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Thirty-fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2162 (2014), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) until 30 June 2015 and requested me to provide a midterm report by 15 December 2014. The present report provides an update on major developments and on the implementation of the UNOCI mandate since the issuance of my previous report ([S/2014/342](#)) on 15 May 2014; it also contains the findings and recommendations of an electoral needs assessment mission conducted during the period under review.

II. Political situation

2. With the presidential election of 2015 already on the horizon, political posturing and pre-campaign activities have dominated political developments in Côte d'Ivoire. Political dialogue, which had stalled since January, resumed on 22 May, following which the Government committed to a series of confidence-building measures, including the release of additional associates of former President Laurent Gbagbo, welcoming the return of those in self-imposed exile, unfreezing their bank accounts and returning illegally occupied properties.

3. On 23 July, the Government announced that 275 out of 659 persons detained in connection with the post-elections crisis had been released on bail between 22 May and 21 July. The Government also reiterated the commitment made by the President, Alassane Ouattara, that persons returning from exile would not be subject to judicial proceedings. At least 191 bank accounts have since been unfrozen, and more persons have returned from self-imposed exile, including high-ranking officials from the former regime, as well as former President Gbagbo's mother, Marguerite Gado, who returned from Ghana on 12 October, although she passed away from age-related issues on 15 October. The government-led Committee for the Restitution of Illegally Occupied Public or Private Sites made progress, reporting that, as at 1 December, of the 901 claims that it had received, 376 illegally occupied properties had been vacated. A further 153 claims remain under consideration.

4. On 18 June, President Ouattara signed into law a bill on the composition, organization and functions of the Independent Electoral Commission. The new legislation established an Independent Electoral Commission whose governing body



would be composed of 17 commissioners, with 1 representing the Head of State, 4 representing the Government, 4 representing the ruling Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP) coalition, 4 representing opposition parties and 4 representing civil society. It also provided for the election of a President of the Commission from among the commissioners. The opposition parties Front populaire ivoirien (FPI) and Liberté et démocratie pour la république (LIDER) criticized the legislation as failing to guarantee the principles of fairness, transparency and credibility. On 28 June, FPI announced that it would not be a part of the restructured Commission but remained open to dialogue with the Government. It argued that the Government was overrepresented in the Independent Electoral Commission, which affected the Commission's independence, and requested the Government to establish an electoral body to be appointed by consensus. That stance was echoed by the FPI-led Alliance des forces démocratiques de Côte d'Ivoire (Alliance) on 2 July, which requested the Government to renegotiate with political parties and agree by consensus on the composition of the Commission. Further consultations between the Government and the Alliance were held on 5 August, following which the Alliance nominated two representatives, including one from FPI, to the Commission. On 8 August, President Ouattara signed the decree appointing the 17 members of the Commission, who took their oath of office on 11 August.

5. On 4 and 5 September, the 17 commissioners negotiated with a view to electing a six-member Bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission, as stipulated in the new legislation. On 5 September, 12 of the 17 commissioners re-elected the incumbent, Youssouf Bakayoko, as President of the Commission. Five commissioners, including the representatives of FPI and the Alliance, two from civil society and one from the RHDP coalition, boycotted the vote. On 8 September, the Alliance announced that it had suspended its participation in the work of the Commission but would not withdraw from the Commission. FPI, on the other hand, announced on 13 September that it was withdrawing from the Commission, owing to the divisive vote by the party's central committee. On 1 October, the Alliance announced its continued willingness to dialogue with the Government on the composition of the Bureau but indicated that its representatives should be given substantive responsibilities in the Bureau. Building on the agreement reached with the Alliance, on 3 October the Government took steps to amend the law on the Independent Electoral Commission and accommodate the opposition by expanding the Bureau from six to nine members. The National Assembly adopted the amendment on 17 October, and on 13 November the Alliance announced through a press communiqué the return of its two representatives to the Commission, following their discussions on 11 November with the Minister of the Interior, Hamed Bakayoko. In the same communiqué, the Alliance highlighted that the expansion of the Bureau still did not address its imbalanced composition but recognized the steps that the Government had taken to encourage the return of the opposition. The Alliance representatives participated in a session of the Commission on 27 November.

6. Prospective candidates for the presidential election of 2015 continued efforts to consolidate support. On 11 May, the President of the pro-Gbagbo opposition party, the Rassemblement pour la paix et la concorde, Henriette Lagou, announced her candidacy for the election. Meanwhile, from 14 to 17 September, President Ouattara paid an official visit to the Iffou region, home of former President Henri Konan Bédié, leader of the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) and President of the ruling

RHDP coalition. During the tour, President Ouattara reaffirmed his intention to stand in the presidential elections of 2015. In a joint press conference with President Ouattara, former President Bédié called upon PDCI members to support the incumbent as the sole candidate of RHDP, which elicited mixed reactions from members of the coalition and the wider citizenry. On 1 November, however, RHDP reconfirmed its support for President Ouattara as its sole presidential candidate for the elections of 2015. Delegations from both PDCI and the ruling Rassemblement des républicains (RDR) party embarked on an information campaign across the country to advocate the sole candidature of the President.

7. The President of FPI, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, toured the eastern and central regions of the country from 29 September to 14 October to mobilize grass-roots support for the party. Earlier, on 4 July, he had announced substantial changes in the party's leadership structure, including the nomination of a new Secretary-General, and on 20 September FPI installed a Vice-President responsible for the coordination of activities aimed at the liberation of former President Gbagbo from the International Criminal Court in The Hague. On 9 October, Mr. Affi N'Guessan announced his intention to run for re-election as party leader during the party's congress, to be held from 11 to 14 December. On 5 November, former President Gbagbo expressed his intention to contest the role of the party's leader. On 20 November, Mr. Affi N'Guessan filed a complaint in which he requested the withdrawal of the former President from the list of candidates for the FPI presidency, citing procedural issues. The following day, his complaint was denied by the party's executive secretariat, which declared the former President's candidature admissible. Meanwhile, on 8 November, the opposition party LIDER elected Mamadou Koulibaly as its President. Mr. Koulibaly has expressed his intention to contest the presidential election.

8. On 31 October, after having resigned from power, the former President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, arrived in Côte d'Ivoire. The following day, through a televised broadcast, the Ivorian Presidency welcomed the former President and his entourage. While some government-affiliated political parties and civil society organizations and a prominent opposition figure, Mr. Koulibaly, expressed support for the decision of the Ivorian authorities to welcome the former President, PDCI remained silent and FPI adamantly objected to his presence. On 20 November, the former President departed Côte d'Ivoire for Morocco.

National and international justice

9. The Government continued its efforts to bring to justice alleged perpetrators of crimes committed during the post-elections crisis. On 26 June, the Supreme Court of Côte d'Ivoire confirmed the 15-year prison sentence of the former commander of the Garde républicaine, General Bruno Dogbo Blé.

10. On 9 and 10 September and early in October, the senior investigative judge and public prosecutor of the Abidjan Court conducted hearings of former First Lady Simone Gbagbo's case. On 10 October, the Government presented the International Criminal Court with documents justifying its ability to try Ms. Gbagbo in a national court. On 13 October, the Government selected a seven-member jury for the trial of 83 individuals, including the former First Lady, Mr. Affi N'Guessan and other associates of former President Gbagbo, all of whom are accused of crimes against the State allegedly committed during the crisis. The legal proceedings, initially scheduled to begin on 22 October, have been postponed indefinitely. On 24 October,

the Minister of Defence under the regime of former President Gbagbo, Lida Kouassi, was rearrested for allegedly undermining State security. Mr. Kouassi was among the 14 FPI leaders, including Mr. Affi N'Guessan, who were released on bail by the Government on 6 August 2013.

11. The Special Investigation and Examination Cell continued to perform its mandated role of investigating and prosecuting crimes perpetrated in the context of the presidential elections of 2010 and the post-elections violence. However, its work is impeded by budgetary and human resource challenges, which in turn undermine the Government's fight against impunity. Meanwhile, on 20 November, the Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Civil Liberties, Gnénéma Mamadou Coulibaly, announced that 800 bodies had been exhumed from 89 sites in Abidjan between 4 April 2013 and 6 February 2014 in the first phase of a joint operation to investigate human rights violations committed during the post-elections crisis.

12. Proceedings at the International Criminal Court related to the case of former President Gbagbo continued. On 11 September, Pretrial Chamber I of the Court rejected the request submitted by his defence to appeal against the confirmation of charges. On 17 September, it assigned the case to a reconstituted Trial Chamber I, which, on 17 November, set 7 July 2015 as the start date of the trial. Former President Gbagbo's request for a three-day release to attend his mother's funeral was denied by Trial Chamber I on 29 October owing to security concerns.

13. Hearings for the confirmation of charges against the former leader of the Young Patriots, Charles Blé Goudé, were held from 29 September to 2 October. Mr. Blé Goudé faces four counts of crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the post-elections crisis, including 184 murders, 38 rapes, 126 inhuman acts and 348 acts of persecution. On 12 November, the International Criminal Court rejected a request from his defence that victim testimonies be excluded from the case record, as well as a challenge to the admissibility of the case. All cases have so far involved persons affiliated with former President Gbagbo, contributing to perceptions of "victor's justice".

Social cohesion

14. The three-year mandate of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission ended on 28 September. Between April and August, despite logistic and budgetary constraints, more than 64,000 victims of the Ivorian crisis, 30 per cent of whom were women, testified during victims' hearings before local commissions. From 8 to 30 September, 80 cases emblematic of the Ivorian crises that occurred between 1990 and 2011 were heard during public hearings before the national commission, with a focus on truth seeking. However, the hearings were not broadcast, owing to concerns about the sensitive nature of the information disclosed. As at 1 December, the Commission's final report, including its recommendations for reparations and other political, judicial and non-judicial measures, had not yet been submitted to the Government.

15. Awareness-raising and early warning committees are being established in local communities to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between communities, while also seeking to pre-empt intercommunal conflict. The impact of those regional mechanisms remains limited, however, owing to insufficient capacity and financial constraints. To overcome the challenges, UNOCI provided technical advice and support to 23 such committees in the west of Côte d'Ivoire with funding

from the Peacebuilding Fund. This strengthened UNOCI relations with local authorities, and UNOCI is now jointly monitoring local developments to help to prevent conflict.

16. Land tenure issues remain a cause of intercommunal tensions. The Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Civil Liberties indicated that, since the entry into force on 1 April of the new law making male foreign nationals married to Ivorian citizens, as well as persons residing in the country since before 1972, eligible for Ivorian nationality, approximately 50,000 persons had applied for Ivorian nationality. In support of the Government, my Special Representative has encouraged traditional and community leaders to actively engage in initiatives aimed at fostering peace, stability and security in their areas of responsibility. On 22 May, a capacity-building workshop on land tenure management and intercommunal dialogue for 500 traditional and community leaders was organized by the regional council of traditional leaders of the Guémon region in the west of the country. Participants adopted a series of recommendations, including the promotion of local compliance with the law on rural land ownership of 1998 and enhancing collaboration between local communities and authorities.

17. From 27 to 29 October, an intercommunal seminar was organized in Grabo following the attacks in Grabo and Fété in February and May 2014, respectively. More than 200 representatives of women, youth and traditional and religious leaders of affected villages convened to discuss solutions to reduce social tension and restore intercommunal confidence. UNOCI also facilitated a workshop for 50 traditional leaders on their role in conflict mediation.

III. Security situation

18. The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire continued to improve but remained fragile, with sporadic incidents of armed attacks, banditry and other violent crimes persisting, particularly near the border with Liberia. However, there was a 10 per cent reduction in reported incidents involving undisciplined elements of the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), former combatants and *dozo* (traditional hunters). Ivorian law enforcement and security forces were deployed throughout the country, but their operational efficiency remained hampered by the lack of equipment for public order maintenance. The frequency of violence meted out by security and defence forces, particularly FRCI, on the population is declining.

19. On 15 May, the western border town of Fété was attacked by a group of unidentified armed individuals, which resulted in the death of 13 persons, including 4 children and 3 FRCI soldiers, and the displacement of 3,500 community members. On 21 May, the Government approved measures aimed at enhancing security in the western areas of the country, including by increasing the presence of FRCI and launching, on 21 June, programmes to promote peace, social cohesion and security. UNOCI conducted special protection patrols and rehabilitated five bridges, facilitating returns, while the Government provided humanitarian assistance with United Nations support. The population of Fété, however, has not yet returned.

20. On 1 September, individuals armed with firearms and other weapons attacked the FPI headquarters in Abidjan, which resulted in serious injury to three FPI members. The Government condemned the attack and began an investigation into the incident.

21. On 18 September, an unknown number of assailants engaged in a shooting incident at the Akouédo camp situated in the east of Abidjan, a joint military camp hosting FRCI elements and UNOCI military personnel. Eight of the assailants were captured, including a police officer and a soldier. Two civilian vehicles and eight weapons were also seized.

22. On 18 November, separate groups of FRCI soldiers erected barricades and blocked streets outside barracks in Abengourou, Abidjan, Aboisso, Bouaké, Daloa, Korhogo, Odienné and Yamoussoukro, protesting against unpaid salaries and other unpaid financial entitlements. In Bouaké, the demonstrators briefly took over the State television and radio stations; protesters also broke into the FRCI armouries in Bouaké and Daloa and looted police stations in Bouaké, which resulted in material damage and the theft of equipment, including firearms and ammunition. Both the Minister of Defence, Paul Koffi Koffi, and the Minister of the Interior issued separate statements that day, advising that the Government would meet some of the soldiers' demands. Negotiations between the Government and representatives of disaffected soldiers were held on 19 and 20 November, during which agreements were reached to accommodate many of the soldiers' requests. At the same time, President Ouattara declared that the military should not hold such protests in the future.

IV. Regional issues

23. The outbreak of the Ebola virus disease continued to present an unprecedented challenge for the subregion, particularly for Guinea and Liberia, which border Côte d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone, the three countries most affected. In Mali, which also borders Côte d'Ivoire, cases were registered during the reporting period. As at 1 December, no cases had been reported in Côte d'Ivoire. On 10 August, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire raised the risk of Ebola to "extremely high" and announced a series of countermeasures, including the suspension of all flights from affected areas and additional screening at entry points. On 22 August, the Government closed the country's borders with Guinea and Liberia, but on 1 September the National Security Council announced the opening of humanitarian corridors for relief purposes, the operationalization of which remains a challenge. On 26 September, President Ouattara announced the resumption of air traffic between Côte d'Ivoire and affected countries, with effect from 29 September. The Ivorian national carrier resumed flights to the affected countries on 20 October. In the meantime, with support from the United Nations, the Government updated its national preparedness and response plan, which had an initial budget of \$114.29 million, of which \$31.9 million had been pledged. The United Nations Children's Fund and UNOCI helped to augment temporary treatment facilities, while the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the mobilization of funds to equip and train up to 300 national and international health agents, as well as Ivorian border police, customs officers and other law enforcement officials in border areas. The United Nations also supported the development of a communications strategy and an outreach programme, as well as the mapping of illegal border crossing points, while the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs supported the Government's efforts to streamline clearance procedures and facilitate the operationalization of humanitarian corridors.

24. As a result of the Ebola outbreak, joint border operations involving UNMIL and UNOCI, as well as the Liberian and Ivorian security agencies, remain

suspended. In October, UNOCI and UNMIL conducted concurrent border assessments on their respective sides of the border in order to inform a joint assessment. The missions found the situation generally calm, with no major imminent threats. In addition, in coordination with the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI continued to monitor embargo violations, working closely with Ivorian customs authorities to deter any breach to the embargo.

25. On 5 November, the Council of Ministers promulgated a decree on the establishment, structure and functioning of a transnational crime unit. In addition to aiding in the fight against drug trafficking, the unit would be responsible for preventing trafficking in diamonds and protecting animal and plant species.

V. Reform of security institutions

26. Efforts to decentralize the security sector reform process and reinforce democratic governance, including civilian oversight of the sector, continued. The national security strategy of April 2014 clarifies the operational arrangements for the reorganization of the security and defence forces. On 22 July, Commander Inza Fofana assumed leadership of the Centre for the Coordination of Operational Decisions, replacing the former zone commander, Lieutenant Colonel Issiaka Ouattara, also known as "Wattao".

27. Within the framework of the strategic advisory consultative group, which monitors progress in implementing security sector reform, the secretariat of the National Security Council enhanced coordination with line ministries and the international community. The secretariat of the Council also intensified its nationwide awareness-raising and capacity-building campaign. Local authorities were empowered to contribute to the establishment of security committees in all five regions of Côte d'Ivoire in order to facilitate information-sharing and the coordination of security sector reform implementation at the local level.

28. The Government continued its efforts to improve the gender balance in security institutions, with particular focus on the gendarmerie. Infrastructural adjustments are under way at the gendarmerie academy to accommodate female recruits. Within the framework of the gender and peace consolidation fund project, police officers and gendarmes will be trained to operate 12 gender desks throughout the country.

29. Through quick-impact projects and with support from the Peacebuilding Fund, police stations in Abengourou, Aboisso, Daloa and San-Pédro, as well as gendarmerie brigades in Dabakala, Taï, Tingréla and Zouan-Hounien, were rehabilitated and re-equipped. The Ministry of the Interior, with assistance from UNOCI and UNDP, developed terms of reference for vetting the police, which remain to be endorsed by the Government.

30. Restoration of public confidence in the security and defence forces remains a challenge. FRCI continued to perform law enforcement tasks in the north, south and west of the country, owing to overlapping security roles and responsibilities with the police and the gendarmerie. In addition, although the police and the gendarmerie were redeployed throughout the country, their lack of essential equipment and logistics continued to impede their operational capabilities. Moreover, the influence of former zone commanders remains a lingering challenge, affecting public trust.

Despite this context, on 25 November the former zone commander of Katiola, Lieutenant Colonel Hervé “Vetcho” Touré, was appointed commander of the third infantry battalion, following FRCI protests described in paragraph 22 above.

VI. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

31. On 4 November, the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration announced that some 44,000 former combatants, including 3,538 women, had been disarmed and that a revised total of 67,460 former combatants were expected to undergo the process by 30 June 2015. As at 1 December, Government statistics revealed that a total of 27,034 weapons, including grenades, and 1,537 items of explosive ordnance had been collected.

32. Since early 2014, enrolment of former combatants into the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process decreased significantly, including as a result of limited reinsertion and reintegration opportunities. Between 1 May and 1 December, UNOCI and the United Nations Mine Action Service conducted 264 disarmament operations in support of national authorities, most of which involved FRCI associates and former Forces nouvelles elements. During those operations, 2,258 former combatants, including 147 women, handed over 1,004 weapons, 228,875 rounds of small arms ammunition and 1,041 items of explosive ordnance. According to the Government, there was an increase in the number of former combatants affiliated with the former regime who entered the disarmament process. However, the exact rate of their participation is difficult to ascertain.

33. As at 1 December, approximately 44,000 former combatants had benefited from reinsertion support. UNOCI assisted the Government’s reinsertion efforts through the implementation of 79 community-based, countrywide reinsertion projects aimed at the enhancement of community safety and social cohesion, the reinforcement of the weapons collection programme and the payment of transitional safety allowances to approximately 24,000 former combatants.

34. From 4 to 6 November, the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration held an international knowledge-sharing workshop to take stock of the achievements and challenges in the national programme and to look forward to the consolidation of the national programme. The head of the Authority, Fidèle Sarassoro, sent a letter dated 14 November to my Special Representative, in which he confirmed that 14,000 former combatants would remain at different stages of the reinsertion process by June 2015 and requested the continued support of UNOCI for their reinsertion and reintegration.

35. With regard to civilian disarmament, the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the support of the United Nations Mine Action Service, conducted 27 weapons collection operations, collecting 376 weapons, 149 ammunitions and 5,918 small arms ammunition. On 10 October, UNOCI, the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons launched a tripartite community disarmament plan. The United Nations Mine Action Service supported nine operations in Bloléquin, Dieuzon, Duékoué, Guiglo, Toulepleu and Zagné. A total of 176 weapons, 851 small arms ammunition and 66 items of explosive ordnance were collected.

VII. Human rights

36. The human rights situation was characterized by reports of arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, racketeering, extortion and sexual and gender-based violence against women and children. Between 1 May and 1 December, former combatants, FRCI elements and gendarmerie, police and corrections officers were reportedly involved in 6 extrajudicial killings, 32 cases of torture and ill-treatment and 49 cases of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention. In most cases, no judicial or disciplinary action was taken against alleged perpetrators owing to out-of-court settlements between the victims' families and the perpetrators.

37. In Abidjan, the detention conditions of persons held in connection with the post-elections crisis continued to be inconsistent with their due process rights. From 22 to 26 September, some 300 detainees went on a hunger strike at the central civilian prison of Abidjan to protest against their prolonged detention without trial and poor living conditions. The authorities, including the public prosecutor, committed to, among other things, accelerating judicial proceedings, following which the detainees ceased their hunger strike. The inmates, however, perceived the commitments to be unfulfilled, and 370 prisoners signed another strike notice on 24 November and began an indefinite hunger strike on 1 December.

38. In June, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, visited Côte d'Ivoire. While noting the significant progress made since his first visit in July 2012, including the ratification of the Kampala Convention, which obliges the Government to provide protection to internally displaced persons, he observed that there remained a serious lack of livelihood opportunities, housing and land for the displaced, who also faced considerable social marginalization. Also in June, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, Doudou Diène, presented a report to the Human Rights Council. He highlighted the challenges ahead of the presidential election of October 2015, including the increase in the number of reported cases of sexual violence, extortion committed by FRCI elements, the difficult socioeconomic climate for the population, and concerns over freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. On 6 November, the Human Rights Council appointed Mohammed Ayat (Morocco) as the new Independent Expert on the enhancement of capacity-building and technical cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights, replacing Mr. Diène. On 20 June, President Ouattara promulgated a law on the protection of human rights defenders.

39. UNOCI supported the National Human Rights Commission of Côte d'Ivoire in drafting its strategic plan and engaging with human rights actors at the national level. On 10 October, a human rights forum aimed at bringing together all stakeholders on a monthly basis to discuss human rights issues and advocate strategic actions was launched. The forum held its inaugural meeting on 13 November, during which it discussed the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the creation of a human rights monitoring group for the presidential election of 2015.

Child protection

40. Between 1 May and 1 December, 65 children were found to be victims of child trafficking for labour exploitation. There were 95 reported cases of rape against minors, of which 6 cases were allegedly committed by FRCI elements, 14 cases of

forced marriage (including attempts) and 39 cases of female genital mutilation. On 20 August, FRCI elements arrested 20 children between the ages of 10 and 17 years on suspicion of belonging to street gangs referred to as “enfants microbes” and illegally detained them in a military camp in Abidjan. Ten of the children were released on 22 August and the remainder on 25 August. No investigation has been opened against the implicated FRCI elements.

Sexual violence

41. Between 1 May and 1 December, the United Nations verified 180 cases of rape, including 32 gang rapes, of which 95 were perpetrated against children. Of the 93 alleged perpetrators arrested and detained, 29 were tried and convicted for indecent assault by national courts. In many cases, there was no accountability because the victims had withdrawn their complaints or had not attended the hearings owing to a lack of confidence in the judicial system, and reliance on traditional mechanisms continued. The low prosecution rate contributes to impunity for sexual and gender-based violence. UNOCI conducted 18 awareness-raising and training sessions on sexual and gender-based violence for 2,847 persons, including former combatants, community groups, prison inmates, social workers and police officers.

42. On 21 July, the FRCI Chief of Defence Staff, Major General Soumaïla Bakayoko, launched a committee of national experts on conflict-related sexual violence. It was tasked with developing and implementing an action plan that incorporated capacity-building and awareness-raising for FRCI. On 5 September, the Minister of Solidarity, Family, Women and Children, Anne-Désirée Ouloto, launched the national strategy for combating gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, which was prepared with the support of the United Nations.

Gender

43. On 30 September, 50 women’s organizations participated in a forum focused on juvenile criminality. On 22 October, women from political parties and civil society established a platform in Bouaké to address challenges to the active participation of women in politics and in decision-making. On 12 November, as part of the Open Day event on resolution 1325 (2000), UNOCI and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) convened some 75 Ivorian female public figures in Abidjan for a discussion on progress and gaps in implementing the national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Recommendations from that discussion will inform United Nations initiatives with partners in Côte d’Ivoire and the global study on the implementation of the resolution.

HIV/AIDS

44. Between 1 May and 1 December, UNOCI provided awareness-raising support to 6,075 Ivorians on HIV/AIDS during its outreach and social cohesion activities, and voluntary counselling and testing to 177 people, including 42 women. Voluntary counselling and testing were also provided to 1,982 former combatants, including 183 women. In addition, 449 gendarmerie recruits and 99 police officers, including 11 women, were provided with awareness-raising support on HIV/AIDS and sexual violence, while voluntary counselling and testing services were provided to 27 gendarmes and 17 police officers.

VIII. Media

45. UNOCI continued its efforts to enhance professional journalism and media ethics, encouraging responsible reporting on sensitive issues related to the Independent Electoral Commission, land, nationality and the legal proceedings against former President Gbagbo and Mr. Blé Goudé. However, media outlets still circulated incendiary information and hate speech. In addition, the Ministry of Health and ONUCI FM developed awareness-raising messages on Ebola, which were broadcast in eight local languages by some 50 radio stations throughout the country. On 3 September, the Ministry of Solidarity, Family, Women and Children, with the support of UNOCI and the United Nations Population Fund, established a network of journalists to counter gender-based violence through responsible and informed reporting.

IX. Economic situation

46. The economy of Côte d'Ivoire is projected to grow at a rate of 9.1 per cent in 2014, up from 8.1 per cent in 2013. This exceeds the projection of 8.2 per cent contained in my previous report, with the growth attributed to increased export of goods and services and improved terms of trade. The level of external debt continued to improve. Production prices for coffee and cocoa increased by 9.5 per cent compared with 2013. Public spending also increased, with expenditure on poverty reduction increasing by 12.8 per cent, and civil servant wages were raised. In October, the Government adopted a draft budget of \$10 billion for the 2015 fiscal year, representing an increase of 13.8 per cent and 72 per cent compared with 2014 and 2010, respectively.

47. Mining activities increased following the implementation of the mining code adopted in January, which was aimed at regulating illegal activity. As a result, more than 150 clandestine gold mines were closed during the reporting period.

48. Côte d'Ivoire registered strong performance with regard to its programme delivery for the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In June, an IMF review found that all end-December performance criteria except one indicative target (on the floating debt ceiling) had been met. The implementation of structural reforms was satisfactory but experienced some delays due in part to the limited number of meetings held by the Council of Ministers early in 2014.

49. Challenges remained, including constrained market and investor confidence as a result of the sluggish international economy, reluctance to invest before the presidential elections of 2015 and concerns about Ebola.

X. Humanitarian situation

50. The outbreak of Ebola in Guinea and Liberia affected voluntary returns facilitated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which had been suspended since March, affecting 42,000 refugees in Liberia and 6,500 refugees in Guinea. The resilience of communities in the border area was affected by the epidemic, owing to the restricted mobility of people and goods, the closure of markets and a ban on bush meat.

51. In June, heavy rains resulted in floods and landslides in Abidjan and the southern regions of the country, leaving 39 people dead and more than 12,000 temporarily displaced. UNOCI and the United Nations country team supported the Government's response, including by providing shelter and food items to displaced families in Abidjan, Fresco, San-Pédro and Sassandra.

XI. Electoral needs assessment mission

52. In a letter dated 18 June 2014, the Minister of the Interior requested United Nations assistance in preparing for the presidential election of 2015. Accordingly, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, in his capacity as the United Nations focal point for electoral assistance activities, deployed an electoral needs assessment mission to Côte d'Ivoire from 22 September to 2 October, which was led by the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat and included representatives from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat and UNDP.

53. The assessment mission consulted broadly with Ivorian and international stakeholders, including the Independent Electoral Commission, members of the Government, the leadership of the national security agencies and armed forces, representatives of national institutions, political parties and coalitions and civil society, including youth and women's organizations, international and regional partners, UNOCI and the United Nations country team. The mission assessed the political and electoral environment and evaluated the legal and institutional framework for the elections in order to define the parameters and the modalities for possible United Nations electoral assistance.

Findings of the assessment mission

54. All of the assessment mission's interlocutors were adamant that the presidential election be held within constitutionally determined timelines, an important element for the continued consolidation of peace and stability. No political party expressed an intention to boycott the election. As mentioned previously, the Government expressed its commitment to taking measures to ease tensions and invigorate political dialogue, including with the former ruling party, while generating economic development and putting in place conditions conducive to the return of refugees and others who left Côte d'Ivoire during the post-elections crisis. The assessment mission found that the Government's efforts had been well supported by the effective and discreet performance of my Special Representative's good offices mandate.

55. In 2014, legislation was adopted to ease societal tensions that had exacerbated the Ivorian conflict, including with respect to nationality and land. While social cohesion has improved, the situation has not yet fully returned to normal. A number of threats emanating from unresolved land disputes, internal divisions within the armed forces and inadequate equipping and training of the police and the gendarmerie remain.

56. The ruling coalition dominates the membership of the Independent Electoral Commission, a fact that, together with the re-election of Mr. Bakayoko as its head, has been taken by the opposition as an ominous signal. The resumption of dialogue between the opposition and the Government also exacerbated tensions, particularly

with respect to FPI, which is facing internal divisions. Meanwhile, PDCI, the ruling party's major coalition partner, has been divided on the question of whether the ruling coalition should support President Ouattara as its sole candidate, which is supported by the PDCI leader, former President Bédié. As a result of their boycott of the legislative elections, none of the opposition political parties are represented in the National Assembly, although some of their members were elected as independent candidates. The assessment mission also found that there remained a lack of equitable access to State media for all political actors.

57. The most recent presidential, legislative and local elections in Côte d'Ivoire, held in 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively, were conducted on the basis of the Constitution of 2010, the electoral code of 2000 and peace agreements (the Linas-Marcoussis, Pretoria and Ouagadougou agreements), as well as various presidential decrees. However, a number of those provisions were temporary special measures. Consequently, amendments are required in order to hold the elections of 2015 on the full basis of norms and in accordance with the law.

58. While the electoral calendar has not yet been announced, the Independent Electoral Commission informed the assessment mission that its preliminary timeline was as follows: (a) revision of the legal framework from 15 January to 30 May 2015; (b) update of the electoral list from 15 March to 31 August 2015; (c) candidate registration from 20 July to 5 October 2015; (d) electoral campaigning from 10 to 23 October 2015; (e) presidential election on 25 October 2015; and (f) run-off election, if required, on 22 November 2015. The assessment mission was informed that the general census of the population, the results of which were to be made public before the end of 2014, would inform identification and the voters list. Unofficial preliminary results revealed the population to be within the range of 23-24 million people, of which some 30 per cent were likely to be foreigners. There should thus be some 8-9 million people eligible to vote, up from 5.7 million in 2010. Since July, the National Identification Office has deployed a team to each of the 108 departments to process the identification of all citizens over 14 years of age who do not possess national identity cards. However, before issuing an identification card, the Office must submit each applicant's certificate of nationality for validation by the judiciary. This step contributes to bottlenecks that may affect the completion of the process before the electoral lists are revised, which all interlocutors agreed should be done, in accordance with Ivorian law.

59. Women are actively involved in the political campaign and related events, although their participation remains low. Only 17.6 per cent of members of the Government are women, and they constitute 8 per cent of the National Assembly, 5 per cent of the heads of municipal councils and 3 per cent of the presidents of regional councils. Four of the 17 members of the Bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission are women. The Ministry of Solidarity, Family, Women and Children, together with the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, is pursuing initiatives to increase women's participation in the political process and governance.

60. Given the significant progress made in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly its impressive economic recovery, partners were of the view that the elections of 2015 would require far less external support than previous ones. Most partners were not planning to provide financial support for the electoral process. Meanwhile, the draft budget presented by the Independent Electoral Commission for the conduct of the election amounted to \$76 million, not including an estimated \$18 million for

updating the electoral list or the operational costs of the Commission. The Government expressed its intention to cover the electoral budget but is also seeking financial support from its international partners.

61. Notwithstanding the lack of pledges of financial support so far, international partners have initiated programmes in support of the elections. The National Democratic Institute and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, both of which are funded by the United States of America, are implementing a consortium of programmes on elections and political processes. UNDP and other United Nations agencies are supporting reconciliation initiatives, political dialogue and conflict prevention. The African Union and the Economic Community of West African States were the only partners to confirm their intention to deploy international observers.

Recommendations of the assessment mission

62. The timeline for conducting the election of October 2015 is tight but feasible, given that all political stakeholders are committed to their conduct, notwithstanding the remaining political, technical, logistical and security challenges. In close consultation with the Government and all engaged stakeholders, the assessment mission therefore recommended that the United Nations respond positively to the Ivorian authorities' request for assistance in preparing for and holding the presidential election of 2015.

63. Specifically, it is recommended that UNOCI: deploy, within existing resources, specialized expertise to support my Special Representative's good offices mandate; assist national authorities in developing an operational plan for securing the elections; and provide limited logistical support within existing resources. In addition, UNDP, in close collaboration with the United Nations country team, should develop an electoral assistance project that would, depending on the resources mobilized, focus on preventing election-related conflict and violence; strengthening the capacity of electoral stakeholders, primarily the Independent Electoral Commission and security forces; promoting the participation of women and young people; supporting civic education; and acquiring electoral material and equipment.

XII. Deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Military component

64. As at 1 December, the strength of the UNOCI military component stood at 6,274 military personnel, comprising 5,994 troops, 97 staff officers and 183 military observers, against an authorized ceiling of 7,137 personnel. A total of 1,120 troops are currently deployed in the Abidjan sector, 3,018 in the west and 2,159 in the east. Women represent some 1.5 per cent of the UNOCI force.

65. The UNOCI force continued to reconfigure so that it would be more mobile and concentrated in high-risk areas, pursuant to resolution 2162 (2014), in which the Security Council decided to reduce the mission's authorized military strength to 5,437 personnel by 30 June 2015. As at 1 December, 840 troops had been withdrawn. Meanwhile, UNOCI continued to reduce its presence in the eastern region of the country and moved to a more pre-emptive posture in order to implement its protection of civilians mandate within its areas of deployment and capabilities. Between 1 May and 1 December, the Force conducted a total of 240 exercises aimed at testing the new

concept of active deterrence, relying on air and land capacities, in order to project military effect and enhance rapid response. Preparations are on track to achieve by May 2015 the full operating capability of the 650-strong quick reaction force authorized by resolution 2162 (2014) to operate in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as in Liberia in extremis.

Police component

66. As at 1 December, the UNOCI police component comprised 1,377 deployed personnel out of an authorized strength of 1,500, including 388 individual police officers and 6 formed police units deployed in Abidjan, Bouaké, Daloa, Guiglo, Korhogo and Yamoussoukro. Women represent 6 per cent of the police component. Adjustments were made in the areas of responsibility of the formed police units to enhance their operational capacity and mobility, in line with the reconfiguration of the UNOCI force.

67. UNOCI police continued to support and advise national law enforcement and security forces, including through the conduct of joint patrols, mentoring, training and co-location activities at police stations and gendarmerie brigades throughout the country. Training on public order for the national police and the gendarmerie has been increased in preparation for the election of 2015.

Conduct and discipline

68. UNOCI continued to work towards full compliance with my zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and other misconduct. One allegation of sexual misconduct against a UNOCI national civilian staff member was recorded during the period under review.

Protection of civilians

69. During the period under review, 30 United Nations personnel underwent a specialized training-of-trainers programme on the protection of civilians, in line with the mission's strategy aimed at streamlining activities related to the protection of civilians. UNOCI also provided training on the protection of civilians to 171 members of the national security and defence forces, which was reinforced through joint patrols.

XIII. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

70. Criminality remained a serious concern, in particular in the north and west. Between 1 May and 1 December, eight criminal incidents were perpetrated against United Nations personnel, including a street robbery, six home burglaries and a carjacking. Two UNOCI force personnel died from vehicle accident-related injuries, while a national and an international civilian staff passed away as a result of illness. On 2 September, an armed attacker carjacked a staff member in Daloa, stealing more than 75 million CFA francs (approximately \$150,000) that was to be distributed as allowances for participants in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. UNOCI has since revised its protocols for cash management. Former combatants in Danané protested against the delay in the payment of their allowances.

71. To mitigate the security implications of the Ebola outbreak in parts of West Africa, UNOCI and the United Nations country team developed contingency plans and put in place measures to strengthen prevention, preparedness and response capacity.

XIV. Observations

72. Côte d'Ivoire continues to make important progress on the path to reconciliation, normalization and economic recovery. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire is to be commended for its efforts to ease political tensions, consolidate hard-won gains and accelerate economic recovery. More than ever, Côte d'Ivoire is approaching President Ouattara's vision of an emerging Ivorian economy by 2020.

73. With the presidential election of 2015 less than a year away, it is increasingly important that all parties remain open to constructive political dialogue, which is an integral aspect of the broader process of national reconciliation. Important steps have been taken to close the continuing gap between the Government and the political opposition, which I welcome. However, much more remains to be done, including with respect to putting in place the legal framework for elections and reaching agreement on critical reforms, such as those related to nationality and land issues, all of which should be achieved in an inclusive manner.

74. The presidential election of 2015 will be an important test for Côte d'Ivoire, demonstrating whether its stability is sustainable, its democratic institutions are sound and the Ivorian people are ready to start a new post-conflict chapter. I therefore welcome steps taken to put in place the legal framework for those elections, including legislation aimed at reforming the Independent Electoral Commission, and the decision of the political opposition to participate constructively in the work of the Commission. I urge all stakeholders to work together towards the holding of a peaceful, constructive and efficient election for the benefit of all Ivorians. At the same time, I am deeply concerned by the resurgence of inflammatory speech, in particular with regard to election-related matters, and urge political actors and the media to refrain from conveying incendiary information detrimental to social and political stability in Côte d'Ivoire. Given the importance of the election of 2015, the United Nations should respond positively to the Ivorian authorities' request for electoral assistance, and I request the Security Council to expand the mission's mandate in a manner that allows it to provide electoral assistance as detailed in paragraph 63 above.

75. Bringing to justice the alleged perpetrators of human rights violations committed during the post-elections crisis, irrespective of their status or political affiliation, would greatly contribute to healing past wounds and fostering reconciliation. I reiterate my call that justice must be impartial in order to enhance the prospects for national healing. I also wish to congratulate the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose mandate ended on 28 September, for effectively performing its role in the reconciliation process, including fostering social cohesion at the local level. I encourage the Commission to submit its report to the President as soon as possible, as its recommendations will be critical to ensuring effective redress to victims of human rights violations and abuses.

76. At the same time, I remain deeply dismayed by delays in the investigation of major cases, such as the killing in June 2012 of seven United Nations peacekeepers and the attack on the Nahibly camp for internally displaced persons in July 2012. I implore the Government to do its utmost to ensure that perpetrators of such serious

violations of international law are brought to justice without further delay. At the same time, I welcome the continued good cooperation between the International Criminal Court and the Ivorian authorities and the progress made by both the national and international justice systems.

77. The improvement in the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire is welcome, although I remain deeply concerned about reports of summary executions, arbitrary arrests, torture and illegal detentions, as well as the low rate of prosecutions, particularly for sexual and gender-based violence. Such violations may intensify ahead of the election of 2015. It is imperative that the fundamental rights of all citizens be respected if Côte d'Ivoire is to recover fully from the conflict in its past. I also call upon the Government to ensure respect for the due process rights of all persons in detention, irrespective of the charges against them. I welcome the efforts made to enhance the functioning of national mechanisms focused on human rights.

78. Important efforts have been made to consolidate the Government's efforts to reform the security sector, including the development of a national security strategy. I urge the Government to ensure its full implementation, with a view to restoring public confidence in the Ivorian security and defence forces. At the same time, I welcome the ambitious target that the Government has set of disarming the full caseload of former combatants by June 2015 and reiterate United Nations support for meeting that goal and for reinserting the residual caseload thereafter. However, it is equally important that international partners provide support, including through joint planning and coordination.

79. Consolidating peace will require that much more progress be made in addressing the root causes of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly with respect to land and nationality. I am pleased to note that intercommunal conflicts, a factor of instability, decreased during the reporting period. I remain concerned, however, that pockets of the country, particularly in the west, continue to be the site of violent crimes. While there have been some noted improvements in the security situation, the situation in the west, in particular the area near the border with Liberia, remains unpredictable.

80. The outbreak of the Ebola virus disease has been devastating for West Africa. Although Côte d'Ivoire has not recorded any case of Ebola, as a neighbour of three affected countries, Côte d'Ivoire has put in place stringent measures to stop its spread. Ivorian refugees from affected countries are not able to return, and the livelihoods of border communities are increasingly at risk. It is important to ensure that measures are in place to build the resilience of the people affected by measures aimed at mitigating the risk of Ebola. At the same time, I welcome the efforts made by the Ivorian authorities to enhance their preparedness and response capacity, with the support of donors and the United Nations. I call upon partners to generously support the important contingency efforts of countries as yet unaffected by but at risk of Ebola, as this would help to ensure that this vicious disease does not unravel the gains made by peacekeeping in West Africa.

81. I wish to express my appreciation for my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her excellent leadership. I also extend my gratitude to all United Nations civilians and uniformed personnel, troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Mano River Union and other regional organizations, multilateral and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support to Côte d'Ivoire.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire: military and police strength

(As at 1 December 2014)

Country	Military component				Police component	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police units	Police officers
Argentina	—	—	—	—	—	3
Bangladesh	10	9	1 660	1 679	180	—
Benin	9	7	372	388	—	40
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	—	—	3	—	—
Brazil	4	3	—	7	—	—
Burkina Faso	—	—	—	—	—	23
Burundi	—	—	—	—	—	38
Cameroon	1	—	—	1	—	3
Central African Republic	—	—	—	—	—	6
Chad	4	1	—	5	—	10
China	4	—	—	4	—	—
Democratic Republic of the Congo	—	—	—	—	—	8
Djibouti	—	—	—	—	—	17
Ecuador	2	—	—	2	—	—
Egypt	—	1	175	176	—	28
El Salvador	3	—	—	3	—	—
Ethiopia	2	—	—	2	—	—
France	—	7	—	7	—	8
Gambia	3	—	—	3	—	—
Ghana	5	6	150	161	—	6
Guatemala	5	—	—	5	—	—
Guinea	3	—	—	3	—	10
India	9	—	—	9	—	—
Ireland	2	—	—	2	—	—
Jordan	9	10	19	38	480	7
Madagascar	—	—	—	—	—	3
Malawi	3	2	—	5	—	—
Mauritania	—	—	—	—	139	—
Morocco	—	3	719	722	—	—
Namibia	2	—	—	2	—	—
Nepal	3	1	—	4	—	—
Niger	5	2	867	874	—	20
Nigeria	1	—	—	1	—	4

Country	Military component				Police component	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police units	Police officers
Pakistan	12	16	1 084	1 112	190	–
Paraguay	7	2	–	9	–	–
Peru	2	–	–	2	–	–
Philippines	3	3	–	6	–	–
Poland	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Korea	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Moldova	4	–	–	4	–	–
Romania	6	–	–	6	–	–
Russian Federation	8	–	–	8	–	–
Rwanda	–	–	–	–	–	41
Senegal	8	6	453	467	–	36
Serbia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Spain	–	1	–	1	–	–
Switzerland	–	–	–	–	–	1
Togo	7	7	464	478	–	23
Tunisia	7	3	–	10	–	15
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	11
Uganda	5	2	–	7	–	–
Ukraine	–	2	31	33	–	13
United Republic of Tanzania	1	2	–	3	–	–
Uruguay	2	–	–	2	–	–
Vanuatu	–	–	–	–	–	3
Yemen	9	1	–	10	–	11
Zambia	1	–	–	1	–	–
Zimbabwe	2	–	–	2	–	–
Total	183	97	5 994	6 274	989	388

