel groups and of involvement in a deadly raid Wednesday in the town of Toulepleu which it claims killed at least 29 people.

Ivorian Defence Minister Kadet Bertin said on Thursday that Abidjan had officially asked former colonial ruler France to activate a bilateral defence pact following the alleged raids by Liberian soldiers.

Bertin said he had proof "that it is regular Liberian forces who are attacking us," adding that the attacks may not have been ordered by Liberian President Charles Taylor but "those in higher echelons of power with bad intentions."

Taylor on Friday denied the allegation but stressed that Liberian mercenaries were fighting both for the rebels and the Ivorian troops, albeit without Monrovia's blessings or knowledge.

However, several witnesses have reported the presence of Liberian fighters in Ivory Coast since the end of November.

The people of Guiglo are convinced that Liberians were involved in the attacks in the west, near the prized cocoa belt of Ivory Coast, the world's top producer of the bean.

Ga Ahou said she saw the "Liberians," mostly young men in their twenties, for the first time at the start of December in her campment of Iffa, in the heart of cocoa country near the town of Bolekin.

She said they looted and extorted locals but did not kill them. But on "Tuesday, they returned and started shooting, started demanding money and killing people who did not give them cash."

"They looted, they took food. we didn't understand what they were saying. They took my cycle and my little brother," said Joachim Koffi Kouame.

Kouame, a cocoa planter from central Ivory Coast, came to the region in 1986. But now he is returning to his native region.

Nearly 2,500 people from the Baoule ethnic group, natives of central Ivory Coast like Kouame, have fled during the last 15 days to the relative safety of Guiglo, said Koffi Tanoh, an official looking after the displaced.

Clement Gnan, who is among those who escaped, said "Many fled on foot through thick forests and the journey took several days."

However, most do not have severe wounds and generally suffer from fatigue or have grazes.

But they have deep psychological scars. "They spoil everything. I've lost 10 years of my life, 10 years of my work," a fiftyish-year-old man said his eyes brimming with tears."

Reuters, 2 January 2003

"Villagers who escaped Neka said there were many Liberians among the fighters who struck on Wednesday in an attack claimed by the Ivorian Patriotic Movement of the Far West (MPIGO).

"There were a lot of dead, they killed lots of people," said one woman called Aminata, who had found a truck to San Pedro after escaping into the bush. "We saw the bodies."

Gbagbo's adviser in Europe, Toussaint Alain, accused mercenaries from Liberia's own savage wars of "massacring the inhabitants (of Neka) with machetes and burning their homes".

Fleeing civilians said they saw helicopter gunships and trucks full of Gbagbo's troops heading towards the fighting. Residents of San Pedro said white mercenaries paid by the army had also arrived in town.

"We're advancing on San Pedro," rebel spokesman Felix Doh told Reuters by satellite phone on Thursday.

San Pedro exports about half the cocoa beans from a country producing 40 percent of the world's supply and prices for benchmark March cocoa futures shot up more than five percent in London on Thursday because of the news from Ivory Coast.

A big contingent of troops from former colonial power France is based in San Pedro to protect hundreds of foreigners.

The French have committed helicopters, heavy arms and some 2,500 soldiers to Ivory Coast in their biggest African intervention since the 1980s to try to stabilise the war-torn country, once the region's economic powerhouse.

A first contingent of West African soldiers is also due to arrive this week to help the French in monitoring the ceasefire between the government and main rebel group.

The Ivorian army says Tuesday's helicopter raid on a small village called Menakro near Beoumi followed an attack on its own positions and spokesman Colonel Jules Yao Yao accused the rebels of using civilians as human shields."

Linac-Marcoussis accord signed by all parties to the conflict (January 2003)

- The accord received the full support of the United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union, among others
- The French "Operation Unicorn" forces and the ECOWAS forces, already monitoring the cease-fire, are mandated by the UN Security Council Resolution 1454 to protect civilians
- A National Security Council has been formed to oversee protection and national defence matters in a consensual forum
- The new National reconciliation government with ministers from the rebel forces has been formed

UN OCHA, 31 March 2003

"The Linac-Marcoussis accord, signed by all parties to the Ivorian conflict in France on 24 January, has received the full support of the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and the United States, among others.

UNSG Special Representative for Cote d'Ivoire Mr. Albert Tevoedjre, as President of the international Monitoring Committee of the Marcoussis accord, and consensus Prime Minister Mr. Seydou Diarra, as well as ECOWAS, have been actively conferring nationally, regionally and internationally with all concerned groups to bring about the successful formation and functioning of the new government.

The French "Operation Unicorn" forces and the ECOWAS forces, newly dubbed "ECOMICI", already monitoring the cease-fire, are mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1464 to protect civilians and ensure a secure environment for the National Reconciliation Government to take root in.

A National Security Council has also been formed to oversee protection and national defense matters in a consensual forum. UNSC resolution 1467 was recently unanimously adopted, and addresses the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, mercenary activities and the phenomenon of child soldiers in West Africa.

After the signing of the Marcoussis accord, violent protests - often with strong anti-French tones - rocked Abidjan, spurring an exodus of foreign nationals and the closure of some embassies and major companies.

On 5 February the UN authorised Security Phase IV for the whole of Côte d'Ivoire, effectively realigning the efforts of the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes present in the country towards emergency humanitarian interventions. A symptomatic economic development is the temporary evacuation of the African Development Bank to Tunis.

Sporadic fighting between Government troops and rebel elements has erupted along the northern cease-fire line, and fairly regular skirmishes between Government, rebels and other armed elements have been taking place in the extremely troubled western region of the country, where two rebel groups, MPIGO and MJP, Liberian mercenaries and, reportedly, local armed militia are present.

Ministers from the rebel forces attended for the first time a cabinet meeting of the National Reconciliation Government on 3 April. Despite this positive political development, humanitarian conditions on the ground continue to worsen.”

UN peacekeeping mission established in Cote d'Ivoire (April 2004)

- UN Security Council establishes 6,240-strong Chapter VII peacekeeping mission (UNOCI), for an initial period of 12 months from 4 April
- UNOCI's mandate, in coordination with French forces, will include assistance in disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement, and support for humanitarian assistance

UN SC, 27 February 2004

“The Security Council this morning, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, established the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for an initial period of 12 months, from 4 April.

Unanimously adopting resolution 1528 (2004), the Council also requested the Secretary-General to transfer authority from the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) forces to UNOCI on that date, and decided, therefore, to renew MINUCI's mandate until 4 April.

The Council also decided to renew until 4 April the authorization given to the French forces and ECOWAS forces through its resolution 1527, as well as authorized the French forces to use all necessary means to support UNOCI in accordance with the agreement to be reached between UNOCI and the French authorities.

Comprising a military strength of a maximum of 6,240 United Nations personnel, UNOCI's mandate, in coordination with the French forces, will include observing and monitoring the implementation of the comprehensive ceasefire agreement of 3 May 2003 and movements of armed groups; assistance in disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and

resettlement; protection of United Nations personnel, institutions and civilians; support for humanitarian assistance, implementation of the peace process; and assistance in the field of human rights, public information and law and order.”

August 2004 peace summit brings new hope, but not for long (October 2004)

- Following talks in the Ghanaian capital Accra in August, all parties to the conflict agreed to enact all political reforms demanded by the August 2003 peace agreement, and to start disarmament on 15 October
- Key reforms include amending nationality laws, reinstating previously sacked ministers from the coalition government, and the delegation of executive presidential powers
- This led to the first cabinet meeting in five months, with President Gbagbo, nine ministers representing the rebel movement, and 17 other ministers representing the four main opposition parties, all sitting at the same table
- Little over one month later, in early October, hundreds of pro-government youth militia members staged violent protests against French peacekeepers in Abidjan, while police carried out a brutal raid against northern Ivorians and West African immigrants suspected of sympathising with the rebels
- This was followed by rebel sympathisers attacking bases of French and UN peacekeepers in the rebel-held north of the country

IRIN, 1 August 2004

“Under heavy pressure from a dozen African leaders and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the leaders of the rival factions in Cote d'Ivoire have agreed to a new timetable to put the country's faltering peace process back on track, with the aim of starting a disarmament programme on 15 October.

An agreement signed on Friday night after two days of talks in the Ghanaian capital Accra committed them to enacting all the political reforms demanded by the French-brokered Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement of January 2003 by the end of August.

The key reforms are: a new nationality law to make it easier for West African immigrants to Cote d'Ivoire and their descendents to gain Ivorian nationality, a new law to make it easier for such immigrants to gain title to the land they work and allow their children to inherit such land and, finally, a reform of the constitution to make it easier for Ivorians of immigrant descent to become president.

The Accra agreement also commits President Laurent Gbagbo to issuing a decree to formally delegate executive powers to Prime Minister Seydou Diarra, the independent head of a power-sharing government which collapsed at the end of March.

In the past, Diarra's decisions were often been over-ruled by Gbagbo, who enjoys near absolute authority under the terms of Cote d'Ivoire's constitution.

The Accra accord aims to prevent this situation from recurring. It demands that Gbagbo enshrine in law the delegation of specific powers to Diarra to implement the Marcoussis peace agreement. These powers were outlined in a letter from the president to the prime minister on 12 December.

With the reform process apparently back on track, the rebel movement occupying the north of Cote d'Ivoire and the four main opposition parties represented in parliament agreed to return to the government of national reconciliation.

They withdrew their 26 ministers at the end of March in protest at the security forces's heavy handed repression of a banned opposition demonstration in Abidjan. UN investigators said at least 120 people died in two days of political violence in the city.

Diplomats said Gbagbo had meanwhile agreed to reinstate three opposition ministers whom he fired in May, including rebel leader Guillaume Soro.

This obligation was not specifically mentioned in the joint statement published by Gbagbo and his opponents at the end of the Accra agreement

Along with the resurrection of the power-sharing government and the enactment of political reforms by parliament, the Ivorian factions committed themselves to starting a long-delayed process of disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation (DDR) 'by October 15 at the latest.' "

IRIN, 9 August 2004

"The cabinet of Cote d'Ivoire's government of national reconciliation met on Monday for the first time in five months following a peace summit in Accra to put the country's deadlocked peace process back on track.

President Laurent Gbagbo sat at the same table as nine ministers representing the rebel movement, which has occupied the north of Cote d'Ivoire for the past two years, and 17 others ministers representing the four main opposition parties in parliament.

All 26 had walked out of the broad-based cabinet following the security forces' bloody repression of a banned opposition demonstration in Abidjan on 25 March. UN investigators have said at least 120 people died in the political violence which followed.

Rebel leader Guillaume Soro, who holds the portfolio of Communications Minister, was present at Monday's hour-long cabinet meeting, along with two other ministers who Gbagbo had tried to sack on May 19.

Diplomats said the fact that the G7 opposition alliance had returned to government represented an important first step back to political normality.

A statement from the presidency issued after the cabinet meeting said Gbagbo had passed three decrees.

One let the three previously-fired ministers back into the government.

Another delegated certain powers to politically independent Prime Minister Seydou Diarra, as Gbagbo had agreed at Accra."

IRIN, 5 October 2004

"Wielding machetes, hurling stones, firing marbles with catapults and slinging burning tyres, young supporters of Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo have resumed their protests against the continued presence of French peacekeeping troops in the divided country.

On Tuesday, about 300 members the militia-style youth movement known as the Young Patriots staged a third day of rowdy demonstrations outside the main French military base in Abidjan, ignoring a plea by Gbagbo to stop the violence.

The resumption of Young Patriot protests outside the base near Abidjan airport after a gap of three months, comes as political tensions are rising and Cote d'Ivoire's fragile peace process once more appears to be running into quicksand.

The latest deal between Gbagbo, the parliamentary opposition parties and rebels occupying the north of the country, signed in the Ghanaian capital Accra on July 30, is coming unstuck. The government has failed to legislate promised political reforms and it is now clear that the rebels will not begin to disarm on 15 October as planned.

As in previous times of crisis since a French-brokered peace agreement was signed in January 2003, the 4,000 French troops, stationed alongside 6,000 UN peacekeepers in the world's largest cocoa producer, are coming under attack from Gbagbo supporters.

So too are people from northern Cote d'Ivoire and immigrants from other West African countries suspected of sympathising with the rebels. They were the main target of a particularly brutal raid by police and soldiers on Adjame market in Abidjan on 29 September.

It provoked a protest from the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI), which said it was 'seriously worried' that human rights violations appeared to have taken place.

Many traders were beaten up and had their goods confiscated as the security forces raided the market on the grounds of checking for unlicensed traders and diplomatic sources said some women were raped.

Then on Monday the French force said its troops were involved in a clash with machete-wielding youths at the small town of Sikensi, 80 km north of Abidjan, injuring one of them with a rubber bullet fired in self-defence.

For the past two weeks, the government's feared Mi-24 helicopter gunships have been making frequent low-level flights over Abidjan, raising fears of renewed violence among the population as a whole, and military road blocks have been stepped up."

IRIN, 11 October 2004

"UN and French peacekeeping troops fired warning shots in the direction of rowdy rebel demonstrators who attacked them with stones and slingshots in Bouake, the rebel capital of Cote d'Ivoire, on Monday, an IRIN reporter at the scene and a French military spokesman said.

The rebel authorities said later in a statement that three civilians were injured when Moroccan troops serving with the UN peacekeeping force in Cote d'Ivoire fired on the crowd of demonstrators which gathered outside their headquarters in Bouake on Monday morning.

[...]

The French and UN peacekeeping forces in Cote d'Ivoire have frequently come under attack in the government-held south of the country from the militia-style youth groups that support President Laurent Gbagbo, who are known as Young Patriots.

However, over the past week, the 4,000 French troops and 6,000 UN peacekeepers have also become the target of rebel supporters in the north of the country too.

Last Thursday, three Moroccan peacekeepers serving with the UN forces were injured and one UN vehicle was damaged when rebel supporters staged an earlier demonstration outside the ONUCI office in Bouake.

And on Saturday eyewitnesses said a similar protest against French peacekeepers took place in the western rebel stronghold of Man. A French military spokesman told IRIN on Monday that tear gas and warning shots had also been fired on that occasion during which, he said, 10 French peacekeepers were hurt.

Tension has been rising throughout the country in recent weeks as a result of renewed deadlock in efforts to end Cote d'Ivoire's two-year-old civil war."

"Regional warriors" re-recruited to fight in Côte d'Ivoire, 2004-2005

- Many young fighters, often forcibly recruited as children, have effectively ended up as mercenaries fighting in numerous armed conflicts in the region
- Armed groups have committed gross human rights violations against civilians with impunity
- Testimonies of "regional warriors", documented by Human Rights Watch, confirms that economic deprivation is a key cause of continuing cycle of war crimes throughout the region
- Since November 2004, hundreds of disarmed fighters in Liberia have been recruited to fight in pro-government militias in Cote d'Ivoire

HRW, 13 April 2005

"Since the late 1980's, the armed conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire have reverberated across each country's porous borders. Gliding back and forth across these borders is a migrant population of young fighters – regional warriors – who view war as mainly an economic opportunity. Their military 'careers' most often began when they were abducted and forcibly recruited by rebels in Liberia or Sierra Leone, usually as children. Thrust into a world of brutality, physical hardship, forced labor and drug abuse, they emerged as perpetrators, willing to rape, abduct, mutilate and even kill. Later, as veteran fighters struggling to support themselves within the war-shattered economy at home, they were lured by recruiters back to the frontlines – this time of a neighbor's war. There, they took the opportunity to loot and pillage; an all too familiar means of providing for their families or enriching themselves.

The flow of arms and combatants across the fluid borders of West Africa, paired with the willingness of governments in the region to support the actions of insurgent groups and government militias in neighboring countries has had lethal consequences, particularly for civilians. The armed groups these regional warriors are part of have a well-documented record of committing unspeakable human rights abuses against unarmed civilians and have so far enjoyed impunity for the violations they commit. Efforts by the international community to disarm and reintegrate these fighters into their home communities –including through training – have so far had limited success. At present, the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and the unstable political situation in Guinea appear to be the current theaters into which these regional warriors are being drawn.

The voices of the regional warriors heard in this report clearly illuminate the link between economic deprivation and the continuing cycle of war crimes throughout the region. The regional warriors unanimously identified crippling poverty and hopelessness as the key factors which motivated them to risk dying in subsequent armed conflicts. They described being deeply affected by poverty and obsessed with the struggle of daily survival, a reality not lost on the recruiters. Indeed they were born in and fight in some of the world's poorest countries. Many described their broken dreams and how, given the dire economic conditions within the region, going to war was their best option for economic survival. Each group with whom these combatants went on to fight with has, to varying degrees, committed serious human rights crimes against civilians, often on a widespread and systematic scale. The brutal armed conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire have resulted in tens of thousands of civilians being killed, raped or maimed.

[...]

Aid organizations and United Nations officials working in Liberia say that hundreds of recently demobilized combatants, including children, have since at least November 2004 been re-recruited to fight in Côte d'Ivoire. The majority have, according to their reports, gone to fight alongside militias associated with the Ivorian government.

[...]

Deterioration in the military-political situation in Côte d'Ivoire would likely be accompanied by human rights abuses on a massive scale, given the proliferation of militias and level of ethnic tension."

See also UN Office for West Africa, 'Youth unemployment and regional insecurity in West Africa', 31 December 2005

October 2005 elections fail to be held as political impasse deepens

- South African mediation failed to narrow the divide between the government and opposition forces
- Forces Nouvelles rejected South Africa's mediation role on the basis of bias towards the government, including its assessment that legislative reforms undertaken were sufficient under the terms of previous peace agreements
- Disarmament both of government militia and rebel forces failed to go ahead as scheduled
- Impossibility of 30 October elections raises serious concerns over the transition period thereafter
- UN Secretary General recommends imposition of targeted sanctions against individuals under Resolution 1572, which the South African mediation had advised against to avoid negative impact on the peace process

UN SC, 26 September 2005

"60. Despite the very commendable efforts of the African Union Mediator, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, actively supported by the United Nations, the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, and in particular the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement, has made little progress. Moreover, the gap between the positions of President Gbagbo and his ruling party, on one side, and those of the forces of the opposition, on the other, remains wide. As members of the Council are aware, the African Union Mediation considers that the remaining obstacles to the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis, Accra III and Pretoria Agreements have been removed. Although many in the international community have questioned the posture adopted by President Gbagbo in the past, the Mediation feels that he is now committed to finding solutions to the problems facing his country. The Forces nouvelles, however, have not implemented the commitments they have undertaken. The Mediation also advised the Security Council not to impose targeted sanctions on individuals at this stage of the peace process, as that may have a negative impact on its efforts, but rather to consider taking actions against those obstructing the implementation of the agreements they have signed. At the same time, in the view of the Mediation, the lack of trust between the Ivorian leadership continues to affect the manner in which they interact. Ivorian leaders, like many others before them, must seek to overcome the continuing legacy of mistrust and engage in a genuine sustained dialogue.

61. Meanwhile, in a letter to me dated 28 August, Guillaume Soro expressed strong doubts over the impartiality of the Mediation, suggesting that, at this stage in the peace process, a "political transition" would be required, the modalities of which should be discussed within a broader framework than that provided by the Mediation. On 29 August in Abidjan, the

political opposition declared that it would be impossible to hold elections on 30 October, while stressing the need for a transitional period during which President Gbagbo would not be in power. Furthermore, in a letter to me dated 8 September, the main leaders of the political opposition, including Mr. Bédié and Mr. Ouattara, expressed surprise over the assessment that President Gbagbo had carried out what was required of him under the Pretoria Agreement.

62. Once again, therefore, Côte d'Ivoire finds itself at a crossroads, with daunting challenges lying ahead. Under the present circumstances, the elections will not be held on 30 October, as required by the Ivorian Constitution. Consequently, urgent attention must be given to the management of the post-30 October period and the preparation of free, fair and transparent elections, the results of which would be acceptable to all. The parties will need to agree on a realistic time frame for meeting key benchmarks in the electoral process. In particular, now that the nationality and identification laws have been brought into conformity with the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, sufficient time will need to be allotted to the voter registration process in order to ensure that it is conducted in a credible manner. Meanwhile, it is vital that the reconstituted Independent Electoral Commission be established without further delay. Urgent steps must also be taken to dismantle and disarm the militia, while continuing preparations for the pre-cantonment of the Forces nouvelles combattants.

63. To that end, the Security Council may wish to consider taking firm action against those who attempt to obstruct the implementation of these and other key provisions of the Pretoria Agreement, notably through the imposition of the targeted sanctions envisaged under Security Council resolution 1572 (2004). The time has come for the Ivorian parties to clearly assume their respective responsibilities. I therefore welcome the decision of the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) to visit Côte d'Ivoire in the coming weeks."

UN sanctions Ivorian leaders in wake of orchestrated anti-UN violence, February 2006

- In February 2006, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on three key Ivorian political figures found to constitute a "threat to peace" in the country
- Two of the individuals were leaders of a pro-government youth militia, and the third a rebel leader
- Sanctions came after a wave of orchestrated anti-UN violence in January, which caused several deaths and widespread damage
- The violence resulted in the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers from the west and the evacuation of humanitarian agencies

IRIN, 8 February 2006

"The United Nations' Security Council has slapped a 12-month travel ban and assets freeze on three Cote d'Ivoire political figures it accuses of hampering efforts to bring peace to the divided West African nation.

A Security Council sanctions committee on Tuesday called on member states to 'prevent the entry or transit' and 'freeze immediately the funds' of the three who it said constituted 'a threat to the peace and reconciliation process in Cote d'Ivoire.'

Those listed, according to a statement by the committee, are: Charles Ble Goude and Eugene Djue, leaders of the Young Patriots movement loyal to Cote d'Ivoire's President Laurent Gbagbo.

Last month, the Young Patriots called supporters onto the streets to demand the departure of UN and French peacekeepers.

The third person is Martin Kouakou Fofie, a commander of the rebel New Forces movement, who was linked by the sanctions committee to human rights violations in the northern city of Korhogo.

Cote d'Ivoire split in two after a failed coup to oust Gbagbo in September 2002. The UN maintains a force of 7,000 blue helmets working alongside 4,000 French peacekeepers.

The UN decided to impose sanctions after hundreds of peacekeepers were forced to retreat as protesters set fire to UN vehicles and offices and ransacked compounds and humanitarian stores. Around 400 civilian staff have been temporarily evacuated and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has warned that Gbagbo and his military chief of staff will be held personally responsible for new disturbances.

The Sanctions Committee said in its statement on Tuesday that it 'will continue to update the (sanctions) list on a regular basis.' "

IRIN, 18 January 2006

"Five people were killed and hundreds of UN peacekeepers forced to abandon base on Wednesday as anti-UN protests swept government-held southern Cote d'Ivoire for a third straight day.

After repeated attacks on UN compounds, vehicles and offices, a UN official said civilian personnel were being concentrated in central locations. 'The security of staff remains our primary concern,' he said.

As angry protesters loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo took over state television and broadcast calls for mass anti-UN demonstrations in the street, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who also heads the African Union, flew in to help defuse the sudden crisis shortly before nightfall.

The main city Abidjan was paralysed for the third straight day by road blocks thrown up by angry youths loyal to Gbagbo.

Cote d'Ivoire split into two more than three years ago and some 10,000 UN and French troops monitor the buffer zone between the government south and the north, which is under rebel control.

In the volatile western region near the Liberian border, hundreds of blue-helmets based in Guiglo and Duekoue were forced to retreat after young protesters invaded compounds and torched UN buildings bearing the distinctive blue flag.

In Guiglo, some 350 km from the main city Abidjan, Bangladeshi soldiers opened fire to repel youths who besieged their barracks overnight. Hours later, the 200-300 men redeployed taking UN civilian personnel with them.

At the local hospital, a doctor who declined to be named told IRIN by telephone that five people were killed and 10 injured from gunshot wounds.

UN officials in Abidjan said four attackers were killed.

[...]

UN peacekeepers operate under the so-called Chapter VII of the UN Charter enabling soldiers to defend themselves and the local population if they come under direct attack.

[...]

Youths loyal to President Gbagbo who belong to a movement known as the Young Patriots have been targeting UN facilities since international mediators overseeing a UN peace blueprint backed measures effectively reducing Gbagbo's powers.

On Sunday, mediators in the ministerial-level International Working Group (IWG) said that parliament, which is packed with Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) party members, does not have a mandate.

Parliament's mandate expired on 16 December and the IWG recommended the mandate not be renewed, effectively disbanding the assembly.

Gbagbo's ruling FPI on Tuesday announced in protest that it was quitting the peace process and pulling out its seven members in a transitional government headed by Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny.

A spokesman for the New Forces rebel movement, Sidiki Konate, meanwhile warned that the country was on the edge of war and said the UN withdrawal from Guiglo and Duekoue meant local populations had been left with no protection.

[...]

At the UN base in Guiglo, as well as at the offices of the aid group Save The Children, looters made away with everything they could salvage.

Western Cote d'Ivoire saw some of the fiercest fighting in the early days of the September 2002 rebellion that split the world's largest cocoa producing nation in two and brought into being the UN peacekeeping mission in April 2004. The volatile west has also often been the scene of ethnic strife.

Residents told IRIN that at the local radio station in the western town of Daloa, Young Patriots had demanded the station transmit pro-government propaganda. But when workers refused, the station was ransacked and looted.

Some 250 km away in Abidjan, makeshift barricades manned by young men brought activity to a standstill. While the number of Young Patriots roaming the streets was lower than during widely supported 2004 anti-French riots, all businesses were closed and most residents stayed at home.

At a hillside hotel transformed into UN headquarters, UN troops fired tear gas grenades and live bullets to warn off a crowd of protestors that has swollen from several hundred in the morning by over a 1,000 by the afternoon.

Nearly 500 youths meanwhile gathered outside the French military base, according to spokesman Jean-Luc Cotard. 'So far they are not violent, they are chanting and dancing,' he told IRIN.

But Young Patriots also massed outside the French Embassy in the lagoon-side business district of Plateau, Abidjan, blocking exits.

[...]

The group was especially vocal against France in violence in November 2004 when thousands of French nationals had to be evacuated from the country."

Elections once again impossible as peace process derails, September 2006

- Key processes of disarmament and voter identification and registration fail to make progress, making October 2006 elections impossible

- President Gbagbo boycotts meeting in New York aimed at reviving peace process, and says UN peacekeepers should leave Cote d'Ivoire
- Tensions rise over uncertainty of what will happen once Gbagbo's mandate expires at the end of October 2006
- Tensions exacerbated by toxic waste scandal in Abidjan, which prompts government to resign

ICG, 7 September 2006

"In May 2006, Crisis Group gave the Banny government a fairly positive evaluation. In its first few months it had installed an independent electoral commission, relaunched direct dialogue on disarmament between the belligerent forces and solved some longstanding problems like the organisation of school exams in the part of the country controlled by the former insurgents, the Forces Nouvelles (FN). But it had not yet addressed the main elements of the roadmap: the nationwide program to identify citizens and produce identity cards for them and papers for foreign residents; the program of demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) of FN fighters and the government's Defense and Security Forces (FDS); disarmament and dismantling of the militias backing President Laurent Gbagbo; and voter registration and the actual organisation of free, fair and transparent presidential elections. Four months later, the government which, although dissolved by Banny on 6 September, is likely to be reconstituted largely intact - has achieved meagre results on all these counts, and a presidential election by the end of October is impossible."

BBC News, 21 September 2006

"Ivory Coast's elections will not happen by the end of October, when President Laurent Gbagbo's extended mandate runs out, the United Nations has confirmed.

A meeting in New York between the country's main rivals and African mediators failed to end a deadlock.

Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo boycotted the meeting - and recently said UN peacekeepers should leave.

Peacekeeping chief Jean-Marie Guehenno said there were serious obstacles, making a vote impossible.

The country has been split in two for four years.

Mr Guehenno said the meeting, chaired by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, established that 'there are serious roadblocks in Ivory Coast which will make it impossible to hold the elections as scheduled'.

Little progress has been made on the identification and registrations of voters and the disarmament of militias and rebels - a pre-condition for polls.

However it is not yet clear what will happen at the end of October, when Mr Gbagbo's mandate runs out.

He has said he will stay on until elections are held - a suggestion rejected by rebels and the opposition.

International mediators have suggested that he remain but cede most of his powers to the neutral prime minister of the government of national unity.

The Ivorian government resigned earlier this month over a toxic waste dumping scandal in the main city, Abidjan - which has led to tens of thousands of Ivorians seeking treatment.”

Main causes of displacement

Xenophobia and anti foreigner sentiments are a root cause of displacement

- · The concept of foreigner stands in negative relief against “ivoirité” and leads to its consideration as the root cause of displacement and exclusion
- · Thousands of people have been persecuted, harassed, threatened and evicted from their lands during the past few years because they, or their parents were foreign-born
- · In November 1999, the anti-foreigner sentiment resulted in the displacement of 15,000 Burkinabes who were chased from their homes in the southwestern town of Tabou
- · Several massacres have underscored the pattern of ethnic persecution as Muslims and other northerners claimed at the time that security forces in Abidjan had rounded them up and tortured them

Alertnet, 23 June 2003

“Refugees International advocate Sayre Nyce leads the organisation's field work in West Africa, undertaking missions to Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Ivory Coast. She returned from Ivory Coast in March after completing her ninth humanitarian assessment in the region in three years. She urges the government to take a lead in soothing the rampant anti-foreigner sentiment gripping the country.

Since the start of the war in Ivory Coast, approximately 400,000 foreigners have fled the country, including about 200,000 Burkinabes, 70,000 Guineans, 48,000 Malians, and 44,000 Liberians.

These people were not simply fleeing the conflict. Instead, many have run from the hostile xenophobia that has grown rampant in the past year in Ivory Coast. Thousands have been harassed, threatened and evicted from their homes or their lands.

When I visited Ivory Coast in March I was stunned by what I found. I travelled there expecting to investigate the needs of people fleeing the fighting between the rebels and the government, which had been well documented by NGOs and the media.

Instead I discovered a serious problem that was hardly being reported: many people were fleeing persecution because they, or their parents, were foreign-born. Ivoirian civilians and military have harassed, threatened, and in a few instances, killed those considered foreigners.

Let's parse the term "foreigner". By the government definition, anyone whose parents were not born in Ivory Coast -- both parents, mind you -- is regarded as foreign. This working definition renders about 30 percent of Ivory Coast's 16 million inhabitants foreign, and, thereby, subject to hostility, even though many of these foreigners have never set foot outside Ivory Coast.

The concept of foreigner stands in negative relief against that of ivoirité, or "ivorianness." One's ivoirité is established simply by lacking foreign-born parents, and yet this has become the credential du jour throughout Ivory Coast.

LICENCE TO PILLAGE

For some Ivorians, it has also become a licence to pillage, intimidate and kill. Military and armed local youth have organised outfits of terror in western Ivory Coast.

The 35,000 Liberian refugees that remain in Ivory Coast are in imminent danger of being caught up in the conflict in the west and being targeted by these bands of thugs. In effect, the Liberian refugees who have sought refuge in Ivory Coast in the past decade are again in need of a safe haven.

This campaign of xenophobia comes at a high cost, literally. Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, relied on thousands of foreigners to work in the plantations. The violence inspired by the government has had the effect of dispersing this labour force from the cacao and coffee plantations.

The hostile and intimidating environment may leave the plantation workers reluctant to return even if Ivory Coast is stabilised. Such disruption of planting and harvesting - even for a short time - would be a severe blow to a major pillar of West Africa's economy. Neighbouring countries have already suffered economic losses.

For example, Carolyn McAskie, U.N. humanitarian envoy for the crisis in Ivory Coast, reported: "Mali relied on Ivory Coast for over 70 percent of its imports and exports, and along with Burkina Faso, and to a certain extent Niger, is suffering serious economic setbacks at a time when it is also affected by the drought in the Sahel."

The violence and xenophobia in Ivory Coast have had severe economic consequences: the loss of remittances, a poor agricultural season, and the strain for communities in Burkina Faso and Mali of accepting thousands of returnees. Together, these consequences present a major challenge to the region.

The origins of ivoirité-based ethnic tension are varied and complex. The notion itself began as a political tactic of former President Henri Konan-Bédié to prohibit some politicians, including prominent northerner Alassane Ouattara, from standing as president.

It has increased tensions among ethnic groups and created a division between the mainly Muslim north, which is where most of those considered "foreigners" are living, and the mainly Christian south.

CHASED FROM THEIR HOMES

In November 1999, the anti-foreigner sentiment resulted in the displacement of 15,000 Burkinabes who were chased from their homes in the southwestern town of Tabou.

In the past eight months of conflict, Burkinabes, along with other foreigners such as Malians and Liberians, have been the targets of hostility. An ethnic massacre at Yopougon, outside Abidjan, in October 2000 and the massacre of gendarmes by northern rebels in the town of Bouaké in October 2002 exemplified ethnic hostility.

The roadblocks to peace in Ivory Coast are legion. Human rights abuses, including forced recruitment, must be stopped immediately. Liberian refugees need to be moved from western Ivory Coast to a safer area.

The government must ensure the protection of immigrants and refugees. It should also establish a new legal framework that liberalises citizenship requirements and protects the rights of foreign nationals living and working in the country.

These measures alone will not suffice. The government must also root out its own hypocrisy on the matter. For a government that has occasionally encouraged anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiments by publicly reviling foreigners, taking an active and public role in soothing xenophobic tension is imperative.

National reconciliation in any meaningful sense cannot happen until the government defuses ivoirité, and welcomes its citizens - all of them - to a persecution-free Ivory Coast. Until the people of Ivory Coast scrap the identity politics, there is little hope for a lasting peace."

AFP 15 January 2003

"The war in Ivory Coast is the culmination of years of instability which triggered a coup in December 1999, smashed the country's reputation as a haven of west African prosperity and brought out deep divisions among its people.

Delegates from rebel groups, political parties and the government in the former French colony began holding peace talks in Paris Wednesday, aimed at resolving the crisis that has seen Ivory Coast's long festering wounds burst open along geo-ethnic lines since a rebellion on September 19.

Since then, rebels have gained control of the cocoa-growing west and predominantly Muslim north of the country, with the government of President Laurent Gbagbo digging in in the south.

The insurgents have repeatedly said they were waging their battle in defense of the rights of Ivory Coast's Muslims and ethnic minorities, both of whom, they insist, have been marginalised by Gbagbo's government.

A Christian from the south, Gbagbo has been accused of excluding anyone but southern Christians from his ruling elite.

He came to power in October 2000 on the back of a popular uprising that prevented 1999 coup-maker, General Robert Guei, from taking up the presidency after an election in that month which Guei claimed to have won.

In an early clue to the simmering tension that was to boil over in the September 2001 rebellion, Gbagbo's supporters, backed by the security forces, fought backers of opposition politician Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim from the north, who had been excluded from the October 2000 election.

Muslims and other northerners claimed at the time that security forces in Abidjan had rounded them up and tortured them.

Ethnic demons had been on the loose since the death in 1993 of Ivory Coast's first president Felix Houphouet-Boigny, as his successors espoused the concept of "Ivorianness", a home-grown concept of priority for Ivoirians.

At the Paris talks, Gbagbo's ruling Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) will face the uphill task of trying to win the support of the main political players -- notably Ouattara's opposition Rally of Republicans (RDR) party -- in the fight against the rebels.

Ouattara had his home ransacked and torched during the unrest, and eventually fled into exile.

A former prime minister under Houphouet-Boigny, Ouattara had been barred from the presidential polls in 2000 on the contentious ground that he hailed from neighbouring Burkina Faso.

The government and the courts recognised his Ivorian nationality last year. Ouattara has backed rebel demands for fresh polls. Gbagbo, who adopted a bellicose tone when the rebellion started, has become more flexible now due to the abysmal performance of his troops against the rebels, and pressure from France and other countries. The embattled leader last year drafted a peace plan to end the ruinous war, which included the formation of a new broad-based government and moves to stamp out any form of ethnic discrimination.

These would include a "referendum on three questions thrown up by the crisis -- the conditions for eligibility to the presidential office, land laws and nationality," according to a statement.

Before the uprising, around one-third of Ivory Coast's population of about 15.8 million were immigrants, mostly migrant workers from west Africa.

Houphouet-Boigny, who ruled from 1960 when Ivory Coast gained independence from France till his death in 1993, welcomed foreigners -- mainly west Africans and French nationals -- with open arms.

Their toil was largely instrumental in turning the country into the world's biggest cocoa producer. Some were also refugees from Africa's many wars, because Ivory Coast was seen as one of the few countries where refugees were able to live not in camps but among the local population.

But many fled their host country following the September uprising, after they were randomly targeted and hunted down in reprisal attacks fuelled by accusations made by Gbagbo that Ivorian rebels were backed by a "rogue nation" in the region, implicitly fingering Burkina Faso."

RI, 6 May 2003

"Since the start of Ivory Coast's conflict on September 19, 2002, more than one million people have been displaced. In addition to the political turmoil that has impelled their flight, many of these people have fled persecution. In the last seven months of conflict, the Government of Ivory Coast has occasionally encouraged anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiments by publicly reviling "foreigners."

Although a new government of national unity was recently created and a ceasefire was signed this weekend, failure to curb xenophobic laws and attitudes could compromise attempts at peaceful resolution and catalyze further displacement.

The term "foreigners" in this case is a misnomer: many of those being persecuted were actually born or raised in Ivory Coast, and some have never been outside of the country.

But by the government's narrow definition of "Ivoirian," about 30% of Ivory Coast's 16 million inhabitants are considered "foreigners" because both parents were not born in Ivory Coast. Ivoirian civilians and military have harassed, threatened, and in a few instances, killed those designated foreigners. Since the start of the war, approximately 400,000 "foreigners" have fled the country, including about 200,000 Burkinabès, 70,000 Guineans, 48,000 Malians, and 44,000 Liberians.

Members of the international community have highlighted the importance of national reconciliation, and have pointed to the need to address the anti-immigrant sentiment. The United Nations Humanitarian Envoy to Ivory Coast, Carolyn McAskie, and the new National Reconciliation Minister, Sebastien Danon Djedje, discussed xenophobia when they met recently.

On April 24, the UN information network reported that in this meeting with the new minister, McAskie "highlighted the importance of his portfolio, assured him that the international community was willing to help Ivory Coast's government, but noted the need for reconciliation at the government level."

The campaign of xenophobia has already caused massive damage to the country and the region. Thousands have been harassed, threatened, and evicted from their homes or their lands. In addition, damage to the regional economy has been great. Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, relied on thousands of foreigners to work in the plantations. The violence inspired by the government has had the effect of dispersing this labor force from the cacao and coffee plantations. The hostile and intimidating environment may leave the plantation workers reluctant to return even if Ivory Coast is stabilized. Such disruption of planting and harvesting - even for a short time - would deal a severe blow to a major pillar of West Africa's economy.

Neighboring countries have already suffered economic losses. For example, the Humanitarian Envoy reported, "Mali relied on Côte d'Ivoire for over 70% of its imports and exports, and along with Burkina Faso, and to a certain extent Niger, is suffering serious economic setbacks at a time when it is also affected by the drought in the Sahel." The violence and xenophobia in the Ivory Coast have had severe economic consequences: the loss of remittances, a poor agricultural season, and the strain for communities in Burkina Faso and Mali of accepting thousands of returnees. Together, these consequences present a major challenge to the region.

Anti-foreigner sentiment is not new in Ivory Coast. The notion of "ivoirité" or "ivoirianness" started out as a political tactic of former President Konan-Bédié to prohibit some politicians, including prominent northerner Alassane Ouattara, from running for President. It has increased tensions among ethnic groups and created a division between the mainly Muslim north, which is where most of those considered "foreigners" are living, and the mainly Christian south.

In November 1999, the anti-foreigner sentiment resulted in the displacement of 15,000 Burkinabès who were chased from their homes in the southwestern town of Tabou. In the last seven months of conflict, Burkinabès, along with other foreigners such as Malians and Liberians, have been the targets of hostility.

In response to the latest outflow of Burkinabès, a UN worker told RI that "it appears to be rather clear cut that the Burkinabès have left Ivory Coast based on a well-founded fear of being persecuted owing to their nationality."

Several massacres have underscored the pattern of ethnic persecution. A recent Amnesty International report explained that an October 2002 massacre of gendarmes by the northern rebels in the town of Bouaké was reminiscent of an ethnic massacre at Yopougon (outside of Abidjan) in October 2000.

"All the victims of this massacre belonged to the Dioula ethnic group, a name often used to describe Côte d'Ivoire nationals from the north of the country... [Dioula] is also sometimes used to describe nationals of neighboring countries, especially those from Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea," stated Amnesty. The report added that until the massacre at Yopougon, "[Ivory Coast] had steered clear of ethnically motivated massacres and violence, even though for some years, certain sections of the press and the state media had been regularly publishing xenophobic material promoting the ideology of 'ivoirité.'"

Refugees International has advocated for increased protection of Liberian refugees in Ivory Coast who also face anti-foreigner threats. In March, RI reported, "More than 35,000 Liberian refugees that remain in the Ivory Coast are in imminent danger of being caught up in the conflict in the west or targeted by the military and armed local youth."

These Liberian refugees, who [have] sought refuge in the Ivory Coast over the last decade, are again in need of a safe haven." This safe haven has not been furnished. Furthermore, recent reports from western Ivory Coast state that there is an increase of forced recruitment of these refugees."

Government and rebel forces cause mass displacement in Abidjan and provinces in aftermath of failed coup of September 2002

- In September 2002, a failed coup by disaffected soldiers marked the beginning of the worst crisis in Cote d'Ivoire's post-independence history
- Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced by fighting which left rebels in control of much of the predominantly Muslim north of the country
- At least 200,000 people were estimated to have fled the rebel-held northern town of Bouake, and several thousand were made homeless in the economic capital Abidjan by a government demolition policy aimed at rooting out dissidents
- Fierce fighting between government forces and two new rebel factions in the west of the country, as well as systematic human rights abuses against civilians displaced more than one million people, including some 150,000 who fled to neighbouring countries

UNHCR, 8 October 2002

"UNHCR remains concerned about the ongoing developments in Cote d'Ivoire amid reports of growing internal displacement following renewed fighting after the collapse of cease-fire negotiations on Sunday. A government-sanctioned program to raze shanty towns in Abidjan is also continuing, displacing thousands of local residents and foreigners, including refugees.

As a result of the renewed fighting in Bouake, a humanitarian inter-agency needs-assessment mission (OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and UNHCR) that was heading towards Bouaké yesterday (Monday) to assess the dire humanitarian situation there was turned back on the outskirts of Abidjan for security reasons. An advance team left Abidjan again this morning to the capital, Yamoussoukro. Depending on security conditions, the planned inter-agency mission to Bouake could take place in the next few days.

Worsening conditions in Bouake, including lack of water, electricity and food supplies, have prompted many residents to flee. According to the Red Cross, between 150,000 and 200,000 residents of Bouaké (pop. 600,000) have fled in recent days to escape fighting and insecurity. Most of them are believed to have sought shelter with families of relatives in other parts of the country.

In Abidjan, meanwhile, the demolition of houses in the city's shanty towns continues, affecting thousands of Abidjan's local and foreign inhabitants, including refugees. The governor of Abidjan announced on Friday that the burning of shanty towns in Abidjan is expected to be completed in one month. During a visit to UNHCR's office in Abidjan on Friday, however, the Minister of Human Rights said the razing of shanty towns would be suspended for ten days. There is still no suspension, however. Such a suspension would be welcomed because it would give humanitarian agencies some more time to find alternative accommodation for the thousands of people, including migrants, refugees and Ivorians, who are being displaced on a daily basis. The minister told UNHCR that this is not an operation against foreigners, as many Ivorians are also affected. She reiterated that refugees have always been welcome in Cote d'Ivoire and remain so."

UN OCHA, 15 October 2002

“According to mission members, the city of Bouake has partially become a ‘ghost town’ with several neighbourhoods completely empty of its residents. Shops, banks, pharmacies and commercial businesses remained closed since the 19th of September. The inability of Bouake’s remaining residents to withdraw money from the banks is creating an increasingly untenable situation. The few open markets have very limited produce with only onions and yams available in some quantity. In addition, the prices of these basic commodities have increased three to four times from their original price since the beginning of the conflict. Cooking gas or charcoal has also become very scarce and expensive.

While hospitals and other social services are barely functioning, most of the medical personnel have either left the city or are unable to leave their homes.

The mission witnessed an estimated influx of more than 32,000 people fleeing Bouake in the direction of Brobo, M’Bahiakro, Sakassou, Didievei and Yamoussoukro. This brings to about 200,000 the number of people estimated to have left Bouake and become internally displaced persons [IDPs]. The figures, collected from some of the transit centers in the region of Bouake, are partial and need to be verified. After leaving Bouake some of the IDPs proceeded to their villages of origin or towns located further south of the ‘ghost town’. Women and children are the most affected, exhibiting signs of extreme exhaustion and fatigue including swollen feet, after two to three days of walking to safety. The Catholic Church has been instrumental in providing shelter and food, and in some instances transportation for the displaced. Their capacity to continue this level of services will be stretched to the limit should the flow of displaced persons continue to increase.”

IRIN, 29 January 2003

“The UN children’s agency, UNICEF, has appealed for US \$5.7 million for emergency health, nutrition and education to cover over the next two months needs of more than one million people displaced by conflict in Cote d’Ivoire, over the next two months. At least 150,000 of the displaced had crossed into neighboring countries, straining already weak social service systems.

‘Four months after the attempted coup in Côte d’Ivoire, the country is teetering on the brink of a catastrophe that threatens to trigger massive population upheaval if fighting between rebels and government forces continues,’ UNICEF said. ‘The political turmoil has unleashed an anti-immigrant sentiment affecting millions of foreigners in Côte d’Ivoire that likely will linger even if a solution to the current military standoff can be found. Vigilante groups, often acting with total impunity, continue to target immigrants from the sub-region.’ ”

Abuses in rebel-held areas cause renewed displacement following November 2004 crisis (2004-2005)

- Rebels in northern Cote d’Ivoire have reportedly increased human rights violations against civilians since November 2004, including kidnapping for ransom, which has caused new displacement
- Thousands of IDPs sheltering at various sites and with host families following attacks and harassment by Forces nouvelles rebels remain too afraid to return to the north
- In Abidjan, the humanitarian situation of IDPs continues to deteriorate and little assistance is provided

IRIN, 25 November 2004

“Government bombs may have stopped falling on towns in the northern half of Cote d’Ivoire, but now rebels are taking residents hostage for ransom, reports of human rights violations are on the increase, and the price of essential items such as bread and fuel has doubled.

Rebel forces, who hold the north of the country and were hit by Ivorian airplanes when an 18-month ceasefire was shattered on 4 November, are reported to be raiding villages to demand cash.

Some commentators in the Abidjan press see this as part of a drive by the rebels to strengthen their war chest in case full-scale conflict resumes.

An Ivorian woman, who asked not to be identified, told IRIN on Thursday that rebel fighters had stormed her home village of Konaklo in early November, looking for money.

All the young men in Konaklo, which lies about 50 km from the main rebel stronghold Bouake, fled into the bush as the rebel fighters arrived. The gunmen began breaking into houses to search for hidden notes and beat up many of the people they found inside, who pleaded that they had nothing left to give.

The woman said her own mother, who is aged over 70, also fled. She was smuggled over the frontline by a young nephew, who carried her on his bicycle.

Four middle-aged men were not so lucky. They were taken hostage by the rebels, who imprisoned them in containers seven kilometres down the road in the town of Sakassou, pending the payment of a 1.5 million CFA (\$3,000) ransom.

The New Forces rebel movement have used containers as makeshift prisons before in the northern city of Korhogo.

A UN human rights investigation into clashes between rival rebel factions in Korhogo in June reported that dozens of people were arrested and held in hot airless containers. A medical examination of 99 bodies discovered in mass graves on the outskirts of the city showed that many of them had suffocated to death.

Race to raise funds

With their neighbours languishing in custody, the remaining Konaklo villagers were only able to raise one million francs between them, the woman said. They therefore sent an envoy to Abidjan at the end of last week to raise the remaining 500,000 CFA (\$1,000) from people who had left the farming community to seek jobs in Cote d'Ivoire's economic capital.

The woman said the rebel fighters gave no reasons for demanding money and did not accuse the villagers, who are mostly from the Baoule ethnic group of former president Felix Houphouet Boigny, of siding with the government.

But she said the rebel gunmen threatened bluntly to kill the hostages and burn down the entire village unless the money was paid. One of her relatives, who witnessed the scene first-hand, quoted the leader of the rebel fighters as saying: 'If you don't give us the money, you won't see them again. They will be dead.' "

UN OCHA, 17 January 2005

"Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) remain a particularly vulnerable group in Côte d'Ivoire. It is expected that more humanitarian assistance will be needed in 2005 as many IDPs and their host families have exhausted their resources and no longer have the capacity to cope with a third year of crisis. In the meanwhile, new displacements have taken place since the November crisis, also demanding humanitarian assistance.

Between August and December 2004, IOM has registered 1.233 new arrivals at the IDP centre in Guiglo since August 2004. There are now a total of 6.648 IDPs at the centre. Many of the new arrivals are IDPs who until recently were living with host communities in and around Guiglo, who have come to the centre to benefit from the humanitarian assistance available at the camp. It is expected that more families will arrive at the camp in 2005 as many no longer have the coping mechanisms to deal with a third year of little revenue and limited food stock. IOM is concerned, as the IDP centre does not have the capacity to deal with this growing population. In December the centre received 15 new tents and 2 kitchens in order to cater for the new arrivals.

Over 3500 IDPs, the majority of them children and women, remain sheltered at various sites and with host families in the towns of Priko and M'Bahiakro situated within the zone of confidence. The many IDPs gathered here following attacks and harassment by the Forces Nouvelles in early November. Humanitarian aid agencies have provided assistance and are currently reviewing the possibility of facilitating their return to the North. A joint mission including ONUCI, FANCI and Licorne went to Priko and M'bahiakro to encourage the return of IDPs to the village of Bonguera, so far 35 IDPs in M'Bahiakro returned to Bonguéra, however many are still wary of the security situation and prefer to wait. UNICEF has ensured the supply of water and sanitation to these two towns as well as conducted a vaccination campaign against measles and provided vitamin A supplements for the children. WFP has distributed 30days of ration benefiting 2109 IDPs.

UNHCR has commenced its repatriation programme for 2005. In early January 100 Liberian refugees from Bolequin were voluntarily repatriated to Liberia with the support of GTZ and SAARA. Another 50 refugees will be flown to Liberia by UNHCR on 18th January. UNHCR plans to repatriate approximately 45.000 Liberian refugees by the end of 2005. It is estimated that there are currently 72.000 refugees living in Côte d'Ivoire.

OCHA Korhogo, has received reports from the local NGO ARK, that a group of Ivorian refugees from Mali have returned to the border town of Pogo in Côte d'Ivoire and are in need of assistance. OCHA Korhogo is currently organising an assessment/verification mission to the site.

The Mie N'Gou centre in Yamoussoukro, will remain open until further notice. The centre was scheduled to close by the end of the year 2004. The 479 IDPs residing there have refused to leave following the November crisis as they are concerned about the security situation in the North. The local NGO ASAPSU continues to provide medical assistance to the IDPs at the centre and WFP provides food assistance.

The number of refugees in the Tabou refugee camp has increased by 128 people since September 2004. The new arrivals previously lived with host communities, but had come to the camp for assistance due to increased vulnerability from sickness and/or poverty. WFP distributes food aid to the refugees at the camp, in September WFP distributed aid to 3,369 refugees, in January 3,497 people benefited from assistance.

In Abidjan, the humanitarian situation of IDPs continues to deteriorate and little assistance is provided. A local association for IDPs from Bouaké, has reported that many of those who had returned to the North have now come back to Abidjan following the crisis of November. In Abobo, there are 11 631 IDPs from the North of which 2412 are children. Enfance Meurtrie Sans Frontières (EMSF) is the only international NGO currently providing assistance to this group."

Resumption of armed clashes and mob violence in Abidjan causes displacement and mass evacuation of expatriates (November 2004)

- In November 2004 government warplanes bombed the rebel stronghold of Bouake in an operation to retake the north, killing nine French peacekeepers and an American aid worker
- France's response of destroying Cote d'Ivoire's airforce sparked widespread mob violence in Abidjan, targeting mainly French citizens as well as opposition politicians and immigrants
- Several thousand expatriates were evacuated amid accusations that France was supporting Ivorian rebels

AFP, 5 November 2004

"The Ivory Coast military on Friday resumed air strikes on positions held by former rebels, after 24 hours of air raids and political violence targeting opposition parties in Abidjan raised fears of a collapse back into civil strife.

Regional leaders prepared talks to cool the situation, with African Union leaders calling a crisis meeting for Saturday, while UN agencies suspended relief and humanitarian work in response to the fighting.

On Thursday, military aircraft attacked strongholds of the ex-rebel New Forces (NF) at Bouake in central Ivory Coast and Korhogo in the north, leading NF officials to describe a shaky peace pact as 'defunct'.

[...]

The Ivorian military said Thursday's raids -- in which three people died and at least 40 were wounded -- had achieved their objectives, destroying ex-rebel camps and strategic targets in both cities.

Overnight arson attacks on opposition party buildings in Abidjan and belligerent language from both sides have added to tensions in the divided country.

Radical young supporters of Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo ransacked the Abidjan offices of two main opposition parties late Thursday, also torching the offices of three pro-opposition newspapers.

Targeted were the Ivory Coast Democratic Party (PDCI), the country's former ruling and now main opposition party, and the Rally for Republicans (RDR) which is led by exiled former prime minister Alassane Ouattara."

IRIN, 7 November 2004

"Militant supporters of President Laurent Gbagbo rampaged through Abidjan's streets overnight, looting and burning French homes, schools and businesses and forcing France's military to airlift more than 150 foreigners to safety and send in troops to restore calm.

The violence erupted in Cote d'Ivoire's commercial capital after France destroyed almost the entire airforce of its former colony, following the Ivorian army's bombardment of a French base in the north. Nine French peacekeepers and one American civilian died in Saturday's bombing on the rebel town of Bouake.

Pro-Gbagbo militants, some wielding machetes and sticks, set fire to three French schools and the offices of the Orange mobile phone company. French-owned restaurants, hotels and homes

were also looted as militant leader Charles Ble Goude called on his Young Patriots group to 'go and liberate Cote d'Ivoire'."

IRIN, 8 November 2004

"France sought on Monday to reassure thousands of angry Ivorian demonstrators that it was not trying to topple President Laurent Gbagbo, after a weekend of mob violence forced more than 2,000 foreigners to flee their homes.

As French troops tried to restore calm to the streets of the West African nation, French diplomats scurried to push a resolution through the UN Security Council that would impose penalties on Cote d'Ivoire, while South African President Thabo Mbeki prepared to fly into Abidjan to kick-start the battered peace process.

Ivorian youths began setting fire to French schools and businesses, looting homes and threatening foreigners on Saturday after the French army destroyed almost the entire Ivorian air force in retaliation for the killing of nine of its peacekeepers in an aerial bombardment in the northern town of Bouake.

At least 2,050 foreign residents were sheltering in French and UN military bases in Abidjan on Monday, many having been plucked by helicopter from their homes as they came under attack from angry mobs, some armed with sticks, stones and machetes.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said well over 400 people had been treated on Sunday, some for wounds from live ammunition and it appealed to be allowed to continue its activities unharmed.

Gbagbo made his first television appearance late Sunday, appealing to protesters to head home and not let themselves be provoked, but on Monday around 5,000 demonstrators lined up opposite French tanks stationed outside the Hotel Ivoire in the upmarket suburb of Cocody.

Screaming anti-French slogans and carrying banners branding the French assassins, the protesters rallied at the hotel following a morning appeal on state radio to form a human shield to protect Gbagbo, whose residence is nearby.

A diplomat at the hotel said French troops had fired shots in the air to disperse the protesters. Ivorian state television broadcast images of injured people getting to hospital. Over the weekend, it also showed the bodies of protesters who, it said, had been killed by French forces.

However it was unclear how many casualties there were."

Ethnic clashes in « Wild West » displace civilians, 2002-2006

- Inter-communal violence in western Cote d'Ivoire has been on the increase since the failed coup of September 2002, continuing into 2006, displacing many thousands of people
- Fighting has taken place in and around the 'Zone of Confidence' where only French and UN peacekeeping troops are supposed to carry arms
- Violence in this area had originally been provoked by indisciplined bands of Liberian militiamen, but more recently has involved villagers of the local Guere tribe and settlers from Burkina Faso, Guinea and other parts of Cote d'Ivoire who grow cocoa in the region
- Thousands of immigrants have been chased off their land, and many have sought refuge at the already overburdened camps at Guiglo and Nicla

- Complicated property issues in cocoa-growing areas and the proliferation of small arms contribute to the tension in western Cote d'Ivoire

OCHA-CI, 13 March 2006

"L'Ouest du pays reste le théâtre de déplacements des populations en raison des affrontements entre les différentes communautés ethniques. Dans la nuit du 05 au 06 février 2006, le campement de Peehapa du village Mona, situé à environ 17 km de Guiglo a été attaqué par des individus non encore identifiés. Au total, 12 personnes appartenant aux communautés Guéré et Gnaboua (ethnie minoritaire ivoirienne) ont été tuées et il y a eu plusieurs autres blessés. Cette attaque a provoqué un mouvement de population dans la zone. Une vingtaine des familles déplacées a été signalée par le comité de crise de la mairie de Guiglo. Les familles déplacées ont trouvé refuge dans des familles d'accueil. Les autorités politico-administratives et militaires de Guiglo ont ouvert une enquête qui se poursuit.

Suite à l'attaque de Peehapa, un groupe des jeunes des villages de Zouan et de Monan situés à une dizaine de kilomètres à l'ouest de Guiglo se sont mobilisés le 13 février 2006, pour aller attaquer le Centre d'Accueil Temporaire (CATD) à Guiglo. Selon les rapports des FDS, les jeunes voulaient se venger de l'assassinat de leurs douze (12) parents dans le campement de Peehapa une semaine avant. Ils accusaient les burkinabés d'être les auteurs de ce massacre. Les autorités locales (mairie, préfecture et FDS) informées des menaces, se sont rendues sur le lieu et ont contenu les jeunes. Les autorités locales restent en contact avec le comité de déplacés et ont promis de continuer à assurer leur sécurité.

En janvier 2006 le département de Tabou a connu les mouvements importants des populations suite aux tensions inter-communautaires. Les affrontements inter-communautaires à Yakro le 19 janvier 2006, entre les lobi (groupe ethnique du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire avec des ramifications au Burkina Faso) et les populations considérées comme « allogènes » (baoulé et abron) et « autochtones » (krumen), ont fait 09 morts et plusieurs blessés. Face à la dégradation de la situation sécuritaire, les populations de Yaokro ont fui leur campement pour se réfugier dans les villages voisins et ensuite à la mission catholique de Tabou. Pendant les premiers jours, 153 déplacés avaient été enregistrés sur le site de la mission catholique. Les déplacés étaient pris en charge par le HCR et la mission catholique. La mission du PAM sur le terrain les 26-28 janvier 2006 a confirmé les faits.

A la fin du mois de février 2006, les déplacés ont quitté le site de la mission. Toutefois, IRC-Tabou a rapporté que le village de Niplou (approximativement 35 km de Tabou) reste toujours vide de presque toute sa population (environ 289 personnes) qui a trouvé le refuge dans les villages environnants, notamment à Béséréké (25 km de Tabou) pour des raisons de sécurité. Selon les autorités locales de Déholinké, les populations n'ont pas accès à leurs champs parce que des hommes armés (apparemment des lobis) les empêchent d'y accéder."

UN, 18 November 2005

Examples of inter Community conflicts in 2005

Date	Principal events	Impact assessment
28 February 2005	Following the attack on the positions of the <i>Force Armée des Forces Nouvelles</i> (FAFN) at Logoualé, the youths of the MILOCI militia set fire to the houses of the so-called alien Burkinabe (from Burkina Faso) at Fengolo, who in turn retaliated by burning the houses of the Guérés	Destruction of the majority of the houses at Fengolo and all the indigenous population fled to Duékoué
16 March 2005	Request for investigation by UNOCI following the death of 13 so-called alien villagers who were said to have been tortured by the forest guards in the Marahoué national park	13 fatalities and several wounded
30 March 2005	An argument between Dioula and Baoulé (ethnic groups) children led to inter-ethnic clash between two communities at Boli village	6 people suffered severe injuries, hundreds of people were displaced and the majority of the houses and shops were torched
29 April 2005	Inter ethnic clashes between the Dioulas and the Guérés at Duékoué	More than 15 died and some 500 people were displaced at Duékoué
30 mai/02 June 2005	Another inter ethnic incidents between Dioulas and the Guérés at Duékoué	More than 70 died and some 5000 people were displaced at Duékoué and at Man
14/15 June 2005	Expropriation by the so-called local Attié youth of farmers from the North, (of the Lobi, Koulangoand Abron ethnic groups), who have been in Attié country for generations	More than 500 displaced persons people at Alépé,
23/24 Juillet2005	Attack by unidentified elements at Agboville and Anyama	Some 25 deaths including 7 soldiers

HRW, 3 June 2005

“Amid the latest wave of ethnic violence in Côte d'Ivoire's western cocoa belt, which has claimed 58 lives this week, the United Nations Security Council must urgently boost its peacekeeping force in the country by 2,000 troops, Human Rights Watch said. Today the Security Council will discuss the mission's mandate.

The Ivorian government must take concrete steps to stop the deadly cycle of communal violence around the western town of Duékoué, which is in the government-controlled part of the country, including by bringing the perpetrators to justice.

In the past week alone, renewed clashes between local indigenous groups and farm workers from the north and neighboring countries have brought the total number of dead in western Côte d'Ivoire since February to at least 89. Ethnic tension in this fertile cocoa-producing region predates the civil war between northern-based rebels and the Ivorian government, which is primarily composed of officials from the south and west.

Despite the end of the war in 2003, tension has remained high between indigenous groups in the west and the northern and foreign-born workers who for decades have worked on the local cacao plantations. In recent years, this tension has been both exploited and exacerbated by the country's political and military divisions.

All that stands between the northern-based rebels and the government forces are a U.N. force of some 6,000 peacekeeping troops and a French force of 4,000 more heavily armed soldiers under separate command. The United Nations has said this is too small a force to maintain peace and protect civilians. The Security Council will consider a proposal to add 2,076 U.N. peacekeepers. [...]

At least three waves of communal violence have broken out in Côte d'Ivoire in the last four months. On February 28, an attack by government-backed militia on the rebel-held town of Logoualé sparked ethnically motivated attacks between the indigenous Wê tribe and immigrant farm workers, mostly from Burkina Faso, that caused some 16 deaths. The violence also caused more than 13,000 villagers to flee, and left several villages in flames. In late April, several days of interethnic fighting around Duékoué resulted in the death of at least 15 people from the indigenous Guéré and Northern Dioula tribes.

The latest wave began one week ago when Guéré tribesmen allegedly killed at least four farmers from the Senoufo ethnic tribe, which originates from the northern part of the country. On May 31, unidentified men attacked the two largely Guéré villages of Guitrozon and Petit Duékoué, shooting, stabbing or burning to death at least 41. This in turn triggered more attacks against Dioulas and Burkinabe (those originally from Burkina Faso), which on June 1 claimed at least another 11 lives.

[...]

The western region of Côte d'Ivoire, the heart of the country's vital cocoa and coffee industry, is a zone of smoldering instability which, if ignited, could engulf the whole sub-region. For decades, immigrants from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Guinea have provided cheap labor for local landowners, which helped turn Côte d'Ivoire into the world's leading cocoa producer.

However, competition over land rights, economic decline and the 2002-2003 civil war resulted in ever-increasing ethnic tension. As a result, both indigenous groups and immigrant farmers have organized themselves into militias and self-defense groups resulting in a lethal tit-for-tat dynamic between the groups. Western Côte d'Ivoire saw the heaviest fighting in the months after the September 2002 rebellion."

IRIN, 19 April 2005

"An exchange of insults between two children of different ethnic groups mushroomed two days later into full-scale fighting between neighbours in this large village in the no-man's land between government and rebel lines in Cote d'Ivoire.

Houses were burned, cattle were killed, several people received machete wounds and 1,000 members of the minority Dioula community in Boli last month trekked out to seek shelter in the rebel sector.

UN peacekeepers were called to restore order, but took six hours to arrive from the rebel capital Bouake, 75 km to the north.

President Laurent Gbagbo and the rebel forces occupying the north of Cote d'Ivoire may have agreed earlier this month to put a two-year-old peace agreement back on the rails, but the situation on the ground in many places remains tense.

As in Boli, a village of 8,000 souls on the railway line from the port of Abidjan to Burkina Faso, Muslim northerners are all too readily seen as sympathisers with the rebel cause, while Christian southerners are identified with the pro-Gbagbo camp.

The curious thing about the flare-up of violence in Boli on 30 March was that it took place in the Zone of Confidence, a demilitarised zone between the government and rebel frontlines where neither faction holds sway.

UN and French peacekeepers that patrol the broad swathe of territory that keeps the two sides apart, are supposed to maintain security."

IRIN, 2 February 2005

"Suleymankro is a microcosm of the cocoa belt, a region where so many different ethnic groups and nationalities live together that political leaders once proudly nicknamed Côte d'Ivoire the 'land of hospitality'.

For decades, the indigenous Bete people welcomed migrants from less fertile regions of northern Côte d'Ivoire and immigrants from Burkina Faso and Mali to cultivate the land alongside them.

But the settlers' welcome wore out as cocoa prices fell and unused land grew sparse.

During the 1990s, nationalist politicians began to promote the notion of 'Ivoirite' - Ivorian national identity - from which the immigrants and their descendents were excluded.

However, violent clashes between the two communities only began in September 2002 when rebels from northern Côte d'Ivoire tried to overthrow president Laurent Gbagbo in a coup d'état that presidential supporters say was sponsored by Burkina Faso.

The coup failed, but Cote d'Ivoire plunged into civil war. The country ended up split into a rebel-controlled north and a government-controlled south, with French and UN peacekeeping troops patrolling a buffer zone in between.

Since the conflict erupted two and a half years ago, angry Bete villagers have driven hundreds of settlers off their farms, accusing them of being a fifth column, sympathetic towards the rebels if not openly collaborating with them.

However, many residents of Suleymankro believe that the expulsions have little to do with politics or ethnicity. They say that the indigenous population is primarily interested in easy money.

"Whenever there is cocoa, there is trouble"

One Burkinabe farmhand pointed out that the expulsions always took place at the eve of the cocoa harvest.

'Whenever there is cocoa, there is trouble,' he said, speaking on condition of anonymity. 'The villagers take back their land because they want to sell the cocoa themselves.'

Other people think that following rapid population growth there just aren't enough farms to go around any more.

'It's a land problem,' said a Lebanese businessman who works in the cocoa industry. 'The Bete are good people, but they are too hospitable. A Bete will share a chicken with you even if he hasn't had chicken for five months.'

Whatever the case, if the civil war has not entirely destroyed the tightly-knit social fabric that helped spawn Cote d'Ivoire's wealth, it has certainly damaged it badly.

In December, things got horribly out of hand in Bete country, which is centred on the town of Gagnoa, 290 km west of Abidjan.

In the nearby village of Siegouekou, shortly after midnight, 11 men, women and children were killed by a gang of murderers. All the victims were Bete.

The attack is widely believed to be an act of revenge by settlers of the Senoufo ethnic group who several weeks earlier had been chased from their plantations.

Youths in the nearest large town of Ouragahio did not wait for proof to carry out a reprisal attack.

That same night, several hours later, in a neighbourhood inhabited mainly by expelled farmers, seven so-called northerners were hacked to death.

Guillaume Soro, the leader of the New Forces rebel movement, is a Senoufo so there was no mercy shown.

The wrong identity

'My truck driver and his apprentice were stopped by Bete youths,' the Lebanese businessman told IRIN. 'My truck driver belonged to the 'right' ethnic group so they let him go. But the apprentice happened to be a northerner, so they dragged the poor kid out of the car and killed him with a machete.'

The attack on Siegouekou was the second on a Bete village in the space of nine months. In March 2004, 12 people in the mainly Bete village of Broudoume were shot dead in their sleep by raiders armed with hunting guns.

After both incidents, authorities reacted swiftly, dispatching soldiers and police to the area to prevent a further built-up of ethnic tension.

But the recurrent tit-for-tat killings remain a sensitive subject that most residents, no matter what their background, are loath to discuss. It is as if they are afraid to conjure up evil just by talking about it. And besides, you never know who is listening in on the conversation.

'Everything is okay now,' they say. 'There is no problem.'

The local police chief would not give IRIN permission to visit Siegouekou, where the latest massacre took place. 'There is nothing to see,' he said. 'There is no need to poke around.'

But district official Marc Gbaka, a prominent Bete leader, said the situation there remained tense. He said there could be no real reconciliation between the locals and incomers until the rebels in the north disarm.

'The village chiefs of Siegouekou and Broudoume will not hold ceremonies or ritual sacrifices until the end of the war,' he told IRIN. 'It means that there is no reconciliation.'

Machetes and arrows

Gbaka said that at least 100 of 165 villages in the region had set up 'self-defence committees' to ward off possible attacks.

'They consist of young men armed with machetes and arrows and so on who guard their village at night,' he said. 'We don't have enough military to protect every single village, but this way at least the villagers can sleep at night.'

However, Gbaka was evasive about the expulsion of Burkinabe farmers and other settlers from their homes, saying simply that this phenomenon was 'not an issue.'

The Bete leader said he was convinced that the attacks on Broudoume and Siegouekou had been carried out by agents provocateurs who want to spark a series of ethnic killings in the region which in turn would fuel the civil war.

He accused the rebels of being behind both incidents. 'Really, the settlers and the foreigners are innocent, they are just simple farmers,' Gbaka said. 'That's why we won't allow the fighting.'

A young Burkinabe farmer in the settlers' village of Suleymankro told IRIN that he did not feel concerned by the attacks.

'So far, it's been between the Senoufo and the Bete. They are all Ivorians. It's just a revenge issue,' he said.

But he smiled when asked if he was worried about expulsions.

'We're not leaving," he said. "Where should I go? I was born in this country. And anyway, we northerners are a majority. They can never drive us all out.' "

See also, *International Crisis Group (ICG)*, [Cote d'Ivoire: 'The War Is Not Yet Over'](#), 28 November 2003

POPULATION FIGURES AND PROFILE

Global figures

Total number of IDPs revised to 750,000 (July 2006)

- UNFPA-funded study published in March 2006 puts total number of IDPs in five key government-held zones at 700,000
- Figure subsequently revised to 750,000 in the Mid-Year Review of the UN Consolidated Appeal

UN, 18 July 2006

“One of the main challenges in Côte d’Ivoire at present is to extend and diversify humanitarian responses to better address the needs of returning IDPs and host communities at a time when, each year, an additional 2% of the population is falling below the poverty line. According to a new baseline survey the total figure of IDPs in Côte d’Ivoire – originally believed to be close to 500,000 – is now estimated at 750,000 with less than 10% living in transit camps and more than 90% being hosted by families. Each host family on average cares for about six IDPs, while about 30% of displaced children are not attending school.”

UN Humanitarian Coordinator (Cote d'Ivoire), 27 April 2006

“En 2005 les membres du IAHCC (Comité de Coordination Humanitaire Inter-Agences) ont commandité une étude sur les conditions de vie des personnes déplacées d’où il ressort notamment, que :

Le nombre de déplacés en situation de grande vulnérabilité est actuellement estimé à près de 700 000 personnes sur cinq zones, à savoir Abidjan, Daloa, Duekouè, Toulepleu et Yamoussoukro,

Plus de 90 % des déplacés ont été pris en charge par des familles d’accueil, Les familles ont accueilli en moyenne six déplacés, avec comme conséquence une forte pression sur leurs ressources et pour certaines un début de paupérisation grandissante, 50 % des déplacés indiquent avoir vu leur santé se dégrader, 30 % des enfants déplacés n’ont pas les moyens d’aller à l’école.”

More than 1 million Ivorians were estimated to be displaced at the height of the conflict (2003)

UN OCHA 8 May 2003

“Relief agencies estimate that between 700,000 and one million people were forced to flee their homes by the fighting and seek refuge in other parts of the country - mainly the government-held south.”

UN OCHA, 10 January 2003

“The scale of displacement in Cote d'Ivoire is both large and rapid. Out of a population of 16 million, an estimated 600,000 were displaced internally by the end of November. Fighting in the west since then has caused further population movements, currently estimated at an additional 500,000. The total number of IDPs topped 1.1 million by the beginning of January.”

Geographical distribution

Abidjan hosts almost 70 per cent of IDPs in government-held south (March 2006)

ENSEA, March 2006

“Au total, environ 709 377 personnes ont été accueillies dans des ménages avec une proportion relativement importante (67,5 %) pour le département d'Abidjan. Cette population déplacée est composée de 48 % d'hommes et de 52 % de femmes. La supériorité numérique de la population féminine est constatée dans tous les départements. Les PDI sont dans l'ensemble concentrées en milieu urbain (81% des déplacés) : ceci est lié au poids démographique de la ville d'Abidjan et des possibilités offertes pour les accueillir. En revanche, la population rurale des déplacés est numériquement plus élevée dans les autres départements exception faite de Duékoué (43%) : Daloa 68%, Toulépleu 71%, Yamoussoukro 55%. Un quart des PDI sont des enfants de moins de 10 ans. Les jeunes de moins de 25 ans représentent 62% des déplacés. Par ailleurs, parmi les 709 377 PDI, 51 037 sont des enfants nés après le déplacement des parents. Par conséquent, l'ajustement de l'estimation des Personnes Déplacées Internes, après déflation de l'effectif de ces enfants, conduit à 658 340 déplacés internes.”

Disaggregated data

Demographic data of IDPs in government zones (March 2006)

- The majority of IDPs surveyed were aged between 0-4 years and 15-19 years (13 per cent in each category)
- 50 per cent of host family members were aged between 15-30 years
- One in five heads of household (of host families) were women
- The vast majority of IDPs were directly related to the head of their host family

ENSEA, March 2006

“ *Structure par sexe et âge*

Les groupes d'âge dominants dans la population des déplacés sont ceux compris entre 0 et 4 ans et 15 et 19 ans (13% chacun). Au sein de ces âges, les effectifs par sexe sont quasiment identiques (13% de femmes contre 12% d'hommes). En outre, une personne sur deux a moins de 20 ans. En considérant la population non déplacée, il apparaît une faible proportion d'enfants âgés de 0 à 5 ans. Elle est deux fois moins importante que dans la population déplacée. Par ailleurs, la majorité des personnes non déplacées se situe dans la tranche de 15 à 30 ans (50%

de la population non déplacée). Par ailleurs, avant 30 ans, il existe plus de femmes que d'hommes parmi les déplacés ; cette tendance est inversée chez les non déplacés.

Caractéristique des ménages

Les ménages de plus de 8 membres sont majoritaires (16%), suivis de ceux comportant 3 personnes (14%) et des unités regroupant 5 individus (13%). L'âge moyen des chefs de ménage est de 45 ans ; 39,5% d'entre eux n'ont jamais été scolarisés. A Daloa et à Toulépleu, cette proportion est relativement importante et atteint 47%. Il ressort qu'une femme sur cinq est chef de ménage. C'est à Yamoussoukro que cette proportion est la plus élevée (31% des chefs de ménage). Chez les déplacés, les personnes sans lien de parenté avec le chef de ménage et son épouse sont en faible proportion dans l'ensemble (2%). Toutefois, le département de Toulépleu reste une exception avec 19% dans l'ensemble et 27% dans son milieu rural. Enfin, la proportion de chefs de ménage occupés a connu une baisse significative de 12%. La baisse la plus importante (25%) est survenue à Duékoué suivie d'Abidjan (13%)."

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Vast majority of IDPs live with host families or communities (2005)

- Of the estimated 500,000 IDPs in Cote d'Ivoire, many fled to Abidjan and other major towns in the south, and the vast majority are living with host families or communities
- The country's only purpose-built IDP camp, in the western town of Guiglo, is stretched beyond its capacity of 6,000
- IDP movements are particularly complicated in the west of the country, with continuing displacement occurring at the same time as limited return

UN, 23 June 2005

"It is estimated that there are about 500,000 vulnerable IDPs in the country. About 120,000 vulnerable displaced persons live in Abidjan, of which a considerable number live in poor neighbourhoods and find themselves in an extremely vulnerable state, exacerbated by pressure on the meagre resources of host families and an absence of United Nations or Government assistance. About 30,000 displaced persons live in Yamoussoukro, while those displaced from Bouaké to M'Bahiakro and Prikro are estimated at 2,468. Moreover, militia attacks and inter-community conflicts in the west have resulted in the flight of thousands of civilians at each attack. Though most tend to return to their home areas after a few weeks or months, some of the displaced are gathered at sites not designed to receive such large numbers, or are temporarily with host families. In the temporary transit centre of Guiglo the number of displaced has exceeded the site's capacity, reaching 6,700 people at a site set up to shelter 6,000. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is in the process of launching a registration exercise, which should result in a report with precise figures on the number of displaced, their profile and their areas of return."

UN, 11 November 2004

"The situation of IDPs in the West is characterised by a confusing myriad of displacement and return. Many communities remain hostile towards those who fled, while others encourage their return. Inter and intra ethnic tensions and conflicts are a main factor causing the current situation. Another large burden in the West is the large number of Liberian refugees. More than 70,000 refugees reside in Côte d'Ivoire, of which 7,000 live in a refugee camp in Guiglo. UNHCR estimate that in 2005 35,000 refugees will remain in Côte d'Ivoire following its repatriation programme."

Complex patterns of displacement and lack of access make IDPs hard to locate, 2002-2003

- In March 2003, UN OCHA reported that despite a concerted effort to document numbers of IDPs, available information and data were insufficient
- Reasons for this included lack of access, lack of national capacity, and ad hoc registration and monitoring

- Biggest constraint to accurate information was the fact that some 80 per cent of IDPs had found shelter with host families

UN OCHA, 31 March 2003

“The weeks and months following the violence of the 19 September coup attempt saw population movements mainly from the central areas of Cote d'Ivoire towards the south, and from areas further north into neighboring countries. Based on accounts coming out of rebel-held zones, including that Cote d'Ivoire's northern "second" city Bouake (pop. 600,000) had become a ghost town, it was estimated that as many as 600,000 people had been displaced by mid-November.

Then two more rebel groups emerged in the west, and that violence created further displacement, roughly estimated at 500,000. In January of 2003, however, given differing estimates of the number of IDPs among various UN Agencies and the Government, a concerted effort to tackle the issue was begun. OCHA held two ad hoc working groups on IDPs in February, which were followed by a workshop held in Abidjan in March by an OCHA IDP expert sent from Geneva. The current estimate, based on the information and data available, is that approximately 750,000 IDPs are currently in Cote d'Ivoire.

Available information and data are, however, insufficient due to a variety of factors. The majority of population movements occurred before humanitarian structures were in place; the humanitarian community lacks targeted information on IDP presence in large portions of the north; the west is almost completely inaccessible due to violence and insecurity; the Government Solidarity and Humanitarian Action Cell is lacking in human resources and technical capacity to tackle the issue in the south; registration and monitoring to date have been largely ad hoc and incomplete; and perhaps most important, approximately 80% of IDPs have found shelter with host families, making them hard to locate.”

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical security

Impunity continues to be major factor in worsening human rights situation, 2006

- Both government forces, their allied militia and rebel forces are continuing to commit serious abuses against civilians with impunity, warns Human Rights Watch, increasing the likelihood of pre-election violence
- HRW recommends prompt publication of key UN inquiry into human rights violations committed since 2002, as well as an investigatory mission by the International Criminal Court
- The UN similarly warns of the problem of impunity as a factor in the worsening human rights situation across Cote d'Ivoire

HRW, 25 May 2006

"Government forces in Côte d'Ivoire, their allied militias and New Forces rebels alike are committing serious abuses against civilians with impunity...These abuses and the impunity that fuels them raise serious concerns about the potential for violence in the run-up to the October elections.

[...]

Human Rights Watch found that members of the government security forces continue to prey on civilians by extorting, robbing and, at times, beating those they are entrusted to protect. These abuses typically take place under the guise of routine security checks during which police and gendarmes inspect the identity papers of individuals they stop at road blocks, in markets or other public places. Nationals of neighboring states and Ivorians from the north of the country are particularly signaled out for abuse, on the basis of suspicions that they support the northern rebels. Individuals from these groups are targeted and frequently subjected to arbitrary arrests, beatings, torture and sometimes murder, particularly during episodes of heightened political tension.

In the northern part of Cote d'Ivoire, Human Rights Watch found that New Forces rebels routinely extort money from civilians through threats, intimidation or outright force. In the zone administered by the New Forces, citizens accused of common crimes are sometimes subject to arbitrary arrest by rebel-administered police officers, and the imposition of custodial "sentences" of questionable legal authority continue to occur with no independent judicial or executive checks.

The report notes how neither the Ivorian authorities, the leadership of the rebel New Forces, nor the international community has taken meaningful steps to bring to justice those responsible for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Côte d'Ivoire. Unless measures are taken now to combat impunity, a repeat of the violence experienced during the 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections could occur. In 2000, political, ethnic and religious violence in the run-up to the elections resulted in the deaths of more than 200 people and injuries to hundreds more.

Human Rights Watch recommended that the U.N. Security Council authorize wider application of travel and economic sanctions against individuals identified as responsible for serious human rights abuses. The organization said the council should promptly publish and discuss the recommendations of a U.N. Commission of Inquiry's report into human rights violations

committed since 2002 – a report that has not yet been made public, even though it was submitted to the Security Council in December 2004.

[...]

The International Criminal Court should promptly dispatch a mission to Côte d'Ivoire to investigate government and rebel forces accused of serious crimes. The report also calls on the government of Côte d'Ivoire and the New Forces to investigate and punish, in accordance with international standards, crimes committed in their area of effective control, including extrajudicial execution, torture, and the harassment and extortion of civilians.”

UN SC, 11 April 2006

“55. Serious human rights violations continue to be committed in Côte d'Ivoire, mainly by elements of the Defence and Security Forces in the Government-controlled south, elements of the Forces nouvelles in the northern zone under their control, and militias on both sides of the Ivorian conflict. As in the past, human rights violations documented by UNOCI include summary executions, disappearances and death threats, rape and sexual exploitation, human trafficking, torture, and inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as interference with freedom of expression, freedom of movement and freedom of association.

56. Impunity continues to be a major contributing factor to the worsening human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Repeated appeals by UNOCI and other international actors to civilian and military authorities to institute criminal proceedings against elements of the Defence and Security Forces in the south, and of the Forces nouvelles in the north, who have committed serious human rights violations, have remained unheeded. The imposition of sanctions by the Security Council early in February against a commanding officer of the Forces nouvelles for human rights violations is a welcome signal to military and civilian leaders on both sides of the Ivorian crisis that they will henceforth be held personally accountable for serious human rights violations.

57. UNOCI continued to implement its human rights promotion programme, with funding from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In a pilot phase, for which a grant of \$25,000 was received, human rights training was conducted for a total of 250 representatives of Government departments, judicial services, local administrations and civil society organizations in Abidjan, Bouaké and Yamoussoukro. Within the same programme, human rights awareness-raising materials, including posters, pamphlets and T-shirts, were produced and distributed to more than 50,000 people in target communities. The Operation is also establishing a field presence in Bouna, Korhogo and Odienné, bringing to eight the number of UNOCI human rights regional offices in the country.”

HRW, 21 December 2005

“In the interest of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, internationally supported initiatives designed to restrain abusers and combat impunity have been put on hold. Yet the continuing abuses of human rights and the degradation of the rule of law is a major impediment to the peace process. The failure of three successive peace agreements to resolve the political-military standoff in Côte d'Ivoire has resulted in a nearly three-year 'no peace no war' stalemate, with disastrous consequences for ordinary Ivorians. Not only has the impasse facilitated widespread and serious human rights abuses by all sides, it has led to a dangerous degradation of state institutions designed to protect and uphold basic human rights. In government-controlled areas, the police and army often prey on civilians they are entrusted to protect while the judicial system offers little legal recourse. The northern-based New Forces rebels have not established functioning governance institutions in the territory they control, and instead rule by threat, intimidation, or

outright use of force against civilians. The standoff has also wrought an unrelenting deterioration of the humanitarian situation, especially in the rebel-held north.

[...]

At checkpoints in government-held areas the security forces regularly abuse their power by extorting and robbing civilians. The state security forces are buttressed by government-supported militias, ill-trained forces that regularly harass, intimidate, and often terrorize the populace, particularly persons believed to be sympathetic to the New Forces rebels and political opposition. According to reports by local and international human rights monitors, journalists and diplomats, members of the government's official security forces including the army, police, and the forces of the newly-formed Security Operations Command Center have in 2005 reportedly committed numerous extrajudicial executions, mostly under the guise of fighting crime.

In the north, members of the New Forces rebels regularly exploit their power and systematically extort money from civilians at checkpoints and in the towns and villages under their control. There are also credible reports of New Forces rebels committing extrajudicial executions of individuals suspected of working as government infiltrators.

The government has not taken meaningful steps to hold perpetrators of recent human rights violations accountable, let alone bring to justice those responsible for serious international crimes in the past (including human rights abuses and war crimes committed during the 1999-2000 military junta, the 2000 elections, and the 2002-2003 armed conflict, as well as the most serious incidents since the end of the cessation of hostilities). The leadership of the New Forces has not punished perpetrators of crimes who are within its ranks, nor has it set up any real legal system in the areas under its control. Meanwhile, the international community, fearful of undermining efforts to end the political and military stalemate, has been less than robust in implementing a U.N. Security Council resolution providing for sanctions against persons implicated in human rights abuses, and in pressing for prosecutions.

The failure of the Ivorian government and rebels to resolve the issues which gave rise to the war—disputes over citizenship, the eligibility to contest elections, and rural land tenure—increases the likelihood of resumed armed conflict between the government and New Forces, or other political violence, such as a military coup or localized clashes around Abidjan or in the restive cocoa and coffee-producing areas of the west. In the event of renewed violence, the risk to civilian life and property remains high. The force that currently stands between the rebel and government forces comprises some 6,000 U.N. peacekeeping troops, and 4,000 more heavily armed French soldiers under separate command, but the U.N. says this is too small a force to ensure peacekeeping and protection for civilians in imminent danger. The U.N. has asked for more troops to improve the capacity to protect civilians. The continued instability in Côte d'Ivoire also threatens to draw in more combatants from neighboring countries and so jeopardize the current tenuous stability of the region.

Putting justice on hold for an elusive final settlement denies victims the right to see those responsible for serious crimes under international law held accountable, and undermines the rule of law, making it even more difficult to rebuild the country once the crisis is resolved. Moreover, this approach—and the pervasive culture of impunity it has created—appears to have emboldened perpetrators to commit ever-increasing acts of violence against civilians.”

Former child soldiers at risk of re-recruitment (February 2006)

- UNICEF estimates more than 5,000 children have been associated with armed groups in Cote d'Ivoire's conflict

- Continuing inter-ethnic violence as well as attacks on the UN has put former child combatants at risk of re-recruitment
- Various UN agencies are attempting to apply Resolution 1612 in Cote d'Ivoire, aimed at monitoring the situation of children in armed conflict

UNICEF, 22 February 2006

"Renewed violence in this West African nation divided by three years of civil and ethnic conflict has raised concerns that thousands of demobilised former child combatants -- those who have been returned to their communities -- could once again be at risk of re-recruitment.

[...]

The demobilization of child soldiers -- and other children associated with armed groups -- is one of UNICEF's most urgent priorities in Côte d'Ivoire. It is estimated that more than 5,000 children have been associated with armed groups in the conflict. Working with its UN and other partners, UNICEF has been able to help reintegrate more than 1,900 of these children back into their communities.

The village of Gnakanzou in the volatile west of the country has been a particular success story. Close to the border with Liberia, it is situated in an area that has been exposed to more than a decade of instability. In November 2002 rebels attacked the village killing, injuring and raping scores of civilians and abducting more than a thousand children. The children were then forcibly recruited by warlords and forced to participate in campaigns of violence before being taken across the border to Liberia.

In late 2004 most of these children managed to escape from Liberia following clashes between different rebel factions. Together with PAHO, a local non-governmental organization, UNICEF was able to repatriate 720 of them back to Gnakanzou. Today through counselling, skills training and regular follow-up visits they have been successfully reintegrated into the community.

However fresh outbreaks of inter-ethnic violence and recent attacks on UN peacekeepers by militant youth groups in the western region have resulted in the evacuation of many humanitarian workers, putting these former child combatants at risk of re-recruitment.

[...]

In July 2005 the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1612 to monitor the situation of children in a number of countries affected by conflict -- including Côte d'Ivoire -- and impose sanctions on violators. Together with other UN agencies in Côte d'Ivoire UNICEF has started the establishment of a viable Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) in the application of the resolution.

[...]

UNICEF is also conducting extensive briefings on the application of Resolution 1612 to all sides in Côte d'Ivoire's conflict. However as long as the instability continues and a lasting peace is not firmly established, children will remain at risk of being recruited."

Shaky political situation raises fears of massive human rights violations against civilians, 2005

- Government militia attack on rebel-held town of Loguoualé in February, as well as inter-ethnic massacres around Duekoué in May and June, increased tensions particularly between indigenous Ivorian ethnic groups and immigrant communities in volatile western region
- Both government and rebel forces have continued to perpetrate summary and extrajudiciary executions, rape, sexual violence and extortion throughout the country

- Rights organisations continue to highlight the dangers posed by indisciplined pro-government militia
- The issue of impunity remains key to both preventing and addressing the resumption of violence

UN SC, 17 June 2005

“42. The human rights situation throughout Côte d’Ivoire remains worrying. It has been exacerbated in the western part of the country by the continuing tensions created by the armed attack by a group of elements claiming to be members of the Mouvement Ivoirien pour la Libération de l’Ouest de la Côte d’Ivoire (MILOCI) against Forces nouvelles positions at Logoualé on 28 February and also the attacks around Duékoué.

43. Summary and extrajudiciary executions, rape, sexual violence and extortion continue throughout the country, involving elements of the Forces nouvelles and affiliated militias such as the Dozos, the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces, pro-Government militias and other armed groups.

44. Relations between indigenous Ivorian ethnic groups and immigrant communities in many areas remain tense, notably in Duékoué and Guiglo and in and around the zone of confidence. The continuing confrontations between these communities have resulted in serious human rights violations. Robberies have also increased on main roads, while some elements of the Forces nouvelles and pro-Government militias have infiltrated the zone of confidence on several occasions.”

HRW, May 2005

“The continuing failure of the government of Côte d’Ivoire and the New Forces rebels to address human rights concerns raises the prospect of massive rights violations should the shaky peace between the government and rebels fall apart. The government has provided support for some ten thousand ill-disciplined militia fighters, which often are supplanting the official security forces. These militias have committed serious crimes with impunity, particularly against northerners, Muslims and West African immigrants and others perceived to be supporting the rebels. The government’s past willingness to use hate speech in the media to incite violence against perceived opponents remains a cause of future concern should armed hostilities return. As well, the northern-based New Forces rebels continue to engage in serious human rights abuses such as extrajudicial executions, torture, arbitrary detentions and confiscation of property.

The 1999-2000 military junta and the 2002-2003 armed conflict between the government and northern-based rebels, in addition to the political unrest and impasse that has followed, have been punctuated by egregious atrocities by both government and rebel forces including political killings, massacres, ‘disappearances’ and numerous incidents of torture. The steady crescendo of impunity by armed groups from all sides, but especially government militias, has resulted in ever-increasing incidents of violence against civilians. The political and social climate has become increasingly polarized and characterized by intolerance, xenophobia, and suspicion, bringing fears of what could happen should there be an all-out resumption of hostilities.

Two military incidents since November 2004, discussed in this report, demonstrate the precarious nature of the situation, and how further incidents could set off a spiral of human rights violations that could prove difficult to control. The two incidents – the November 2004 government offensive against the rebel-held north and the February 28, 2005 militia attack on the rebel-held town of Logouale – not only sparked an alarming spate of ethnically motivated attacks between indigenous groups and immigrant farm workers over land rights, but also highlighted the desperate need for stronger measures to protect vulnerable groups of civilians.

In the first several months of 2005, diplomats, U.N. sources, international aid workers and Liberian fighters said they believed, despite official denials, government forces were training and equipping militias, including hundreds of Liberian mercenaries, to renew the war against the New Forces rebels. The attacks would likely start from the far west where long-simmering tensions between indigenous groups and immigrant farm workers over land rights are easily manipulated for political gain. The deployment of ill-trained and ill-disciplined militias would greatly increase the likelihood of abuse against the civilian population and suspected rebels. Human rights abuses by New Forces rebels, which have a history of torture and summary execution against perceived government opponents, are also a grave source of concern, especially given that rebel commanders sometimes appear to be unable to exert effective command and control over armed bands, ostensibly allied to them.”

UN report exposes grave human rights abuses ahead of peace talks (April 2005)

- Report by the human rights division of the UN peacekeeping mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) documents series of abuses by both sides to the conflict in the first two months of 2005
- Both government and rebel forces were guilty of extra-judicial killings, disappearances, torture, beatings and extortion
- Militia activity had risen sharply in Abidjan, as had the crime rate since almost 4,000 prisoners escaped from jail during the November 2004 riots
- Other causes for concern highlighted by the report were continuing ethnic tensions in western Cote d'Ivoire, racketeering by security forces and state control of media

IRIN, 1 April 2005

“The UN peacekeeping force in Cote d'Ivoire has published a detailed and scathing [report](#) on recent human rights abuses in Cote d'Ivoire as President Laurent Gbagbo prepares for a face-to-face meeting with rebel leader Guillaume Soro at fresh peace talks in South Africa on Sunday.

[...]

The report by the human rights division of the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI) chronicled a series of human rights abuses committed during the first two months of this year.

These took place in the government-controlled south and the rebel-held north of the country, as well as the lawless buffer zone patrolled by UN and French peacekeepers that lies in between.

The report ... cited a long list of extra-judicial killings and disappearances and instances of torture, beatings and extortion by gunmen supporting both sides in Cote d'Ivoire's three-year-old civil war.

[...]

The ONUCI human rights report said that in the government-run south of Cote d'Ivoire, ‘summary and extra-judicial executions and excessive use of force continue to be regularly perpetrated.’

It highlighted the execution-style killing of 18 alleged ‘gangsters’ by the security forces in the Abidjan suburb of Yopougon in broad daylight on January 18.

The rebel-held north is not much safer.

The report said at least four civilians were found summarily executed in rebel territory during the two-month period.

It accused the rebels of arbitrarily detaining civilians suspected of sympathising with or working for government forces.

Several detainees in rebel custody had 'disappeared,' while others had been subjected to torture in the homes of rebel leaders, notably at the Bouake residence of Mobido Drabo, a rebel commander known as "Mobio".

He died shortly afterwards in suspicious circumstances. The ONUCI human rights investigators said they had been unable to verify allegations that he had simply become the latest troublesome commander to suffer rough justice at the hands of the rebel leadership.

In the government zone as well as in the rebel-controlled north, "the climate of suspicion and fear of conspiracies [...] have provoked arbitrary arrests and acts of intimidation targeting individuals suspected by the rebels to be a supporter or a sympathizer of 'the enemy', the report said.

UN and French peacekeeping troops patrol the Zone of Confidence, which runs as a dividing belt through the centre of the country. But the report said this no-man's-land was equally cause for concern because 'the judicial system and the administration do not function according to required norms, which leaves much room for impunity'.

It said the Zone of Confidence had become infested with bands of robbers, who blocked roads with tree trunks and stripped passers-by of their money and possessions at gunpoint.

The report highlighted an 'increase of cases of theft, racketeering and violence committed by military elements, bandits or militias against civilians who live in the confidence zone or who are crossing it.'

The report said crime had risen sharply in Abidjan since 3,858 prisoners escaped from the city's main jail during anti-French rioting in early November. It noted that only 153 of the escaped prisoners had been recaptured.

Every day, Abidjan newspapers publish reports about burglaries, armed robberies and random killings. Many of the thugs appear to be carrying AK47 automatic rifles, the standard weapon used by all the armed groups in the Ivorian conflict.

The UN human rights division warned that militia activity had intensified since January and that armed groups were active in at least seven neighbourhoods of Abidjan, which hosts a quarter of Cote d'Ivoire's 16 million population.

According to the report, one such militia group, which guards a TV mast on the outskirts of the city, appeared to have been responsible for the murder of a mechanic from northern Cote d'Ivoire, whose body was found nearby.

[...]

Other worrying developments, highlighted by the report were continuing ethnic tensions in western Cote d'Ivoire, racketeering by security forces, which frequently extort money from passers by at roadblocks, and an attempt by Gbagbo to reassert full control over state radio and television. This technically comes under the authority of Soro, the rebel leader, who is Minister of Communications in Cote d'Ivoire's dysfunctional government of national reconciliation."

Deteriorating human rights situation throughout Côte d'Ivoire remains of "very serious concern" (December 2004)

- UN Secretary General reported in December 2004 that gross human rights violations continued to be perpetrated in government and rebel territories, as well as in the zone of confidence
- Failures of the parties to the conflict to adhere to the peace agreement and the resumption of hostilities in November 2004 contributed to the deteriorating human rights situation
- In government-held areas of the countries, abuses were often targeted on the basis of ethnicity, religion or political affiliation
- In rebel-held areas, tensions between rival factions resulted in serious human rights violations, including a rise in cases of rape

UN SC, 9 December 2004

“41. The deteriorating human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains an issue of very serious concern. Gross violations continue to be reported throughout the country, in both the Government and Forces nouvelles-controlled areas, as well as in the zone of confidence. These include cases of summary executions and extrajudicial killings, torture, rape, forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, illegal and incommunicado detentions and the destruction of houses and other property.

42. The tense situation created by the failure of the Government and the Forces nouvelles to meet the deadlines stipulated in the Accra III Agreement, as well as the military offensive launched by FANCI against Forces nouvelles positions in early November, have caused a further deterioration in the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire. In this context, the number of requests for protection received by UNOCI from individuals who fear for their lives and physical integrity have steadily increased during the reporting period. There were numerous reports of women and girls being raped and also of the ransacking and burning of houses of opposition supporters during the recent outbreak of violence.

43. In the Government-controlled south, the human rights situation has been exacerbated by a series of high-profile incidents such as the operations carried out by security forces in Abidjan against the civilian population in the Gobele neighbourhood and at the Adjamé market on 29 September 2004. Other incidents, which took place in recent months, include a security operation against worshippers at the mosque in Yamoussoukro, the attack by members of the militant student organization, Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire (FESCI), against inhabitants of the Abidjan shanty towns of Wassa and Blingué and the abduction of four employees from the Abidjan residence of RDR leader, Alassane Ouattara, one of whom was subsequently found dead while the others were tortured and suffered serious physical injuries. In the western part of the country that is under Government control, militias supporting President Gbagbo repeatedly attacked residents of other ethnic groups in Bloléquin, Guiglo, Tai and other locations, as well as impeding the movement of humanitarian agencies within the region.

44. Tensions between rival factions of the Forces nouvelles in the west and the north, notably in Man, Logouale and Korhogo, also led to serious violations of human rights. A rise in cases of rape committed by Forces nouvelles elements has been reported in Korhogo.

45. In accordance with its mandate to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights and to ending impunity for human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI monitored, investigated and reported on several cases of human rights violations. It has also repeatedly urged the Government, which has primary responsibility for the protection of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the Forces nouvelles leadership, to bring the perpetrators of these abuses to justice. However, the prospects of holding the perpetrators of gross human rights violations accountable are seriously diminished by a general unwillingness on the part of both the Government and the Forces nouvelles to take the necessary measures, including providing investigators with access to information and to sectors of their security services for the purpose of identifying those within their ranks who are responsible for committing these violations.

46. In its efforts to combat exploitation of child labourers in the cocoa and coffee plantations, on 29 September 2004, the Government of National Reconciliation established a National Committee against Child Labour, with the technical support and assistance of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Subsequently, a conference aimed at defining dangerous child labour practices in Côte d'Ivoire was held in early October. Since September 2004, UNOCI has conducted training for peacekeepers and personnel of all its units on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

47. On 15 October 2004, the International Commission of Inquiry established under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement to investigate all serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law perpetrated in Côte d'Ivoire since 19 September 2002, submitted its report to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It was subsequently circulated to the Ivorian parties signatory to the Linas- Marcoussis Agreement for their comments and was finalized and submitted to the Secretary-General on 19 November, for transmission to the Security Council."

UN News, 23 November 2004

"Human rights abuses in Côte d'Ivoire are giving rise to concern, with cases of arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detention and forced disappearances continuing to be reported nationwide after the resurgence of violence in the West African country earlier this month, the United Nations mission said today.

The Human Rights Office in Bouaké in the rebel-held north reported yesterday increasing cases of forced disappearances, arrests and detention of people accused of supporting President Laurent Gbagbo, the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) added in its second such warning on abuses in five days.

In this connection, the rebel Forces Nouvelles has proposed the nomination of a liaison officer with the mandate to interact on human rights issues with the Bouaké Human Rights Office, the mission added.

Last Friday it said summary executions, torture, rape, disappearances, arbitrary arrests and destruction of property continued to be reported throughout Côte d'Ivoire, both in Government- and rebel-controlled zones and in the UN-patrolled Zone of Confidence (ZOC) separating the combatants.

The latest crisis began 4 November when Government forces bombed rebel positions in the ZOC. Two days later Government forces bombed French peacekeepers there, killing nine, and French troops destroyed the Government's air force in retaliation, leading to widespread rioting, looting and harassment of foreigners.

More than 10,000 Ivoirians, mostly women and children, fled into neighbouring Liberia, itself struggling to recover after 14 years of vicious civil war, and thousands of foreigners were air-lifted out of Abidjan, the country's largest city."

Displaced women and girls are most vulnerable particularly to acts of sexual violence (2004-2005)

- IDP population consists largely of West African immigrants, among whom women and girls remain most exposed to abuse, especially sexual violence
- Protection needs of these groups are great, but support is practically non-existent
- IDPs are discriminated against in various fields, which also impacts on the prospects of return/resettlement

UN, 17 December 2004

“Throughout the country, in the Government and FN-controlled zone as well as the Zone of confidence, inadequate prosecution of human rights violations, cases of arbitrary arrests, recruitment of refugees and children, detentions, tortures, rapes, disappearances, and destruction of property continue to be reported.

Both sides of the conflict have breached international humanitarian law. Humanitarian actors have been harassed, have vehicles searched and confiscated and it has been reported that Liberian refugees and children have been targeted for recruitment as soldiers.

In the South, the recent events confirmed the vulnerability of certain communities and the lack of state protection and security available to them. People and communities identified as the most vulnerable and exposed to acts of violence include non-African foreigners (particularly French), urban refugees, Ivorians living in poorer neighbourhoods, other West-African nationals living in poorer areas (Burkinabe, Malian, Senegalese, Beninoise etc.) and youths aged 13-18. Within these groups women and girls remain the most exposed, particularly to sexual violence. For these groups of people there is little physical or moral security and limited access to judicial support. Psychosocial assistance is practically non-existent for those who have suffered traumatic experiences. ‘These communities form the largest part of the IDP population which, due to their displacement status, face specific protection needs which have to be addressed. These needs are linked to the root causes of displacement where groups have been targeted specifically because of their membership to the above communities. As a result they continue to be discriminated against in various fields which also will influence the return / resettlement of the displaced. The discrimination issue has to be included in the peace process and also followed up in responding to the protection needs of the displaced.’

The state-controlled media has also played a key role in mobilising the violence of the 4-12 November, spreading discriminatory, xenophobic and hateful messages and encouraging the pro-Gbagbo supporters to take to the streets. The coverage was entirely partial as all the opposition newspapers were silenced by vandalism and/or death threats and the international radio stations were pulled off the air.

Many children have been directly affected and traumatised by the situation. A number of children were mobilised to participate in street demonstrations and have therefore been directly subjected to violence, aggression, and psychosocial trauma. Four French schools in Abidjan were burnt down and other schools throughout the South remained closed for several days.”

Pro-government militias commit abuses with impunity, says Human Rights Watch (2000-2004)

- Human Rights Watch documents serious abuses against civilians by government-backed armed groups between 2002 and the end of 2004

- Militia groups have targeted immigrants from other West African countries as well as Ivorians of ethnic groups perceived to be opposed to the government, and chased thousands from their land
- Pro-government militia groups, known as the 'Young Patriots', have proliferated in Cote d'Ivoire since the attempted coup in September 2002
- There has also been an upsurge in reported incidents of abuse carried out by undisciplined armed elements linked to the rebels in the north of the country

HRW, 11 November 2004

"As the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire deteriorates, the Ivorian authorities must ensure that pro-government militias end all attacks and threats against civilians, Human Rights Watch said today. The government must also cease radio or television broadcasts intended to incite violence against perceived government opponents, Human Rights Watch said today.

United Nations peacekeepers, under Security Council resolution 1528, have the responsibility 'to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.' Both within Abidjan and the rural areas, and most urgently in the western cacao-growing region, U.N. peacekeepers should conduct frequent patrols and make their presence felt in areas heavily populated by vulnerable groups. In recent years, northerners, Muslims and West African immigrants have come under attack from pro-government militias, which accuse them of supporting the northern-based rebellion.

'Until they were evacuated, French citizens bore the brunt of the militias' xenophobic attacks. Now we are concerned the militias will turn their rage on their more familiar targets — Muslims, northerners and West African immigrants,' said Peter Takirambudde, executive director of Human Rights Watch's Africa Division. "Given the history of militia abuses during Côte d'Ivoire's political crisis, the United Nations must anticipate such attacks and be ready to respond."

Over the last few days, local Ivorian human rights activists in hiding told Human Rights Watch about numerous cases of northern civilians and opposition supporters whose houses and business in Abidjan had been ransacked or burned by pro-government militias. On Tuesday, pro-government militias attacked northerners and West African immigrants in the western town of Gagnoa, killing at least five of them.

Speaking on state radio and television, government officials and militia leaders have disseminated continual messages inciting the militias to attack French civilians after French forces destroyed Ivorian aircraft. These messages recently spread to private radio stations. There has been at least one instance in which a broadcaster incitement of an attack included the number plate of a vehicle said to be driven by French nationals."

HRW, 27 November 2003

"Pro-government militias in Côte d'Ivoire are committing serious abuses against civilians, including killings and torture, Human Rights Watch said today. The Ivorian government and international peacekeeping forces must take steps to control the rise of these militias, which operate with impunity.

In a visit to Côte d'Ivoire in October, Human Rights Watch received many credible accounts that armed groups -- which the official security forces allowed to act with impunity -- had carried out serious abuses against civilians in government-controlled parts of the country. These abuses, which included killings, torture and assaults, have continued since the nominal end in July of the civil conflict that had broken out in September 2002.

[...]

The reports received by Human Rights Watch indicate that in the west and southwest of the country these government-supported militias have harassed and assaulted peasant farmers, many of whom are migrants from other West African countries, including Burkina Faso. Most of the militia members are Bété -- the same ethnic group of the Ivorian president, Laurent Gbagbo -- or are from groups related to the Bété. Over the past 10 months, thousands of farmers who had migrated from Burkina Faso have been forced from their homes around Toulepleu, in western Côte d'Ivoire. In late October, several hundred West African immigrants and Ivorians of the Baoulé ethnic group were chased off their lands around Gagnoa, in southern Côte d'Ivoire, reportedly by groups of Bété youths. Militia groups supporting the government also remain active in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan.

Pro-government militia groups, known as the 'Young Patriots' (Jeunes Patriotes), have proliferated in Côte d'Ivoire over the past 14 months. Membership is believed to number in the thousands, although precise figures are unknown. Several of the leaders of the umbrella group -- the Group of Patriots for Peace (Groupement des Patriotes pour la Paix, or GPP) -- are ex-student leaders from a national university students association, the Student and School Federation of Côte d'Ivoire (Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire, or FESCI). They appear to have built up membership from the student network and the youth wings of political parties, particularly the Ivorian Popular Front (Front Populaire Ivoirien, or FPI), the ruling party. Student activists have also played a prominent role in the rebel movement and within other major political parties.

Several of the militia units -- known by names like the Bees, the Gazelles, the Ninjas and the Panthers -- have reportedly received support in their training exercises from members of the national armed forces. There are also credible allegations that some of the militia members, particularly those of Bété ethnicity, have been armed by government forces. As recently as October, militia members attacked water and electricity companies in Abidjan, allegedly for providing services to the rebel-held northern part of the country. In late October, they attacked newspaper distributors and kiosks selling newspapers linked to opposition parties, temporarily shutting down press circulation.

Since the end of the conflict in July, and as recently as this month, Human Rights Watch has continued to receive reports of torture, arbitrary detentions and 'disappearances' perpetrated by members of the state security forces in Abidjan.

In northern Côte d'Ivoire, controlled by the rebel New Forces (Forces Nouvelles), in recent months there has been an upsurge in reported incidents of assault, rape and looting allegedly carried out by undisciplined armed elements linked to the rebels. Many members of the New Forces have not been paid since the war was officially declared over.

[...]

Côte d'Ivoire's nine-month civil war began with a rebel uprising in September 2002, and was officially declared over in July. But the implementation of the French-brokered Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement, which called for a transitional government and elections in 2005, has all but broken down. In September, the rebel New Forces walked out of the government of national reconciliation, citing the government's failure to implement the agreement in good faith.

Urban and rural militias played an increasingly active role following the outbreak of hostilities in the civil war: civilian militias manned checkpoints on main roads in government-controlled areas, checked civilian identification, and generally took on tasks usually carried out by uniformed government security forces. In Duékoué, in the west of the country, Human Rights Watch documented executions and harassment of civilians in April by civilian militias acting with full impunity and, in some cases, with the collaboration of state security forces. In Abidjan, militia activity brought the town to a standstill during the militias' demonstrations against the peace accords in January. During those demonstrations, pro-government militias attacked French businesses and institutions with no response from the state security forces.

While a ceasefire, monitored by 5,300 peacekeepers from France and ECOWAS, is still holding, there are worrying signs that the two sides are again preparing for war. Militias would likely play a large part in any return to violence. ECOWAS-sponsored talks aimed at breaking the impasse were held earlier this month, but failed to bring the rebels back into the government of national reconciliation. At present, the country remains split in two, with the rebel forces controlling the northern part and the government holding the south.

Crucial provisions in the January peace accords provided for a national human rights commission and an international inquiry into abuses committed during the conflict. To date, neither the commission nor the inquiry has materialized. Other key provisions of the peace agreement -- including those on disarmament, land reform and nationality law -- remain unfulfilled.

Impunity by government security forces remains a fundamental concern in Côte d'Ivoire and is both a cause and a result of the disintegration of the rule of law over the past four years.

Since 2000, Human Rights Watch and other human rights organizations have documented a persistent pattern of serious human rights violations committed by state security forces alone or in complicity with civilian militias, none of which have been seriously investigated or prosecuted by the Ivorian government. During the violence surrounding the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2000, there were scores of extrajudicial executions as well as numerous disappearances, cases of sexual violence, and hundreds of cases of torture committed by government forces, often in collaboration with youth supporters of the ruling party, the Ivorian Popular Front.

Human Rights Watch documented similar patterns of abuses against northern Ivorians, foreigners and suspected rebel sympathizers since the outbreak of the internal conflict on September 19, 2002. These violations included systematic and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, summary executions, arbitrary arrest and detention, 'disappearances', torture, rape, pillage, corporal punishment and other violent acts against civilians."

Both government forces and rebels have committed war crimes, reports Human Rights Watch (2002-2003)

- The war has produced numerous abuses against civilians
- Armed groups have targeted civilians, as looting has been their primary objective
- HRW has documented executions, sexual violence, and forced labor at the hands of both government and rebels in the west of Côte d'Ivoire

HRW, 20 June 2003

"The eight-month-old war in the Côte d'Ivoire has revealed deep divisions in Ivorian society and produced numerous serious abuses against civilians, some of which amount to war crimes.

Western Côte d'Ivoire has been the site of a virtual proxy war by Liberian forces, demonstrating the easy spillover potential of the Liberian conflict. As was the pattern by all sides in Liberia, armed groups have targeted civilians for abuse, and looting has been a primary objective.

Human Rights Watch has documented widespread abuses by both government and rebel-allied fighters in the west. Executions, sexual violence, forced labor and systematic looting of property have been commonplace, abuses that echo the treatment of civilians in Liberia.

The recent ceasefire in the west, and the formation of the government of reconciliation, are steps in the right direction, but the Ivorian peace process remains extremely fragile.

There is an urgent need for the parties to the conflict, the United Nations and member states to reinforce these positive steps with further concrete action, both within Côte d'Ivoire and in neighboring Liberia. Parts of the country, particularly along the Liberian border, remain volatile, demonstrating the degree to which the Liberian and Ivorian conflicts are interlinked.

Impunity-both past and present, Ivorian and regional-remains a key concern that must be addressed if a stable Côte d'Ivoire is to emerge from the past months of conflict. Efforts must be made to bridge the social divisions created by years of manipulation of ethnic and political tensions.

Abuses committed by the government and government-allied forces include: reprisal killings by state security forces based on the ethnic, national, religious or political affiliations of individuals; indiscriminate attacks on civilians by helicopter gunships; killings, rapes, and other acts of violence against civilians committed by Liberians recruited by the Ivorian government in refugee camps and from the Liberian MODEL rebel group; and attacks on northern Ivorians and immigrant civilians by civilian militias encouraged by and sometimes working in complicity with government in and around Duékoué, Daloa, Toulepleu and Tabou.

Abuses by the "Forces Nouvelles"¹ rebel groups and allied Liberian fighters include: summary executions of dozens of government officials, suspected government sympathizers and members of civilian militias by Ivorian rebel troops; systematic looting, summary executions and other acts of violence against civilians by Liberian fighters allied to the MPIGO rebel group; and sexual violence against girls and women in the west, including rape and sexual slavery.

Refugees and immigrants have been particular targets in the Ivorian war. Liberian refugees, including children, have been subjected to forced recruitment and violence by state authorities and local communities in western Côte d'Ivoire.

Immigrants, particularly Burkinabé, continue to suffer from widespread attacks that have in many instances been encouraged or tolerated by authorities. Efforts to relocate the refugee population and ensure protection for the immigrant population must be implemented without further delay."

Freedom of movement

Roadblocks continue to hinder free movement of people and goods (2005)

- Roadblocks in both government and rebel-held areas continue to impede freedom of movement, limit the provision of basic supplies to the north, and ultimately contribute to the economic downturn of the country

IASC, 25 April 2005

"Roadblocks continue to be present in the Forces Nouvelles –held areas as well as in the Government's areas. While roadblocks in the South have resulted in constant delays in the provision of basic supplies like fuel for electricity to the North, roadblocks in the FN- held areas are hindering the free circulation of goods and people and contribute to what has been defined the "economic cost of the crisis". It has been estimated that by increasing the price of cocoa (the main export crop) from currently US\$ 0.5 to US \$ 0.75 (which will still be below the US\$ 1.0

producer price in Ghana) one would generate an extra overall revenue of US\$ 150 million to the producers i.e. more than three times what the UN Agencies received for humanitarian funding through the CAP in 2004. Such an increase would need not necessarily come from an official increase at the price level as a mere reduction of roadblocks, hence illegal taxation, would have the same effect. From an economic standpoint, the mission noted that the lead role of one of the major international actors, has been substantially weakened thus contributing to the economic downturn of the country.”

UN ‘peace corridors’ to facilitate freedom of movement (September 2004)

- UN 'peace corridors' aim to allow families separated by fighting to travel between government-controlled and rebel-held areas

UN News, 9 September 2004

“The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) today announced plans to set up 'peace corridors' in a bid to promote freedom of movement in the strife-torn West African country.

As the parties work to reunify the divided country by implementing the Accra III agreement reached in late July, the UN mission is helping those displaced by the conflict which began in 2002. The corridors will serve to allow families separated by the fighting to travel between areas controlled by the Government and those controlled by the rebel Force Nouvelles.

ONUCI says the travel should provide hope to the war's victims that peace is returning to Côte d'Ivoire.”

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

General

Huge presence of IDPs puts increasing strain on vulnerable host families, 2006

- Effects of ongoing displacement have seriously affected purchasing power of host families
- Water crisis remains of particular concern across the country

UN, 18 July 2006

“The need to address the devastating ‘spill-over effects’ of the massive presence of IDPs on vulnerable host families and on already fragile inter-ethnic relations is corroborated by a WFP needs

assessment indicating that forced population displacements from conflict zones to more secure zones

has lead to a significant drop in the purchasing power of host families. Further, despite limited progress in some areas, the water crisis in the country remains a major problem. Côte d’Ivoire’s utilities companies have supplied an estimated six million people in the north with free water and electricity resulting in the near halt of services and the collapse of infrastructure. In May 2006, Guiglo

experienced power supply cuts for several days and its telephone communication network also collapsed. Concurrently, the telephone network of the entire region of Denguelé was out of service for

two weeks contributing to nurture apprehension and increase social tensions. Similarly, the second

biggest town in the country, Bouaké (about 600,000 inhabitants) remained without water supply for the

whole month as a result of the breakdown of hydraulic pumps caused by lack of adequate maintenance. A grave humanitarian crisis was avoided thanks to the action of humanitarian agencies

and organisations as well as ONUCI that supplied local health facilities, schools and public utility services with emergency water supplies and assisted in sanitising water sources. As a result also of

persistent and concerted humanitarian advocacy, the hydraulic pumps were repaired at the beginning of June.”

Summary of living conditions of IDPs and host families – new survey (March 2006)

ENSEA, March 2006

“Cadre de vie et équipements

A l’opposé des ménages urbains qui comptent un cinquième de propriétaires, en milieu rural, deux ménages sur quatre le sont et vivent en majorité dans leurs propres maisons ou celles de leurs familles. En ce qui concerne le mode d’approvisionnement en eau, il existe une inégalité entre les milieux de résidence et les départements. En effet, les ménages urbains d’Abidjan et de Yamoussoukro ont un accès correct à l’eau potable avec environ quatre ménages ravitaillés sur cinq, alors que ceux de la zone rurale ont recours de façon générale à des sources d’eau de

qualité médiocre. Au plan de l'éclairage, en milieu urbain, la quasi-totalité des ménages utilise l'électricité pour moins d'un ménage sur deux en milieu rural. En matière d'équipement, les postes radios sont plus fréquents dans les ménages ruraux (47%) qu'en milieu urbain (23,5%). Le téléphone est disponible dans 10% des ménages ruraux et le téléviseur dans 16%. Ces deux équipements se retrouvent beaucoup plus en ville. Concernant l'assainissement, dans l'ensemble, plus de quatre ménages sur dix utilisent des latrines situées dans leur cour, deux sur dix utilisent la nature comme lieu d'aisance, une proportion équivalente se sert de WC avec chasse d'eau et un sur dix, d'un WC sans chasse d'eau. En milieu rural les ménages font usage en majorité des latrines localisées dans leur concession (25,5%) ou dans la nature (26,6%)."

Displacement is major contributing factor to wide-ranging needs of children, 2006

- Child and infant mortality rates have seen a serious increase primarily due to collapse of the health care system and poor nutrition
- In early 2006, UNICEF estimated 40,000 children in Cote d'Ivoire were living with HIV/AIDS, a rate likely to increase
- Massive displacement has contributed to serious nutritional problems of children and women

UNICEF, 27 March 2006

"The health system, which was gravely disrupted due to the crisis, has been reactivated in 2005, but suffers from an insufficient return of qualified personnel. This situation, in combination with poor nutrition and disease monitoring and reduced routine EPI coverage, has contributed to a serious increase in child and infant mortality rates. A recent meningitis outbreak caused several deaths before UNICEF could respond with a vaccination campaign in the targeted area.

Access to safe drinking water is problematic due to a high number of broken water pumps and absence of public administration personnel in FN-controlled areas.

According to the latest estimates, 40,000 children in Côte d'Ivoire are currently living with HIV/AIDS, and as long as the crisis continues, this rate is likely to increase.

Loss of harvests, food reserves and the massive displacements of persons have seriously affected the nutritional status of children and women, leading to 11% of children in the Northern half suffering from wasting, and over 20% from stunting.

The Education sector has been seriously affected as well, with excess enrollment demands in government controlled areas and shortages of teachers and deterioration of school infrastructures in the FN-controlled areas. In addition, national exams have not been held in the latter for more than two years, but this situation is currently being addressed with some 93,000 children convened to take exams in the FN-controlled zones.

The lack of a functioning judicial system and state representatives in the North negatively affects the protection of children and women. Birth registration is problematic and girls have been exposed to all sorts of sexual abuse without having subsequent access to health or judicial assistance."

Health

Summary of health data on IDPs (March 2006)

ENSEA, March 2006

"Santé

Parmi les PDIs, une personne sur deux reconnaît avoir souvent des problèmes de santé. Les déplacés du milieu rural semblent connaître relativement les mêmes problèmes de santé que leurs homologues du milieu urbain (48% de ruraux contre 50% de citadins). En outre, on relève des différences parfois notoires entre les départements de résidence: Abidjan et Daloa abritent plus de 50% des personnes dont la situation sanitaire s'est aggravée alors qu'à Toulépleu, il sont seulement 24 %. En cas de maladie, un ménage d'accueil sur quatre (24 %) vient au secours des déplacés hébergés. Par ailleurs, les soutiens de l'Etat, des ONG nationales ou internationales, bénéficient seulement à environ 1 % de la population des déplacés."

Crisis in the health sector continues in all areas of the country (2004-2006)

- IDPs and other vulnerable groups in the north and west of the country have extremely limited access to health care facilities, while malnutrition and various diseases have been on the increase
- In one area of the north a single doctor serves a population of 200,000
- During the November 2004 crisis in Abidjan hospitals did not have the capacity to provide emergency treatment to some 2,000 people
- The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 7 per cent as a direct consequence of the crisis (the highest rate in West Africa)

UN, 18 November 2005

"The health sector is still an issue of concern, especially in the North and West of the country, despite the efforts of humanitarian agencies. A rehabilitation exercise carried out by UNICEF and ICRC in the West and North reported that about 497 out of a total of 578 health centres were open. UNICEF has supplied drugs to the majority of these health centres. The ICRC ensures and will continue to ensure in 2006 the supply of medicines from the central pharmacy Pharmacie de la Santé Publique (PSP) to seven major hospitals and clinics in the North. The World Health Organization (WHO) opened a sub office in Bouaké to facilitate information management through quick assessment and information sharing for better health interventions coordination. Apart from the rehabilitation of health centres by UNICEF and the European Union, international NGOs working in the field of health and nutrition participated in the humanitarian response. Save the Children-U.K. initiated a programme of mobile clinics, with UNICEF's support, to cover the health care needs of displaced local populations at Duékoué and immigrants who remained at Fengolo in departments of Guiglo, Bloléquin and Grabo.

Some NGOs have invested heavily in nutrition centres to combat chronic malnutrition, that is ranging between 3% and 15% in the West. As of 1 August 2005, the Therapeutic Nutrition Centre "Centre de

Nutrition Thérapeutique" (CNT) of MSF-France in Guiglo was treating 85 children including 40 inpatients and 45 outpatients. According to ACF, cases of malnutrition increased at three of its Supplemental Nutrition Centres "Centres de Nutrition Supplémentaires" (CNS) in the third quarter of 2005. During the same period, MSF-Belgium was concerned by the growing number of malnourished children at its CNT in Man, which received 232 children from the Bangolo area and the Northern part of Danané. Humanitarian actors are considering a concerted curative and preventive action in Bangolo and northern Danané where the majority of those hospitalised originate from. In addition, ACF and MSF-Belgium received WFP food rations for care and support of malnourished children admitted to the National Health Centres of Zouan Hounien, Bin Houyé and Téapleu, and the National Transit Centres in Man and Zouan Hounien. Meanwhile, the Northern region has recorded the highest rate of malnutrition estimated 15%.

In spite of the various initiatives and actions carried out to rehabilitate health facilities and supply materials and drugs, access to health care remains problematic for populations impoverished by the crisis. After three years of crisis, most people cannot afford to pay for health care.

In response to the low national immunisation coverage, observed in the past six years, the Ministry of Health, with the support of UNICEF, WHO and several other partners, organised three vaccination campaigns in 2005 against polio, immunising more than 5 million children aged 0 - 5 years, i.e. 99.9%. As part of the fight against measles, 7,8 million children aged 9 months - 14 years were vaccinated between 18 and 27 August 2005, representing 87.7%. Hence, for the year 2005, there was significant improvement in the prevention of poliomyelitis and measles, increasing from a coverage rate of approximately 50% in 2004.

Côte d'Ivoire is the country most affected by HIV in West Africa, and one of the 15 most affected countries in the world. In fact, the country continues to register the highest rates of HIV prevalence since the outbreak of the pandemic, at 7% (range: 4.9-10%) although Abidjan registered its lowest rate in a decade (6%)⁵ in 2000. Accordingly, it is estimated that there were 570,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in 2004. HIV/AIDS has become one of the main causes of death in adults in Côte d'Ivoire⁶. The infected populations are increasingly young and mostly women.

This indicator is currently all the more significant given the crisis raging in the country for the past three years, bringing in its wake factors favouring the spread of HIV, notably population displacements, collapse of traditional sexual standards, explosion of the sex industry, rape, destruction of the health systems and increase in the consumption of substances (alcohol and drugs). In addition, according to the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) 2004 report, the epidemic is spreading in circles where there is malnutrition and food insecurity, as in the case of Côte d'Ivoire. Unfortunately, recent statistics are not available, as the partition of the country and dysfunctional institutions have made data collection very difficult.

The impact of AIDS on the development capacity of the country will seriously jeopardise the chances of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, especially as regards poverty reduction, education, health, and care and support of orphans.”

UN, 23 June 2005

“The health system is unable to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly in the north and west, with children under five, who are less and less protected following the interruption of routine immunisation programmes and the weakness of the epidemiological surveillance system. Meanwhile, according to World Health Organization (WHO), the global and moderate malnutrition rates among children under five remain high with 22% of chronic malnutrition and 7% of acute malnutrition. In addition, the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) prevalence rate has reached 7%, which may increase further as the deterioration of the situation causes an important displacement of the population.

Where the health facilities and staff are present, lack of water has serious implications on the functioning of the main hospital and on the treatment available to the local populations. Furthermore, the breakdown of the system has considerably slowed down the collection of medical information and data, including on epidemics, resulting in a slow response to such outbreaks.”

UN SC, 18 March 2005

“61. In the health sector, vulnerable populations in the north and the west are still suffering because of a lack of medicines, medical equipment and professional health workers, despite tremendous efforts undertaken by medical non-governmental and other organizations. An increased prevalence of diseases such as cholera, yellow fever, meningitis, measles and poliomyelitis has been reported. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, jointly organized vaccination campaigns in 2004 to eradicate these diseases, especially poliomyelitis, and planned another five poliomyelitis vaccination campaigns for 2005.”

UN, 17 December 2004

“The lack of medical personnel and staff will continue to constitute a major obstacle to providing basic health care throughout the country. It is feared that redeployment efforts to the northern part of the country controlled by the FN will no longer be a priority for the Government. Populations living in the FN-controlled areas have had limited access to basic social services for over two years. Even with the redeployment of some medical staff, there was still a serious lack of personnel. During the heat of the crisis in Abidjan, over 2,000 wounded people were in need of emergency health care. The capacities of the hospitals in Abidjan were overstretched and there was an urgent need for medicines and first-aid material. The Ministry of Health had not developed a contingency plan and hospitals were not equipped and prepared for an emergency situation.”

WHO, 11 November 2004

“Three-and-a-half million vulnerable persons, including 500,000 IDPs, are affected by the crisis and ongoing insecurity. Host families of IDPs have completely depleted their resources and are no longer capable of providing for them, while government resources to respond to needs have greatly diminished.

Access to health services: Access to social services (health centres and education) is difficult for vulnerable groups in areas under control of the Forces Nouvelles (FN). There is a shortage of

medical care and facilities in the Northeastern region, where a single doctor serves a population of 200,000, making it difficult to address health needs. While only 110 health centres out of 350 are operational and are supplied with medicines, a lack of medical staff remains a true constraint.

Disease surveillance and control: World Bank data in 2002 listed the under-five mortality rate in Côte d'Ivoire as 191 deaths per 1,000 children. This is an alarming increase since 1995, when the mortality rate was of 142 deaths per 1,000 children. Only 49% of children have been vaccinated against measles but it is expected that the next vaccination campaign in December 2004 will reach many more. With regard to HIV/AIDS, the current prevalence rate (according to UNAIDS' annual report for 2004) is estimated at 7% as a direct consequence of the crisis."

Food

Food security situation remains fragile in conflict-affected areas and may deteriorate, 2006

- Internal displacement and insecurity continue to prevent many farmers from accessing their land
- The conflict also wiped out 80 per cent of animal stock in western and central Cote d'Ivoire
- As a result, substantial sections of the population rely on food aid and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future

UN, 18 November 2005

"Until the beginning of the 1990s, Côte d'Ivoire experienced a relatively prosperous food security situation as a result of peace and social stability, favourable agro-climatic conditions, available and skilled agricultural populations, good quality social services rendered and functioning infrastructures.

The strong development of cash crops had been at the centre of the economic growth and food security.

With the onset of the crisis in 2002, the social and economic situation of the country has radically changed, with significant humanitarian consequences for the population. In rural areas some 500,000

people are still internally displaced and insecurity is still preventing many farmers from accessing their

land. The food security situation remains fragile in most of the conflict-affected areas and is likely to

deteriorate for the most-vulnerable segments of the population. Although population resettlement and

agricultural rehabilitation activities in the west of the country have led to an increase in planted areas

and production, continued instability, economic stagnation and insufficient income has left urgent agricultural needs unmet and agricultural production still below pre-war levels leaving substantial sections of the population in need of food aid.

Food crop production during the 2004 season was still below the average of the five pre-war periods, mainly due to a marked decrease in cereal crop production⁸. Rice levels were lower by 10%; maize, root and tuber crop outputs even decreased by 15%. Conflict-related problems, notably insecurity, population displacement, lack of access to agricultural inputs, labour scarcity and obstacles to the freedom of movement of people and commodities with consequent market fragmentation were among the major causes of this agricultural decline in the Centre West of the country, while in the North West some localised rain shortage induced a negative impact on the yields of staple cereals. Even though it is early at this stage to have a complete picture, preliminary surveys indicate that outputs in 2005 should reveal large pockets of vulnerability in line with 2004's findings. The conflict had a very negative impact on the animal stock in western and central Côte d'Ivoire, where over 80% of the flocks were wiped out. During 2005, the livestock has shown little improvement and, in most of the conflict-affected areas, communities still do not have small ruminants or poultry. Moreover, they can no longer afford animal protein.

The crisis had also limited the activities of fresh water fisheries in central Côte d'Ivoire, where the population was forced to leave. Boats and fishing gear were looted or destroyed and were not replaced.

In the northern regions under the control of the FN, technicians and specialists working in the agricultural sector did not return, leaving farmers with a serious lack of technical assistance.

Since the beginning of the 2002 crisis, many vulnerable populations including refugees have depended on external assistance to survive. In 2005, in addition to the School Feeding programme (465,000 students), WFP provided food aid to: (i) 17,500 refugees and displaced persons living on sites; (ii) 35,000 returnees and others war-affected and food-insecure people; (iii) 40,000 rural households experiencing short-term food insecurity during the lean season; and (iv) 23,000 households beneficiaries of the seeds ration protection for the joint agricultural recovery programme with FAO. The emergency agricultural assistance carried out by FAO allowed more than 14,000 vulnerable families in 2005 to resume food crop production through the distribution of key agricultural inputs (cereal and bean seeds, vegetable seeds, tools and fertilizers). In order to improve self-reliance and resilience of the local population, an additional 1,700 farmers received training and support for the production of quality seed. Altogether the agencies involved in the agricultural support programme have assisted some 20,000 households.

As indicated above, in 2006 Côte d'Ivoire will remain a food-deficit country with large pockets of food insecurity and vulnerability. Although insecurity and intercommunity conflicts represent the main

threats to food security, the conclusion of a peace agreement through the election will not immediately result in the reduction of the number of households in need of humanitarian assistance, as many people are still internally displaced and/or have lost most of their assets during the conflict. Ensuring food security in the context of a peace building process is of paramount importance to facilitate the reinsertion of approximately 500,000 people living in sites or with host families. In addition, the success of the peace process is closely linked to the success of disarmament programmes and social reinsertion. In this context, the capacity to ensure, through agricultural support and food assistance, the food security of households involved in the reinstallation and reintegration programme, including ex-combatants and their dependants, is a prerequisite for durable peace and stability.”

Shelter

Thousands remain homeless following the destruction of shanty towns in Abidjan (January 2003)

- A UN envoy to Côte d'Ivoire was shocked by the living conditions facing people who were forced from their slum homes when war broke out in September 2002
- The people's homes had been razed on the orders of President Laurent Gbagbo days after rebels rose up against his government
- The aid agency "Save the Children" has said that 16 out of Abidjan's 30 neighbourhoods have been razed since October. Some 25,000 people have been affected by the raids, and 3,000 left homeless

“A UN envoy on a visit to west Africa said Saturday she was shocked by the living conditions facing people who were forced from their slum homes when war broke out in Ivory Coast four months ago.

"I had heard about the situation these people faced but to see how they really live was shocking," Carolyn McAskie told AFP after meeting with the slum dwellers, dubbed "evictees," in the Allakro neighbourhood of Abidjan.

McAskie, who arrived in Ivory Coast on Thursday for the start of a three-week visit to the region, visited a group of slum dwellers, most of them west African migrant workers, in the economic hub of the west African country.

The people's homes had been razed on the orders of President Laurent Gbagbo days after rebels rose up against his government on September 19, sparking the conflict that has ground on for four months.

The government announced on October 4 that it would destroy all shantytowns in the city within a month, claiming that foreign supporters of the rebels were living there.

Allakro was completely destroyed in the post-rebellion raids. McAskie urged Gbagbo's government "to treat the people who were chased from their homes in a humane manner and allow them to keep their personal belongings."

She said the UN would give "humanitarian aid to displaced persons who are in a difficult situation."

The aid agency "Save the Children" has said that 16 out of Abidjan's 30 neighbourhoods have been razed since October. Some 25,000 people have been affected by the raids, and 3,000 left homeless. ...

[...] The head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Besida Tonwe, has estimated that between 600,000 and a million people have been displaced by the Ivory Coast war." (AFP, 18 January 2003)

Water and Sanitation

IDPs and host communities continue to have urgent needs for water and sanitation facilities (2004-2006)

- Access to clean water is still poor for IDPs and other vulnerable populations, particularly in rebel-held areas
- Limited access to potable water has resulted in the resurgence of endemic diseases and indirectly had a negative impact on education
- During the November 2004 crisis, water and electricity supplies were cut off to key northern and western towns, increasing the risk of epidemics due to waterborne diseases

UN, 18 November 2005

"**The water and sanitation sector** is one of the major concerns of the humanitarian response, in light of the difficulty of populations to access safe water in sufficient quantities and of satisfactory quality. The differences are more pronounced in areas of the North and of the West controlled by the FN as illustrated by a joint UNICEF/SODECI study from May to June 2005. At the level of urban water supply, apart from Abidjan and some major towns in the Government zone, less than 60% of the population has access to safe water. A case in point is the water level of the Korhogo dam. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the current availability of water in the dam is estimated at 1,000,000 m³. Based on a ration of 3,000 m³ per day, this quantity would be merely sufficient until the end of February 2006. This situation is due primarily to the lack of maintenance of water supply infrastructures and unfavourable climatic conditions. UNICEF and ICRC have installed emergency facilities in Korhogo to distribute more than 700,000 litres of safe water per day to an estimated population of 180,000 inhabitants.

The 2001/2002 assessments by the Water Supply Department, the *Direction de l'Hydraulique Humaine* (DHH), indicated breakdown rates of 35% nationwide. According to a sectoral group report, the breakdown rates were estimated at 60% in 2004. In 2005, a vast programme aimed at rehabilitating 8,200 pumps was launched by the DHH. For reasons of inaccessibility by civil servants, the programme was carried out only in Government controlled zones. In the North, West and North East, it is difficult to evaluate the breakdown rates, but estimates by humanitarian agencies indicate rates ranging from 70 - 80% in some areas.

Poor rainfall and the drying up of water supply sources in the North of Côte d'Ivoire considerably

increased safe water shortages in a number of localities (Korhogo, Bouna, Man, Katiola, Séguéla, etc) with adverse effects on farm crops. In response to this critical situation and following a nationwide assessment mission, the Ministry of Economic Infrastructures has set up an emergency national water committee to address this issue.

In the area of sanitation, rapid assessments on the ground indicate that more than 54% of the population does not have adequate excreta disposal systems, which leads to increased risk of epidemics such as diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid fever, measles, Guinea worm, poliomyelitis, etc.”

UN, 23 June 2005

“Since February 2005, water cuts are very frequent in the areas under FN control. It is estimated that 9,000 water pumps are not operational throughout the territory. Their breakdown rate has risen from 35% to 70%. In urban areas, households are increasingly hard-hit by shortages of potable water. Most cities (Abobo, Yopougon, Anyama, Kouassi-Kouassikro, Kouassi-Datédro, Guiglo, Bouaké, Bouna, Nassian, Téhini, San Pedro, Tabou, etc.) are experiencing a drinking water shortage due to breakdowns in the water works and insufficient capacity of hydraulic infrastructures. Limited access to potable water, particularly for women and children affected by the war, has resulted in the resurgence of endemic diseases, epidemics, and in a negative impact on education. Fetching water is increasingly a chore done by children, notably girls, detrimental to their schooling, and leads to a high dropout rate amongst girl children. More than 50% of the women and children in rural areas do not have access to potable water, while only 30% of primary schools have potable water.”

UN, 17 December 2004

“Water and electricity supplies were cut off to the Northern towns of Bouake, Korhogo and Man and the Western town of Guiglo from the 4 -12 November. The consequences of the electrical power outage in the North were of major humanitarian concern, given the increased risk of epidemics due to waterborne diseases and lack of hygiene as well as the difficulties of storing medicines/vaccines and running the hospitals and health clinics in these areas. Assessments made in the North indicate that a number of stocks of vaccines were destroyed due to the lack of cold storage.

In Abidjan, although water supply has not been affected by the November crisis, the inadequate supply of water to certain areas of the city, including the largest prison (MACA) has led to a riot and the escape of thousands of prisoners. Most of the major cities throughout the country have suffered from inadequate water supply and poor levels of public sanitation and hygiene. The semi-private water company (SODECI) has stated that the lack of state investment in the water sector and the limited resources provided for maintenance and replacement of equipment have led to a general deterioration of the water supply since the start of the crisis in 2002.

During the height of the November crisis garbage was not collected in the bigger towns thus contaminating the environment and augmenting the risk of animal vectored and water-borne diseases.”

UN News, 12 July 2004

“In Côte d'Ivoire, a West African country whose peace process is deadlocked, the towns and villages lack safe drinking water, while households in rural areas do not have adequate latrines, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said today.

The problem with drinking water supplies stems from infrastructures that have either been over-exploited or cannot cope with urban population pressures as trained maintenance personnel leave, the agency said.

In rural areas about 65 per cent of hand pumps for water are out of order and more than three-quarters of the population lack adequate latrines, UNICEF said.

In the northern areas, military insecurity has made access to public services, health care and education difficult because government employees have been slow to deploy there, it said.”

UN OCHA, 15 June 2004

“There has little been progress in the improvement of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene for the populations affected by the crisis. Though some progress has been made at transit sites for IDPs, IDPs living with families and host communities continue to have urgent needs. Given the current situation, it is important to continue providing humanitarian assistance, while creating conducive conditions for the return of the populations to their localities of origin by improving access to basic social services, including hydraulic and sanitation infrastructures.”

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Summary of education data on IDPs (March 2006)

ENSEA, March 2006

“Education

Les déplacés vivant en milieu urbain semblent plus scolarisés que ceux du milieu rural (70% en ville contre 60% en zone rurale). Les enfants et les jeunes dont les âges se situent entre 6 et 24 ans révolus sont en majorité encore inscrits à l'école (75%). Lorsque l'on s'intéresse aux enfants déplacés de moins de 15 ans, il ressort que 70% d'entre eux poursuivent leur scolarité.

Cependant, les filles déplacées sont moins scolarisées que les garçons. Ce sont en moyenne 59% d'entre elles qui sont encore à l'école entre 6 et 24 ans contre 69% de garçons. Cette configuration est peu satisfaisante, néanmoins, elle est appréciable comparativement à la situation à Duékoué où à peine trois filles sur dix ont la chance d'être scolarisée. Les départements ayant les taux de scolarisation les plus élevés sont Abidjan et Yamoussoukro avec des niveaux respectifs de 71% et 67%.

Les principales raisons évoquées par les déplacés qui ne fréquentent plus l'école sont le manque de moyens financiers surtout parmi ceux de 10-24 ans (34%) et le fait de n'avoir jamais été à l'école chez les moins de 10 ans (64%). En général, les frais de scolarité des déplacés scolarisés sont pris en charge par leurs parents biologiques. Ce qui est confirmé par les propos de plus de 70% d'entre eux.”

After three years of limbo, promise of exams for thousands of students in rebel-held north (February 2006)

- In February 2006 the Ivorian government announced a plan to allow some 90,000 students in rebel-held territory to sit key exams
- Many schools in the north had been closed since the crisis began in 2002, with large numbers of teachers displaced in the south

IRIN, 16 February 2006

“After waiting more than three years to sit key exams because of Cote d'Ivoire's unrelenting civil war, more than 90,000 school students left in limbo in rebel-held territory could be able to take the tests as soon as this month.

In a statement issued after Wednesday's weekly cabinet meeting, the West African country's interim government announced a new plan to restore schooling in the northern half of Cote d'Ivoire, which has been split in two since a failed coup in September 2002.

Teachers, judges, nurses and a host of other civil servants left jobs in the north after the start of the civil war, heading for the government-held south where public administration and civil service pay have continued uninterrupted.

Since the conflict began, schools in the north - home to some six million people - have been operating with the help of volunteer teachers, while exams have been scrapped because they needed the approval of the education ministry.

'The proposed plan will enable the school year to begin on 1 March 2006 and to organise exams for the 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 school years according to a schedule running from 23 February to 29 March 2006,' the cabinet statement said.

In Cote d'Ivoire the school year generally begins in October with final exams set for June.

In 2004, exams for the 2003/2004 school session for 72,243 northern pupils were set for 10 November but had to be cancelled at the last minute when fighting flared up.

By 2005, the number of students from the north who had paid fees to sit the exams had swollen to 93,845, but Education Minister Michel Amani N'Guessan said at the time that it was too dangerous to send teachers to rebel territory to supervise the tests.

Of the total who have paid out the fees, 8,776 hope to sit their final secondary school leaving exam, the 'baccalaureat,' which is needed to advance to further study. Another 23,715 have applied to sit for the BEPC leaving certificate after four years of secondary school, and 60,140 for the CEPE exam certifying the end of the primary school cycle.

The fate of school children in northern Cote d'Ivoire has been a sticking point in peace talks, with the New Forces rebel movement slamming the government of President Laurent Gbagbo for failing to allow exams to take place. Rebels have called this 'cultural genocide.'

A new interim government was put in place in December, however, headed by Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny. He has been tasked by the international community with overseeing a UN peace blueprint for the country."

Education severely disrupted by the crisis (2004-2005)

- In September 2005, school exams had not taken place in rebel-held areas for over 2 years for apparent reasons of security
- By December 2004, few teachers had returned to the rebel-controlled north, while schools in the south remained overcrowded with IDPs
- Due to massive levels of displacement and other conflict-related factors, an estimated 700,000 children have had their schooling interrupted since 2002
- During the November 2004 crisis in Abidjan, numerous schools were destroyed, affecting thousands of children

"In the zones under FN control, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has still not organised the 2003-2004 school examinations, stating that it was impossible to do so due to the prevailing insecurity since the events of November 2004, and insisting on the beginning of disarmament as a precondition. However, there has been a slight shift in that position but it is unclear when the deployment of teachers and school administration will take place." (UN, 23 Jun 05)

"Children's education throughout the country has and will continue to be negatively affected by the deteriorating crisis. In Abidjan, numerous schools were destroyed from the 6 to 9 November, affecting thousands of children. Furthermore the Government has stated that final exams for children in the

FN-controlled zone will be postponed until the country is reconciled, which could jeopardise the next academic year of hundreds of thousands of children.

It is feared that the education sector will also suffer greatly from the slow or non-redeployment of civil servants, including school administrative staff and school teachers. Few teachers have returned to their posts in the North as well as the insecure West. UNICEF estimates that there are currently 700,000 children who have left school since the start of the conflict in 2002. There is great concern that this figure will grow if teachers are not redeployed and exams ensured for the children in the North." (UN, 17 Dec 04)

"The Ivorian school system continues to suffer as most teachers drawing government salaries in the South have refused to return to the FN-controlled North. In the meanwhile schools in the South remain overcrowded due to the large number of displaced children. The Ministry of Education estimates that almost half of the 533,000 children, who remained in the North have been deprived of education since the start of the crisis. Only 20% of the teachers in the North stayed at their post or returned once the fighting died down. Over 3,000 volunteers have supplemented these few to help fill the gap. The local NGO, Ecole pour Tous, report that 286,000 children now attend primary school and 55,000 attend secondary school. The Minister of Education, Michel Amani N'Guessan, admitted to IRIN, that he was reluctant to push for the return of teachers to the North before the FN disarm. In the meanwhile humanitarian organisations continue to maintain childrens interests including their right to go to school." (UN OCHA, 10 September 2004)

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Self-reliance

Summary of employment statistics of IDPs (March 2006)

ENSEA, March 2006

“Emploi

De manière générale, la structure de l'occupation dans la population des personnes déplacées indique une prépondérance des élèves (38%). Ce constat est nuancé dans les départements de Duékoué et de Toulépleu où la majorité des déplacés est occupée. Les actifs occupés (26%) viennent ensuite suivis des chômeurs et des personnes en quête de leur premier emploi (25%). Les personnes actives occupées travaillent essentiellement dans le commerce (34%), l'administration (31%), l'artisanat (19%) et l'agriculture (16%). La structure de l'occupation dans la population des non déplacées est quelque peu différente. En effet, les occupés sont dominants (42%) suivi des élèves (33%), des chômeurs et personnes en quête de leur premier emploi (14%). Dans l'ensemble, les populations déplacées renferment deux fois moins de personnes occupées que dans la population non déplacée.”

Public participation

IDPs risk disenfranchisement in rushed elections, 2005

- Lack of information on numbers and locations of IDPs, as well as the risk of renewed displacement of Ivorian "settlers" and West African immigrants, are just some of the factors contributing to possible disenfranchisement of IDPs in elections scheduled for 30 October 2005
- By July 2005 practically none of the necessary preparations had been made for October elections, including electoral lists and voter education

“The electoral process in Cote d'Ivoire is facing severe constraints, with time running out. Senior United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) officials insist that elections will take place on schedule, even though a High Representative for elections has only just been appointed, there has been no agreement on voter rolls, and there has been little in the way of technical preparation and voter education. An electoral law was finally passed by presidential decree, but rebel forces are saying they will wait to see the fine print before accepting the conditions. Disarmament, a condition for elections, has not taken place yet, with deadlines on both sides repeatedly ignored.

According to an NGO specialist, the estimated 500,000 internally displaced persons in the country would risk disenfranchisement if elections were to take place this October because little thought has been given to ensuring how they would participate. Up until now, there has been little real information about the exact numbers, whereabouts, and needs of IDPs; the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has been tasked with launching an IDP survey, but the work has yet to begin. The political situation is also still so polarized and unstable that unrest in the run-up to elections is highly likely. With the recent massacres in the west of the country and

the prevalence of anti-foreigner sentiment, disruptive forces can easily manipulate ethnic tensions with violent results. Potential targets of violence include the displaced Burkinabé who have been living in isolated camps for the past several years near Guiglo, as well as Liberian refugees. Because of the severely reduced timeline for election preparation in Cote d'Ivoire, an enormous investment by the international community, which heretofore has been reticent at lending support, is required." (RI, 22 Jul 05)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Summary of data on IDPs' wishes to return or resettle (March 2006)

ENSEA, March 2006

“Volonté de retour des PDIs vers leurs lieux d’origine et les raisons de leur sédentarisation dans leur lieu de résidence actuelle;

En règle générale, les déplacés ne sont pas retournés dans leur zone de résidence d’avant la crise pendant toute la durée de celle-ci. C’est le cas de 8 personnes déplacées sur 10. Aussi, 83% des déplacés qui ont refusé de faire un tel voyage ont avancé la raison de l’insécurité qui règne toujours dans le pays.

La majorité des PDIs (72%) font le projet de quitter les ménages d’accueil et de retourner dans leur zone de provenance à la fin de la crise, après que la situation se soit complètement normalisée. Cependant, cette situation d’ensemble n’est pas uniforme et change parfois considérablement selon la zone de provenance du déplacé. Ainsi, les hommes déplacés venus de la zone nord qui souhaitent y retourner ne sont que 17 % alors que, la proportion de femmes venant de cette zone et ayant manifesté le même désir s’élève à 43 %. Ce sont les proportions les plus faibles des volontés de retour exprimées. Les réfugiés en provenance de la Vallée du Bandama manifestent également une assez forte réticence à retourner dans leur zone de départ : 46 % des hommes et 57 % des femmes seulement ont exprimé le désir de retour. En revanche, plus de 4 personnes sur 5 souhaitent retourner lorsqu’elles proviennent du Haut Sassandra ou de l’Ouest (82 % et 77 % respectivement au niveau des hommes, 74 % et 77 % respectivement pour les femmes).

Une proportion significative de 13 % des déplacés interrogés (autant chez les hommes qu’au niveau des femmes) refuse obstinément le retour dans leur ancienne localité de résidence quelle que soit l’incitation.

Des attentes matérielles ont été avancées comme incitation pour le retour dans leurs localités d’origine par certaines PDIs. Elles souhaitent une aide au retour et d’autres pensent que la réhabilitation des logements endommagés et leur évacuation seraient les conditions préalables. Les premiers constituent 14 % de l’ensemble et les seconds 10 %.”

Tensions high between returning IDPs and local communities in western Cote d’Ivoire (2004)

- In western Cote d'Ivoire, many local communities are frightened by the return of IDPs due to continuing ethnic tensions and violence, and this has itself caused further displacement
- In some cases IDPs are unwilling to return before armed elements are disarmed
- Serious efforts for conflict resolution and reconciliation are needed in the villages

“There has been limited movement of IDPs, the majority of which are living with host families in the South of the country. It has been estimated that there are at least a quarter of a million IDPs

living in Abidjan. Some movement has been noted in the western part of the country, however this mostly concerns farmers who have returned to cultivate their crops. The environment in the west remains very hostile towards IDPs. There has been virtually no return of civil servants to the Northern part of the country, and they remain reluctant to return before the DDR process.

On the 13th of August a group of Baoulé, including men and women attempting to return to their homes in and around Bolequin, was held up in the village of Kaadé, where they were physically aggressed, stripped of their belongings and denied the possibility to pass through the area. They were also prevented access the following day even though they had received passes from the local authorities and were escorted by gendarmes. The problem of denied access has also been encountered by humanitarian agencies, which have been denied access to vulnerable populations including IDPs North of Bolequin.” (UN OCHA, 10 September 2004)

“In the western Côte d'Ivoire tensions are heightened due to the premature return of IDPs to their areas of residence. Humanitarian organisations are receiving mixed reports from IDPs and host villages regarding their return. It is clear that while some communities and IDPs may be ready to be reunited others are not.

In the classified Forest Scio, situated northwest of Guiglo, the return of IDPs to the campement of CIB in the forest of Scio led to violent clashes and the death of one Guéré, who was decapitated in early April. Due to this incidence and a general feeling of insecurity among the local inhabitants, many have chosen to leave the village. It is estimated that since the 2nd April 2004 a total of 321 IDPs have returned to CIB. OCHA and IOM will conduct a mission to this area to further investigate the situation.

The conflict between the of Dozos from Duoekpé and the Guéré from Diéouzon (26km northeast of Bangolo), on the 20th April has led to the displacement of 357 villagers of the Guéré ethnic group from Diéouzon and 158 from Duoekpé, who have fled to Bangolo.

LICORNE has been prevented from conducting its routine patrols in the Bolequin. On the 19th April, LICORNE was held back by a barrage set-up by groups of young men, accusing LICORNE of facilitating and organising the " clandestine" return of Burkinabé. Also in Bolequin, between Guiglo and Toulepleu, it has been reported that, the local population are alarmed and frightened by the return of IDPs and have sought shelter on the main road. Many villagers are still against the return of immigrants and intercommunity tensions are still very high. It is clear that serious efforts for conflict resolution and reconciliation are needed and that villagers are unable to initiate this process themselves. On the 23rd April the Minister of National Reconciliation, Professor Danon Djedje, visited Bolequin and Toulepleu in order to start the process of peace and reconciliation by establishing the local reconciliation committees.

Tuteurs (land owners) are coming to the camps in Nicla, Guiglo to encourage the return of IDPs as they urgently need the labour force for the start of the agricultural season. However, as mentioned earlier, many local communities are not yet ready for their return, likewise not all IDPs are not willing to return before the disarmament of armed elements begins.

In Man 1486 IDPs (173 families) have registered with the committee for IDPs to facilitate their return to their areas of residence, which include Danané, Bin-Houye, Zouan-Houien and Mahapleu. Many of these families expressed a wish to return to their homes in order to commence this year's agricultural season. The humanitarian community have been contacted to provide support for their return.

Number of IDPs Wanting to Leave Man and Return to Areas of Residence:

Area of residence	No. IDPs	Families
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Danané	472	58
Bin-Houye	259	26
Zouan-Hounien	594	70
Mahapleu	161	19
Total	1486	173

Source: Committee for IDPs in Man

There are some humanitarian support mechanisms (WFP food-aid) in place for IDPs who have returned to their areas of residence. Between the 14th-20th April, WFP in partnership with ICRC WFP provided 5,515 returnees with rations and commenced food for work programmes in Zouan Houien, Bin Houye and Man.

The general council of Danané has presented a project for peace and reconciliation in the department of Danané. During the crisis many fled from this area, particularly from Bin Houye and Zouan Hounien. The project is comprised of various different stages including 1) facilitating inter-community dialogue and building social cohesion, 2) sensitisation of local authorities (formal and informal) and 3) addressing the specific cases of IDPs in the prospect of their return." (UN OCHA, 26 Apr 04)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Assistance for IDPs threatened by anti-UN riots (January 2006)

- More than 6,000 IDPs and 8,000 refugees in camps in western Cote d'Ivoire were left without assistance after UN agencies were forced to evacuate in January 2006 by violence and looting directed at them
- Several hundred UN peacekeepers also left their base in the western town of Guiglo
- Humanitarian assistance in the area had to be suspended for several weeks until sufficient security was restored to allow operations to be resumed

IRIN, 23 January 2006

"The gutting of UN facilities and evacuation of staff in western Cote d'Ivoire last week could deprive thousands of refugees and displaced of food aid and other humanitarian assistance, officials warned on Monday.

About 14,000 refugees and displaced persons live in camps near the western town of Guiglo, where anti-UN protesters loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo went on the rampage last week, torching the offices of 10 UN agencies and other aid groups and driving out all UN personnel and most other aid workers.

'The situation is extremely serious,' Abdou Dieng, UN World Food Programme country director, told IRIN. "We don't know what's going to happen to these people."

Angry youths damaged or stole at least 20 UN vehicles and looted a WFP warehouse of just under 700 tonnes of rice destined for vulnerable populations, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). They also made off with laptops, cameras, scanners, generators and satellite phones.

Total damages for the UN could amount to US \$1.8 million, UN humanitarian coordinator Abdoulaye Mar Dieye said in a statement, condemning what he called a 'flagrant violation of human rights and humanitarian law.'

[...]

Currently, UN agencies feed and provide humanitarian assistance to almost one million people faced by food insecurity, and about one out of five of the country's 17 million people receives humanitarian assistance of some kind, UN officials told IRIN.

Last week's riots, which lasted four days and brought the economic capital Abidjan to a standstill, targeted UN-sponsored attempts to bring peace to Cote d'Ivoire, split between a rebel-held north and government-controlled south for more than three years.

While calm has returned to Abidjan, the head of the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI), Pierre Schori, told reporters at the weekend that the situation in the west is 'very worrying...because it can lead to a humanitarian disaster.'

Staff from the medical aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres-France are among the few humanitarian agents left behind in the region, according to head of mission Hiam Elzein, who said MSF-France's health and nutritional centres were continuing to function.

'We're trying to maintain a humanitarian presence,' she said.

The densely forested region around Guiglo is home to a refugee camp for 8,000 Liberians and a camp sheltering some 6,000 Burkinabe farmers, driven off their plantations in Cote d'Ivoire during three years of conflict.

Nearly all aid workers were forced out of the region last week when mobs began to burn and loot UN facilities following the death of five youths when peacekeepers opened fire following an attack on a UN military compound.

Following the clashes several hundred Bangladeshi peacekeepers left their bases in Guiglo and the nearby town of Duekoue, retreating to the buffer zone that separates the rebel and government zones.

For the refugees and displaced persons stranded in the west, WFP's Dieng says the priority must be to resume aid to those who need it. 'We must return there. We cannot just abandon them.' "

Renewed fighting further hampers humanitarian access (November 2004)

- Resumption of fighting in November 2004 resulted in the evacuation of staff of both UN agencies and NGOs, some for several months
- Humanitarian agencies have been threatened, harassed and directly attacked
- WFP was forced to temporarily suspend operations at the end of November 2004 after rebels opened fire near one of its planes

IRIN, 7 November 2004

"The United Nations Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (ONUCI) on Sunday raised its security level across the whole country to Phase Four, the last phase before evacuation, a spokesman said.

Phase Four enables security chiefs on the ground to recommend the relocation outside the country of all international staff except those concerned with emergency or humanitarian relief operations or security matters."

UN News, 6 November 2004

"With six of their vehicles no longer available and roadblocks proliferating, United Nations humanitarian agencies are struggling to continue their work in Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest exporter of cocoa, during government bombardment of rebel-held areas, a UN spokesman said today.

The bombing around the rebel Forces Nouvelles-controlled towns of Bouaké and Korhogo has forced the agencies to restrict staff movements, spokesman Fred Eckhard said. Five agency vehicles were "confiscated" by armed groups and a sixth was destroyed.

Continued hostilities could prevent farmers from going to their fields, affecting the harvesting of food, as well as the biggest revenue earner in the south and west, cocoa, he said."

WFP, 16 November 2004

"WFP has been able to resume some of its operations in crisis-ridden Cote d'Ivoire just days after the wave of unrest sweeping the country had forced the agency to suspend most of its food aid projects.

WFP food aid is currently reaching more than 15,000 refugees and displaced persons sheltering at camps in Guiglo and Tabou.

The agency also continues to provide assistance to thousands of malnourished children and pregnant & nursing women at therapeutic feeding centres across Cote d'Ivoire.

"Continued instability is limiting the number of distributions, but we hope to be able to resume full operations soon," said WFP spokesman Ramin Rafirasme.

WFP suspended most of its Cote d'Ivoire activities in the wake of violence sparked by the government's November 4 offensive against rebels.

The insecurity has forced the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to evacuate non-essential UN civilian staff, including WFP personnel. On November 15, the UN Security Council imposed an immediate arms embargo on Cote d'Ivoire."

OCHA-CI, 24 November 2004

"The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that a small number of UN humanitarian staff returned to Abidjan yesterday.

Today, more UN humanitarian staff or those working on emergency-related programmes are scheduled to return. If conditions permit, rapid assessment missions will be conducted to various areas, including Guiglo and Bouake.

The UN relocated most of its staff to Accra on November 10th, due to the seriousness of the situation in Abidjan and other parts of the country.

OCHA says the return of the staff will allow the resumption of humanitarian operations in all parts of the country – although there are still serious concerns that the crisis could worsen."

UN News, 1 December 2004

"A senior United Nations official has obtained assurances from the rebels in Côte d'Ivoire that there will be no repetition of the kind of incident that forced the world body's emergency feeding agency to suspend flights last week after one of its planes was met with shots fired in the air, threats and hostile slogans.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Principal Deputy Special Representative in the West African country, Alan Doss, met with senior representatives of the Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles in Bouaké in the rebel-held north where he stressed the need for full respect by all parties of Security Council resolution establishing the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

The rebel representatives assured Mr. Doss of free and unimpeded access for UN peacekeepers, military observers and UN and other humanitarian agencies' personnel.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) suspended its flights after the incident last Thursday in Man, in the west of the country, warning that such acts risked compromising its humanitarian mission at the expense of the local population."

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

Overview

Constrained response

Since the start of Côte d'Ivoire's civil conflict in September 2002, the state response to the situation of internal displacement in the country has been hampered by the fact that at both the policy and operational levels there is little knowledge or experience in tackling humanitarian crises in general. While several government ministries have worked in varying degrees on issues related to displaced persons – including the Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims, the Ministry of National Reconciliation and Institutional Relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Reconstruction and Reintegration – the lack of a focal point at the central level has greatly hampered OCHA-led efforts to put in place a coordinated IDP response structure. By mid-2006, the Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims officially took the lead role on IDP issues, and drafted an action plan for IDP return which was discussed with international humanitarian agencies at the end of August 2006. While this may be a heartening first step, such a plan is still a long way from being implemented.

This situation has been compounded by the continuing absence of local administration and social service workers from many parts of the country, particularly the rebel-held north as well as insecure areas of government-held territory in the west. Although some efforts have been made to re-establish state administration, principally through the *Comité Nationale de la Redéploiement de l'Administration*, the lack of services combined with a deteriorating humanitarian situation remains of major concern. Humanitarian organisations have therefore been working directly with various government institutions aiming to complement their work, but in many cases effectively substituting for them.

At the local level, crisis committees (*comités de crises*) are responsible for registering IDPs and for coordinating and managing humanitarian aid mobilised at the national level – but this has been inconsistent and generally poorly managed, according to international agencies in the country. And in areas under the control of the rebel *Forces Nouvelles* the capacity to deal with the humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations has been even more limited, and access to humanitarian agencies patchy at best.

At the international level, UN response to the humanitarian crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is headed by the Humanitarian Coordinator, who is also the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, and is supported by UN OCHA based in Abidjan and other strategic locations. A key pillar of coordination is the inter-agency humanitarian coordination committee (IAHCC), consisting of numerous UN agencies, the Red Cross movement, IOM and international NGOs.

In the past year, a certain measure of progress has been made in terms of IDP protection and assistance by the international humanitarian community in Côte d'Ivoire. The UNFPA-funded IDP survey, carried out in five government priority zones, fills an important information gap and may serve as a basis for improved response to IDPs' protection and assistance needs (ENSEA, March 2006). Various protection fora now exist, with varying levels of focus on IDPs. OCHA's Protection Network, developed in July 2005, has been an important advocate for IDP protection and assistance in line with the UN Guiding Principles, and has been coordinating the development of an inter-agency IDP strategy (OCHA-CI, 11 July 2006). The more recently created IDP Protection

Cluster – under the leadership of UNHCR – is intended to bring greater accountability and predictability to overall IDP response, in line with global reform giving UNHCR sectoral responsibility for IDP protection, camp management and emergency shelter. So far, one of its main activities has been to develop a monitoring system to collect information on IDPs who wish to return to their areas of origin. Small-scale return of IDPs had already been facilitated to a number of locations in the west of the country on the basis of the UN Guiding Principles, including measures on social cohesion and reconciliation (UN, 18 July 2006). However, there still appears to be some scepticism about the implementation of the “cluster approach” – particularly by international NGOs in Côte d’Ivoire – some of whom see it as further encroachment on their humanitarian space.

Indeed, international NGOs in the country have long had similar concerns about the UN Mission (UNOCI), and have complained about the constraints of working alongside a mission that integrates its peacekeeping and humanitarian components. These tensions came to a head following the resumption of hostilities in Côte d’Ivoire in November 2004, when the response of French troops was widely viewed as highly partial, and by association, that of UNOCI as well (IRIN, 8 November 2004). With UN peacekeepers perceived to be taking sides in the conflict, and due to the nature of the integrated mission, Save the Children UK was one NGO that argued it was very difficult to resume activities in the conflicted-affected areas and still be seen as impartial and independent humanitarian agencies (Jefferys and Porter, 26 November 2004). And when anti-UN riots erupted in January 2006, those inciting the violence made no attempt to differentiate between the political/military and humanitarian components of the UN in the country.

There have been divisions even among international NGOs on the issue of relations with the UN Mission, with some relying heavily on UNOCI for security information and evacuation, and some for logistical support such as helicopters. One NGO in Côte d’Ivoire was critical of the “us versus them” attitude adopted by some NGOs towards the UN, and urged constructive engagement. In late 2005, the Humanitarian Coordinator opened up the IAHCC consultative forum to any international NGO wishing to attend.

Further constraints have hampered the response of international agencies to the needs of IDPs in Côte d’Ivoire. The lack of information about IDPs’ numbers, needs and locations has been a fundamental obstacle to response, one which the UNFPA-funded evaluation should help to alleviate although it was only carried out in five areas in the government-held south of the country (ENSEA, March 2006). Humanitarian access has also been limited to varying degrees by the endemic insecurity in some areas of the country. Following orchestrated attacks against UN offices in various parts of Côte d’Ivoire in January 2006, which caused widespread destruction and forced the evacuation of hundreds of peacekeepers from the western town of Guiglo as well as most humanitarian agencies, IDPs and other vulnerable populations were left without assistance for several weeks (UN News, 26 January 2006; UN OCHA, 9 February 2006). Likewise, following the resumption of hostilities in November 2004, many humanitarian agencies were forced to suspend operations and personnel were temporarily evacuated. Agencies have at various times been harassed, blocked in their movements, or deliberately targeted with violence. Furthermore, the poor state of roads, particularly in the rainy season, has made access to remote areas in the north and west of the country practically impossible, according to WFP.

Another major constraint has been the acute lack of funding for humanitarian programmes, largely as a result of the belligerence of the parties to the Ivorian conflict and the lack of tangible progress in the peace process. A UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP) 2006 for Côte d’Ivoire was launched in November 2005, requesting just over \$40.5 million in order to respond to the humanitarian needs of more than 3.5 million vulnerable people, including some 500,000 IDPs (as estimated at the time). According to the UN’s financial tracking service at the end of June 2006, only 31 per cent of the requested amount had been received, with the education, health and water/sanitation sectors particularly under-funded (the latter with 0 per cent funding). In July

2006, the UN carried out a mid-year review of the CAP, reiterating the primary goal of providing adequate protection and support to IDPs as well as relief assistance to vulnerable populations including host communities (UN, 18 July 2006). However, in March 2006 some immediate funding was allocated to IDP and refugee programmes in western Côte d'Ivoire from the new UN central emergency response fund, or CERF (IRIN, 14 March 2006). The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, who manages the CERF, allocated a further \$3million to Côte d'Ivoire in August 2006 (ERC, 17 August 2006).

According to one donor in Côte d'Ivoire, the situation of "no war, no peace" prevailing in the country has made the issue of IDPs in particular difficult to "sell" as a priority. Côte d'Ivoire is effectively a "country on the edge" with neither all-out conflict nor sufficient stability for real rehabilitation activities. Ongoing tensions surrounding the electoral process have made conflict prevention activities similarly hard to sell to many donors, some of whom admit being more interested in "repair" than prevention.

The visit to Côte d'Ivoire in February 2006 of Jan Egeland, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, helped to focus international attention on the humanitarian situation in the country, albeit briefly. Condemning the anti-UN violence in the country, Mr. Egeland said that "the humanitarians are hanging on by their fingernails in many areas due to decreasing humanitarian space" and that "international support is desperately needed if we are going to continue to help the Ivorian people" (UN OCHA, 17 February 2006).

High level advocacy on the situation of IDPs was also undertaken by Walter Kälin, the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, following a visit to the country in April 2006. Describing the situation in Côte d'Ivoire as "a protection crisis in terms of the human rights of the internally displaced", Kälin called on the authorities and humanitarian organisations to draft without further delay a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges of internal displacement in the country as well as a detailed plan of action to improve the current situation of the internally displaced. He also requested the donor community to support a long term strategy, which is the only option for durable solutions to the internal displacement crisis. Kälin further recommended that a law providing for indemnities be adopted as soon as possible (OHCHR, 25 April 2006).

References to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known references to the Guiding Principles

- References to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation
- Other references to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)
- Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages
- Training on the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

References to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

None

Other references to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

As of June 2006, several important documents with references to the Guiding Principles remained in draft form. These included:

- a) an IDP response framework (containing elements of the previous IDP strategy), developed by the Protection Network in Cote d'Ivoire**
- b) an IDP action plan also being developed by the Protection Network**
- c) final report and recommendations of the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, Walter Kaelin, following his visit to Cote d'Ivoire in April 2006**

Strategy for the Assistance and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, developed by UN OCHA's IDP Adviser in Cote d'Ivoire at the beginning of 2004, sets out objectives along the lines of the Guiding Principles, e.g. the need for durable solutions for returning IDPs.
Source: UN OCHA
Date: 17 January 2004
Document: Proposition de stratégie d'assistance et de protection des personnes déplacées (endorsed)

Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages

Guiding Principles in [French](#)

Training on the Guiding Principles

OCHA and UNICEF-CI training workshop: OCHA and UNICEF-CI jointly organised a workshop in Abidjan on 14 and 15 May to develop a Code of Conduct for all humanitarian workers in Cote d'Ivoire, as well as a strategy to improve assistance and protection of vulnerable groups, including refugees, the sick and wounded, minorities, the elderly, handicapped individuals, women and children, and particularly IDPs. The workshop which was part of the effort to increase complementarity between humanitarian and military initiatives, was attended by Government Ministries, UN agencies and local and international NGOs as well as the FANGI (Ivorian national armed forces), ECOMICI and French Operation Licorne representatives.
Sources: UN OCHA; UNICEF
Date: 14-15 May 2003
Document: "On the basis of the consensus reached during the seminar, humanitarian actors will soon finalise a Code of Conduct for all humanitarian workers in Cote d'Ivoire and will revise their strategies for assistance to and the protection of vulnerable populations, particularly internally displaced populations (IDPs)" (UN OCHA, 16 May 2003).

OCHA and UNICEF-CI training workshop: OCHA and UNICEF-CI jointly organised a workshop in Abidjan on 16 May directed to the impartial forces ECOMICI and the French Operation Licorne Forces to the sensitise them on humanitarian intervention.
Sources: UN OCHA; UNICEF
Date: 16 May 2003
Document: "On the basis of the consensus reached during the seminar, humanitarian actors will soon finalise a Code of Conduct for all humanitarian workers in Cote d'Ivoire and will revise their

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