

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	76
Land:	Elfenbenskysten
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Annual Report 2008
Udgivet:	28. maj 2008
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	16. september 2008

Côte d'Ivoire

REPUBLIC OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Head of State	Laurent Gbagbo
Head of government	Guillaume Soro (replaced Charles Konan Banny in March)
Death penalty	abolitionist for all crimes
Population	18.8 million
Life expectancy	47.4 years
Under-5 mortality (m/f)	193/174 per 1,000
Adult literacy	48.7 per cent

A peace agreement signed in March contributed to the reduction of political tensions in Côte d'Ivoire. The UN Security Council decided that international peacekeeping forces would remain in the country until after presidential elections. Despite the peace agreement, human rights abuses continued to be committed by both sides, particularly against women, and harassment as well as physical assault remained rampant, notably at roadblocks.

Background

In March, President Laurent Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro, Secretary General of the New Forces (Forces Nouvelles), the coalition of armed groups in control of the north since September 2002, signed an agreement in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso. This aimed at reunifying the country and setting the conditions for presidential elections postponed since 2005. A timetable was set for disarmament and for creating an integrated army. Guillaume Soro was appointed Prime Minister of a new transitional government in March. In September the buffer zone separating government troops and armed elements of the New Forces and controlled by UN and French forces was dismantled and mixed brigades composed of government and New Forces troops began to patrol the area. In September, a process of voter registration was launched and in November the two parties agreed to hold presidential elections by June 2008. They pledged to start the long-awaited disarmament process in December in a step towards forming a new national army.

In October, the UN Security Council decided to renew for a further year the embargo on arms and diamond exports as well as individual sanctions such as travel bans and asset freezes against three political leaders.

Violence against women

Reports of sexual violence against women and girls continued to be received and several alleged perpetrators were released without being brought to trial. This impunity stemmed notably from the fact that the Ivorian Penal Code does not define rape.

- In July, a 16-year-old girl who worked as a maid in a private house was reportedly raped in Abidjan by the son of her employer. The alleged perpetrator was arrested but released the same day. Despite several requests from the lawyer of the victim, by the end of the year no official investigations were known to have taken place.
- By the end of the year no measures had been initiated to provide reparation or access to health for the countless women and girls who had been victims of widespread and systematic rape and sexual assault committed by combatant forces or by civilians with close ties to these forces since the beginning of the armed conflict in 2002. This was despite official commitments by the government and the President.

Allegations of sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers

In July, serious allegations emerged of widespread sexual abuse by peacekeepers with the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The UN sent a mission of inquiry to Ivory Coast but noted that the victims were reluctant to give details of the attacks. In November, a Moroccan mission of inquiry went to Bouaké, the stronghold of the New Forces, but by the end of the year the results of these inquiries had not been made public.

Human rights violations by government forces

The security forces were responsible for arbitrary arrests, torture and extrajudicial executions of detainees, as well as for widespread abuses committed to extort money at checkpoints and during inspections of identity documents.

- In March, Gombané Bouraima, suspected of theft, died in a police station in Abidjan as a result of torture. Police opened an inquiry but at the end of the year no perpetrators had been identified and brought to trial.
- In July, Kouassi Kouamé Félix, aged 15, was shot and killed, and five others were wounded, during an attack on a group of taxi drivers in Adjamé, Abidjan, by members of the Command Centre for Security Operations (Centre de commandement des Opérations de Sécurité, CECOS). The attack was reportedly in retaliation after a taxi driver had refused to give money demanded by security officers at a checkpoint. By the end of the year, no inquiry was known to have been opened despite official protests by a taxi drivers' union.

Abuses by the New Forces

Combatants and supporters of the New Forces were responsible for human rights abuses including torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and widespread extortion. A climate of impunity prevailed due to the absence of a functioning judicial system in the north.

- In August, Koné Drissa, accused of theft, was arrested by members of the Poste de commandement opérationnel (PCO), a branch of the New Forces in Bouaké, and tortured while in detention. He was released a few days later but died soon afterwards as a result of his treatment. The New Forces promised to investigate but by the end of the year none of the alleged perpetrators had been identified.

Amnesty law

In April, President Gbagbo signed a regulation providing for an amnesty for most of the crimes committed in the context of the conflict since 2002. The amnesty did not expressly exclude crimes under international law, including the widespread and systematic acts of sexual violence against women. In July, however, President Gbagbo stressed to an Amnesty International delegation that this amnesty excluded “crimes against human kind” and assured the delegation that “victims [would] have every opportunity to lodge their complaints”.

Amnesty International visit/reports



An Amnesty International delegation visited Côte d'Ivoire in July to meet the head of state and organize a workshop with local NGOs on sexual violence against women.



[Côte d'Ivoire: Targeting women – the forgotten victims of the conflict \(AFR 31/001/2007\)](#)



[Côte d'Ivoire: Crimes under international law cannot be amnestied \(AFR 31/006/2007\)](#)