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## **Final progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire**

### **I. Introduction**

1. By its resolution [2284 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for a final period, until 30 June 2017, and requested me to provide, by 31 January 2017, an update on the implementation of the mandate of UNOCI and its phased drawdown, including the continued transition of its security responsibilities to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire. The present report contains major developments since my special report of 31 March 2016 ([S/2016/297](#)) and an update on the ongoing drawdown and transition of UNOCI, with a view to completing its mandate as provided for in resolution [2284 \(2016\)](#).

### **II. Major developments**

2. Preparations for and the conduct of the constitutional referendum on 30 October and the legislative election on 18 December were the key developments in Côte d'Ivoire. Dialogue between the Government and the opposition advanced, leading to the introduction, on 6 April, by the Government of a bill in the National Assembly on the status of a "Leader of the opposition". In the bill, it was stipulated that the position should be given to the candidate or the leader of the party that finishes second in a presidential election. On the basis of the results of the presidential election of 2015, the position would therefore be given to the president of the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI) opposition party, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, who came in second in that election. Other opposition leaders agreed in principle to the creation of such a position, but rejected the proposed criteria and modalities of appointment. The National Assembly began consideration of the bill on 4 July; however, as the opposition became increasingly hostile towards the constitutional reform process, five parliamentary caucuses affiliated with the Rassemblement des républicains (RDR) and the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) asked to suspend consideration of the bill, which is pending approval in the Assembly.

3. The period leading up to the constitutional referendum was dominated by antagonism between the ruling majority party supporting the constitutional reform initiative of the President, Alassane Ouattara, and the opposition, which rejected it.



Some media outlets disseminated inflammatory rhetoric, hate speech and incitement to violence and called for a boycott of the referendum. On 30 May, the President established a committee of experts tasked with elaborating a new constitution. From 7 to 13 June, the President and the committee consulted separately with opposition political parties of the Cadre permanent de dialogue, followed by traditional chiefs, religious leaders and civil society organizations, and concluding with the ruling coalition, the Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP). The draft new constitution developed by the committee, which contains important new provisions addressing the root causes of the past civil war, including land tenure, nationality and identity, was officially presented to the President on 24 September and endorsed by the Government on 28 September and by the National Assembly on 5 October.

4. The political opposition, including FPI, challenged the legitimacy of the committee of experts. On 30 June, a group of 23 small opposition political parties led by Mr. N'Guessan, under the banner of the Collectif des partis de l'opposition démocratique, issued a statement rejecting the constitutional review process as "undemocratic and unilateral". From August to 30 October, the opposition's protests against that process consolidated around two groups, the "Coalition du non" and the "Front du refus", both comprised of FPI dissidents. The latter group was led by Aboudramane Sangaré and included hardline elements of FPI and other smaller opposition parties and politicians, including the president of the Liberté et démocratie pour la république (LIDER) party, Mamadou Koulibaly, and a former presidential candidate, Konan Bertin. They argued that the referendum was neither legal nor legitimate and that Côte d'Ivoire had first to make progress towards national reconciliation before embarking on institutional reforms. They also criticized the process for not being sufficiently participatory. Nevertheless, they indicated that, once all conditions were met, Ivorians might meet to discuss issues facing the nation through an expanded national dialogue, including all segments of society. RHDP rejected the proposal.

5. A nationwide voter registration exercise conducted by the Independent Electoral Commission from 25 June to 24 July registered 375,352 new voters, increasing the total number of eligible voters to 6,439,876, of whom 49 per cent were women. Upon the publication of the final electoral roll on 12 October, the umbrella civil society organization Plateforme des organisations de la société civile pour l'observation des élections en Côte d'Ivoire observed that the transparent voter registration process had been transparent but criticized the low rate of young people registered. From 15 to 27 October, the Commission shared the electoral roll with all political parties and distributed voter cards and related materials for the referendum and legislative election.

6. With a view to encouraging the opposition and the Government to resume dialogue, my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire and Head of UNOCI met the FPI-led Alliance des forces démocratiques on 1 September and the Minister-in-charge of Political Dialogue on 5 September. This led to the Government initiating conciliatory gestures, including unfreezing 12 bank accounts and releasing nine more detainees, both of which had been major demands of the opposition. As a result, dialogue between the Government and FPI resumed on 8 September. FPI also discussed the proposed constitutional reform with the committee of experts. My Special Representative also met representatives of the Plateforme des organisations

de la société civile pour l'observation des élections en Côte d'Ivoire and the civil society organization the West African Network for Peacebuilding — Côte d'Ivoire, given their concerns about inclusivity and the participation of civil society in public awareness-raising activities on the constitutional reform. On 17 September, however, the opposition launched a campaign against the reform and called for a constitutional commission to decide whether the Constitution should be amended. Similarly, a group of 18 civil society organizations called upon the Government to undertake a "more inclusive and transparent" process. Furthermore, on 13 October, the president of FPI called for a boycott of the forthcoming referendum and, on 20 October, the Front du refus organized a march to protest against the reform. Police used tear gas to disperse the demonstrators, and a few opposition leaders were detained briefly.

7. The official referendum campaign was conducted from 22 to 28 October without incident. On 30 October, the referendum was held in a peaceful atmosphere and without any major incidents, notwithstanding minor disruptions in some 100 polling stations of the 20,024 nationwide. The Minister of Justice stated that charges would be brought against individuals involved in those disturbances. As a result, between 4 and 6 November, a few opposition figures of the Front du refus, including the president of LIDER and Mr. Sangaré, were questioned in court for a few hours. On 4 November, the Constitutional Council validated the results of the referendum announced by the Independent Electoral Commission, with 93.42 per cent voting in favour of the revised Constitution. Of 6,318,311 registered voters, a total of 2,678,601 cast their ballot, resulting in a voter turnout of 42.42 per cent. On 8 November, the President promulgated the new Constitution.

8. The referendum was observed by several organizations, including the Commission nationale des droits de l'homme, the West African Network for Peacebuilding and the Plateforme des organisations de la société civile pour l'observation des élections en Côte d'Ivoire. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided support to civil society to carry out awareness-raising of the right to vote and of peaceful participation. All observers stated that, overall, the referendum had been conducted in a peaceful and satisfactory manner. However, the Commission underscored a few cases of violations of the right to freedom of expression and equitable access to information and the media, while the West African Network for Peacebuilding noted some disturbances at a number of the polling stations on the day of the referendum, which did not taint the fairness of the process.

9. Preparations for the legislative election began immediately after the referendum, with intensified forging of alliances by political parties. On 7 December, the Constitutional Court validated the final list of 1,337 candidates, including 740 independent candidates, of whom only 166 (12.4 per cent) were women. On 18 December, the country voted peacefully in the legislative election. No serious security incidents were reported. Of the 6,318,311 registered voters, a total of 2,027,078 cast their ballots, resulting in a voter participation rate of 34.1 per cent, which was slightly lower than in the previous legislative poll, held in 2011 (37 per cent). In line with the new Constitution, members of the legislature were elected for an exceptional four-year term instead of five years, until 2020, when all provisions of the new Constitution will come into force. Of the 254 newly elected members of the National Assembly, 225 are men and 29 are women (11.42 per cent).

10. RHDP, the Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI) and the Union pour la Côte d'Ivoire (UPCI) won 167, 6 and 3 seats, respectively, while FPI secured 3 seats and the independent candidates the remaining 76 seats (75 of which had previously been associated with the ruling coalition). The number of seats won by independent candidates (29.53 per cent) is significantly higher than in the 2001 and 2011 legislative elections.

11. While voter turnout was, in general, higher in the northern regions, with up to 95 per cent turnout, there was lower participation in the southern and central regions, including the Abidjan district (15.7 per cent), Bouakét (16.99 per cent) and Yamoussoukro (18.57 per cent). Within RHDP, RDR remains the strongest partner, with 99 seats, followed by PDCI, with 67 seats. The significantly low achievement of three seats secured by FPI, of 187 fielded candidates, fell short of its declared ambition to gain at least 30 seats. In that regard, on 26 December, president of FPI, commenting on the party's poor result in the legislative election, recognized that FPI had to detach itself from the former President, Laurent Gbagbo, who "became a stumbling block" for the party.

12. On 9 January, Guillaume Soro was re-elected president of the National Assembly, while the Government of the Prime Minister, Daniel Kablan Duncan, resigned. On 10 January, in accordance with the new Constitution, the President appointed the former Prime Minister as First Vice-President of Côte d'Ivoire and Amadou Gon Coulibaly as Prime Minister. On 11 January, the new 28-member Government was formed: 19 returning ministers, 6 of whom were women, and 9 new ministers. The Ministries for Human Rights and Public Liberties were dissolved and 12 others were merged into 6 ministries.

#### **National and international justice**

13. On 27 October, the Government took stock of the residual challenges in the field of transitional justice in Côte d'Ivoire during a high-level conference organized by the International Centre for Transitional Justice, in partnership with UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UNOCI. The conference attendees recommended ensuring accountability and redress in an equitable and inclusive manner. On 31 October, the President announced that Côte d'Ivoire had no intention of withdrawing from the International Criminal Court. Since June 2016, the hearings in the trial of Mr. Gbagbo and the former Minister of Youth, Blé Goudé, before the Court have been closed to the media in order to protect witnesses.

14. With respect to national proceedings, on 31 May, the trial of the former First Lady, Simone Gbagbo, for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the post-election crisis of 2010 and 2011 began before the Criminal Court of Abidjan and has been open to the public and the media. The trial was suspended from 8 to 18 July owing to the hospitalization of the defendant and from 1 August to 10 October owing to the court's recess. Since 2 November, the trial has adjourned several times following the decision of Mrs. Gbagbo's defence counsel to suspend its participation in the trial owing to the refusal of the president of the Court to subpoena five senior public officials, including the president of the National Assembly.

### **National reconciliation and social cohesion**

15. On 25 October, the final report and recommendations of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, presented to the President on 15 December 2014, were officially released during a public ceremony in Abidjan. On 19 October, the mandate of the successor to the Commission, the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims, ended with the presentation of the final report to the President. The report, which is yet to be made public, includes a consolidated list of victims of crises in Côte d'Ivoire from 1990 to 2012, a proposal for national reparations and a draft reconciliation action plan. Civil society and victims' groups criticized the current reparations process as non-inclusive and called for the establishment of an appeals mechanism for those applicants denied the status of "victim".

16. Alongside efforts towards national reconciliation and social cohesion, the Government continued with the restitution of illegally occupied properties. To date, 1,204 of 1,731 claims received by the established State committee on this issue have been returned to their rightful owners, mainly properties of the associates of Mr. Gbagbo in Abidjan, while 189 are under consideration. A further 338 claims remain to be processed.

17. The UNOCI partnership with the United Nations country team, the Government and local administrators to ensure a timely and effective response to reported incidents of intercommunal violence continued. The Government has enhanced its awareness of and response to latent threats, including the implementation of the national social cohesion programme. From 6 to 8 December, in Bouna, the Government, in coordination with the office of the Ivorian ombudsman and with support from UNDP and UNOCI, organized a high-level workshop to identify and find solutions to obstacles to social cohesion further to the intercommunal violence of March 2016 in the area. Participants agreed on a 12-point commitment, including action to restore confidence between the population and security forces, efforts to combat impunity for crimes committed during the violence and establish early warning mechanisms. The implementation of the commitments will be monitored by a committee comprising representatives of all communities.

18. From 1 April to 30 August, UNOCI, in partnership with the United Nations country team, supported 10 capacity-building workshops on conflict prevention for *sous-préfets* and traditional chiefs as part of a nationally owned early warning initiative involving some 450 participants, including young people and women, from 31 regions of Côte d'Ivoire. In addition, UNOCI and the Government developed a transition framework for a social cohesion strategy for conflict prevention and trained 584 government administrators, including 190 women, at the National School of Administration on mediation and conflict prevention. They will be deployed throughout the country at the conclusion of their programme in 2017.

### **Security situation**

19. The security situation remained stable and continued to show signs of improvement, with an overall downward trend of security incidents since the beginning of 2016. Intercommunal conflicts, armed robberies, sexual and gender-

based violence and violence against minors, as well as other criminal activities, still contribute to insecurity in some parts of the country. While armed attacks in the south-west declined, tensions over land disputes have increased with the resumption of the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Liberia to western regions of Côte d'Ivoire. In the east, sporadic armed robberies and clashes between the local population and security forces are still reported. Social unrest, primarily in the form of public demonstrations and protests, occurred. There were violent demonstrations in July triggered by hikes in electricity tariffs, protests by university students in April and July over campus tertiary education conditions, a strike by university lecturers in August regarding their remuneration, strikes by primary and secondary schoolteachers in September and October and in January 2017 over salaries and pension reforms, and protests by students in January. The Government addressed those situations without any serious security incident. Following the negotiations with the schoolteachers that the Government had held in mid-January, the protesters announced the end of the strike on 23 January.

20. Following the terrorist attack in Grand-Bassam on 13 March, the Government stepped up preventive measures and strengthened border controls to counter terrorist threats. On 6 April, it adopted an action plan on the fight against terrorism. On 13 April, the Minister of the Interior and Security announced that 83 people had been arrested in connection with the attack. According to the Government, some of the suspects participated in that attack and in ones carried out in Ouagadougou and Bamako. On 9 January, the French forces deployed under "Operation Barkhane" in Mali reportedly arrested another suspect, Mimi Ould Baba Ould Cheikh, near Gao, Mali. He allegedly admitted to having masterminded and supervised the attack in Grand-Bassam.

21. Land disputes tended to concentrate in areas along the country's western and eastern borders and in some northern areas. On 11 May, 61 persons were arrested in connection with the intercommunal violence of 24 March in Bouna allegedly over disputed grazing areas and skirmishes for control of traditional power in the area, which left more than 30 persons dead, 52 wounded and some 2,900 internally displaced, while another 2,000 fled to neighbouring Burkina Faso. The presence of armed, non-integrated former combatants and *dozo* elements complicated the situation. UNOCI deployed a 105-strong quick reaction force to Bouna to protect civilians, while the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire established a temporary command post in the area to restore calm and enhance border control.

22. Rumours of attacks and the presence of armed individuals continued in areas near the border with Liberia, in particular in Tabou, owing to the suspected presence of a large number of former combatants. On 29 March, two soldiers were wounded in an attack by unidentified assailants against an army post near the Liberian border village of Nero in the Tabou area. Skirmishes along the border with Mali in April, in particular in the villages of Ouelli and Dèbété, Tengrela region, raised concern. To counter cross-border insecurity, including terrorist activities, the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali are coordinating efforts.

23. The mutiny on 6 and 7 January 2017 by Ivorian soldiers was similar to the protests of 18 November 2014 by the military over unresolved grievances, such as unpaid allowances, promotions and housing subsidies. It occurred at a critical political juncture, with the renewal of institutions and changes in the Government

following the promulgation of the new Constitution and the legislative election. The mutiny, which began in Bouaké, spread quickly to Daloa, Daoukro, Ferkessédougou and Korhogo, reaching Abidjan on 7 January. The protest ended without any serious incidents following an agreement reached by the Minister-in-charge of Defence with the mutineers. The Government began paying the soldiers their pending allowances on 13 January. However, on 17 January, gendarmes and other personnel from the military training centre in Zambakro initiated another protest, demanding the payment of compensation packages. Such protests were also reported in Abidjan, Bondoukou, Bouaké, Daloa, Ferkessédougou, Gagnoa and Man. On the same day, four soldiers were killed in Yamoussoukro as a group of disgruntled soldiers were attempting to seize arms and ammunition from the depot guarded by the Republican Guard. Following further negotiations, the Government reached an agreement with the new group of mutineers and the situation calmed down in full by 21 January.

### **Regional issues**

24. Bilateral relations between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso improved after the Burkinabé judicial authorities withdrew charges against the president of the National Assembly on 6 June. However, the international arrest warrant issued on 15 December 2015 by the Burkinabé prosecutor against former the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, for his alleged role in the killing of another former President, Thomas Sankara, in October 1987 remains in force.

25. Strengthening regional cooperation to combat terrorism was at the heart of several events. From 10 to 13 May, the Mano River Union held a series of meetings in Côte d'Ivoire to finalize a memorandum of understanding on maritime security and a framework for counter-terrorism. On 27 May, a summit of the West African Economic and Monetary Union considered fostering collective regional security. Regional cooperation on maritime security improved following the signing on 1 June of a bilateral agreement between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana on border control and on settling their maritime boundary dispute through dialogue.

26. On 8 September, Côte d'Ivoire reopened its borders with Guinea and Liberia following the end of the international health emergency surrounding the Ebola virus disease. Local community-based conflict prevention mechanisms under the Mano River Union joint border security and confidence-building units in the Zwedru-Toulépleu and the Tabou-Harper axes were reactivated in June and August 2016, respectively. Current efforts are focused on improving information-sharing and confidence-building between the population, local authorities and security forces on both sides of the borders.

### **Reform of security institutions**

27. The Ministry of Defence and other related institutions are working to ensure the implementation and operationalization of the military programming law (2016-2020) and the law on the organization of armed forces. These arrangements are intended to be implemented over the coming five years and entail the operationalization of a new organizational structure for the Ministry, the reorganization of human resources, the adjustment of the command and control structure and the strengthening of operational capabilities. In addition, under the law on the organization of the armed

forces, the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire were officially renamed the Forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire on 14 November 2016.

28. However, as shown by the protests by soldiers in January, serious challenges remain with regard to the status of security sector reform, including cohesion, discipline, training and conditions of service in the army. There is also a need to enhance the operational capacity of the police and gendarmerie through the provision of adequate equipment. These deficiencies are to be addressed in part through the implementation of the internal security planning law.

#### **Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration**

29. As reported by the national authority for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, a total of 69,506 former combatants, including 6,105 women, entered the national programme for disarmament and demobilization that had been implemented from 2012 to 2015, including 66,216 who were reinserted with the support of UNOCI. As at 30 May, the reinsertion of an outstanding caseload of 4,769 ex-combatants remained, out of which 3,015 ex-combatants had not been processed because they had stable jobs or were employed, already enrolled in training activities, not interested in the programme or unreachable. According to the Government, the remaining 1,754 ex-combatants awaiting reinsertion received a reinsertion package in July. From 1 April to 30 June, the implementation of the Government's resocialization programme, payment of transitional safety allowances and support for the vocational training component of the programme, with UNOCI assistance, contributed to an increase in the number of former combatants in reinsertion initiatives. Some 2,000 former combatants in Liberia are yet to join the national programme.

30. A total of 43,510 armaments, including 14,121 weapons, were collected throughout the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration period from 2012 to 2015. The low number of collected weapons and items of explosive ordnance can be explained by the significant number of weapons still hidden within communities. The national commission for the fight against small arms and light weapons continued community weapons collections, offering benefits to civilians in exchange for weapons and ammunition, involving local and traditional authorities in raising the awareness of target groups.

#### **Human rights situation**

31. The human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire is, in general, improving. Human rights violations decreased from the post-election crisis of 2010 and 2011, from 1,726 cases noted in my report of 30 March 2011 (S/2011/211) to 88 documented between 1 April 2016 and 15 January 2017. Those cases comprised the following: 13 violations of the right to life against 31 people, including 4 women; 24 violations of the right to physical integrity against 25 people, including 2 women; 33 cases of illegal and arbitrary arrest and detention against 188 people, including 1 woman; 3 violations of the right to peaceful assembly; and 15 violations of the right to property. Only one alleged perpetrator in those cases was convicted to three years' imprisonment, while two others were arrested and remain in pretrial detention.

32. UNOCI investigated the human rights abuses that had been committed during the March intercommunal violence in Bouna. It established the circumstances

surrounding the killing of at least 27 persons, including 4 women and 2 boys, allegedly by *dozos*, with most of the victims belonging to the Fulani, Koulango and Malinké ethnic groups. At least 117 people, primarily *dozos*, have been arrested and the investigation is continuing.

33. UNOCI continued to provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Commission, of the joint human rights mechanism of the army, the Commission and UNOCI and of local human rights civil society organizations, focusing on strengthening their human rights monitoring and reporting skills. Seven capacity-building activities were conducted with the Commission from 29 September to 29 November for the staff of its 31 regional offices, funded by the Government of Canada. In September and October, four capacity-building workshops were jointly organized for newly appointed army focal points of the joint human rights mechanism, representing the four military regions of Côte d'Ivoire.

34. UNOCI supported the National Human Rights Commission in developing its complaints management manual and its strategic plan for the period 2017-2020. On 11 November, the Commission presented its 2015 annual report to the President. It was made public on 9 December. In it, the Commission noted human rights violations committed in the context of the presidential election of 2015, the situation of children in conflict with the law and child education and stressed the importance of the resumption of political dialogue between the Government and the opposition.

35. UNOCI continued to support human rights mainstreaming with the mapping of the human rights education needs of the police and gendarmerie academies. On 12 and 13 May, a training session on basic human rights norms and principles and their application in the civil service was conducted for students of the National School of Administration.

36. On 1 July, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution extending, for a final one-year period, the mandate of the Independent Expert on the enhancement of capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights ([A/HRC/RES/32/30](#)). Referring to his fourth mission to Côte d'Ivoire in May, the Independent Expert highlighted the need to strengthen the judicial system, prevent community tensions, step up efforts to combat terrorism while complying with human rights standards and consolidate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

### **Sexual violence**

37. The number of reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence has progressively decreased, owing in part to the concerted awareness-raising efforts by UNOCI and United Nations partners with the Ivorian military, communities and schools. Compared with 180 cases noted in my report of 12 December 2014 ([S/2014/892](#)), during the period under review UNOCI documented 34 cases, which comprise the following: 25 cases of rape and 9 cases of other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including 2 forced marriages and 2 cases of female genital mutilation, perpetrated against 14 girls and 1 woman. At least 23 perpetrators were arrested; 9 of them were tried and sentenced to prison terms ranging from one month to five years. In the remaining cases, the suspects were either acquitted for

lack of evidence, failure to attend court or the victim's withdrawal of the complaint for fear of retaliation. Progress has been slow, however, in the investigation and prosecution of cases of sexual violence in connection with the post-election crisis of 2010 and 2011.

38. On 3 June, the President signed a decree on the creation of a national committee to combat conflict-related sexual violence, which is mandated to coordinate the Government's efforts to prevent and respond to such violence. On 11 July, UNOCI and OHCHR released a joint report on crimes of rape and their prosecution in Côte d'Ivoire, following which two ministerial circulars were adopted on the prosecution of rape and the registration of complaints for gender-based violence. On 19 and 20 July, to ensure the effective implementation of the action plan of the armed forces on conflict-related sexual violence, UNOCI and the army conducted a high-level advocacy session for army leadership, which resulted in the signing of undertakings by 30 army and 8 national gendarmerie commanders to combat conflict-related sexual violence.

39. My Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict visited Côte d'Ivoire in May and November 2016 and discussed with the Prime Minister and members of the Government the support under her mandate for addressing remaining challenges in the light of the impending withdrawal of UNOCI. In line with a United Nations workshop held in Abidjan from 14 to 22 September, my Special Representative urged the Government to implement the national programme on gender-based violence launched in June.

#### **Child protection**

40. UNOCI recorded the lowest number of cases of violations against children, from 1 April 2016 to 15 January 2017. There were 10 violations against children, including 3 violations of the right to life against three boys; 3 cases of rape and other sexual violence by State agents, including 2 by army elements, against three girls; 3 violations of the right to liberty and security against six boys; and 1 violation of the right to a fair trial against one boy.

41. UNOCI continued to work on strengthening the juvenile justice system, in particular for the national judiciary to implement decisions consistent with the principle of the "best interest of the child". A national judicial protection policy for minors and youth, drafted with UNOCI support, remains to be adopted by the Ministry of Justice. Modules on child protection were also incorporated into the military academy's training curricula.

#### **Gender**

42. UNOCI continued to support the convening of platforms that allow women in politics and in civil society organizations to discuss political issues, such as gender equality and women's rights provisions in the new Constitution, as well as the selection of candidates for the legislative election. To encourage and enhance women's participation in social cohesion efforts and confidence-building in identified hotspots, three quick-impact projects implemented in 2015 and 2016 were inaugurated, including the rehabilitation of women's market spaces and women's and young people's meeting spaces and the construction of a local food production facility. UNOCI also supported the establishment of focal points for gender and

security sector reform in the armed forces and began 12 quick-impact projects to establish gender desks in nine police and three gendarmerie stations, which are intended to assist victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Awareness-raising on gender and women and peace and security concerns continued for uniformed and civilian personnel of UNOCI.

### **Economic situation**

43. The Ivorian economy continued to experience solid growth and a controlled fiscal and external balance. As a result, the country is expected to achieve a real growth rate of gross domestic product of approximately 8.7 per cent in 2016 (which is below the 8.9 per cent achieved in 2015). The Government adopted a draft budget that has increased by 11.2 per cent since 2015. Budget implementation was satisfactory, with revenues exceeding objectives and higher expenses than expected due to an acceleration of the implementation of public investment projects. Spending to reduce poverty increased by 10.5 per cent on average (since 2015) in the context of the significant progress made in the implementation of structural reforms. The budget deficit is expected to stand at 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product in 2016 (against 3.7 per cent in 2015). The external accounts continued to improve and the level of external debt (36 per cent of gross domestic product) remains sustainable, notwithstanding a further increase in public spending. Inflation remained moderate, or less than 2.5 per cent, in 2016. Notwithstanding the progress made in these areas, economic growth still needs to become more inclusive, with continued efforts to combat inequality.

44. Côte d'Ivoire continues to assist private sector development by promoting business opportunities in the agriculture, industry, mining and services sectors. The Government has placed specific emphasis on improving the business environment. In November 2012, it had enacted an investment code. Four years later, it resulted in businesses being given a total exemption from the value added tax, a 40 per cent reduction in customs duties and tax exemption on profits, and continues to create a window for investment and foreign trade.

### **Humanitarian situation**

45. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes helped the Government to meet the humanitarian needs of some 3,500 people displaced by the intercommunal violence in Bouna in March, most of whom had returned to their places of origin by July.

46. By 31 July, the last of the some 25,000 illegal occupants of the Mont Péko National Park were moved from their settlements, completing a government-led evacuation. Notwithstanding a year-long awareness-raising campaign, the evacuation created humanitarian needs for those displaced, including 18,300 children and 24,000 people from receiving communities. Joint assessments revealed acute needs in food security, health, water, sanitation and shelter. The response was well coordinated through the enlarged coordination committee and a specific local committee established in Duékoué. In early September, the Emergency Relief Coordinator approved a grant of \$2.1 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund targeting 20,000 beneficiaries with food, non-food-items, shelter and direct assistance in water and sanitation, health and protection sectors. Given that the

affected population is predominantly Burkinabé, the Government, supported by the International Organization for Migration, is exploring options to assist the voluntary repatriation of those willing to return to Burkina Faso. A Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire joint commission was established in October to discuss the repatriation.

47. On 8 September, the Minister of Health announced the lifting of Ebola-related prevention measures, including an end to the closure of the border with Guinea and Liberia (see para. 26 above). Consequently, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was able to resume the voluntary repatriation process of Ivoirian refugees from the Nzérékoré region of Guinea. Notwithstanding the closure of the border, repatriations from Liberia had been continuing through a humanitarian corridor since December 2015. Overall, the repatriation process continues mainly from the camps and host communities in Liberia. From December 2015 to 15 January 2017, UNHCR facilitated the return of 20,376 refugees, mainly from Liberia. Some 20,000 Ivoirian refugees remain in Liberia.

48. On 9 September, the Prime Minister signed a national action plan on disaster risk reduction for the period 2017-2020, which is part of the Government's commitment to implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in order to demonstrate its support for durable development goals.

### **III. Deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire**

#### **Military component**

49. Given the overall improved security conditions on the ground and the progress made by Côte d'Ivoire in assuming its security responsibilities, pursuant to resolution [2284 \(2016\)](#), UNOCI continued its incremental troop drawdown. By 31 August, UNOCI had withdrawn 1,969 military personnel, reaching its authorized strength of 2,000 personnel. This comprises one infantry battalion deployed in the southwest (650), the quick reaction force (650), a headquarters protection unit (300) and associated enablers, specifically aviation (176) and signals (66), as well as 58 staff officers and 100 military observers, consolidated at nine team sites primarily in the south-west.

50. The final withdrawal of the UNOCI military component is continuing and scheduled to be completed by mid-February 2017. The Senegalese quick reaction force with the associated aviation unit are scheduled to deploy to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Arrangements to deploy an advance party of up to 250 military personnel directly from UNOCI to MINUSMA are under way. The rest of the contingent will repatriate to Senegal for reconfiguration and training and deploy to MINUSMA by mid-August. The remaining military headquarters personnel will leave Côte d'Ivoire by 30 April.

#### **Police component**

51. UNOCI police prioritized efforts to enhance the capacity of national law enforcement agencies, with a focus on operational-level support for the national police, gendarmerie and the transnational crime unit. Pursuant to resolution [2284](#)

(2016), UNOCI repatriated three formed police units and 250 individual police officers, reaching the authorized strength of 670 police personnel by December 2016, including three 140-strong formed police units deployed to Abidjan, Bouaké and Daloa, as well as 250 individual police officers. In order to complete the withdrawal of all UNOCI police by April 2017, the repatriation of the remaining three formed units has been brought forward to mid-February. Team sites decreased from 23 to 12 as of December 2016 and, by February, only those in Abidjan, Bouaké and Daloa will remain, with the latter two closing in March.

#### **Civilian component**

52. UNOCI is implementing a phased drawdown of its civilian staff on the basis of a plan that prioritizes the requirements for mandate implementation through 30 April 2017 and completion of the transition and the closure of UNOCI by 30 June. In June, September and December 2016, 154, 48 and 360 civilian staff, respectively, left UNOCI. Further reductions in civilian staff will be effected on a monthly basis through 30 April, at which point only 159 personnel will remain, including 148 associated with the liquidation of UNOCI and 11 supporting my Special Representative in fulfilling the mandate relating to political facilitation in accordance with paragraph 18 of resolution 2284 (2016). The efforts of UNOCI to assist national staff in finding employment has resulted in some being recruited by the Government, the United Nations country team, other peacekeeping operations, international and non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny pour la recherche de la paix also recruited 19 former staff of the UNOCI FM radio station to progressively take over and begin operating the Operation's broadcasting services by 28 February.

#### **Safety and security of personnel**

53. Criminology and traffic accidents remained the main concern for staff. From 15 March 2016 to 15 January 2017, five criminal acts were perpetrated against United Nations personnel. Sixteen cases of road accidents were registered involving United Nations vehicles, of which none was fatal. Five United Nations vehicles were stoned during various incidents.

#### **Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse**

54. UNOCI continued to work towards full compliance with my zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and other misconduct. Preventive measures recommended in my report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/70/729) were implemented, such as an improvement in living conditions in barracks, the regular inspection of camps and the strict enforcement of conduct-related directives. From 1 April to 15 January 2017, 7 category 1 and 14 category 2 allegations were reported, including 5 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse that are under investigation.

## **IV. Transition of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire**

55. Together with the Government, the United Nations country team, bilateral and multilateral partners, UNOCI mapped the international community's support for

Côte d'Ivoire with regard to challenges remaining in key tasks that would continue after its withdrawal. Six thematic technical committees were established to discuss social cohesion; human rights and transitional justice; security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, weapons management and civilian disarmament; defence, security and law enforcement; and communications, specifically the operation of the ONUCI FM radio station. The result was the development of a handover plan for UNOCI signed on 17 October by all stakeholders. In it, key residual functions and implementation partners, together with the resource requirements necessary, are identified.

56. To support the implementation of the handover plan, the United Nations country team developed a \$50 million joint programme for peace consolidation in the post-UNOCI period, which took into account the existing "One UN" programmatic framework for Côte d'Ivoire and the new national development plan for the period 2016-2020. In addition, the United Nations country team developed proposals for programmatic activities, which are aligned with the Operation's mandate and supported by assessed contributions from its 2016/17 budget. These activities are in the areas of social cohesion and national reconciliation, community disarmament, cross-border stabilization, security sector reform and human rights, with a focus on sexual and gender-based violence. In parallel, options were explored for the Peacebuilding Fund to support the transition process. Since 2015, the Fund has provided \$12 million in support of peace consolidation.

57. Further cross-border initiatives have been mainstreamed into a project on cross-border cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia for sustainable peace and social cohesion, supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia, to be implemented in the southern area of the border between the two countries. From 1 to 4 November, UNOCI hosted a mission of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and UNDP conflict prevention experts to consider options for continued support for the Governments concerned and the Mano River Union joint border security and confidence-building units in the western border areas with Liberia. The mission identified a number of challenges that continue to be faced by Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in the border areas, including the unemployment of young people, the marginalization of border communities, poor infrastructure, drugs, weapons and ammunition trafficking and the illegal occupation of land. Recommendations were made to address them, including strengthening the capacity of the Mano River Union. Following the departure of UNOCI, UNOWAS will continue to monitor developments in the country within the context of its regional mandate.

58. The Ivorian National Security Council will continue the overall coordination and monitoring of the security sector reform strategy, with the support of a consultative group comprising national institutions and international partners. It is also in the process of assuming activities with regard to weapons management, the residual caseload of former combatants and linking reinsertion to reintegration. Social cohesion and intercommunal dialogue initiatives were transferred to the Government and the United Nations country team. UNOCI continues to transfer its human rights monitoring, reporting and investigation activities to the National Human Rights Commission. Technical support for the armed forces and gendarmerie has shifted to donor partners, while that for law enforcement agencies will be delegated to the United Nations country team and donors. A joint technical

committee has been working on the transfer of the ONUCI FM radio station to the Government. A memorandum of understanding has been concluded and the broadcasting studio has been set up at the Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny pour la recherche de la paix, while the Government has taken charge of the 24 transmitter sites.

## V. Financial aspects

59. The General Assembly, by its resolutions [71/271](#), appropriated the amount of \$171.9 million for the maintenance of the Operation for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, inclusive of the amount \$153.0 million previously authorized for the Operation for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2016 under the terms of the resolution of its resolution [70/272](#).

60. As at 4 January 2017, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNOCI Special Account amounted to \$25.4 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amounted to \$1,801.7 million.

61. Reimbursement of troop/formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 October 2016, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 September 2016 in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

## VI. Observations

62. Côte d'Ivoire saw the further extension of State authority and the deployment of public services, the strengthening of democratic institutions, progress in security sector reform and steady economic development. The peaceful, transparent and credible presidential elections of 2015, the constitutional referendum in October and the legislative election in December have demonstrated the maturity of the Ivorian democratic process and the will of the people to articulate political differences within the institutional framework. While the wounds of the past will take time to heal, I am encouraged to see that Ivorians are progressively developing a common sense of nation and shared national pride, which has the potential to break down political, ethnic and religious barriers. Efforts to pursue a meaningful national reconciliation process must continue with the full engagement of all stakeholders to prevent violence and conflict in the future, including with the assistance of the United Nations country team through the implementation of the handover plan (see para. 55 above). These efforts should be supported by an increased drive by the Government to distribute national wealth more equitably for the benefit of all Ivorians.

63. In 2016, Côte d'Ivoire peacefully adopted its new Constitution through a popular referendum. In underscoring the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of Côte d'Ivoire and putting an emphasis on the importance of tolerance and dialogue, the new Constitution could serve as an instrument of reconciliation and stability. It provides the Government with an important means of addressing the root causes of the past civil war, including land tenure, nationality and identity. At the same time, continued instability triggered by issues relating to land and belonging still require

decisive action, including in achieving social cohesion. I urge the Government to address the outstanding caseload of former combatants, while ensuring that they all have reintegration opportunities to be able to constructively contribute to Ivorian society. Concrete measures need to be put in place to link short-term reinsertion to the longer-term reintegration of former combatants in order to consolidate achievements.

64. I commend all political actors, the electoral authorities and the Ivorian population for holding peaceful legislative elections on 18 December with no serious security incidents reported. The resumed participation of the opposition in them marks a promising change after years of boycott. The incoming multiparty National Assembly has the potential to promote parliamentary cooperation. I urge opposition leaders to continue to constructively engage in dialogue that the President and his Government have extended to them since 2012. I am encouraged to see that forward looking elements of the opposition have begun a serious rethinking of their role and place in the new Ivorian reality in an attempt to break free of the anchors holding them to the past.

65. The security situation throughout Côte d'Ivoire has improved significantly. The Government is addressing security challenges, in particular in the west. Notwithstanding isolated incidents, the decreasing trend in armed attacks gives reason for optimism. The holding of the referendum and legislative election also attests to the capacity of its security sector to provide a stable security environment. However, the protests in January 2017 by Ivorian soldiers, who were followed by gendarmes and other related personnel, demonstrated the remaining fragility of the Ivorian security sector. While the Government managed to reach an agreement with the protesters without any security incident, those protests showed an institutional gap in terms of training and discipline within the armed forces, which remains one of the key challenges for the security sector. There is also a continued need to enhance the cohesion and operationalization of the security agencies, especially of the gendarmerie and police, while improving their equipment and addressing conditions of service. In addition, the legitimacy and accountability of security institutions remain crucial to improving the confidence of the population, which has yet to improve. Their transformation will require concerted efforts to implement the military programming and internal security planning laws, as well as the law on the organization of the armed forces. Finally, strong democratic control and oversight of the security sector needs to be established and an increased compliance by security providers with good governance standards ensured.

66. I remain concerned about continuing perceptions of one-sided justice and impunity for human rights violations. In this regard, I reiterate my call that all perpetrators of such violations, irrespective of their political affiliation, must be held accountable. Persistent human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, are also deeply concerning. Urgent action is required to fight impunity for such crimes and to ensure the protection of civilians, in particular women and children. The development of the capacity of national institutions to promote and protect human rights must remain a priority if peace in Côte d'Ivoire is to be sustained. This would require the continued strengthening of the National Human Rights Commission and raising the awareness of and training on sexual violence and gender-based violence for law institutions and service providers. The

United Nations remains committed to promoting and protecting human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, in close collaboration with the Government.

67. The attack in Grand-Bassam in March 2016 confirmed that no country in West Africa is immune to the scourge of terrorism. Efforts since undertaken by the Ivorian authorities, in close cooperation with neighbouring countries, to step up measures to tackle the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism in the subregion and cross-border insecurity are encouraging and must continue. The United Nations remains committed to helping to strengthen such regional collaboration and support the development of comprehensive strategies for addressing this threat.

68. The completion of the peacekeeping phase of the United Nations engagement is a turning point for both Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations. As the Government vigorously pursues its ambitious political and economic development agenda, UNOCI is in the process of delegating to the United Nations country team challenges that will remain after its withdrawal. An agreement to this effect was signed between all stakeholders concerned on 17 October. I welcome this transition, which will mark the most recent successful completion of a peacekeeping operation in West Africa since the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone in 2005. However, additional resources are required to enable the Government and/or the United Nations country team to perform critical tasks to ensure the sustainability of the gains achieved. I therefore reiterate my call upon all stakeholders, in particular bilateral partners and donors, to provide the resources needed to facilitate the transformation of the United Nations engagement in Côte d'Ivoire.

69. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to all past and present civilian and military personnel of UNOCI, as well as to my Special Representative, Aïchatou Mindaoudou, and all previous leaders of the Operation, who have made the successful completion of UNOCI's mandate and the Organization's peacekeeping presence possible. My appreciation also goes to the troop-contributing and police-contributing countries, donor countries, regional and multilateral organizations and non-governmental organizations that continue to provide invaluable support to Côte d'Ivoire. I wish to pay special tribute to the essential role played by the African Union and the Economic Community of West Africa States throughout the Ivorian peace process, which facilitated the achievements attained by UNOCI. The Government and people of Côte d'Ivoire deserve commendation for their remarkable resilience and for making excellent use of the support offered by international partners to restore peace and stability in their country.

