

Côte d'Ivoire

As 2010 drew to a close, Côte d'Ivoire was at “real risk” of descending into civil war as incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo refused to cede power after losing a 28 November runoff election against Alassane Ouattara. The stand-off threatened to reignite the conflict that ended in 2007. The tense climate surrounding the elections dominated the operational environment for the UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), and while Gbagbo's call for the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers went unheeded, the mission finds itself pitted on one side against another. The international community, including the UN, the US, the EU, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and many others have all unequivocally backed Ouattara, who won the runoff election with 54.1 percent of the votes, winning by an 8 percent margin. Undoubtedly, UNOCI is a critical force for preventing a further escalation of the disputed election into a full-blown war between Gbagbo's supporters, largely composed of southerners including the military, and those of Ouattara, composed of northerners and the rebel Forces Nouvelles.

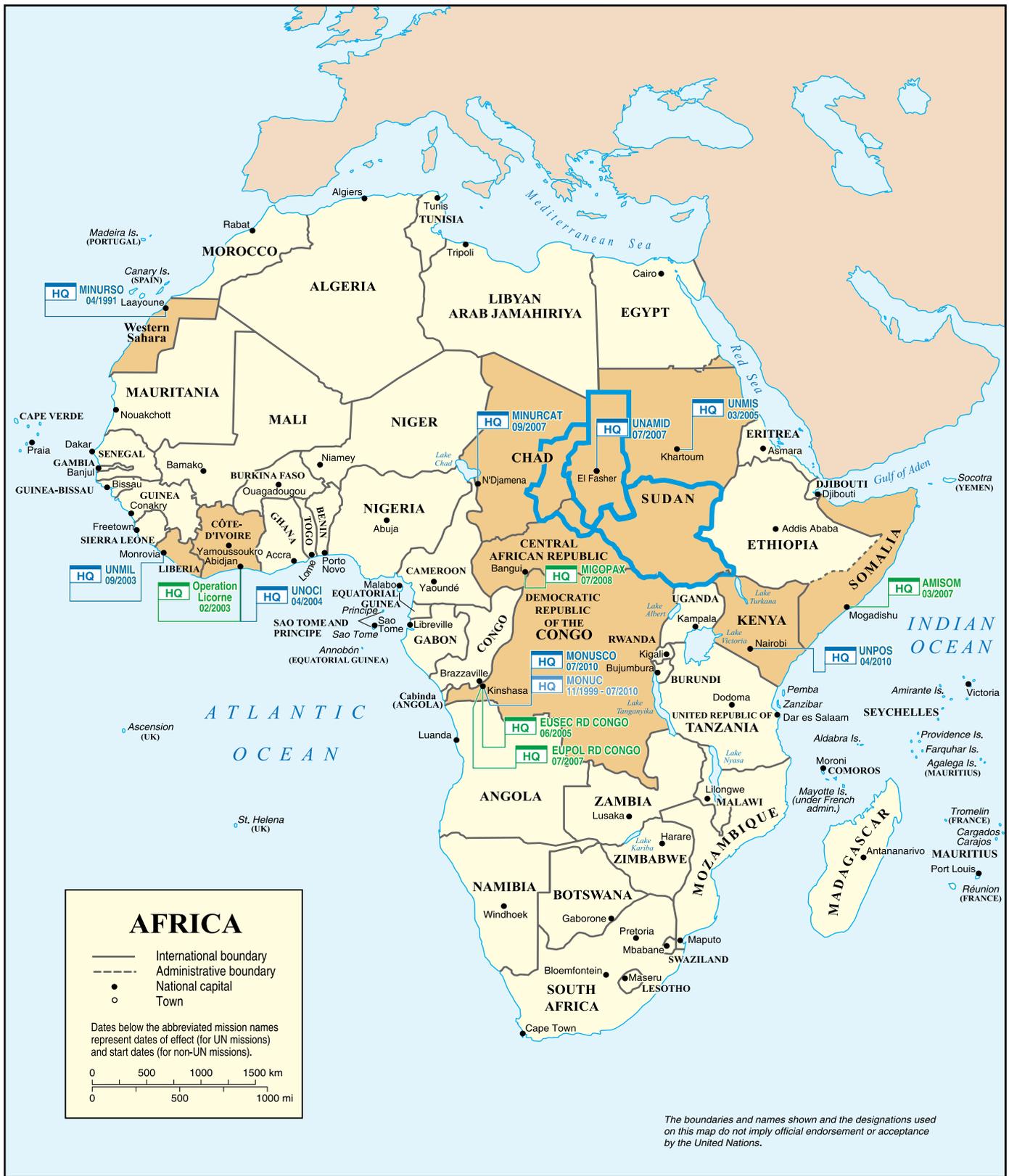
Background

In September 2002, amid growing ethnic and political tensions, Côte d'Ivoire erupted into civil conflict after some of the state's military forces staged an unsuccessful coup d'état and launched attacks across the country. At issue were questions of identity, citizenship—important for resolving presidential-eligibility disputes—and political representation. The government forces retained control over the south of the country, while rebels held strongholds in the north. Although the parties signed the Linas-Marcoussis

Accords, which established a cease-fire and a government of national reconciliation in 2003, internecine fighting between the government of President Laurent Gbagbo and rebels, including the Forces Nouvelles, continued. As a result, in April 2004, the Security Council created UNOCI, with a mandate to support implementation of the accords. Since its inception, UNOCI has supported a number of follow-on peace deals, the most recent being the Ouagadougou Agreement of 2007 and its supplements. Operation Licorne—a French deployment initially mandated to operate with the former Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI)—continued to provide support to UNOCI.

Signed in March 2007, under the auspices of Burkina Faso's president, Blaise Compaoré, the Ouagadougou Agreement addresses, *inter alia*, issues of identification of the population; voter registration and the holding of elections; the dismantling of armed militias, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and the restructuring of the national army; the removal of the zone of confidence; and the restoration of the state authority. Unlike previous agreements, clear timelines and two follow-up mechanisms were established: first, a standing consultative mechanism composed of President Laurent Gbagbo, the prime minister, Guillaume Soro, a former president, Konan Bedie, and a former prime minister, Alassane Ouattara, with President Compaoré as facilitator; and, second, the Evaluation and Monitoring Committee (EMC), comprised of the facilitator and three representatives from the signatories to the agreement.

Using the broadly popular Ouagadougou Agreement as a roadmap, initial efforts to reunify



UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)

Authorization Date	27 February 2004 (UNSC Res. 1528)
Start Date	4 April 2004
SRSO	Choi Young-Jin (Republic of Korea)
Force Commander	Major-General Abdul Hafiz (Bangladesh)
Police Commissioner	Major-General Jean Marie Bourry (France)
Budget	\$485.1 million (1 July 2010–30 June 2011)
Strength as of 31 October 2010	Troops: 7,572 Military Observers: 192 Police: 1,316 International Civilian Staff: 380 Local Civilian Staff: 73 UN Volunteers: 26

For detailed mission information see p. 293

Operation Licorne

Authorization Date	24 January 2006 (UNSC Res. 1625)
Start Date	February 2004
Force Commander	Brigadier-General Francis Autran (France)
Budget	\$96.6 million (1 October 2009– 30 September 2010)
Strength as of 30 September 2010	900

the country got under way. In a dramatic public display for militia disarmament, thousands of Ivoirians witnessed the burning of tons of surrendered weapons in Bouake in July 2007. The zone of confidence that had divided Côte d'Ivoire's northern territory from the south was replaced by a green line, patrolled by newly mixed police units. Despite some progress, however, delays in the extension of state authority, citizenship identification, DDR of former combatants, and integration of the military threatened to undermine the fragile peace.

In December 2008, in the fourth supplementary agreement to the Ouagadougou Agreement,

the parties changed the sequencing of the peace process and gave priority to reunification instead of presidential elections, which had hitherto been the main focus. In order to hold elections, specific reunification tasks must be completed two months in advance, including transferring authority from zone commanders to prefects; centralizing the treasury; completing the profiling and integration of Forces Nouvelles elements (military, police, gendarmerie) into the integrated command center; and paying \$1,000 to all demobilized former combatants and militiamen. This dramatic shift prompted UNOCI to reconfigure according to benchmarks set by the Secretary-General: (1) DDR and dismantling of militias; (2) the holding of presidential elections in November 2009; (3) the restoration of state authority throughout the country; and (4) the commencement of a security sector reform process for the whole of the country. By the end of 2009, UNOCI's force configuration was flexible in movement, had a capacity for rapid reaction in the event of an outbreak of violence, and was structured to support the Ivoirian military's integrated command center.

However, in 2009 reunification efforts stalled, falling short of the requirements to hold elections as stipulated by Ouagadougou IV. Nevertheless, the government scheduled presidential elections for 29 November 2009. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) completed registration, yielding some 5.3 million individuals (known as the "white list") confirmed as eligible voters and some 1.03 million individuals unconfirmed as eligible (known as the "grey list"). Because of disagreements over these lists, the elections were postponed to the beginning of March 2010.

Key Developments

In January 2010, the electoral processes halted due to disagreements surrounding a separate parallel list of some 429,000 persons produced by the president of the IEC, Robert Beugré Mambé. The emergence of the list caused the government to question the commission's integrity and allege massive fraud of the provisional

lists. Shortly thereafter, President Gbagbo dissolved both the IEC and the government. By late February, however, a new government and IEC were installed. These troubling developments raised tensions at a time when reports surfaced that the ruling party had requested courts to purge ineligible voters. After violent and deadly protests erupted, President Gbagbo delayed elections for the fifth time since they were first scheduled in 2005. He also redoubled his efforts to emphasize the importance of disarmament and reunification before the polls could be held. With the opposition parties at odds with the government's stance, an impasse set in, deadlocking progress in 2010. Nonetheless, the UNOCI Electoral Assistance Division and Certification Cell continued to provide technical advice and assistance to the new IEC.

The situation pitted three main groups against each other: the president and his supporters, who want reunification before presidential elections; against the opposition parties, who want elections before reunification; against the Forces Nouvelles, who want identification before reunification. While the Secretary-General noted that the stalemate has led some to question the Ouagadougou Agreement's continuing relevance, he underscored that in the absence of any alternative there would be cause for serious concern if the agreement were to be abandoned.

On 24 September the voters list of some 5.7 million individuals was officially certified. Campaigning began on 15 October. As a part of its effort to help stage the elections, UNOCI assisted in the distribution of voter and identity cards in both the north and south of the country. Despite serious disputes over voter lists, differences were resolved and Côte d'Ivoire peacefully held presidential elections on 31 October. The incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo received 30 percent of the vote, while former prime minister Alassane Ouattara received 32 percent. The two candidates faced each other in a runoff on 28 November, with Ouattara winning.

About six million voted in the runoff election on 28 November—a turnout of around 70 percent. While there was some election-related



A woman voter is shown at a polling station in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, ready to cast her ballot in the country's long-awaited presidential elections, 31 October 2010.

violence with seven killed during the week, the polls were conducted fairly according to the UN and international and regional electoral monitors. On Wednesday 1 December the head of the IEC announced that Ouattara had won with 54.1 percent of the vote against 45.9 percent for Gbagbo. However, the Constitutional Council, a governmental body loyal to Gbagbo, announced that the results were invalid because they were released a day late and electoral law had not been followed. On 2 December, violence erupted and eight were shot dead at Ouattara's office. The Ivorian military, still controlled by Gbagbo, closed the land, sea, and air borders, and the state extended a curfew set before the election. The Constitutional Court swiftly announced Gbagbo as the winner on Friday 3 December. As violence spread across the country some 6,000 people had fled to the neighboring countries of Liberia and Guinea. On 7 December, the UN asked nonessential staff to leave the country.

The world came down quickly against Gbagbo. Weeks after the poll, ECOWAS and the AU had suspended Côte d'Ivoire from their organizations, as Gbagbo's grip on the Ivorian

Box 3.3 SCR 1308: A Decade of HIV/AIDS and UN Peacekeeping

Ten years have passed since Security Council Resolution 1308 (2000) established a mandate for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to raise awareness and prevent the transmission or contraction of HIV in UN peacekeeping operations. Resolution 1308 recognized the link between the HIV/AIDS pandemic and international peace and security; HIV/AIDS is exacerbated in states plagued by violence and instability, conversely, the unchecked spread of HIV/AIDS presents a threat to global security. DPKO has sought to train its peacekeepers to become advocates for awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Simultaneously, the DPKO has made an important priority of preventing the transmission of HIV among peacekeepers and host communities. The past decade has seen innovations along these two tracks in practices for HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness in UN peacekeeping operations.

Resolution 1308 established programs of predeployment orientation/training and in-mission induction and education of UN peacekeepers about the spread of HIV/AIDS, and sought to facilitate cooperation between UNAIDS and other UN agencies to improve HIV/AIDS prevention interventions and services. Today, there are chief HIV/AIDS

officers/advisers with teams in nine large DPKO peacekeeping missions and HIV focal points in eleven smaller DPKO-led and Special Political Missions (SPM).

DPKO has sought to heighten awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS in UN peacekeeping operations with methods that have been improved upon over time. Innovations in HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness have been implemented in various field missions.

An important practice this past decade in DPKO's fight against HIV/AIDS is voluntary confidential counseling and testing (VCCT) for peacekeepers. Since 2000, there has been a steady increase in the number of peacekeepers who undergo VCCT.

The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has utilized regional HIV focal points. Local familiarization of the mission through the use of UN international staff as regional HIV focal points allowed for a more in-depth assessment of the needs and responses of the HIV Unit, establishing an effective, decentralized system of focal points. MINUSTAH also partnered with the Public Information Office (PIO) to promote HIV awareness and prevention.

The UN and African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) has trained UN Police (UNPOL) from Community Policing

Centers as regional focal points for HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness, which established unique access to local communities, and particularly vulnerable groups (women, children, and victims of gender-based violence), in remote sectors and regions.

The UN Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) organized an inspiring program to train change agents in HIV/AIDS from both sides of the Sudanese conflict. Returning home, they had the skills to train other Sudanese in HIV/AIDS prevention.

Missions in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and Liberia (UNMIL) successfully increased the rate and uptake of HIV voluntary counseling and testing by utilizing static, mobile, and mixed strategies to provide peacekeepers with improved access to VCCT, particularly in remote areas of deployment. The rate of VCCT in-mission rose from 8 percent to 36 percent.

A decade ago, the UN Security Council first described the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a threat to international security. Today, there is an ongoing discussion about the relationship between human security and international security. In this context, this year, UNAIDS and DPKO are preparing a report documenting the implementation and progress of Resolution 1308. The last such joint report was in 2005.

state was as firm as ever. To break this, on 13 December the EU agreed to sanctions against Gbagbo's administration. The World Bank on 22 December froze funding to the country, amounting to over \$800 million.

UNOCI troops surrounded the Golf Hotel in Abidjan where Ouattara was sworn in as president. Prime Minister Guillaume Soro left Gbagbo and joined Ouattara's government. The president's residence was secured by the Ivorian military, while UNOCI troops and the Forces Nouvelles protected Ouattara's camp.

Gbagbo called for UN and French troops to leave the country on 17 December. But the Secretary-General's spokesman quickly responded by saying that UNOCI would continue to stay in the country and fulfill its mandate.

By the end of year the violence had claimed almost 200 lives. Attacks against UNOCI peacekeepers and Ouattara supporters continued. Soro and Ouattara supporters said they want Gbagbo's "departure by any means." ECOWAS said that force might be used if Gbagbo fails to relinquish power. Meanwhile,

UN officials confirmed on 23 December that there was evidence that Gbagbo's regime had hired armed mercenaries from Liberia, and possibly Angola. The Ivorian military continued to attempt to blockade and suffocate UN forces and Ouattara's camp at year's end. Armed groups continually blocked UNOCI supply vehicles and patrols.

While the post-election environment radically altered the Mission's posture, DDR programs faced major obstacles in 2010. Some of the major challenges facing the implementation of DDR are the lack of capacity of the Integrated Command Centre, lack of resources for cantonment sites, the government's inability to pay the \$1,000 promised to former combatants and militia personnel, inadequate reintegration opportunities for demobilized combatants, and a lack of progress on issuing identity cards and elections—important incentives for combatants to give up their arms. The Integrated Command Centre's mixed brigades still lack adequate manpower and resources. Nevertheless, 600 former combatants from the Forces Nouvelles began disarming and demobilizing in June 2010 in the northern, rebel-held town of Korhogo, and joined a group of some 1,200 former combatants set to enter cantonment and to join the integrated national army.

On 27 May 2010, the Security Council approved a one-month technical rollover of the mission, in light of the postponement of elections. While some members desired a UNOCI

drawdown, their hopes were dashed because of the deteriorating political and security situation. On 30 June, the Council renewed UNOCI's mandate until the end of 2010. An additional 500 military and police personnel reinforced UNOCI during the elections. On 20 December, the Security Council renewed the mandate of UNOCI until 30 June 2011 and authorized the Secretary-General to extend until 31 March 2011 the temporary deployment of up to 500 additional personnel and the temporary redeployment of troops from UNMIL to Côte d'Ivoire. In early January 2011, DPKO and the Security Council were discussing plans to deploy an additional 2,000 troops to UNOCI.

Conclusion

While Côte d'Ivoire successfully held presidential and runoff elections the country remains divided and on the brink of renewed conflict. UNOCI's presence is therefore as critical as ever. Yet, with a radically changed operational and political environment, and Gbagbo's refusal to cede power to his democratically elected rival Ouattarra, it remains to be seen how much pressure the UN and others can put on Gbagbo without threatening to inflame tensions further. Indeed, while holding the election was a major step forward, the fallout of Gbagbo's actions not to respect the outcome has undermined much of the gains made toward unification and ending the eight-year political crisis.