

Côte d'Ivoire

Sustained stability in Côte d'Ivoire during 2009 contributed to the alteration of the peace-keeping operations in the country. The French-led Operation Licorne halved its presence, and the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) began to consider the factors on the ground that would allow the UN to reduce its presence. The calm environment, however, should be cause for only measured optimism, as peace in Côte d'Ivoire remained extremely tenuous throughout the year.

The implementation of the Ouagadougou Agreement, which governs the peace process between the government of Côte d'Ivoire and the Forces Nouvelles, stalled. In particular, key areas of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, as well as extending the reach of the central government throughout Côte d'Ivoire and preparing for long delayed presidential elections, saw very limited progress. These difficulties reflected broader questions regarding the political commitment of the parties to reconciliation and the continued need for security guarantees.

Unsurprisingly, elections were again postponed, and with poverty among the Ivorian people on the rise as a consequence of years of inadequate governance, the potential for renewed conflict remains.

Background

Côte d'Ivoire plunged into conflict in September 2002 after a failed coup attempt by the country's armed forces. The country has since played host to the Economic Community of

West African States (ECOWAS), the UN, and French-led peace operations.

Established in April 2004, UNOCI has a mandate 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, most recently, the Ouagadougou Agreement, signed on 4 March 2007 under the auspices of President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, chairman of ECOWAS. French Operation Licorne forces—initially deployed to operate alongside the earlier ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI)—continue to complement the UN mission by providing additional rapid reaction capabilities.

The Ouagadougou Agreement establishes a road map for the feuding parties and UNOCI. The agreement addresses, among other things, issues of identification and voter registration, holding of elections, DDR, reestablishment of state administration throughout the country, and removal of the zone of confidence. Perhaps most important, the agreement calls for the merging of rebel and government forces through the formation of a joint integrated command center. It also establishes clear implementation timelines, and creates two follow-up mechanisms. One is a standing consultative mechanism composed of President Laurent Gbagbo, Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, former president Konan Bedie, and former prime minister Alassane Ouattara. President Compaoré remains in his capacity as the facilitator to the Ouagadougou Agreement. The second follow-up mechanism is the Evaluation



and Monitoring Committee (EMC). The EMC comprises the facilitator, as the chair, and three representatives from the signatories to the agreement. While the consultative mechanism is mandated to address all issues pertaining to the agreement, the EMC is charged with assessing and recommending ways to enhance the peace process.

Despite being a bilateral agreement between Gbagbo and Soro, the Ouagadougou Agreement enjoys broad political support from Ivorian opposition parties and civil society. This support is based in part on a popular sentiment that the agreement is a homegrown initiative, in contrast to previous efforts to secure peace.

Following the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement, the zone of confidence that had divided Côte d'Ivoire since 2002 was dismantled and replaced by a green line patrolled by new mixed police units, consisting of the national police and those from the Forces Nouvelles, and overseen by seventeen UNOCI observation posts. UNOCI had dismantled all of its observation posts along the green line by July 2008, reflecting improvements in the security situation.

Though the removal of observation posts demonstrated significant progress in the reunification process, the security situation remained fragile, mainly as a consequence of the stalled DDR of former combatants. Technical and logistical hurdles, slow progress on reunification of the territory, and a failure to extend the state's authority to northern Côte d'Ivoire at the end of 2008 contributed to the postponement of presidential elections for another year.

In late December 2008, the parties to the Ouagadougou Agreement signed a fourth supplementary agreement that effectively changed the priority of the peace process from presidential elections to reunification as the primary driver. This dramatic shift predicated the holding of elections on the completion of politically sensitive reunification tasks at the heart of Côte d'Ivoire's conflict-prone past. These tasks, which must be resolved two months prior to the elections, include the transfer of authority from zone commanders to prefects; centralization of the treasury; completion of the profiling and integration of Force Nouvelles elements (military,

UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)	
• Authorization Date	27 February 2004 (UNSC Res. 1528)
• Start Date	4 April 2004
• Force Commander	Major-General Fernand Marcel Amoussou (Benin)
• Police Commissioner	Major-General Gerardo Cristian Chaumont (Argentina)
• Budget	\$491.8 million (1 July 2009–30 June 2010)
• Strength as of 31 October 2009	Troops: 7,028 Military Observers: 19 Police: 1,158 International Civilian Staff: 400 Local Civilian Staff: 682 UN Volunteers: 303
<i>For detailed mission information see p. 344</i>	

Operation Licorne	
• Authorization Date	24 January 2006 (UNSC Res. 1652)
• Start Date	February 2004
• Force Commander	Brigadier General Jean-François Hogard (France)
• Budget	\$108.0 million (1 October 2008–30 September 2009)
• Strength as of 30 September 2009	Troops: 923

police, gendarmerie) into the integrated command center; and the payment of \$1,000 to all demobilized ex-combatants and militiamen.

Key Developments

The shift in focus from elections as a driving force for the Ouagadougou Agreement to the centrality of reunification presented a significant challenge for UNOCI and the broader international community, which had focused largely on the electoral process. Nevertheless, in early 2009 the Secretary-General, at the request of the Security Council, outlined the milestones necessary for ultimate withdrawal of UNOCI: (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.

In 2009, UNOCI was reconfigured to provide the support necessary to reach the Secretary-General's benchmarks. The force configuration at the end of the year reflected an emphasis on flexibility in movement and capacity for rapid reaction in the event of the outbreak of violence and to support the integrated command center. UNOCI includes a battalion-sized force reserve, two company-sized sector reserves, and increased mobility through airlift capacities. UNOCI's military concept of operations and rules of engagement were commensurately updated to reflect the new posture of the force. Furthermore, UNOCI conducted several multiple-day military exercises throughout the year, code-named Umbrella I and II, to test the readiness of its rapid response capability.

UNOCI's police component continued to provide guidance and training to the national police and gendarmerie in the government-controlled south and to the 600 security auxiliaries deployed in the north in the former zone of confidence. UNOCI's formed police units also continued to conduct training and joint patrols with its national counterparts throughout the year, while protecting UN personnel and maintaining a safe and secure environment.

Though the identification of benchmarks is a reflection of the relative stability in Côte d'Ivoire, the presence of crime and banditry continues to remain high. Indeed, a state of fear beyond open conflict has the potential to derail the peace process even further, especially since Operation Licorne has cut its deployment in half. The indication of benchmarks also reflects a general desire of the international community for the peace process to move forward, as UNOCI remains one of the UN's larger deployments.

Reunification, Extension of State Authority, and DDR

Reunification of Côte d'Ivoire saw some progress through UNOCI's assistance, but any

advances fell far short of those necessary to trigger elections during 2009. The issues of reunification relate not only to the extension of the state's authority throughout Côte d'Ivoire, but also to the establishment of the integrated command center and the reintegration of former combatants.

As of October 2009, only 600 of the expected 8,000 elements of the mixed Forces Nouvelles and Ivorian national police and gendarmerie officers had been deployed to Abidjan and Bouake. Meanwhile, those brigades that were deployed suffered from an acute lack of both capacity and resources to execute their tasks. The legal framework necessary to integrate the 5,000 Forces Nouvelles elements into the national army is still absent, as are the logistical facilities to conduct their cantonment. UNOCI provided logistical support to the establishment of the integrated command center, as well as technical support to local authorities in this process, but a lack of financial resources necessary to fulfill this mandate served as a significant operational obstacle. In October 2009, elements of the Forces Nouvelles already operating in mixed brigades had yet to be paid for their work, and the \$1,000 demobilization allowance promised to ex-combatants for reintegration was lagging. These setbacks in the DDR process yielded frequent protest, an area of particular concern given the military source of Côte d'Ivoire's conflict.

As a stopgap measure, UNOCI, alongside the UN Development Programme (UNDP), employed resources from the Peacebuilding Fund to provide short-term reinsertion assistance to some 3,000 ex-combatants. The initiative utilized 525 micro-projects in twenty-three locations in Côte d'Ivoire. While this was recognized as having a positive impact on reintegration, it is expected that more than 25,000 ex-combatants will need to be reintegrated, which will require further contributions to the reintegration process. Compounding the slow DDR of the 5,000 Forces Nouvelles and 20,000 militiamen loyal to President Gbago is an apparent lack of commitment on both sides to demobilize; in addition, military equipment continues to be imported, in violation of the UN arms embargo.

Box 3.3.1 UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

The first fully integrated mission of the UN Department of Political Affairs, the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), completed its initial year of operation in September 2009. UNIPSIL works with the UN Country Team, the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Peacebuilding Fund to help consolidate the peace and restore democracy in Sierra Leone by providing support to national and local efforts for identifying and resolving tensions and threats of potential conflict.

In helping Sierra Leone further consolidate its postconflict recovery, UNIPSIL serves to implement the UN's "Joint Vision" integrated peacebuilding strategy under the consolidated leadership of an Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, Michael von der Schulenburg, who also serves as the UN Country Team resident coordinator and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative. UNIPSIL has a light footprint, with a staff ceiling limited to seventy-three individuals, thirty-two of whom are locally recruited, and with about 75 percent of staff devoted to programmatic rather than administrative tasks. UNIPSIL had eight

regional field offices at the end of 2009—three in the provincial centers of Makeni, Bo, and Kenema, and five in the local district centers of Koidu, Kabala, Kailahun, Pujehun, and Port Loko.

Following politically motivated violence in March 2009, the two main political parties in Sierra Leone issued a joint communiqué on 2 April, pledging their commitment to strengthening the peace consolidation process. The UN's Joint Vision was developed as its contribution to the government of Sierra Leone's strategic framework for 2009–2012, known as the Agenda for Change. The initiative was endorsed by the UN Peacebuilding Commission on 10 June at a high-level special session.

Ultimately, the Joint Vision serves to streamline the various UN and international peace consolidation and development efforts through joint planning, implementation, and coordination mechanisms. The UN has identified the following four programmatic priorities: economic integration of rural areas, economic and social integration of youth, equitable access to health services, and accessible and credible public service.

The total resources required for implementing the Joint Vision for the four-year period is estimated to be \$345 million, which would require \$204 million in new funding. The Joint Vision has established a multidonor trust fund to address this financing gap, with the UNDP administering the fund for all UN agencies. The trust fund is designed to attract donors that have no representation in Sierra Leone and that intend to channel funds through the UN's infrastructure.

On 15 September 2009, the Security Council passed a resolution to extend UNIPSIL's mandate another year. The resolution authorizes the mission to assist the government with the 2012 election process, constitutional reform, building police capacity, tackling corruption, illicit drug trafficking, and organized crime, and addressing youth unemployment. It is anticipated that, following the 2012 presidential election, the UN presence in Sierra Leone will be able to begin its transition into a UNDP-led Country Team. Until then, UNIPSIL will continue to play its crucial supporting and coordinating role.

Delays in implementing the DDR components of the Ouagadougou Agreement had a deleterious impact on the extension of the state's authority. Despite the deployment of corps prefectoral (administrators) to areas in the north controlled by the Force Nouvelles, their authority to enforce administrative decisions was severely limited on account of delays in the deploying of the integrated command center. Similarly, a lack of resources dedicated to tax officials deployed to the north meant that Force Nouvelles elements, rather than the central government, continued to collect taxes there. The deployment of the judiciary to the north also remained limited, and corrections facilities continued to be closed, even though UNOCI trained over a hundred prison officers during 2009.

Preparation for Elections

Despite slow, if not debilitating, progress toward the establishment of an adequate electoral environment, in May 2009 the Ivorian government announced plans to hold the long delayed presidential polls on 29 November 2009.

The voter registration process was launched in the final months of 2008 and completed on 30 June 2009. A total of 6.5 million Ivorians registered to vote. Subsequent to the completion of voter registration, the Ivorian government's independent electoral council adopted several pieces of legislation that detailed the electoral timeline, including publication of a provisional electoral list by 29 August, publication of the final electoral list between 15 and 21 October, distribution of voter cards by 26 November, and commencement of electoral campaigns from 13

to 27 November. From the onset, Ivorian authorities announced the lapsed deadlines in regard to this election timeline, causing concern as to whether the elections would be held at all during the year. The deadline for the publication of the provisional electoral list was delayed by nearly one month, until 26 September 2009. Complicating matters, one month before the planned elections, UNOCI began an investigation into 2.75 million cases of suspected voter fraud.

UNOCI worked with national authorities throughout the year to identify and address the obstacles to the deployment of the mixed brigades charged with providing security to election coordination centers. While related to the resource and capacity issues outlined here, the integrated command center was able to provide security to only half of the seventy election coordination centers throughout the country. With this reality in mind, UNOCI devised plans with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for the re-deployment of an UNMIL infantry company and two helicopters to help support security for the planned elections.

Conclusion

Despite this significant amount of activity, it was announced at the end of November 2009 that elections would once again be delayed until 2010. The decision was met with considerable concern by the international community, who called for the holding of elections at the earliest possible date.



UN Photo/Ky Chung

UNOCI staff load boxes containing provisional voter lists onto a helicopter for transport to polling stations, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 12 November 2009.