



Cote d'Ivoire - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 7 & Wednesday 8 June 2016

Information on the current security situation; Information on the current political situation; Are pro-Gbagbo defendants including senior FPI figures being released

A report issued in April 2016 by the *United Nations Security Council* states:

“Welcoming Côte d’Ivoire’s remarkable progress towards lasting peace, stability and economic prosperity, the Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in that country for a final period, extending it until 30 June 2017” (United Nations Security Council (28 April 2016) *Security Council Authorizes Final Extension for United Nations Operation In Côte d’Ivoire, Welcoming Country’s ‘Remarkable’ Progress - resolutions 2283 (2016) and 2284 (2016)*).

A report issued in March 2016 by *Human Rights Watch* points out that:

“In October 2015, Ivorians gave President Alassane Ouattara another five-year mandate in an electoral process that the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States considered largely free and fair” (Human Rights Watch (22 March 2016) *Justice Reestablishes Balance”, Delivering Credible Accountability for Serious Abuses in Côte d’Ivoire*, p.1).

In March 2016 a document released by the *United Nations Security Council* states:

“During the period under review, the President of Côte d’Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, initiated a series of consultations with stakeholders aimed at furthering national reconciliation and social cohesion” (United Nations Security Council (31 March 2016) *Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (S/2016/297)*, p.1).

This publication also notes that:

“The security situation remained stable but fragile. For most of the reporting period, the environment was characterized by labour and student strikes, youth demonstrations and intercommunal conflict” (ibid, p.3).

Amnesty International in May 2016 notes that:

“...today’s trial of former first lady Simone Gbagbo is an important step towards ending impunity in Côte d’Ivoire...” (Amnesty International (9 May 2016) *Côte d’Ivoire: Trial of Simone Gbagbo opens*).

This document also states that:

“Simone Gbagbo’s husband, the former President Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé, an ally of Gbagbo’s and leader of a militant youth group, are currently on trial before the ICC for crimes against humanity in relation to the post-election violence” (ibid).

The *United States Department of State* in April 2016 issued a report commenting on event of the preceding year including stating:

“Opposition and government representatives offered differing assessments of the number of politically affiliated detainees remaining in custody. The FPI party split during the year, and the two factions offered differing numbers of party-affiliated detainees remaining in custody. As of November the main FPI branch reported 96 remaining detainees, while the hard-line faction reported 413. In December the government released 38 politically affiliated detainees” (United States Department of State (13 April 2016) *2015 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Cote d'Ivoire*).

A document published in January 2016 by the *Agence France-Presse* states:

“Ivory Coast's President Alassane Ouattara announced Thursday in his New Year's address that he had reduced the sentences of 3,100 prisoners held over bloody post-election unrest” (Agence France-Presse (1 January 2016) *I. Coast president frees prisoners held over post-vote violence*).

Voice of America states in a document published in January 2016 that:

“The leader of the opposition Ivorian Popular Front said he saw "real progress" in his meeting of more than three hours Thursday with Ivory Coast's president...Thursday's meeting was requested by the FPI, mainly to discuss the release of the remaining political prisoners taken during that post-electoral crisis. On that, too, Affi Nguessan said progress was made. "The principle of their release was agreed on," he said” (Voice of America (21 January 2016) *Ivorian Leader, Opposition Delegation Discuss Reconciliation, Political Prisoners*).

Voice of America in April 2016 notes:

“Five years after the end of Ivory Coast's second civil war, the government has released a list of over 300,000 people it considers as entitled to compensation for crimes suffered during both wars and as a result of political crises stretching back to 1990” (Voice of America (20 April 2016) *Ivory Coast to Compensate Thousands of Conflict Victims*).

The *Bertelsmann Foundation* in 2016 states in a report that:

“Since 2011, President Ouattara and his government have strived for normalization and the extension of state authority throughout the territory, which was largely completed in 2013. Sporadic clashes between the government and supporters of Gbagbo still occurred in 2014; as did raids by militant groups, for example in the Bas-Sassandra district, and attacks on UNOCI forces. Further problems remain in the form of the still incomplete cantonnement of several thousand former combatants and the continuing weak territorial control in two provinces that border Liberia (where returning refugees and militias represent a threat to the state's monopoly)” (Bertelsmann Foundation (2016) *BTI 2016; Côte d'Ivoire Country Report, 2016*, p.5).

In March 2016 a document released by the *Institute for Security Studies* notes:

“Arbitrary arrests and detentions of opposition figures – primarily from the former ruling party, the Ivorian Popular Front (Front populaire ivoirien, or FPI), add to criticism of how the post-election crisis has been managed by the Ivorian justice system...The release of some prisoners close to the former government – some provisionally – and the unfreezing of assets, have generally been interpreted as a result of political bargaining. This has also been reinforcing the impression that acts are guided by political, rather than legal consideration” (Institute for Security Studies (9 March 2016) *Can Gbagbo's ICC trial quench Côte d'Ivoire's thirst for justice?*).

In March 2016 *IRIN News* states in a report that:

“The attacks that killed 16 people yesterday at a beach resort in Cote d'Ivoire were shocking and brutal, but not entirely unexpected” (IRIN News (14 March 2016) *Is Ivory Coast attack the new normal?*).

This document also notes that:

“Authorities in Cote d'Ivoire were well aware of the threat and had prevented several attacks recently...” (ibid).

In March 2016 a publication issued by the *Agence France-Presse* notes that:

“Clashes between arable farmers and nomadic herders in northeast Ivory Coast have left 19 people dead, authorities announced Tuesday, raising an earlier estimate of last week's violence” (Agence France-Presse (29 March 2016) *19 killed in clashes between I. Coast farmers and herders*).

In April 2016 the *European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office* states in a report:

“As a result of violent clashes that started on 29 March between native farmers and migrant pastoralists in Bouna, northeastern Côte d'Ivoire, 27 people have been killed and more than 40 wounded” (European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (6 April 2016) *Côte d'Ivoire - Conflict (ECHO, UNHCR, NGOs) (ECHO Daily Flash of 6 April 2016)*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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