

Côte d'Ivoire

Efforts to resolve the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire registered partial progress in 2007. The precarious situation that existed at the end of 2006 was replaced by a surprising political accommodation between arch-rivals President Laurent Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro, leader of the Forces Nouvelles. This was largely credited to the Ouagadougou Agreement, signed on 4 March 2007 under the auspices of President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso and the chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Despite being a bilateral deal between the two main protagonists, Gbagbo and Soro, the agreement enjoys broad political support from the Ivorian opposition parties and civic groups. Support for the agreement was based in part on a popular sense of it being a homegrown initiative, as distinct from previous deals. Under the agreement, Soro was appointed prime minister on 26 March 2007, a move that instilled confidence in what has been seen as a faltering peace process. While progress has been slow in some areas, notably in disarming the militias and merging the Forces Nouvelles and the Ivorian armed forces, the agreement stood up to serious challenges, the most significant being the attack on Prime Minister Soro's plane in June that left four of his close aides dead.

Background

Côte d'Ivoire was plunged into conflict in September 2002 following a mutiny and a failed coup attempt by soldiers of the country's armed forces. The country has since played host to ECOWAS, UN, and French-led peace operations. Established in April 2004, the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)

• Authorization Date	27 February 2004 (UNSC Res. 1528)
• Start Date	4 April 2004
• SRSG and Head of Mission	Choi Young-Jin (Republic of Korea)
• Force Commander	Major-General Fernand Marcel Amoussou (Benin)
• Police Commissioner	Major-General Gerardo Cristian Chaumont (Argentina)
• Budget	\$470.9 million (1 July 2007–30 June 2008)
• Strength as of 31 October 2007	Troops: 7,833 Military Observers: 189 Police: 1,137 International Civilian Staff: 406 Local Civilian Staff: 573 UN Volunteers: 284

For detailed mission information see p. 333.

Operation Licorne

• Authorization Date	4 February 2003 (UNSC Res. 1464), 24 January 2006 (UNSC Res. 1652)
• Start Date	February 2003
• Head of Mission	General Bruno Clément-Bollée (France)
• Budget	\$334.5 million (October 2006–September 2007)
• Strength as of 30 September 2007	Troops: 2,400

(UNOCI) was mandated to support implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Accords, signed in 2003. Since then, the mission has

supported the implementation of several follow-on peace deals, including the Ouagadougou Agreement. French Operation Licorne forces deployed to operate alongside the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI), an earlier mission, continued to complement the UN mission by providing additional rapid reaction capabilities.

Developments in 2007

The Ouagadougou Agreement addresses, among other things, identification and registration of voters, holding of elections, disarming of militias, the process of reestablishing state administration throughout the country, the removal of the zone of confidence, and perhaps most importantly, the merging of rebel and government forces through the establishment of an integrated command center. Unlike previous agreements, clear timelines were established for its implementation, and two new follow-up mechanisms were established. One is a standing consultative mechanism composed of Gbagbo, Soro, former president Konan Bedie, former prime minister Alassane Ouattara, and President Compaoré in his capacity as facilitator. The second follow-up mechanism—the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee—comprises the facilitator as the chair, and three representatives from the signatories to the agreement. The consultative mechanism was mandated to address all issues pertaining to the agreement, while the committee is charged with assessing and recommending ways of enhancing the peace process. In addition, Security Council Resolution 1765, of 16 July 2007, supported the establishment of an international consultative organ, composed of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the resident coordinator of the United Nations system, and representatives of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, the African Union, the African Development Bank, ECOWAS, and France, in order to support the Ivorian parties and the facilitator in implementing the Ouagadougou Agreement. The resolution further noted that this organ shall participate in the

meetings of the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee, as an observer, and may be consulted at any time by the facilitator.

The dismantling of the zone of confidence that had separated the government-controlled south and the rebel-held north started with the removal of two UNOCI check points on 16 April 2007, marking the beginning of an important step in reuniting a country that had been divided since the outbreak of the crisis in September 2002. The zone of confidence has been replaced by a green line patrolled by new mixed police units, consisting of the national police and those from the Forces Nouvelles. By October 2007, UNOCI had established seventeen observation posts along the green line while maintaining its readiness to respond to security threats in the region.

While the removal of the zone of confidence demonstrates significant progress in the reunification of the country, the security situation remains precarious, especially in the western region. President Gbagbo's official launch of militia disarmament on 19 May—symbolized by a weapons-destruction ceremony—has been followed by painfully slow progress, and substantial delays in establishing the integrated Ivorian–Forces Nouvelles command structure. Nonetheless, disarmament of the Forces Nouvelles commenced on 30 July with a ceremony in the town of Bouake attended by President Gbagbo and six of his counterparts from the region. The deployment of the mixed police units and efforts to build a unified national defense force have been hampered by disagreements over the ranks and number of rebel forces to be integrated into the Ivorian armed forces. UNOCI continues to support disarmament efforts, despite its exclusion from the two new follow-up mechanisms provided for by the agreement. UNOCI's exclusion is not surprising in light of previous objections by several Ivorian parties—especially pro-Gbagbo groups—to what they viewed as the intrusive role of the UN.

While the 23 April 2007 commencement date for a process of citizenship identification—a contentious issue in the conflict—was missed,

the process was officially launched on 25 October through the establishment of mobile courts in the west and north of the country. This was preceded by the appointment of judges and prefects, and consultations involving President Campaoré in his capacity as facilitator and chair of the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee. Domestic and international concerns have been raised over delays in the identification process for two reasons. First, the issue of national identity is at the core of the conflict, and its speedy resolution will enhance the peace process. Second, elections can only be held after the completion of the identification process.

In July 2007, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1765, terminating the mandate of the High Representative for elections, and mandated the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to oversee and certify the outcome of the pending elections. Preparations for elections moved slowly, as the process was closely linked with the delayed identification process. UNOCI's ongoing work with the electoral commission in the training of electoral personnel has been stymied by the absence of key elements such as a clear strategy for the overall management of the election process.

Nonetheless, efforts to restore state authority throughout the country made some progress in 2007, with over 12,000 of the approximately 24,000 civil servants displaced by the conflict redeployed to their stations, as well as the appointment of several senior regional administrative officers. However, a lack of infrastructure and continued insecurity slowed the process of reestablishing state authority across the country.

Collaboration between UNOCI and Operation Licorne continued, with the latter providing ongoing rapid reaction capabilities for the UN mission. The improved security situation led to the withdrawal of 1,000 Licorne troops from the country, but UNOCI's troop strength remained at the authorized level, pending reassessment as the security situation improves. UNOCI was in the spotlight in 2007 when troops deployed in the Bouake area were accused of widespread sexual abuse of women and girls, prompting the UN to launch



Thousands of Ivorians attend the "Flame of Peace" ceremony, where tons of surrendered weapons were burned, Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire, 30 July 2007.

REUTERS/Luc Gnago

an investigation into the allegations. A contingent of Moroccan troops involved in the scandal was suspended and confined to their base as investigations continued. The episode added to the spate of sexual scandals involving UN military and civilian peacekeeping personnel across the globe.

Thus, during the year in review, Côte d'Ivoire moved on from the "no war, no peace" situation that had characterized it over the past few years. The conversion of President Campaoré from an alleged "spoiler" into a peacemaker bodes well for the fragile peace process. But the key to a successful resolution of the crisis rests with the two protagonists: President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro. However, lack of progress in vital aspects of the peace process, such as unifying the armed forces, identification and registration of voters, disarmament of militias, and the continued insecurity in the western part of the country, raises serious concerns. While the parties have demonstrated commitments to implementing the peace agreement, further delays could erode the modest gains made thus far, especially as economic hardship persists.