

Côte d'Ivoire

Despite international efforts to end the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, the country remained divided in 2006 between the government-controlled south and the rebel-held north. Lack of progress in disarmament and demobilization, continued delays in the national identification process, and the development of an electoral register meant that the presidential and parliamentary elections were not held as scheduled in October 2006. The expiration of President Laurent Gbagbo's term of office, coupled with the resignation of Prime Minister Charles Banny's government of national unity triggered by a poison scandal that followed the dumping of toxic waste in the commercial capital Abidjan, left the country dangerously divided and presented the international community with a dilemma. The opposition insisted they would not accept Gbagbo as president after the October deadline, while Gbagbo claimed that under the constitution he had the mandate of the populace to stay in power until elections are held. The matter was resolved in October when the Security Council, acting on a recommendation from ECOWAS and the AU, adopted Resolution 1721 (2006) extending the president's and prime minister's terms for one year, during which time key aspects of the peace process including elections should have been completed. The prime minister was given expanded powers, including control of the country's security forces—a potential source of friction with the president.

Côte d'Ivoire, the once prosperous and world-leading cocoa producer, which gained independence from France in 1960, was plunged into conflict in September 2002 following a mutiny and a failed coup attempt by soldiers of the armed forces. Since then, the

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the AU, former colonial power France, and the UN have all been engaged in efforts to resolve the crisis. The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was established in April 2004, with a mandate to assist in the implementation of the 2003 Linas-Marcoussis Accords. It took over from the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI), which was deployed immediately after Linas-Marcoussis. Meanwhile, French Operation Licorne forces were mandated by the Security Council to operate alongside ECOMICI and then the UN mission.

Tensions that emerged toward the end of 2005 boiled over in early January 2006, starting with an attack on a military barracks in Abidjan. This was soon followed by a more organized and orchestrated violent demonstration under the banner of the Young Patriots. These riots, which lasted from 15 to 20 January 2006, were ostensibly triggered by an erroneous interpretation of a communiqué issued by the International Working Group regarding the expiration of the National Assembly. The Young Patriots interpreted the communiqué as an attack on the country's sovereignty, because it purportedly did not recommend the extension of the National Assembly.

The demonstrations, which left five people dead, were targeted at UN personnel, Licorne forces, international organizations, and ethnic minorities. They were concentrated in the government-controlled south and west of the country, especially in the towns of Guiglo, Toulépleu, Duékoué, and Bloléquin, forcing UNOCI and UN agencies to relocate their staff from these areas. The cities of Abidjan,

Yamoussoukro, San Pedro, and Daloa also witnessed increased lawlessness. The UNOCI headquarters in Abidjan, and the French embassy, came under repeated attacks. In the western part of the country, rioters destroyed UN property and that of international humanitarian agencies, forcing them to withdraw and leaving thousands without any humanitarian assistance. Radio Télévision Ivoirienne, which was taken over by the Young Patriots, incited the rioters by broadcasting hate messages against the UN, the international community, and ethnic minorities, while the government watched in silence.

Meanwhile, Licorne forces were obstructed in their operations by the Force Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI), especially

in the western part of the country. Following the French retaliatory attack on the Ivorian air force and its forceful occupation of the international airports in Abidjan and Yamoussoukro in November 2004, in reaction to the deaths of some of its soldiers, pro-Gbagbo forces came to view Licorne forces as occupiers.

The January riots, threatening to jeopardize the faltering peace process, ended with the timely intervention of then chairman of the AU, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, who arrived in Abidjan on 18 January 2006. President Obasanjo's visit resulted in a joint communiqué released by the two heads of state, calling for an immediate end of the demonstrations and for the president and the prime minister to explore options to resolve the status of the National Assembly. However, on 27 January 2006, President Gbagbo signed a decree extending the life of the National Assembly, which was immediately rejected by the opposition parties and the Forces Nouvelles, who described the move as a flagrant violation of the country's constitution and UN Security Council Resolution 1633 (2005).

In February 2006, Prime Minister Banny and Guillaume Soro, the secretary-general of the Force Nouvelles (who had withdrawn from the previous government), discussed a roadmap for peace. They agreed to establish mechanisms for the implementation of key aspects of the peace process.

On 2 June 2006, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1682, which increased UNOCI by 1,025 military personnel and 475 civilian police, in response to an earlier request by the Secretary-General. As the year drew to a close, UNOCI's strength stood at 6,896 military out of an authorized strength of 8,115, and 728 personnel out of the mandated 1,200. Despite shortfalls in troops and police and a wave of anti-UN propaganda mounted by the Young Patriots and other pro-Gbagbo forces during the year, UNOCI police continued their joint patrols with defense and security forces in Abidjan, and conducted joint training exercises with Licorne forces. UNOCI and UNMIL initiated a two-month joint border

UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)

• Authorization date	27 February 2004 (UNSC Res. 1528)
• Start date	4 April 2004
• SRSG	Pierre Schori (Sweden)
• Force commander	Brigadier-General Fernand Marcel Amoussou (Benin)
• Police commissioner	Major-General Gerardo Cristian Chaumont (Argentina)
• Budget	\$420.2 million (1 July 2006–30 June 2007)
• Strength as of 30 September 2006	Troops: 7,843 Military observers: 194 Police: 949 International civilian staff: 366 Local civilian staff: 508 UN volunteers: 228

For detailed mission information see p. 347.

Operation Licorne

• Authorization date	27 February 2004 (UNSC Res. 1464)
• Start date	February 2003
• Head of mission	General Antoine Lecerf (France)
• Budget	\$253.4 million
• Strength as of 30 September 2006	Troops: 3,400

patrol initiative to increase security and the visibility of peacekeepers along the Côte d'Ivoire–Liberia border.

In collaboration with the UN High Representative for Elections, Côte d'Ivoire's electoral commission embarked on a number of preelection preparation programs, including the contested identification process. The identification and disarmament processes, which were supposed to be coordinated simultaneously, were hampered by deliberate obstructions from the parties. However, some progress was made on both during 2006: 12,547 FANCI troops and 12,885 Forces Nouvelles elements were reportedly cantoned in designated sites, while 3,907 applicants received their birth certificates and 3,137 received certificates of nationality as part of the identification process. Despite logistical problems and conflicting demands from the parties, these phases of the DDRR and identification programs were carried out simultaneously.

An ECOWAS meeting on the issue of elections recommended to the AU's Peace and Security Council and to the UN the renewal of the president's mandate for a period of twelve months, and called for a significant strengthening of Prime Minister Banny's powers, something that President Gbagbo had resisted for a long time. Initially the Forces Nouvelles rebels and civilian opposition rejected the proposed extension of President Gbagbo's mandate, but eventually softened their stance on condition that the prime minister be given enough room to exercise his strengthened mandate, which they argued had been obstructed by the president. As the year drew to a close, the stalemate in the peace process exposed the complexities and limitations of the various stakeholders involved in resolving the Ivorian conflict, and it remained to be seen whether this time around the outstanding issues including elections would be implemented in good faith.