

# The State of the World's Human Rights; Côte D'Ivoire 2024

## Background

Political tensions rose ahead of the 2025 presidential election. In August, Kando Soumahoro, a leader of the Generations and Peoples Solidarity (GPS) movement, received a three-year prison sentence including one year suspended. The conviction related to his membership of GPS, which had been established by the exiled former prime minister Guillaume Soro and suspended in 2021.

Intense rainfall in June led to flooding and landslides. At least 24 people died in Abidjan according to the National Office of Civil Protection.

By August, there were over 56,000 registered asylum seekers who had fled conflict in Burkina Faso.

## Freedom of expression and peaceful assembly

Legal provisions continued to contravene international human rights standards by imposing prison sentences for acts which should be decriminalized. The Criminal Code's Article 183 imposed "a one to three-year prison sentence" for publishing, disseminating, divulging or reproducing "by any means whatsoever fake news... when doing so results in or could result in a failure to abide by laws, damage to public morale, or disrepute for the institutions or their operation." Articles 197 to 199 carried a prison sentence for anyone participating in, or organizing, an undeclared demonstration.

In September, the police violently repressed a march – previously banned by the authorities – in Abidjan, arresting around 20 people. The Acting for the People movement had organized the protest against the high cost of living and forced evictions.

## Freedom of association

On 12 June, the government adopted an ordinance regulating civil society organizations' activities with the stated aim of ensuring that they complied with requirements to fight transnational organized crime. Organizations were required to submit activity reports annually and reports on ongoing projects upon request. The ordinance also allowed the authorities to dissolve an organization by decree, with no mechanism for appeal. The move was denounced by some Ivoirian NGOs who feared that the authorities would use the law to interfere in their finances and control their activities.

## Torture and other ill-treatment

In its concluding observations, published in August, the UN Committee against Torture welcomed the adoption of Act No. 2024-358 of 11 June 2024 of the Criminal Code, which strengthened penalties for acts of torture committed by public officials or anyone acting at their instigation or with their consent. However, the committee was concerned about a Code of Criminal Procedure provision which might give judges scope to admit evidence obtained by coercion or torture.

## **Right to truth, justice and reparation**

In March, the Council of State declared that it lacked the jurisdiction to rule on a 2019 application from human rights organizations requesting the repeal of a 2018 amnesty law. The law benefited hundreds of people accused or convicted of offences committed during the 2011 post-electoral violence.

## **Forced evictions**

Large-scale operations to demolish neighbourhoods in Abidjan and evict their inhabitants were launched in January on sites considered to be at risk of flooding. The Boribana neighbourhood was demolished in January, followed by Gesco and Banco 1 in February and Abattoir in June as part of a plan by the Autonomous District of Abidjan to demolish 176 sites. Thousands of affected families were not meaningfully consulted on the conditions of their eviction, or given adequate notification in advance of the demolitions. Most households and owners were not given prior compensation or rehoused.<sup>1</sup> On 21 November, the authorities decided to suspend the eviction operations and committed to take measures for rehousing and compensating those affected.

## **Women's and girls' rights**

Legal provisions continued to contravene women's rights, including Article 403 of the Criminal Code, which allowed impunity for men who rape their wives by stating that consent can be presumed, unless "proved otherwise".

In June, the National Assembly adopted a legislative amendment to the Criminal Code to allow abortion in cases of incest, formerly available only in cases of rape or where the mother's life was threatened.

## **Children's rights**

In his July report, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery expressed his concern about the persistent use of child labour, particularly in the artisanal gold mining sector, and in agriculture and domestic work.

## **Right to a healthy environment**

In February, the International Monetary Fund agreed a USD 1.3 billion loan to help Côte d'Ivoire improve climate resilience and transition to renewable energy. The funding aimed to improve governance of climate policies, create a framework for green and sustainable finance, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It did, however, increase the country's debt burden.

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