3.3

Côte d'Ivoire

Despite the efforts of a relatively large and active United Nations peacekeeping operation, backed by France's Security Council–authorized Operation Licorne, the situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains precarious. The year 2005 saw a resurgence of violence, little progress in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, and failure to achieve political deadlines outlined in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The country remains divided, the economy is in decline, human rights abuses are widespread, and the elections scheduled for 30 October 2005 have been postponed for up to a year. Against this backdrop of noncompliance and political fragmentation, the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and Operation Licorne have accomplished more than could reasonably be expected, yet less than needed and desired. In June 2005 the Security Council extended the mandates of both operations through January 2006. Meanwhile, intensive mediation efforts continued to help resolve the contentious issues blocking progress in the peace process.

Background

Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest cocoa producer, under the leadership of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, saw prosperity from independence in 1960 until a global downturn in commodities prices, and corruption and mismanagement, started an economic decline in the 1990s. Following the death of Houphouët-Boigny in 1993, his handpicked successor, Henri Konan Bédié, attempted to consolidate power by emphasizing a concept of "Ivoirité" (Ivorian nationality), designed to target his rival Alassane Ouattara. This began to inflame tensions between the significant, long-term emigrant population from West African states, especially Burkina Faso and Mali, and the native Ivorians.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

MALI
BURKINA FASO
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

GUINEA

SAVANES
DENGUÉLÉ
Boundiali
Odienné
Korhogo
Ferkessédougou
ZANZAN

Zone of Confidence

WORODOUGOU
VALLEE DU BANDAMA
Séguéla
Bondoukou

Bouaké

MONTAGNES
Man
Abengourou

Bouaflé
NZI-COMOÉ
Zone of Confidence
Daloa
Yamoussoukro
Abengourou
Duékoué
MARAHOUÉ
Dimbokro
MOYEN-COMOÉ
Guiglo
HAUT-SASSANDRA
LACS
GHANA

AGNEBY
Divo
Agboville
SUD-BANDAMA
HQ UNOCI 04/2004
SUD-COMOÉ
LIBERIA
LAGUNES
Aboisso
BASS-SASSANDRA
Abidjan
HQ Operation Licorne 02/2003
San-Pédro

Gulf of Guinea
ATLANTIC OCEAN

0   150 km
0   100 mi

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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Cartographic Section

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Bédié also systematically excluded the military from power, which led to a bloodless military coup in 1999 led by General Robert Guei. A low-turnout election following the coup showed an early lead for Laurent Gbagbo, the candidate from the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI); General Guei promptly terminated the process and declared himself the winner, sending Gbagbo supporters to the streets of Abidjan. The Supreme Court had previously disqualified Ouattara from this election, basing its decision on his Burkinabe nationality, which led to clashes between Ouattara's supporters—mainly from the north—and security forces. This process launched a cycle of violence that has continued in Côte d'Ivoire to this day.

An attempted coup in 2001 was weathered by Gbagbo, who reengaged the international community and held violence-free municipal elections. Steps toward the creation of a government of national unity were taken in 2002, but the temporary calm was shattered on September 19, when soldiers launched coordinated attacks in Abidjan, Bouaké, and Korhogo against government personnel and facilities. In the ensuing clashes with government forces, General Guei, the minister of interior, and several military officers were killed. The rebels took control of the northern half of the country, under the umbrella of the Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MCPI), led by Guillaume Soro. The MCPI was later joined by two new armed groups, the Ivorian Popular Movement of the Great West (MPIGO) and the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP), to form the Forces Nouvelles (FN).

In mid-October 2002, a cease-fire was signed under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), setting the stage for negotiations on a political agreement. President Gbagbo requested French protection of internationals in Abidjan, as well as assistance with the cease-fire. The French forces were already stationed in the country on the basis of a long-standing military assistance agreement between France and Côte d'Ivoire. France added 2,500 troops to its forces after a December 2002

UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)

- Resolution passage and date of effect: 27 February 2004 (UNSC Res. 1528) 4 April 2004
- SRSG: Pierre Schori (Sweden)
- Force commander: Major-General Abdoulaye Fall (Senegal)
- Police commissioner: Yves Bouchard (Canada)
- Budget: $418.77 million (1 July 2005–30 June 2006)
- Strength as of 31 October 2005: Troops: 6,704
  Military observers: 193
  Civilian police: 661
  International civilian staff: 341
  Local civilian staff: 385
  UN volunteers: 192

Operation Licorne

- Authorization date: 27 February 2004 (UNSC Res. 1528, current authorization)
- Start date: February 2003
- Head of mission: N/A
- Budget as of 30 September 2005: $261.9 million
- Strength as of 30 September 2005: Troops: 4,000

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confrontation, and ECOWAS decided to deploy a peacekeeping mission (ECOFORCE) of 1,500 in January 2003.

Later that month, all parties signed the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, providing for the creation of a government of national reconciliation and various measures aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict. The Security Council, through Resolution 1464 of 4 February 2003, recognized the French and ECOWAS deployments and authorized their presence for a further six months. The agreement also envisaged a UN role and, after a cease-fire agreement between the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire (Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire [FANCI]) and rebel groups in May 2003, the Security Council established

the UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) with a mandate to work with French and ECOWAS forces to facilitate the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

Mission Mandate and Deployment

MINUCI was replaced by UNOCI, which absorbed ECOWAS forces in April 2004, on the basis of Security Council Resolution 1528. That resolution also extended the authorization of Operation Licorne and called on the UN and French forces to coordinate their efforts. UNOCI's initial mandate was extended and enhanced by Resolution 1609 of 24 June 2005, resulting in a broad range of functions, including:

UNOCI peacekeeping forces patrol in Duekoue, June 2005

Lutens/Panapress/Getty Images

- Monitoring the cessation of hostilities and movements of armed groups.
- Assisting the government in disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation, and resettlement, including disarmament and dismantling of militias.
- Protecting United Nations personnel, institutions, and civilians.
- Monitoring the arms embargo imposed by Resolution 1572.
- Supporting humanitarian assistance, the redeployment of state administration, and the organization of open, free, and fair elections.
- Assisting in the field of human rights and monitoring the mass media for incitement of hatred.
- Assisting in the restoration of law and order, the judiciary, and the rule of law throughout the territory of Côte d'Ivoire.

UNOCI's Chapter VII mandate includes the authority to "use all necessary means" to carry out the mission, "within its capabilities and areas of deployment." Meanwhile, Operation Licorne is authorized to use all necessary means to support UNOCI in fulfilling those multiple tasks.

By the end of October 2005, UNOCI had almost reached its authorized strength of nearly 8,000, with the exception of the helicopter unit, for which a troop-contributing country was still to be identified. The troops and military observers were mainly deployed in the zone of confidence, a buffer zone that divides the country, and where none of the Ivoirian armed forces are permitted. Additional deployments are concentrated around major cities including Abidjan, Korhogo, Daloa, and Bouaké. The Secretary-General described UNOCI's operational approach in the zone of confidence as "robust mobile patrolling."[1] The peacekeepers have the authority to apprehend suspects in the zone of confidence and then hand them over to the authorities on either side. Nearly 700 civilian police are present in major cities, including three formed police units in Abidjan, Bouaké, and Daloa to protect UN personnel and facilities,

and for small-scale crowd control. A UNOCI special protection group of gendarmes provides security to the opposition ministers of the government of national reconciliation. Throughout 2005, UNOCI also maintained links with the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), with particular cooperation on preventing cross-border movement of arms and combatants. Meanwhile, a substantial civilian component with an authorized strength of 1,221 international and national staff is responsible for the broad range of political, electoral, humanitarian, and human rights functions in UNOCI's mandate.

Operation Licorne consists of about 4,000 troops divided into three task forces and supported by two platoons of mobile gendarmes, seventeen helicopters, and two C-170 airwings, currently based in Lomé, Togo. Its main function is to support UNOCI and to provide security in the area of UN operations. Under Resolution 1609, French forces are also authorized to intervene against belligerent actions outside the areas controlled by UNOCI, and to protect civilians in their deployment areas. Operation Licorne is more mobile than UNOCI and has a quick reaction force to reinforce UNOCI contingents in volatile areas, although it is rarely called on. Throughout 2005, cooperation between the two operations was good, based on a well-understood division of labor for patrolling, monitoring, and providing security, and on effective information-sharing and joint crisis preparedness.

Key Developments and Challenges

The year in review began with the country effectively divided and it remained that way as the end of 2005 approached. The final months of 2004 were marred by an incident whose repercussions were felt throughout 2005. In early November 2004, FANCI attacks on FN positions across the zone of confidence south of Bouaké culminated in an air-raid on French peacekeepers, which killed nine and injured twenty-three. France responded by destroying the Ivorian planes involved and seizing the airport in Abidjan, triggering massive public protests and riots. Tense standoffs between the Young Patriots (supporters of President Gbagbo) and Licorne forces led to a number of deaths and injuries. Public opinion soured against French forces after the incidents, and there was consistent demand for French withdrawal from the airport in Abidjan.[2]

An AU mediation effort led by South African president Thabo Mbeki helped restore some calm, but attempts to violate the zone of confidence continued. On 28 February more than 100 armed individuals attacked an FN checkpoint in the zone, north of Bangolo. UNOCI responded by rapidly deploying troops to the area and successfully quelling the confrontation, with a Bangladeshi peacekeeper receiving serious injuries. On 1 March, when some 500 additional individuals gathered around Bangolo and the FN announced it would reinforce its positions, Licorne deployed its quick reaction force to support UNOCI units.

On 6 April the Pretoria Agreement, mediated by President Mbeki, was signed, declaring an "immediate and final cessation of all hostilities" and affirming the need to hold elections in October 2005. Hopes that some semblance of peace would be restored were dashed when an outbreak of violence in the western part of the country in late April left twenty-five dead, forty-one injured, and more than nine thousand displaced. Another outburst in late May resulted in the death of at least seventy, with scores more injured. UNOCI was the first to respond by deploying a Bangladeshi battalion, thereby preventing the situation from deteriorating further. UNOCI and Licorne subsequently launched a joint surveillance operation in the region.

A declaration on the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement was signed in late June 2005 among the main Ivorian parties to the conflict. However, its implementation suffered further delays, in particular regarding the dismantling of militias, the adoption of laws envisaged in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, and disarmament. The security situation deteriorated

with attacks on police stations in Anyama and Agboville, north of Abidjan, on 23 July, and with repeated obstructions of the freedom of movement of UNOCI and Licorne forces in the southern part of the country.

Resolution 1603 (2005) provided for the appointment of a High Representative for the elections, autonomous from UNOCI, to verify all stages of the electoral process. In July, the Secretary-General appointed Antonio Monteiro to the post, on behalf of the international community. Monteiro made his first visit to the country in August 2005. In September, however, the UN and AU acknowledged that elections could not be held by the end of October as scheduled. At a meeting on 14 September, the AU Peace and Security Council entrusted ECOWAS with determining how to overcome the political impasse. ECOWAS met in an emergency session later in the month, which was followed by an AU summit in Addis Ababa on 6 October that recommended President Gbagbo remain in office beyond 30 October to avert a political crisis. Elections were to be organized within a year.

The UN Security Council met on 13 October 2005 to consider this and other issues. The Council supported the AU Peace and Security Council decision that Gbagbo should stay on until elections are held, no later than October 2006. The Council also supported the appointment of a new, widely acceptable, and more powerful prime minister, through consultations led by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa as the AU-appointed mediator, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria as chair of the AU, and President Tandja Mamadou of Niger, as chair of ECOWAS. The FN was not assuaged and continued to insist on the prime minister–ship for themselves, leading to an impasse that was finally resolved on 5 December with the appointment of Charles Konan Banny. A new international working group, composed of a long list of states and organizations, was given responsibility for preparing a "road map" for the transition, culminating in elections. Sanctions have been threatened if deadlines are not met. Steps to be taken along the way include resolving the long-standing dispute over Ivorian identity—critical to the rebels—and disarmament in the north and south (which the FN insists should not occur before elections). It is also envisaged that a national forum will be launched to broaden the range of voices in the peace process.

In October 2005 the Security Council also expressed its intention to review UNOCI's strength at the end of its mandate in January 2006. The Secretary-General had been calling for an expansion since the events of November 2004. The Council balked then but, after the Pretoria Agreement created new responsibilities for UNOCI in June 2005, authorized the addition of 850 military personnel and three formed police units totaling 375 officers.

Both UNOCI and Licorne have robust mandates, which they have put to use mainly by establishing a large presence in the zone of confidence to deter violations. However, the peace operations would have difficulty dealing with more than two major crises at a time or protecting civilians in the face of systematic attacks in ethnically divided areas like the western part of the country and Abidjan. A proposed solution, authorized in Resolution 1609, is the temporary redeployment of troops from neighboring missions (UNMIL and UNAMSIL). As the situation in Liberia stabilizes, that option may become more feasible, but there are many operational, legal, and budgetary issues that would first have to be sorted out with troop contributors.[3]

The stalled political process and poor security situation inhibited progress in other areas. Little progress was made on disarmament throughout the year, the rule of law remains weak and the legislative and judicial branches are not effective. The human rights situation continues to deteriorate in both north and south, as reflected in the regular reports published by UNOCI's small human rights component. Humanitarian access to affected

populations declined and appeals frequently go unanswered.

As the end of 2005 approached, Côte d'Ivoire remained a divided country in danger of getting worse. Fundamental issues that must be addressed before credible elections can be organized concern the dismantling of militias, the disarmament process, and the identification of eligible voters. The engagement of the international community—as reflected in the Security Council and the host of participants in the international working group—was encouraging. But given the proliferation of external actors and the lack of political will displayed by the Ivorian parties, it remains to be seen whether the international community will be sufficiently cohesive to act effectively.

Notes

1. United Nations, *Sixth Progress Report to the Secretary General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire,* S/2005/604, 26 September 2005, para. 16.

2. The uneasy relationship between France and its former colony suffered another blow in November 2005, when it was confirmed that French troops suffocated an Ivoirian prisoner in an armed vehicle in May. The force commander was suspended from duty as the investigation continued. Todd Pitman, "In Ivory Coast, French Seek to Mend Image While Keeping the Peace," *The Boston Globe,* 3 November 2005.

3. For a description of the cooperation among the UN missions in West Africa, see Box 3.4.1 in Mission Note 3.4 on Liberia. An existing example of this arrangement exists among UNTSO, UNIFIL and UNDOF, as described in Mission Note 4.18.