

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Ivory Coast

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>-88</td> <td>-88</td> <td>x</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>-88</td> <td>-88</td> <td>x</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>-88</td> <td>-88</td> <td>x</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>0</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change		Polity:	-88	-88	x		Democ:	-88	-88	x		Autoc:	-88	-88	x		Durable:		0			Tentative:		No			
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SCODE	IVO	CCODE	437	Date of Report	1 June 2011																										
Polity IV Component Variables																															
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																										
-88	-88	-88	-88	-88	-88																										
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																															
End Date		6 April 2007		Begin Date																											
Polity Fragmentation: No																															
Constitution	1960; revised several times, most recently in 1998; 23 July 2000																														
Executive(s)	President Alassane Ouattara (RDR), directly elected 31 October and 28 November 2010; 32.1%, 54.1%																														
Legislature	Unicameral: National Assembly (225 seats; most recent elections: 10 December 2000 and 14 January 2001, boycotted by RDR) Ivorian People's Front (FPI): 96 Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI): 94 Rally for the Republicans (RDR): 5 Other parties: 6 Independents: 22 Vacant: 2																														
Judiciary	Supreme Court																														

Narrative Description:¹

Summary of Transition: (-88)

Between 1960 and 1990 a small clan of elite politicians maintained a remarkable degree of political stability in Cote d'Ivoire, at least for African standards, by playing musical chairs with key government posts and by dealing with the political opposition through a combination of state patronage and government repression. After thirty years of one-party rule by founding President Felix Houphouet-Boigny and his Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI), however, student-led demonstrations in 1990 initiated a process of limited political liberalization in this relatively prosperous West African country. Despite the expansion

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

of democratic participation in Cote d'Ivoire, government manipulation of the electoral process ensured the continuation of PDCI hegemony. Henri Konan Bedie, who replaced Houphouet-Boigny as head of government upon his death in 1993, was elected to the office of president in 1995 in an electoral campaign marred by widespread violence, government manipulation of electoral laws, an "active" opposition boycott, and severe limitations on opposition assembly and speech.

The PDCI, under the strong leadership of Houphouet-Boigny and Bedie, dominated the political arena in Cote d'Ivoire up until the late 1990s. Its domination of the legislative and judicial branches of government ensured only limited opposition to presidential initiatives. Presidential control was further enhanced in June 1998 when the National Assembly adopted numerous amendments to the constitution that expanded the power of the chief executive (although public outrage forced the President to rescind some of these powers in December of that year).

In an effort to secure his reelection in 2000, President Bedie sought, once again, to manipulate the vote by excluding his primary political opponent, Allesane Ouattara, on the grounds that he failed to meet the requisite citizenship criteria for candidacy. This decision produced massive street protests in late 1999 that subsequently triggered the military to directly intervene into the political arena for the first time in the history of the Ivory Coast. In a relatively bloodless pre-Christmas coup in 1999, General Guei forced the resignation of President Bedie and promised to hold democratic elections within a year. While General Guei initially declared that "power did not interest him," nevertheless, as the 2000 election approached General Guei's desire to hold onto power became clear. Relying on the same political tactics that he had initially condemned in his predecessor, General Guei sought to manipulate the electoral process in his favor by barring his primary political opponents – Alesane Ouattara (the RDR candidate, whose political cause Guei had initially supported) and Emile-Contant Bombet (the PDCI candidate) – on citizenship grounds.

Despite condemnation by the international community, elections were held on 22 October 2000. These elections were boycotted by both the RDR and PDCI. When the only electoral challenger to General Guei, Laurent Gbagbo, appeared to be poised to win the 2000 election, General Guei attempted to halt the counting of the votes on October 24. After facing massive street demonstrations in the aftermath of the elections, General Guei was forced to accept the electoral victory of Gbagbo, who was sworn into office on 26 October 2000. Supported to some extent by the military, President Gbagbo was able to quash demands by Ouattara and his supporters to hold new elections that would include those candidates originally barred by General Guei. Electoral controversy also marred the subsequent legislative elections, held in December 2000, as Ouattara was once again barred from running for elected office.

President Gbagbo spent most of his tenure in office trying to rally military support for his government. While the leader of the armed forces, who was previously loyal to General Guei, declared his allegiance to President Gbagbo, the depth of loyalty within the armed forces to Gbagbo was tenuous. While the military has historically eschewed politics, nevertheless, it has a long history of factional divisions. These factional divisions were evident after the coup by Guei in 1999 and were once again evident after the failed coup attempt of January 2001. Responding to a new law that restricted citizenship rules for presidential candidates even further, military forces in the north of the country led a successful mutiny and secured much of the northern half of the Ivory Coast on 19 September 2002. These rebels, initially known as the Cote d'Ivoire Patriotic Movement (MPCI) but now known as the New Forces, also secured control of several major cities in the western half of the country. Despite several failed peace agreements, this conflict continued until early 2007, when the most recent set of peace agreements was reached.

The degree of executive constraints in Cote d'Ivoire has been in flux since the 24 December 1999 coup, and has been dramatically changed by the ongoing civil war. Despite his professed democratic goals, General Guei's short tenure in office was marked by only a limited degree of horizontal accountability. Neither the PDCI nor the institutions of government provided a serious check to his policy initiatives. However, the unwillingness of the military to back his efforts to manipulate the 2000 elections indicated that his authority was not unlimited in nature. The election of President Gbagbo further complicated this already confusing situation. The president's authority to act is seriously limited by his relatively small constituency, questionable mandate, and strong and active opposition. On the other hand, the absence of an empowered constitutional opposition leaves the president in control of the government with few institutional constraints. The attitude of the military was crucial, and their internal divisions ultimately led to the civil war currently embroiling the country.

Prior to the Christmas 1999 coup opposition parties were allowed to operate in Cote d'Ivoire but their activities were closely supervised to ensure the hegemony of the ruling PDCI. Through a dual track policy of economic co-optation and the legal manipulation of electoral laws, the PDCI was able to restrict

the power of political opponents without provoking the type of political turmoil associated with its neighbors. Integral to the success of this dual track policy was the continued economic prosperity of the country and the inclusive ethnic strategies of the government. However, as the economy weakened during the 1990s, ethnicity became an increasingly volatile and divisive issue in this country. The country's civil war, ostensibly to right the wrongs associated with citizenship rules, reflects the ethnic diversity issue.

Over sixty minor and four major (Baoule, Bete, Senoufou, and Malinke) ethnic groups are found in the Ivory Coast. While the Christian Baoule people of central and eastern Cote d'Ivoire have long maintained a position of political supremacy in this country (both Houphouet-Boigny and Bedie were members), President Houphouet-Boigny was able to keep the "tribalization" of his country at bay by distributing state patronage widely amongst all ethnic groups. Exacerbating factional tensions within this country, however, were the large immigrant communities that constitute an approximate forty percent of the total population, a proportion which grew steadily in the 1990s. Initially encouraged to migrate to Cote d'Ivoire to work on the large cocoa and coffee plantations, citizens from Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, Guinea and Liberia have become a powerful political force in this country. Ironically, President Houphouet-Boigny encouraged the political efficacy of these groups when he provided them with the right to vote. However, as the economy has worsened in recent years, and the hegemony of the PDCI has weakened, political relations between "Ivorite" and "non-Ivorite" communities have become increasingly divisive.

In addition to the increased harassment of foreign nationals in Cote d'Ivoire, government officials have increasingly used the ethnic card to secure their hold on power. President Bedie, for example, in an effort to secure his electoral victory in the 2000 election, introduced the policy of "Ivorite" to isolate his primary political opponent, Alassane Ouattara, from the political process. This policy effectively divided the country into "pure Ivorians" and "circumstantial Ivorians" (i.e., immigrants and their descendents). Associated with this division is 2000 law (supported by the Supreme Court) to ban all "circumstantial Ivorians" from running for political office. The main, although not exclusive, target of this policy was Alassane Ouattara. Mr. Ouattara, a northern Muslim, was first barred from running for president by President Bedie on the grounds that he had non-Ivorian parents (a charge that he denies). While the coup by General Guei in 1999 seemed at first to be good news for Ouattara, like Bedie, Guei soon resorted to the "Ivorite" policy to maintain his hold on power. His successor, President Gbagbo, has relied on the "Ivorite" policy to sideline Mr. Ouattara from the political process, sparking a factional conflict that led to the fragmentation of the polity. The beginning of this factional competition was most clearly demonstrated by the post-election violence of October 2000 when pro-Ouattara and pro-Gbagbo forces clashed. As political tensions between Gbagbo and Ouattara increased, ethnic tensions between Ivory Coast nationals and its immigrant communities from Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea have also escalated. Many people have been killed in civil war, political unrest and ethnic strife in this country since the presidential elections of October 2000 and the mutiny that followed in 2002.

Despite the serious ethnic and political problems facing this country, there were some promising signs in 2001 that the Ivory Coast would soon return to the stability that defined the pre-1999 era. As a result of EU pressure, the main opposition party, Ouattara's Rally of the Republicans, participated in the March 2001 municipal elections. In these elections, which were deemed free and fair by EU observers, the RDR won a plurality of municipal government posts, including one in Gbagbo's hometown. Moreover, the last three months of 2001 were dominated by the convening of the National Reconciliation Forum. This meeting, which included representatives from all major political parties and civil society, sought to outline a common ground on how to address the major social and political issues that produced the social unrest of the past two years. Nearly a month after this meeting a twenty-four point document was presented to the public, including proposal to grant Ouattara the right to apply for a certificate of nationality. Also included was a pledge by the "Big Four" to abide by the rules of democratic politics, the establishment of a national electoral commission and the call for the state to end the harassment and victimization of "foreigners" and citizens of northern Cote d'Ivoire.

Despite these promising political signs, 2002 proved to be highly volatile and unstable. First, a new law was enacted that effectively barred Alassane Ouattara from standing in future presidential elections. For many Muslims, this act confirmed their belief that they were being actively marginalized from the political process. Moreover, in September 2002 heavy shooting broke out in Abidjan after a failed coup attempt, allegedly orchestrated by General Guei with the support of Burkina Faso. At least four hundred people were killed, including General Guei and his wife. In response, government security forces cracked down on all political opponents of the Gbagbo regime, including Ouattara, who sought refuge in

the French Ambassador's residence. In an effort to consolidate their political base, army mutineers took over the hinterland towns of Bouake and Korhogo and announced the formation of an insurgent group, the Cote d'Ivoire Patriotic Movement (MPCI). After serious fighting in the fall of 2002, the rebels signed a cease-fire in mid-October and African peacekeepers were dispatched to the country. Despite the cease-fire, three rebel groups – collectively known as the “New Forces” – continued to control the northern half of the country and threatened to bring fighting to the streets of Abidjan. In January 2003 President Gbagbo accepted a peace deal which proposed the formation of a power-sharing government of national unity. The government of national unity would consist of Gbagbo and his followers as well as representatives from the G7 (the three rebel factions plus the four main opposition political parties).

One year after the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Peace Agreement in Paris in January 2003, the fighting had stopped but the country remained deeply divided and reconciliation continued to be an elusive ideal. Nine rebel ministers joined the national unity government in mid-April 2003 but, in frustration over president Gbagbo's reluctance to move forward the peace effort, staged a walk out of their government posts between October 2003 and January 2004. Although the rebels rejoined the cabinet in December 2003, they made it clear that they had no intention of disarming their forces (originally scheduled for March 2004) prior to the planned October 2005 elections. As a result, suspicion between the two sides remained deep and the security situation continued to be tense and unstable. Further contributing to the instability in Cote d'Ivoire was the rampant lawlessness in rebel controlled areas of the north and the rising levels of ethnic violence between local tribesmen and immigrant settlers in the cocoa and coffee growing belt in the south and west of the country.

In early 2004 the UN approved the deployment of a 6,000 member peacekeeping force in preparation for the scheduled elections in October 2005. Despite international support, the political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire continued to deteriorate. In March 2004 120 supporters of the G7 were killed by security forces after trying to stage a demonstration for peace. In response, all twenty-six members of the G7 withdrew their support of, and participation in, the government of national unity. In July 2004 the government and members of the G7 agreed to a new peace proposal. The Accra Three Agreement forwarded three objectives: (1) the expansion of economic and political rights for West African immigrants living in Cote d'Ivoire; (2) the disarmament of rebel forces by 15 October 2004; and (3) the ending of the five-month boycott of the government of national unity by members of the G7. While the government of national unity was reconvened in August, little progress was made on the other two objectives due to the continued intransigence of Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) party in the National Assembly.

In late 2004 the fragile political peace began to unravel. In October 2004 President Gbagbo asked Prime Minister Diarra to step down. Prime Minister Diarra was supported by the G7 ministers and had been widely seen as a strong voice for peace in Cote d'Ivoire. Moreover, the leader of the New Forces accused Gbagbo of seeking to destabilize the north of the country and, subsequently, called back his ministers from the government of national unity. In response, President Gbagbo launched an air raid against the rebel stronghold of Bouake in early November, killing nine French peacekeepers. The renewed violence triggered political instability in the capital of Abidjan. French troops restored peace to the capital city and, in the process, destroyed almost the entire Ivorian air force in retaliation for the killing of its peacekeepers in Bouake. Led by Gbagbo's Young Patriots Militia, anti-French demonstrations subsequently engulfed the capital resulting in fifty-seven dead, 2,000 injured and over 9,000 French residents displaced. Despite the continuation of political violence, some progress in the direction of peace was made in December when the National Assembly passed a constitutional amendment permitting politicians with neither an Ivorian mother nor father to run for president.

The international community involved in the transition government, in conjunction with the United Nations Security Council, appointed Charles Konan Banny to the post of transitional Prime Minister in December 2005, to retain his office until scheduled elections for president in October 2006 (ultimately delayed until early 2008). In April 2005 rebel forces began to disarm, but it was not until the spring of 2007 that the Ouagadougou peace agreement (brokered by President Compaore of Burkina Faso) was reached. On 4 March 2007 the government and the New Forces reached a power-sharing, peace settlement, and New Forces leader Guillaume Soro was subsequently appointed Prime Minister; this is reported to be the fourteen peace agreement reached in the civil war. In April the UN-maintained line between rebel forces in the north and the central government was dismantled, followed by disarmament of the western territories in May. Despite an assassination attempt on Soro's life and some hesitation in the implementation of peace terms from both sides, the restoration of central authority appeared to remain on track throughout 2009. Of particular importance was the continued calm; as no substantial fighting had been reported since 2005.

The power-sharing transitional government that ended the civil war was significantly challenged by President Laurent Gbagbo's decision on 12 February 2010 to dissolve both the government and the electoral commission. In the face of mounting civil unrest, Gbagbo made concessions on the leadership of the electoral commission and on 28 February the opposition rejoined the power-sharing government. However, the presidential elections held on 28 November 2010 unleashed a political crisis that divided the country once again into rival territories enforced by ethnic militias: the north and west supported Ouattara and recognized his victory in the presidential election, while the southeast continued to support Gbagbo and his refusal to cede executive authority. After international mediation efforts failed to dissuade Gbagbo to transfer authority, forces loyal to Ouattara began to march toward the coast. In late March 2011 these forces entered the country's principal city, Abidjan, in an effort to force President Laurent Gbagbo to cede power. Forces allied to Ouattara had already captured the country's capital, Yanoussoukro, and the southern port town of San Pedro. Gbagbo, who claimed that electoral fraud in the north of the country led to his defeat, maintained his hold on power in the south by relying on the coercive support of violent militia groups and death squads. The Young Patriots student movement, led by Charles Ble Goude, had become the backbone of Gbagbo's military power since the election. Ouattara, who has long denied playing any role in the 2002 attempted coup, nonetheless, became increasingly reliant on the military support of the New Forces, and its leader Guillaume Soro, who maintained controlled the north of the country since the civil war. Soro, who became prime minister in a power-sharing deal with Gbagbo in 2007, allied with Ouattara in the wake of the election after the president-elect offered him the post of prime minister in his administration. Over 500 people were killed in the post-election violence and over 1 million fled their homes. Ouattara, who had set up the core of his own government administration in an Abidjan hotel following the November 2010 election was protected by 800 UN troops. Gbagbo was captured and arrested on 11 April 2011 when his residence was stormed by French Special Forces and forces loyal to Ouattara. New parliamentary elections are scheduled for 11 December 2011.