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## Côte d'Ivoire's Forces Nouvelles

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Key Points:

- Côte d'Ivoire, formerly the most successful economy in West Africa, has been divided between a rebel-held north and loyalist south for five years. A peace deal signed in March has raised hopes for elections and national reunification. Following that accord, the rebel leader became the national Prime Minister.
- Key deadlines for the main planks of the peace deal –identification and disarmament - have not been met, however. It is still uncertain whether the opposing sides will manage to put in place a successful identification programme for millions of citizens without identity papers. The identity crisis was the major cause of the war and, without resolution of the issue, rebels may refuse to disarm.
- The official dismantling of a UN- and French-controlled “Zone of Confidence” between rebels and loyalists is a significant achievement, but the presence of armed militias in the area means the area is still potentially volatile.

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## **About the Author**

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## Executive Summary

On 19 September 2002, a mysterious rebel group launched simultaneous attacks on three major cities in Côte d'Ivoire, including the lagoon-side, skyscraper-lined commercial capital Abidjan. The rebels, who would soon announce themselves as the *Mouvement Patriotique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI), failed to overthrow the Abidjan-based government but did manage to take over most of the northern half of the country.

Later that year, two more rebel groups emerged and the rest of northern Côte d'Ivoire fell out of loyalist control. Some 2,000 were killed in the nine months of conflict triggered by the rebels' attempted *coup d'état*, and around a million were forced to flee their homes. The war was declared over by the rebel and loyalist army chiefs in May 2003, although violence has flared sporadically since then.

Now, the three rebel movements are known collectively as the *Forces Nouvelles* and come under the leadership of one man: Guillaume Soro. Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest cocoa producer and for decades West Africa's most successful economy, has become one of the world's most troubled nations.

For now at least, the time for fighting talk is over and both sides are smoking the pipe of peace. Soro, a 35-year-old former student leader, has been made Prime Minister, working alongside the man he once tried to overthrow: President Laurent Gbagbo. The country, however, remains divided between a rebel-held, mainly Muslim north and a loyalist, majority-Christian south. A buffer zone, largely under the control of thousands of UN and French peacekeepers, divides the two rival armies. Officials in France and at the UN now moot pulling out the peacekeepers, but some fear this could trigger a new war, which would threaten to suck in neighbouring nations.

This paper examines Côte d'Ivoire's rebel movement, looking at what led to its formation in Burkina Faso, how it runs the areas now under its control and how likely it is to disarm. To answer these questions, the paper discusses the reasons for the outbreak of war, focusing on a bitter power struggle between rival politicians after the death of the country's founding president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, in 1993. The power struggle turned ordinary Ivorians against each other and led to mounting protests, military revolts and crackdowns by security forces. Other factors also played important roles in fomenting war, including periodic pay and employment disputes in the army and competition over land in the southwestern cocoa belt.

The latest power-sharing arrangement stems from a March 2007 accord signed by both Soro and Gbagbo at Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. It was the seventh peace agreement aiming to end the division of Côte d'Ivoire, and a string of other national unity governments have come and gone during the Ivorian crisis. Will this deal prove any more successful than its predecessors?

The Ouagadougou deal offers new ideas on how to resolve a bitter dispute over the nationality of millions of people living in Côte d'Ivoire, and lays the groundwork on disarmament and merging the rebel and loyalist armies, but it is far from clear whether hopes of peace will be realized. As this paper was published, deadlines had been missed by several months for the start of disarmament and the launching of ad hoc tribunals which would issue fresh identity papers around the country. These are, under

the Ouagadougou accord, supposed to pave the way for presidential elections by January 2008. However, the Independent Electoral Commission recently said it doesn't see polls being held until October 2008.

The Soro-Gbagbo compact presents a desperately needed chance for Côte d'Ivoire to exit its downward spiral, but the long delays are raising scepticism over whether Côte d'Ivoire's crisis is really ending.

## **Introduction**

Almost nothing was known of Côte d'Ivoire's rebel movement until it tried to take over the country in the very early hours of 19 September 2002. The mysterious Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI) simultaneously attacked three cities, including the skyscraper-lined commercial capital Abidjan, whose three million residents were woken by volleys of gunfire and exploding rocket-propelled grenades. By the end of the day, the attackers had fled Abidjan, but seized almost the entire northern half of the country.

Cancelling a meeting with the Pope in Italy, Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo flew back home and gave a rousing speech. 'The hour of patriotism has struck, the hour of courage has struck, the hour of battle has struck. They have imposed a battle on us and we will fight it,' he told Ivorian television viewers.<sup>i</sup>

Neither side won the ensuing nine-month-long war, in which some 2,000 were killed<sup>ii</sup> and around a million were forced to flee their homes.<sup>iii</sup> Particularly brutal Liberian mercenaries were recruited by both rebels and loyalists, and went on to commit some of the conflict's worst atrocities. By May 2003, former colonial master France had managed to halt major hostilities and was enforcing a ceasefire, after pressuring the warring sides into signing a peace deal.

That agreement – signed in a rugby stadium in Linas-Marcousis, a Parisian suburb – may have stopped the worst violence, but failed in its aims of reunifying the country, disarming the rebels and paving the way for elections. Côte d'Ivoire, which for decades had been West Africa's most successful economy, is now split between a mainly Muslim, rebel-held north and a majority-Christian loyalist south. In the middle is a buffer zone, where security was the chief responsibility of French and UN soldiers until they officially handed over security throughout the area to "mixed brigades" - comprising loyalist, rebel and UN troops together - on 14 September this year.

In March 2007, Gbagbo and rebel leader Guillaume Soro signed a new peace accord in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital,<sup>iv</sup> brokered by the president of the neighbouring nation of Burkina Faso, whom loyalists had regularly accused of being behind the rebellion. The agreement led to Soro being named prime minister and has given rise to fresh hopes that Côte d'Ivoire may be on its way to reunification and a lasting peace. Yet deadlines for a disarmament process and the nationwide issuing of new identity papers have slipped by, making the peace deal look shaky.

This paper takes a look at the reasons why war broke out, how life and the administration in northern Côte d'Ivoire have been affected by the rebel take-over there and what the chances of peace are after the Ouagadougou agreement. The study is based primarily on research by the author during a trip to Côte d'Ivoire from November to December 2006, incorporating material gathered in Côte d'Ivoire from 1999 to 2007.

It also makes reference to reports by analysts and international organizations, as well as media coverage. Much emphasis is placed on Ivorians' individual experiences and views, which highlight the home-grown reasons for the conflict, and the problems which must be overcome if any kind of durable peace is to be established.

The first part of the paper explores factors behind the outbreak of war, going back to the 1993 death of Côte d'Ivoire's founding father Félix Houphouët-Boigny and the ensuing struggle for power between four key personalities. It also looks at the formation of the rebellion in Burkina Faso. Since the 1990s, discrimination against the more than two million Burkinabé residents of Côte d'Ivoire has embittered relations between the two countries, and made Burkina Faso an ideal base for a nascent rebel group.

The rebel movement – now known as the Forces Nouvelles (FN), or 'New Forces' – has gradually begun to look more like a northern government, with its own increasingly well-organized bureaucracy. Compared with other rebel groups in West Africa – such as those which devastated Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1980s and 1990s – the FN are remarkably well organized and areas controlled by the movement are surprisingly calm, with several factories, markets and restaurants continuing their business, although trade is much reduced from pre-war times.

The rebels began by establishing a reputation for discipline. In the northern town of Korhogo, a local baker remembers when the masked insurgents first arrived and surprised him by paying for the bread he supplied them with. At first, an important regional branch of the Central Bank of West Africa (BCEAO) in the rebel capital of Bouaké was left untouched, but rebel gunmen finally stormed it in September 2003, signalling the linked dangers of financial desperation and factionalism.

The paper's second section starts by looking at the different groups involved in the rebellion. These include not just the original army dissidents who had taken refuge in Burkina Faso, but also Liberian fighters, last-minute adherents from the national army and the *Dozos*: traditional hunter-warriors who claim to have mystical powers.

As the MPCCI fought off loyalist counter-attacks and later fell prey to violent factional infighting, some of the war's worst abuses were committed. The conflict and rebel occupation of the north also escalated tensions between Burkina Faso and the Ivorian loyalist authorities, at times threatening a clash between the two nations.

As well as examining these issues, the section 'Among the Rebels' takes a look at how Soro has been gradually building up a northern administration. There are chapters on the rebels' parallel finance ministry called La Centrale, the embattled education system, the chaotic cotton sector and policing.

The rebels fund themselves through taxes on trade and transport, as well as through involvement in the sale of commodities including diamonds – subject to UN export sanctions since December 2005 – and cocoa. Revenue from these sources has helped the rebels create, and progressively strengthen, their own regional administrative structures, raising fears that northern Côte d'Ivoire could secede. However, while the rebel movement flirted with the idea of secession in 2004, following a particularly bloody loyalist crackdown in Abidjan, it finally declared itself in favour of a united Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>v</sup>

The final section examines the Ouagadougou accord and discusses some of the risks which lie ahead, including the dangers in abolishing the buffer zone.

Basic tenets of the accord are: a new national army which would include many former rebels; a proper identification programme, giving identity papers to millions of Ivorians without them; and disarmament of all the rebels and loyalist militias, as well as loyalist soldiers recruited into the army during the war. The Zone of Confidence's dismantling was agreed upon (a measure officially achieved on 14 September 2007), with security being taken over by 'mixed brigades' of rebels, loyalist soldiers of the *Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* (FANCI) and a small number of UN troops. Presidential elections are to be held by January 2008, crowning the peace process.

Whether this peace deal will succeed or not is the 64-thousand-dollar question. The accord offers new ways of resolving Côte d'Ivoire's impasse, notably easing the criteria for obtaining identity cards, as well as setting out a staged process for dismantling the buffer zone. It gives the rebels a greater share of power than under previous national unity governments, with Soro becoming Prime Minister. The fact that Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaoré is the accord's broker and co-signatory strengthens its credibility.

And yet, months after the April 30 deadline to begin disarming, neither rebels nor loyalist fighters have put down their weapons. Rebel officials were sceptical about the effectiveness of a militia disarmament process carried out under Gbagbo's leadership in May. The official completion of the dismantling of the Zone of Confidence on September 14 has been a significant achievement, but it should be remembered that, for now, with security in the hands of mixed brigades, the strip of territory remains a buffer zone and a potential area of tension should the political mood turn sour again. Most of the UN's 8,000 peacekeepers remain in the buffer zone for now.

French troop numbers, on the other hand, have been reduced. France's Licorne (or 'Unicorn') peacekeeping force was scaled down from 3,500 to 3,000 troops in mid-May, and it closed two of its bases in western Côte d'Ivoire, including a regional headquarters in the town of Man. French Cooperation Minister Brigitte Girardin has said the conditions are in place for a gradual withdrawal of UN and French peacekeepers from Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>vi</sup>

Worries have risen over a mounting number of killings by armed gangs and localized ethnic conflict in the buffer zone since mid-April.<sup>vii</sup> Extortion by loyalist security forces returning to the buffer zone has also sparked unrest.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Death of an African Dream**

For decades after independence, the former French colony of Côte d'Ivoire was the jewel of West Africa. As its neighbours suffered from a seemingly endless string of coups and violent unrest, Côte d'Ivoire's economy boomed.

The first twenty years of independence saw an average GDP growth rate of 7.5% a year.<sup>ix</sup> People talked about 'the Ivorian miracle'. Immigrants from neighbouring nations flocked to the country in their millions, slashing and burning virgin forests to set up cocoa and coffee farms.

The tropical nation provided nearly half the world's supply of cocoa beans. The cocoa money helped build skyscrapers and develop the region's busiest container ports. As a symbol of Ivorian grandeur, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny built the world's largest

Roman Catholic basilica in his home-village-turned-capital, Yamoussoukro, in 1990. At a cost of \$200 million, the building of the air-conditioned edifice sparked controversy in a year when the country was forced by donors to embark on its first austerity programme.

Commodity prices were now plunging, and the Ivorian miracle began to collapse. Côte d'Ivoire faltered on repaying the huge international debt it had built up: \$13.5 billion by 1987. Strikes became common and the early 1990s saw a series of revolts by security forces, which had been unheard of until then.

On 7 December 1993, the 'Wise Man' died of cancer. Houphouët-Boigny had ruled the country for 33 years, relying to a large extent on corruption, personal relationships and backing from France to maintain stability. Of world rulers, only Cuba's Fidel Castro and Kim Il-Sung had been in power longer.

Houphouët-Boigny's death opened the way for a power struggle between prominent political and military figures. Each represented different regional constituencies, and ethnic chauvinism – camouflaged as patriotism – became a weapon of choice.

Four main contenders would occupy centre-stage in the protracted crisis which reached a bloody dénouement on 19 September 2002: Houphouët-Boigny's anointed successor, Henri Konan Bédié, a fellow ethnic Baoulé from central Côte d'Ivoire; Military Chief-of-Staff Gen. Robert Guéi, from the western region bordering on Liberia; Alassane Dramane Ouattara, a Muslim northerner serving as technocratic prime minister in Houphouët-Boigny's final years; and opposition champion Laurent Gbagbo, whose Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) mixed socialist rhetoric with a stand against immigration into the southwestern cocoa-belt.

The tug-of-war for power began almost as soon as Houphouët-Boigny breathed his last breath, with Bédié pulling on one end of the rope, and Ouattara on the other. Within hours, Bédié made an unscheduled appearance at national television headquarters. 'The constitution confers on me in this tragic moment...the responsibilities of a head of state,' he said in a broadcast. 'I am assuming them now.'<sup>x</sup>

Pushed to resign by Bédié, Ouattara held out for three days, calling for a transitional government until elections were held. News reports said the security forces were split, with the gendarmerie supporting Bédié and army chiefs backing Ouattara.<sup>xi</sup>

'This is what happens when power is offered publicly for auction,' Gbagbo commented from the sidelines. 'When it is time to share the cake, they tear each other apart.'<sup>xii</sup>

In power, Bédié moved quickly and firmly to eliminate Ouattara from the political scene. In doing so, he opened a Pandora's box of ethnic tensions. Bédié nurtured a philosophy called *ivoirité* or Ivorian-ness, which is now often blamed, more than any individual, for the collapse of the Ivorian dream.

*Ivoirité* 'is a fundamental question which deals with what makes a people, its identity and collective soul', says one of its main proponents, academic Jean-Noël Loucou.<sup>xiii</sup>

Central to what would otherwise be a murky concept was the necessity of distinguishing between us, the Ivorians, and them, the foreigners. In a country where millions were without identity cards, and where many ethnic groups spilled over borders, this was not straightforward. *Ivoirité* created a climate of prejudice against ethnic northerners, easily singled out by southerners as being different. They were mostly Muslim, while the

southerners were Christian. Their culture was rooted in the arid north, rather than the lush tropical south. They shared ethnic groups, languages and family names with people in other francophone neighbouring states, including Burkina Faso and Mali.

Bédié used the anti-foreigner rhetoric of *ivoirité* to harness support for a change in the constitution ensuring no one with a foreign parent could stand for president. The ruling party decided that Ouattara's parents were both foreigners, from the northern neighbouring state of Burkina Faso. Ivorian politics and street discussion became dominated by the question of whether Ouattara was Ivorian or not. Almost everyone had a passionate point of view on the matter. Opinions tended to follow ethnic lines, with southerners convinced of Ouattara's foreign parentage and northerners and immigrants sure of his *bona fide* Ivorian credentials.

By 1999, the pro-Ouattara opposition was rioting in the streets. Twelve senior leaders of Ouattara's party, the Rassemblement des Républicains (RDR), were arrested. The authorities accused Ouattara of falsifying his identity papers and he went into exile before a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Round two in the power struggle was opened by the army. What began as a dispute over money owing to a couple of hundred soldiers quickly mushroomed, radically altering the country's history.

On 23 December 1999, a clique of soldiers, at first numbering just six,<sup>xiv</sup> took control of Abidjan's munitions depot. They were demanding unpaid bonuses and *per diems* for themselves and other Ivorian soldiers who had served as UN peacekeepers in the Central African Republic. Bédié returned from a holiday visit to his hometown of Daoukro a day later, held talks with the soldiers but refused to give in to their demands, which by now included the release of the RDR leaders. On Christmas Eve, a tired-looking Gen. Guéï appeared on national television, surrounded by young, tough soldiers. He quickly became known as *Père Noël* (Father Christmas).

'As of now, President Henri Konan Bédié is no longer president of the republic,' he said. 'The young mutineers will propose a Committee of Public Salvation for the Republic.'<sup>xv</sup> He dissolved parliament, the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Council. Thousands of Côte d'Ivoire's poor youth took to the streets in a looting frenzy, intermittently scared away by groups of soldiers firing live rounds.

In power, Guéï dusted off the anti-Ouattara propaganda machine. In a trend which began under Bédié, foreigners and northerners, seen as Ouattara supporters, were targeted for abuse by security forces whose extortion practices at roadblocks had long become the norm. Guéï's grip on power was, however, fragile. Several of the soldiers who had brought him to power were northerners, some of whom supported Ouattara and did not like the turn their ruler was now taking.

Ethnic distrust gained the ranks of the army, culminating in an event which sped Côte d'Ivoire along the road to war: an apparent assassination attempt on Guéï in September 2000. The crackdown which followed would eventually lead to the formation of the rebel movement.

## The White Horse and the Black Mercedes

Before dawn on 18 September 2000, gunfire crackled around Gen. Guéï's residence in Abidjan's central business district, Plateau. Images of Guéï's pink-and-white house, its wrought iron gates bent off their hinges, were soon shown on national television, accompanied by B-movie-like, ominous music. Guéï's white horse – believed by many to be the source of his supposed mystical powers – was killed in the violence. The attack became known as the Plot of the White Horse.

A crackdown began immediately, and all of those targeted were northerners. Some were killed. Others, including men who are now top rebel commanders, were tortured. Several soldiers were forced to flee Côte d'Ivoire after their names were put on a wanted list. The army began caving in on itself. Guéï had already raised anger among the troops by engineering Ouattara's exclusion from an upcoming presidential election, and by going back on promises not to bid for the presidency himself.

Nearly thirty northern soldiers were arrested and tortured. At least two of them were killed.

Chérif Ousmane, now the commander of the rebel capital Bouaké, says the assassination attempt was staged, as do all others implicated in it.<sup>xvi</sup>

*It was really a painful period that I do not want to revisit. But...you must understand, this plot was a set-up. You know that Guéï wanted to protect his presidency.*

Ousmane said he went to Guéï's residence on the morning of the apparent attack, arriving there at 9 a.m. This is where he usually reported for work, as a member of the president's personal bodyguard unit. He was arrested upon arrival there, and tortured at Guéï's residence, where he had a front tooth pulled out. From there, he was sent to the paramilitary gendarmerie camp of Agban. Other soldiers arrested were transferred to Abidjan's main munitions depot and tortured further. *'The next day,'* he said. *'I learnt of the death of my colleagues.'* Among those killed were a senior presidential guard called Souleymane Diomandé – nicknamed La Grenade – and his driver, fellow soldier Sansan Kambiré. Concordant accounts described them being beaten to death as they arrived at the munitions depot, by a group of soldiers who became known in the army as 'the Pygmies'.

Ouattara Siaka, alias Wattao, now the Deputy Chief-of-Staff of the rebel army, was one of the soldiers tortured in the munitions depot. The 'Pygmies' broke both his legs, and an arm:

*They wrapped us in barbed wire ...They put planks on top. They jumped on us, so that it dug into our body again and again. And then they took iron bars and beat us on the soles of our feet.<sup>xvii</sup>*

By the time elections were held in October 2000, the initial euphoria surrounding the coup had turned sour. The Supreme Court barred all serious candidates except Gbagbo from standing, declaring that there were 'persistent doubts'<sup>xviii</sup> over Ouattara's nationality and that Bédié had failed to present the required medical certificate.

When Guéï tried to rig the vote, he was forced out of power by crowds supporting Gbagbo, who had won a majority of the ballots cast. Hours later, Ouattara supporters took to the streets, demanding new elections in which their candidate could stand. During the street violence which followed, paramilitary gendarmes killed 57 people from northern ethnic groups and dumped them in a mass grave in the Yopougon area of Abidjan. Calls for revenge for the 'mass grave of Yopougon' (*le charnier de Yopougon*) have infused the rhetoric of the rebellion.

During the turmoil of October 2000, dissident soldiers attacked the munitions' depot and freed the prisoners held there. Some of the prisoners held over the 'Plot of the White Horse' fled to Burkina Faso, where they were joined within months by other northern soldiers, similarly accused of coup-plotting.

A second major crackdown was triggered by the 'Plot of the Black Mercedes' against Gbagbo in January 2001, when loyalists said a column of cars led by a black Mercedes attempted to take Bouaké. Accounts differ, even among the rebels, as to whether this was a real or staged plot, but many northern soldiers deny allegations of their involvement and say they were targeted because of their ethnicity.

Chérif Fofana, now the rebel *Commandant de Secteur* of the northern town of Kong, was one of those who fled Côte d'Ivoire after being accused of involvement in the Black Mercedes affair.<sup>xix</sup> He was warned by a colleague that he had become a wanted man when he was away from his base of Bouaké, investigating an attack by road bandits further north. He was there with two other soldiers, who were also northerners.

*I called a colleague of the Anti-Crime Brigade to say we'd finished the mission and that we would return to Bouaké shortly. He told me: your house has been surrounded since yesterday by gendarmes in unofficial cars. So, I tried to call other people from where I was. They said...if you come back be very careful...  
From that moment, everything had changed. Should I go and get myself killed, or should I save my life. I began thinking very hard.*

After a week on the run, Fofana made the decision to go into exile. Like some others interviewed on the subject, he would not say to which country he fled. The question of Burkina Faso's role in supporting the rebellion remains sensitive.

*The more time passed, the more we wanted to see our family...even the extended family. That's when things began getting complicated.  
So, we got in touch with friends who were back home in our country to explain the problem we had, being here... Then, they started having problems all of a sudden as well. Instead of trying to help us, they were trying to save their skins.  
We grew to nearly 80 people: soldiers, policemen and so on. We were all together, and had to do something ...It was time for us to sacrifice ourselves. If we died, it was good, but we were going to do everything we could to be in Côte d'Ivoire like other Ivorians.*

Multiple sources among the rebels say the country of exile was Burkina Faso. There, they gathered in a training camp to which they gave the name Farakoro, meaning 'behind the rocks'. The camp was near the southeastern town of Ziniaré, the hometown of Burkinabé President Blaise Campaoré. The hard core of dissidents who would form the rebel movement, initially known as the Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), still refer to themselves as 'Farakoriciens'.

One rebel leader based at Côte d'Ivoire's northern border spoke, on condition of anonymity, of the training in Burkina Faso:

*'At that time, we were forbidden everything: no phone calls, no contact with our families. Nobody is in contact with us, we are in contact with nobody,'* he said.

Q: Who was training you?

*They were Burkinabé soldiers...We did ground combat (training), heavy combat...Every morning we did exercises for our muscles, and every evening night combat.*

*...We spoke about power, what we would do if we managed to take power...If we took power, how people would treat us, young guys like us taking up arms and just taking power like that.*

### **The 'And' and the 'Or'**

The successive crackdowns in the army sparked by real or fictitious coup plots fed directly into the rebellion. But the military had become better armed and better trained under Gbagbo and, for the rebels to succeed, they needed support from within the country.

The leaders of the 19 September coup attempt attribute their failure, in large part, to the fact that a planned revolt within Abidjan's Akouédou army barracks did not materialize.<sup>xx</sup> However, they managed to take over northern cities, including Bouaké and Korhogo, with almost no opposition. The rebels managed to hold onto these cities mainly because of support from ethnic northerners, many of whom had become frustrated by years of abuse by security forces and by discrimination in the handing out of identity papers. Foreigners and second-generation immigrants not qualifying for Ivorian nationality – who together make up an estimated 26% of Côte d'Ivoire's population<sup>xxi</sup> – tended to back the rebels for the same reasons.

Under Guéï, a debate over a clause in a proposed new constitution became emblematic of the divide in Ivorian society. Guéï initially appeared to be favourable to Ouattara. He would, he said, change just one word in a proposed constitution handed to him by a national panel. Article 35 stated that, to stand for the presidency, one must be 'Ivorian by origin, born of a father and a mother themselves of Ivorian origin'. The words 'mother and father' would, he said, be changed to 'mother or father'.<sup>xxii</sup>

Ouattara was accused of being a closet foreigner, hiding the supposed Burkinabé nationality of at least one of his parents. This stance on Ouattara was extended to northerners generally, who would commonly be accused by government supporters and others of holding false Ivorian identity cards. By backing the change to 'or' (*ou*), Guéï was saying, in coded yet widely understood language, that he supported the electoral eligibility of Ouattara. But Guéï later changed his mind, announcing after a tour of the country that he would like to keep the 'and' (*et*) clause after all. A referendum ushered in a new constitution, with the 'and' in place.

The debate over '*le et et le ou*' – sometimes referred to as 'the battle of the conjunctions' – dominated discussion at all levels of Ivorian society.

Security forces would often destroy Ivorian identity cards held by people with northern names, claiming they were fake. Such actions effectively turned people into non-citizens, and left them more vulnerable to mistreatment – particularly extortion – at the next identity check. People considered to be closet foreigners or with a foreign parent

would be pejoratively called 'ors' ('ous') and those claiming to be '100% Ivorians' would proudly refer to themselves as 'ands' ('ets').

The climate of suspicion against northerners made it more difficult for them to obtain identity papers, even when following all the rules. Northerners complain that, even when they weren't refused identity papers outright, important documents would go missing during the application process – and the explanations were not always convincing.

*'The war broke out because people were fed up. All the time, they were saying we were foreigners. We were left by the roadside,'* says Fatou, an Ivorian resident of Korhogo. *'That made people upset. Very upset.'* Fatou was living in Abidjan before the war, and still recalls the time in 1993 when an official who was dealing with her application for identity papers said that her entire portfolio had been lost. *'She told me: "With your strange, funny names I don't know where I could find your documents,"'* said Fatou. *'They told me they had lost not only my carte orange [her expired identity card] but also my parents' documents. They lost everything.'*

Fatou, who requested that only her first name be mentioned in this paper, has a surname which is typical in the north, but also common in several Sahelian countries, including Burkina Faso and Niger.

Sylla, another resident of Korhogo, tells a similar story.

*'In 1993 ...I applied for three identity cards...They sent the applications to Abidjan. They gave an identity card to my son, they said that the computer refused for me, that I am Malian. It also refused my wife – we are both Malians. But we both come from Katiali [in northern Côte d'Ivoire].*

*... I said the computer made a mistake, because my father comes from Katiali, his father comes from Katiali, his father comes from Katiali, right up to seven fathers who come from Katiali. I don't know why we are not Ivorians, I don't know why we are not from Katiali.*

*He said: your name, Sylla, that's what we don't like the look of. I told him, well I don't know where I should go then.*

*That was in '93. Up until now, I don't have an identity card. I have a receipt – what one calls an "attestation"... I just don't get it.'*

Asked if he tried getting an identity card again after that, Sylla said:

*'I tried twice. The second time I applied for me and my wife, they told us the truck which should have brought the identity card here was attacked by road bandits.'*

From the late 1990s until the outbreak of war and beyond, accounts of round-ups of foreigners – the prime targets in identity checks – were common. Those arrested were forced to pay to be freed. After the war, such abuses continued, and at periods of high tension many foreigners arrested after identity checks were never seen again.<sup>xxiii</sup>

## **This Land is Ours**

The governments of Bédié, Guéi and Gbagbo successively all blamed Ouattara for stirring up trouble in Côte d'Ivoire, portraying him as a leader desperate to rule the country for the benefit of foreign backers. But the Ouattara issue was never just about one man. It reflected deeper concerns among southerners that they could lose control not just of national government, but also of their cities and rural land, to outsiders.

They are concerned because over the decades since independence, migrants – particularly northerners and immigrants from poorer, arid Sahelian countries – have been becoming the majority in many southern areas, particularly in the southwestern cocoa belt. Most of these settlers came as cocoa and coffee farmers, others as traders.

If we take Daloa, the largest city in the southwestern heartland of Gbagbo's Bété ethnic group, 63% of its 383,000-population was made up of northerners in 2002 and only 13% of the population were Bété, according to the mayor of the city.<sup>xxiv</sup> At the local level, this has caused resentment.

Ethnic and political riots which rocked Daloa three months before the outbreak of war in 2002 highlighted tensions between Bétés and northern ethnic groups referred to collectively as Dioulas or 'traders'.<sup>xxv</sup> The violence began during local electioneering, and pitted the mainly northern supporters of Ouattara's RDR against ethnic Bétés, most of them backers of Gbagbo's FPI.

These comments from Lago Betto Emile, Bété chief of the Belleville neighbourhood of Daloa at the time of the fighting, help explain the hatreds which were dividing Ivorian society:

*Here in Daloa, Bétés and Dioulas were living in peace, but we just can't understand the events which are happening now. ...The Dioulas came here, and we gave them land to settle on. My great-grandfather, Zokou Gbeli, he's the one who first welcomed the Dioulas ...That was around 1918. They came here to buy cola nuts... Zokou Gbeli welcomed them like they were his children ...At that time, there was no problem between us and the Dioula, but now that politics has come along, they want to start ruling over the Bété. ...They are our foreigners, and they want to rule over us. Really, it's a very difficult matter. The person that you fed, he wants to command over you – your foreigner...We took them like brothers, and they want to take Côte d'Ivoire.*<sup>xxvi</sup>

A comment Chief Emile went on to make about Ouattara highlighted the close parallel between national and local tensions. 'A foreigner', he said, in reference to Ouattara, 'does not have the right to rule over another person's land.'

The unrest in Daloa triggered attacks on northerners in the countryside, forcing over 2,000 to flee.<sup>xxvii</sup> In the years leading up to war, such conflict was becoming common in the cocoa-growing areas. A 1998 rural land law recognized ancestral land rights officially for the first time, thus encouraging southwesterners to claim land from settler communities.<sup>xxviii</sup> These conflicts and disputes provided one more layer in a deteriorating pre-war situation in Côte d'Ivoire. They are central to continuing sporadic violence in western Côte d'Ivoire, and form a bone of contention between rebels and loyalists.

## Among the Rebels

After the failure of the September 2002 attack in Abidjan, the *Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire* retreated to the northern half of the country, making Bouaké, the country's second-largest city situated in the geographic centre, its main base.

Ordinary civilians sped up their exodus from Bouaké after intense fighting on 6–7 October in which loyalists launched an unsuccessful attempt to take back the city.

In the run-up to that fighting, France had deployed troops and persuaded the combatants to agree to a brief truce while all Western nationals who wished to could leave. But once this job had been completed, French soldiers remained on the outskirts of Bouaké. They then blocked rebel advances out of the city,<sup>xxx</sup> saying they needed to maintain a security cordon to ensure the safe evacuation of foreign nationals.<sup>xxx</sup> France gave logistical support to loyalists, and allowed them through its checkpoints.<sup>xxxi</sup>

And so, after less than three weeks, the conflict had reached stasis. Loyalist forces failed to defeat the rebels, and French soldiers prevented the rebels from launching a new assault. The January 2003 Linas-Marcoussis peace accord officially froze the conflict and transformed the frontline into a buffer zone called the 'Zone of Confidence'. Rebel representatives joined a national unity government. West African peacekeeping troops arrived to help patrol the ceasefire. In 2004, these 'ECOFORCE' troops were integrated into a new UN peacekeeping mission, ONUCI, which now operates alongside the French Licorne force.

Separated from the south, roughly 60% of Côte d'Ivoire was now being led by a 30-year-old, one-time student leader and a clique of mainly junior officers. Collaborating with them were the 'Dozos' – traditional hunters reputed to have mystical powers – and army dissidents with sympathies for Guéï, who had recruited them into the army. These former footsoldiers of Guéï's regime were known as the *Zinzins et Bahéfoués* – 'crazy men and wizards' in the Baoulé language – because of their supposed fanaticism and discipline problems. They joined the 19 September revolt because of fears they would soon be purged from the military. The rebels also kept on their side several other soldiers who were based in the north when the revolt broke out, including some senior officers such as their current Chief-of-Staff Gen. Soumaïla Bakayoko.

In November 2002, two months after war broke out, two other rebel groups emerged in western Côte d'Ivoire, until then untouched by fighting. The *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP) and the *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) allied themselves to the main, northern rebel group, the MPCl, and quickly took over much of the west, including the region's major town of Man. They claimed to be independent, fighting to avenge the murder of Guéï by loyalists soon after the 19 September coup attempt began.

In reality, MJP and MPIGO were packed with Liberian mercenaries. MPIGO was headed by a former close aide to Guéï, N'dri N'guessan – alias 'Felix Doh' – but owed much of its fighting strength to Liberians and Sierra Leoneans close to Liberian President Charles Taylor.<sup>xxxii</sup> The MJP was, according to two well-placed rebel sources, formed by 'Farakoricien' Adama Coulibaly, one of the northern soldiers tortured after the Plot of the White Horse.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The fighting in western Côte d'Ivoire quickly became entangled with Liberia's civil war, and many combatants fought on both sides of the border. In the spring of 2003, clashes broke out between Ivorian rebels and their foreign allies in the west, prompting Chérif Ousmane to lead a force from Bouaké to drive out Liberian fighters.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Later that year, Liberian rebels forced Charles Taylor from power. So by the end of 2003 MPCI had lost a major foreign backer and its mercenary forces had been driven out. It was now clear that the MPCI would be calling the shots in the west, as well as in the north. Although the three groups continued to exist officially, they became known collectively as the 'Forces Nouvelles', under Soro's leadership.

Four years after major fighting ended in May 2003, northern Côte d'Ivoire is in impressively good shape, given the circumstances. Foreign observers compare the usually calm situation in the north favourably with the south, where large-scale riots have been fairly frequent, often targeting French citizens or the UN. Take, for example, these comments from a Western aid worker:

*It's a dream rebellion, when you compare it to Somalia or Liberia. They want to project a very good image of themselves so they have made a lot of effort ... When people ask us if we have any problem working with the FN, we say no. I think that's just because they know it's good for them, but tomorrow they could change their behaviour.*<sup>xxxv</sup>

### **Unacknowledged Atrocities**

The aid worker had good reason to qualify his praise. During and after the war, the rebels carried out massacres which they have neither apologized for nor acknowledged.

The killings of some 130 gendarmes, along with their family members and other civilians, in Bouaké in October 2002 and of around 100 captives, including dozens of civilians, following factional fighting in Korhogo in June 2004 were among the worst atrocities during Côte d'Ivoire's protracted crisis. They were by no means the only ones carried out by the rebel side,<sup>xxxvi</sup> and there is also abundant evidence of war crimes committed by the loyalists, but it is instructive to consider these incidents as responsibility appears to lie with the MPCI leadership, which now holds the reins of power throughout the northern half of Côte d'Ivoire.

One of the worst wartime atrocities was the killing of dozens of gendarmes, their children and other civilians who were arrested during the loyalists' October 2002 attempt to retake Bouaké. Amnesty International detailed the killings in a February 2003 report,<sup>xxxvii</sup> which described how rebel fighters opened fire on the gendarmes and their children in a military prison in Bouaké, and then had the bodies dumped in a mass grave. According to witness statements cited in the report, survivors of the first wave of killings were forced to bury the corpses, before being executed themselves.

The following year, a UN panel report put the number killed in this massacre at 131. The panel said it had 'a precise idea' of where the mass grave was and that those responsible for the killing were 'perfectly identifiable'.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Asked to comment in an interview with the author in 2004, Soro was dismissive:

*I put these ideas, which could tarnish the Forces Nouvelles, down to disinformation and intoxication. There was never a massacre of families of gendarmes, or children of gendarmes. There were epic combats in Bouaké, where Gbagbo's army returned right into the city centre of Bouaké. There were exchanges of gunfire. There were a lot of deaths. I don't deny that during these combats, gendarmes died, but a lot of our combatants died as well. So, it can't be said that we went specially to take gendarmes to execute them because they are gendarmes. That's incorrect.*

In June 2004, over a year after the end of major fighting between southern and northern forces, rebel factions battled each other in the cities of Bouaké and Korhogo. Within less than 24 hours, troops loyal to Soro repelled assailants who backed Ibrahim Coulibaly, a co-founder of the rebellion commonly known as 'IB'.

Later that month, French peacekeepers in Korhogo discovered mass graves which UN investigators found to contain 99 bodies, dozens of them civilians rounded up by soldiers under the command Fofié Kouakou, a pro-Soro rebel commander in Korhogo. Most of them had suffocated in a bright yellow shipping container which served as a prison, while others had been executed.<sup>xxxix</sup> The rebel leadership did not publicly acknowledge that any abuses had been committed and denied the shipping container had been used to imprison people.<sup>xi</sup> A rival commander of Fofié's was eliminated during the violence, and Fofié has since been promoted from joint commander of Korhogo to *Commandant de Zone* ('Comzone') for the region. The UN has imposed financial and travel sanctions on Fofié because of these killings, and for involvement of his troops in the 'recruitment of child soldiers, abductions, imposition of forced labour' and sexual abuse.

While the rebellion has become increasingly disciplined since the factional clashes of 2004, atrocities such as the killings of gendarmes in October 2002 and of suspected opponents of Soro in June 2004 underline how this behaviour could very easily change should peace break down.

## **How Strong is the Rebellion?**

There is a good deal of uncertainty over how many rebel fighters there are. According to the national disarmament commission and the terms of a series of disarmament deals signed in 2005 – the principles of which still hold, although deadlines have been repeatedly missed – the rebels have 42,564 troops.<sup>xi</sup> The deals state that all these troops are to hand in their weapons and be paid 499,500 *Communauté Financière Africaine* (CFA) francs (£518, US\$970) each. They could also benefit from loans for small business start-ups, or farming, reaching a maximum of 430,000 CFA (£446, US\$830).<sup>xiii</sup>

There may well be an element of paying for peace in the disarmament programme and the figure of 42,564 – a huge number compared to the loyalists' 17,050<sup>xiii</sup> military and paramilitary troops – should be taken with some scepticism. Reviewing the figures over time, one can see an inflation of troop numbers claimed by the Forces Nouvelles as disarmament has crept up the agenda, and become a more realistic possibility.

The Forces Nouvelles have every reason to exaggerate their numbers, as the more troops who are officially disarmed, the more money they receive. The Ivorian authorities may turn a blind eye to inflation of the rebels' real troop numbers, viewing the disarmament process as a pay-off for the insurgency disbanding itself. The same temptation exists among the militias on the loyalist side. The MPCJ had an estimated

800<sup>xiv</sup> fighters at the very beginning of the war, including most of the Ivorian soldiers based in the north – who had little choice but to join the revolt – and the *zinzins et bahefoués*. The MJP and MPIGO sprung up on 28 November 2002, adding an extra 2,000<sup>xiv</sup> rebel fighters, including some 1,000 Liberians who were mostly within the ranks of the MPIGO. Sympathetic northerners and foreigners joined the MPCl during the major fighting from September 2002 to May 2003.

By the end of March 2003, the UN estimated the MPCl's numbers had increased to 5,000, bringing the total number of rebel fighters to 7,000.<sup>xvi</sup>

In 2003, an Ivorian disarmament agency was created, the CNDDR – the *Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion* (CNDDR) – and the estimates it put out on rebel troop numbers were much higher than the earlier UN and independent ones. In October 2004, the CNDDR put the rebel fighting force at 26,000,<sup>xvii</sup> not including the Liberian fighters, most of whom had been pushed back into their home country by then. By July 2006, the figure recognized by the CNDDR had risen to 42,564.

While there are no readily available independent estimates, the rise in troop levels reflected in the CNDDR data does appear to be surprisingly rapid given that it occurred during a period when major fighting was over (bar the short-lived loyalist attacks of Opération Dignité of November 2004). Even if the troop levels are as high as is claimed by the rebels, the loyalists nevertheless have the advantage of being better funded and more heavily armed, as a result of an arms-purchasing drive soon after the rebellion broke out.

Although the rebels seized all of Côte d'Ivoire's military aircraft when they took Bouaké in 2002, these planes (including notably four Alpha Jets for light combat and training) are in disrepair and are unusable, according to the November 2005 report of the UN Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>xviii</sup> The loyalists, on the other hand, still have five operational military aircraft stationed in Côte d'Ivoire, which were spared by Licorne troops in November 2004, when French President Jacques Chirac ordered the 'destruction of Ivorian military aviation equipment used in violation of the ceasefire' (see section below – Peace on the Horizon?).<sup>xix</sup> The loyalist air force used its aircraft – causing mainly civilian casualties – repeatedly during fighting from September 2002 to May 2003, and again during Opération Dignité. If hostilities were to break out again, the Ivorian air force could be expected to play a big role. The UN Group of Experts reported in November 2005 that 'since November 2004, the government of Côte d'Ivoire has sought to repair, maintain and rebuild FACI [Force aérienne de la Côte d'Ivoire] as a political statement that air power provides the government with a military advantage that the FN do not have'.

Since 2002, the Ivorian army has compensated for defections to the rebellion by recruiting some 4,000 new official troops, while also helping to form and maintain numerous militias. These militias are armed with assault rifles, grenade launchers and other light weaponry, including locally-made hunting rifles. Foreign fighters, advisers, trainers and technicians, from countries including Liberia, Ukraine, Belarus,<sup>i</sup> Israel<sup>ii</sup> and Angola<sup>iii</sup> have all been brought in to help out the loyalists.

Although the Ivorian military lost up to 40% of its arms stocks<sup>iiii</sup> to the rebellion on 19 September 2002, it has bought more than enough weapons to make up for this since then.

The presidential camp's higher spending power has given it a significant edge in terms of weapons acquisition and paying for troops and militias. Known presidential loyalists are in control of cocoa institutions, the oil sector and the ports.<sup>liv</sup> These are far greater revenue generators than anything under rebel control in the north. The expert panel said that of 146 billion CFA (£151 million, \$284 million) spent on defence and security between September 2002 and December 2003 (a period covering the most serious conflict), one-fifth was provided in the form of loans or contributions from the cocoa sector.<sup>lv</sup> There are widespread concerns that funds captured by the presidency or loyalist officials – legally or illegally – go towards funding militias, although there is no proof of this.<sup>lvi</sup>

International donors, including the European Union and the World Bank, have called on Côte d'Ivoire to improve financial transparency in the cocoa and hydrocarbons sectors.<sup>lvii</sup> Numerous Ivorian press reports – including in the ruling party's flagship *Notre Voie* newspaper – say the Ivorian presidency has also had its own 'sovereignty budget' for many years, amounting to tens of billions of CFA, of which no mention is made in the official Ivorian budget.<sup>lviii</sup>

Even with the loyalists' material advantages, the outcome of a fresh conflict would by no means be predetermined. Other factors, including factional rivalry and pay disputes which pose a risk to both the rebel and loyalist sides, could come into play. Moreover, outside backers lie in the wings, and could play a more active role if their favoured side was losing or if their territory was attacked. The tacit backing of Burkina Faso increases the threat the rebels pose against southern loyalists. Burkina Faso has itself threatened Côte d'Ivoire on occasion, sometimes in couched terms and at other times explicitly.

In the first week of the conflict, Burkina Faso's Interior Minister Djibril Bassolé said in an interview that his country could go to war against Côte d'Ivoire. 'A war? I hope there isn't one,' he said. 'But if we have to react for a good cause, because we won't be able to watch indefinite brutalities against our people, then that's that.'<sup>lix</sup>

Other Burkinabé officials made similar comments during the crisis. Tension peaked in July 2004, when Burkina Faso's foreign minister Youssouff Ouedraogo publicly complained that Côte d'Ivoire had repeatedly violated its airspace. He threatened to shoot down aircraft flying over Burkinabé territory without authorization in future.<sup>lx</sup>

Ouedraogo also warned of 'serious consequences for peace and stability between the two countries and in the subregion' if the overflights continued. Burkinabé Defence Minister Yero Boly said that Burkina Faso would 'give itself the necessary means to defend the integrity of its territory and its citizens'.<sup>lxi</sup>

The delivery to Burkina Faso of two Mi-24 combat helicopters and eight anti-aircraft missile systems from Russia in 2005 appears to have been a response to the perceived threat from Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>lxii</sup> Agence France-Presse reported that the helicopters and missiles were displayed in military ceremonies at the end of 2006, marking the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Burkina Faso's independence.<sup>lxiii</sup> At the ceremony, Burkina Faso Defence Minister Yero Boly told the press his country 'would get more equipment' so that it would be 'ready to accomplish our mission of defence of our territory'. Russian press reports referred to the shipment of the Mi-24s as 'the first batch' under a contract with Russia's Rosoboroneksport, suggesting there may be more such deliveries to come.<sup>lxiv</sup>

### Box 1: The Burkina Faso Enigma

The extent to which Burkina Faso backed Côte d'Ivoire's rebels is deeply controversial. In the early days of the conflict, the Ivorian authorities made repeated accusations that at least one neighbouring country had been backing the rebels with arms, training and cash – and it was clear they were pointing the finger at Burkina Faso.

Senior Ivorian officials including the president, the prime minister and the speaker of parliament, all took care at first not to name Burkina Faso as the culprit, for fear of triggering a direct confrontation between the two nations. Yet, in the months preceding the war Defence Minister Lida Kouassi had openly accused Burkina Faso of providing training facilities to Ivorian army dissidents, and even provoked a diplomatic incident after admitting that Côte d'Ivoire had infiltrated informants into Burkina Faso to track them down.<sup>1</sup>

Kouassi was at first alone out of high-ranking politicians in dropping diplomatic discretion and naming Burkina Faso as a backer of the rebellion. The accusation came in a Radio France Internationale interview on 20 September 2002:

*RFI: And what is going on in Korhogo? We received reports of gunshots last night.*

*Lida Kouassi: In Korhogo, a column of six four-wheel drive Toyota vehicles arrived from the border with Burkina Faso and was defeated, and went back across the border.<sup>1</sup>*

In accusing a foreign power of involvement in the unrest, Kouassi and other officials intended to push France to intervene heavily on the loyalist side, even if the Ivorian authorities never made clear precisely what help they wanted. In the RFI interview, Kouassi said he had given the French 'the information we had about the situation and expressed the hope that they will look into the possibility of helping us, should the crisis last and should it be proven that foreign elements are involved'.

By the end of the month, Côte d'Ivoire began to publicly insist that France should activate a 1961 bilateral defence accord.<sup>1</sup> The precise terms of that accord remain secret. While the main body of the text is publicly available, the *accords spéciaux*, outlining in what circumstances France could intervene militarily, are not.<sup>1</sup>

French media reports have stated that the *accords spéciaux* say that France could only activate the accord if Côte d'Ivoire was attacked by a foreign power. France has repeatedly claimed that proof even of the involvement of another country is lacking.

This provision was spelled out by French Defence Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie in an interview with radio station France Inter on 22 September 2002: 'As far as our cooperation accords go, and in particular the military accord with Côte d'Ivoire, it is envisaged, as with a number of African countries, that if states are attacked by other states, France can be called on to support the legitimate government's defence action. That is not the case today.'<sup>1</sup>

Instead of activating the defence accords, France gave Côte d'Ivoire lower-level 'logistical' assistance, mostly in the form of petrol and transport vehicles for troops. Lida Kouassi, who was removed as Defence Minister shortly after war broke out, said on 28 September that French help was 'frankly a little less than we expected'.<sup>1</sup>

Faced with repeated accusations, Burkina Faso broke its silence on the matter in October 2002. Minister for Regional Cooperation Jean de Dieu Somda said that Burkina Faso had given refuge to deserters from the Ivorian army in accordance with a 'long tradition' of such hospitality. He pointed out that Laurent Gbagbo had himself gone into exile in Burkina Faso in his days as an opposition leader.<sup>1</sup>

Pointing to Burkina Faso as the main backer of the rebels may also have helped Côte d'Ivoire get important support from China and Angola. Burkina Faso is one of only seven African countries to recognize Taiwan rather than China. China has regularly supported the Ivorian loyalist position in the UN Security Council, helping to dampen France's often-hardline position and stave off further sanctions. Angola, a supplier of arms and fighters to Côte d'Ivoire at the start of the war, also has a history of bitter relations with Burkina Faso, which was accused in a March 2000 UN report of channelling arms and providing passports to the former Angolan UNITA rebels.<sup>1</sup> Gbagbo's government, by contrast, broke relations with UNITA after taking over from Gen. Robert Guéï in October 2000.

France's refusal to recognize Burkina Faso's involvement with the rebellion, and its perceived failure to do enough to help the loyalist forces, sharpened latent hostility towards the former colonial power. Speaking a month after the rebellion broke out, Gbagbo said he had given the French prior warning that 'Burkina Faso had welcomed soldiers who had broken away from the Ivorian army, and that they were planning something bad. The French said I was too alarmist ... My warnings were not taken seriously.'<sup>1</sup> Franco-Ivorian relations would only get worse, with thousands of French expatriates forced to flee by massive demonstrations against the former colonial power in January 2003 and November 2004.

Relations with Burkina Faso stretched to near breaking point before Campaoré's brokering of the Ouagadougou accord of March 2007 seemed to put them right. Ivorian national television whipped up hatred against Burkinabés, as in a news editorial on October 8 2002. The piece accused Burkina Faso of backing the rebellion because of its hostility to the 1998 land law (see section above – 'This Land is Ours').<sup>1</sup>

Burkina Faso, said journalist Max Goudé, '*sees in the Rural Land Reform Act, adopted unanimously by the National Assembly of Cote d'Ivoire, a real danger as regards the revenue that migrants from this country contribute every month to the state budget of Burkina Faso. This is the hidden but real motive behind all the attacks (weapons and media) that have been launched against Côte d'Ivoire since September 19, 2002. ...If a mere 500,000 Burkina nationals were expelled to their country, the chief of Burkina Faso, and also the chief of the war against Côte d'Ivoire and his henchmen, would understand the role of Côte d'Ivoire in the subregion. ...If a country like Gabon can expel several thousand Africans in times of peace ...why can't we in times of war throw out those who are responsible for our troubles?*

## Rebel Life

Life has been gradually returning to northern Côte d'Ivoire since wartime. At the heavily guarded entrance to Bouaké, a few miles from the buffer zone, the traveller is stopped repeatedly by junior soldiers desperately seeking money. Beyond this, however, the streets are usually free of armed men. The rank-and-file stay in barracks, where training – ranging from stretching exercises to target practice – continues. Senior rebel leaders tend to spend their days behind computers in air-conditioned offices or at meetings in the decaying RAN Hotel, next to Bouaké's still-functioning railway station.

The central market is bustling with people selling fruit and vegetables, schoolbooks and newspapers, pirate music CDs and videos of rebel leaders. Newly trained rebel traffic police are now at work around the city. Just off the main thoroughfare, the *rue de commerce*, one can even browse in a bookshop displaying the latest newspapers and magazines imported from France, before enjoying French cuisine in the restaurant next door or in a competing eatery near a heavily fortified branch of the Central Bank of West Africa.

Most of northern Côte d'Ivoire's people are poorer than before the war. Soldiers are fed in their barracks, but few get the 'soap bonus' they have been promised as a regular stipend. Thousands of cotton farmers, the mainstay of the north's economy, have gone unpaid, many of them for years. Drivers of trucks and buses must pay extortion money to rebels, just as they did to national security forces before the war. A jobs shortage helps explain the boom in popularity of betting parlours – one of the few growing businesses in the north.

Amid these economic problems, a collection of international organizations have played a central role in keeping hospitals, rubbish collection, water systems and even prisons running. *'We keep basic public services running at a minimum level. Somehow, we help them keep the population quiet,'* said a Western aid worker. He summarized the situation by recalling a comment made to him by a French peacekeeper: *'We protect the Forces Nouvelles from the south by preventing attacks from the Zone of Confidence, and you protect them from their population.'* The north was also fortunate to have many dedicated individuals who made the best out of bad times. These include the volunteer teachers who helped reopen hundreds of schools, and workers for state utility companies who carried on doing their work when their colleagues fled.

Soro has been consolidating his control over the rebellion – partly through the violent purging of opponents – and building up a nascent administration centred around his headquarters, the Secrétariat Général in Bouaké.

## Rebel Finances

An essential element of the fledgling rebel administration is its tax and customs organization called La Centrale, set up in 2004 and headed by economics professor André Ouattara. The establishment of La Centrale was key to Soro's tightening his grip on the rebellion. It followed his dismantling of a previous rebel tax organization called the Dirmob, reputed to be controlled by rival rebel figure 'IB'. While IB benefited from strong relations with the government of Burkina Faso and his reputation as the godfather

of the rebellion, he lost the respect of many rebel troops early on by staying in Burkina Faso when war was raging. Soro, the chief on the ground, was well placed to take control.

La Centrale manages three kinds of taxes and levies on commercial goods, for which Ouattara gave the following rates: a *laissez-passer* of 15,000 CFA (£16, \$29) which trucks must pay to enter rebel-held territory; an 'escort' fee of 10,000–12,000 CFA (£10–13, \$19–23), which pays for an armed guard for each truck; and a 'merchandise tax' which Ouattara says is 65,000 CFA (£68, \$126) 'on average' but can change according to weight.

One product has a specific tax imposed on it: cocoa. For the 2006–07 season, the cocoa tax in the rebel area was fixed at 'either 125 or 150' CFA (13–15 pence, 24–29 US cents) a kilogram, says Ouattara. Explaining the imprecision, he says 'they don't give me all the information'. Cocoa taxes are dealt with personally by the FN's National Secretary in Charge of Economy and Finances, Moussa Dosso, as are also petrol taxes. Dosso, who is also Commerce Minister in the national unity government, sits on La Centrale's Management Council. This Council is headed by Soro and also has as members the Forces Nouvelles military Chief-of-Staff, all ten Commandants de Zones, the FN Comptroller Général, the President of the Economic and Social Forum and the Directeur Général of La Centrale, currently Professor Ouattara.

Beyond stating its rough tax levels, there is no transparency to La Centrale's finances. The organization gives out no information on its outlays or on its revenues, which are presumably not inconsiderable, given that an estimated 20–25% of Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa (or up to 10% of world supply) is produced in the rebel-held area, along with over 10% of West Africa's globally important cotton harvest. Cocoa traders, including at least one European, have paid considerable amounts for operating licences in the Forces Nouvelles area. Much of the cocoa is exported to Burkina Faso, and then sent on to Lomé, Togo.<sup>lxv</sup>

Rebels also earn money from diamond exports, despite a December 2005 export ban imposed by the UN Security Council. A 2006 UN Panel of Experts report on the implementation of arms and diamonds embargoes on Côte d'Ivoire said diamonds were being smuggled through Ghana, and estimated rebel takings from diamonds at between \$9 million and \$23. The panel said a diamond-mining site it visited in the north appeared to be 'structured and militarily organized'.<sup>lxvi</sup> Diamond revenues do not appear on La Centrale's books, said Ouattara.

La Centrale has four main spending priorities: feeding soldiers and other rebel officials; taking care of the health of Forces Nouvelles members; looking after their essential material needs, such as uniforms; and paying soldiers a monthly 'soap bonus'. The 'soap bonus', says Ouattara, is 5,000 CFA (£5, \$10) a month.

Expenditure on the general population is notably absent among these priorities. When the Forces Nouvelles do spend money on schools and hospitals, the outlay is presented as a gift from an individual rebel figurehead on FN regional television stations and websites.

With IB now isolated, Soro has the challenge of consolidating control over the powerful ten regional commanders, called *Commandants de Zones* or *Comzones*.

Some Comzones, including Fofié and Koné Zachariah of Vavoua, personally control payments from traders and truckers – areas of economic life La Centrale plans to bring under its control. Fofié's control over a major town and key trade routes means he has

much opportunity for amassing wealth, while Zachariah controls the main rebel-held cocoa-producing areas and diamond mines.

La Centrale pays 'sovereignty bonuses' of undisclosed amounts to the Comzones, André Ouattara says. But La Centrale does not disclose how much these bonuses come to: the amount is different for each region, and this could cause squabbles between commanders.

In November 2006, the Forces Nouvelles announced at the end of a closed-door meeting that it would reform its finances and its army.<sup>lxvii</sup> Although changes to La Centrale did not form part of the publicly announced resolutions, Ouattara says the FN leadership agreed that La Centrale would become '*the only structure which will have power over the economic and social life of the population*'. Each section of the Forces Nouvelles would be given its own budget, using money collected by La Centrale, he said. New senior tax officials, called *régisseurs*, would be hired for each of the ten rebel zones, working alongside regional treasurers, accountants and military finance officials called *intendants*. At the end of 2006, according to Ouattara, La Centrale only had offices functioning effectively in five of the ten rebel zones, but it would now establish its authority throughout the north.

### **Education: 'The only war that has been won'**

Schoolteacher Koffi Toussaint gives a lively Spanish lesson at the Djibo Sounkalo school in Bouaké, writing verbs on an old blackboard in a classroom patched with sunlight. He is on crutches after damaging a leg during a football match a few months ago, but his sense of humour is still intact. He jokes with the children: 'Those of you who are not talking, what are you doing? You must be from the UN, come to see if the classes are running well.' Everyone, including Koffi himself, laughs.

It is a normal scene in a normal school, and one can very easily forget that Djibo Sounkalo school is in a rebel-held city which has been the scene of violent clashes several times over the past five years. There are several such schools in the rebel-held north, taking care of children who would otherwise have been obliged to earn money for struggling parents or tempted to join the rebellion. '*The only war that has been won here is the war for our schools,*' says Namory Dahoué, a colleague of Toussaint.

The difficulties in keeping the school going during the crisis have been enormous. Without a budget from the state, struggling parents had to chip in together to keep the school running and pay stipends to 20 volunteer teachers. Some of the 4,000 children now here had to be dragged away from the ranks of the rebel army and readapt to peaceful life at school. Despite much loyalist opposition, officially recognized exams have been held every year since war broke out in this school and others in rebel territory.

One of the pupils here, Silué, was 17 at the time war broke out and planning on resitting exams he had failed earlier in the year. Instead, rebel fighters persuaded him and some friends 'to take up arms as good citizens'. He did not see combat against loyalist troops, but says he was sent to intervene in factional fighting between rebels, or to calm drunken disputes that had degenerated into gunfights. Silué is now 22, with dreams of getting a *baccalauréat* and becoming a doctor.

For fees totalling 5,600 CFA a year (£6, \$11), the children here are educated according to the national curriculum, by volunteers and by state teachers who ignored government calls to flee south at the start of the war. The state teachers still receive salaries, but some have seen their pay suspended without warning for months at a time, something they put down to political game-playing. *'This is a crisis distinct from all other crises...Everywhere where you see war, school never stays open. But we have continued to function,'* says Toussaint. *'One of the fundamental reasons that we did this was to take children away from the frontline – because there were some who, having nothing to do, knew that their only hope was in war. We were going to start having child soldiers, and we were also starting to see young girls prostitute themselves.'*

Keeping the school going was an achievement, but the challenges did not stop there. Children encouraged to return to their studies had developed violent behaviour as a result of their time as rebel fighters. Discipline was an issue as never before. *'Even here in this school, among the pupils that you have just seen, there are some that have taken part in the war. That's why we here try to treat them like gods. You mustn't be brutal or frustrate them.'* Toussaint gives an example of what can go wrong: *'Last year there was one who shot a pupil in the foot.'* The incident, he said, was provoked by a dispute during a school football tournament. *'We have had to be social workers as well as teachers. We have to make them understand that success does not come through arms ...They should try to succeed, so they can find a place in the sun, as they say. Progressively, they understand and have left their arms behind.'*

The Forces Nouvelles have helped keep arms away from school, by punishing any pupil found with a weapon. The schoolboy who shot a fellow pupil in the foot was sent away to a rebel camp. *'They gave him a kicking,'* says teacher Lacina Diabaté, so that he could understand *'weapons don't belong in school. He came back and pulled himself together.'*

In early 2003, teachers in the north – volunteers and civil servants – formed a group called Ecole Pour Tous, which played a major role in reopening schools and persuading parents to return their children to the education system. Ecole Pour Tous even managed to arrange the holding of *baccalauréat* and other nationally recognized exams in 2003. Exams were held again in 2004 and 2005, organized by a new body, the Comité de Sauvetage, which was headed by Ecole Pour Tous but also included other representatives from society and the national government.

Attendance at primary and secondary schools has risen to slightly over half of the pre-war level of 700,000, from 231,727 in the first year of war to 384,116 in the 2005–06 academic year, according to Ecole Pour Tous. As of end-2006, around 20% of schools remained shut, however.<sup>lxviii</sup>

Street children were prevalent in Bouaké and other cities before the war, making a living selling cheap goods such as chewing gum and tissues or doing odd jobs such as shoe-shining. But their numbers have increased since the outbreak of hostilities. *'Since the beginning of the crisis,'* says Sekou Touré, the President of Ecole Pour Tous, *'everybody has had to make his or her contribution to the household.'* Even with the best intentions, some parents cannot afford their required contribution to the stipend for voluntary teachers, which comes to under 500 CFA (52 pence, 97 US cents) a month.

In September 2005, the Forces Nouvelles formed a 30-member Committee for Schools and Exams (the *Comité Ecoles et Examens*, generally known as C2E). This took over organizing exams, in liaison with the education ministry in Abidjan.

Just over 4,000 children in the rebel-held area sat the 2006 baccalauréat, with a pass rate of just over 30%, compared with just over 40% in the south. The pass rate for the Brevet d'Etudes de Premier Cycle (BEPC), taken by children aged 13 and above, was higher in the north (42.4%) than in the south (35.75%). Col. Major Bamba Sinima, the head of the C2E, is proud of this, saying *'it is a competition.'*

As with La Centrale, Sinima says the end-2006 FN meeting decided to strengthen the C2E. It would be renamed the National Secretariat for Education in the near future and have full-time, paid staff, becoming a kind of rebel ministry. Asked whether the consolidation of the rebel administration risked making an eventual reunification of the country problematic, Sinima said that *'The day they say the crisis is over, all these structures will be automatically abolished.'*

### **Desperate Farmers**

Soro Siele, dressed in a dirty white shirt, a straw cone hat and black buckle-up sandals, is short of cash. And for good reason: he has not been paid for his cotton crop in four years. The startling dysfunctionality in the cotton sector means that he does not know when, or if, he will receive the money owed him. Rebel commanders' admonishments of cotton firms who owe billions of CFA to farmers have had little effect. When the system was functioning properly, before market liberalization in 1998, farmers were typically paid two or three weeks after delivery. But now industry problems – some directly related to the war, some not – have financially ruined thousands of cotton growers.

Northern Côte d'Ivoire has historically been poorer than the south. The problems in the cotton industry are widening the wealth gap. Siele stopped to discuss his problems, while travelling on a rickety bike through the dusty dirt roads of his cotton-growing village near Korhogo. *'It's four years now that I have not been paid at all, and now we are about to go into the fifth year...Each time we have hope, but we are always disappointed in that hope.'* Siele's cow, which he used to plough his field, died recently because he could not afford to look after it. He laments that he cannot even afford to repair his bike saddle, and remembers days of relative wealth, when he built a house out of concrete blocks and drove around on a moped. Now Siele is relying on income from his fields of corn and rice, near his village of Seridjakaha. That earns him around 55,000 CFA a year (£57, \$107). Back in the 1990s, cotton could earn him 150,000 CFA (£157, \$291) in a good season.

Côte d'Ivoire's cotton sector started unravelling after the 1999 privatization of most of its ginning factories. Under donor pressure, the national cotton company Compagnie Ivoirienne de Développement des Textiles (CIDT) was split up and most of it sold off. The confused marketing system which emerged, coupled with mismanagement and possibly corruption within the new ginning firms, led to industry breakdown.

The debts owing to farmers are considerable: 10.7 billion CFA (£11 million, \$20.8 million) in all, according to the government. Farmers give higher figures, and say they are owed 15 billion CFA (£15.5 million, \$29.2 million) by one company alone: La compagnie cotonnière de la Côte d'Ivoire (LCCI), which dominated cotton-buying in the northeast since liberalization and has now gone into liquidation.<sup>lxix</sup>

The failure of ginners to pay up for crops they have taken delivery of and sold on has resulted in farmers increasingly turning to freelance, unlicensed buyers who smuggle

cotton to Mali and Burkina Faso. These buyers, unlike the ginners, pay cash up front, even if the prices they offer are still lower than the official minimum price of 145 CFA (15 pence, 28 US cents) a kilogram.

Regulation of the cotton sector is officially the responsibility of the national unity government and industry bodies based in Abidjan, but rebel leaders have intervened overtly on several occasions to try to resolve the crisis themselves. After a public meeting on the cotton sector towards the end of 2006, Soro announced a 2 January deadline for cotton ginners to pay 25% of their debts to farmers. He also announced other measures, including unspecified sanctions against companies who breached national industry rules, by purchasing cotton produced with pesticide or fertilizer supplied by a competitor. These decisions were not adhered to by the ginners, and proved as ineffective as previous manoeuvres. In January 2005, just two months after loyalists launched a series of ceasefire-breaching bombing raids on the north, Chérif Ousmane temporarily banned the state-owned Nouvelle CIDT from operating, saying: 'It's partly with the money from this company that Gbagbo buys arms to bomb us.'<sup>lxx</sup>

In September of the same year, Korhogo Comzone Fofié banned LCCI's operations, insisting that it had to pay farmers 3 billion CFA (£2.9 billion, \$5.8 million).<sup>lxxi</sup> LCCI, on the verge of bankruptcy then, did not pay up. Nouvelle CIDT soon resumed cotton-buying operations: the risk of disaster for farmers would have been even greater if it stopped operations during the peak November–December harvest period.

In January 2007, the national government's Finance Minister-Delegate, Charles Diby Koffi, outlined a plan to pay farmers the arrears owed them. He said the debts would be paid using 3.6 billion CFA (£3.7 million, \$7 million) of government money, with the rest coming from European Union grants and the sale of cotton stocks belonging to LCCI.<sup>lxxii</sup>

The financing problems, smuggling and industry confusion have not only hit farmers' pockets, but have also prevented the proper distribution of pesticides and fertilizers, causing a fall in production. Current forecasts put 2006–07 cotton fibre output at 98,000 metric tons, compared to the previous harvest of 115,000 tonnes.<sup>lxxiii</sup> The fall in output has been dramatic: the 2001–02 harvest, prior to the outbreak of war, was around 170,000 tonnes.<sup>lxxiv</sup> Falls in the minimum farmgate price for cotton – 145 CFA (15 pence, 28 US cents) a kilogram for the current season, compared to 190 CFA/kg (20 pence, 37 US cents) in 2001–02 – are compounding farmers' misery. Many farmers are now abandoning cotton and turning towards other crops such as mangoes and cashew.

## **Police and Dozos**

The Forces Nouvelles rely on a mixture of their own police force and hunter-warriors with reputed mystical powers to fight crime. The only courts that have been functioning are traditional ones, at the village level, since the entire justice system decamped with the outbreak of war. Prisons, opened up by rebels and emptied of hundreds of their inmates when fighting began, have since been put back into service but, in the absence of any sentencing system, prisoners are simply kept as long as the jailers feel is necessary. There is a widespread fear of road banditry in the north. Bouaké and Korhogo are deserted at night, with major roads barricaded as soldiers or Dozos stand guard.

One of the main resolutions of the November 2006 Forces Nouvelles forum was to create a Direction Générale de la Police et de la Gendarmerie, led by senior rebel figure Tuo Fozié – one of the original group of exiles in Burkina. In fact, Fozié had this title for several months before the official announcement, and there were already 3,500 police and gendarmes in operation. But this very formal announcement of the unit's creation – 'décision n° 2006-27/sg du 4 décembre 2006' – served nevertheless as a public message that this would be a permanent institution, at least until the country is reunified.

The announcement also clarified the hierarchy into which some 600 police and gendarmes trained by the UN were to fit. These security forces, all of whom must have the BEPC school certificate or above, were trained in Bouaké by UN police in accordance with the Pretoria peace agreement of April 2005. They were initially intended to begin patrols only during the final stages of disarmament, but as delays were proving lengthy, they were officially deployed in December 2006.

Although agreed in a peace deal, the training of hundreds of new police was viewed with some mistrust by the loyalist camp, says Col. Ouattara Seydou, the FN's Deputy Director General of Police and Gendarmerie. The UN refers to the police in its statements as 'security auxiliaries', the unusual terminology perhaps reflecting some unease over how their role in the training may be construed by loyalists who regularly feature the UN in wild conspiracy theories. While UN officials say the training did not involve the use of weapons, this is contradicted by Seydou, who says they were taught how to dismantle and reassemble firearms, even if no shooting exercises were conducted.

The deployment of police by the Forces Nouvelles means it is now easier to keep soldiers, who are no longer needed for routine security tasks, in their barracks. Furthermore, because only the head of each company carries a firearm, the risks of abuses are lower than they would be with the military.

Difficulties could arise, however. The question of pay – the trigger for many armed revolts in recent Ivorian history – is one potentially thorny issue. Seydou says that the police are to be paid a salary out of the national government's budget. In principle this would help prevent bribe-seeking, but there is a risk it could stoke jealousy among FN soldiers not even receiving their 'soap bonus'.

The police should also be wary of replicating the behaviour of their southern counterparts, who spend a disproportionate amount of their time randomly checking identity papers in procedures unconnected with any criminal activity, and very often aimed at seeking extortion opportunities. A journalist from Agence France-Presse recently accompanied FN police on one of their first patrols in Bouaké, and random identity checks appeared to be one of their main occupations.<sup>lxv</sup>

When night falls in Korhogo, the city is under the control of the Dozo brotherhood and the official security forces are nowhere to be seen. Dozos guard every junction, where they sit around bonfires, dressed in their traditional garb of patterned rough brown cloth, sometimes generations old and, according to custom, never washed. The Dozos wear amulets and other charms known as *gris-gris*, which are believed to confer special powers on them, such as invulnerability to bullets, invisibility and the ability to considerably reduce or increase one's size. Korhogo's police chief asked the Dozos last year to start nightly patrols, to allay fears of gun crime. The Dozos are paid by contributions from households, both in Korhogo and surrounding villages. As well as

operating checkpoints at night, teams of three or four Dozos each also scour the outskirts of town, looking out for armed bandits in alleyways and amid patches of forest.

The Dozos have worked in collaboration with the rebels since their days together in exile in Burkina Faso. Karamoko Cissé, the main Dozo chief in Korhogo, says he and a handful of other Dozos fled Côte d'Ivoire in 2000, where they joined the people who would lead the rebellion. He would not name the country of exile, although it was presumably Burkina Faso. Cissé, now 70, is often consulted by rebel leaders and will prepare concoctions for them which, when applied to the skin, confer mystical protection.

The Dozos have had some success in their new policing role. According to a report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Dozos managed to apprehend at least two criminal gangs in January this year, including one which made a business out of stripping bare houses abandoned by the war.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

At the same time, the Dozos have been accused in human rights reports of torturing suspected criminals and have also been drawn into bloody conflicts between indigenous and settler groups in the area formerly known as the Zone of Confidence. An Amnesty International report says that a Dozo was among the perpetrators of the 2002 massacre of gendarmes.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

Reports of Dozo fighters using Kalashnikov weapons in combat in the west are a reminder of the risks inherent in giving them more power, without making them accountable to any clear command structure. The history of Sierra Leone's civil war provides a nightmare scenario, where a similar group to the Dozos – the Kamajors – became a major, heavily armed power in the land and, although often acting to protect communities and the state, committed many atrocities.

Prisoners, whether captured by Dozos or rebel security forces, are mostly kept in one of the six main jails in northern Côte d'Ivoire, which altogether held under 300 prisoners when the last count was made between late 2005 and early 2006.<sup>lxxviii</sup> Senior rebel leaders also operate their own small, secret detention centres, about which next to nothing is known, according to a UN observer. Bouaké's main prison is dirty and cramped, with prisoners packed into two dormitories, sleeping on thin mats spread out on a concrete floor. They have no idea for how long they will be detained.<sup>lxxix</sup>

However, owing to the provision of food and medicine by the Red Cross and other charitable organizations, conditions are far better than before the war. Bouaké's prison had a pre-war death rate of 60 a year. Since the prison reopened in 2004, the death rate has been two a year.<sup>lxxx</sup> A UN report warns that international aid to the prison could stop at any time, and points out that the Forces Nouvelles 'are not at all concerned about the living conditions of prisoners and give no financial or material help to the prison'.<sup>lxxxi</sup> The same report nevertheless praises the FN for encouraging people to resolve disputes between themselves, helping to keep prison populations down. It notes the 'near-absence' of deaths in prisons under FN control, compared to a high death rate due to malnutrition in loyalist-zone jails.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Col. Ouattara Seydou said there were rough guidelines on periods of detention. 'For small crimes, like petty theft, we keep people for a month and then free them,' he said, before correcting the detention period to 'a month or two'. 'Now, for murders and rape we have to keep the person a bit longer, for the time it takes residents to feel safe again.' One of the prisoners in Bouaké's jail said freedom was simply dependent on a bribe of 3,000 CFA (£2.79, \$5.83), paid to a senior police official.

## Peace on the Horizon?

On 4 March 2007, President Laurent Gbagbo and rebel leader Guillaume Soro put their signatures to a new peace accord, outlining innovative compromises aimed at reuniting the country and ending deadlock over key issues, including disarmament and identification. The accord, signed in the Burkina Faso capital Ouagadougou and brokered by Burkinabé President Blaise Compaoré, has been greeted with a great deal of optimism. Yet, there are multiple worries. Implementation of disarmament and identification programmes is dragging far beyond the original deadlines, raising the question of whether Soro will end up as yet another lame duck Prime Minister. Opposition to the agreement also risks causing new unrest, as was evidenced by a 29 June assassination attempt on Soro.

The compromise over the contentious issue of identification is one reason for hope. Until now, progress on identification has been proceeding at a snail's pace. Charles Konan Banny, the Prime Minister whom Soro succeeded, championed ad hoc identification tribunals called '*audiences foraines*' as the solution. The tribunals started work in August 2006, with the aim of resolving identification disputes and issuing nationality certificates, but were soon shut down by rioting pro-Gbagbo militants. Banny then tightened the rules, restricting the tribunals to issuing replacement birth certificates (*jugements supplétifs*) to Ivorians who needed them.

A few of the tribunals started running again in January, but the restrictions reduced them to the proportions of small cogs in a vast, Kafkaesque machine. Under the riot-induced change in the rules, an Ivorian who succeeded in getting a replacement birth certificate would then have to go through more uncertain procedures to apply for a nationality certificate, then for an ID card. The people dealing with these applications would be the same officials who caused difficulties for northerners applying for papers before the war.

Under the Ouagadougou accord, anyone on the electoral register has the right to a national ID card. And to get on the electoral register, all you need is a birth certificate or a replacement birth certificate. If – and it is a big if – there is follow-through, the agreement could go a long way towards solving the identification dispute. Making out replacement birth certificates remains the job of the *audiences foraines*, and it is still to be seen whether they can fulfil their promise. The identification tribunals were due to start up by 23 April under the Ouagadougou accord, but had yet to begin work by the time this report was published.

As for another major hurdle, disarmament, it is not clear whether the developments following the signing of the Ouagadougou accord signify real progress.

As agreed in the accord, on 16 March Gbagbo signed a decree creating a *Centre de Commandement Intégré* (CCI), grouping together rebel and loyalist army chiefs. This new joint command, headquartered in Yamoussoukro, has the task of unifying the two armies into a new, restructured force covering the whole of the country. It would also deal with the disarmament process ('under the supervision of the impartial forces'), put in place the mixed brigades and 'coordinate measures aiming to guarantee the protection and free movement of people and goods throughout the national territory', commonly understood to mean the CCI has authority over security in the buffer zone.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

More recently, a *Programme nationale de réinsertion et de réhabilitation communautaire* (PNRRC) was created under the control of the Prime Minister, to deal with returning former fighters to normal life. The head of the PNRRC, Daniel Ouattara, says he expects to take charge of 6,000 former Forces Nouvelles fighters before the year's end, putting them through training courses, mainly in agricultural and related work.

In a press conference, Generals Soumaïla Bakayoko and Philippe Mangou – the Chiefs-of-Staff of the rebel and loyalist forces respectively – made it clear that the CCI was only a halfway house to the much-awaited *Etat-Major Intégré*. Until disarmament has taken place, both sides maintain their own armies with their own *Etats-Majors*, which will simply coexist with the CCI. The CCI reports directly to the rebel and loyalist Chiefs-of-Staff.

Serious problems dog the CCI, notably the question of military ranks. Since the outbreak of war, the rebel movement raised the ranks of a great many of its ex-FANCI soldiers and attributed ranks to new fighters. Several loyalist officials say the 'Soro ranks' cannot be carried over into a new, unified army or into the CCI.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Dispute over the question has – together with pay demands – contributed to malaise in the loyalist army, which Gbagbo and FANCI Chief-of-Staff Philippe Mangou have tried to dampen in large meetings with rank-and-file soldiers.

Another potential area of disagreement on the path towards fusing the rebel and loyalist armies is timing. The peace accord presents a confused timetable for disarmament and identification, according to which:

- two weeks after the formation of the new government - that is, by 23 April 2007 – *regroupement* would begin (the grouping of rebel and loyalist forces in 17 sites, and the storing of their arms under peacekeepers' supervision);
- at the same time as *regroupement*, the *audiences foraines* would be launched.

Both *regroupement* and the *audiences foraines* would last three months.

In this schedule no precise timing is given for the handing out of ID and electoral cards. It simply says the issuing of these will 'begin after the official acceptance of the final electoral list', and no date is given for the latter. It is thus unclear which comes first: disarmament or the distribution of identification and voting documents. It should be remembered that the *audiences foraines* simply issue replacement birth certificates: important documents for those who need them, but only a step along the way to being registered as a voter or getting the crucial national identity cards.

Given the bitterness raised over the identification issue, it is questionable whether the rebels would put their weapons under lock and key if the identification process were not completed beforehand. As it is, neither *regroupement* nor the identification tribunals had started by the time this report was completed.

There seem to be other potential sticking points lurking in the background. The Ouagadougou accord says disarmament will be carried out according to a deal already struck between rebels and loyalists on the issue back in May 2005, in Yamoussoukro. That accord said that 42,564 rebels would be disarmed – the estimated total, not including the 600 UN-trained police – and 5,500 Ivorian army soldiers, in addition to loyalist militias. It is hard to see the Forces Nouvelles disarming completely, while an estimated 11,550 loyalist forces remain armed.<sup>lxxxv</sup> Surprise loyalist bombing raids on the north in November 2004, carried out while the country was supposed to be in the

middle of a peace process, have not been forgotten.

Another very controversial matter is the fate of the former Zone of Confidence. Prior to the Ouagadougou agreement, the loyalist militants known as Young Patriots repeated calls for the dismantling of the buffer zone in their daily soapbox rallies. The strategy was to leave rhetoric against the rebels to one side and blame the entire war on the 'impartial forces' (i.e. the peacekeepers), particularly France and Chirac personally. The most prominent Young Patriot leader, Charles Blé Goudé, led a 'Caravan of Peace' tour, demanding the French and UN forces leave and the disappearance of the buffer zone, which he dubs the *Zone de Méfiance* ('Zone of Mistrust').

Young Patriots accuse France of plotting to maintain economic dominance over Côte d'Ivoire. Their fiery rhetoric frequently spills over into violence. Two Young Patriot leaders – Blé Goudé and fellow firebrand Eugène Djué – are among the three Ivorians to have financial and travel sanctions imposed on them by the UN in February 2006 for human rights abuses.

The Ouagadougou accord stipulated that the Zone of Confidence should be dismantled one week after the forming of a new government, and replaced by an imaginary 'green line' dotted with 17 peacekeepers' 'observation posts'.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> The number of posts would be reduced every two months from then on, and eventually the peacekeepers' bases in the buffer zone would disappear entirely. On September 14, UN troops completed their gradual redeployment to the green line. The UN plans to eventually redeploy these forces throughout the country, on missions including providing security for the identification and disarmament processes.

Although the Ouagadougou accord says nothing of the other peacekeeping bases in the north and south, senior French politicians have now raised the possibility of beginning a withdrawal of France's entire Licorne force.

Politically, this is an attractive idea for France. Licorne was unpopular from the beginning of the crisis with both sides, but it was unequivocally seen as an enemy by the Gbagbo camp in November 2004. During the bombing raids of *Opération Dignité*, loyalist-piloted Sukhoi warplanes bombed a French army camp and killed nine soldiers. France responded by destroying most of the Ivorian air force, provoking still more violence in which over 8,000 French citizens were forced to flee and Licorne soldiers opened fire on unarmed demonstrators.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

During these incidents, militiamen surrounded a Licorne base in the town of Duékoué, forcing the French army to abandon its base rather than enter into confrontation. It is easy to understand why France would jump at the opportunity presented by the Ouagadougou accord to leave with the agreement of both sides. But western Côte d'Ivoire could flare up if peacekeepers leave. In the town of Guiglo, militia leader Mao Denis Glofiéï – officially the third deputy to the mayor – has unfettered authority, as does his collaborator further to the west in Toulepleu, Deputy Military Prefect Lieutenant Oulaï Delafosse. They command thousands of militiamen, a great many of them based in camps near the Liberian border, like one the author visited in Zéaglo village.

The ethnic Guéré militia there was armed with rocket-propelled grenade launchers and Kalashnikovs. Some of the fighters were wearing Ivorian military uniforms and were indistinguishable from regular soldiers; others were draped in fetishes which they say were taken from rebels they had killed in battle. Glofiéï, with whom the author spoke before the Ouagadougou accord was signed, said he wanted peace but insisted that his

fighters must be represented in any new government.

During the war, many thousands of Guérés and immigrant farmers were forced off their farmland in tit-for-tat violence. Even since the end of major conflict in May 2003, the largest militia in the west, the Front pour la Libération du Grand Ouest (FLGO), has clashed repeatedly with immigrant farming groups and Dozos. FLGO fighters in Zéaglo said they wanted an end to the Zone of Confidence, and hoped that this would allow them to chase the rebels from what they regard as their ancestral lands. Immigrant farmers in the area, on the other hand, were worried by the prospect of peacekeepers withdrawing from the buffer zone.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

On 19 May 2007, Gbagbo presided over a militia disarmament ceremony, at which 1,027 weapons – assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and hunting guns<sup>lxxxix</sup> – were handed over by western militias to ONUCI. Glofié backed down from demanding a place in government and spoke the language of peace. ‘Since the signature of the Ouagadougou accord, we realize that the reason for which we took up arms no longer exists,’ he said in a speech.<sup>xc</sup>

The disarmament ceremony may well have created new problems. Under its formative decree, the joint command centre should have been running the disarmament process, but instead it was spearheaded by Gbagbo, who is a close ally of the militias. It is clear the Forces Nouvelles doubt whether the operation was truly successful in taking away all the weapons held by western militia groups – estimated to be over 5,000-strong.<sup>xc</sup> If the rebels do not accept the militia disarmament, then it becomes more questionable whether they will lay down their own weapons. The CCI is drawing up plans for a new militia disarmament drive. As long as they remain armed, the militias remain wild cards in the Ivorian pack, with the potential to cause great disruption to the peace process, particularly in the former Zone of Confidence.

Another significant dispute has erupted within the militia groups themselves over allegations that their chiefs have run off with large portions of 280 million CFA francs (£300,000, \$545,000) distributed by Gbagbo’s security adviser Bertin Kadet to ‘pay for transport for the young people [to the militia disarmament ceremony] and to encourage them to enlist in the peace process’.<sup>xcii</sup>

Beyond the myriad issues relating to identification, disarmament and other related measures, there remains the final step in the Ouagadougou accord’s to-do list: elections. Given a history of electoral malpractice, a fairly organized and popularly accepted presidential election would be a big challenge. Opposition parties have been understandably worried by the UN’s somewhat puzzling decision to terminate the post of High Representative for the Elections, most recently held by Gerard Stoudmann. Now, the UN Special Representative to the Secretary General – a position currently held in an interim capacity by Abou Moussa of Chad – has responsibility for overseeing the polls. UN Security Council Resolution of 16 July 2007 instructs the Special Representative to certify ‘all stages of the electoral process’ and provides him with a support team for this. The main danger with this decision is that the UN’s election monitoring could become more subject to political pressure, given that it is no longer independent of the wider ONUCI machine, which is wary of adopting a critical line towards the authorities. There seems to be a greater risk that the UN could ignore polling irregularities, in order to avoid wider problems for ONUCI, to prove that its mission has been completed successfully and to allow the peacekeepers to go home.

The attempt on Soro’s life in June places another question mark over the country’s

future. The attack saw three rockets fired at a plane bringing Soro back from Abidjan, shortly after it touched down in Bouaké. While four of his aides were killed, the Prime Minister emerged unscathed.

A national enquiry into the attack has been launched by Government Commissioner Ange Kessi but, probably because of the latter's perceived bias towards the presidency, Soro has called on the UN to organize an international enquiry.<sup>xciii</sup> Soro intriguingly said in early July: 'I know those who carried out the assassination attempt, but I will say nothing for the moment.'<sup>xciv</sup> Since then, no official statements have been made regarding who was responsible, but it appears that Ibrahim Coulibaly is high on the list of suspects. The first indication of this was in a UN daily report in July, where it was reported that the Forces Nouvelles in Man was blaming 'a group of dissident Forces Nouvelles soldiers' for the attack.<sup>xcv</sup> An unknown number of arrests have been made and at least one of those detained is accused of being a follower of 'IB', according to concordant reports.<sup>xcvi</sup> It is entirely possible that the results of investigations could end up being buried, but were presidency or FPI officials to be implicated in the attack, trust between the rebels and loyalists would obviously be undermined.

On a more encouraging note, steps have been taken to reunify the country, even prior to the Ouagadougou accord. In February, the national pensions office reopened in Bouaké, meaning retired civil servants no longer need to travel to Abidjan to collect their pensions. Other major banks have opened discussions on returning, while talks are in an early stage on reopening the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), which was broken into by gunmen and robbed of 16 billion CFA (£17 million, \$31 million) in September 2003. The robbery was, according to UN experts and press reports at the time, the work of rebel soldiers. Indeed, the break-in sparked three days of shoot-outs between rebels and scrambling for loot, leading to 25 deaths and dealing a severe blow to the MPCI's carefully cultivated reputation for discipline. Calm only returned to Bouaké when the rebels called in French and ECOWAS troops. Given the controversy over this and the robbery of another BCEAO branch in Man, the reopening of any major privately-owned banks would mark a great improvement in the rebellion's reputation, and show that the Forces Nouvelles are gradually being accepted as valid business partners.

The essential first steps to lasting peace in Côte d'Ivoire are a successful identification programme, disarmament and elections. The opposed agendas of the two sides, and a history of failed accords, mean that only practical achievements on the ground could convince Ivorians peace has really arrived. Soon after signing the accord, Soro told *Le Monde* newspaper that Gbagbo's 'sudden conversion' to peacemaker was 'difficult to digest'. Soro said, as Prime Minister, he would have to 'dodge' and 'dribble' Gbagbo.<sup>xcvii</sup> Such comments are rather worrying, but Soro's talk has become more conciliatory since the publication of his book *Why I Became a Rebel* in 2005.<sup>xcviii</sup> There, he said, the future of Côte d'Ivoire 'would surely be built without Mr Laurent Gbagbo'. Now, the Gbagbo-Soro compact is the best chance the country has of peace.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Copy of speech of 21/9/02 obtained by the author. See Reuters story summarizing the speech: 'Ivory Coast leader promises total war on rebels' by Matthew Tostevin.

<sup>ii</sup> In a report released on 24/1/03, the United Nations mission to Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) gave a death toll from the Ivorian civil war of 'between 1,000 and 2,000'. The report was completed on 20/12/03, after which hundreds more were killed in fighting in the west, as well as during episodes including the March 2004 crackdown on opposition protests in Abidjan, rebel factional violence in June 2004 and the loyalist Opération Dignité bombing raids on the north in November 2004. See UN document S/2003/90, 'Report of an Urgent Human Rights Mission to Côte d'Ivoire' (24/1/03), para 49: ([http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/S.2003.90.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/S.2003.90.En?Opendocument)).

<sup>iii</sup> A March 2006 report by Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry for Social Security and the Handicapped estimated that 709,377 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) were living in five southern Ivorian regions, including Abidjan and the capital Yamoussoukro. Subtracting from this figure the number of children born after the conflict, the report comes to an estimate of 658,340 people displaced to or within these districts during the war (see 'Enquête sur les personnes déplacées internes dans cinq départements de la Côte d'Ivoire', Ministère de la solidarité, de la sécurité sociale et des handicapés March 2006, at [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/\(httpDocuments\)/149F32C64848DBE4C1257173004740DF/\\$file/ENSEA+IDP+study+Mar06.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/(httpDocuments)/149F32C64848DBE4C1257173004740DF/$file/ENSEA+IDP+study+Mar06.pdf)). In February 2003, Carolyn McAskie – then Special Envoy to the UN Secretary-General on the Ivorian crisis – put the number of displaced within Côte d'Ivoire at 600,000, estimating that a further 250,000 at least had fled abroad (see 'UN concerned over millions behind I. Coast's ceasefire line', 12/2/03, Agence France-Presse). In April 2003, UN agencies gave a figure of 750,000 internally displaced and 400,000 refugees in Liberia, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali and Ghana – a total of 1.15 million forced from their homes in all (see 'UN, Red Cross seek almost 88m dollars in aid for west Africa [Corrected 04/30/03]', AFP, 30/4/03).

<sup>iv</sup> The Ouagadougou accord is posted on the ONUCI website (viewed 10/5/07):

<http://www.onuci.org/archives/communiqués/DossierOuaga.html>.

<sup>v</sup> See Daniel Balint-Kurti. 'Ivory Coast Rebel Leader May Launch Secession', 30/4/04. Soro is quoted telling a crowd of hundreds earlier in the month that 'Everyone should know that faced with the threat of a return to civil war, which could lead to the massacre of millions, we prefer secession.' He later dismissed the idea of forming a separate state (see 'Tournée du "M7" à Korhogo et à Bouaké', *Le Patriote*, 30/4/04: 'Those who accuse us of wanting secession are mistaken. In declaring secession, we would lose half the country, while for us it is a matter of having all the power.')

<sup>vi</sup> Arnaud La Grange, 'Côte d'Ivoire: la France réduit ses troupes', *Le Figaro*, 23/3/07. The article quotes Brigitte Girardin on troop withdrawal: 'From now, we can envisage a withdrawal of the international community, progressively. I believe that now the conditions are met so that Ivorians can manage to overcome their difficulties by themselves.'

<sup>vii</sup> On the rise in crime see 'Ivory Coast: Increasing violent attacks against civilians in the former Zone of Confidence', Médecins Sans Frontières, 26/4/07 (<http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/countries>). The ONUCI daily briefs – which can be consulted at <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc104?OpenForm&rc=1&cc=civ> – give regular accounts of brutal gun crime and ethnic killings in the buffer zone. The UN Daily Brief of 12/4/07

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reports an ethnic conflict in the village of Brobo, noting that 'traditional mechanisms for resolving conflicts are no longer respected by young people in the area'. In its briefings of 3/5/07 and 4/5/07, ONUCI reports clashes in Fengolo (which it describes as being in 'the former Zone of Confidence') on 30/4/07, when three men with ethnic northern names had their throats slit. There are other examples of such violence in and around the Zone of Confidence, since the Ouagadougou accord was signed.

ONUCI has been far from clear on how it sees the security situation in the Zone of Confidence. ONUCI Information Director Margherita Amodéo told journalists at a press briefing on 10/5/07 that 'Contrary to information being circulated for some weeks by certain media houses ... there was no deterioration of security in the country.' (Compte-rendu du point de presse hebdomadaire de l'ONUCI – 10 mai 2007). However, the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in its report covering 19/3/07–1/4/07 that there was a rise in crime all the way along the important Man to Duékoué road, including in the town of Bangolo. There is a risk that ONUCI could choose to play down problems which might cast doubt on the peace process.

<sup>viii</sup> See, for example, ONUCI Daily Brief 4/5/07, which reports loyalist troops extorting money from villagers immediately after starting up patrols in the buffer zone village of Zéalé. The extortion sparked a local street protest.

<sup>ix</sup> For a discussion of Ivorian growth and the onset of stagnation in the 1980s see Kouadio Benié Marcel, 'Analyse de la croissance économique de la Côte d'Ivoire' (undated). Global Development Network: [http://www.gdnet.org/pdf/draft\\_country\\_studies/CotedIvoire-Kouadio.pdf](http://www.gdnet.org/pdf/draft_country_studies/CotedIvoire-Kouadio.pdf).

<sup>x</sup> Kenneth Noble, 'Felix Houphouët-Boigny, Ivory Coast's Leader since Freedom in 1960, is Dead', *New York Times*, 8/12/93.

<sup>xi</sup> Antenne 2 television news 8/12/93, viewed 6/6/07 at <http://www.ina.fr> ([http://www.ina.fr/archivespour tous/index.php?vue=notice&from=fulltext&fuull=ouattara&num\\_notice=1&total\\_notices=1](http://www.ina.fr/archivespour tous/index.php?vue=notice&from=fulltext&fuull=ouattara&num_notice=1&total_notices=1)).

<sup>xii</sup> 'AFP reports controversy over succession following death of Houphouët-Boigny', BBC Monitoring Service, 10/12/93.

<sup>xiii</sup> Quoted in Francis Akindès, 'Côte d'Ivoire: Socio-political Crises, "Ivoirité" and the Course of History'. *African Sociological Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2003).

<sup>xiv</sup> Author's interviews with rank-and-file participants in the *coup d'état*.

<sup>xv</sup> 'Ivorian general who seized power gives message over TV', AFP, 24/12/99.

<sup>xvi</sup> Interview with Chérif Ousmane at his Guépard camp on the outskirts of Bouaké, 23/11/06.

<sup>xvii</sup> Interview with Ouattara Siaka in Bouaké, 29/11/06.

<sup>xviii</sup> 'Guei, Gbagbo candidats a la présidentielle, Ouattara et Bombet invalidés', AFP, 6/10/00.

<sup>xix</sup> Interview with Chérif Fofana in Kong, 26/3/06.

<sup>xx</sup> Interview in April 2006 with Ouattara Yssouf – better known in Côte d'Ivoire by his nickname Kobo – head of operations for the rebellion in Abidjan during the failed coup. He is now a senior official in La Centrale, in Bouaké.

<sup>xxi</sup> According to data from the last census in Côte d'Ivoire, carried out by the Institut National de la Statistique and summarized on the Ivorian presidency website, at <http://www.presidence.ci/decouverte/demographie.php>. To qualify for Ivorian nationality by right, at least one parent must be Ivorian. Alternatively, the president can naturalize foreigners at his discretion.

<sup>xxii</sup> Marc Koffi, 'Côte d'Ivoire-Vers un durcissement des conditions d'éligibilité', Reuters, 7/6/00.

<sup>xxiii</sup> See Daniel Balint-Kurti, 'FEATURE-Summary killings keep Ivory Coast on edge', Reuters, 24/1/03. Numerous human rights reports also detail killings and mistreatment of foreigners and northerners after round-ups, for example: 'Because they have guns ... I'm left with nothing', *Human Rights Watch*, May 2006; Vol. 18 No. 4 (A): <http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=africa>.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Interview with Frédéric Guédé Guina, RDR mayor of Daloa, conducted by the author while working in a former capacity in 2002.

<sup>xxv</sup> See news articles from the time of the unrest, including Daniel Balint-Kurti, 'Ethnic Violence Breaks Out in Central Ivory Coast' (26/6/02) and 'Burnt-Out Settlements Testify To Ivorian Cocoa-Belt Violence' (1/7/02), OsterDowJones (ODJ); Matthew Tostevin, 'Ivory Coast villagers expel outsiders after clash', Reuters (27/6/02); 'Curfew in Ivory Coast region after four killed in pre-election violence', AFP, 27/6/02.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Interview with the author in a former capacity, 26/6/2002.

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<sup>xxvii</sup> Data collected at sites caring for people fleeing the violence, gathered by the author working in a former capacity.

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Loi N° 98 –750 du 23 Décembre 1998 relative au domaine foncier rural*. The law formally recognized ‘traditional land rights’ (*‘droits coutumiers’*) as the fundamental criteria for determining private ownership of land for which no legal property documents had previously been issued. It is not the only criterion and much room is left for interpretation, but the law nevertheless marked a U-turn from Houphouët-Boigny’s doctrine that ‘land belongs to those who cultivate it’, which was given legal backing in a 1967 decree. The 1998 law was amended by parliament in August 2004, in line with the Linas-Marcoussis peace accord. However, the agreed amendment concerned only the rights of the small minority of people who already had land certificates before 1998 and challenged neither the recognition of traditional land rights nor a further restriction barring non-Ivorians from owning land.

<sup>xxix</sup> On France blocking rebel advances, see Virginie Gomez, ‘Les mutins ivoiriens furieux contre Paris’, *Libération*, 2/10/02. Also, Tuo Fozié, speaking on Radio France Internationale (RFI) 4/10/02: ‘Despite assurances that you would not be fired at, would you agree to move towards a roadblock 5 km from which you are barred from passing, and you see troops and tanks in a firing position? Would you do this when the colonel heading the battalion and commanding the French troops told me prior to this that I could not move 25 km beyond Bouaké because his troops were there?’ (BBC Monitoring).

<sup>xxx</sup> ‘French troops withdraw from rebel-held Ivory Coast city; evacuation completed’. Associated Press (AP), 27/9/02: ‘Some French troops would pull back only to a nearby area, [Licorne spokesman Ange-Antoine] Leccia said, refusing to identify it. Authorities indicated a skeletal French contingent would remain within range, ready to pluck out any French or other Westerners missed.’ Also Emmanuel Goujon, ‘Desperate scenes as people try to flee Ivory Coast town’, AFP, 27/9/02. Twenty French citizens remained behind in Bouaké after French forces evacuated 2,100 mostly foreign nationals by 27 September, according to the Associated Press on 28/9/02: ‘Ivory Coast Rebels Digging in; French Pledge Aid to Army.’

<sup>xxxxi</sup> Clar Ni Chonghaile, ‘France offering help in Ivory Coast’, AP, 29/9/02; ‘Firing in Rebel City as Ivory Coast Peace Efforts Falter’, AP, 6/10/02.

<sup>xxxii</sup> UN Panel of Experts on Liberia Report, 17/4/03 (S/2003/498), para 66: ‘The panel found that ex-RUF, CDF and West Side Boys members have been recruited to fight as mercenaries for the Government of Liberia, LURD and, in Côte d’Ivoire, for the MJP, MPIGO and Lima forces.’ <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1521/liberiaPOE.shtml>. On the importance of Liberian elements within MPIGO, see Human Rights Watch, ‘Trapped Between Two Wars: Violence Against Civilians in Côte d’Ivoire’, August 2003, p. 15, [http://www.hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=cotedi&document\\_limit=20,20](http://www.hrw.org/doc?t=africa&c=cotedi&document_limit=20,20); and Arnaud Zajzman, ‘Murky Death of Ivory Coast Rebel’, 29/4/03 (BBC); <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2985359.stm>.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Author’s interviews with two mid-ranking rebel officials, in Bouaké (22/11/06) and another rebel-held town, the name of which cannot be disclosed for reasons of confidentiality (April 2006). See also ‘Côte d’Ivoire: Liberian Woman Commands Mercenaries in Korhogo’, 2/1/04 (IRIN).

<sup>xxxiv</sup> See Agnès du Pargé, ‘Parmi les rebelles: carnets de route en Côte d’Ivoire, 19 septembre 2002–19 septembre 2003’, Editions L’Harmattan, 1/9/04. The author also gathered information from an anonymous mid-ranking rebel fighter, in an April 2006 interview, on the degeneration of relations between Ivorian and Liberian fighters in the western rebel-held areas.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Interview with the author, on condition of anonymity, November 2006.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Many other cases of abuses by rebels and allied Liberian forces could be listed, including the ethnically motivated killing of at least 40 civilians in the western village of Dah by Liberian fighters. Several massacres of civilians were also carried out by loyalist forces and their Liberian allies – for example, 56 killings in Daloa in October 2002; 120 in the village of Monoko-Zohi, November 2002; and between 60 and 200 killed in Bangolo by the pro-loyalist Liberians. See Human Rights Watch, ‘Trapped Between Two Wars’ and ‘Côte d’Ivoire: Accountability for Serious Human Rights Crimes Key to Resolving Crisis’ (October 2004); and ‘Commission d’enquête internationale sur les allegations de violations de droits de l’homme en Côte d’Ivoire’ (see note 41).

<sup>xxxvii</sup> ‘Côte d’Ivoire: A Succession of Unpunished Crimes’, Amnesty International, 27/2/03: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR310072003?open&of=ENG-CIV>.

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<sup>xxxviii</sup> The report of the 'Commission d'enquête internationale sur les allégations de violations de droits de l'homme en Côte d'Ivoire' covers the period 19/9/02 to 15/10/04. It has yet to be officially released, although the author has received a leaked copy. The report was viewed on 10/5/07 at the following website:

[http://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale sur les allégations de violations des droits de l'homme en Côte d'Ivoire](http://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Rapport_de_la_Commission_d'enqu%C3%AAtre_internationale_sur_les_all%C3%A9gations_de_violations_des_droits_de_l'homme_en_C%C3%AAte_d'Ivoire).

<sup>xxxix</sup> The report of the UN investigation was last viewed by the author on 14/5/07 at:

[http://www.abidjan.net/documents/files/Rapport ONUCI Charniers Korhogo.htm](http://www.abidjan.net/documents/files/Rapport_ONUCI_Charniers_Korhogo.htm).

<sup>xi</sup> Sidibe Oumar, 'Mass Killings Reported in Ivory Coast', AP, 6/8/04. A detailed rebuttal by the Forces Nouvelles of the UN report can be found in the news section of Burkina Faso's ruling party, the Congrès pour la démocratie et le progrès: 'Massacres de Korhogo: Les Forces Nouvelles s'expliquent', 28/12/04.

<sup>xii</sup> 'Fifth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', 17/6/05 (S/2005/398), para 10: <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep05.htm>.

<sup>xiii</sup> See UN Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration website for Côte d'Ivoire: <http://www.unddr.org/countryprogrammes.php?c=51>. The maximum optional loan of 430,000 CFA comes from adding the following: micro-credit financing at 180,000 CFA per individual, plus a loan of 150,000 CFA for purchase of equipment, plus a loan of 100,000 CFA for agricultural projects and the purchase of seeds.

<sup>xliii</sup> *The Military Balance 2007*, International Institute for Strategic Studies.

<sup>xliiv</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Côte d'Ivoire', 26/3/03 (S/2003/374): <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep03.html>.

<sup>xliv</sup> Report of the UN Panel of Experts on Liberia, 24/4/03 (S/2003/498), para 49.

<sup>xlv</sup> 'Report of the Secretary General on Côte d'Ivoire' 26/3/03 (S/2003/374), para 46.

<sup>xlvii</sup> African Union: Rapport du président de la Commission sur la situation en Côte d'Ivoire, PSC/AHG/2(XXIII), para 26: <http://reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/d2fc8ae9db883867852567cb0083a028/385e06fdea47c002c1256f85004b3a01?OpenDocument>.

<sup>xlviii</sup> Report of UN Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, released on 7/11/05 (S/2005/699). Paras 88–123 discuss air power of the rebels and loyalists. Report can be consulted at [http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/CI\\_poe\\_ENG.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/CI_poe_ENG.shtml).

<sup>xlix</sup> French presidency press release 6/11/04, viewed 10/5/07 at the Elysée's website: [http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/elysee.fr/francais/salle\\_de\\_presse/communiques\\_de\\_la\\_presidence/2004/novembre/communique\\_de\\_la\\_presidence\\_de\\_la\\_republique\\_sur\\_la\\_cote\\_d\\_ivoire.22689.html](http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/elysee.fr/francais/salle_de_presse/communiques_de_la_presidence/2004/novembre/communique_de_la_presidence_de_la_republique_sur_la_cote_d_ivoire.22689.html).

<sup>i</sup> UN Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire report 12/12/06 (S/2006/964), para 25: [http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/CI\\_poe\\_ENG.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/CI_poe_ENG.shtml). Eastern European mercenaries have also co-piloted aircraft, helped train loyalist forces in the use of heavy weaponry and gone into battle alongside loyalist troops, according to media reports and an April 2006 interview with a military source in Abidjan, on condition of anonymity.

<sup>ii</sup> In an article on 15/11/04, *Le Monde* reported that 46 Israeli military and security advisers were working with Ivorian authorities, before being evacuated in November 2004: 'Enquête sur une quasi-guerre de huit jours entre Paris et Abidjan'. A European diplomat confirmed to the author reports that Israeli advisers were based in Abidjan's Hôtel Ivoire during the events of November 2004.

<sup>iii</sup> Despite persistent Angolan denials, in mid-October 2002 Ivorian Parliamentary Speaker Mamadou Koulibaly – officially the second-highest-ranking politician in Côte d'Ivoire – said Angolan troops were fighting alongside Ivorian forces against the rebels. See 'Angolan forces fighting alongside Ivorian army: Head of I Coast parliament', AFP, 18/10/02. In an interview published the previous day, Gbagbo denied Angolan troops were in Côte d'Ivoire but said Angolan companies had been supplying arms and munitions to Côte d'Ivoire since the war broke out: Caroline Dumay, 'Gbagbo – «Si la médiation échoue, je n'ai pas d'autre choix que la

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guerre», *Le Figaro*, 17/10/02.

<sup>liii</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Côte d'Ivoire', 26/3/03 (S/2003/374), para 44.

<sup>liv</sup> To give some patent examples: Firmin Kouakou, the head of cocoa regulatory body the Fonds de Régulation et de Contrôle, is also Campaign Director for Gbagbo in the central town of Bouaflé and the surrounding district; Marcel Gossio, the Director General of Abidjan's port, is a National Secretary of Gbagbo's FPI; Laurent Zirignon Ottro, Chairman of the national oil refinery, is a relative of Gbagbo and is FPI Campaign Director in the president's home region of Gagnoa.

<sup>lv</sup> Report of UN Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, released on 7/11/05 (S/2005/699), para 25.

<sup>lvi</sup> *Ibid.*, para 30: 'Cocoa plays an important role in providing funds for the off-budget and extrabudgetary military procurement efforts of the government.' A small but pertinent example of presidency funding for militias was given when Touré Zéguen, the head of the Abidjan-based Groupement des Patriotes pour la Paix (GPP) militias, told a journalist his hospital fees were being paid for by the presidency: 'Touré Moussa Zéguen (président du GPP) sur son lit d'hôpital – «Nous sommes traités comme des moins que rien»', *Nouveau Réveil*, 21/3/07.

<sup>lvii</sup> Transparency in the cocoa sector has been a major bone of contention between donors and Côte d'Ivoire since the time of Houphouët-Boigny. In November 2003, six donors – including the EU, the IMF and the World Bank – jointly signed a letter calling for the freezing of industry levies on cocoa exports because of transparency concerns (copy seen by author). Further letters and *aides-mémoire* from donors hammered home concerns over misappropriation of resources from the cocoa sector. A legal audit of the cocoa sector, funded by the EU in 2004, called for the dissolution of two of the three cocoa regulatory bodies (the Bourse du Café et du Cacao and the Fonds de Régulation et de Contrôle) and of a development fund for farmers (the Fonds de Développement et de Promotion des Activités des Producteurs de Café et de Cacao). The audit was released in May 2007:

[http://www.delciv.ec.europa.eu/fr/ue\\_information/dial\\_kko\\_27\\_04\\_2007.pdf](http://www.delciv.ec.europa.eu/fr/ue_information/dial_kko_27_04_2007.pdf). The World Bank launched audits into the cocoa and petroleum sectors in January 2007: 'Côte d'Ivoire: la Banque Mondiale lance un audit sur la gestion du cacao et du pétrole', AFP, 13/1/07.

<sup>lviii</sup> Bédié's former Cabinet Director Jean-Noël Loucou was quoted in a December 2006 article as saying the former president had 40 billion CFA (around £40 million) as his 'sovereignty budget': 'Prétendus fonds secrets de Gbagbo: Encore de l'intox pour distraire', *Notre Voie*, 28/12/06.

<sup>lix</sup> 'UPDATE 1-Tension rockets between Ivory Coast and Burkina' by Anne Boher and David Clarke. Reuters, 25/9/02.

<sup>lx</sup> See 'Burkina Faso Accuses Ivory Coast Of Violating Airspace', 6/7/04.

<sup>lxi</sup> *Ibid.*, and also: 'Violation de l'espace aérien burkinabé par la Côte d'Ivoire : 'L'affaire est suffisamment sérieuse...', selon le ministre de la Défense M. Yéro Boly', 7/7/04 (Sidwaya/AllAfrica Global Media via COMTEX).

<sup>lxii</sup> Submission of Burkina Faso to the UN Register of Conventional Arms on 11/10/06:

[http://disarmament.un.org/UN\\_REGISTER.NSF](http://disarmament.un.org/UN_REGISTER.NSF).

<sup>lxiii</sup> 'Burkina: Un imposant défilé de troupes et de matériel militaire a marqué mercredi les cérémonies commémorant le 46ème anniversaire de l'armée au Burkina', AFP, 1/11/06.

<sup>lxiv</sup> 'Russia delivers two combat helicopters to Burkina Faso', Interfax, 12/12/05.

<sup>lxv</sup> Author's research in Burkina Faso, while working in a former capacity.

<sup>lxvi</sup> Report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, released 5/10/06 (S/2003/735):

[http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/CI\\_poe\\_ENG.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/CI_poe_ENG.shtml).

<sup>lxvii</sup> The reforms are outlined in Denis Koné, 'Soro interdit l'exploitation forestière', *24 Heures*, 5/12/05. A list of formal decrees issued after the meeting was published in *Le Patriote* of 5/12/06. Among the many new structures created was a Direction Générale des Forces Paramilitaires des Forces Nouvelles, headed by 'Farakoricien' Koné Messemba and including a customs agency. This structure could generate a dispute over who is responsible for collecting taxes on merchandise.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Information provided by Ecole Pour Tous, 27/11/06.

<sup>lxix</sup> 'Côte d'Ivoire: l'Etat ivoirien va rembourser plus de 10 milliards de FCFA d'impayés aux producteurs de coton par les industriels', AFP, 31/1/07.

<sup>lxx</sup> 'Les rebelles interdisent la sortie du coton', AFP, 26/1/05.

<sup>lxxi</sup> 'Ivory Coast Rebels Shut Cotton Company', AFP, 14/9/05.

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- <sup>lxxii</sup> 'Côte d'Ivoire: l'Etat ivoirien va rembourser plus de 10 milliards'.
- <sup>lxxiii</sup> 'Ivory Coast 2006–07 Cotton Output Seen Down 16% on Year.' ODJ, 23/1/07.
- <sup>lxxiv</sup> 'Côte d'Ivoire: Cotton Annual Report', United States Department of Agriculture, 6/1/02.
- <sup>lxxv</sup> 'Premières patrouilles de policiers et gendarmes rebelles à Bouaké', AFP, 4/1/07.
- <sup>lxxvi</sup> 'Côte d'Ivoire: OCHA Rapport Hebdomadaire No. 03 – 15-21/1/07', viewed 14/5/07 on [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).
- <sup>lxxvii</sup> 'Côte d'Ivoire: A Succession of Unpunished Crimes' (see note 40 above).
- <sup>lxxviii</sup> ONUCI Rule of Law Unit report, published 17/8/06.
- <sup>lxxix</sup> Author's visit to Bouaké prison, 18/12/06.
- <sup>lxxx</sup> Interview with Rule of Law Unit, Bouaké, 28/11/06.
- <sup>lxxx1</sup> ONUCI Rule of Law Unit report. 17/8/06.
- <sup>lxxxii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxxxiii</sup> Décret No. 2007-82 du 16 mars 2007 portant creation du Centre du Commandement intégré (CCI).
- <sup>lxxxiv</sup> See, for example, Cyrille Djedjed, 'Gbagbo et FDS évaluent les progrès et les difficultés', *Le Courrier d'Abidjan*, 24/5/07. Gbagbo made his opposition to maintaining the rebels' grades clear in a speech on 1/8/06: 'I will never accept these grades. These grades will not enter the Republic. That's too easy. I see corporals who are have proclaimed themselves commanders or colonels. But as everyone's at play, everyone can do as he pleases.' He went on to say that there are 437 ex-Ivorian military in the rebellion. 'Gbagbo hier aux femmes patriotes: Benjamin Koré, "Jamais je n'accepterai les grades des rebelles dans la République"', *Notre Voie*, 2/8/06.
- <sup>lxxxv</sup> The 'Thirteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire', para 53, says that the details of the disarmament process were revised on 25/4/07. Under the plans described in the report, soldiers from both the loyalist army and the rebellion would be cantoned and have their weapons put in storage, but no loyalist troops would be demobilized. The reason given for this apparent change in plan is that Gbagbo promised to keep war-time recruits in the army in 2006. However, the author has been unable to confirm whether both sides have accepted such a change in the disarmament plans.
- <sup>lxxxvi</sup> Although not mentioned in the accord, the number of observation posts was stipulated in a subsequent agreement. 'Signature d'un accord quadripartite sur la suppression de la zone de confiance – 11/04/2007'. Article on ONUCI website: [www.onuci.org](http://www.onuci.org).
- <sup>lxxxvii</sup> 'Nearly 9,000 people evacuated as a result of unrest in Ivory Coast', Agence France-Presse, 19/11/04.
- <sup>lxxxviii</sup> Interviews with farmers from immigrant communities in western Côte d'Ivoire, February 2007.
- <sup>lxxxix</sup> UN daily brief, 22/5/07.
- <sup>xc</sup> 'Discours du Général Maho Glofiehi', online at [www.presidence.ci](http://www.presidence.ci) (viewed on 25/5/07).
- <sup>xci</sup> UN Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire report 12/12/06 (S/2006/964), Table 1 gives estimated numbers of the fighters in each of the armed western militias, with the total coming to 5,600.
- <sup>xcii</sup> Traoré Ahmed, 'Kadet Bertin: "Moi, vrai ministre de la Défense?"', *Nord-Sud*, 25/5/07.
- <sup>xciii</sup> At the time this report was being finalized, the UN was still in discussion with the government on forming a commission of enquiry into the assassination attempt.
- <sup>xciv</sup> Khristian Kara, 'Bouaké: Guillaume Soro aux chefs de guerre, hier. "Je connais les auteurs de l'attentat mais je ne dirai rien pour l'instant."', *Le Patriote*, 4/7/07.
- <sup>xcv</sup> UN daily brief, 3/7/07
- <sup>xcvi</sup> UN daily brief, 17/8/07. Also see: K. Khara, 'Qui sont les suspects arrêtés et déférés à la prison de Bouaké?', *Le Patriote*, 9/7/07.
- <sup>xcvii</sup> 'Soro: Une volonté politique existe "pour partager le pouvoir à Abidjan"', *Le Monde*, 13/3/07.
- <sup>xcviii</sup> Guillaume Soro, *Pourquoi je suis devenu rebelle: La Côte d'Ivoire au bord du gouffre* (Paris: Hachette, 2005).

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