

# The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire: A Source of Conflict and a Key to Peace

Arthur Boutellis

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**Cover Photo:** Soldiers on guard among a crowd of Laurent Gbagbo's supporters during a rally calling on UN peacekeepers and French troops to leave. Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, Dec. 19, 2010.

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## Executive Summary

The security sector in Côte d'Ivoire is both at the root of the recent crisis and the key to finding a way forward. While successive attempts to resolve divisions have recognized some of the larger challenges of security-sector reform (SSR), the failure to reunify the Ivoirian security forces prior to holding the presidential elections in 2010 was a key factor behind the recent crisis and contributed to its escalation into a military confrontation—a confrontation that included violence against civilians committed by both sides. The decade-long crisis and its latest episode have made the politicians in Côte d'Ivoire increasingly dependent on uniformed men. This will have to be addressed through comprehensive security-sector reform to prevent a return to armed conflict.

This report includes recommendations on how to focus the reform on changing the relationship among politicians, security institutions, and the larger population, as part of a broader reconciliation process among Ivoirians themselves. This means going beyond the previous peace-deal objectives of the reunification of security forces and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) to build a new security architecture for the country. It will also mean downsizing the security forces to pre-crisis levels, demilitarizing the police and *gendarmerie*, and returning the army to barracks, while neutralizing potential spoilers in a deeply divided country. To restore public confidence in the security forces, they will have to become more professional and representative. In addition, the issue of impunity will have to be addressed, including through the possible prosecution of those on both sides who were responsible for crimes against civilians.

Such comprehensive SSR will of course require strong political commitments with encouragement from subregional, regional, and international partners. The latter should seize the opportunity to rebuild a much-needed consensus over their role in preventing, managing, and resolving election-related disputes and political violence. With over a dozen presidential elections taking place this year

in Africa, more attention needs to be paid to SSR as a key tool for preventing electoral violence and the resurgence of conflicts in general.

## Introduction

The latest political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire has put the Ivoirian Defense and Security Forces (DSF) in the spotlight yet again. As forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo, members of the DSF were directly involved in the crackdown on Alassane Ouattara's supporters in the days following the November 28, 2010, presidential election run-off.<sup>1</sup> In turn, Gbagbo-loyal soldiers became the target of attacks as fighting erupted in the western part of the country,<sup>2</sup> breaching the six-year ceasefire between ex-rebels and government troops,<sup>3</sup> before Ouattara-allied forces finally marched on Abidjan. Until the very end, the DSF were the key constituency that allowed Gbagbo to remain in power in spite of sanctions and asset freezes imposed by the international community. Gbagbo managed to hold power for four months, in spite of losing the November election, largely because he was able to continue paying security forces and civil servants. But in the process, he also became hostage to the security-forces, which have played a key role over the last two decades in the political instability leading up to and including the present crisis. President-elect Ouattara also had to ally with the ex-rebel army—the *Forces Nouvelles* (by designating their former military leader, Guillaume Soro, prime minister)—in order to seize power by force once the prospect of a regional ECOWAS military intervention had faded away.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the problems with today's security forces predate the current crisis. Although the Ivoirian DSF had long been kept relatively small in size and were once arguably among the best trained in West Africa, a series of crises have profoundly transformed them. They have expanded significantly, losing both their unity and neutrality, while becoming increasingly politicized. In the process, both the "loyalist" forces in the South and the rebel *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) in the North lost the trust of the broader population—due to abuses, including human rights violations, corruption, and associa-

1 Adam Nossiter, "Security Forces Open Fire on Protesters in Ivory Coast," *The New York Times*, December 16, 2010.

2 BBC News, "Ivory Coast: Abidjan Attack Kills 10 Soldiers," February 23, 2011, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12549221>.

3 BBC News, "Ivory Coast: Army and Ex-Rebels 'Breach Ceasefire,'" February 24, 2011, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12569372>.

4 ECOWAS stands for Economic Community of West African States.

tion with militias and paramilitary youth groups. The security forces have experienced institutional rivalries (among army, *gendarmerie*, and police), internal tensions (along political, ethnic, and regionalist lines) and were responsible for a series of coups leading up to the 2002 insurrection and subsequent division of the country.

Security-sector reform (SSR)<sup>5</sup> has long been put off in Côte d'Ivoire—despite some preliminary reform measures being outlined in the successive Linas-Marcoussis (2003), Pretoria (2005), and Ouagadougou (2007) accords. These accords do indeed lay out the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants, the dismantling of militias, and the reunification of the Ivoirian security forces (loyalist forces in the South and ex-rebel FN in the North) as pre-conditions for the holding of elections. However, none of this took place before the November 2010 election. Now that the latest chapter in a decade-long crisis is over, the need to reform the security sector is greater than ever. The crisis will have further damaged the security forces, both internally, in their unity and coherence; and externally, in their relationships with politicians and the population at large. SSR will be all the more important because it will be a key tool for preventing the resurgence of conflict in the future.

This report will first provide a historical perspective as to how the Defense and Security Forces in Côte d'Ivoire were at the root of the 2002 crisis, and how successive peace accords failed to plant the seeds of a necessary, broader approach to security-sector reform. The second part of this report will analyze the latest crisis (which followed the November 2010 presidential election), including the role played by uniformed forces, and the episode's long-term implications. Finally, the report makes recommendations on how the political way forward will need to pave the way for comprehensive SSR, and how the international community could best support an Ivoirian led process.

## The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire, 1960-2009

### FROM INDEPENDENCE TO INTERNAL DIVISION

In order to understand the current dynamics within the Ivoirian security forces, and between the security forces and politics, it is essential to look first at the country's history. Côte d'Ivoire became independent from French rule on August 7, 1960. The country's first post-independence constitution, like its French model, provided for a strong presidential role, giving the president the power to appoint civil and military officers for the states. The National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (*Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire* [FANCI]) was composed of the army, navy, air force, and the *gendarmerie*, and reported to the Minister of Defense. The national police reported to the Ministry of the Interior. The army had been intentionally kept limited in size in order to prevent a coup d'état,<sup>6</sup> and the *gendarmerie* served as a paramilitary counterweight to the army. The first post-independence Ivoirian President Félix Houphouët-Boigny (November 1960–December 1993) understood the importance of keeping the army happy, paying it well and ensuring officers were given senior civilian positions in state-run companies. In return, the army and *gendarmerie* provided support to the police in the provision of internal security, while the April 24, 1961, *Defense Agreement* signed with France ensured protection against external aggression.

In the early 1990s, however, soldiers were progressively replaced by technocrats and a new vision of the role of the army in Côte d'Ivoire emerged, leading to a feeling of marginalization among some senior officers. This led army chief of staff General Robert Guei to defy President Bédié's request that the army intervene in response to popular demonstrations in the run-up to the

5 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on Securing Peace and Development: the Role of the United Nations in Supporting Security Sector Reform*, UN Doc. S/2008/38, January 23, 2008, defines "security sector reform" as "a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law. As the Security Council noted, security sector reform 'should be a nationally owned process that is rooted in the particular needs and conditions of the country in question' (S/PRST/2007/3)."

6 Prior to the 2002 crisis, the DSF was estimated at about 20,000 elements (approximately 11,000 army troops and, 8,000 *gendarmes*), and the police at approximately 9,000 elements.





October 1995 elections. General Guei was subsequently relieved of his duties,<sup>7</sup> and the Bédié regime started sidelining army officers who had been close to Houphouët-Boigny as well as officers and junior officers who had worked closely with Alassane Ouattara during his term as Prime Minister (November 1990-December 1993). In a departure from the policies of Houphouët-Boigny, who had carefully preserved regional balances within the army, President Bédié promoted many Baoulé<sup>8</sup> officers to key posts, dividing an army largely composed of people from the west and the north of the country.<sup>9</sup> It was junior officers from these “minority” regional and ethnic groups, fearing exclusion and discrimination, who allied with a few frustrated senior officers to lead the 1999 coup that unseated Bédié and brought General Guei to power.

The military regime would be short-lived, as General Guei’s attempt to fix the results of the October 2000 presidential elections led to massive popular protests that brought long-time opposition figure Laurent Gbagbo to power, with the decisive backing of parts of the security forces, including the *gendarmerie*. However, the divisions within the army and the politicization of the armed forces did not vanish. On September 19, 2002, another unsuccessful military coup attempt—this time against Gbagbo—by junior officers fearing marginalization and demobilization under the army-reform program led to weeks of fighting and a de facto partition of the country, with insurgent groups coalesced under the *Forces Nouvelles* (FN) led by Guillaume Soro gaining control of the northern 60 percent of the country.<sup>10</sup>

## THE EFFECT OF THE 2002 CRISIS ON THE IVOIRIAN SECURITY SECTOR

The Linas-Marcoussis peace accords were signed in January 2003 after the loyalist army failed to defeat the *Forces Nouvelles* rebels, and rebel representatives joined a national unity government. This effectively froze the conflict, with the creation of a buffer “*Zone de confiance*” between North and South. A West African (ECOWAS) force was deployed to monitor the ceasefire, which was subsequently, in 2004, integrated into a UN peacekeeping operation (UNOCI) established under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. French and UN soldiers handed over responsibility for security of the buffer zone in September of that year to “mixed brigades,” each composed of ten FN rebels, ten loyalist *gendarmes*, and four UN Police (UNPOLs), as part of the confidence-building process; but the chains of command in FN-controlled North and DSF-controlled South otherwise remained completely separate.

Up until 2002, about 40 percent of the Ivoirian DSF were based in the north of Côte d’Ivoire, but as the country became divided, it is estimated that about 20 percent of these, including a few senior officers and a number of junior officers,<sup>11</sup> decided to remain in the north and joined the armed rebellion.<sup>12</sup> The *Forces Nouvelles* relied largely on tax revenues and levies on commercial goods. While a good part of this income went to sustaining its armed forces, corrupt practices and extortion were common, as FN leadership did not always have full control over its ten powerful “*comzones*” (FN regional commanders). These *comzones* were in charge of security and administered “justice”

7 Raphael Outtara, “Côte d’Ivoire,” in *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in West Africa*, edited by Alan Bryden, Boubacar N’Diaye, and Funmi Olanisakin (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2008).

8 There are more than sixty ethnic groups in Côte d’Ivoire, and the Baoulé in the center of the country account for approximately 23 percent of the population. Houphouët-Boigny and his successor Konan Bédié were both Baoulé. Laurent Gbagbo is Bété, whereas Alassane Ouattara is from the Dioula ethnic group.

9 Guy-Andre Kieffer, “Armée Ivoirienne : le refus du déclassé,” *Politique Africaine* 78 (2000), pp. 26-44.

10 Originally from the far North of the country, he developed a reputation as a leader when he headed the Ivoirian students’ federation. After a short period in prison in 1997 under President Bédié, Guillaume Soro went to France to study law. In 2000 he returned to Côte d’Ivoire, and was asked to head the youth wing of Gbagbo’s political party. The two men however broke apart when Soro linked up with the military leaders who wanted to get rid of President Gbagbo.

11 Key *Forces Nouvelles* leaders, including chief of staff of their armed forces (FAFN) General Soumaila Bakayoko and his deputy Issiaka Wattara (“Wattao”), were formerly part of the Ivoirian national army. More junior FAFN officers included “*comzones*” (regional commanders) such as Cherif Ousmane, the Bouaké regional commander, who was a junior officer in the national army prior to the crisis and had taken part in the 1999 coup alongside General Guei.

12 There are no official statistics on this, but President Gbagbo only officially recognized that 750 members of the army had defected to the rebellion. From November 2002 to February 2003 the army however officially recruited 4,000 new elements. The third complementary accord of Ouagadougou signed on November 28, 2007, officially reinstated *Forces Nouvelles* elements previously in the national army, and put those elements who came forward back on the payroll (Article 7).



themselves, and it was not until November 2006 that the FN created their own police and *gendarmerie* for which they earmarked about 3,500 of their elements.<sup>13</sup> This made it easier for the FN to keep armed soldiers in their barracks and away from routine security tasks and to limit the risks of abuses—particularly as only the head of each company would carry a firearm.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile in the south, the security forces, as well as other public institutions, continued to operate throughout the crisis, and recruitment to both the police and army never stopped. The national government also retained control of cocoa production, the oil sector, and port revenues in the South. By 2009, it was estimated that the national police had almost doubled in size (to about 18,000 police), while the army (including the *gendarmerie*) more than made up for defections to the rebels, ultimately recruiting far beyond its previous size of fewer than 20,000 in 2002 to reach about 55,000 elements during the Pretoria (2005) and Ouagadougou (2007) peace negotiations, further growing to an estimated 62,500 by 2009.<sup>15</sup>

Many of the new recruits came from ethnic groups favorable to Gabgbo, including his own Bété. This recruiting was supported by a political discourse—describing the northern rebellion as a foreign occupying force supported financially and supplied with combatants by neighboring Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea—with sectarian elements opposing the Christian South to the Muslim North. Changes also took place at the top of the DSF, starting with the replacement of army Chief General Doué by General Mangou at the end of 2004, after the former expressed reservations about the possible success of “Operation Dignity” to retake the North of the country.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the national police and *gendarmerie* were militarized (given weapons of war and combat uniforms) and brought into the war effort alongside the army.

The increase in the overall size of security forces and the additional bonuses given to motivate the troops during the fighting resulted in a significant increase in government military spending, but also in a loosening of the chains of command, as many new recruits answered directly to their recruiting officers.

These years of crisis sustained a situation of “neither peace nor war.” The participation of the Defense and Security Forces in sporadic combat was of course not conducive to their being restructured and delayed the possibility of broader security governance reforms.<sup>17</sup> Quite the opposite was true, as corrupt practices flourished and individual officers enriched themselves,<sup>18</sup> while indiscipline and impunity were common in both the FN and the regular DSF of the South as well. Militias were also created and armed, and mercenaries from neighboring countries were used in various instances by both sides.<sup>19</sup> All this, plus widespread extortion at road checkpoints, and the bloody repression of an opposition demonstration on March 25, 2004, contributed to a growing popular distrust of uniformed men in both the north and south of the country.

The official report of the independent Commission of Inquiry into the events connected with the protest of March 25, 2004, in Abidjan concluded that at least 120 people were killed.<sup>20</sup> The report also concluded (§72) that

what happened on 25 and 26 March was the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians and the committing of massive human rights violations. The march became a pretext for what turned out to be a carefully planned and executed operation by the security forces, i.e., the police, the *gendarmerie*, the army, as well as special units and the so-called parallel forces, under the direction and responsibility of the highest authorities of the State. This conclusion is the result of accounts from eyewitnesses and survivors as well as corroborating

13 The leadership of newly created FN police and *gendarmerie* was given to senior rebel leader Tuo Fozie.

14 Daniel Balint-Kurti, “Côte d’Ivoire’s Forces Nouvelles,” London: Chatham House, September 2007.

15 The Ivorian defense forces are composed of approximately 15 percent officers, 20 percent noncommissioned officers, and 65 percent troops.

16 Christophe Boisbouvier, « Gabgbo et l’armée: L’armée de Côte d’Ivoire est-elle ‘Bétéisée?’ » RFI, August 29, 2005.

17 On November 4, 2004, government armed forces launched “Operation Dignity” against the FN, thus violating the ceasefire agreement.

18 International Crisis Group, “Côte d’Ivoire: Can the Ouagadougou Agreement Bring Peace?” *Crisis Group Africa Report* 127, June 27, 2007.

19 The UN Group of Experts has repeatedly reported that Côte d’Ivoire security forces continued to receive foreign assistance throughout the crisis and that “the Government of Côte d’Ivoire hired foreign pilots during air operations against the Forces Nouvelles in 2002-2004.” Available at [www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/CI\\_poe\\_ENG.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1572/CI_poe_ENG.shtml).

20 Report of the independent Commission of Inquiry into the events connected with the march planned for March 25, 2004, in Abidjan. See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Geneva, April 29, 2004.

evidence collected in Abidjan from 13 to 28 April 2004.

### THE 2005 PRETORIA ACCORDS: A MISSED (SSR) OPPORTUNITY

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was first established in 2004 as a multidimensional peacekeeping mission with civilian, judicial, correctional, police, and military components.<sup>21</sup> It was mandated to monitor the ceasefire and armed groups; to help the Government of National Reconciliation implement a national program for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the combatants (DDR); and also to “assist the Government of National Reconciliation in conjunction with ECOWAS and other international organizations in restoring a civilian policing presence throughout Côte d'Ivoire, and to advise the Government of National Reconciliation on the restructuring of the internal security services.” It therefore had explicit elements of an SSR mandate—in support of a government lead and in coordination with ECOWAS—but no comprehensive sector-wide SSR mandate.

It was however only after the *Pretoria Peace Agreement* of April 2005 that the UN mission started implementing part of this mandate, prompted by the need to ensure security in the area under FN control.<sup>22</sup> Under the Pretoria agreement, “600 individuals from the FAFN will be recruited and trained on the basis of national gendarmerie and police criteria” by the police component of UNOCI, “with a view to their integration in the national police and national gendarmerie.”<sup>23</sup> In 2005, the UN police (UNPOLs) started training in Bouaké an initial 600 FN so-called Security Auxiliaries (*Auxiliaires de Securite* [ADS]),<sup>24</sup> even though the parties had not yet reached an agreement on either integration (including the number of FN to be integrated and the ranks at which they would integrate into the national security forces) or a larger restructuring plan for

the DSF. UNPOLs had been in a difficult position since the beginning of the mission; they deployed across the country and many expected to have to rebuild the entire Ivoirian police force, but instead found a well-educated and well-trained, albeit militarized, national Ivoirian police in the South that was not willing to take advice.<sup>25</sup> The UN arms embargo of November 2004—and the fact that UNPOLs became more popular in the North as they started training FN elements—only aggravated the national police's hostility toward them.

The lack of political will on the part of the government and the failure to build trust between the parties are often cited as the primary reasons for the failure to integrate security forces and launch a successful DDR process ahead of the elections. Although France has been the lead country on Côte d'Ivoire in the UN Security Council, the complex relationship between France and its former colony, which escalated into a military confrontation in November 2004, may have compromised the role it could have otherwise played. For example, France could have perhaps advocated for a Security Council mandate with a greater role for the UN in support of a more comprehensive security-sector reform, and subsequently helped the UN mission implement such a mandate by engaging Ivoirian authorities.

During the events of September 2002, the Ivoirian government had called on France to intervene based on the defense agreements it had signed with France. The French initially refused, claiming that the agreements only applied in case of an external attack, but eventually intervened to halt the rebel advance on Abidjan. This episode however raised tensions between France and Côte d'Ivoire, culminating on November 6, 2004, when the Ivoirian air force launched an air attack that killed nine French soldiers stationed in Bouaké as part of the French military operation “Licorne” in support of UNOCI. The French military retaliated by destroying the entire Ivoirian Air Force, and

21 UN Security Council Resolution 1528 (February 27, 2004), UN Doc. S/RES/1528.

22 The Pretoria agreement also scheduled the presidential election for October 30, 2005—the day of expiration of the constitutional term of office of President Gbagbo. Elections were however later postponed due to the delays caused by the parties.

23 UN Security Council Resolution 1603 (June 3, 2005), UN Doc. S/RES/1603; UN Security Council Resolution 1633 (October 21, 2005), UN Doc. S/RES/1633.

24 The UN police had indicated their ability to train up to 4,000, but the initial number agreed at Pretoria was 600, as there was no agreement on the number of FN that would eventually integrate into national police and *gendarmerie*. The police were initially intended to begin patrols only during the final stages of disarmament, but as DDR delays were proving lengthy, they were officially deployed in December 2006 but never integrated into national security forces nor officially received pay.

25 Some of the African UNPOL officers deployed as part of UNOCI had actually received training at the Abidjan police academy before the crisis.

subsequently clashed with Ivoirian troops and government-loyal mobs. Those incidents were followed by massive anti-French protests in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>26</sup> These incidents also led to the UN Security Council's passing Resolution 1572 on November 15, 2004, which condemned the air strikes committed by the national armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire as "flagrant violations of the ceasefire agreement of 3 May 2003,"<sup>27</sup> and imposed an arms embargo on the country.

The UN Security Council's "P3" (France, the United Kingdom, and the United States), despite their recent strong stance in opposing Gbagbo's refusal to cede power following the November 2010 election, have not always exerted as much pressure on the parties to implement signed agreements or to comply with Security Council resolutions. Some UNOCI officials at the time "expressed frustration at the wide gap between the numerous statements against impunity emanating from Council resolutions and presidential declarations and [the Council's] reluctance to take concrete action against the perpetrators of human rights violations and the political actors who encouraged them."<sup>28</sup> The 2006 sanctions were imposed against a few individual "spoilers" in reaction to targeted attacks on the UN and not as a response to the politicians behind them that were stalling the overall peace process.

Côte d'Ivoire's armed forces also continued to receive foreign assistance throughout the crisis. On the police side, traditional bilateral cooperation continued, and Côte d'Ivoire never stopped contributing police to the UN throughout the years of crisis. At the end of 2010, the country was contributing about 150 individual police officers (UNPOLs) across five UN missions.<sup>29</sup> However, neither UNPOL training nor the above-mentioned foreign assistance to Ivoirian defense and security forces addressed the broader SSR issues of security governance. In particular, the embedded political, socioeconomic, and ethnic/regional dynamics that

were at the origin of the crisis were never addressed, and the assistance packages in place did not pave the way to a comprehensive security-sector reform.

Instead, in the name of "consent of host country" and "national ownership," continued foreign assistance over time may have played into the Gbagbo discourse that the crisis was temporary and largely due to external interference, and that once it came to an end the national security forces located in the South would simply redeploy across the entire country. In fact, the UN Group of Experts monitoring sanctions against Côte d'Ivoire reported that despite the arms embargo, northern and southern Ivoirian parties were able to rearm and re-equip themselves,<sup>30</sup> which should not come as a surprise given the rate of growth in forces on both sides through the years of crisis.

#### THE 2007 OUAGADOUGOU ACCORDS: AN IVOIRIAN SOLUTION TO AN IVOIRIAN PROBLEM?

Following the missed opportunity of the 2005 *Pretoria Peace Agreement*, the *Ouagadougou Agreement (Accords Politiques de Ouagadougou [APO])* signed on March 4, 2007,<sup>31</sup> seemed to leave even less space for the international community to get involved, including in support of an SSR agenda. These accords, the first to result from direct dialogue between the armed protagonists of the Ivoirian crisis, brought an end to a mediation process led together by ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), and the United Nations. They also meant that the responsibility for the implementation of the agreement now resided with the protagonists themselves: Ivoirian President Laurent Gbagbo and newly-appointed Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, leader of the *Forces Nouvelles*. The agreement called for a short transition period for establishing the conditions for credible elections. It represented a step forward in that the parties agreed to concrete steps in "a restructuring and revision of

26 BBC News, "Anti-French Uproar in Ivory Coast," November 7, 2004, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3989567.stm>.

27 UN Security Council Resolution 1572 (November 15, 2004), UN Doc. S/RES/1572.

28 Giles Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire," in Blanca Antonini, Maud Edgren-Schori, Débora García-Orrico, Pierre Schori, Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, and Gilles Yabi, eds., *Security Council Resolutions Under Chapter VII* (Madrid: FRIDE, 2009), p. 98.

29 The 2004 UN arms embargo restricted material support to Ivoirian Defense and Security Forces. In 2010, however, UNOCI called for a partial lifting of the arms embargo so that crowd control-equipment such as tear gas grenades could be bought in the country ahead of elections.

30 See UN Security Council, *Final Report of the Group of Experts Submitted in Accordance with Paragraph 11 of Security Council Resolution 1842 (2008)*, UN Doc. S/2009/521, October 9, 2009.

31 A series of supplementary agreements to the Ouagadougou agreement were also signed, to set out the modalities of the DDR and reunification process, including the fourth supplementary agreement of December 22, 2008.

the two armed forces, in view of setting up new defense and security forces committed to the values of integrity and republican morality” by (a) the adoption of a “special mechanism to fix the general framework of organization, composition and functioning of the new defense and security forces”; and (b) the creation of an Integrated Command Centre” (*Centre de commandement intégré* [CCI]) to “unify the forces and the combatants” from the loyalist Defense and Security Forces and the *Forces Nouvelles* (FAFN).<sup>32</sup>

The “special mechanism” was effectively created by a December 2007 presidential decree, in the form of a Joint Working Group for the reforming and restructuring of the Defense and Security Forces (*Groupe de Travail mixte sur la restructuration et la refondation des FDS* [GTRRA]) under the Office of the Prime Minister, which was supposed to present recommendations to the executive. The creation of CCI also satisfied a long-standing demand of the FN’s political leaders, who wanted to see an “integrated general staff” made responsible for the implementation of military agreements associated with the DDR program and the restructuring of the Ivoirian army.<sup>33</sup>

The *Ouagadougou Agreement*, however, narrowed the focus of the security-sector reform almost solely to the reunification of the Ivoirian Defense and Security Forces and the FN, postponing the question of developing the country’s new security-sector policy and architecture until after the elections when a strong, elected president would take office.<sup>34</sup> It also limited the role of the international community to a weak mandate to “assist” a government composed of representatives of all parties,<sup>35</sup> calling on ECOWAS and UNOCI to collaborate and assist in close liaison with the above-mentioned working group “in formulating a plan on the restructuring of the Defence and Security Forces and in preparing possible seminars on security sector reform to be organized by the African Union and ECOWAS.”<sup>36</sup>

With little progress on either DDR or integration of ex-rebels into national security forces—since the training of the 600 Security Auxiliary from FN in late 2005—and a series of ruptures in dialogue and new demands from the parties, the possibility of a future comprehensive SSR was slight.

In an attempt to regain the initiative, the UN, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched a capacity-building effort in support of the technical committee (*comite scientifique*) of the Joint Working Group (GTRRA). This is the closest the UN has come to initiating comprehensive SSR to date. Under this initiative, UNDP provided technical and financial support to the organizing of three activities at the end of 2009: (1) a trip to Burundi to study how the integration process had worked there; (2) an SSR seminar looking at lessons from Burundi and Central African Republic; and (3) a training retreat on the strengthening of military leadership. These activities did indeed initiate debates on the various aspects of army restructuring, and were an opportunity for military leaders from both sides to build confidence and trust at the top. But this was probably too little too late.

As the working group looked at lessons from the Burundi experience that led to successful elections in 2005, it must have realized that just about everything had been done differently there. Ex-rebel forces were integrated with government army and police in 2004 prior to the elections in order to build trust between the parties to the conflict,<sup>37</sup> and this was a driver of public confidence in the elections themselves. The downsides of the Burundi approach were that political imperatives led to integrating large numbers of people, many with little or no training, and without a real vetting process—but this was mitigated through harmonization training and the downsizing of security forces that followed as part of a longer-term comprehensive SSR effort.

32 International Crisis Group, “Côte d’Ivoire: Can the Ouagadougou Agreement Bring Peace?” Crisis Group Africa Report 127, June 27, 2007.

33 Ibid.

34 United Nations, *Twenty-Fourth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI)*, UN Doc. S/2010/245, May 20, 2010.

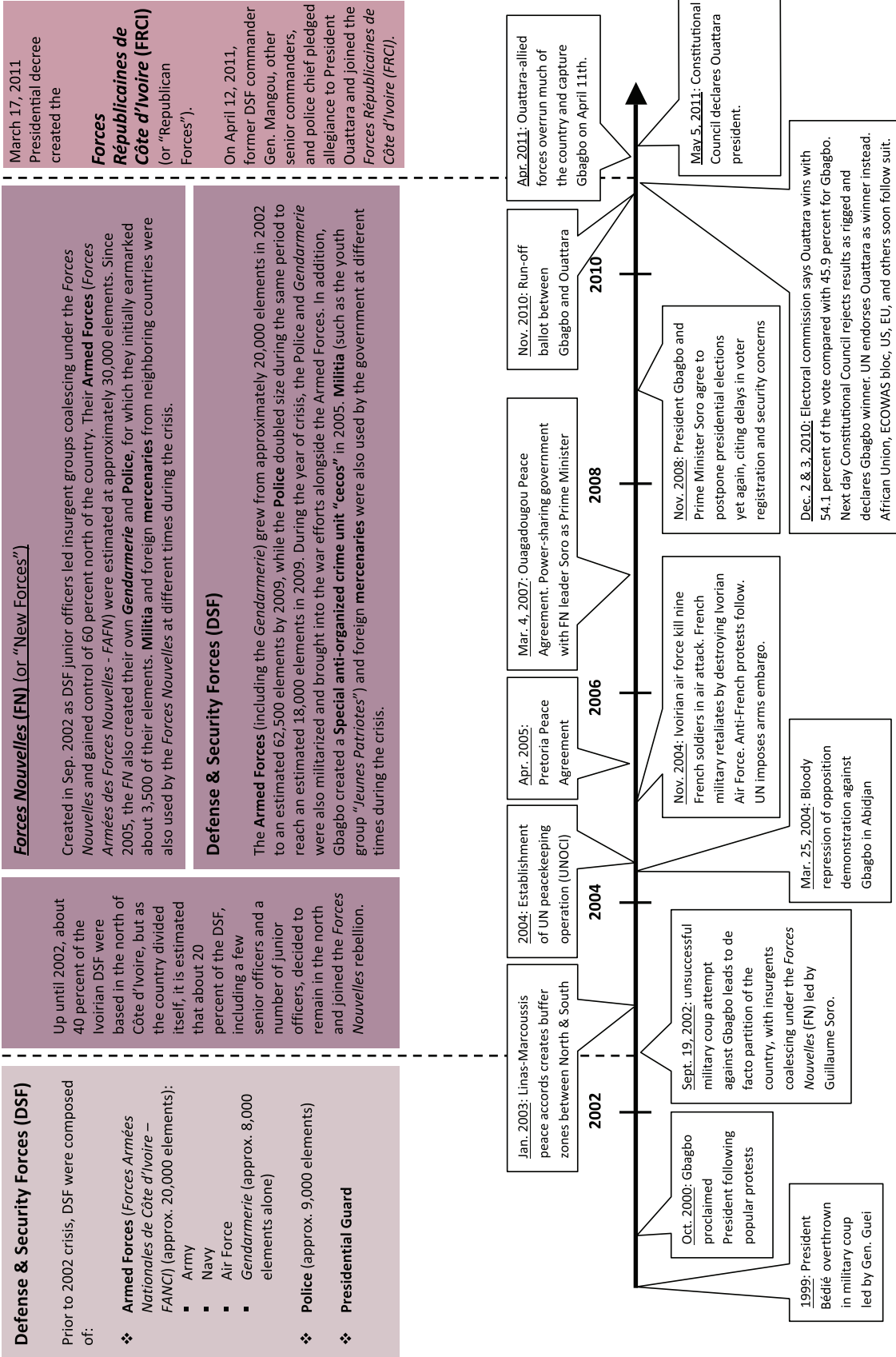
35 Guillaume Soro was named prime minister at the end of March following March 4, 2007, *Ouagadougou Agreement*, with a new cabinet composed mostly of the ministers from the previous cabinet.

36 UN Security Council Resolution 1739 (January 10, 2007), UN Doc. 1739.

37 This process of so-called “direct integration” was largely managed by the Burundians themselves and led to a complete restructuring of security forces—which had played a central role in the conflict—guided by respect for ethnic quotas within the new Defense and Security Forces established by the 2000 *Arusha Peace Accords*.



# TIMELINE





## Anatomy of the Latest Crisis

### PREPARING FOR THE 2010 ELECTIONS WITHOUT SECURITY-SECTOR REFORM

A UN Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) that visited Côte d'Ivoire in early 2010 found that even before the elections SSR could have a significant impact in restoring confidence, consolidating achievements, strengthening the rule of law, and easing the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. It also concluded that UNOCI would have a comparative advantage in playing a leadership and coordination role for international support to SSR in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>38</sup> What this mission may not have foreseen was that, without significant DDR progress and a start to the SSR process, elections would lead to a deadlock. Indeed, although a subsequent UN Security Council resolution (1933) continued to call for concomitant progress on all fronts, the priority was to hold elections and complete the population-identification process. Even the SSR elements of the mandate were related to elections, in that the mission was mandated to “contribute, as appropriate, to the development by the Ivoirian authorities of the capacities of the police and gendarmerie, in particular through crowd control training, and to restoring their presence throughout Côte d'Ivoire.”<sup>39</sup>

The Integrated Command Centre (CCI) created under the *Ouagadougou Accords* was meant to be at the heart of the confidence-building effort prior to elections, with a support role for international UNOCI and French *Licorne* forces. The CCI was 8,000-strong (half DSF, half FN) and led by then Colonel Kouakou of the FN, but under the joint supervision of General Philippe Mangou (chief of staff of the DSF) and General Soumaila Bakayoko (chief of staff of FAFN [FN]). According to the *Ouagadougou Accord* of March 2007, the CCI was to secure the electoral process through the disarmament and reinsertion of 26,000 FN elements under General Bakayoko's orders. This CCI was only meant to be a step toward the much-awaited

“integrated general staff” (*Etat-Major Intégré*), but until the disarmament process was completed, both sides would maintain their own armies with their own *Etats-Majors*, alongside the CCI.

The assembly process started in June 2010 in the north of the country. According to the UN, “there are 32,777 registered former combatants: 23,777 are to be demobilized; 5,000 are to be incorporated into the new army; and 4,000 should be part of the Integrated Command Centre.”<sup>40</sup> By October 31, some 17,601 combatants had been demobilized. However, only a limited number of weapons, most of them unserviceable, were collected during the disarmament process.<sup>41</sup> Thus ex-combatants could easily be remobilized. The reasons for the shortcomings of the DDR program were of a different nature. The decision by the government to split the National DDR Program (PNDDR) previously supported by the World Bank into two separate processes—CCI in charge of disarmament and demobilization and the National Civilian Reinsertion Program (PNRC) in charge of reinsertion—and the later addition of the National Service Program, led to institutional rivalries, unequal reintegration packages, and further delays in the process. UNOCI then decided to launch an initiative called “1,000 micro-projects” as a stop-gap measure to accommodate demobilized combatants who had not received the allowance of 500,000 CFA francs stipulated in the *Ouagadougou Agreement* (third complementary agreement), with financing from the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

Disarmament had always been a contentious issue. Weapons are often considered an insurance policy by former rebel movements, and in negotiations the *Force Nouvelles* conditioned their disarmament on both the identification of the population as well as the integration (numbers and ranks) of forces. On one side, most of the junior army officers who originally joined the rebellion had since been promoted within the FN, with questions as to how they would now be integrated into the army, given their previous status and rank. One of the confidence-building measures suggested

38 See “Findings of the Technical Assessment Mission,” in United Nations, *Twenty-Fourth Report*.

39 UN Security Council Resolution 1933 (June 30, 2010), UN Doc. S/RES/1933.

40 These 4,000 elements would integrate the national police and *gendarmerie*.

41 United Nations, *Twenty-Sixth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire*, UN Doc. S/2010/600, November 23, 2010.

by the GTRRA was to even out the ranks of top officers from both sides in order to facilitate the future reunification of the two armies. Therefore, in the second half of 2009, Gbagbo promoted officers of the DSF,<sup>42</sup> as well as a few senior *Forces Nouvelles* elements,<sup>43</sup> but this was of little value to the ex-rebellion, as it took place without the integration of *Forces Nouvelles* elements into DSF and without restructuring the overall army hierarchy. However, the fact that most of the promotions in the national army were based on ethnic origin rather than merit affected the overall morale of the troops, and Gbagbo again promoted five senior officers from the “loyalist” side in August 2010,<sup>44</sup> leading to outrage in the FN camp.

Although the *Ougadougou Accords* represented the conviction of the parties that elections could be held before disarmament and the reunification of the country, the violence that erupted in February 2010 led Gbagbo and his camp to push instead for them to take place before elections.<sup>45</sup> The FN side, however, saw this as yet another attempt to delay elections. Many interlocutors, including the facilitator of the Ivoirian peace process, President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, advised that the issues surrounding these two processes must be tackled concomitantly in order to remove any pretexts by which any of the parties could justify not following through on their obligations.

Delays, dysfunctions, and politicization of the national DDR program as well as the lack of funding to sustain the cantonment of the 5,000 FN elements earmarked to join the new army, only led to further distrust between the parties and increased tensions within the FN camp over payment of salaries to the troops. While on August 28, 2010, President Compaoré noted some progress in the implementation of the accords, including the launching of the cantonment process for former FN combatants and the joint deployment of FN and

government customs officers to border locations, a significant number of tasks remained uncompleted, including the disarmament of former FN combatants and the dismantling of militia, as well as the reunification of the Ivoirian Defense and Security Forces.<sup>46</sup>

### THE 2010 ELECTIONS: TWO PRESIDENTS, TWO ARMIES, AND A RADICALIZATION OF THE DISCOURSE

In spite of much talk about the reunification of the Ivoirian Defense and Security Forces, Côte d’Ivoire went into the November 2010 election as a country still split in two. The election-security plan reflected this division, with two armies and two completely separate chains of command. Loyalist DSF secured the south of the country while 2,000 FN elements secured the north.<sup>47</sup> In spite of the continued lack of trust between the two sides, there were no major security incidents on the day of the elections, which were held in a generally peaceful environment, according to international observers.

However, almost immediately after the announcement of the disputed outcome of the November 28<sup>th</sup> presidential election, the Integrated Command Centre dissolved, and the security forces became partisan participants in the political-electoral crisis. General Mangou, chief of staff of the national army, with most of his senior officers present, pledged allegiance to Gbagbo on Ivoirian national television on December 3, 2010, while Alassane Ouattara—widely recognized by the international community as the winner—criticized the passivity of the DSF in preventing exactions against certain segments of the population. Gbagbo also demanded the departure of UN peacekeepers, accusing them of supporting his rival, Ouattara. After failing to gain support from DSF leadership initially, the discourse on the *Forces Nouvelle* side also became increasingly belligerent, with FN

42 Baudelaire Mieu “Un pays, deux armées,” *Jeune Afrique*, September 8, 2009. Gbagbo however favored police and *gendarmérie* (which helped him access power in 2000) and few elite units (presidential security and commandos), which benefited from superior equipments and pay, but also on police side, the anti-riot police (BAE and CRS).

43 On November 16<sup>th</sup>, President Gbagbo signed several decrees on harmonization of the ranks of FN elements, including the promotion to the rank of Brigadier-General of the *Forces Nouvelles* Chief of Staff, General Soumaila Bakayoko, and the Prime Minister’s Military Adviser, Colonel Michel Gueu.

44 The five senior officers promoted were all part of the inner circle of Gbagbo’s security apparatus, namely: army chief General Mangou; *gendarmérie* commander General Tiapé Kassaraté; aviation chief General Aka Kadjo; Republican Guard commander General Dogbo Ble; special anti-organized crime unit “Cecos” commander Police General Guiai Bi Poin; and army infantry commander General Détoh Létoh.

45 Violent protests erupted in February 2010 amid reports that the ruling party had requested courts in a number of areas to purge ineligible individuals from the provisional electoral list.

46 United Nations, *Twenty-Sixth Progress Report*.

47 Another 5,000 FN troops were cantoned into five camps in the north as part of the arrangement.

Bouake *comzone* Cherif Ousmane threatening to march on Abidjan, and Soro and Ouattara calling for an international (ECOWAS-led) military intervention to dislodge Gbagbo.<sup>48</sup>

Although official communiqués of the national Defense and Security Forces defended the impartiality, professionalism, and discipline of their soldiers,<sup>49</sup> members of Gbagbo-loyal DSF were reported to have opened fire on Alassane Ouattara's supporters repeatedly, starting during the December 16, 2010, peaceful attempt to take over the state media channel *Radio Television Ivoirienne* (RTI);<sup>50</sup> and both regular and irregular forces (militias) have obstructed subsequent attempts by the UN to investigate reported human rights violations and mass graves in the aftermath of the elections.<sup>51</sup>

General Mangou may have crossed the Rubicon when, on January 23, 2011, he joined the leader of the Young Patriots militia ("*Jeunes Patriotes*," a paramilitary youth group with close ties to Gbagbo), Charles Ble Goude, at a recruitment rally at Champroux Stadium in Abidjan,<sup>52</sup> and told the crowd, that "we [the armed forces] prefer to die first, and if the last of the DSF falls then take on our fight so that we can free the country,"<sup>53</sup> implying that the paramilitary youth group is essentially a reserve military force. Similar recruitment drives took place subsequently.<sup>54</sup>

Already, by the afternoon of Election Day the 1,500 soldiers of the national DSF that had been deployed to the north of the country to secure the elections were called back to Yamoussoukro,<sup>55</sup> while other transfers took place immediately after the elections. This was all part of a larger effort to

reposition "more loyal" DSF units with the heavy weaponry in strategic locations such as Abidjan and the capital Yamoussoukro, as well as to man strategic checkpoints in Abidjan with elite units such as the Presidential Guards, indicating that Gbagbo did not trust his regular forces. Such transfers served the dual purpose of preventing a possible attempt by ex-rebels to march on Abidjan from the north via the capital, but also of preventing possibly massive popular protests of the type that brought Gbagbo to power in October 2000.<sup>56</sup>

### SANCTIONS, MILITARY INTERVENTION, OR A POLITICAL SOLUTION: THE HESITATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Two months after the elections, the loyalty of the DSF leadership to Gbagbo seemed unequivocal. What was more difficult to assess was the extent to which officers controlled their troops, including their most recent recruits. This was also true for the *Forces Nouvelles* to which Ouattara de facto allied by designating ex-rebel leader Guillaume Soro his Prime Minister. Although the combined effect of sanctions, including the freezing of assets by the US, EU, and the ECOWAS Central Bank (BCEAO) progressively limited Gbagbo's ability to pay the DSF and civil servants, it did not prove decisive. The country has neither its own money nor a Central Bank.<sup>57</sup> However, revenues remained from taxing the Abidjan Port and nationalizing the cocoa and coffee industries,<sup>58</sup> and funding was likely made available from friendly African countries, so Gbagbo was able to continue paying a large part of the DSF when most international actors appeared to have counted on

48 BBC News, "Ivory Coast: Ouattara Wants Commandos to Snatch Gbagbo," January 6, 2011, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12131518>.

49 *Déclaration des Forces de Défense et de Sécurité de la Côte d'Ivoire du 11 Décembre 2010, lue par le porte-parole Col Major Babri Gohourou.*

50 BBC News, "Ivory Coast: Ouattara Supporters in Deadly Clashes," December 16, 2010, available at [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12007523](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12007523).

51 Rukmini Callimachi, "AP IMPACT: New Proof of Ivory Coast Vote Killings," February 15, 2011, available at <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=12921963>.

52 General Mangou had initially been thought of by the Ouattara camp as someone who could be part of the transition, but on January 21<sup>st</sup> General Mangou revealed to the press that he refused an offer from President-elect Alassane Ouattara, and Soro has since indicated that it would no longer be possible to work with General Mangou.

53 Matthieu Mabin and Nicolas Germain, "Côte d'Ivoire: 'Jeunes patriotes', les hommes de Laurent Gbagbo," France 24, February 4, 2011, available at [www.france24.com/fr/20110204-reporters-cote-divoire-jeunes-patriotes-charles-ble-goude-gbagbo-ouattara-presidentielle-crise-politique-cedeao](http://www.france24.com/fr/20110204-reporters-cote-divoire-jeunes-patriotes-charles-ble-goude-gbagbo-ouattara-presidentielle-crise-politique-cedeao).

54 Associated Press, "Thousands Enlist for Gbagbo's Army in Ivory Coast," March 21, 2011, available at [http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110321/ap\\_on\\_re\\_af/ivory\\_coast\\_1](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110321/ap_on_re_af/ivory_coast_1).

55 Crisis Group, "Cote d'Ivoire: Faut-il se résoudre à la guerre?" *Rapport Afrique* 171, March 3, 2011, p. 8.

56 Ibid.

57 Gbagbo and Mamadou Koulibaly, the president of the Ivoirian Parliament and an economist, had in the past advocated for the creation of a new, independent Ivoirian currency to replace the CFA Franc controlled by the BCEAO.

58 CNN, "Ivory Coast President Nationalizes Coffee and Cocoa Industry," March 8, 2011, available at [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-07/world/ivory.coast.coffee\\_1\\_gbagbo-coffee-ivory-coast?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-07/world/ivory.coast.coffee_1_gbagbo-coffee-ivory-coast?_s=PM:WORLD).

this scenario as a game-changer in the crisis.<sup>59</sup>

A regional ECOWAS military intervention, although possibly a credible threat due to its past operations in Sierra Leone in 1998 or in Liberia in 2003, was never a likely option. First, the enthusiasm of ECOWAS members and other African countries was lacking, and although such an intervention would probably have required at least 20,000 well-equipped troops, only 5,000 were pledged. Whereas Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Senegal were more amenable to troop deployments, other West African nations seemed more reluctant. Second, this operation would have been different from previous ECOWAS interventions, in that it would have confronted a fairly well-organized national army, bringing with it the potential for high casualties, and there would have been no guarantee of success. With presidential elections coming up in Nigeria, it was unlikely that Nigerian leadership would have risked a public-opinion backlash against casualties. Third, because the population of Côte d'Ivoire is so polarized, with widespread support for Gbagbo in Abidjan, any large-scale intervention could have led to serious civilian casualties, with grave implications for the future of the country and the larger regional balance. The violent reactions to the November 2004 French attacks on Ivoirian aviation installations were an indication of Gbagbo's potential to mobilize his supporters against foreign forces. The March 24<sup>th</sup> ECOWAS statement calling on the UN Security Council to reinforce the mandate of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to allow it use all necessary means to protect people and property and to facilitate the immediate transfer of power to Alassane Ouattara, confirmed that the subregion was not ready to intervene militarily.<sup>60</sup>

Although the High-Level Panel of the African Union for the resolution of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire achieved some success in reconciling initially divergent African viewpoints,<sup>61</sup> the successive AU representatives' visits to Abidjan came up short of convincing the incumbent Gbagbo to leave

power to bring an end to the crisis. In its March 10<sup>th</sup> report, the AU Panel indeed only echoed the views already expressed by African leaders at the late January 2011 AU summit, reiterating the importance of “working out a negotiated political solution” to the political impasse “with the establishment of a Government of National Unity appointed by President Alassane Dramane Ouattara.”<sup>62</sup>

### THE CREATION OF THE FORCES RÉPUBLICAINES DE CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND THE BATTLE OF ABIDJAN

One of the key decisions President Ouattara made since the beginning of the post-electoral crisis was to sign a decree on March 17, 2011, creating the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (*Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire* [FRCI]), as an attempt to symbolically unify ex-rebel *Forces Nouvelles* and those members of the national Defense and Security Forces that would side with Ouattara. Not all members of the DSF voted for Gbagbo, and Ouattara early on claimed to have the backing of some senior army officers; meanwhile, Ouattara-appointed Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Guillaume Soro also appointed some DSF officers as part of his new government.<sup>63</sup> By creating the appellation “Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire”—a term almost immediately adopted by most media—the Ouattara camp achieved the double aim of ending the “Gbagbo-loyal national DSF versus ex-rebel *Forces Nouvelles*” dialectic and sending a signal to members of the Defense and Security Forces that most of them would be welcome as part of the future national security forces of the country if they distanced themselves from Gbagbo. And this was ahead of pro-Ouattara forces launching a military offensive on Yamoussoukro on March 28<sup>th</sup> that would then take them to Abidjan by the 31<sup>st</sup>.

The FRCI initially encountered little resistance on their march toward Abidjan, as Gbagbo had called the most loyal and better-equipped units of the DSF back to the economic capital, where most

59 US Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, On-the-record-briefing, US Ambassador to the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire Phillip Carter, On the Current Situation in Cote d'Ivoire, February 4, 2011, Washington, DC., available at [www.state.gov/p/af/rls/spbr/2011/156036.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/spbr/2011/156036.htm).

60 BBC News, “Ivory Coast: Ecowas Wants More UN Action on Gbagbo,” March 24, 2011, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12853554>.

61 For a detailed account of the roles played by Angola, South Africa, and ECOWAS member countries' in the current Ivoirian crisis, refer to Crisis Group, “Côte d'Ivoire: Faut-il se résoudre à la guerre?” *Rapport Afrique* 171, March 3, 2011, p. 12.

62 African Union, *Report of the High Level Panel of the African Union for the Resolution of the Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire*, March 10, 2011.

63 Soro appointed Colonel Mian Gaston as Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Defense and Captain Alla Kouakou Léon as army spokesperson.



militia and paramilitary *Jeunes Patriotes* were also gathered. The speed with which pro-Ouattara forces advanced probably prevented the feared scenario of large-scale urban fighting and violence against civilians. It may also have encouraged the defection of key senior DSF commanding officers<sup>64</sup> who—most likely having been in contact with the Ouattara camp throughout the crisis—joined the pro-Ouattara FRCI as it progressed toward Abidjan. The speed of their advance however did not stop them from committing abuses during the offensive. Pro-Ouattara forces have been accused of killing hundreds of people in the western town of Duekoue.<sup>65</sup>

Only a few key senior officers and elite units remained loyal to Gbagbo until the end,<sup>66</sup> as they would probably have most to lose in a transition, including a risk of prosecution alongside the former president. The pro-Ouattara FRCI reinforced by DSF defections did not however manage to maintain the blockade around Gbagbo's residence, whose loyalists even managed to launch a counter-attack on UN-protected Ouattara headquarters at the Golf Hotel.<sup>67</sup> The inability of the FRCI to complete the offensive opened speculations about internal divisions within their ranks<sup>68</sup>—among leaders of the ex-rebel *Forces Nouvelles*. The potential for such divisions will be one of the great challenges President Ouattara will face in recreating a truly “republican army” in the aftermath of this crisis, particularly as he had to rely on these former FN commander's military forces to seize power.<sup>69</sup>

As the FRCI offensive stalled, the military involvement of UNOCI, with support from the French “Licorne” force,<sup>70</sup> on April 3<sup>rd</sup> began by seizing control of Abidjan's airport, but this soon

escalated into joint UN and French helicopter attacks as part of a “neutralization” campaign targeting heavy weapons and army barracks, as well as armored vehicles of Gbagbo-loyal forces.<sup>71</sup> This international involvement was justified on the basis that UNOCI had been given the mandate to “use all necessary means to carry out its mandate to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, within its capabilities and its areas of deployment, including to prevent the use of heavy weapons against the civilian population.”<sup>72</sup> As such, the international involvement was a response to heavy weapons having been used against civilians, UN troops, and headquarters in Abidjan, as well as the Golf Hotel. Beyond the controversy over the level of involvement of international forces that led to the capture of Gbagbo at his residence on April 11th, it is now clear that Ouattara may not have won the “battle of Abidjan” without this joint UN and French involvement. This will likely be an additional challenge to President Ouattara as he strives to establish national legitimacy in the aftermath of the crisis. Similarly, his pledge to create a peace-and-reconciliation commission to investigate the atrocities allegedly committed by both sides during four months of postelection conflict will present its own set of challenges.<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion: Security Sector Reform and the Way Forward

As noted by the UN Secretary-General in a 2008 report on SSR, “the experience of the United Nations in mediating peace agreements has demonstrated the importance of addressing

64 Army commander General Firmin Detoh and *Gendarmerie* commander Edouard Kassarate.

65 Human Rights Watch, “Côte d'Ivoire: Ouattara Forces Kill, Rape Civilians During Offensive,” April 9, 2011.

66 In particular the 1,500-strong Republican Guard led by General Bruno Dogbo Ble and the 2,000-strong special anti-organized-crime unit (*Commandement des opérations de sécurité* [“Cecos”]) created in 2005 and led by Police General Georges Guiai Bi Poin. Many of the loyalist elements in these units would have been recruited after 2004. The Army Chief-of-staff General Mangou initially took refuge at the South African Embassy, but reappeared a few days later on April 4th and rejoined Gbagbo-loyal units.

67 Reuters, “Gbagbo's Forces Attack Ouattara's Ivory Coast Base,” April 9, 2011, available at [www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/09/us-ivorycoast-idUSTRE73014Z20110409](http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/09/us-ivorycoast-idUSTRE73014Z20110409).

68 *Jeune Afrique*, « Côte d'Ivoire : les FRCI divisées, le camp Gbagbo se renforce », April 10, 2011.

69 Renegade FN-affiliated warlord Ibrahim “IB” Coulibaly, head of the so-called “Invisible Commandos” that started battling Gbagbo's forces in Abidjan in January 2011, was killed by FRCI after rejecting the call by Ouattara for his forces to disarm. See Associated Press “Renegade Warlord Killed in Ivory Coast,” April 27, 2011.

70 It however took a formal letter from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to French President Nicolas Sarkozy on April 3rd, asking for French “Licorne” support to UNOCI, as authorized under UN Security Council Resolution 1962 (2010), para. 17.

71 Adam Nossiter, “France and UN Hit Ivory Coast Strongman's Home and Palace,” *The New York Times*, April 10, 2011.

72 UN Security Council Resolution 1975 (March 30, 2011), UN Doc. S/RES/1975.

73 RFI, “Ouattara Hails New Era for Côte d'Ivoire After Gbagbo capture,” April 12, 2011.



security issues at the outset.<sup>74</sup> The failure to reunify Ivoirian security forces (loyalist DSF and *Forces Nouvelles*) has negatively impacted the implementation of peace accords, and is in great part responsible for the escalation of the recent political-electoral crisis into a military confrontation. Both loyalist forces and FN elements have showed high levels of politicization, and what little trust that had been built at the highest levels—through the Integrated Command Centre, the joint leadership training organized by the UN, and the “four generals” weekly meetings—was lost during the latest episode of the crisis.<sup>75</sup> The military outcome of the crisis also risks perpetuating the unhealthy dependency that has long existed between politicians and uniformed troops, which was also a key factor leading to the recent, prolonged crisis.

In the short term, the priority will be to avoid a security vacuum and prevent possible reprisals and further abuses of the civilian population, particularly in Abidjan where most uniformed men are concentrated. This may require support from the 9,000 UNOCI troops and police already on the ground, while the national security forces and the police in particular are being reorganized and their salaries paid again. This latest episode of a decade-long crisis will no doubt have exacerbated divisions among the uniformed personnel of the yet-to-be-reunified country, and the recent creation by decree of a unified Republican Forces of Côte d’Ivoire (FRCI) will now have to be made a concrete reality. With the end of the military confrontation marked by senior DSF officers pledging allegiance to Ouattara on national Ivoirian television on April 12<sup>th</sup>, the way forward politically will have to include a comprehensive security-sector reform, which will in turn be a key tool for preventing the resurgence of conflict in the future.<sup>76</sup>

Sustainable reform of the security sector in Côte d’Ivoire must primarily aim to change the relationships among politicians, security-sector institutions, and the larger population, seeking a long-term transformation of the **security culture**. SSR will have to be part of the broader national

truth-and-reconciliation process, both among Ivoirians themselves, and between the population and its security providers, especially the armed forces. Yet, not only could it become part of the solution, it could also become a catalyst for a wider confidence-building process that will help Ivoirian society rebuild itself and “disarm minds.”

Most of the key SSR objectives of the 2007 *Ouagadougou Accords* remain salient: the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants; the dismantling of militias; and the so-called reunification of the armed forces. In theory, these were preconditions for holding elections. Now that the elections have been held with none of the SSR objectives achieved, it is unlikely that previously-agreed numbers for DDR and integration of ex-rebel *Forces Nouvelles* into national security forces will still apply, since recruitment has continued on both sides. What is clear is that SSR and the reunification of the armed forces will have to be part of a political settlement. Any such reforms will need to address the very conditions that led to the postponing of SSR: many in the Defense and Security Forces are convinced that they stand to lose from these reforms, as are politicians who have built their power in relation to these forces and have benefited from the status quo, including the repeated postponing of elections over the last six years.

The political agreement over SSR will determine at the strategic level what the new **national security architecture** of the country will look like. It will have to emerge from a national dialogue involving the population, security-sector actors, local authorities, and nonstate actors in a wider public debate on the reform and restructuring of the armed forces and other security-sector institutions. Once a new government is effectively in place and functioning, the UN and ECOWAS may be well positioned to facilitate this national dialogue and engage the government on the issue of building a new national vision that would guide the making of the new security architecture, building on past reform experiences in West Africa.

74 United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General of 23 January 2008 on Securing Peace and Development: the Role of the United Nations in Supporting Security Sector Reform*, UN Doc. S/2008/38, January 23, 2008, §21.

75 The “four generals”—UNOCI Force Commander, French *Licorne* force Commander, with Head of Ivoirian army General Mangou and Head of *Forces Nouvelles* armed-branch General Bakayoko—used to meet on a weekly basis. Their meetings had stopped after the November election, but the generals met once again in early February 2010 to discuss movement restrictions.

76 Associated Press, “Ivory Coast Generals Swear Loyalty to Ouattara,” April 12, 2011.

Once such a vision is agreed upon and the integration process is underway, **DDR of ex-combatants and disarming of militias** will follow, but guarantees of sustainable reintegration, pensions, and retraining opportunities will have to be provided both to former rebels and former members of the DSF army who wish to or will be asked to demobilize. This will be an essential part of a successful transition, as former armed men on both sides represent potential spoilers in the short and medium terms, especially if they continue to make use of previous networks for potentially lucrative criminal or rebel activities. In the short term, a larger FRCI may have to be temporarily accommodated and only later downsized (i.e., “right-sized” in the SSR jargon), and unified; and representative security forces should play an important role in dissuading potential spoilers. The DSF, composed of approximately 30,000 elements before 2002, almost tripled in size during the years of crisis. It will eventually have to be returned to near pre-crisis levels in order to be financially sustainable in the medium run.<sup>77</sup>

A comprehensive SSR process will be needed to address some of the longer-term challenges that face the different **components of the security sector**—including the army, police, prison system, and intelligence services. While the UN has legitimacy and credibility in assisting national authorities in developing their vision for the future of their security sector, bilateral donors will remain the most important source of assistance in the implementation of that vision. Some of the longer-term challenges facing implementation include the following:

- a) the demilitarization of police and *gendarmerie*—with the possible dissolving of certain units;<sup>78</sup> and the return of army troops to the barracks, as they should no longer take part in internal security or law enforcement in times of peace;
- b) the professionalization, retraining, and

depoliticization of the security forces;

- c) the restoration of public confidence in a more representative FRCI, starting with the improvement of discipline and the struggle against corruption;
- d) the progressive diminution of military spending as part of the national budget, including through the above-mentioned “right-sizing” of the army and police; and
- e) the re-instituting of internal and external civilian oversight mechanisms (including Parliament and civil-society organizations).

One of the most sensitive issues will be the question of **impunity**. Although Ouattara had indicated that he would follow a policy of “inclusion” in the armed forces reform process, some vetting of mid- and higher-ranking officers from both camps will need to take place. Maintaining some of these former DSF officers may however be necessary in the short term to ensure the progressive building of trust at the top, and the maintenance of command and control over each side’s elements integrated into the reunified FRCI. Early in the crisis, the International Criminal Court prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, had indicated that he would pursue those responsible for deadly violence against civilians<sup>79</sup> But, even though the international community may want to take some exemplary decisions in order to discourage electoral violence in the future, it may also have to accept some of the political decisions made by President Ouattara as part of the reconciliation process. Ivoirians themselves should ultimately decide what peace and reconciliation process is appropriate for a country that is deeply divided along political, regional, ethnic, and religious lines. If this process is to be credible, it is essential that crimes against civilians committed during the prolonged crisis (and possibly during the last decade) be properly investigated, and that justice be dispensed fairly regardless of which side committed crimes.

<sup>77</sup> The 2007 *Ouagadougou Accord* had envisaged that only the 4,000 elements recruited from November 2002 to February 2003 would be considered part of the army (in addition to the approximate 20,000 army troops in 2002), while those recruited into the national army after that would have to be demobilized.

<sup>78</sup> Three generals have already been targeted by sanctions and individual travel bans for the involvement of the units they command in recent violence, namely Republican Guard commander General Dogbo Ble, special anti-organized-crime unit “Cecos” commander Police General Georges Guiai Bi Poin, and Navy commander Admiral Vagba Faussignaux.

<sup>79</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Côte d’Ivoire Pro-Gbagbo Forces Abducting Opponents,” December 23, 2010, available at [www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/12/23/c-te-d-ivoire-pro-gbagbo-forces-abducting-opponents](http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/12/23/c-te-d-ivoire-pro-gbagbo-forces-abducting-opponents).

**Regional and subregional organizations**, such as the African Union and ECOWAS, should play a major role in this area. With good normative texts as a starting point, ECOWAS in particular—in cooperation with the UN<sup>80</sup>—could seize this as an opportunity to operationalize its ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) and SSR Policy in development<sup>81</sup> focusing on national ownership, regional partnerships and coherence, security governance, and donor coordination. This would be a test for the recently developed plan of action for the implementation of the ECPF and the existing joint UN-ECOWAS network of SSR experts, with the potential that regional experience and lessons feed into the process that the AU has undertaken of developing its own SSR policy, which should be adopted later this year. The latest episode of the Ivoirian crisis has challenged both the unity of the AU and its relationship to ECOWAS and the UN. The postcrisis phase will also be an opportunity for these three organizations to rebuild much-

needed consensus over their coordinated role in preventing, managing, and resolving election-related disputes and political violence.<sup>82</sup>

This latest crisis confirms that SSR is an extremely political process that requires a strong political commitment from the parties—a commitment that can usefully be encouraged by subregional, regional, and international partners. SSR should not be an afterthought, but rather a vital prerequisite to holding credible elections, whose result will be adhered to by the parties and the people, and upheld by professional and apolitical uniformed personnel. With over a dozen presidential elections taking place this year in Africa, not to mention recent events in Tunisia and Egypt, where armed forces have distinguished themselves by their professionalism, more attention needs to be paid to **SSR as a key tool for preventing electoral violence** and the resurgence of conflicts in general, and to the importance of security governance in particular.

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80 The UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) convened in November 2008 in Conakry a workshop on the role of security institutions in providing security during electoral processes in West Africa, in which ECOWAS and the AU participated.

81 The ECOWAS *Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* of 2001 insists on the apolitical nature of DSF and their subordination to civilian authorities mandated by the constitution (Articles 1, 19, 21, 20, and 28) and the ECOWAS Conflict-Prevention Framework adopted in January 2008 highlights the notion of “security governance” (S72) and sets an number of objectives and benchmarks for assessing progress in security governance.

82 African Union Panel of the Wise, “Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence: Strengthening the Role of the African Union in Preventing, Managing, and Resolving Conflict,” *The African Union Series*, New York: International Peace Institute, July 2010.







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