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**PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT :
COTE D'IVOIRE**

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PROFILE SUMMARY

Côte d'Ivoire : IDPs increasingly vulnerable as peace process flounders

Since Côte d'Ivoire's faltering peace process all but collapsed with the violent suppression of an opposition demonstration in Abidjan in March 2004, when government security forces and allied militia killed at least 120 civilians, the deteriorating security situation has further endangered thousands of already vulnerable internally displaced people (IDPs) throughout the country. Despite the deployment in April of an eventual 6,240-strong UN peacekeeping mission (UNOCI), on top of the existing contingent of 4,000 French peacekeepers, violent ethnic clashes have continued to displace civilians and hamper return in the volatile 'Wild West' region of the country. In the northern part of the country, splits within the de facto ruling rebel coalition, known as the Forces nouvelles, have led to several armed clashes and serious human rights abuses against civilians. And in the government-controlled south of Côte d'Ivoire, where host communities have been struggling to look after the vast majority of the country's estimated 600,000 IDPs, a resurgence of targeted attacks by pro-government armed militia against civilians on the basis of ethnicity, nationality or political opinion has heightened the need for protection of IDPs and other vulnerable groups. The virtual breakdown of the peace process resulted in the international humanitarian community revising its overall response strategy in June to one of continued emergency assistance for vulnerable populations, aimed at preventing another full-blown humanitarian crisis. Failure of the parties to the conflict to resume political dialogue and fulfil their commitments under the 2003 Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement may lead to further fighting and population movements, which could rapidly overwhelm humanitarian capacities and sink Cote d'Ivoire and its neighbours into even deeper crisis.

'Ivoirité' a root cause of the conflict

For more than three decades after independence from France in 1960, Côte d'Ivoire was a beacon of peace and stability in West Africa. The autocratic but tactical rule of the country's first President, Felix Houphouët-Boigny, ensured religious and ethnic harmony as well as economic prosperity until after his death in 1993. Houphouët-Boigny's successor, Henri Konan Bédié, sowed the seeds of ethnic discord in 1995 when he introduced the concept of 'Ivoirité', or 'Ivorian-ness'. This was used to deny Ivorian citizenship to his main political rival, Alassane Ouattara, and thereby exclude him from running in elections held that year. Bédié insisted that Ouattara, a Muslim from the north of the country, was actually from Burkina Faso. Since that time there have been an increasing number of attacks on people of foreign descent (HRW, August 2001). About one quarter of Cote d'Ivoire's population of 16 million are immigrants, or descended from immigrants, many from neighbouring Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana and Niger.

The start of protracted political crisis was assured when the military, under the leadership of General Robert Gueï, overthrew the elected government of Konan Bédié in the country's first ever coup, staged on Christmas Eve 1999. Although the coup d'état was ostensibly prompted by soldiers' unhappiness over pay and conditions, it soon became apparent that, like Bédié, General Gueï was also ready to incite ethnic and religious rivalries in order to remove political opposition. Continuing the theme of 'Ivoirité', Gueï introduced even stricter eligibility requirements for the 2000 presidential elections.

Military rule was, however, short-lived. General Gueï was forced to flee by a popular uprising after he claimed that he had won the presidential elections in October 2000. This left Laurent Gbagbo as the winning candidate. But the elections were marred by violence against civilians by all sides, and by "state-sponsored human rights violations, with a clear ethnic and religious focus" (HRW, 20 December 2000). Victims of the violence were, initially, supporters of both Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) and Ouattara's Rally of the Republicans (RDR), but once Gueï had fled the country the main victims were suspected members of the RDR, foreigners and Muslims (HRW, August 2001). Gbagbo, just like his predecessors, made the issue of nationality central to his political agenda.

A regional displacement crisis

President Gbagbo failed to resolve the growing ethnic and religious divisions across the country. Then in September 2002, a failed coup by Ivorian rebels – the second attempt in just over a year – marked the beginning of the worst crisis in Côte d'Ivoire's post-independence history. Hundreds of thousands of Ivorians were displaced by fighting which left the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d'Ivoire* (MPCI) rebels in control of much of the predominantly Muslim north of the country, and government forces holding the largely Christian south. At least 200,000 people were estimated to have fled the rebel-held northern town of Bouaké, and several thousand were made homeless in the economic capital Abidjan by a government demolition policy aimed at rooting out dissidents (UN OCHA, 15 October 2002; UNHCR, 8 October 2002). The main targets of the demolition policy were West African immigrants whom the authorities accused of supporting the rebellion, although many Ivorians as well as refugees from neighbouring countries were also displaced, creating population movements that threatened the stability of the entire region.

At the end of November 2002 two new rebel factions emerged in western Côte d'Ivoire – the *Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix* (MJP) and the *Mouvement Populaire Ivoirienne du Grand Ouest* (MPIGO) – who said they were not linked with the MPCI rebels but were fighting to avenge the death of former junta leader, General Robert Guéi. These troops included both Liberians and Sierra Leoneans, providing a chilling 'déjà vu' of the brutal civil wars that wrecked both of those countries (BBC, 30 November 2002). Fierce fighting between the rebel groups and government forces and systematic human rights abuses against civilians displaced more than million people, including some 150,000 who fled to neighbouring countries (IRIN, 29 January 2003).

The violence, in varying degrees, has so far eluded all military and diplomatic efforts to end it – including the Linas-Marcoussis Accord signed by all parties to the conflict in January 2003. Opposition parties, including rebel leaders (now united into the *Forces nouvelles*) have consistently accused President Gbagbo of not fulfilling his obligations under the peace accord, resulting in the withdrawal of key ministers from the Government of National Reconciliation (and the summary dismissal of three ministers in May 2004) as well as the refusal of the *Forces nouvelles* to begin disarmament (UN SC, 2 June 2004).

Protection of IDPs remains major challenge

The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire has, from the outset, been characterised by serious and widespread human rights abuses against civilians, committed by both government and rebel forces as well as urban militia and youth groups, mostly with impunity (HRW, 27 November 2003). Due to the ongoing inflammation of ethnic and religious tensions, displaced Ivorians have been particularly vulnerable to abuse at the hands of armed fighters as well as local communities (UN, November 2003). The west of Côte d'Ivoire remains a flashpoint for violence against people perceived to be non-native to the region, and thousands of settlers who grow cocoa in the area have been chased off their land in recent months (IRIN, 13 January 2004). This has resulted in further deadly recriminations, such as the clashes in April between the Diéouzon and Douékpe communities near the town of Bangolo in the west, which reportedly killed several people and displaced around 3,000 (UN OCHA, 17 May 2004).

Important protection issues have also been raised by the premature return of IDPs to their areas of residence in western Côte d'Ivoire. Although landowners have encouraged the return of IDPs to prepare for the start of the agricultural season, local populations have in some cases reported to be alarmed and frightened by the return of "non-native" settlers. Likewise, some IDPs are unwilling to return before disarmament takes place. Such heightened intercommunity tension has led to further violent clashes and renewed displacement, increasing the calls for local peace and reconciliation work (UN OCHA, 26 April 2004).

In Abidjan, government forces or allied militia continued in 2003 to raze shantytowns housing large numbers of West African immigrants (albeit at a slower pace than before), forcibly displacing – and in

some cases killing - the inhabitants. This happened despite a presidential commitment to put a stop to the destruction (UN, November 2003). As of April 2004, 80,000 displaced people remained homeless in Abidjan (UN OCHA, 1 April 2004).

Throughout Côte d'Ivoire as a whole, the UN Secretary General reported that since the deadly events of March 2004 in Abidjan, there has been a further deterioration of the already precarious human rights situation, with arbitrary detention of civilians, extrajudicial killings, as well as discrimination and violence on the basis of nationality, ethnic origin, gender and political opinion. Checkpoints have been re-established, particularly in and around Abidjan, controlled by paramilitary groups who regularly harass, intimidate and extort money from civilians. This has resulted in a dramatic decrease in freedom of movement. And in the north of the country, controlled by the *Forces nouvelles*, reported incidents of abuse against civilians have included summary execution, forceful abduction, extortion and sexual violence, particularly in the town of Bouaké. In many cases abuses have apparently been motivated by splits within the rebel coalition and rivalry among various armed factions (UN SC, 2 June 2004).

Humanitarian emergency threatens, again

Humanitarian agencies have warned that the continued state of insecurity in Côte d'Ivoire threatens to plunge the country back into a humanitarian crisis. Malnutrition rates are on the rise again in the western part of the country due to ongoing conflict, repeated displacement and loss of harvests (UN SC, 2 June 2004). Food aid to IDPs and other vulnerable groups remains essential. In the north, where local administration has yet to redeploy since the effective partitioning of the country in September 2002, most health care facilities remain closed and up to 85 percent of health professionals have fled. The crisis has contributed to an increase of epidemics and diseases such as cholera, yellow fever, meningitis and measles, as well as the highest rate of HIV/AIDS in West Africa. And in the government-controlled south, where the vast majority of the country's 600,000 IDPs have been absorbed into host communities, people suffer generally from the effects of considerably reduced purchasing power (UN SC, 2 June 2004; UN, November 2003).

According to preliminary results from a study by CARE, focusing on the impact of IDPs on host families, 50 percent of IDPs are women and 45 percent are young children. IDPs who have sought refuge outside Abidjan (e.g. in the western town of Man) are mostly rural families, whereas the IDPs in Abidjan are mostly civil servants and businessmen. The most vulnerable IDPs (and hosts) are female heads of household, and this group requires most assistance (UN OCHA, 1 June 2004).

The fact that most IDPs are living in host communities, and only very few are in formal camps, has made it more difficult for humanitarian agencies to assess and respond to their needs. The advocacy organisation Refugees International describes Ivorian IDPs as "largely an invisible problem" and contends that "International relief agencies have ... done very little to help these people or the communities which are hosting them" (RI, January 2004).

The 2004 UN Inter-agency Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for Côte d'Ivoire does however specifically set out the broad aims of humanitarian interventions for IDPs. As well as addressing the immediate needs of IDPs, humanitarian agencies' aimed in 2004 to promote conditions for IDP return, support their recovery and reintegration, and reinforce the absorption capacity of communities in areas of return - envisaging a gradual phasing out of emergency response. But as a direct result of the carnage in Abidjan in March 2004, which marked a major downturn in the already troubled peace process, the UN issued a Mid-Year Review of the CAP in June 2004. This sets out a revised humanitarian strategy refocusing firmly on meeting emergency needs of IDPs and other vulnerable populations. According to preliminary surveys, nearly 80 percent of Ivorian IDPs have limited or no resources and are in a "critical state of impoverishment" (UN, 15 June 2004). IDPs will therefore be among the main beneficiaries of assistance, particularly in the areas of protection, health, water and sanitation, and education.

Constrained response

Although the Ivorian government has gone some way towards addressing the IDP problem in the country – for example by setting up “crisis cells” charged with registering IDPs and raising resources (WFP, 2 May 2003) – its response is widely seen as inadequate, not least because government forces and pro-government militia have been a principal agent of displacement.

At the international level, funding shortfalls continue to hinder the efforts of aid agencies in Côte d’Ivoire. The 2004 Consolidated Appeal for Côte d’Ivoire and three surrounding countries originally appealed for a total of US\$ 59.8 million to meet the needs of over one million war-affected people. However, by the time the revised appeal for US\$ 61.1 was issued in June 2004, a mere 6.5 percent of the requirements had been met, which limited the ability of agencies to respond to needs. Donors such as the European Union have been discouraged by the Côte d’Ivoire government’s lack of progress in putting the country’s beleaguered peace process back on track (IRIN, 13 November 2003).

Hopes were raised that the 6,240-strong UN peacekeeping mission in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI), established in April 2004 with a Chapter VII mandate, would succeed in keeping the peace where French and West African (ECOWAS) peacekeepers failed. But even this is clearly insufficient to assure adequate protection and assistance for Côte d’Ivoire’s highly vulnerable IDPs. Their fate depends ultimately on a speedy resumption of political dialogue by the parties to the conflict, who must fulfil their commitments under the 2003 Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement. Failure to do so may lead to further fighting and population movements, which could rapidly overwhelm humanitarian capacities and sink Côte d’Ivoire and its neighbours into even deeper crisis.

June 2004

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

Background

Since 1995 Ivorian politicians have incited a violent xenophobia that ultimately destabilised the country

- Since former President Henri Konan Bedie introduced the concept of 'Ivoirité' in 1995, successive leaders have manipulated issues of nationality and ethno-religious divisions to further their political aims
- Human Rights Watch report describes atrocities committed during presidential and parliamentary elections in October and December 2000, including more than 200 killings, as well as torture, rape and arbitrary detention
- Flawed election of President Laurent Gbagbo in 2000, based on a blatantly racist agenda, laid the ground for the eventual division of the country into distinct ethnic and religious zones in 2002

"The 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections in Côte d'Ivoire in October and December were marred by political violence which left over 200 people dead and hundreds wounded. In the months preceding the October presidential and December parliamentary elections, political leaders exploited ethnic divisions to oust rivals, used the state apparatus to repress opponents, and incited hatred and fear among populations which had for decades lived in relative harmony. Their actions culminated in two unprecedented waves of violence which shocked Ivoirians and members of the international community alike, as well as grimly highlighting the danger of manipulating ethnic loyalties and latent prejudice for political gain. The legacy of the heightened suspicion and intolerance generated during the election period will take determined action to overcome; action which has so far been seriously lacking.

The violence shattered Côte d'Ivoire's hopes of rapidly regaining its status as francophone West Africa's economic powerhouse and a regional beacon of stability. This was lost a year earlier when a coup d'état against the corrupt government of incumbent elected president Henri Konan Bédié installed General Robert Guei as a military head of state in December 1999. General Guei had promised to return Côte d'Ivoire to civilian rule, and scheduled elections to do so, but had manipulated the process to such an extent that the legitimacy of the elections was already in doubt before they were held. A new constitution introduced by General Guei and approved by a July 2000 referendum required both parents of any Ivorian wishing to contest the presidential election to have been born in Côte d'Ivoire. This amendment was transparently designed to exclude Alassane Ouattara, the leader of the Rally of Republicans party (*Rassemblement des Républicains*, RDR), the largest opposition party, from the contest. On October 6, 2000, a controversial Supreme Court decision disqualified from running fourteen of the nineteen presidential candidates, including Ouattara, on citizenship grounds, and former president Bédié for not submitting a proper medical certificate. The Supreme Court, headed by General Guei's then legal adviser, was widely believed to have been hand picked by Guei himself.

On October 24, 2000, after early results showed Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the Ivorian Popular Front (*Front Populaire Ivoirien*, FPI), leading in the presidential poll, General Guei dissolved the National Electoral Commission and proclaimed himself the winner. Just two days later, he fled the country, in the midst of violence surrounding protests at his attempts to rig the elections. Laurent Gbagbo was left as the leading presidential candidate.

Despite the very serious concerns surrounding the legitimacy of the elections-both the widespread violence and the exclusion of Alassane Ouattara from the contest-Gbagbo was installed as president. Gbagbo then used the same methods as his predecessor during the December parliamentary elections, in particular to ensure that Ouattara was once again not allowed to run. Since assuming office, he has failed to acknowledge the flawed manner in which he became head of state, to promise new elections, to seek accountability for the violence, or to take adequate steps to ensure that, under his leadership, Côte d'Ivoire would be characterized by the rule of law, not by ethno-religious tension and military impunity." (HRW, Aug 01)

A chronology of significant events (1999-2003)

1960: Côte d'Ivoire acquires independence from France. Félix Houphouët Boigny is elected President, with his party called Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (PDCI-RDA).

1960-1990: Côte d'Ivoire has a single party system.

1993: Félix Houphouët Boigny died. Henri Konan Bédié (President of the National Assembly) became President by interim and launched the concept of *ivoirité*.

1999: A military coup – the first ever in Côte d'Ivoire's history – overthrow the government led by President Henri Konan Bédié.

2000: October and December presidential and legislative elections trigger violence due to the exclusion of opposition leader Alassane Ouattara.

2001: October: Laurent Gbagbo who replaced junta Robert Guei as president, ending 10 months of military rule, initiates a two-month-long National reconciliation Forum which fails.

2002: September - A Rebel group called Mouvement Patriotique de Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI) launch an uprising in Abidjan, the economic hub, and other towns. Former leader general Robert Guei and Interior Minister Emile Boga Doudou are killed. (AFP, 24 January 2003)

2002: October - 17 Rebels sign an accord in Bouake to end hostilities. Gbagbo accepts deal, asks France to police it.

2002: November - Two new rebel groups, the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP) and the Far West Ivory Coast People's Movement (MPIGO), emerge, claim to control the western towns of Man and Danane.

2003: January - the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and opposition forces signed a French-brokered peace agreement called Les Accords de Marcoussis. Under the agreement, a new consensus Prime Minister, Seydou Diarra, is named to the position.

2003: July - Warring parties in Côte d'Ivoire officially declare the war over and pledge their loyalty to President Laurent Gbagbo.

2003: August - Group of suspected mercenaries and their backers detained in France; said to have planned to assassinate President Gbagbo.

2003: September - Rebels accuse President Gbagbo of failing to honour peace agreement and pull out of unity government. President Gbagbo says rebels are making excuses to avoid having to disarm (BBC, 25 September 2003).

Warring parties involved in the post-September 2002 crisis: an overview

"Following are details of the rebel groups [...] operating in the country:

Ivory Coast Patriotic Movement (MPCI):

The best known of the three groups which started the conflict with a well-synchronised rebellion on September 19 by disgruntled soldiers facing demobilisation.

Although the MPCI was defeated in the country's main city Abidjan on the first day, they occupied the northern half of the world's top cocoa producer in a lightning campaign.

This movement is headquartered in Ivory Coast's second city Bouake, the main economic hub after the economic capital Abidjan. Its other stronghold is the northern town of Korhogo.

The group now has tens of thousands of fighters in its ranks, which have swelled due to voluntary enlistment by youths living in occupied territory.

The MPCI insists it is not a political movement and claims that none of the country's main political leaders are backing it.

However, it says it is fighting for the rights of the Muslim-majority northerners who have been discriminated against by the government of President Laurent Gbagbo, a Christian based in the south.

The best-known public faces of the MPCI are two soldiers – Tuo Fozie and Sherif Usman – but the leaders of their political wing remain shadowy.

Another of the leaders of the political movement is Louis Dakoury-Tabley, ironically one of Gbagbo's closest friends when the latter was an opposition figure and often forced to go into hiding.

The MPCI says it is determined to remove Gbagbo and usher in a new government after holding fresh elections.

It has strenuously denied claims that it is backed by neighbouring Burkina Faso, fingered by the government as the shadowy mastermind of the rebellion, or that it has any links with exiled opposition leader Alassane Ouattara, Gbagbo's arch-foe.

The MPCI signed a West African brokered ceasefire on October 17 which was "accepted" by Gbagbo as well but the truce was shattered late last month when fighting resumed in the country's west, where two new rebel groups emerged at the same time.

The MPCI and the Ivorian government began peace talks in the Togolese capital Lome on October 30 but the negotiations have been deadlocked for weeks.

Far West Ivory Coast People's Movement (MPIGO):

The group, which has now pulled out of the Paris talks, made a dramatic appearance on November 28 by taking the key western town of Danane near the Liberian border.

Its fighters are often armed with old-fashioned rifles and essentially comprise soldiers and men close to former military ruler General Robert Guei, killed in Abidjan on the first day of the September uprising.

The MPIGO claims to have around 6,000 fighters and controls a vast swathe of the west including Guei's native village of Gouessesso, where Guei withdrew after Gbagbo defeated him in presidential elections in 2000.

The MPIGO accuses the government of killing Guei and says it wants to avenge his murder and to secure a place for Guei's Yakuba ethnic group in Ivory Coast's pluralist society.

The group has repeatedly denied roping in Liberian fighters although witnesses have reported the presence of "English-speaking" combatants who loot and terrorise locals in sharp contrast to the MPCCI forces.

Most of their men do not wear uniforms – another major difference between the MPIGO and the two other rebel groups.

In December, French troops fired on the MPIGO to prevent them from taking the strategic town of Duekoue, on the route to Ivory Coast's cocoa capital Daloa, prompting the insurgents to threaten all-out war against the peacekeepers.

But like the MJP (see below) they have since signed a ceasefire, despite vowing to continue to fight the government forces.

Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP):

Surfaced on the same day as the MPIGO, with which it later concluded an alliance, when it took the key western town of Man on November 28.

Also based in western Ivory Coast, the MJP is thought to group some 250 soldiers of whom about one-fifth are traditional 'dozo' hunters who are reputed to possess magical powers.

Its leaders claim the group is a breakaway faction of the main MPCCI rebel movement, whom they oppose for agreeing to enter into peace talks with the Ivorian government under the aegis of Togolese President Gnassingbe Eyadema.

The MJP however insists it has no links whatsoever with the MPCCI despite maintaining "cordial relations" with the MPCCI top brass including Tuo Fozie." (AFP, 12 January 2003)

Mercenaries and refugees from Liberia recruited by all parties to the conflict (end 2002-2003)

- MJP and MPIGO and Ivorian government forces accused of using Liberian fighters
- Civilians displaced after attacks by presumed Liberian fighters in the west of war-torn Côte d'Ivoire
- Ivorian and Liberian authorities reported attacks on their common border by groups from each other's territory
- Liberia accuses Côte d'Ivoire government to back armed groups, which launch attacks from Toulepleu on the Ivorian side of the border
- Côte d'Ivoire asks France to activate bilateral defence pact following alleged raids by Liberian soldiers

"Defence authorities in Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia have reported attacks by groups from each others' territory on locations on either side of their border. However, the claims could not be immediately confirmed by third parties.

Defence authorities in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, said that heavy fighting continued on Monday between Liberian government troops and insurgents in Toe Town, close to the Ivorian border. The town was captured on Friday by the Liberians United for Reconciliation (LURD) rebel group, according to the Liberian government.

Liberian Defence spokesman Philibert Browne told IRIN on Monday that Liberian government troops were "engaging the rebels to regain control of the town" which, prior to the attack, was a transit point for Ivorian refugees and Liberians fleeing armed conflict in Cote d'Ivoire.

Liberian Defence Minister Daniel Chea had told a news conference in Monrovia on Saturday that Toe Town had been attacked by two platoons of insurgents "armed and backed by the Ivorian government". He said the attack had been launched from the town of Toulepleu, on the Ivorian side of the border.

"For the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire to encourage Liberian mercenaries fighting alongside their own troops in their civil crisis to cross the border into Liberian territory is tantamount to a declaration of war," Chea said. "[...] those who want to continue this wave of violence against our people must understand that we reserve the right to self-defense."

However, Cote d'Ivoire's armed forces denied Chea's claims. The armed forces "would like to indicate that no foreign mercenary is fighting alongside it and that the statements of the minister of defence of Liberia constitute groundless accusations," Armed Forces spokesman Lt Col Jules Yao Yao said on Sunday.

"On the other hand," he continued, the Ivorian armed forces "recognise that the situation in the west of Cote d'Ivoire remains worrying since the different actors intervening in the conflict are difficult to identify."

Two rebel groups, the Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (MJP) and the Mouvement patriotique du Grand Ouest (MPIGO), operate on the Ivorian side of the border between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. The MJP has its headquarters in the town of Man, while MPIGO's territory is farther south, around the town of Danane. Like the Ivorian government, both groups have been accused of using Liberian fighters. (UN OCHA, 3 March)

"They speak English and they kill," said Madeleine Ga Ahou, one of several thousand people displaced after attacks by presumed Liberian fighters in the west of war-torn Ivory Coast.

"Some were in uniform, the others in civvies. We don't know if they were rebels or others," she told AFP in the town of Guiglo, about 120 kilometres (75 miles) east of Toulepleu, the scene of bitter fighting on Wednesday and Thursday.

Ga Ahou arrived in Guiglo on Friday with her two children and was lodged at a camp run by the Red Cross.

She cannot say with certitude, like the Ivorian military, that the attackers were regular soldiers from neighbouring Liberia who went on the rampage alongside two rebel movements based in western Ivory Coast.

"All that we saw is that they had guns and they kill people," she said simply.

The Ivorian military has accused soldiers from the Liberian army of fighting alongside Ivorian rebel groups and of involvement in a deadly raid Wednesday in the town of Toulepleu which it claims killed at least 29 people.

Ivorian Defence Minister Kadet Bertin said on Thursday that Abidjan had officially asked former colonial ruler France to activate a bilateral defence pact following the alleged raids by Liberian soldiers.

Bertin said he had proof "that it is regular Liberian forces who are attacking us," adding that the attacks may not have been ordered by Liberian President Charles Taylor but "those in higher echelons of power with bad intentions."

Taylor on Friday denied the allegation but stressed that Liberian mercenaries were fighting both for the rebels and the Ivorian troops, albeit without Monrovia's blessings or knowledge.

However, several witnesses have reported the presence of Liberian fighters in Ivory Coast since the end of November.

The people of Guiglo are convinced that Liberians were involved in the attacks in the west, near the prized cocoa belt of Ivory Coast, the world's top producer of the bean.

Ga Ahou said she saw the "Liberians," mostly young men in their twenties, for the first time at the start of December in her campment of Iffa, in the heart of cocoa country near the town of Bolekin.

She said they looted and extorted locals but did not kill them. But on "Tuesday, they returned and started shooting, started demanding money and killing people who did not give them cash."

"They looted, they took food. we didn't understand what they were saying. They took my cycle and my little brother," said Joachim Koffi Kouame.

Kouame, a cocoa planter from central Ivory Coast, came to the region in 1986. But now he is returning to his native region.

Nearly 2,500 people from the Baoule ethnic group, natives of central Ivory Coast like Kouame, have fled during the last 15 days to the relative safety of Guiglo, said Koffi Tanoh, an official looking after the displaced.

Clement Gnan, who is among those who escaped, said "Many fled on foot through thick forests and the journey took several days."

However, most do not have severe wounds and generally suffer from fatigue or have grazes.

But they have deep psychological scars. "They spoilt everything. I've lost 10 years of my life, 10 years of my work," a fiftyish-year-old man said his eyes brimming with tears." (AFP, 24 January 2003)

"Villagers who escaped Neka said there were many Liberians among the fighters who struck on Wednesday in an attack claimed by the Ivorian Patriotic Movement of the Far West (MPIGO).

"There were a lot of dead, they killed lots of people," said one woman called Aminata, who had found a truck to San Pedro after escaping into the bush. "We saw the bodies."

Gbagbo's adviser in Europe, Toussaint Alain, accused mercenaries from Liberia's own savage wars of "massacring the inhabitants (of Neka) with machetes and burning their homes".

Fleeing civilians said they saw helicopter gunships and trucks full of Gbagbo's troops heading towards the fighting. Residents of San Pedro said white mercenaries paid by the army had also arrived in town.

"We're advancing on San Pedro," rebel spokesman Felix Doh told Reuters by satellite phone on Thursday. San Pedro exports about half the cocoa beans from a country producing 40 percent of the world's supply and prices for benchmark March cocoa futures shot up more than five percent in London on Thursday because of the news from Ivory Coast.

A big contingent of troops from former colonial power France is based in San Pedro to protect hundreds of foreigners.

The French have committed helicopters, heavy arms and some 2,500 soldiers to Ivory Coast in their biggest African intervention since the 1980s to try to stabilise the war-torn country, once the region's economic powerhouse.

A first contingent of West African soldiers is also due to arrive this week to help the French in monitoring the ceasefire between the government and main rebel group.

The Ivorian army says Tuesday's helicopter raid on a small village called Menakro near Beoumi followed an attack on its own positions and spokesman Colonel Jules Yao Yao accused the rebels of using civilians as human shields" (Reuters, 2 January 2003)

October 2002 ceasefire failed to end fighting, particularly in west and central Cote d'Ivoire (October 2002-April 2003)

- Despite the participation of the "New Forces" which include insurgent movements MPCI, MPIGO and MJP in the new government, a lasting peace remains difficult to reach. (April 2003)
- Fighting has been reported between the loyalist forces and the "New Forces" in the west and in central Côte d'Ivoire. (April 2003)
- Civilians have been killed as a result of combats between government forces and MPCI rebels in the village of Badiefla, some 20 kilometres northeast of the town of Zuenoula and 280 kilometres northwest of Abidjan. (February 2003)
- Terrified civilians flee southwestern Côte d'Ivoire as both sides' attacks open a new front. (January 2003)

April 2003:

"Despite the first effective participation of the "New Forces", which includes the insurgent movements MPCI, MPIGO and MJP, in a cabinet meeting Thursday last week, fighting has continued in pockets of the country.

Clashes between loyalist and "New Forces" have been reported over the weekend in the western towns of Bin-Houye and Toulepleu, as well as in the village of Belleville near Daloa. In the west there is no defined truce line at the moment, despite peacekeeping forces in place.

A scheduled meeting on 22 April between the Presidents of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire to discuss the precarious situation, was cancelled.

A nutrition study of 500 IDP women and children under five has been conducted in Duekoue by OMS. The study revealed that as many as 20 percent of the children and women were suffering from acute malnutrition. It is believed that all such cases are caused by the current crisis." (WFP, 25 April 2003)

"Fighting has been reported during the reporting period: in the west, in or near Bin-Houye, Toulepleu and Para; in central Cote d'Ivoire in Belleville (near Daloa).

Attacks by MI-24 helicopters reported in the national press and by the International Monitoring Committee include: Zouan-Hounien, Sepidou, Sanguinare/Mahapleu and Vavoua. Heavy fighting reportedly continued between the Loyalists and Forces Nouvelles over the Easter weekend in Bin-Houye and Toulepleu.

The International Monitoring Committee for the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement issued a statement on 18 April insisting that the 11 April appeal by President Gbagbo and the 17 April appeal by the Council of Ministers for the cessation of armed hostilities be effectively heeded, and reiterated its formal request to the Government that MI-24 helicopters be grounded in Abidjan.

[...] However, recent sustained fighting between the Government and Forces Nouvelles in western and central portions of the country, including the repeated use by Government forces of MI-24 attack helicopters despite pleas by the International Monitoring Committee to ground the gunships in Abidjan, is in stark contrast with the official messages coming from reconciliation government officials.

Furthermore, the presence of unaligned and uncontrolled armed groups in the west, both as attackers and military targets, renders accountability for cease-fire violations tricky to establish.

Fighting and helicopter attacks have caused an unknown number of civilian casualties and the continued displacement of populations, most acutely in the west, but also in Vavoua, in central Cote d'Ivoire.

The humanitarian situation will continue to worsen unless concerted political efforts bring effective disarmament and the re-establishment of public health, education and administrative services to the west and north. If stability and security are not restored, the estimated 750,000 IDPs in Cote d'Ivoire will be unable to return to their areas of habitual residence, and their need for humanitarian aid will undoubtedly increase." (UN OCHA 21 April 2003)

On Sunday, MPIGO leader Felix Doh claimed that Ivorian army helicopters had attacked the town of Bin Houye, which lies near the southern limit of MPIGO-controlled territory. He said the attack, carried out on Saturday, killed about 20 civilians and wounded many others. AFP quoted Doh as saying that he had "given orders to take the offensive".

"Once helicopters start bombarding, I think the ceasefire is over," AFP reported Doh as saying. The ceasefire was signed late last year.

However, Yao Yao claimed that the Ivorian armed forces "were forced to give an appropriate response to an attack against their positions in Toulepleu", which is about 20 km south of Bin Houye. He said the attack had been carried out "by heavily armed men who spoke English" and that "if there were deaths, they could only have occurred during the fighting since the enemy probably registered many losses".

Yao Yao also said that on Sunday "an enemy element evaluated at about 30 persons was detected at Tambly", a village about 5 km east of Duckoue, a government-held town east of the rebel positions. "An offensive reconnaissance is under way to flush out and destroy this element," he said. (UN OCHA, 3 March)

February 2003:

"The Ivorian Government reported that combat with MPCJ rebels in the village of Badiefla, some 20 kilometres northeast of the town of Zuenoula and 280 kilometres northwest of Abidjan, took place on Wednesday 19 February.

The fighting resulted in a dozen wounded and one missing Government soldier. This followed the killing of 5 civilians in the same village on the evening of Saturday 8 February, according to the Government, by rebel elements. The rebels claim that the Government is attempting to "frame" them." (UN OCHA, 24 February 2003)

January 2003:

"De nouveaux accrochages ont eu lieu lundi entre les troupes françaises et les rebelles à Duékoué, une ville de l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, a déclaré à IRIN le porte-parole de l'armée française, le lieutenant colonel Ange-Antoine Lecia. Quatre éléments du contingent français ont été blessés, mais M. Lecia n'a pas été en mesure de fournir un bilan des pertes du côté rebelle.

S'exprimant depuis Abidjan, M. Lecia a ajouté qu'il n'était pas possible dans l'immédiat d'identifier le ou les mouvements rebelles à l'origine de ces attaques. A la fin novembre, deux nouveaux groupes, le Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (MJP) et le Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest (MPIGO) sont apparus comme de nouveaux fronts. Le mois dernier, de nombreux accrochages se sont produits entre ces nouveaux groupes et les soldats français.

D'après M. Lecia, les combats au mortiers, qui ont duré trois heures, se sont terminés vers 12H30 GMT (heure locale).

Ces derniers combats coïncident avec des incursions rebelles dans le sud-ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire, qui ont conduit à un déplacement de la population vers la ville portuaire de San Pedro, ont indiqué à IRIN lundi des sources humanitaires. Grabo, une ville du sud-ouest, est tombée aux mains des rebelles, ont précisé les sources.

La ruée vers San Pedro est une situation inquiétante, ont ajouté les sources. Au cours des derniers jours, environ 2 200 personnes se sont réfugiées dans le bâtiment d'une école primaire locale, a confirmé à IRIN lundi le responsable de la Croix-Rouge à San Pedro, Akpa Emmanuel. Il a déclaré qu'il était difficile d'évaluer le nombre des déplacés car le mouvement de la population était très imprévisible.

M. Akpa a signalé que son organisation et d'autres sont en butte à de sérieuses difficultés pour répondre aux besoins élémentaires, notamment en termes de nourriture et de matériels médicaux. Les organisations s'activent aussi pour le transport car les déplacés veulent quitter San Pedro pour la capitale économique, Abidjan, ou pour Bocanda et Daoukro, deux villes du centre.

Ces incidents se sont déroulés pendant une fin de semaine riche en événements politiques, avec la seconde visite du ministre français des Affaires étrangères, Dominique de Villepin, qui se trouvait à Abidjan pour donner un élan à une solution diplomatique à la crise. Lors de sa première halte à Abidjan vendredi, M. de Villepin a annoncé que son Gouvernement serait prêt à recevoir, le 15 janvier, les principales formations politiques pour une table ronde d'une semaine.

Cette réunion sera suivie, le 26 janvier, d'une rencontre des chefs d'Etats des pays affectés par la crise, a précisé le chef de la diplomatie française.

L'autre nouvelle d'envergure a été l'annonce faite par le président Laurent Gbagbo que l'armée nationale allait observer un cessez-le-feu total sur tous les fronts, garder au sol tous les hélicoptères de combats utilisés dans les récents raids aériens, et expulser tous les mercenaires. Les mercenaires devaient quitter le pays samedi.

La deuxième étape a conduit le ministre français à Bouaké pour rencontrer des membres du Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), qui s'est également engagé à cesser tous les combats. Le MPCI a aussi accepté d'envoyer une délégation à Paris. Les représentants du MJP et du MPIGO étaient absents de la réunion de Bouaké." (UN OCHA 6 janvier 2003)

"Terrified civilians fleeing southwestern Ivory Coast told on Thursday how they had seen many corpses after a rebel attack that has opened a new front in the West African country's civil war.

Helicopter gunships and loyalist troops headed for Neka, where rebels struck on Wednesday taking fighting to some 200 km (125 miles) from the port of San Pedro, which ships about half the cocoa beans from the world's top grower.

President Laurent Gbagbo's government accused rebel-backed Liberian mercenaries of hacking to death civilians and burning homes during the attack on Neka.

But the government faced a demand from Paris to explain why a helicopter gunship crossed a ceasefire line in northern Ivory Coast on Tuesday and blasted 11 people to death, all civilians.

"France considers this violation of the October 17 ceasefire unacceptable and will demand explanations from the Ivorian authorities," Foreign Ministry spokesman Francois Rivasseau said on Thursday. "The ceasefire must be respected by everybody."

A war sparked by a failed September 19 coup has increasingly fractured the country of 16 million along ethnic lines.

The main rebel group the Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast signed a ceasefire in mid-October, but peace talks have made little progress and two new factions sprang up and seized chunks of the west in November. All three groups want to oust Gbagbo.

The MPCCI, which controls the northern half of Ivory Coast, also issued a statement on Thursday condemning the attack near its stronghold in Bouake and urged French troops to respond.

"In any case, the MPCCI troops have received carte blanche to launch a general offensive at any time," said the MPCCI's political leader Guillaume Soro.

"Once again, on the orders of Laurent Gbagbo, mercenaries have massacred Ivorians. The MPCCI cannot tolerate and accept these ceasefire violations which lead to the deaths of innocent people," he said in a statement." (Reuters, 2 January 2003)

Strategic rebel-held city of Bouake remains a shadow of its former self (June 2003)

- - Bouake used to have a population of about 600,000
- - By mid-2003 the population remained at about half, with banks and most shops still closed.
-

"But although life is slowly coming back to Bouake, where the forests of southern Cote d'Ivoire give way to the savannahs of the north, this once bustling commercial centre remains a shadow of its former self.

All six petrol stations in the city's main avenue are closed, just like the banks and most of the shops. There are few private cars or taxis on the streets.

The four-wheel drive vehicles of international relief agencies account for a large percentage of the traffic. And indeed there are few people. Not even rebel patrols.

The rebel military presence is marked mainly by groups of uniformed MPCCI recruits - many of them well below the age of 18 - who go jogging and chanting through the streets as part of their training.

One aid worker estimated that half of Bouake's 600,000 inhabitants had fled since the civil war was sparked off by a failed military coup on September 19 last year.

"They say Bouake is back on its feet, but the only things living here are the ghosts", said Aboubacar, a visibly saddened young man who used to drive a taxi, but who is now unemployed." (UN OCHA, 18 June 2003)

Political tensions culminate in 120 killed by government troops during Abidjan protest (March 2004)

- Protest march by opposition parties in Abidjan is violently disrupted by government security forces and their militia allies, killing at least 120 people according to a leaked report by UN HCHR investigators
- The report blames President Gbagbo's security forces for indiscriminately killing innocent civilians, and for specially targeting individuals from the north of the country and immigrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger

- Eyewitnesses reported police shooting at civilians as they were running away

"Political tensions culminated on Thursday the 25th March when the protest march planned by opposition parties pushing for the full implementation of the Linas Marcoussis peace accord, was violently disrupted by President Gbagbo's security and defense forces. Opposition parties claim that at least 300 people were killed whereas government authorities have reported that 37 were killed including two police officers¹. The most severely affected districts of Abidjan include Abobo, Port Bouet, Youpougon, Adjamé and Koumassi. Security forces opened fire on non-armed demonstrators and used MI 24 helicopters to spread teargas over the crowds. The situation remained precarious throughout the following day where witnesses reported that security forces in armored vehicles continued to move from street to street firing heavy machine guns. There have been numerous reports of abuse and raids carried out by security forces in the various districts of Abidjan. In Cocody and Treichville, eyewitnesses reported that police were shooting at individuals as they were running away." (UN OCHA, 1 Apr 04)

"At least 120 people were killed by the government security forces and their militia allies after opposition parties in Cote d'Ivoire tried to stage a banned demonstration against President Laurent Gbagbo in Abidjan at the end of March, according to a leaked report by UN human rights investigators.

Their report was obtained by Radio France Internationale and published in full on its website on Monday. Its findings were widely reported by Ivorian newspapers on Tuesday.

[...]

The document published by RFI blamed Gbagbo's security forces squarely for the bloodshed. It said many of the killings took place 'the dwellings of would-be demonstrators or even innocent civilians targeted by the security forces.'

The report said: 'hat happened on March 25 and afterwards was the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians by the security forces. There is overwhelming evidence which suggests that these killings were mostly unprovoked and unnecessary to deal with the demonstrators.'

It said that individuals from northern Cote d'Ivoire and immigrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger were 'specially targetted' in a 'carefully planned and executed operation by the security forces,' even though these communities had 'little or nothing to do with the march.'

'All available evidence suggests that there was no significant threat to the security forces posed by the demonstrators,' the report said. The level of violence employed by the police, army and pro-Gbagbo militia 'was not proportional to the situation,' it stressed.

A team of three international human rights experts was sent to Cote d'Ivoire last month by the UNHCHR to investigate the outburst of political violence in Abidjan on 25 and 26 March.

The version of their report leaked to RFI said: 'At least 120 people were killed, 274 wounded and 20 disappeared. These figures are by no means final.'

This represents something of an embarrassment for the government of Cote d'Ivoire, which said only 37 people died in the disturbances which it described as an attempt by opposition parties and rebels occupying the north of the country to seize power." (IRIN, 4 May 04)

Main causes of displacement

Xenophobia, anti foreigner sentiments as cause of displacement

- The concept of foreigner stands in negative relief against "ivoirité" and leads to its consideration as the root cause of displacement and exclusion
- Thousands of people have been persecuted, harassed, threatened and evicted from their lands during the past few years because they, or their parents were foreign-born
- In November 1999, the anti-foreigner sentiment resulted in the displacement of 15,000 Burkinabes who were chased from their homes in the southwestern town of Tabou
- Several massacres have underscored the pattern of ethnic persecution as Muslims and other northerners claimed at the time that security forces in Abidjan had rounded them up and tortured them

"Refugees International advocate Sayre Nyce leads the organisation's field work in West Africa, undertaking missions to Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Ivory Coast. She returned from Ivory Coast in March after completing her ninth humanitarian assessment in the region in three years. She urges the government to take a lead in soothing the rampant anti-foreigner sentiment gripping the country.

Since the start of the war in Ivory Coast, approximately 400,000 foreigners have fled the country, including about 200,000 Burkinabes, 70,000 Guineans, 48,000 Malians, and 44,000 Liberians.

These people were not simply fleeing the conflict. Instead, many have run from the hostile xenophobia that has grown rampant in the past year in Ivory Coast. Thousands have been harassed, threatened and evicted from their homes or their lands.

When I visited Ivory Coast in March I was stunned by what I found. I travelled there expecting to investigate the needs of people fleeing the fighting between the rebels and the government, which had been well documented by NGOs and the media.

Instead I discovered a serious problem that was hardly being reported: many people were fleeing persecution because they, or their parents, were foreign-born. Ivoirian civilians and military have harassed, threatened, and in a few instances, killed those considered foreigners.

Let's parse the term "foreigner". By the government definition, anyone whose parents were not born in Ivory Coast -- both parents, mind you -- is regarded as foreign. This working definition renders about 30 percent of Ivory Coast's 16 million inhabitants foreign, and, thereby, subject to hostility, even though many of these foreigners have never set foot outside Ivory Coast.

The concept of foreigner stands in negative relief against that of ivoirité, or "ivorianness." One's ivoirité is established simply by lacking foreign-born parents, and yet this has become the credential du jour throughout Ivory Coast.

LICENCE TO PILLAGE

For some Ivoirians, it has also become a licence to pillage, intimidate and kill. Military and armed local youth have organised outfits of terror in western Ivory Coast.

The 35,000 Liberian refugees that remain in Ivory Coast are in imminent danger of being caught up in the conflict in the west and being targeted by these bands of thugs. In effect, the Liberian refugees who have sought refuge in Ivory Coast in the past decade are again in need of a safe haven.

This campaign of xenophobia comes at a high cost, literally. Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, relied on thousands of foreigners to work in the plantations. The violence inspired by the government has had the effect of dispersing this labour force from the cacao and coffee plantations.

The hostile and intimidating environment may leave the plantation workers reluctant to return even if Ivory Coast is stabilised. Such disruption of planting and harvesting - even for a short time - would be a severe blow to a major pillar of West Africa's economy.

Neighbouring countries have already suffered economic losses.

For example, Carolyn McAskie, U.N. humanitarian envoy for the crisis in Ivory Coast, reported: "Mali relied on Ivory Coast for over 70 percent of its imports and exports, and along with Burkina Faso, and to a certain extent Niger, is suffering serious economic setbacks at a time when it is also affected by the drought in the Sahel."

The violence and xenophobia in Ivory Coast have had severe economic consequences: the loss of remittances, a poor agricultural season, and the strain for communities in Burkina Faso and Mali of accepting thousands of returnees. Together, these consequences present a major challenge to the region.

The origins of ivoirité-based ethnic tension are varied and complex. The notion itself began as a political tactic of former President Henri Konan-Bédié to prohibit some politicians, including prominent northerner Alassane Ouattara, from standing as president.

It has increased tensions among ethnic groups and created a division between the mainly Muslim north, which is where most of those considered "foreigners" are living, and the mainly Christian south.

CHASED FROM THEIR HOMES

In November 1999, the anti-foreigner sentiment resulted in the displacement of 15,000 Burkinabes who were chased from their homes in the southwestern town of Tabou.

In the past eight months of conflict, Burkinabes, along with other foreigners such as Malians and Liberians, have been the targets of hostility. An ethnic massacre at Yopougon, outside Abidjan, in October 2000 and the massacre of gendarmes by northern rebels in the town of Bouaké in October 2002 exemplified ethnic hostility.

The roadblocks to peace in Ivory Coast are legion. Human rights abuses, including forced recruitment, must be stopped immediately. Liberian refugees need to be moved from western Ivory Coast to a safer area.

The government must ensure the protection of immigrants and refugees. It should also establish a new legal framework that liberalises citizenship requirements and protects the rights of foreign nationals living and working in the country.

These measures alone will not suffice. The government must also root out its own hypocrisy on the matter. For a government that has occasionally encouraged anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiments by publicly reviling foreigners, taking an active and public role in soothing xenophobic tension is imperative.

National reconciliation in any meaningful sense cannot happen until the government defuses ivoirité, and welcomes its citizens - all of them - to a persecution-free Ivory Coast. Until the people of Ivory Coast scrap the identity politics, there is little hope for a lasting peace." (Alertnet, 23 June 2003)

"The war in Ivory Coast is the culmination of years of instability which triggered a coup in December 1999, smashed the country's reputation as a haven of west African prosperity and brought out deep divisions among its people.

Delegates from rebel groups, political parties and the government in the former French colony began holding peace talks in Paris Wednesday, aimed at resolving the crisis that has seen Ivory Coast's long festering wounds burst open along geo-ethnic lines since a rebellion on September 19.

Since then, rebels have gained control of the cocoa-growing west and predominantly Muslim north of the country, with the government of President Laurent Gbagbo digging in in the south.

The insurgents have repeatedly said they were waging their battle in defense of the rights of Ivory Coast's Muslims and ethnic minorities, both of whom, they insist, have been marginalised by Gbagbo's government.

A Christian from the south, Gbagbo has been accused of excluding anyone but southern Christians from his ruling elite.

He came to power in October 2000 on the back of a popular uprising that prevented 1999 coup-maker, General Robert Guei, from taking up the presidency after an election in that month which Guei claimed to have won.

In an early clue to the simmering tension that was to boil over in the September 2001 rebellion, Gbagbo's supporters, backed by the security forces, fought backers of opposition politician Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim from the north, who had been excluded from the October 2000 election.

Muslims and other northerners claimed at the time that security forces in Abidjan had rounded them up and tortured them.

Ethnic demons had been on the loose since the death in 1993 of Ivory Coast's first president Felix Houphouet-Boigny, as his successors espoused the concept of "Ivorianness", a home-grown concept of priority for Ivoirians.

At the Paris talks, Gbagbo's ruling Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) will face the uphill task of trying to win the support of the main political players -- notably Ouattara's opposition Rally of Republicans (RDR) party -- in the fight against the rebels.

Ouattara had his home ransacked and torched during the unrest, and eventually fled into exile.

A former prime minister under Houphouet-Boigny, Ouattara had been barred from the presidential polls in 2000 on the contentious ground that he hailed from neighbouring Burkina Faso.

The government and the courts recognised his Ivorian nationality last year.

Ouattara has backed rebel demands for fresh polls. Gbagbo, who adopted a bellicose tone when the rebellion started, has become more flexible now due to the abysmal performance of his troops against the rebels, and pressure from France and other countries.

The embattled leader last year drafted a peace plan to end the ruinous war, which included the formation of a new broad-based government and moves to stamp out any form of ethnic discrimination.

These would include a "referendum on three questions thrown up by the crisis -- the conditions for eligibility to the presidential office, land laws and nationality," according to a statement.

Before the uprising, around one-third of Ivory Coast's population of about 15.8 million were immigrants, mostly migrant workers from west Africa.

Houphouet-Boigny, who ruled from 1960 when Ivory Coast gained independence from France till his death in 1993, welcomed foreigners -- mainly west Africans and French nationals -- with open arms.

Their toil was largely instrumental in turning the country into the world's biggest cocoa producer.

Some were also refugees from Africa's many wars, because Ivory Coast was seen as one of the few countries where refugees were able to live not in camps but among the local population.

But many fled their host country following the September uprising, after they were randomly targetted and hunted down in reprisal attacks fuelled by accusations made by Gbagbo that Ivorian rebels were backed by a "rogue nation" in the region, implicitly fingering Burkina Faso." (AFP 15 January 2003)

"Since the start of Ivory Coast's conflict on September 19, 2002, more than one million people have been displaced. In addition to the political turmoil that has impelled their flight, many of these people have fled persecution. In the last seven months of conflict, the Government of Ivory Coast has occasionally encouraged anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiments by publicly reviling "foreigners."

Although a new government of national unity was recently created and a ceasefire was signed this weekend, failure to curb xenophobic laws and attitudes could compromise attempts at peaceful resolution and catalyze further displacement.

The term "foreigners" in this case is a misnomer: many of those being persecuted were actually born or raised in Ivory Coast, and some have never been outside of the country.

But by the government's narrow definition of "Ivoirian," about 30% of Ivory Coast's 16 million inhabitants are considered "foreigners" because both parents were not born in Ivory Coast. Ivoirian civilians and military have harassed, threatened, and in a few instances, killed those designated foreigners. Since the start of the war, approximately 400,000 "foreigners" have fled the country, including about 200,000 Burkinabès, 70,000 Guineans, 48,000 Malians, and 44,000 Liberians.

Members of the international community have highlighted the importance of national reconciliation, and have pointed to the need to address the anti-immigrant sentiment. The United Nations Humanitarian Envoy to Ivory Coast, Carolyn McAskie, and the new National Reconciliation Minister, Sebastien Danon Djedje, discussed xenophobia when they met recently.

On April 24, the UN information network reported that in this meeting with the new minister, McAskie "highlighted the importance of his portfolio, assured him that the international community was willing to help Ivory Coast's government, but noted the need for reconciliation at the government level."

The campaign of xenophobia has already caused massive damage to the country and the region. Thousands have been harassed, threatened, and evicted from their homes or their lands. In addition, damage to the regional economy has been great. Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, relied on thousands of foreigners to work in the plantations. The violence inspired by the government has had the effect of dispersing this labor force from the cacao and coffee plantations. The hostile and intimidating environment may leave the plantation workers reluctant to return even if Ivory Coast is stabilized. Such disruption of planting and harvesting - even for a short time - would deal a severe blow to a major pillar of West Africa's economy.

Neighboring countries have already suffered economic losses. For example, the Humanitarian Envoy reported, "Mali relied on Côte d'Ivoire for over 70% of its imports and exports, and along with Burkina Faso, and to a certain extent Niger, is suffering serious economic setbacks at a time when it is also affected by the drought in the Sahel." The violence and xenophobia in the Ivory Coast have had severe economic consequences: the loss of remittances, a poor agricultural season, and the strain for communities in Burkina Faso and Mali of accepting thousands of returnees. Together, these consequences present a major challenge to the region.

Anti-foreigner sentiment is not new in Ivory Coast. The notion of "ivoirité" or "ivoirianness" started out as a political tactic of former President Konan-Bédié to prohibit some politicians, including prominent northerner Alassane Ouattara, from running for President. It has increased tensions among ethnic groups and created a division between the mainly Muslim north, which is where most of those considered "foreigners" are living, and the mainly Christian south.

In November 1999, the anti-foreigner sentiment resulted in the displacement of 15,000 Burkinabès who were chased from their homes in the southwestern town of Tabou. In the last seven months of conflict, Burkinabès, along with other foreigners such as Malians and Liberians, have been the targets of hostility.

In response to the latest outflow of Burkinabès, a UN worker told RI that "it appears to be rather clear cut that the Burkinabès have left Ivory Coast based on a well-founded fear of being persecuted owing to their nationality."

Several massacres have underscored the pattern of ethnic persecution. A recent Amnesty International report explained that an October 2002 massacre of gendarmes by the northern rebels in the town of Bouaké was reminiscent of an ethnic massacre at Yopougon (outside of Abidjan) in October 2000.

"All the victims of this massacre belonged to the Dioula ethnic group, a name often used to describe Côte d'Ivoire nationals from the north of the country... [Dioula] is also sometimes used to describe nationals of neighboring countries, especially those from Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea," stated Amnesty. The report added that until the massacre at Yopougon, "[Ivory Coast] had steered clear of ethnically motivated massacres and violence, even though for some years, certain sections of the press and the state media had been regularly publishing xenophobic material promoting the ideology of 'ivoirité'."

Refugees International has advocated for increased protection of Liberian refugees in Ivory Coast who also face anti-foreigner threats. In March, RI reported, "More than 35,000 Liberian refugees that remain in the Ivory Coast are in imminent danger of being caught up in the conflict in the west or targeted by the military and armed local youth."

These Liberian refugees, who [have] sought refuge in the Ivory Coast over the last decade, are again in need of a safe haven." This safe haven has not been furnished. Furthermore, recent reports from western Ivory Coast state that there is an increase of forced recruitment of these refugees." (RI, 6 May 2003)

"The war has carved Ivory Coast roughly in half along ethnic lines, dividing the rebel-held, mainly Muslim north from the government-controlled, mainly Christian south." (Reuters, 9 January 2003)

Further displacement accompanies intensification of violence and human rights abuses (February-March 2003)

- Violent activity in western Côte d'Ivoire forced people to flee towns of Guiglo and Duekoue
- 40,000 IDPs have been reported by the government Crisis Cell and the Ivorian Red Cross in the Toulepleu-Guiglo area
- 2,000 IDPs have been reported by MSF Holland in Grabo as the town has been looted, and food security was tenuous

"There were reports of violent activity in western Cote d'Ivoire on Sunday 23 March, in the village of Dah situated roughly between the towns of Man and Duekoue, in which 42 civilians were reported killed."

As has been the case in similar episodes of violence in violation of the cease-fire over the last few months, rebels and government forces have traded accusations over the violence. The fighting and casualties have not been confirmed by independent sources to date.

ECOMICI (ECOWAS Mission in Cote d'Ivoire) forces this week took over "front line" cease-fire monitoring positions from the French Operation Licorne forces in the towns of Daloa, Tiebissou, Prikro and elsewhere in central Cote d'Ivoire. The French forces moved into back-up positions." (UN OCHA, 28 March)

People flee western towns of Guiglo and Duekoue

"The NGO Solidarities further reports that near the western towns of Guiglo and Duekoue, around 85,000 people have fled military confrontation, rape, pillaging, summary executions and exactions.

Shelter and hygiene conditions in the overpopulated villages situated on the fringe of combat zones in the area, they report, are deplorable, and humanitarian assistance is not yet in place. They have issued an urgent appeal for funding.

...The western area of the country along the border with Liberia and in particular the area between the towns of Toulepleu, Guiglo and Touba remains highly unstable. WFP received information from the Government Crisis Cell and the Ivorian Red Cross indicating that some 40,000 IDPs are present in the Toulepleu-Guiglo area.

The national daily Notre Reveil reported on 18 February that the area surrounding Toulepleu had been "ravaged" by MPTIG forces and Liberian mercenaries.

WFP has undertaken missions in the past week to the western town of Guiglo and to the southwestern towns of San Pedro and Tabou to assess the food security situation of vulnerable populations and IDPs in those areas, including the town of Grabo, recently retaken by Government forces.

MSF Holland reports that there are some 2,000 IDPs in Grabo, that foreigners are suffering from human rights abuses there, that the town has been looted, and that food security was tenuous.

An inter-agency UN mission to the western towns of Man and Danane is also being carried out (21-23 February). Reports of atrocities and lawlessness in the west, and large numbers of IDPs fleeing violence are extremely worrying." (UN OCHA, 24 February 2003)

Renewed fighting between armed factions in the West causes further displacement (May 2003)

- Civilians forced to flee to the bush with their families as fighting raged in towns near Danane and the village of Kanta.
- Loyalist forces accused to have attacked Finneu, to have looted and burned houses in Tiapleu
- More IDPs are expected in the near future

"The big village is deserted, the doors of the houses shut. After a long spell, locals emerge from the nearby bush when they are finally convinced they face no danger in this war-ravaged part of Ivory Coast.

Like several other hamlets and towns near Danane, the last Ivorian town before the border with conflict-torn Liberia, the village of Kanta has been deserted as fighting rages on between rebels and government forces despite the signing of an all-encompassing truce on Saturday.

Ivory Coast's "wild west," the most unruly part of the country since civil war broke out on September 19, has borne the brunt of the fighting and excesses.

The region is even more vulnerable due to its proximity to Liberia, which itself has been grappling to end a rebel war. Liberian fighters are reportedly fighting alongside both Ivorian rebels and government soldiers in the west.

"On Sunday, the loyalist forces attacked Finneu (south of Danane), on Monday we heard shots in Teapleu," which is even closer to the town, said Jean Massoucuseuh, a 39-year-old resident of Kanta.

"We fled to the bush to hide with our families. We return for some time in the day to take food and then we go back to the forest, as we fear fresh fighting," he said.

According to the villagers, all hamlets between Kanta and Zouan-Hounien, held by government troops or Liberians fighting with them, are empty.

Only a few of the locals have actually seen the aggressors. Most recount second-hand testimonies passed on by friends or relatives.

Felix Oulai, a school teacher, said he was in the village of Zeale when it was attacked on Sunday.

"They were men with red headbands, they were loyalists because they spoke of helicopters which were coming to them with supplies. They called up all the people and then picked the youngest to help them transport all that they had looted."

Oulai said the attackers "fired in all directions, burnt homes. Everyone fled. Since then, I have had no news of my wife and daughter."

The Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast (MPCI), the main rebel group which controls this area, confirmed the attack by government troops on Tiapleu on Monday.

"The loyalists attacked Tiapleu on Monday with a tank and 200 men," sergeant Cherif Ousmane, one of the main MPCI military chiefs in western Ivory Coast said.

"They advanced with the tank in front and the men following. That's their tactic. They burnt all the villages and the encampments that they passed. There were some whites with them," he said.

"We demand that the ceasefire be respected," he said. "If this continues, we cannot remain mute with our arms crossed."

However, according to the Ivorian army, there were "no incidents" in the west on Monday.

A ceasefire between Ivory Coast's armed forces and the three rebel movements came over the weekend to end the seven-and-a-half month war which has torn the world's top cocoa producer in two with insurgents holding the north and key areas in the west, and the government entrenched in the south.

Saturday's ceasefire pact covers the entire country, including the west, where neighbouring Liberia has been accused of backing rebels against the former government of President Laurent Gbagbo.

It also contains a clause that provides for the disarmament of mercenaries and armed groups operating on both sides.

Under the agreement, the warring parties accept the deployment of soldiers from west Africa and some 900 troops from France, Ivory Coast's former colonial ruler." (AFP, 7 May 2003)

"The current heavy fighting between various armed factions in the western part of the country is expected to have a serious impact on the humanitarian situation on the ground.

New displaced people, mainly Burkinabes were registered in Man by ICRC this week. They receive food aid and other assistance at Sainte Therese Transit Centre.

More displaced people are expected in the near future and WFP was approached by ICRC to take over any additional displaced people beyond ICRC threshold capacity." (WFP, 2 May 2003)

Civilians expelled from some areas in the West by village authorities and traditional leaders (November 2003)

- Widespread departure and flight of populations from their camps, villages and usual place of residence registered
- West African nationals and ivorians native to other areas are expelled from Toulépleu, Zouan Hounien, Guiglo, Duékoué and the rural areas around
- They are forced out of the plantations where they work and out of their shelters where they are displaced
- During their departure, they are subject to threats and aggression by small groups of youth
- Expulsions aggravate the humanitarian situation

"At least four people have been killed in clashes between locals and immigrants in the cocoa-growing west of Ivory Coast, a region blighted by ethnic tension since civil war erupted last year.

A spokesman for French soldiers deployed in Ivory Coast said on Wednesday that clashes near Bangolo, a town which is on a ceasefire line dividing the government-held south from the rebel-held north, had left four dead on Tuesday.

He said French troops stationed nearby, to monitor the ceasefire line and police a weapons-free buffer zone, had stepped in to calm things down.

Ongoing violence in cocoa-growing areas in the former French colony threatens to affect the crop, which is the country's chief source of revenue.

Residents from the Bangolo area met local officials in the main city of Abidjan on Wednesday and said the clashes took place between villagers of the local Guere ethnic group and immigrant workers from Burkina Faso.

The outbreak of violence comes after villagers in another western cocoa growing zone around Gagnoa drove hundreds of migrant workers from their settlements, burning their homes and threatening the cocoa harvest.

Immigrant farmers, who form the backbone of Ivory Coast's cocoa workforce, have been hounded off farms in several regions of the world's biggest cocoa grower over the past few years, usually in disputes over land." (Reuters, 5 November 2003)

"Villagers in Ivory Coast's western cocoa growing zones have driven hundreds of migrant workers from their settlements, burning their homes and threatening the harvest as tensions mount over who should buy their beans, officials said on Tuesday.

Burkina Faso's top official in Ivory Coast's key cocoa town of Gagnoa said some 300 Burkinabe workers had been driven from their plantations near the town because they refused to sell their beans to newly created village-based cooperatives.

The farmers have long-established relationships with other buyers to whom they feel a degree of loyalty and resent being forced to sell to the new cooperatives that were set up with the backing of high-ranking regional authorities, who said the initiative would benefit local farmers.

"Because they refused to deliver the beans to the cooperatives, the Ivorian people have burnt down the villages," said Mamadou Grabo.

"They took refuge in town and we don't know when they can return to their homes," he said.

Local officials said the new cooperatives, set up at the start of this season with the backing of regional authorities, had ordered farmers to deliver the cocoa to them and threatened to destroy their farms if they refused to do so.

In the Gagnoa area, which produces one quarter of the annual average harvest of 1.2 million tonnes in the world's top producer, the number of authorised cooperatives rose from four last season to 54 this campaign.

"We're very worried about the coming days," the chairman of a large cooperative said. "If the situation carries on, we won't have cocoa any more. Nobody is trying to find a solution."

He said he was receiving 20 tonnes of cocoa beans per day, six times less than usually at this period." (Reuters, 4 November 2003)

"The western region of Côte d'Ivoire has been particularly affected by the armed conflict and inter-community clashes that have torn apart the social fabric and called into question the peaceful atmosphere that has existed for years between the local, ethnic and foreign communities here.

During this moment, in which confidence building and reconciliation constitute prerequisites for a return of displaced populations to their places of habitual residence, humanitarian agencies are issuing an alert aimed at halting the expulsions currently taking place in the western region of the country, which are likely to revive inter-ethnic and community tensions.

Indeed, for several weeks now, humanitarian agencies and the different military forces in place in the west have observed widespread departure, and in some cases flight, of populations from their camps, villages and usual places of residence.

Thousands of people, mostly nationals of West African countries and Ivorians native to other areas of the country, have been and continue to be expelled from villages and rural areas around the towns of Toulépleu, Zouan Hounien, Guiglo and Duékoué. During their departure, they are also subject to threats and aggression by small groups of youth who remain unidentified.

The displacement of these populations is the result of demands for their departure and various ultimatums handed down by village authorities and traditional chiefs in some local communities.

The humanitarian agencies note that the protection of civilian populations living in Côte d'Ivoire, irrespective of their origin, is a right guaranteed by the Ivorian State, signatory to several international conventions on human rights and humanitarian law, which include principles guiding the protection of populations displaced within its borders.

Hence, it is the Ivorian State that is, in the first instance, responsible for protecting its own citizens as well as foreign nationals living in Côte d'Ivoire, and in particular for taking action to avoid their unlawful displacement. Moreover, perpetrators of violent acts or incitement of violence against these populations are responsible for their actions before national and international laws.

The humanitarian agencies also note that these expulsions aggravate the already critical humanitarian situation in the West, because they hamper, or even prevent, the adequate distribution of food aid, the distribution of agricultural tools and seeds to the rural populations, and also result in the saturation of transit centres and host communities in urban areas receiving thousands of newly displaced people.

The town of Guiglo, which has already received 6000 displaced people, continues to receive several hundred new arrivals each day. This unforeseen situation is seriously disrupting the assistance programmes and supply pipelines of humanitarian agencies, which must immediately respond to the pressing needs of

food and non-food items (shelters, blankets, mats, buckets, etc), as well as develop and maintain reception sites.

...

As the situation is still tense, the UN humanitarian agencies and their partners urge the Government to take all appropriate measures to ensure the promotion of the rule of law, in accordance with the aspirations of the authorities, and the protection of the civilian populations in the western region.

Given the complexity of the situation, the humanitarian agencies express the hope that all possible peace negotiations and mediations will be conducted with and among the different parties in order to calm the people and halt these expulsions, which are in total contradiction to the aid and assistance principles of humanitarian organizations" (UN OCHA, 26 August 2003).

"Security has improved in the country but ethnic tension persists in the west of the country. Economic migrants/Third Country Nationals (TCN) are forced out of the plantations where they work, or out of shelters where they are displaced. There are continued reports of the presence of Liberian refugees in villages of Bin Houyé bordering with Liberia. The number of refugees in the area was estimated at 1,500 mainly women and children. In addition, it is estimated that there are now some 55,103 Liberian refugees in the Tabou area. UNHCR distributed WFP food rations to 32,689 refugees." (WFP, 22 August 2003)

Ethnic clashes in « Wild West » continue to displace civilians (2004)

- Inter-communal violence in western Cote d'Ivoire has been on the increase again since the end of 2003, with dozens of people killed and thousands displaced
- Fighting has taken place in and around the 'Zone of Confidence' where only French and West African peacekeeping troops are supposed to carry arms
- Violence in this area had originally been provoked by indisciplined bands of Liberian militiamen, but more recently has involved villagers of the local Guere tribe and settlers from Burkina Faso, Guinea and other parts of Cote d'Ivoire who grow cocoa in the region
- Thousands of immigrants have been chased off their land, and many have sought refuge at the already overburdened camps at Guiglo and Niela
- Complicated property issues in cocoa-growing areas and the proliferation of small arms contribute to the tension in western Cote d'Ivoire

"The French peacekeeping force in Cote d'Ivoire urged the government army and police to send reinforcements to help it maintain order in the troubled west of the country on Tuesday after reporting that 18 people had been killed there in two weeks of ethnic clashes.

Colonel Georges Peillon, the official spokesman of the 4,000-strong French peacekeeping force, said tension was rising in villages around the town of Bangolo, 600 km northwest of the capital Abidjan, where French soldiers had found the bodies of 18 people killed in ethnic fighting since 29 December.

[...]

Peillon said the French forces had also asked the government's paramilitary gendarmerie to send reinforcements to the West to help patrol the area that lies south of the demilitarized zone separating the government-held south of the country from the rebel-controlled north.

Bangolo lies inside the demilitarized 'Zone of Confidence,' just a few kilometres from the rebel frontline and only French and West African peacekeeping troops are allowed to bear arms there.

Peillon said the French peacekeepers wanted the government security forces to help maintain security in the towns and villages that lie on or near the road between Duekoue, 45 km south of Bangolo, and Toulepleu on the Liberian border.

Although a ceasefire has held firm in the rest of Cote d'Ivoire since 3 May last year, there have been continued clashes near the Liberian frontier in an area that has become known as the "Wild West." Most of these have involved informal gangs of gun and machete wielding fighters organised on ethnic lines.

Last year many of these skirmishes and raids involved indisciplined bands of Liberian militiamen armed by both the government and rebels before the ceasefire. However, in recent months most have been confrontations between villagers of the local Guere tribe and settlers from Burkina Faso, Guinea and other parts of Cote d'Ivoire who grow cocoa in the region.

Several thousand of these immigrants have been chased off their land, where other people are now attempting to harvest their crops." (IRIN, 13 Jan 04)

"Thirty-five people have been killed and hundreds displaced since inter-communal violence in Côte d'Ivoire's western regions worsened late last month. 'There has been an alarming increase in levels of inter-communal violence in Côte d'Ivoire. The Government must do more to stop the violence. I call on all parties to actively bring an end to violence directed against civilians,' said Ms. Carolyn McAskie, the United Nations Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Since 29 December, thirty-five bodies have been found by LICORNE, forces sent by the French Government to Côte d'Ivoire, in villages surrounding Bangolo. The town is some 600 kilometers northwest of Abidjan and has recently been a flashpoint for violence against people perceived to be non-native to the region. On January 5, six persons, including three children, were killed in one incident alone.

Hundreds of people of Burkinabé origin have been displaced from villages in Gagnoa District. More than 180 persons have arrived at a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Guiglo, 550 kilometers from Abidjan, since the beginning of the month. Many have reported that they had been forced to flee a nearby village, Troya 2, by armed persons from neighboring villages. According to the internally displaced persons at Guiglo, there have been no ethnic conflicts within their community, but 'armed young people from surrounding villages' have harassed and driven them out. Further, they reported that there were scores of displaced persons who had not yet reached the IDP site at Guiglo. The great majority of the displaced are long-term residents of Côte d'Ivoire, 300 of who had been living in Troya 2 for years. There are now only 22 persons of Burkinabé origin in Troya 2.

The new displacement is straining the resources of Guiglo, where 21,000 IDPs reside, and those of nearby transit centers for displaced persons at Niela. The two sites at Niela, already home to some 7,400 Liberian refugees and Côte d'Ivoire's internally displaced, lack enough shelter or sanitation to cope with recent influxes. In response to growing demand, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) have increased the amount of services they provide to the area. WFP and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have also asked the authorities for permission to begin food distributions to some 7000 Liberian asylum-seekers in the border town of Bin Houye. Refugees there lack basic necessities and food. It has been difficult to reach them with aid, as the towns are just 3 kilometers from the border with Liberia's Nimba County, where some instability persists.

The local administration, including the police and judiciary, has not been able to resume the full range of their activities in this crime-prone area since services lapsed at the peak of fighting between Government forces and rebels roughly a year ago. Complicated property issues in cocoa-producing regions and the proliferation of small arms contribute to the tension in western Côte d'Ivoire. The harvest season may give rise to increased tensions and insecurity over the next three months." (UN OCHA, 22 Jan 04)

"Violent clashes between the communities of Diéouzon and Douékpe (western Côte d'Ivoire in and around the confidence zone) on the 20th April and an incident in Kouibly (North of Bangolo in the West) on the 27th April, where four people were reportedly killed, have forced people to flee their homes. Around 3000 people have fled to Bangolo and surrounding villages. LICORNE reported that the Dozo's (traditional hunters originating from Burkina Faso and northern parts of Côte d'Ivoire) are armed with hunting rifles,

which is a serious security concern for the indigenous population. Many of IDPs who have gathered in Bangolo, refuse to return before the Dozo's are disarmed. OCHA participated in a mission to Bangolo on the 30th April to assess the situation. As recommended by the mission humanitarian assistance was provided soon after." (UN OCHA, 17 May 04)

See also, International Crisis Group (ICG), Cote d'Ivoire: 'The War Is Not Yet Over', 28 November 2003

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

Global figures

IDP numbers are estimated between 500,000 and 800,000 (October 2003)

- IDPs are mostly located in the south of the country
- Some return have taken place
- Although most of IDPs lack means to return and wait for the political situation to stabilize

"It is currently estimated that some 500,000 to 600,000 people remain internally displaced in Cote d'Ivoire, mostly in the south. Some cautious returns to the west and the north have taken place, but the vast majority of IDPs either lack the means to return to their areas of habitual residence, or are waiting for the political situation to stabilize." (UNICEF, 6 October 2003)

"In addition, an estimated 800,000 people are internally displaced. Many children have been separated from their families and several hundreds recruited by all sides of the conflict. The breakdown of basic social services in areas outside government control has led to a desperate situation in the north and the west." (UNSC, 8 August 2003)

IDP numbers are estimated between 600,000 and 1 million (May 2003)

- In January 2003, WFP estimated that 400,000 people had fled south from the north and the centre of Ivory Coast, while 60,000 and 100,000 had left the Man area.
- Many thousand more people are believed to be displaced in the southwestern area of Côte d'Ivoire bordering Liberia.
- Humanitarian agencies are concerned by the progressively worsening situation
- At the end of April UN OCHA reported that there were 200,000 IDPs in camps
- In March 2003 the WFP estimated that there were 190,855 people registered in camps in various parts of the country
- In March 2003 200,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) were living in 14 camps in the west of the country, with another 200,000 IDPs having settled in villages and cities ACT says
- About 45,000 Liberians and 13,000 other West African nationals who lived in Ivory Coast have also returned to Liberia, swelling numbers in the refugee camps, according to the UNHCR

"It is estimated that there are currently some 750,000 IDPs within Cote d'Ivoire's borders." (UN OCHA, 16 May 2003)

"Relief agencies estimate that between 700,000 and one million people were forced to flee their homes by the fighting and seek refuge in other parts of the country - mainly the government-held south." (UN OCHA 8 May 2003)

"Ivory Coast's civil war has driven more than 600,000 people from their homes in barely four months of conflict and the picture is getting worse, the World Food Programme (WFP) said on Thursday.

The United Nations body said between 600,000 and 640,000 people had fled to nearby countries or other parts of the West African nation to escape ethnic tension and fighting that has killed hundreds since a failed coup on September 19.

An untold number of others were abandoning settlements near the Liberian border in the cocoa-rich southwest of the country, where rebels have recently extended their battle front.

"The situation in the west is quite explosive," Gemmo Lodesani, WFP's head of emergencies in Ivory Coast, told reporters in the main city, Abidjan.

"We don't really know what's happening." ...

"The head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Besida Tonwe, has estimated that between 600,000 and a million people have been displaced by the Ivory Coast war." (AFP, 18 January 2003)

"The current fighting has caused tens of thousands of people to flee their homes. Over 200,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), mostly women and children have sought refuge in camps where they are assisted by the international community. Thousands more Liberians, as well as about 50,000 Ivorian refugees and third country nationals are caught behind the front lines and are living under extremely difficult conditions. Due to the security situation, the humanitarian community cannot access 11 of Liberia's 15 Counties and provide badly needed emergency relief assistance to the population." (UN OCHA, 30 April 2003)

"A large number of people continue to be displaced as a result of the war, which now rages in several parts of the country; from the North, West and now also from the Eastern boarder with Cote d'Ivoire. Displaced persons are still arriving daily in displaced camps from areas in Cape Mount and Bomi Counties, other are reported having crossed over into Sierra Leone as well. WFP is preparing to assist an estimated 270,210 people, 71 percent of whom would be IDPs, and an estimated 190,855 people registered in camps in various parts of the country. More than 94,960 Ivorian refugees and third country nationals were registered by UNHCR and its partners crossing the border into Liberia. Ivorian refugees and third country nationals account for approximately 54 percent of all arrivals. Some 9,307 people are in transit facilities receiving regular WFP food assistance." (WFP, 14 March 2003)

"According to Pitchford, [ACT member Lutheran World Federation/World Service's representative in Liberia] the situation in Liberia is worsening. Already the country has 200,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) living in 14 camps in the west of the country, with another 200,000 IDPs having settled in villages and cities. This most recent conflict in the Ivory Coast has resulted in approximately 100,000 people (Ivorians and those Liberians who had fled to Ivory Coast to escape the conflict in their own country) fleeing to Liberia." (Action by Churches Together, 12 March 2003)

"The IDPs are from Bomi, Grand Cape Mount and Lofa counties and have borne the brunt of fighting between loyalist and rebel fighters of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) since 1998. At least 120,000 Liberians have been displaced by the fighting and 228,000 forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. A third of the country became inaccessible." (IRIN 22 Jan 2003)

Due to increasing rebel activity in the southwestern area of Côte d'Ivoire bordering Liberia, the number of internally displaced persons arriving in and transiting through the port city of San Pedro has climbed into the thousands. OCHA is organizing a joint-UN mission on 14 January to assess the humanitarian situation there and in the coastal city of Tabou, about 80 kilometers further west and some 20 kilometers from the Liberian border.

"The scale of displacement in Cote d'Ivoire is both large and rapid. Out of a population of 16 million, an estimated 600,000 were displaced internally by the end of November. Fighting in the west since then has caused further population movements, currently estimated at an additional 500,000. The total number of IDPs topped 1.1 million by the beginning of January." (UN OCHA, 10 January 2003)

"The humanitarian situation is progressively deteriorating with 400,000 displaced people who have fled regions in the north and the centre for the south," Lodesani said. (AFP, 9 January 2003)

"The worsening humanitarian situation is undermining efforts to track the movement of internally displaced persons and refugees. Recent reports show that:

400,000 people have fled the central and northern regions towards the south.

60,000 to 100,000 people have fled the Man region and sought refuge in cities like Daloa, Duckoué, Bouafle and Issia". (WFP, 9 January 2003)

Geographical distribution

80,000 IDPs remain in Abidjan (April 2004)

"In Abidjan there are 80.000 people (10 thousand families) who have been displaced -forced to leave their homes, as a result of 19th September 2002 crisis, without out anywhere to go. The problem was discussed at a seminar on the 21st-22nd March -in view of finding a solution to re-house these many people. To support the District of Abidjan, initiator of the project, the World Bank has allocated 10 billion FCFA and the Japanese Cooperation 22 billion FCFA." (UN OCHA, 1 Apr 04)

Statistics on displaced people in Guiglo department (October 2003)

- There are 6664 IDPs in the HCR transit center in Guiglo
- There are 20 923 IDPs in host families in Guiglo
- There are 22 878 IDPs in Duckoué

« A Guiglo, le nouveau site des déplacés prévoit d'abriter 2 400 personnes et le premier transfert prévu le 15 octobre atteindra ce nombre de personnes. Ce transfert promettra de désengorger le premier site qui les avait accueillies.

A ce jour, les statistiques des personnes déplacées se présentent dans le Département de Guiglo comme suit :

Au centre de transit du HCR à Guiglo : 6664 déplacés

Dans les familles d'accueil à Guiglo : 20 923 déplacés ivoiriens

A Duckoué : 22 878 déplacés ivoiriens

La section Protection de l'UNICEF a pris part à l'identification de 30 bénévoles chargés de l'éducation et des activités sociales des réfugiés et des personnes déplacées internes sur les sites de Guiglo.

Le HCR, à travers son partenaire la GTZ, a terminé la construction de 40 hangars pour loger un total de 2 400 personnes et a aussi commencé la construction de 20 cuisines communautaires qui seront achevées le 15 octobre. » (UNSC, 8 August 2003)

Statistics on displaced people in Yamoussoukro department (October 2003)

- Out of 240,246 inhabitants, 30,171 are IDPs
- 54% of IDPs are women and children
- IDPs in the department of Yamoussoukro come mainly from Bouaké and its surroundings

« Dans le but d'améliorer la situation humanitaire des personnes déplacées dans le Département de Yamoussoukro, une mission d'évaluation composée des groupes sectoriels protection, éducation, santé, eau et assainissement, sécurité alimentaire et redressement économique, s'est rendue dans le Département de Yamoussoukro du 22 septembre au 27 septembre 2003.

Il convient de signaler que le rapport provisoire de cette évaluation relate que 25 localités ont été visitées. Sur une population totale estimée à 240 246 habitants dans tout le département, 30 171 personnes sont déplacées soit 12,55% dont 54% sont des femmes et des enfants.

Ces personnes déplacées du Département de Yamoussoukro venant pour la plupart de Bouaké et des zones environnantes (Sakassou, Béoumi, Botro, Katiola etc.), vivent dans une situation précaire. Les vivres et les non-vivres sont les types d'appui généralement fournis aux populations déplacées et leurs hôtes dans les localités visitées. Dans 55% des cas, les appuis proviennent de la cellule de Solidarité et Action Humanitaire.

Les agences des Nations-Unies sont intervenues dans 43% des cas et les autres structures d'appui, ONG, société civile et autres sont intervenus dans 2% des cas» (UN OCHA, 6 October 2003).

Since September 2002 Côte d'Ivoire has been partitioned into two areas: the northern and western areas controlled by rebels and the south by government forces

- Although a government of national reconciliation have been formed, peace is still difficult to reach
- The partitioning of the country has left central, northern and western zones without public services
- Most IDPs from the north have found shelter with host families in the south
- In the west violence has cause further displacement of around 500,000 people
- But the humanitarian community lacks information on IDPs presence in larger portions of the north. (March 2003)

"Alors que le processus de réconciliation nationale connaît des progrès certains, notamment avec la formation réussie du gouvernement de réconciliation nationale, réaliser la paix sur le terrain apparaît comme une tâche ardue.

Le pays est toujours divisé en deux laissant le nord et l'ouest sans services publics y compris même les soins de santé, l'éducation et les services bancaires.

Comme le disait l'envoyée humanitaire du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies Carolyn McAskie "s'il n'y a pas la paix dans les cœurs des gens, alors il ne peut y avoir de paix".

C'est un impératif pour le gouvernement de réconciliation nationale de travailler avec rapidité et détermination pour redonner confiance au peuple et parvenir à un désarmement afin de permettre aux déplacés internes de retourner chez eux, aux services publics de fonctionner et aux activités économiques de reprendre dans tout le pays. » (UN OCHA, 30 April 2003)

"Each day that political and military issues go unresolved, the humanitarian situation becomes more alarming. The effective partitioning of the country has left central, northern and western zones without public services. Administration structures, schools, hospitals and health clinics are generally not functioning in these areas.

The closure of banks is also causing a cash flow problem in some areas in the north, creating difficulties for merchants, cash crop farmers and other residents. The southern, government-controlled portion of the country has received displaced populations from the north and arrivals continue from the west due to ongoing violence." (UN OCHA 31 March 2003)

"The weeks and months following the violence of the 19 September coup attempt saw population movements mainly from the central areas of Cote d'Ivoire towards the south, and from areas further north into neighboring countries. Based on accounts coming out of rebel-held zones, including that Cote d'Ivoire's northern "second" city Bouake (pop. 600,000) had become a ghost town, it was estimated that as many as 600,000 people had been displaced by mid-November.

Then two more rebel groups emerged in the west, and that violence created further displacement, roughly estimated at 500,000. In January of 2003, however, given differing estimates of the number of IDPs among various UN Agencies and the Government, a concerted effort to tackle the issue was begun. OCHA held two ad hoc working groups on IDPs in February, which were followed by a workshop held in Abidjan in March by an OCHA IDP expert sent from Geneva. The current estimate, based on the information and data available, is that approximately 750,000 IDPs are currently in Cote d'Ivoire.

Available information and data are, however, insufficient due to a variety of factors. The majority of population movements occurred before humanitarian structures were in place; the humanitarian community lacks targeted information on IDP presence in large portions of the north; the west is almost completely inaccessible due to violence and insecurity; the Government Solidarity and Humanitarian Action Cell is lacking in human resources and technical capacity to tackle the issue in the south; registration and monitoring to date have been largely ad hoc and incomplete; and perhaps most important, approximately 80% of IDPs have found shelter with host families, making them hard to locate." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003)

"[...] In the western areas, ICRC and the national Red Cross reported about 9,500 displaced persons in nine sites around Toulepleu and an estimated 7,000 displaced in villages outside Toulepleu. WFP will verify these numbers as soon as security allows. 35 tons of food was delivered to Caritas for 1,300 beneficiaries in the UNHCR transit centre and 1,070 IDPs in Tabou. A joint UN mission composed of WFP, OCHA, UNHCR, UNSECOORD visited Daloa and Guiglo on 5 March to assess the humanitarian situation for IDPs and refugees in the west." (WFP, 7 March 2003)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Many people fleeing Bouake head for the Ivorian capital, Yamoussoukro (2002)

- Instead of preparing for school, many children had to flee from towns to towns on foot
- Thousands of children throughout Côte d'Ivoire are IDPs
- Insecurity in their areas meant that they could no longer go to school

"The day the rebels arrived was still fresh in the memory of 10-year-old Mohammed Kone. Suddenly, there had been gunshots.

Just as suddenly, his uncle - and guardian - had disappeared. He had run off, leaving his ward alone with the maid. The frightened girl accompanied Mohammed to the home of another uncle and, together, they fled Bouake.

That was on the 19th of September, the day when the rebels staged an uprising in Cote d'Ivoire's commercial capital, Abidjan, and took over towns in the north and centre of the country, including Bouake.

Mohamed had just gone from CE2 (Class 4) to CM1 (Class 5) at the Boliba Primary School. Now, instead of preparing for school, he was on the road.

Their flight from Bouake took them first to Sakassou, 50 km to the south. They did the journey on foot. From Sakassou, they walked to the town of Tiebissou, 40 km on, but had to go through the bush so as to escape detection by armed men. From there they were able to find a vehicle that took them to the capital, Yamoussoukro.

Like Mohamed, hundreds of thousands of children throughout Cote d'Ivoire are "deplaces"-displaced persons- forced from their homes by the war between loyalist forces and rebels. The insecurity in their areas meant that they could no longer go to school.

Helping them to continue their education is among the aims of the 'Retour des Enfants a l'Ecole' [Back to school] campaign, which the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched in Yamoussoukro on 13 February" (UN OCHA, 18 February 2003)

Hundreds of IDPs still arrive at the transit centers in the western town of Guiglo (September 2003)

- 5,390 IDPs arrived in the transit center of Guiglo
- Some IDPs near the town of Man would like to return but cannot afford the high price of the transport

"In the western town of Guiglo, 5,390 internally displaced people (IDPs) have registered at the transit centre and hundreds more are arriving each day. The site does not have adequate shelter and sanitation facilities to cope with the influx and the humanitarian situation is considered critical.

The NGO Solidarités has constructed latrines, wash areas and a water reservoir at a new IDP camp, and the Red Cross of Cote d'Ivoire is also carrying out hygiene and sanitation activities. The German NGO, GTZ, has also constructed nine shelters for more than 500 people. The capacity of shelters at the site is currently 2,400 people.

A further ten shelters are planned. IDPs near the western town of Man have expressed their interest in returning to their home villages, but they cannot afford the high price of transport" (UN OCHA, 4 September 2003)

San Pedro becomes a transit city for those fleeing insecure areas (January 2003)

- Some people arrived in San Pedro by foot, before joining the economic capital Abidjan
- According to some humanitarian sources, the cultural centre, one of the transit centres is inadequate for the increasing number of IDPs
- Duékoué, Neka and Grabo more insecure as fighting resume

« San Pedro, une ville portuaire située à 368 km au sud-ouest d'Abidjan, est devenue un nouveau lieu de transit pour des milliers de personnes qui tentent de se réfugier dans des régions plus sûres au sud et au centre de la Côte d'Ivoire.

Des sources humanitaires ont déclaré à IRIN mercredi que les habitants des localités et des villages de San Pedro, dont certains sont arrivées à pied dans la ville, ont fui vers la capitale économique d'Abidjan et d'autres localités au centre de la Côte d'Ivoire.

Durant leur transit à San Pedro peuplée de 430 000 habitants, les déplacés ont été pris en charge par les autorités locales et par des organisations non gouvernementales, qui ont pourvu aux besoins essentiels. Selon des sources, le centre culturel, l'un des lieux de transit de la ville, s'est avéré inadapté aux besoins du nombre croissant de déplacés.

Au cours des dernières semaines, l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire a été en proie à une instabilité grandissante due à une série d'affrontements opposant les rebelles à l'armée nationale ivoirienne ou aux troupes françaises déployées dans le pays pour veiller sur le cessez-le-feu signé en octobre. Au cours de la semaine écoulée, des combats ont eu lieu dans les villes de Duékoué, Neka et Grabo.

Le dernier incident s'est produit lundi entre les soldats français et les rebelles du Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (MJP). Le MJP est l'un des deux groupes qui a surgi dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire. Il a déclaré que son objectif consistait à venger la mort du général Robert Guéï. L'autre groupe est le Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest (MPIGO).

La situation à San Pedro, deuxième noyau économique du pays, était inquiétante car l'incident de lundi s'est produit à Grabo, à une centaine de kilomètres de San Pedro. « Les gens fuient », ont indiqué des sources à IRIN. L'insécurité grandissante a incité le préfet à ramener les horaires du couvre-feu en vigueur de 21H00 GMT à 6H00, à ceux de 19H00 GMT à 6H00 GMT, ont précisé ce mercredi à IRIN des habitants de San Pedro.

La situation préoccupante de San Pedro suscite aussi des inquiétudes pour la ville voisine de Tabou.» (UN OCHA, 8 janvier 2003)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical security

Human rights violations continue against civilians, says UN mission (2004)

- Both government forces and the Forces nouvelles continue to commit serious and widespread human rights violations against civilians with impunity
- Urban militias and youth groups are also responsible for attacks against and harassment of civilians
- Media campaigns continue to stir up ethnic hatred, leading in some cases to the targeting and forcible displacement of certain communities

"29. The human rights unit of MINUCI reported to the assessment mission that serious and widespread human rights violations continued to be perpetrated against civilians, including harassment, killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, the detention of persons incommunicado, roadblocks, house searches, theft and extortion. There are also reports of continuing use of child soldiers and of frequent cases of sexual abuse against women, including sexual slavery and rape, committed by elements from both Government forces and the Forces nouvelles.

30. Neither the Forces nouvelles nor the Government have taken effective steps to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice. Furthermore, little has been done by the Government to check the abuses by urban militias or youth groups, such as the Young Patriots, who have been responsible for attacks against and harassment of civilians, including attacks against media representatives perceived to be supportive of the political opposition. Media campaigns against so-called foreigners accused of being allied to the Forces nouvelles and opposition political parties have continued, often on the basis of ethnicity, religion or region of origin, and fuel ethnic tensions, violence and harassment of specific communities and ethnic groups. Against this background, in late November a number of violent incidents were reported at Gagnoa and surrounding villages among the indigenous population and other residents, many of whom had been living in the area for generations. The incidents resulted in hundreds being forcibly displaced, several deaths and the looting and burning of houses." (UN SC, 6 Jan 04)

Protection of IDPs is a key challenge facing the international community (2004)

- The Cote d'Ivoire crisis has been characterised by abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict
- Key challenges to providing protection for IDPs and other vulnerable groups include the deliberate provocation of ethnic and religious tensions by armed actors as well as local populations; the issue of sexual violence against women and children, many of whom have been separated from their families; and the lack of freedom of movement throughout the country.

"As documented by various human rights missions, the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire has been characterised by abuse and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict.

Human rights-related issues are also at the root of the conflict: issues of nationality such as the right of long-term migrants to become nationals of their adopted country on a basis of equality as well as issues of land tenure such as the right of long-term residents to enjoy their property and possessions in the rural areas and to pass on such property to their heirs. These issues have yet to be tackled.

Key protection challenges include:

➤ The protection of civilians, including in particular refugees, IDPs, migrant workers, minority groups, women and children, continue to be subject to abuse at the hand of armed actors as well as of local populations. The on-going exacerbation of ethnic and religious tensions has also led to abuses between civilian populations. The unconfirmed reports of ethnic-based, armed militia groups is a serious concern to the international community and could pose a serious threat as far as the protection of civilians is concerned;

➤ The conflict has forced families to separate. Female heads of household and unaccompanied minors are particularly vulnerable to abuse, including sexual violence and exploitation. Unconfirmed reports note that armed groups have recruited several thousands of children;

➤ The overall climate of insecurity, harassment by armed forces, the springing up of military as well as civilian checkpoints, etc., has hindered the freedom of movement of populations, and limited their access to basic social services and assistance." (UN, Nov 03)

Pro-government militias commit abuses with impunity, says Human Rights Watch (2000-2003)

- Human Rights Watch documents serious abuses against civilians by government-backed armed groups, even since the official end of the civil conflict in July 2003
- Militia groups have targeted immigrants from other West African countries as well as Ivoirians of ethnic groups perceived to be opposed to the government, and chased thousands from their land
- Pro-government militia groups, known as the 'Young Patriots', have proliferated in Cote d'Ivoire since the attempted coup in September 2002
- There has also been an upsurge in reported incidents of abuse carried out by undisciplined armed elements linked to the rebels in the north of the country

"Pro-government militias in Côte d'Ivoire are committing serious abuses against civilians, including killings and torture, Human Rights Watch said today. The Ivorian government and international peacekeeping forces must take steps to control the rise of these militias, which operate with impunity.

In a visit to Côte d'Ivoire in October, Human Rights Watch received many credible accounts that armed groups -- which the official security forces allowed to act with impunity -- had carried out serious abuses against civilians in government-controlled parts of the country. These abuses, which included killings, torture and assaults, have continued since the nominal end in July of the civil conflict that had broken out in September 2002.

[...]

The reports received by Human Rights Watch indicate that in the west and southwest of the country these government-supported militias have harassed and assaulted peasant farmers, many of whom are migrants from other West African countries, including Burkina Faso. Most of the militia members are Bété -- the same ethnic group of the Ivorian president, Laurent Gbagbo -- or are from groups related to the Bété. Over the past 10 months, thousands of farmers who had migrated from Burkina Faso have been forced from their homes around Toulepleu, in western Côte d'Ivoire. In late October, several hundred West African immigrants and Ivoirians of the Baoulé ethnic group were chased off their lands around Gagnoa, in southern Côte d'Ivoire, reportedly by groups of Bété youths. Militia groups supporting the government also remain active in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan.

Pro-government militia groups, known as the 'Young Patriots' (Jeunes Patriotes), have proliferated in Côte d'Ivoire over the past 14 months. Membership is believed to number in the thousands, although precise figures are unknown. Several of the leaders of the umbrella group – the Group of Patriots for Peace (Groupement des Patriotes pour la Paix, or GPP) – are ex-student leaders from a national university students association, the Student and School Federation of Côte d'Ivoire (Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire, or FESCI). They appear to have built up membership from the student network and the youth wings of political parties, particularly the Ivorian Popular Front (Front Populaire Ivoirien, or FPI), the ruling party. Student activists have also played a prominent role in the rebel movement and within other major political parties.

Several of the militia units – known by names like the Bees, the Gazelles, the Ninjas and the Panthers – have reportedly received support in their training exercises from members of the national armed forces. There are also credible allegations that some of the militia members, particularly those of Bété ethnicity, have been armed by government forces. As recently as October, militia members attacked water and electricity companies in Abidjan, allegedly for providing services to the rebel-held northern part of the country. In late October, they attacked newspaper distributors and kiosks selling newspapers linked to opposition parties, temporarily shutting down press circulation.

Since the end of the conflict in July, and as recently as this month, Human Rights Watch has continued to receive reports of torture, arbitrary detentions and 'disappearances' perpetrated by members of the state security forces in Abidjan.

In northern Côte d'Ivoire, controlled by the rebel New Forces (Forces Nouvelles), in recent months there has been an upsurge in reported incidents of assault, rape and looting allegedly carried out by undisciplined armed elements linked to the rebels. Many members of the New Forces have not been paid since the war was officially declared over.

[...]

Côte d'Ivoire's nine-month civil war began with a rebel uprising in September 2002, and was officially declared over in July. But the implementation of the French-brokered Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement, which called for a transitional government and elections in 2005, has all but broken down. In September, the rebel New Forces walked out of the government of national reconciliation, citing the government's failure to implement the agreement in good faith.

Urban and rural militias played an increasingly active role following the outbreak of hostilities in the civil war: civilian militias manned checkpoints on main roads in government-controlled areas, checked civilian identification, and generally took on tasks usually carried out by uniformed government security forces. In Duékoué, in the west of the country, Human Rights Watch documented executions and harassment of civilians in April by civilian militias acting with full impunity and, in some cases, with the collaboration of state security forces. In Abidjan, militia activity brought the town to a standstill during the militias' demonstrations against the peace accords in January. During those demonstrations, pro-government militias attacked French businesses and institutions with no response from the state security forces.

While a ceasefire, monitored by 5,300 peacekeepers from France and ECOWAS, is still holding, there are worrying signs that the two sides are again preparing for war. Militias would likely play a large part in any return to violence. ECOWAS-sponsored talks aimed at breaking the impasse were held earlier this month, but failed to bring the rebels back into the government of national reconciliation. At present, the country remains split in two, with the rebel forces controlling the northern part and the government holding the south.

Crucial provisions in the January peace accords provided for a national human rights commission and an international inquiry into abuses committed during the conflict. To date, neither the commission nor the inquiry has materialized. Other key provisions of the peace agreement – including those on disarmament, land reform and nationality law – remain unfulfilled.

Impunity by government security forces remains a fundamental concern in Côte d'Ivoire and is both a cause and a result of the disintegration of the rule of law over the past four years.

Since 2000, Human Rights Watch and other human rights organizations have documented a persistent pattern of serious human rights violations committed by state security forces alone or in complicity with civilian militias, none of which have been seriously investigated or prosecuted by the Ivorian government. During the violence surrounding the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2000, there were scores of extrajudicial executions as well as numerous disappearances, cases of sexual violence, and hundreds of cases of torture committed by government forces, often in collaboration with youth supporters of the ruling party, the Ivorian Popular Front.

Human Rights Watch documented similar patterns of abuses against northern Ivorians, foreigners and suspected rebel sympathizers since the outbreak of the internal conflict on September 19, 2002. These violations included systematic and indiscriminate attacks on civilians, summary executions, arbitrary arrest and detention, 'disappearances', torture, rape, pillage, corporal punishment and other violent acts against civilians." (HRW, 27 Nov 03)

Both government forces and rebels have committed war crimes, reports Human Rights Watch (2002-2003)

- The war has produced numerous abuses against civilians
- Armed groups have targeted civilians, as looting has been their primary objective
- HRW has documented executions, sexual violence, and forced labor at the hands of both government and rebels in the west of Côte d'Ivoire

"The eight-month-old war in the Côte d'Ivoire has revealed deep divisions in Ivorian society and produced numerous serious abuses against civilians, some of which amount to war crimes.

Western Côte d'Ivoire has been the site of a virtual proxy war by Liberian forces, demonstrating the easy spillover potential of the Liberian conflict. As was the pattern by all sides in Liberia, armed groups have targeted civilians for abuse, and looting has been a primary objective.

Human Rights Watch has documented widespread abuses by both government and rebel-allied fighters in the west. Executions, sexual violence, forced labor and systematic looting of property have been commonplace, abuses that echo the treatment of civilians in Liberia.

The recent ceasefire in the west, and the formation of the government of reconciliation, are steps in the right direction, but the Ivorian peace process remains extremely fragile.

There is an urgent need for the parties to the conflict, the United Nations and member states to reinforce these positive steps with further concrete action, both within Côte d'Ivoire and in neighboring Liberia. Parts of the country, particularly along the Liberian border, remain volatile, demonstrating the degree to which the Liberian and Ivorian conflicts are interlinked.

Impunity-both past and present, Ivorian and regional-remains a key concern that must be addressed if a stable Côte d'Ivoire is to emerge from the past months of conflict. Efforts must be made to bridge the social divisions created by years of manipulation of ethnic and political tensions.

Abuses committed by the government and government-allied forces include: reprisal killings by state security forces based on the ethnic, national, religious or political affiliations of individuals; indiscriminate attacks on civilians by helicopter gunships; killings, rapes, and other acts of violence against civilians committed by Liberians recruited by the Ivorian government in refugee camps and from the Liberian

MODEL rebel group; and attacks on northern Ivorians and immigrant civilians by civilian militias encouraged by and sometimes working in complicity with government in and around Duékoué, Daloa, Toulepleu and Tabou.

Abuses by the "Forces Nouvelles"¹ rebel groups and allied Liberian fighters include: summary executions of dozens of government officials, suspected government sympathizers and members of civilian militias by Ivorian rebel troops; systematic looting, summary executions and other acts of violence against civilians by Liberian fighters allied to the MPIGO rebel group; and sexual violence against girls and women in the west, including rape and sexual slavery.

Refugees and immigrants have been particular targets in the Ivorian war. Liberian refugees, including children, have been subjected to forced recruitment and violence by state authorities and local communities in western Côte d'Ivoire.

Immigrants, particularly Burkinabé, continue to suffer from widespread attacks that have in many instances been encouraged or tolerated by authorities. Efforts to relocate the refugee population and ensure protection for the immigrant population must be implemented without further delay." (HRW, 20 June 2003)

Freedom of movement

Civilians harassed by security forces at checkpoints throughout the country (April 2004)

- People travelling southwards from rebel-held areas are particularly harassed at checkpoints, and are often forced to pay money

"Check points have been reestablished throughout the country. There are media reports that people are once again being harassed by security forces for identity cards and various documents some of which are not officially recognised, and which many do not have. People traveling from Forces Nouvelles territory are particularly targeted at security checkpoints in the south. Often people are forced to pay a minimum of 500-2000 FCFA to pass through a checkpoint, in some cases where people are unable to pay, the buses abandon them." (UN OCHA, 14 Apr 04)

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

General

Serious setback in peace process increases urgent humanitarian needs (June 2004)

- Setback in the peace process with the violently suppressed demonstrations of March 2004 leads to a revised humanitarian strategy, geared towards emergency assistance
- New challenge is to mobilise adequate humanitarian response to the needs of IDPs, returnees and host communities

"The deterioration of the social-political crisis due to the events of 25 March have led to significant changes to the humanitarian strategy and planned response for the latter part of 2004. At the time of writing, the violently repressed demonstrations of 25 March 2004 was a major turning point in the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis peace accord signed in January 2003. This led to the suspension of seven political groups from the Government and a near collapse of the peace accord.

[...]

The events described above mark a clear setback in the peace process thus the most likely scenario for the next six months is one of 'compromised peace' which will probably directly result in the persistence of humanitarian needs, or perhaps a deterioration of the humanitarian crisis.

The revised humanitarian strategy is, therefore, geared towards 'emergency' humanitarian assistance', aimed at meeting the immediate and urgent needs of vulnerable groups, caused by the following factors:

- Deterioration of the «protection crisis» affecting civilian and vulnerable populations;
- A slow down, or even possible interruption of the redeployment of the public administration and basic educational and health services in areas under the control of the Forces Nouvelles;
- Interruption or slow down of the return of displaced populations, with the need for immediate assistance, as well as the risk of exacerbated inter or intra-community tensions;
- Slow down of development activities, particularly following the declaration of security phase 3 by the United Nations (UN);
- Possibility of the division of the territory persisting longer than expected.

In light of the above, the new challenge is to mobilise the adequate humanitarian response to the needs of the displaced populations, returnees and host communities. Preliminary surveys have revealed that nearly 80% of the displaced people have limited or no resources and are in a critical state of impoverishment. Vulnerable groups in zones under the control of the Forces Nouvelles will continue to receive assistance.

Priority elements of the humanitarian strategy will continue to be in the areas of protection and social cohesion, education, health and water and sanitation to consolidate past achievements and avoid, at all cost, that parts of the country sliding back into a humanitarian crisis." (UN OCHA, 15 Jun 04)

Political crisis continues to have dramatic humanitarian consequences (2003)

- In the west of Cote d'Ivoire there was widespread violence against the civilian population in the first half of 2003, after which the area was gradually made into a weapons-free 'zone of confidence'
- The government-controlled south of the country bore the brunt of hosting hundreds of thousands of IDPs
- The rebel-held north struggled to support populations in the absence of all local administration and social services

"While the past year saw significant progress being made towards the consolidation of peace in Côte d'Ivoire, the dramatic humanitarian consequences of the crisis continued to unfold.

The country continued to operate under a de-facto political and administrative partition, with the centre and the north controlled by the Forces Nouvelles (a coalition of three ex-rebel groups: MPCI, MJP and MPIGO), the south controlled by the Government, and the west gradually becoming a weapons-free zone of confidence. As a consequence, the humanitarian response differed from zone to zone: the west experience open violence with life-threatening consequences on the civilian population in the first half of the year, the south caving in to the pressure of hundreds of thousands displaced, and the north struggling to support populations in the absence of all local administration and social services.

In particular, a number of key elements characterised the evolution of the humanitarian situation in 2003:

- The gradual securing of the west and the ensuing humanitarian access to populations in that area;
- The increase in inter and intra-community tensions;
- The arrival in south-western Côte d'Ivoire of a new wave of Liberian refugees, following the escalation of violence in Liberia;
- The continued absence of local administration and social services in the North and in the West, leading to a deterioration in the general health situation, affecting in particular women and children as well as the continued lack of access to education for a large number of children;
- The mounting pressure of IDP presence on host communities, weakened economy, and unconfirmed militia activities in the south." (UN, Nov 03)

IDPs are among the most vulnerable groups in Cote d'Ivoire, reports UN OCHA (March 2003)

- IDPs are the most affected group by the war
- IDPs main need is an urgent psychological assistance and counselling to ease the traumatic experiences they had gone through
- There is an imbalance between the food-related needs expressed by the displaced persons and the assistance they receive from the government, humanitarian organisations and donors, an OCHA officer says

"Dans le sud, un grand nombre de déplacés internes dépendent de la générosité de familles d'accueil ou de l'aide que leur apportent le gouvernement et des agences internationales d'aide. Comme les hostilités sur le terrain continuent, il est clair que la vulnérabilité de centaines de milliers de personnes continuera de s'accroître." (UN OCHA, 30 April 2003)

"IDPs do not necessarily need humanitarian aid. However, they do constitute a vulnerable group, and as such should be comprehensively tracked and monitored to ensure that their rights are addressed, and to ensure that the humanitarian community is prepared for events that may increase their vulnerability." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003)

"Some of us have nightmares at night. We dream about atrocities committed by the rebels," 19-year-old Fabrice Doly said."

"Many of the IDPs had harassing journeys to safety, as in the case of Fulgence Doly who said he, his wife, three children and 80-year-old mother walked for 62 kms after an attack on the western town of Duckouc, where they lived.

He was among 47 IDPs who, like Fabrice, shared Emmanuel Doly's six-bedroom home in the high-income suburb of Cocody with his host's 17-member family. At night, some people slept in the bedrooms while others made do with the corridors, kitchen, balcony and sitting room. In most cases bed was either a mat or clothes heaped on the floor.

"Still it's better than sleeping under the cocoa trees," Fulgence said. He worked with the National Rural Development Agency (ANADER) in Duckouc. Displacement has reduced him to a state of dependency.

Dao Pena Nicholas also lives with the Doly's, along with six other members of his household. He needs to travel frequently to go to the city centre to fix his pension papers but often he does not have money for transport. Not being able to do anything for his family was tough, he said. "Each time they want this, they want that," he told IRIN.

"Personally I'm obliged to leave the house to get away from the pressure. In any case I don't have the means to do anything for them." Sometimes he goes and hangs out at the lottery kiosk. At other times he simply walks around the neighbourhood.

The mental health issue cannot be overemphasized, according to Rosa Malango of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Access to mental health services is essential, given the post-trauma stress and psychological reactions that result from moral and physical aggression undergone before, during or after displacement, she told IRIN.

However, other needs are also important, added Malango, who is a programme officer at OCHA's West Africa Regional Support Office in Abidjan.

According to the UN guiding principles on internal displacement, she noted, national authorities should at the very least provide internally displaced persons with and ensure safe access to essential food, potable water, basic shelter and housing, appropriate clothing; and essential medical services and sanitation.

[...] In Cote d'Ivoire, given the sudden nature of the crisis and the high number of IDPs, about 700,000 according to UN figures, it has been observed that there is an imbalance between the food-related needs expressed by the displaced persons and the assistance they receive from the government, humanitarian organisations and donors, Malango said." (UN OCHA, 25 March 2003)

"The joint FAO/WFP Emergency Needs assessment concluded that displaced people are among the most affected by the crisis, in particular those who are not hosted by resident families. Other population groups are facing food shortages, including the urban population, especially the marginal wage earners and the now increasing number of jobless city dwellers; and the commercial farmers in the North who largely depend on market purchases and who face great difficulties to market their cotton and sugar.

(b) In some villages in the center-west (Daloa) and center-east (Daokro), the number of IDPs exceeds the resident population figure. Existing food stocks preserved for the lean period (March to September) will be exhausted 3-4 months earlier.

The gradual loss of employment opportunities and rising food prices for 43 percent of the urban population is expected to force many people to return to their home villages (1.8 to 2 million in Abidjan are internal migrants).

The urban exodus will cause temporary food shortages in those rural areas. The worst affected rural populations are cotton and sugar producers in the North. Although the cotton harvest progresses normally, the closure of 3 to 4 cotton processing plants, transport problems, and the fact that payments for the last season were not made, are causing a desperate situation for some 150,000 cotton farmers.

It is estimated that at least 30,000 families almost entirely depend on cotton sales for their food security. Also some 3,000 sugar workers and an unknown number of sugar cane farmers in the north are in a difficult situation. As the produce cannot be marketed in the South, factories cannot pay their workers. (WFP, 7 March 2003)

Health

Crisis in the health sector continues in all areas of the country (2004)

- Health needs across Cote d'Ivoire are still acute according to Mid Year Review of the Consolidated Appeals Process, that renews the focus of humanitarian response on emergency assistance

"Health indicators are still a cause for concern:

- More than half of the health centres are out of service in the North and over-stretched in the South, because of the demographic pressure of people displaced by the war;
- Cases of meningitis and yellow fever, resulting in deaths, were regularly reported in the North zone;
- Access to clean water is limited and inadequate for 50% of households in the West of Côte d'Ivoire, an observation from the nutritional survey conducted by UNICEF;
- HIV/AIDS prevalence rate has reached alarming proportions: it ranges from 10% to 12% for men and above 12% among women, a rate, which, according to UNAIDS, may increase further due to the presence of high-density zones (sites for displaced people and camps for regrouping soldiers)." (UN OCHA, 15 Jun 04)

Public health system completely disrupted by the crisis (2003)

- Access to health care has been significantly reduced, with the majority of health facilities in the west and north closed down and most health personnel absent
- Measles and cholera are serious public health problems, as well as meningitis and yellow fever
- Mass displacement and other conflict-related factors may have increased the rate of HIV/AIDS, although case management is almost non-existent
- Food insecurity has further worsened the malnutrition situation

"The Côte d'Ivoire crisis has completely disrupted the public health system, especially the provision of safe water and sanitation conditions in northern and western areas.

A joint assessment conducted by WHO and the Ministry of Public Health revealed very serious problems. Health facilities have been looted and vandalised, and the equipment has been seriously damaged, and is now useless, except for some beds in hospitals. Globally 80% of the 547 health facilities in the west and north are closed. Concerning health personnel, 85% have left their duty stations, and have yet to return. Before the crisis, there were 3,500 health workers operating in those areas.

As a result, access to health care has been significantly reduced. The few functioning facilities cannot cover all needs. The lack of ambulances hinders the transfer of patients to the referral hospitals or clinics. In addition to this, there are no drugs and other medical supplies because of management problems with the Public Health Pharmacy.

This crisis has also affected coordinating structures, resulting in paralysis of health information reporting and surveillance systems. The reporting rate decreased from 90% before the crisis, to 30% in September 2003.

The epidemiological situation includes the epidemic prone diseases (measles, cholera, meningitis and yellow fever), current diseases and emergent diseases (malaria, worms and diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections, malnutrition, STI/HIV-AIDS and tuberculosis).

[...]

Measles and cholera are serious public health problems. Meningitis and yellow fever, while not confirmed, constitute a great concern as well, as such epidemics have been declared in the neighbouring countries, mainly Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. In addition many populations have experienced many negative health effects of the crisis, including sexual violence, the increase of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality. That causes great needs in the framework of reproductive health.

Concerning HIV/AIDS, case management is almost non-existent in the country. The prevalence rate which was estimated at 10,7% before the crisis may have increased because of mass population displacements, overcrowded IDP sites or camps, and the development of undesirable behaviour, particularly in the areas of military quarters or stationing. UNFPA and UNAIDS provided condoms, which were distributed as well by national and international NGOs. WHO and UNAIDS gave support to National Blood Transfusion Centre by purchasing equipment, tests and others laboratory reagents. Meanwhile the Ivorian Government has just signed a US\$ 55,000,000 agreement with Global Fund, working on the prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child, sensitisation activities, case management with antiretroviral treatment, counselling and voluntary testing. This, however, does not include blood safety, which is therefore being appealed for in this document.

Food insecurity has further aggravated the malnutrition situation. A survey conducted in the western area revealed 17% of acute malnutrition and 5% of severe malnutrition among children under five." (UN, Nov 03)

Food and Nutrition

IDPs and other vulnerable groups continue to need external assistance to meet basic food needs (2004)

- Various food needs assessments confirm that the cumulative effects of mass displacement is a major factor in Cote d'Ivoire's inability to feed its own vulnerable people

- Food vulnerability differs from region to region, with the north (due to its economic embargo) and particularly the west (due to conflict) generally more at risk
- The government-controlled south suffers more from reduced purchasing power as a result of the economic crisis and the burden on families hosting so many IDPs
- IDPs have limited access to land for cultivation, particularly in the west, and malnutrition rates are particularly high in this area

"The joint WFP/FAO food needs assessment (Jan.-Feb. 2003) and later studies carried out by ACF (Zouan-Hounien, Bin-Houyé, June-July), Solidarités (in Moyen Cavally Region, June-July), CARE (Bandama and Savanes Regions, May) as well as MSF nutritional assessments, all confirmed that due to the cumulative effects of massive displacement, depletion of food stocks and seeds, loss of two agricultural campaigns, lack of access to land or cash, insecurity and deterioration of the economy in addition to the collapse of social services, Côte d'Ivoire will require external assistance in 2004, in order to meet the basic food and nutritional needs of vulnerable people.

Preliminary indications from FAO showed that below average harvests have left rural households with insufficient food stocks to meet their needs. The collapse of the administrative, manufacturing/processing and business sectors has reduced the purchasing power of urban households.

The characteristics of food vulnerability tend to differ geographically, from region to region, with the North (due to economic embargo of the north) and especially the West (due to conflict), generally more at risk. The South on the other hand, is suffering from the effects of considerably reduced purchasing power. This is a result of the economic crisis as well as the burden on families hosting so many displaced persons. In the North, farmers are heavily reliant upon cash crops, while artisan villagers are reliant on tourism. As a result of the collapse of social services, closure of banks and collapse of the general infrastructure, all caused by the conflict, both farmers and artisans have few and limited resources to fall back on.

The most recent study on livelihoods and food security in the north carried out by CARE in May 2003 reported that vulnerability, until now based exclusively on the direct impact of the war, has extended to numerous other groups beyond displaced and host families. This is in turn affecting many marginal farmers, cash crop farmers and particularly landless households dependent on non-farming activities. The latter group, mostly located in urban areas, does not have land and consequently has had no access to revenue or income for up to 9 months. In the Savannah region particularly, households in these groups have sold their assets, exhausted their savings, sold their crops (if they had land), used formal and informal support methods and considerably reduced their overall food consumption.

The numbers of internally displaced people, including Ivorians and *residents of West African origin* has been estimated at around 600,000 persons. The IDPs have limited access to land for cultivation, and this lack of agricultural input together with inter-ethnic tensions in some areas of the West, have become a sensitive issue. The situation in the West remains the most alarming aspect of the humanitarian crisis. Due to the persistent conflict, certain areas (i.e. Zouan-Hounien and Bin-Houyé) remained completely inaccessible until June. As a result, according to WHO and MSF reports, malnutrition among displaced women and children has increased dramatically in this area.

Following a rapid assessment carried out by WFP and FAO in the West in June and July 2003 the two agencies jointly implemented a seeds and tools distribution supported by "food for agriculture". Some 7,500 households of IDPs, returnees and host communities were targeted in the districts of Man, Danané, Zouan-Hounien, Bin Houyé, Duékoué, Guiglo, Toulepleu, Tabou and Grabo." (UN, Nov 03)

Alarming nutritional situation of IDPs in Western Côte d'Ivoire (September 2003)

- Screening by humanitarian agencies show continued high rates of malnutrition in IDP camps
- Screening show high proportion of children with oedema
- Medical operations in Guiglo hampered by the lack of medical personnel and the absence of public structures and proper sanitation

"The nutritional situation in Western Cote d'Ivoire is particularly alarming. WFP was able to make deliveries to the western towns of Man and Guiglo last month, though a shortfall in the pipeline of food aid had forced the UN's food agency to reduce its caseload by 30% in August.

Screening by NGOs active in the area, including Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) and Merlin, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Ivorian Red Cross show continued high rates of malnutrition as well as a high proportion of children with oedema.

Malnourished children from an IDP camp in Guiglo are being admitted to the MSF/WFP therapeutic feeding programme in Guiglo. Late in August, WFP/Solidarités distributed a 10-day food ration to all residents of the IDP camp. According to MSF, medical operations in the area are hampered by the lack of medical personnel and the absence of public structures and proper sanitation (UN OCHA, 3 September 2003).

Distribution of food to IDPs suspended or halted due to overcrowded camps and unruly crowds (June 2003)

- IDPs continue to arrive at the Ste Thérèse Transit Centre in Man for emergency food distribution registration
- Since the first WFP distribution on 17 May, a total of 7,778 IDPs have received a two-week emergency ration
- The operation had to be suspended due to overcrowded site and increasingly impatient displaced population in Danane

"[...] IDPs continue to arrive at the Ste Thérèse Transit Centre in Man for emergency food distribution registration by the WFP registration and distribution team. Since the first WFP distribution on 17 May, a total of 7,778 IDPs have received a two-week emergency ration.

The operation had to be suspended last week due to the overcrowded site and increased tension among the increasingly impatient displaced population. It has been suggested that another more spacious and appropriate site should be identified by the Chief Officer in Man and made available for WFP operations.

(d) WFP food distributions targeting 5,000 war-affected persons in Danane and environs on 28 May were halted due to unruly crowds. WFP revisited Danane on 04 June to identify the most vulnerable persons and register them for food assistance.

Most of the IDPs are from Zouan Hounien and Teapleu and registration will be completed on 06 June, with food distribution following next week.

(e) WFP's general distributions to some 7,600 IDPs in Brobo, Boli and Diédivi resumed during the week, following CARE's return to Bouaké.

WFP's implementing partner Action Contre la Faim (ACF) on the other hand, is closing all its programmes in Bouaké at the end of this week. A hand-over to local NGOs has not been arranged. Support to

institutions through ICRC and St Camille continued to some 3,420 vulnerable beneficiaries." (WFP, 6 June 2003)

WFP warns of deteriorating food security in Cote d'Ivoire (June 2003)

- Risk of food shortage caused by the civil unrest
- As armed incursions continue in western Côte d'Ivoire, more people are being displaced, trapped and cut off from sources of income and food

"There are serious shortfalls for oil and pulses starting this month. From July onward, there will in addition be a serious pipeline break for cereals, including maize meal and bulgur wheat, followed in August by other commodities such as corn-soya blend and salt. New contributions will only be available around October." (WFP, 13 June 2003)

"The United Nation's World Food Programme has appealed for US\$16 million to deliver food assistance in Cote d'Ivoire, warning of deteriorating food security in the war-torn country.

"Hundreds of thousands of people are already confronting food shortages caused by the civil unrest over the last few months. Their difficulties are now going to be compounded by the onset of the lean season," said WFP's Regional Coordinator, Gemmo Lodesani.

WFP is appealing to the international community to fund an emergency operation to assist over 500,000 people for a period of eight months. These include refugees from Liberia, people internally displaced by the fighting in the country, as well as families hosting them. Also at risk are the unemployed, marginal wage earners and their dependents.

The emergency operation will also target about 300,000 pupils through school feeding. In addition, under a food-for-work scheme, food assistance will be used to buttress the weak social structure.

"As armed incursions continue in Liberia and Western Cote d'Ivoire, more people are being displaced, trapped and cut off from sources of income and food," Lodesani said. "Humanitarian operations in the West have been seriously hampered by the fighting and the situation in neighbouring Liberia seems to be deteriorating by the day."

Safe access for relief workers to assist people in areas affected by the fighting remains a critical concern of WFP and all the humanitarian agencies. However, following ongoing military operations in the West, WFP hopes to gain access to the tens of thousands of displaced people as well as the war affected population who are in critical need of humanitarian assistance.

More than one million people have been displaced by the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire or have sought refuge in neighbouring countries and the country's economy is partially paralyzed.

"If people returning to their villages are not helped to start a normal life, Cote d'Ivoire may soon fall back into chaos and conflict. We have to move quickly and rebuild people's lives, if the hope of peace is to be fulfilled," said Lodesani." (WFP, 27 May 2003)

Food insecurity is due to the lack of access to food for large portions of the population, UN OCHA reports (March 2003)

- There is no food shortage in Côte d'Ivoire, UN OCHA says
- There is however, a lack of access to food among large portions of the population

- WFP is using food aid as a way to support agriculture and ensure that public services in the north continue to function

"Food-Security is not related, per se, to the availability of food in Cote d'Ivoire. There is no food shortage here.

There is, however, a lack of access to food among large portions of the population. In the north, a besieged economy and cash flow problems are creating food insecurity for people there. In the south, high unemployment, concentrations of IDPs in transit centers, and most importantly dwindling resources of households hosting IDPs are the major sources of food insecurity.

WFP with its NGO partners, including CARE, ACF, Solidarités and others, is providing food aid both in the rebel-held north and in the south, mostly to IDP transit centers and host families.

WFP is also using food aid as a way to ensure that public services in the north continue to function, through Food For Work programmes, and is supporting agriculture through Food For Agriculture programmes.

WFP is also working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF to further strengthen its award-winning School Cantine programmes, adapting and enlarging them to keep children in school and protect them from possible recruitment by armed elements." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003)

Shelter

In Guiglo IDPs are sheltering in "sub-standard" conditions (June 2003)

- The four sites centres (Town Hall, Prefecture, St. Joseph's Church, UNHCR transit center) are not large enough for the estimated 8,000 people that are currently receiving protection and assistance there
- Sanitation conditions are deplorable
- Many of the displaced are traumatised due to their experience in the conflict
- Despite the "mop-up" operations, IDPs continue to arrive in Guiglo, most are still wary to returning to their homes in the west
- The UN is trying to obtain authorisation from central Government for the construction of a new, temporary transit centre in Guiglo to provide adequate shelter and sanitation facilities

"The conditions under which IDPs in Guiglo are sheltering remain sub-standard. The four sites centres (Town Hall, Prefecture, St. Joseph's Church, UNHCR transit center) are not large enough for the estimated 8,000 people that are currently receiving protection and assistance there, and sanitation conditions are deplorable.

Further, many of the displaced, the majority of whom are Burkinabe, are traumatized due to their experiences in the conflict, and their flight from home and hearth. There are also Ivoirians and third-country nationals (TCNs) from other West African countries, including Malians, at the centres.

IDPs continue to arrive in Guiglo, and despite the "mop up" operations recently undertaken by Government and peacekeeping forces, most are still wary of returning to their homes in the west.

The UN is continuing efforts to gain authorization from the local and central Government for the construction of a new, temporary transit center in Guiglo, mainly to provide adequate shelter and sanitation

facilities. UNICEF, Merlin, Solidarite (latrines), UNHCR (electricity), Merlin (Health) and WFP (food) will cooperate in the construction of the new transit center." (UN OCHA, 15 June 2003)

The rainy season disrupts the construction of shelters for IDPs (May-June 2003)

- Due to continuing rainy season, the construction of appropriate shelter for IDPs has been slowed down in Tabou
- Access is extremely difficult to areas where extremely vulnerable IDPs are
- This is a challenge as some remote villages will be unreachable until the end of the rainy season

"Due to the continuing rainy season, the construction of appropriate shelter for refugees has been slowed down in Tabou, and access to some areas where extremely vulnerable IDPs are believed to be present in the west is extremely difficult. Many non-asphalted roads in the west and southwest are impassible due to thick mud and generally swampy conditions.

This situation is presenting challenges to the delivery of assistance, including food aid. Some remote villages will be unreachable until the end of the rainy season." (UN OCHA, 15 June 2003)

Thousands remain homeless following the destruction of shanty towns in Abidjan (January 2003)

- A UN envoy to Côte d'Ivoire was shocked by the living conditions facing people who were forced from their slum homes when war broke out in September 2002
- The people's homes had been razed on the orders of President Laurent Gbagbo days after rebels rose up against his government
- The aid agency "Save the Children" has said that 16 out of Abidjan's 30 neighbourhoods have been razed since October. Some 25,000 people have been affected by the raids, and 3,000 left homeless

"A UN envoy on a visit to west Africa said Saturday she was shocked by the living conditions facing people who were forced from their slum homes when war broke out in Ivory Coast four months ago.

"I had heard about the situation these people faced but to see how they really live was shocking," Carolyn McAskie told AFP after meeting with the slum dwellers, dubbed "evictees," in the Allakro neighbourhood of Abidjan.

McAskie, who arrived in Ivory Coast on Thursday for the start of a three-week visit to the region, visited a group of slum dwellers, most of them west African migrant workers, in the economic hub of the west African country.

The people's homes had been razed on the orders of President Laurent Gbagbo days after rebels rose up against his government on September 19, sparking the conflict that has ground on for four months.

The government announced on October 4 that it would destroy all shantytowns in the city within a month, claiming that foreign supporters of the rebels were living there.

Allakro was completely destroyed in the post-rebellion raids. McAskie urged Gbagbo's government "to treat the people who were chased from their homes in a humane manner and allow them to keep their personal belongings."

She said the UN would give "humanitarian aid to displaced persons who are in a difficult situation."

The aid agency "Save the Children" has said that 16 out of Abidjan's 30 neighbourhoods have been razed since October. Some 25,000 people have been affected by the raids, and 3,000 left homeless. ...

[...] The head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Besida Tonwe, has estimated that between 600,000 and a million people have been displaced by the Ivory Coast war." (AFP, 18 January 2003)

Water and Sanitation

IDPs and host communities continue to have urgent needs for water and sanitation facilities (2004)

- Access to clean water is still poor for IDPs and other vulnerable populations
- Humanitarian response aims to provide emergency assistance while also creating conducive conditions for returnees, including water and sanitation infrastructures

"There has little been progress in the improvement of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene for the populations affected by the crisis. Though some progress has been made at transit sites for IDPs, IDPs living with families and host communities continue to have urgent needs. Given the current situation, it is important to continue providing humanitarian assistance, while creating conducive conditions for the return of the populations to their localities of origin by improving access to basic social services, including hydraulic and sanitation infrastructures." (UN OCHA, 15 Jun 04)

Poor water and sanitation facilities cause cholera in West Côte d'Ivoire and in IDP camps, says Merlin (March 2003)

- Sanitary conditions for tens of thousands of displaced people living in makeshift camps are degrading rapidly
- An increasing number of diarrhoea cases have been reported among people sheltering on the grounds of prefecture in Guiglo
- Due to the malfunction of municipal water system, displaced families are forced to seek water from private wells around the town, which could lead to conflict between them and host communities

"One week after the disruption of water supplies and electricity services to much of south-western Ivory Coast, sanitary conditions for tens of thousands of displaced people living in makeshift camps are degrading rapidly.

Personnel from Merlin, the UK Charity that provides healthcare in crises, have noted a sharp increase in acute diarrhoea among the 3800 people sheltering on the grounds of the prefecture in Guiglo. Rapid assessments conducted by the Charity also indicate the number of children currently malnourished or at severe risk of malnutrition has reached 20%, up 6% from one week before.

Conditions have deteriorated visibly in the past week, and swarms of flies now blanket the camp. Of greatest concern, however, is the likelihood of outbreaks of dysentery and cholera, which would decimate an already weakened displaced population and gravely impact host communities. According to Merlin's

medical co-ordinator for Ivory Coast, Viviane Maranzan, "without water, an epidemic is almost inevitable in these conditions."

Due to the malfunction of the municipal water system, there is now no source of water in the refugee camp. Displaced families are forced to seek water from private wells around the town, these wells cannot provide adequate water and such moves could lead to conflict between displaced and host populations.

It is possible there are similar scenarios in other towns in the west, which host large informal camps of displaced persons, but which are inaccessible to international aid agencies for security reasons. In a rapid assessment conducted among the approximately 13,000 displaced, sheltering in Blolekin on the 7th of March, before the water system failed, Merlin found 18% of children to be malnourished or at severe risk. Insecurity in the area has prevented a follow-up assessment.

Merlin appeals to all humanitarian, political, and military actors in the Ivory Coast to act immediately to help restore the water supplies to western towns in order to avoid a potential cholera epidemic, in a population already weakened by malnourishment and trauma." (Merlin, 14 March 2003)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Education severely disrupted by the crisis (2003)

- Due to massive levels of displacement and other conflict-related factors, an estimated 1 million children have had their schooling interrupted
- Many schools in government-controlled areas cannot cope with large numbers of displaced children arriving from conflict zones
- Informal educational initiatives initiated with the support of religious groups, NGOs and UN agencies have been hampered by numerous constraints, not least lack of funding

"It was estimated in 2001, before the crisis, that some 720,000 primary school-age children and a further 1,100,000 secondary school-age children had never set foot in a school. Over half of these were girls - ten percentage points behind the boys in national enrolment rates, at just 46%. Due to the partitioning of the country, massive internal displacement of populations, increasing poverty and general insecurity resulting from the conflict, it is estimated that 1 million more children have had their schooling interrupted.

While schools have continued to function in government-controlled areas, many cannot cope with the large numbers of displaced children who have arrived from conflict zones. Schools in the west were looted and damaged during the violence, and inter-community tensions there remain rife, keeping many children and teachers away from classrooms. In the Forces Nouvelles-controlled zones and in the west, the departure of teachers and public administration has paralysed the education system, and caused enrolment rates to plummet." (UNICEF, 11 Dec 03)

"The net enrolment rate for primary school in Côte d'Ivoire hardly exceeds 56%, with only 46% enrolment for girls. The crisis and the consequent partitioning of the country compounded weaknesses in the education system, depriving an additional 700,000 children of primary school education. The closing of schools in conflict-affected zones following the departure of staff and teachers favoured the occupation of these buildings for purposes other than teaching or led to their destruction or plundering.

Informal educational initiatives initiated with the support of religious groups, NGOs and UN agencies allowed 200,000 pupils to receive primary and secondary school education.

However, these initiatives have faced numerous constraints, namely:

- the lack of a genuine relationship with the Ministry of Education despite attempts to draw them into a true partnership;
- the uncertainty as to the validation and certification of the schoolwork completed in the west and north;
- difficult access to rural areas, hence reaching mainly urban populations;
- the increasing disparities in access to education for young girls, due to insecurity and the ensuing amplification of sexual and physical violence against young girls and women.

In areas under Government control, a second academic year started in January 2003. This enabled the integration of about 75,000 displaced children in primary schools called "relay" schools. This number represents 12.6% of primary school attendees in areas under the control of the Forces Nouvelles.

The lack of funding for the education sector severely limited planned interventions: only 130,000 children, out of the 500,000 initially targeted, received support towards their reintegration into the school system (IDPs in the south) or through educational/recreational activities in the centre, north and the west. Furthermore, activities aiming at integrating 23,000 refugee children into formal education structures in Guiglo, Danané, Tabou and at eliminating illiteracy among young girls in Bouna could not be implemented. In large portions of the country, WFP was forced to suspend its school-feeding programme. As a result, only 315,963 students (84% of the targeted group) were fed, and some one thousand teachers were unable to receive a salary." (UN, Nov 03)

Access to education still undermined in rebel-held areas (June 2003)

- Teacher kits for 40 school inspectors were delivered to M'Bahiakro and Yamoussoukro by UNICEF to assist them to provide support service to 2,400 IDP children
- It is feared that thousands of students will be forced to repeat the year
- According to the Minister of National Education, nearly half a million students living in besieged areas will need exceptional measures to ensure their education
- The supplement schools for IDP children in the town of Brobo and surrounding villages are sadly lacking in school supplies
- However, thousands are still out of school, especially in the rebel controlled north due to damaged school buildings and equipment as well as the absence of many teachers and pupils who are unable to return to their original place of posting due to insecurity

"On 13 February, UNICEF helped launch a Back-to-School campaign in Yamoussoukro by providing education kits and learning material for over 1,000 children as well as recreational kits for over 4,000 children.

Teacher kits for 40 school inspectors were delivered to M'Bahiakro and Yamoussoukro to assist them to provide support service to 2,400 IDP children. 110 educational kits and 60 recreation kits were delivered to the Ministry of Education for 16,000 displaced children in Abidjan. Ten educational and recreation kits were supplied in Guiglo (West of Côte d'Ivoire).

UNICEF also provided education and recreation kits for 1,300 school children receiving temporary classes at the mission compound in Bouna and surrounding locations as their original schools remained closed due to the flight of the teachers." (UNICEF, 17 June 2003)

"According to Education Minister Michel Amani N'Guessan, only 95,000 of the 600,000 children who normally attend school in the rebel-held area have been receiving regular lessons." (UN OCHA, 18 June 2003)

"The Ministry of Education has re-evaluated its earlier decision to declare the school year null and void for all areas not under Government control since 19 September.

The Ministry, with the close collaboration of UNICEF and UNESCO, plans to proceed with the evaluation of all students to determine whether or not this school year will be validated for them, and to organize "catch-up" courses for those who do not pass the evaluations, so that they may proceed with the next year of school in the autumn.

It is feared that thousands of students will be forced to repeat the year. It is critical that a strategy and concrete plan to reinstate public schooling, including the return of teachers to the north and west, be put in place to ensure that the fall 2003 school year begins for all students throughout the country.

UNDP and the Chamber of Commerce of Belgium have combined their efforts in a joint initiative to allow displaced children located in the Mie N'Gou reception site in Yamoussoukro to continue and complete the primary school year. Around 370 children, including 113 girls, have been taken on by an educational group based there.

According to the Minister of National Education, nearly half a million students living in besieged areas will need exceptional measures to ensure their education. UNDP, in collaboration with the French Cooperation, has supported the retraining of about 800 primary and secondary school teachers who will teach classes for the second school term that began last January.

In addition, strengthened UNDP support to school canteens is underway in close cooperation with WFP.

A local NGO reported that the supplement schools for IDP children in the town of Brobo and surrounding villages are sadly lacking in school supplies." (UN OCHA, 15 June 2003)

"Côte d'Ivoire's new Prime Minister Seydou Diarra has pledged full cooperation with UNICEF to ensure that the needs of children and other vulnerable groups in the Ivorian crisis get priority attention.

In a meeting with government officials last Friday, UNICEF Western and Central Africa Regional Director Rima Salah requested the government's assistance to allow UNICEF and humanitarian work partners gain immediate and safe access to all children and displaced persons in the government controlled south as well as in the occupied zone of the north.

She stressed the need to have all schools reopened. There has been significant progress in the " Back to School " initiative launched on February 13 and actively supported by UNICEF with education and recreation materials and logistics. To date 63,000 displaced school children in the government controlled south are in school - 23,000 more than had been planned for.

However, thousands are still out of school, especially in the rebel controlled north due to damaged school buildings and equipment as well as the absence of many teachers and pupils who are unable to return to their original place of posting due to insecurity." (UNICEF, 1 April 2003)

"Due to the disruption in the school year for a large number of children in government and rebel controlled areas, the Ministry of Education is examining the possibility of introducing a new school year in May, which would absorb all children who were unable to go to school because of the ongoing conflict.

UNICEF and other partners are exploring ways to support the initiative by identifying teachers, providing incentives for the workers, and distributing school supplies.

UNICEF is working in the north to support initiatives that provide educational and recreational activities for children due to the lack of functioning, formal education structures." (UN OCHA, 28 March 2003)

Displaced children risk losing a full academic year (January 2003)

- Tens of thousands of schoolchildren in Ivory Coast have been displaced throughout the country by the rebel war that led to the closure of schools
- The northern half of Ivory Coast has been held by the rebel group and schools there have been simply closed down

- The education ministry estimates that some 550,000 children in rebel-occupied territory risk losing a full school year
- The government launched a new academic session in January 2003 for some 60,000 pupils displaced by the war or whose studies were affected by the crisis

"Tens of thousands of schoolchildren in Ivory Coast risk losing a full academic year due to a rebel war raging in the west African country since September.

A military uprising, which rapidly transformed into a full-scale war, has not only split the country geographically but also led to the closure of schools in rebel-held areas and displaced large chunks of the population.

In the government controlled part of the country, the authorities have announced a new academic session, which began on Sunday to cater for some 60,000 pupils displaced by the war or whose studies were affected by the crisis.

The exercise will cost the government 3.5 billion CFA francs (5.3 million euros).

Normally, the school year in Ivory Coast starts in September. Recently Education Minister Michel Amani N'Guessan said Ivory Coast's international donors had invested 82 million CFA francs since the start of the crisis to accommodate displaced schoolchildren.

He said the government currently aimed to enrol 80 percent of the pupils whose studies had been interrupted by the crisis, acknowledging that a "100 percent target would be unrealistic."

The northern -- and Muslim-dominated -- half of Ivory Coast has been held by the main rebel group since September 19 and schools there have simply closed down. Two other rebel movements hold large swathes of the country's west.

According to Carolyn McAskie, a special envoy of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan for the Ivorian crisis, more than a million people could have been displaced by the fighting.

The Ivorian government has set up temporary schools in government-controlled areas to replace those that have shut down and is trying to mobilise teachers.

The Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast (MPCI), the main rebel group, recently slammed what it called "official intimidation" for the lack of teachers and nurses in the "so-called war zones."

The education ministry meanwhile estimates that some 550,000 children in rebel-occupied territory risk losing a full school year.

An official from Ivory Coast's main student union said its members held a meeting in the northern rebel-held town of Katiola Monday to discuss the situation.

He said they had taken a decision to urge the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to help reopen schools in the area.

"We want UNESCO to give us the opportunity to go to school like our counterparts in government-held zones and intervene with both parties in the conflict to see that this happens," a representative told AFP on the telephone.

But the regime of President Laurent Gbagbo, whom the rebels say they are bent on ousting, does not seem very enthusiastic about the idea.

Recently the education minister carped that UNICEF and UNESCO were trying to reopen schools in rebel territory with "teachers being paid by the government of Ivory Coast," according to the *Fraternite-Matin* newspaper.

Education Minister N'Guessan said this would not help "create conditions to end the war because people in those areas will no longer feel the conflict," the daily reported." (AFP, 21 January 2003)

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Self-reliance

The protracted crisis erodes coping mechanisms of host families (October 2003)

- In Yamoussoukro department, host families have less and less resources to cope with IDP needs

« La Ministre de la Solidarité, de la Sécurité sociale et des Handicapés, Madame Clotilde Ohouchi a fait le bilan d'une année de solidarité et d'action humanitaire le 20 septembre 2003 à la radio nationale. Elle a noté que la solidarité s'était essoufflée parce que la crise a perduré dans le temps et que les familles ont accueilli, chez elles, des déplacés depuis plus d'un an et ont partagé leurs gîtes et leurs couverts...

Une mission multisectorielle composée du Gouvernement et des agences des Nations Unies a eu lieu du 22 au 27 septembre 2003 dans le département de Yamoussoukro, elle a fait ressortir que les populations hôtes disposent de moins de moins de ressources pour faire face aux besoins des familles déplacées, qui pour la plupart sont arrivées dans cette zone complètement démunies.» (UN OCHA, 6 October 2003)

Host families struggle to bear burden of hosting IDPs (March 2003)

- - Thousands of people in Côte d'Ivoire have had to open their doors to friends and acquaintances displaced by the war.
- - They also had to provide accommodation, food and sometimes clothing to the IDPs.
- - Some homes accommodate as many as 80 persons.
- - The host families were not receiving aid.
- - And the charity of host communities sheltering IDPs could not last for ever (April 2003)

"There are currently an estimated 750,000 IDPs within Côte d'Ivoire's borders, the vast majority of whom have found shelter with host families. As the crisis continues, however, the resources of host families are dwindling and the vulnerability of both IDPs and their hosts is rising." (UN OCHA 31 March 2003)

"Thousands of people in Cote d'Ivoire have had to open their doors to friends and acquaintances displaced by an armed conflict that broke out in the West African country in September 2002. From one day to the next, they have had to provide accommodation, food and sometimes clothing to the internally displaced persons (IDPs).

However, many complain, that despite their sacrifices - and sometimes those of the IDPs themselves - they receive no assistance from the authorities.

Yao Adou Nguessan's two-roomed home in the Ivorian capital, Yamoussoukro, was just about what she needed, but she had to share her bedroom with three relatives who fled the central town of Bouake when it fell to the rebels in September.

Her sitting room of six square metres serves as a bedroom for five other IDPs. All told, 14 relatives had landed at her doorstep but the other six live in a room she rented for them in the neighbourhood for FCFA 8,000 per month. [One US dollar is equivalent to about FCFA 610.]

"With FCFA 1,500 my three children and I were able to have three meals a day," Nguessan, a seamstress, told IRIN. With the additions to her household, her daily expenses on food alone went up to FCFA 3500. The additional expenses add up to a significant sum in a country where many people earn less than 75,000 CFA francs per month.

New coping mechanisms

She has had to adopt new coping mechanisms. Instead of buying food in Yamoussoukro, she travels each week to one of the surrounding villages, where she buys about 250 kg of plantains and yams at much cheaper prices. However, that is usually not enough so she supplements it with rice which she purchases in town.

For each meal, she says, she needs four kg. "All the savings I had have gone towards boarding and lodging my IDPs," she said. "I also had to foot the delivery bill when one of them gave birth here."

As at 10 March 2003 there were about 700,000 IDPs in Cote d'Ivoire, according to Aboke Damaz of the Solidarity and Humanitarian Action Unit at the Ministry of Solidarity, Health and Social Security.

These included over 97,000 people displaced from the hinterland and more than 3,000 "deguerpis", people displaced after the government ordered the security forces to demolish shantytowns following the armed uprising on 19 September that marked the start of the rebellion. The authorities said the shanties had to be destroyed because they posed a security threat.

The Solidarity and Humanitarian Action Unit receives donations from institutions and individuals, which it gives to various structures for distribution to IDPs. These structures include reception centres, where some IDPs are accommodated, and social centres, where they are registered and given assistance. They do not include the host families, some of which accommodate record numbers of displaced persons.

Some homes accommodate as many as 80 people

N'Dri Youbouet, for example, had 80 people in his five-bedroom house when IRIN visited him in Yamoussoukro in February. They had all fled Bouake, 100 km north of the capital, after rebels took it over in September 2002. Some were relatives, others were simply people from his home village. "We've really had a hard time looking after the displaced," he told IRIN.

Since 24 September 2002, when the IDPs started arriving in his home, his expenses had almost doubled. The amount he spent each week on food went from FCFA 10,000 to FCFA 18,000. His water bill used to be FCFA 5,000 for every two months, but increased to FCFA 12,000. His electricity bill jumped sky high. "I must admit it's been weighing me down both financially and psychologically," said the former public servant who retired nine years ago.

Still, he said, he tried to do everything he could to keep up an appearance of happiness and make sure that the atmosphere in the home was good so that the IDPs did not think the family was accommodating them against its will, especially since things were difficult for the IDPs themselves and not just on the material plane. For example, Youbouet's daughter, Appoline, had had no news of her husband since she left Bouake with their two children. "I cannot tell you whether he has been killed or not," she said with tears in her eyes.

She, like many of the IDPs in the hinterland and their hosts, had the impression that all assistance was concentrated in Abidjan since, every now and then, NGOs and other groups could be seen on television announcing that they had provided aid for the IDPs, but she and her relatives had receive nothing in Yamassoukro.

Surviving on help from friends

However, in Abidjan, too, host families complain. Often, the little assistance they receive comes not from an official body but from friends, as in Bernadette Sia's case. When 19 people fleeing fighting in the west

of the country arrived at her home at the end of October, a family friend offered a 50-kg bag of rice, which lasted one week.

Within weeks, the 375,000 CFA francs she had painstakingly saved over the years had been used up and eight of the 19 had to look for accommodation elsewhere. A friend who worked at the African Development Bank (ADB) headquarters in Abidjan sometimes gave her money - 5,000 CFA here, 20,000 there - but when the ADB relocated its staff from Abidjan in connection with the insecurity in the country, that assistance dried up.

Damaz, who is in charge of the social centres set up by the Ministry of Solidarity, Health and Social Security to assist displaced persons, confirmed that the host families were not receiving aid. "The mission of the social centres is not to intervene directly in the host families," he said. However, he added, all registered IDPs living with host families had a right to assistance.

The big question was whether there was enough food aid to go around. Aboke said that his ministry planned to provide 23 mt of rice to IDPs through the 15 social centres between 14 and 27 March.

Each IDP has a right to 250 grammes of rice per day, according to norms set by the ministry. Giving the example of how hard it was to respond to the needs of the IDPs, he said the social centre in Abidjan's North Cocody neighbourhood had registered 6,878 vulnerable persons, both IDPs from the hinterland and "deguerpis". The centre, he said, would receive 1,600 mt of rice for one day. Asked what the IDPs would receive after that, he said: "Those are the difficulties we face". (UN OCHA, 25 March 2003)

"Amara Cisse, who fled in November from the rebel-held town of Bouna in northern Ivory Coast, is one of tens of thousands of people displaced by the west African country's lingering civil war.

Like many of the others, Cisse is being fed and sheltered by relatives but fears he will soon outlive his welcome.

The plight of Ivory Coast's displaced people is acutely felt in the north-eastern town of Bondoukou where more than 2,000 people have sought refuge with their kin.

They have no work, prices have spiralled since a September 19 rebellion rapidly became an all-out civil war and split the world's top cocoa producer in half, and food aid is, at best, extremely scanty.

In all, it's a recipe for disaster. "This is the first time I am in this situation and I fervently hope it will be the last," Cisse told AFP.

"I would rather die than go through this again." Speaking in the courtyard of his in-laws' home in Bondoukou, about 400 kilometres (250 miles) north-east of the main city of Abidjan and near the border with Ghana, 57-year-old Cisse said his relatives' charity would not continue infinitely.

"It is the African tradition to lend a helping hand to your relatives. But there is a limit. I already feel I should pull my own weight," he said.

Baba Ali Kamagate, a 23-year-old who escaped from the central city of Bouake - which has served as the capital of the main rebel movement from the first day of the rebellion - echoed Cisse.

"There is no great tension as yet but already the women have had quarrels about who is a burden and who is not, how family finances are being stretched by people like us," he said.

Kamagate said his studies had been put on hold by the Ivorian war, now in its seventh month.

"I did my baccalaureat last year and I hoped to become an economist," he said. "The war has ruined everything."

There is little by way of official aid. The state has doled out meagre rations, only a few times, the displaced people say.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is only about to start supplementing a state-backed food-for-work programme in the town.

According to local authorities and the UN food agency there are a total of 2,233 registered displaced people in Bondoukou from 1,887 families.

Mamadou Sylla, a senior local official, admitted that the "situation is pitiful for the displaced because we are not a rich region.

"It would have been tenable if we had enough finances," he said. "The markets are on fire. Meat is scarce because it used to come from (rebel-held) Bouna and now costs 1,500 CFA francs against 800 francs (about one dollar) per kilo.

"Economic activities have gone down by half," said Sylla, a general secretary at regional government headquarters.

He said farmers were scared to go to their fields fearing rebel attacks and added that agriculture in the region -- which produces cashewnuts, coffee and igname, locally grown yams which are a popular Ivorian staple -- could be very badly hit.

Sylla said farmers used to take their guns with them to the fields, to hunt animals for meat.

"Now they can't even do that out of fear that they might be mistaken for rebels," he added.

Bondoukou is currently policed by Ghanaian soldiers who are part of a west African peacekeeping force.

The Ghanaians recently took charge from French troops, some 3,000 of whom have been deployed in the west African country to monitor a ceasefire between rebels and government forces and to protect foreigners.

Those seeking shelter in Bondoukou come from both near and far -- as distant as the rebel-held west, bordering Liberia, where security is so bad that some pockets are even off-limits for humanitarian organisations and the WFP.

WFP official Hans Vickoler said the situation was difficult in places such as Bondoukou.

"The burden on the host families is enormous. Earlier, people thought it would be over in a month. But even now the problems seem to be far from over." (AFP, 4 April 2003)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Tensions high between returning IDPs and local communities in western Cote d'Ivoire (April 2004)

- In western Cote d'Ivoire, many local communities are frightened by the return of IDPs due to continuing ethnic tensions and violence, and this has itself caused further displacement
- In some cases IDPs are unwilling to return before armed elements are disarmed
- Serious efforts for conflict resolution and reconciliation are needed in the villages

"In the western Côte d'Ivoire tensions are heightened due to the premature return of IDPs to their areas of residence. Humanitarian organisations are receiving mixed reports from IDPs and host villages regarding their return. It is clear that while some communities and IDPs may be ready to be reunited others are not.

In the classified Forest Scio, situated northwest of Guiglo, the return of IDPs to the campement of CIB in the forest of Scio led to violent clashes and the death of one Guéré, who was decapitated in early April. Due to this incidence and a general feeling of insecurity among the local inhabitants, many have chosen to leave the village. It is estimated that since the 2nd April 2004 a total of 321 IDPs have returned to CIB. OCHA and IOM will conduct a mission to this area to further investigate the situation.

The conflict between the of Dozos from Duoekpé and the Guéré from Diéouzon (26km northeast of Bangolo), on the 20th April has led to the displacement of 357 villagers of the Guéré ethnic group from Diéouzon and 158 from Duoekpé, who have fled to Bangolo.

LICORNE has been prevented from conducting its routine patrols in the Bolequin. On the 19th April, LICORNE was held back by a barrage set-up by groups of young men, accusing LICORNE of facilitating and organising the " clandestine" return of Burkinabé. Also in Bolequin, between Guiglo and Toulepleu, it has been reported that, the local population are alarmed and frightened by the return of IDPs and have sought shelter on the main road. Many villagers are still against the return of immigrants and intercommunity tensions are still very high. It is clear that serious efforts for conflict resolution and reconciliation are needed and that villagers are unable to initiate this process themselves. On the 23rd April the Minister of National Reconciliation, Professor Danon Djedje, visited Bolequin and Toulepleu in order to start the process of peace and reconciliation by establishing the local reconciliation committees.

Tuteurs (land owners) are coming to the camps in Niela, Guiglo to encourage the return of IDPs as they urgently need the labour force for the start of the agricultural season. However, as mentioned earlier, many local communities are not yet ready for their return, likewise not all IDPs are not willing to return before the disarmament of armed elements begins.

In Man 1486 IDPs (173 families) have registered with the committee for IDPs to facilitate their return to their areas of residence, which include Danané, Bin-Houye, Zouan-Houien and Mahapleu. Many of these families expressed a wish to return to their homes in order to commence this year's agricultural season. The humanitarian community have been contacted to provide support for their return.

Number of IDPs Wanting to Leave Man and Return to Areas of Residence:

Area of residence	No. IDPs	Families
Danané	472	58
Bin-Houye	259	26
Zouan-Hounien	594	70
Mahapleu	161	19
Total	1486	173

Source: Committee for IDPs in Man

There are some humanitarian support mechanisms (WFP food-aid) in place for IDPs who have returned to their areas of residence. Between the 14th-20th April, WFP in partnership with ICRC WFP provided 5,515 returnees with rations and commenced food for work programmes in Zouan Houien, Bin Houye and Man.

The general council of Danané has presented a project for peace and reconciliation in the department of Danané. During the crisis many fled from this area, particularly from Bin Houye and Zouan Hounien. The project is comprised of various different stages including 1) facilitating inter-community dialogue and building social cohesion, 2) sensitisation of local authorities (formal and informal) and 3) addressing the specific cases of IDPs in the prospect of their return." (UN OCHA, 26 Apr 04)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Insecurity is still a matter of concern (June 2003)

- The appearance of new rebel movements in the West undermined humanitarian access to people in need
- The guns have been quiet throughout Côte d'Ivoire since March 2003, except in the west where presence of mercenaries fighting for both sides, has complicated efforts to bring peace
- WFP reports that there are currently some 37,000 IDPs in the district of Guiglo, and between 40,000 and 50,000 IDPs in the nearby district of Duckoué, where little humanitarian assistance is available

"Phase I of a tri-partite security "mop up" operation undertaken by the FANCI, French Operation Licorne, and MICECI forces has been successfully completed, with the establishment of a cease-fire line which runs east-west roughly from the town of Teapleu to the town of BANGOLO. A map of the situation is available on WAHIMS.

Phase I has resulted in the securing of the main routes: Guiglo-Toulepleu, Toulepleu-Danane, Danane-Man, and Man-Duckoué.

Some resistance was met in Toulepleu where "LIMA" forces refused to allow the security convoy to enter the town. Pockets of uncontrolled, armed elements are also still believed to be present in more remote areas.

Humanitarian organizations have been advised to begin conducting evaluation missions with caution.

Missions to the area by UN agencies and NGOs have reported that villages between Guiglo and Blolequin appear to be deserted, but not damaged.

In the area of Zouan-Hounien, there were reports of both deserted and destroyed villages, and a remaining LIMA contingent. Phase II of the security operation is underway, and aims to expand an arms-free buffer zone north and south of the cease-fire line.

The Ivorian Red Cross is present in Toulepleu and is providing medical assistance there." (UN OCHA, 15 June 2003)

"Further to the recent massive influx of Liberian refugees, the tension amidst the local population in Tabou and surrounding areas persists.

WFP staff are no present at night in Tabou due to lack of secure accommodation. However, secure office/lodging space has now been identified, to which WFP will move on 16 June.

Areas around and north of Grabo are now accessible. However military and civil authorities recommend no travel beyond Neka, which is one of the remaining strongholds of LIMA fighters in the area.

The population is returning to Guiglo, and many businesses have resumed their operation. However the disarmament in the camp of Niela has not begun.

According to military authorities, humanitarian organizations can go to Taï without problems, but are discouraged from going to Toulepleu as the town is controlled by LIMA forces.

The buffer zone north of Daloa is still insecure. Looting and killing of civilians by an unidentified group was reported during the week. In Duckoue, the security situation is calm, but a curfew is maintained from 2200 to 0600 hrs." (WFP, 13 June 2003)

« La région occidentale de la Côte d'Ivoire reste la plus fragile du pays, et de nombreuses agences humanitaires ayant conduit des missions d'établissement des faits depuis la fin novembre continuent à dépeindre un sombre panorama de la stabilité dans la région.

Dans un communiqué de presse lundi, le Bureau de coordination des affaires humanitaires de l'ONU (BCAH/OCHA) a indiqué que la région de l'ouest, incluant les localités de Man, Guiglo, Toulepleu, et Danane, était "fortement instable".

OCHA a cité des informations émanant des agences partenaires et d'organisations non gouvernementales telles que Solidarities, qui a rapporté que "environ 85 000 personnes avaient fui la confrontation militaire, le viol, le pillage et les exécutions sommaires près de Guiglo et Duékoué, des villes de l'ouest".

Les conditions d'hygiène et d'hébergement, en particulier dans les villages surpeuplés, suscitent une inquiétude majeure, selon Solidarities.

Médecins sans frontières-Hollande a fait état de pillage, de pénuries alimentaires et d'atteintes des droits de l'homme des étrangers.

L'ONG Merlin, qui a achevé une mission à Toulepleu à la fin de la semaine, a caractérisé Toulepleu de "ville fantôme" ayant des besoins alimentaires et autres.

Une autre mission inter-agences était attendue à Abidjan mardi, après quatre jours d'évaluation dans la région de Man.

Depuis l'émergence en fin novembre de deux nouveaux groupes rebelles aux environs de Man, l'ouest est devenu une zone instable, difficile d'accès pour les agences humanitaires.

La plupart des affrontements depuis novembre se sont produits le long de la frontière libérienne où des sources affirment que des mercenaires libériens ont combattu du côté des insurgés.

Dans d'autres régions contrôlées par les rebelles, les agences humanitaires sont restées actives. A Bouaké et Yamoussoukro, dans le centre du pays, le Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM) a distribué des secours alimentaires aux populations vulnérables, et a surveillé la situation de la sécurité alimentaire des personnes déplacées à l'intérieur et des familles d'accueil.

L'UNICEF, en partenariat avec le PAM et le ministère de l'Education, prépare un programme alimentaire scolaire dans les zones contrôlées par les rebelles.[...]» (UN OCHA, 25 February 2003)

West

"Humanitarian agencies have little or no access to IDP and refugee camps cut off by the fighting (since February 2003)

United Nations aid agencies fear the supplies they have will not be enough to meet growing needs for IDPs (April 2003)

Western Liberia cut off due to heavy fighting (February-April 2003)

The government wants to relocate IDPs

IDP camps are overcrowded

"Following the attack on Ricks IDP camp, the government has requested that the estimated 150,000 IDPs and about 17,000 Sierra Leonean Refugees housed in camps in the Po river and Virginia area be relocated. The government's preferred location is along the Roberts International Airport Highway. Faced with this new challenge that has serious resource and security implications, the humanitarian community remains skeptical especially as the proposed new location is in close proximity to a government military installation." (UN OCHA, 5 April 2003)

"Thursday morning's attack on Zwedru (Grand Gedeh county) has left the entire eastern region bordering Ivory Coast out of reach of aid. Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) two expatriate volunteers working in the Zwedru transit camp did manage, with difficulty, to leave the combat zone but we have not had any news from the 28 members of the Liberian team. This attack follows the attack a few weeks ago on Toe Town, around 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Zwedru, which had already led to suspension of aid in the Grand Gedeh region.

In Nimba County, further north, an offensive on Ganta town launched Saturday morning, has forced several thousands to flee, especially towards Guinea-Conakry. On our part, we have been forced to reduce our presence in the Saclepea refugee camp. The protection of and assistance to these populations can no longer be guaranteed.

Nearly 75,000 refugees are living in the region bordering Ivory Coast. Today, they, like the local population, are cut off from necessary assistance and protection.

In central Liberia's Bong county, new offensives forced some 30,000 people to flee as fighting approached the outskirts of Monrovia, the capital city. Last Friday, in the wake of the fighting, MSF decided to reduce its teams in the field while continuing its activities in the Bong county displaced persons camp.

MSF is preparing to receive new arrivals there and in the Montserrado camps, where nearly 50,000 displaced persons are today caught between the front line and the capital. The surgical team working in Redemption Hospital has also continued its activities." (Médecins Sans Frontières, 1 April 2003)

"Poor security, and the resulting fluid movements of vulnerable populations it causes, also leaves humanitarian workers unable to reach people in need in the most affected areas. Emergency interventions have become more difficult, and planned health care initiatives like vaccinations against measles have been postponed. Where access is possible - mainly near Monrovia - humanitarian agencies are running low on supplies. Shortages have also prompted the World Food Programme (WFP) to reduce its April and May food rations. Aid agencies fear supply shortfalls will soon become worse because programmes for food, shelter, emergency health, and human rights protection have not received any contributions. (UN, April 2003)

"Humanitarian crises in the West African region continue to mount in the aftermath of Côte d'Ivoire's five-month civil war as the United Nations reported today that intensified fighting in western Liberia has cut-off humanitarian access to huge numbers of displaced people.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) the displaced - mostly women and children fleeing ahead of fresh clashes in the area - continue to stream into camps in and around Monrovia, Liberia's capital.

With access to humanitarian staff and goods cut-off, aid agencies already in these camps have been left to deal with the influx. As of last Wednesday, they have recorded a total of 5,881 persons arriving from Dewoin district in Tubmanburg, Mecca/Suehn and villages across the Po river. The numbers are increasing, OCHA said.

Sierra Leonean refugees and Liberian displaced persons sheltering outside the capital, meanwhile, have fled the camps in which they were staying.

Militias are reportedly harassing and robbing the fleeing populations of their valuables. Arriving displaced mothers are also reporting missing children. Meanwhile, OCHA says that rebels, in retreat, have reportedly abducted a number of persons from Cheesmanburg.

Teams led by representatives of non-governmental organizations and aid agencies in the camps are continuing to register new arrivals and provide them with food and non-food items, as well as health care, and family tracing services." (UN News Services, 7 February 2003)

Government refuses to allow aid agencies beyond Klay Junction (January 2002)

Relief agencies are allowed back to Klay Town, 47km from Monrovia, but no further
IDPs in Klay Town reported to need food, water and shelter
Government wants to avoid thousands of IDPs entering Monrovia

"Relief agencies have returned to Klay Town, north of the Liberian capital, Monrovia, to help thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing fighting between anti-government forces and the army some 35-50 km farther north, a UN humanitarian worker told IRIN on Thursday. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) returned on Wednesday to Klay Town, some 47 km north of Monrovia, Mohammed Siryon, national field officer for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Liberia, said. After getting permission from the Justice Ministry to go to Klay, at least 10 groups are now in the town providing aid, Siryon said. He said the ministry had told the NGOs they could not travel north of Klay.

Groups present in Klay include Medecins sans Frontieres, which is providing water, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is providing sanitation services. Save the Children's Fund is giving aid to children and minimal health services, while the Lutheran World Service is putting up large transit tents. Siryon said the World Food Programme was sending a food assessment team to Klay: on Sunday the IDPs there did not have sufficient food, water and shelter.

Some 1,500 people lived in Klay Town before the influx of IDPs, who fled their temporary camp at Sawmill on Sunday when anti-government forces entered it and ordered them to leave. They fled with what they had on, Siryon said.

He said some 50 troops from the government's Joint Security Command were manning a checkpoint at Klay Junction, an important crossroads about one km south of the town. One of the roads at this junction leads to Sierra Leone and the other to Tubmanburg, capital of Bomi County, where government troops are deployed.

'The government wants the IDPs to stay in Klay Town until Tubmanburg is secure,' Siryon said.

Humanitarian workers said the government did not want thousands of IDPs heading into Monrovia, where many victims of earlier displacements still squat in unfinished and war-damaged buildings." (IRIN, 31 January 2002)

MSF pulled out of Jenna Manna camp in November 2001

MSF pulled out of Jenna Manna camp in November due to security concerns
MSF does not consider zones of southwestern Liberia to give sufficient security to host IDPs
Medicines and other basic necessities were left with medical workers living in Jenna Manna
Some 8,000 IDPs remain at the camp

"French medical charity MSF (Doctors without Borders) announced Friday it was withdrawing teams of aid workers from southwestern Liberia in view of increasing security risks and conflict there.

The organisation said in a statement the decision to pull out its two expatriate workers and around 40 local staff from the Jenne Manna camp meant it had 'to leave some 8,000 displaced people to their fate'.

MSF had been caring for the people since they fled war-ravaged Lofa County in the north of the west African country in May.

'Médecins sans Frontières considers today that these zones (in the southwest) no longer give sufficient security conditions to host these people,' MSF said in a statement.

It said it had left medicines and other basic necessities with medical workers who actually live at Jenne Manna to allow them to continue their work.

MSF has already suspended its activities in Liberia on several occasions on security grounds." (AFP 30 November 2001)

Access to Lofa county has been cut off repeatedly by armed attacks and fighting (September 2000-November 2001)

By end 2001, aid agencies were not always able to conduct assessments
Renewed fighting has forced humanitarian agencies to scale down or pull out
UN Country Team has cited access to Lofa as serious concern throughout the year
A recent assessment by MSF noted that pockets of civilians exist in Lofa; these people apparently want to stay close to their crops

Access problematic throughout 2001:

"However, access of UN staff to Lofa County remains restricted for security reasons. From 8 to 20 November, WFP prepositioned or dispatched to its NGO partners a total of 476 tons of food for distribution under various programmes in Montserrado, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi and Gbarpolu Counties." (WFP 23 November 2001)

"In particular, access to Lofa county remains restricted and humanitarian agencies have been unable to conduct assessments in the county to determine the condition of the residents who have remained there throughout the hostilities." (UN November 2001)

"MSF still does not have regular access to much of Lofa county. During assessment missions in the region, we came across destroyed villages and towns, but also found pockets of civilians who prefer to stay in their village so as to take care of their crops, despite nearby fighting. But those in camps, who have already missed the planting season, show no intention of returning to Lofa in the near future, nor is it likely they could do so safely." (MSF 17 October 2001)

"In February 2001, the latest fighting erupted in Kolahun District in Lofa [which] [...] produced a new wave of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

[...]

The situation forced humanitarian agencies working in the area to either scale down their activities, while others have pulled out completely.

[...]

"A UN official Wednesday expressed concern about "what appears to be prospects of increased fighting in Liberia."

[...]

McAskie said relief groups are catering for the victims from a distance since because they have seen it to be "too dangerous to go deeper" into the crisis area." (PANA 25 April 2001)

Access restricted by military theatre of operations in late 2000:

"We were also advised not to beyond Zorzor by the government forces," a relief worker said.

The relief workers had gone into embattled Lofa County as part of a consortium of non-governmental organizations to distribute food and other relief items to some 13,000 internally displaced persons after an earlier assessment mission.

The aid workers said the relief distribution had to be called off as a result of the attack.

Other convoys of relief items headed for the area were ordered back due to insecurity in the operational areas." (PANA 10 October 2000, "Thousands Flee Fresh Fighting")

Since then most of the fighting has consisted of skirmishing along a frontline that divides the country from east to west. But even there, the guns have been quiet since March, except in the west, where the presence of Liberian and Sierra Leonean mercenaries, said by diplomats to be fighting for both sides, has complicated efforts to bring peace.

The fighting in the west has also taken its toll on the relief agencies. They still find it difficult to gain access to the area around Danane which has now been widely nicknamed Cote d'Ivoire's "Wild West." Four volunteers of the Ivorian Red Cross were kidnapped there in December and were found dead near Toulepleu, a town on the Liberian border, two months later" (UN OCHA, 8 May 2003).

"La situation a l'ouest du pays demeure l'aspect le plus alarmant de la crise humanitaire en Cote d'Ivoire. La survenance continuelle des combats et de la violence depuis l'apparition des mouvements rebelles du MJP et MPIGO en novembre dernier a empêche l'accès aux populations vulnérables. Des civils ont été blessés et tués au cours des échanges de tirs; et étaient même des cibles d'éléments armés. On pense aussi que des déplacés internes de la région auraient besoin d'une aide d'urgence.

Un bureau de relais des Nations Unies récemment établi dans la ville de Man a commencé à fournir de l'aide et de l'assistance à certaines populations accessibles et travaille à la mise en œuvre de stratégies pour atteindre les autres et assurer la sécurité des agents humanitaires » (UN OCHA, 30 April 2003).

"The UN inter-agency office in Man has been established. However, due to security concerns it cannot yet be staffed on a permanent basis. MSF-Holland reports that it has begun a measles vaccination campaign for children, and a mobile clinic for villages surrounding Man.

Tens of thousands of IDPs and other vulnerable populations remain out of the reach of humanitarian organizations in the west. IDPs continue to arrive in Duekoue and Guiglo. Efforts are underway in Guiglo to improve the humanitarian aid structures available to the IDPs, including the planning of a new transit center to host some 2,500 IDPs." (WFP, 4 April 2003)

"The dangerous and unpredictable security situation in the west, especially in areas near the border with Liberia, poses stiff challenges to the humanitarian aid community.

The UN World Food Programme reports that there are currently some 37,000 IDPs in the district of Guiglo, and between 40,000 and 50,000 IDPs in the nearby district of Duekoue, where little humanitarian assistance is available.

UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in cooperation with local authorities, are currently evaluating sites for the temporary shelter for and the provision of further aid to IDPs in Guiglo.

Continuing violence in the west has prompted tens of thousands of people, including third country nationals, Ivorians and Liberian refugees, to flee both into Liberia, where they are now trapped in fighting that has broken out in recent days near the town of Zwedru, as well as into Government-controlled areas in southern Cote d'Ivoire.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is concerned that Liberian refugees in Niela camp, outside of Guiglo and in the transit centers of Abidjan are being recruited—sometimes by force—into armed groups.

North

Humanitarian conditions in the north, largely controlled by Mouvement Patriotique de Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI) rebels, are also worrisome. WFP reports that commercial farmers in the northwest, now cut off from access to southern markets to sell crops such as cotton, are at high risk of food insecurity.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is sending a convoy of medical supplies to the North, as it reports that the situation of children in the Bouna and Bondoukou districts is "near catastrophic" due to a breakdown in the health system, including a lack of vaccination campaigns.

As in the west, the health situation in the north continues to deteriorate due to the interruption of health services and lack of medical supplies.

In the Government-controlled south, the high concentrations of IDPs in transit centers and with host families add to rising prices of food commodities, and are rendering ever higher numbers of individuals prone to communicable diseases.

Measles outbreaks among children have not reached epidemic status, thanks to the quick intervention of local authorities, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), and NGOs. Over 500 cases of cholera have been reported in the last two months, with an estimated 20 confirmed deaths having occurred in Abidjan and central Cote d'Ivoire." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003)

Southwest

"It is foreseen that large numbers of IDPs will enter southwestern Cote d'Ivoire fleeing the instability and lack of assistance and food for displaced, refugee and third country populations in eastern Liberia.

UNHCR, IOM and WFP are preparing for a possible surge in border crossings." (UN OCHA, 11 April 2003)

"UN OCHA reports that the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. Populations in rebel-controlled areas have no access to public services and are suffering from the deep economic crisis.

IDPs, host families and communities in the government-controlled south are also facing the economic crisis, health and social pressures. Violence and instability in the west are not allowing humanitarian workers access to populations in desperate need of humanitarian assistance." (WFP, 4 April 2003)

"As the world's attention is focused elsewhere, the humanitarian situation in Cote d'Ivoire continues to worsen.

Intensifying violence and instability in the country's lawless west are making it increasingly difficult for aid workers to reach civilians desperately in need of humanitarian assistance.

Conditions in rebel-controlled areas (of the North) suffer for lack of public services and a strangled economy. Even in the government-controlled south, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the communities who host them face deepening economic and health crises." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003)

Humanitarian aid workers killed (March 2003)

- The ICRC announced that in the western town of Toulepleu, bodies of four Red Cross Côte d'Ivoire volunteers had been found and identified
- Access and security are among the main concerns of the humanitarian aid community
- Violent activity involving several armed elements along the border with Liberia presents serious dangers for local populations and humanitarian workers alike
- The lack of security in the country led to the lack of security for humanitarian operations living thousands of IDPs and local populations without urgently needed aid

"Access and Security are currently among the principle concerns of the humanitarian aid community.

While access to northern areas control has been fairly smooth, western Côte d'Ivoire, along the border with Liberia, has become a hotbed of violent activity involving several armed elements, presenting serious dangers for local populations and humanitarian workers alike.

Three ADRA humanitarian aid workers were killed in late February in eastern Liberia during an attack on Toe's Town, close to the border with Ivory Coast.

The attack was reportedly launched from western Cdl. The bodies of four Ivorian Red Cross volunteers who had been missing since 12 January were also recently found in the western Ivorian town of Toulepleu.

In this violent, unpredictable environment, thousands of extremely vulnerable IDPs and local populations are without urgently needed aid due to the lack of security for humanitarian operations.

It is also feared that the delivery of food aid and other supplies to civilian populations in these areas could turn them into targets and fuel the conflict." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003)

"On 19 March, the ICRC announced that the bodies of four Red Cross Cote d'Ivoire volunteers, missing since 12 January, had been found and identified in the western town of Toulepleu.

This follows the deaths of three humanitarian aid workers in eastern Liberia in late February, and heightens concerns about the security of humanitarian staff in western Cote d'Ivoire, given the recent increase in activity by armed elements in the area." (UN OCHA, 28 March 2003)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

General

Broad aims of humanitarian interventions for IDPs in 2004

- Interventions in 2004 will aim to promote conditions for the return of IDPs, support their recovery and reintegration, and reinforce absorption capacity of communities in areas of return
- Monitoring and reporting on the protection of IDPs (and other vulnerable groups) will be strengthened, as will advocacy efforts in this area
- Increased advocacy will also aim to prevent incidents of arbitrary displacement, as seen during the destruction of shantytowns in Abidjan
- Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement will continue to be used to promote a common strategic response to IDP needs, including perhaps the creation of a national policy on internal displacement

See also 'Serious setback in peace process increases urgent humanitarian needs' in the Subsistence Needs (General) section

"As of end-September 2003 it was estimated that some 500,000 to 600,000 people remained internally displaced in Côte d'Ivoire. The situation remains very volatile: while return movements are taking place, in other areas, particularly in the West, insecurity prevails and populations continue to seek refuge in the few UN-run transit camps or with host families.

Host families are supporting the overwhelming majority of the displaced. In this regard, beyond addressing the immediate needs of IDPs, activities in 2004 will also aim at stabilising the displaced population and host families where return is not yet feasible. Along the lines of the adopted 'two-pronged approach', interventions will aim to promote conditions for the return of the displaced, support their recovery and reintegration, and reinforce the absorption capacity of communities in the areas of return.

In a climate of heightened ethnic and religious tension, civilians, including in particular IDPs face serious protection needs. Humanitarian actors will aim to reinforce capacity on the ground to monitor and report on the protection conditions of vulnerable populations and increase advocacy efforts with all relevant actors to promote the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Increased advocacy will also aim to prevent incidents of arbitrary displacement. Notwithstanding a presidential commitment to put a halt to the destruction of shantytowns in Abidjan, with the ensuing forced displacement of their inhabitants has continued, albeit at a slower pace. Most recently the destruction of the 'Derriere-Wharf' shantytown in July 2003 in the outskirts of Abidjan caused the death of three people, including an infant.

Using the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as the overall framework, a number of workshops and training sessions were organised to reinforce understanding of the problem of internal displacement, and the inherent rights of the displaced. In an effort to promote a common strategic response to IDP needs, the IAHCC issued an IDP Strategy Note. Future efforts in this regard will include the endorsement on the part of the national authorities of the IDP Strategy Note and, if possible, the issuance of a national policy on internal displacement." (UN, Nov 03)

The OCHA/CRIH regional des informations humanitaires (CRIH) to coordinate humanitarian partners' actions on IDPs (June 2003)

- OCHA/CRIH introduced a common humanitarian evaluation form for use by UN agencies and NGOs
- The CRIH has designed an online system for the submission of these forms, as well as universal access for all humanitarian partners to the resulting database
- It is hoped that wide use of the common evaluation form will streamline response efforts in general, and aid in the elaboration of a nationwide strategy for the localization of IDPs and the identification of their needs

"OCHA/CRIH (centre regional des informations humanitaires - HIC) visited Yamoussoukro on 5 and 6 June, and western/central areas including Guiglo and Daloa the week of 9 June, in order to introduce a common humanitarian evaluation form for use by UN agencies, NGOs and local authorities.

The common evaluation form was designed by the Ministry of Solidarity, Health and Social Welfare in collaboration with the CRIH, UN agencies and NGOs. The CRIH (HIC) has designed an online system for the submission of these forms, as well as universal access for all humanitarian partners to the resulting database.

It is hoped that wide use of the common evaluation form will streamline response efforts in general, and aid in the elaboration of a nationwide strategy for the localization of IDPs and the identification of their needs. Following the OCHA/UNICEF seminar on IDPs and Code of Conduct held in May in Abidjan, an ad hoc working group on IDPs held its first meeting at OCHA on 12 June. ICRC, OCHA, WFP, and UNHCR attended. A separate ad hoc working group will finalise the Code of Conduct in the coming weeks." (UN OCHA, 15 June 2003)

"The HIC, operational since mid-February, is closely involved in the task of aiding the Government in coordinating humanitarian data collection through the design of a common evaluation form to be used by all humanitarian actors performing evaluations in the field.

The data collected will be hosted in a comprehensive database on humanitarian populations affected by the crisis. A follow-up IDP workshop is also planned for early May, with the return of the OCHA IDP expert and the added participation of Government and local NGOs, to form a concrete IDP strategy for this complex environment." (31 March 2003)

National response

The Ivorian government's Cellule Solidarité et Action Humanitaire is contributing to the provision of humanitarian aid (January 2003)

- The Cellule has been active in the mobilisation and transportation of humanitarian aid supplies to government-controlled areas
- The Cellule reported the organization of eight convoys of medical supplies, food and non-food items to IDP populations in cities and towns, and their environs, including Daloa, Zénoula, Zoukougbeu, Zahibo, Issia, Man, Kouibli, Bloléquin, Guiglo and Siémian
- The Cellule reported that as of 8 January 2003, approximately 5,683 IDPs have received medical attention in central Abidjan and in peripheral zones of the city

- Over 50% of the beneficiaries have been women

"The Ivorian government's Cellule Solidarité et Action Humanitaire, presided over by the Ministry of Solidarity, Health and Social Welfare, and in collaboration with the prefectural Comités de Crise (Crisis Committees) has been active in the mobilisation and transportation of humanitarian aid supplies to Government-controlled areas.

From 30 September through 30 December 2002 they report the organization of eight convoys of medical supplies, food and non-food items to IDP populations in cities and towns, and their environs, including Daloa, Zénoula, Zoukougbeu, Zahibo, Issia, Man, Kouibli, Bloléquin, Guiglo and Siémian.

They report that as of 8 January 2003, approximately 5,683 IDPs have received medical attention in central Abidjan and in peripheral zones of the city. Over 50% of the beneficiaries have been women.

They further report that there are currently 40,250 persons registered in IDP reception centres in Abidjan, the number having grown from 25,000 in December, and 28,199 in November of 2002." (UN OCHA, 13 January 2003)

Regional response

Various initiatives to tackle the Côte d'Ivoire crisis (2003)

- The Côte d'Ivoire-Mali border was reopened the week of May 19, 2003 after an eight-month closure
- ECOWAS security committee decided to create a rapid response military force to tackle conflicts in the region
- At a meeting in May 2003, ECOWAS heads of states articulated a sub-regional policy towards maintaining peace and security in West Africa
- Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire are to set up new surveillance systems on their common border and intensify patrols by their armies, French and West African peacekeepers to enable cross-border road and railway traffic
- November 2003 Accra summit of West African heads of state fails to put faltering peace process back on track

"West African leaders were due to meet in Ghana on Tuesday to discuss the deadlocked peace process in Cote d'Ivoire, but diplomats and government officials played down earlier hopes of a dramatic breakthrough to prevent the country drifting back to civil war.

They said a previously mooted reconciliation meeting between Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo, leaders of the rebel movement that controls the north of Cote d'Ivoire and the leaders of the country's main opposition parties, was unlikely to take place.

Instead, the sources said, Gbagbo would meet with the presidents of Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin. They would press him to implement in full a French-brokered peace agreement which he signed with the rebels in January.

[...]

Diplomats in Abidjan said France, which has 4,000 peacekeeping troops stationed in Cote d'Ivoire to keep the army and rebel forces apart, was pessimistic that the Accra summit would make progress in putting the increasingly sour peace process back on track.

Although Gbagbo signed the French-brokered peace agreement 10 months ago, he has never been happy with its terms. The president has consistently alleged that it gives too many concessions to the rebels who seized control of the north of Cote d'Ivoire shortly after the country plunged into civil war in September last year." (IRIN, 10 Nov 03)

"The Cote d'Ivoire - Mali border was reopened the week of 19 May after an eight-month closure. At a meeting in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, on 28 May, the ECOWAS security committee decided to create a rapid response military force to tackle conflicts in the region.

It also agreed to send more peacekeeping troops to Cote d'Ivoire. ECOWAS heads of state articulated a sub-regional policy towards maintaining peace and security in West Africa.

In a bid to strengthen and support relief response capacity of Red Cross Societies in the West Africa region, the International Federation has brought together over 30 Red Cross volunteers and officials in Accra, Ghana, to create Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRT).

The Red Cross volunteers and staff, with experience in the areas of telecommunications, logistics, information, finance and health were given special training to prepare them for a possible expanded crisis in West Africa, IRIN reported on 11 June.

Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire are to set up new surveillance systems on their common border and intensify patrols by their armies, and French and West African peacekeepers to enable cross-border road and railway traffic, which was shut down eight months ago, to resume by 30 June."

"Fighting died down after the January peace agreement and the dispatch of 4000 French and 1,300 West African peace-keeping troops to police the front line.

A ceasefire between the two sides has held well since early May. The government and rebels had been due to begin a process of disarmament on August 1." (IRIN, 30 June 2003)

« Par ailleurs, les deux mouvements rebelles qui opèrent dans l'ouest ivoirien, le Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (MJP) et le Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest (MPIGO), ont accepté un accord de cessation des hostilités avec les troupes françaises stationnées dans la région. » (UN OCHA, 9 January 2003)

International political response

UN peacekeeping mission established in Cote d'Ivoire (April 2004)

- UN Security Council establishes 6,240-strong Chapter VII peacekeeping mission (UNOCI), for an initial period of 12 months from 4 April
- UNOCI's mandate, in coordination with French forces, will include assistance in disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement, and support for humanitarian assistance

"The Security Council this morning, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, established the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for an initial period of 12 months, from 4 April.

Unanimously adopting resolution 1528 (2004), the Council also requested the Secretary-General to transfer authority from the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) forces to UNOCI on that date, and decided, therefore, to renew MINUCI's mandate until 4 April.

The Council also decided to renew until 4 April the authorization given to the French forces and ECOWAS forces through its resolution 1527, as well as authorized the French forces to use all necessary means to support UNOCI in accordance with the agreement to be reached between UNOCI and the French authorities.

Comprising a military strength of a maximum of 6,240 United Nations personnel, UNOCI's mandate, in coordination with the French forces, will include observing and monitoring the implementation of the comprehensive ceasefire agreement of 3 May 2003 and movements of armed groups; assistance in disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement; protection of United Nations personnel, institutions and civilians; support for humanitarian assistance, implementation of the peace process; and assistance in the field of human rights, public information and law and order." (UN SC, 27 Feb 04)

The UN Security Council adopts several measures to aid the peace process (August 2003)

- The UNSC renewed for six months the authorisation given to ECOWAS and France troops in Côte d'Ivoire
- The troops should report the Council on all aspects of the implementation of their mandates
- On 13 May, the UNSC established the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI)

"The Security Council this morning, reaffirming its full support for the national reconciliation process in Côte d'Ivoire, renewed for six months the authorization given to troops of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and France dispatched to aid the peace process.

Unanimously adopting resolution 1498 (2003), the Council also requested ECOWAS and France to report to the Council periodically on all aspects of the implementation of their respective mandates.

On 4 February, through resolution 1464 (2003), the Council welcomed the deployment of ECOWAS and French troops, which aimed at supporting a peaceful solution of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. That Agreement, signed on 24 January, called for the formation of a government of national reconciliation and the establishment of a monitoring committee to supervise compliance, leading to elections in 2005.

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council also in February authorized the forces to take the necessary steps to guarantee the security and freedom of movement of their personnel and, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the government of national reconciliation, to ensure protection of civilians immediately threatened with physical violence.

Also, to facilitate implementation by the Ivorian parties of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, the Council had, through the adoption of resolution 1479 (2003) on 13 May, established the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) for an initial period of six months (see Press Release SC/7758).

The Mission consists of a military liaison group, co-located with the field headquarters of the French, ECOWAS, government and rebel forces, charged with: advising the Secretary-General's Special Representative on military matters; monitoring the military situation, including the security of Liberian refugees; helping build confidence among the armed groups in cooperation with French and ECOWAS troops; and providing input on forward planning on disengagement, disarmament and demobilization." (UNSC 4 August 2003)

The UN to send observers to Côte d'Ivoire (May 2003)

- Determining that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire was a threat to international peace and security in the region, the UN decided to establish a United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI)
- The unarmed mission will be deployed to observe the respect of the ceasefire
- The Council stressed that the military liaison group should initially include 26 military officers and that up to 50 additional officers might be progressively deployed when the Secretary-General determines that there was a need and security conditions permitted
- The mission is supposed to complement the French and the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

"The UN Security Council is to send about 75 military observers to Cote d'Ivoire to monitor the fragile ceasefire in the country's civil war and assist other peacekeeping forces in the country, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Jeremy Greenstock said.
Col.

Mathieu Bony, commander of the five-nation West African peacekeeping force in Cote d'Ivoire, told IRIN on Tuesday that the unarmed UN mission, would be deployed throughout the country to ensure respect for a ceasefire following an eight-month conflict that was sparked-off by a failed coup attempt in September." (IRIN, 13 May 2003)

"Determining that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire was a threat to international peace and security in the region, the Security Council today decided to establish a United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) for an initial period of six months.

Through the unanimous adoption of resolution 1479 (2003), the Council authorized the new Mission to facilitate implementation by the Ivorian parties of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, signed by the political forces on 24 January.

The Mission would include a military component on the basis of option (b) in the Secretary-General's report of 26 March, complementing the operations of the French and the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Option (b) refers to deploying a military liaison group, to be co-located with the field headquarters of the French and ECOWAS forces, as well as those of the government and rebel forces.

The Council stressed that the military liaison group should initially include 26 military officers and that up to 50 additional officers might be progressively deployed when the Secretary-General determines that there was a need and security conditions permitted.

The tasks of the military liaison group would include: advising the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on military matters; monitoring the military situation, including the security of Liberian refugees; and establishing liaison with the French and ECOWAS forces, as well as with the Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the forces nouvelle, in order to build confidence and trust between the armed

groups, in cooperation with the French and ECOWAS forces, in particular, concerning helicopters and combat aircraft.

The military Liaison group would also be mandated to provide input to forward planning on disengagement, disarmament and demobilization and identifying future tasks, in order to advise the Government and support the French and ECOWAS forces.

It would report to the Special Representative on the above issues.

Along with welcoming the complete ceasefire reached on 3 May between FANCI and the forces nouvelles for the entire territory of Côte d'Ivoire, in particular, the West, Council members also welcomed the intention of ECOWAS forces and the French forces to lend their full support in the implementation of the ceasefire.

In addition to the military liaison group, the Council approved the establishment of a small staff to support the Special Representative on political, legal, civil affairs, civilian police, elections, media and public relations, humanitarian and human rights issues.

The Council also stressed the importance of the regional dimension of the conflict and its consequences for neighbouring States and invited the donor community to help the neighbouring States to face the humanitarian and economic consequences of the crisis." (UN security, 13 May 2003)

The UN calls on the government to provide assistance to all those in need (January 2003)

- The UN humanitarian envoy for the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire stressed the importance of the government's role in the provision of emergency relief to those in need in the country
- She also reminded the government that it should protect civilians

"As fighting in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire and recent ceasefire violations in the north persist, sending thousands of Ivorians fleeing to neighbouring countries, the United Nations humanitarian envoy for the crisis in the country today urged the government to provide relief to those in need wherever they may be.

On the second day of her month-long mission to the region, Carolyn McAskie, Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, met with government leaders and stressed the importance of the government's role in the provision of emergency relief to those in need regardless of their location.

She also reminded the Government of its responsibilities to protect civilians, including some one million internally displaced persons, the 50,000 Liberian refugees living in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the humanitarian personnel working to bring aid to vulnerable populations.

The scale of displacement in Côte d'Ivoire is massive and increasing rapidly. Out of a population of 16 million, an estimated 600,000 were displaced internally by the end of November, according to an update issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Fighting in the west has since forced the displacement of perhaps an additional 500,000." (UN News Service, 17 January 2003)

Linah-Marcoussis accord signed by all parties to the conflict (January 2003)

- The accord received the full support of the United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union, among others
- The French "Operation Unicorn" forces and the ECOWAS forces, already monitoring the cease-fire, are mandated by the UN Security Council Resolution 1454 to protect civilians
- A National Security Council has been formed to oversee protection and national defence matters in a consensual forum
- The new National reconciliation government with ministers from the rebel forces has been formed

"The Linas-Marcoussis accord, signed by all parties to the Ivorian conflict in France on 24 January, has received the full support of the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and the United States, among others.

UNSG Special Representative for Cote d'Ivoire Mr. Albert Tevoedjre, as President of the international Monitoring Committee of the Marcoussis accord, and consensus Prime Minister Mr. Seydou Diarra, as well as ECOWAS, have been actively conferring nationally, regionally and internationally with all concerned groups to bring about the successful formation and functioning of the new government.

The French "Operation Unicorn" forces and the ECOWAS forces, newly dubbed "ECOMICI", already monitoring the cease-fire, are mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1464 to protect civilians and ensure a secure environment for the National Reconciliation Government to take root in.

A National Security Council has also been formed to oversee protection and national defense matters in a consensual forum. UNSC resolution 1467 was recently unanimously adopted, and addresses the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, mercenary activities and the phenomenon of child soldiers in West Africa.

After the signing of the Marcoussis accord, violent protests - often with strong anti-French tones - rocked Abidjan, spurring an exodus of foreign nationals and the closure of some embassies and major companies.

On 5 February the UN authorised Security Phase IV for the whole of Côte d'Ivoire, effectively realigning the efforts of the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes present in the country towards emergency humanitarian interventions. A symptomatic economic development is the temporary evacuation of the African Development Bank to Tunis.

Sporadic fighting between Government troops and rebel elements has erupted along the northern cease-fire line, and fairly regular skirmishes between Government, rebels and other armed elements have been taking place in the extremely troubled western region of the country, where two rebel groups, MPIGO and MJP, Liberian mercenaries and, reportedly, local armed militia are present.

Ministers from the rebel forces attended for the first time a cabinet meeting of the National Reconciliation Government on 3 April. Despite this positive political development, humanitarian conditions on the ground continue to worsen." (UN OCHA, 31 March 2003)

Donor response

UN Consolidated Appeal for Cote d'Ivoire and three neighbouring countries requests almost US\$60 million to meet needs of over one million war-affected people – but response is poor (November 2003)

- In a 'two-pronged' approach, the 2004 CAP aims to promote the gradual stabilisation of the country as well as addressing life-saving needs of vulnerable populations
- By June 2004, a mere 6 percent of the almost US\$ 60 million requested has been received

In June 2004, only 6 percent of the Consolidated Appeal had been funded, according to the UN Financial Tracking Service.

"Humanitarian and development agencies are appealing for US\$ 59,812,624 to respond to the needs of over one million people affected by the war in Côte d'Ivoire.

One year after the attempted coup that split Côte d'Ivoire into two and brought instability to the country unknown since its independence, there continue to be serious humanitarian needs affecting the people of Côte d'Ivoire and those who have fled to Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

Due to the departure of the civil service administration, acts of violence, and insecurity, formal education of children and the health system have effectively collapsed in the West and the North of the country. Curable diseases have once again started killing the populations and malnutrition, which was unthinkable in Côte d'Ivoire, has made its appearance, affecting the most vulnerable groups, i.e. women and children. In the South, thousands of displaced children are unable to attend school while health services are overburdened. The crisis has seriously affected agriculture and trade, and poverty has generally increased. Religious and ethnic-based inter and intra-community tensions are rife, thus posing a serious problem regarding the protection of vulnerable population groups, including in particular displaced populations and refugees.

The country finds itself at a critical juncture: significant progress has been made towards the achievement of peace. But at the same time simmering tensions at the political, military and community level, if unchecked, could easily push the country back into the spiral of violence and war.

In such a 'make or break' situation, humanitarian assistance and protection activities can have a key impact on the national reconciliation process, laying the foundations for the recovery of livelihoods and a return to stability.

While the focus of the previous Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) was to address the life saving needs of vulnerable populations, the 2004 CAP also aims to promote the gradual stabilisation of the country. The common humanitarian strategy therefore adopts a two-pronged approach: on-going efforts to respond to critical needs will be coupled with medium and longer term activities, contributing to the stabilisation of conditions and the recovery of livelihoods. In addition to promoting effective protection of civilians in the aftermath of the conflict, and in an effort to curb rising ethnic and religious tensions, priority focus will be given to developing a culture of peace and addressing the wider human rights issues that lay at the root of the conflict. Finally, agencies will work to reinforce the capacity of national and local authorities to respond to the crisis by sustaining the timely re-establishment of local administration and social services throughout the country. In accordance with the recommendations of the Joint Humanitarian Review Mission (JHRM) and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) decisions, the impact of the Côte d'Ivoire crisis on Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ghana is also reflected in analysis and projects attached to this Appeal as these countries continue to bear the humanitarian fallout of the crisis." (UN, Nov 03)

**UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for
Cote d'Ivoire + 3 2004**

Summary of Requirements
By Appealing Organisation
as of 25 October 2003

Compiled by OCHA on the basis of information provided by the respective appealing organisation.

Appealing Organisation	Original Requirements
FAO	4,312,300
IOM	8,342,392
MINUCI - Human Rights Unit	236,170
OCHA	2,440,047
UNDP	8,810,514
UNDP/UNESCO	500,000
UNDP/UNSECOORD	898,476
UNFPA	1,744,000
UNHCR	12,219,782
UNICEF	18,558,342
WFP	0
WHO	1,750,601
Grand Total	93,812,624

**UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for
Cote d'Ivoire + 3 2004**

Summary of Requirements - by Sector
as of 25 October 2003

Compiled by OCHA on the basis of information provided by the respective appealing organisation.

Sector Name	Original requirements
AGRICULTURE	4,312,300
COORDINATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES	2,247,774
ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND INFRASTRUCTURE	7,597,392
EDUCATION	3,443,864
FOOD	0
HEALTH	14,806,762
MULTI-SECTOR	15,289,782
PROTECTION/HUMAN RIGHTS/RULE OF LAW	9,400,365
SECURITY	898,476
WATER AND SANITATION	1,815,909
Grand Total	59,812,624

Mid-Year Review of the Consolidated Appeals Process follows deterioration of the peace process (June 2004)

- Following the serious setback to the peace process with the violently suppressed demonstrations in Abidjan in March 2004, the humanitarian community revises its strategy towards emergency assistance
- Revised requirement for the Cote d'Ivoire plus three CAP is US\$ 61.1 million

"The Consolidated Appeal (CA) for Côte d'Ivoire and three surrounding countries originally appealed for a total of US\$ 59.8 million. To date, only 6.5% of the requirements have been met. Though this has limited the ability of appealing agencies to respond to the needs, funding received through other partner agencies and core budgets enabled some progress to be made. In light of changes in the humanitarian context, five new projects have been included to respond to the priority sectors of protection, education, coordination and support (in the form of registering and surveying Internally Displaced Persons or IDPs), and agriculture. Other projects have been revised to reflect increased beneficiary needs, especially in the water and sanitation sector. The revised requirement for the Côte d'Ivoire Plus Three 2004 CA is therefore US\$ 61,104,666. Contributions to date total US\$ 3,913,273, leaving an unmet requirement of US\$ 57,191,393." (UN OCHA, 15 Jun 04)

European Union withholds aid to Cote d'Ivoire (November 2003)

- European Union announced in November 2003 that it would continue to withhold 400 million euros of aid to Cote d'Ivoire until the peace process was put back on track
- This came after a summit of West African heads of state, including Cote d'Ivoire's President Laurent Gbagbo, failed to make any progress

"The European Union said on Thursday it would continue to withhold 400 million euros (US \$465 million) of aid to Cote d'Ivoire until there was real progress in putting the country's faltering peace process back on track, but it warned that time was running out.

Roman Prodi, the President of the European Commission, told reporters after talks with Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo that 'Time is against Cote d'Ivoire.'

'There was a stronger international engagement in Cote d'Ivoire, but there's a little bit of despair [now],' he added.

The UN Security Council, meeting in New York, meanwhile noted that the situation in Cote d'Ivoire 'continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region.'

The rebels who occupy the north of Cote d'Ivoire signed a French-brokered peace agreement with Gbagbo in January and joined a broad-based government of national reconciliation three months later. But the rebels pulled out of the cabinet on 23 September, protesting that that Gbagbo was refusing to delegate effective powers to ministers, and froze plans to disarm.

Prodi said he had spoken by telephone to Ghanaian President John Kufuor who hosted a West African summit on Tuesday that tried to break the seven-week-old impasse in Cote d'Ivoire. But Prodi said both he

and Kufuor agreed that the meeting between Gbagbo and six other heads of state from the region had been a failure." (IRIN, 13 Nov 03)

Selected UN activities (2003-2004)

UNICEF and partners vaccinate one million children against measles (February 2004)

- Crisis that began in Cote d'Ivoire in September 2002 has devastated the health care system and thus led to higher mortality rates among children from treatable diseases, including measles
- UNICEF and partners vaccinate a total of one million children aged between 6 months and 14 years against measles, and target a further 350,000

"The crisis that split Ivory Coast in two in September 2002 has devastated the health care system in the north and west, and disrupted routine vaccinations throughout the country, leading to higher mortality rates among children from treatable diseases, including measles. In response to this threat to children's lives, UNICEF and its partners are currently completing the third emergency measles vaccination campaign of the past year for children aged 6 months to 14 years. The number of children vaccinated against measles through UNICEF-supported emergency campaigns in Ivory Coast has now reached one million.

[...]

This third campaign, still ongoing, covers five remote northern districts of the country, in Forces Nouvelles-controlled territory - Odienné, Boundiali, Tengrela, Korhogo and Ferkessedougou. In the coming weeks, an additional 350,000 children are targeted for vaccination against the highly contagious and deadly disease as the campaign moves on to the districts of Korhogo and Ferkessedougou. The Forces Nouvelles (New Forces), an alliance of three ex-rebel movements that now participate in the government of national reconciliation, are still armed and control the northern half of the country." (UNICEF, 10 Feb 04)

UNICEF provides educational assistance to IDP children (October 2003)

- UNICEF distributed 1,000 educational kits to 50,000 IDP children and vulnerable groups
- UNICEF distributes aid kits for 1,000 teachers
- UNICEF distributes 175 recreational kits to aid children to overcome the psychological trauma of the conflict

"UNICEF, in collaboration with the Government, is providing assistance in support of the 2003-2004 school year that commenced in the south on 6 October 2003. In order to ensure that 50,000 internally displaced and extremely vulnerable primary school-age boys and girls (age 5 – 12 years) in and around Abidjan, Yamoussoukro, Dimbokro and San Pedro may fully enjoy and benefit from their right to education, UNICEF is providing 1,000 educational kits, including pencils, pens, plastic rulers, plastic carrying bags, notebooks, chalk and slates to children whose families can not afford them.

UNICEF has also provided teaching aid kits for 1,000 teachers in these same zones, and 175 recreational kits, including soccer and volleyballs, to aid children in overcoming the psychological trauma that they have sustained during the conflict. The total value of the materials is over US\$100,000.

Given the inter-community tensions that have flared as a result of the crisis, UNICEF has also provided financial and technical support to the government for the development of a "Culture of Peace and Tolerance" curriculum, accompanied by a Teachers' Guide and "training of trainers" module.

UNICEF has ensured the training of some 250 teachers in the curriculum, which has been integrated into the educational programmes of primary and secondary school students in target communities in the south, and will be progressively integrated into all schools (UNICEF, 6 October 2003).

WFP provides food aid to IDPs across the country (September 2003)

- WFP in cooperation with the government and UNICEF, uses feeding programmes in schools and institutions around the country to gain access to IDP children
- As a consequence of the break in the pipeline, WFP prioritises IDPs and other vulnerable groups
- In June the WFP distributed dry rations to 6,267 IDPs in Man and 7,700 IDPs in Danane, while 400 children in Man received wet feeding
- In May the WFP carried on a Rapid Emergency Need Assessments in Logoualé, Gonguinée II and Mahapleu where the communities are victims of looting and pillaging
- In Yamoussoukro, a total of 151.8 tons of food was distributed to 18,700 IDPs and in Daloa, 56.6 tons of food was distributed to 3,400 IDPs

"Since the crisis erupted, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) has been providing food under programmes across the country tailored to help the most vulnerable groups: children, refugees, IDPs, nationals of West African countries, pregnant and breast feeding mothers, the mentally handicapped and families hosting IDPs.

WFP, in cooperation with the Ivorian Government and UNICEF, is also using feeding programmes in schools and institutions in northern, western and central areas to gain direct access to vulnerable children, to encourage regular school attendance and to avoid the recruitment of children by armed elements (UN OCHA, 8 September 2003).

"During the week, a total of 242 tons of food was distributed to 51,316 beneficiaries.

Due to a break in the pipeline, rations and caseloads for August had to be reduced by 30 percent. WFP has been prioritising refugees, IDPs and vulnerable children, with particular emphasis on the West, which continues to be most precarious part of the country. The shortfall of pulses, oil, cereals and corn-soya blend is expected to continue until October." (WFP, 22 August 2003)

"[...] Between 18 and 24 June, WFP dry rations were distributed to 6,267 IDPs in Man and 7,700 IDPs in Danane, while 400 children in Man received wet feeding. In Danane food distributions to a total of 20,000 war-affected people is an ongoing.

Distributions have so far gone smoothly, with only a few cases of malnutrition noted. In response to the critical situation in Zouan Hounien and Bin Houyé, close to the Liberian border, WFP is preparing for a general food distribution to IDPs there, as security now has been declared acceptable.

The beneficiary number is estimated to be 6,000 in Zouan Hounien and 15,000 in Bin Houyé. Plans are also underway to distribute food to 5,000 IDPs in Ganleu, and 6,000 in Teapleu. As of 12 June, a hot ration of rice and vegetables is given to the vulnerable in each IDP site in Guiglo, for five days a week. 2, 550 children, sick, elders and pregnant and lactating women currently benefit from the hot ration.

In rural sites in Bouaké distributions to 4,250 IDPs and vulnerable host families were completed. In Yamoussoukro WFP continues to distribute food to and monitor the IDPs in the buffer zone.

This week, 1,500 IDPs in Bouaflé and 240 IDPs in Zuenoula were assisted. In the buffer zones of Daloa, a general food distribution began this week, following the registration of IDPs by Solidarités. 2,319 IDPs in Bonoufia received two weeks worth of dry rations.

Action Contre la Faim (ACF), is implementing distributions at four supplementary feeding centres and one therapeutic centre in Duckoué. From 13 to 31 May, 122 moderate and severe malnourished children were admitted to the centres and received WFP food assistance." (WFP, 27 June 2003)

"United Nations agencies in Cote d'Ivoire's commercial capital, Abidjan, will "as soon as funds are available" set up a civil-military cell in the city.

The World Food Programme (WFP) was therefore appealing to donors for US \$99,000 to cover the operational costs for a period of six months, a source from WFP told IRIN on Wednesday.

The new structure, supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and WFP on behalf of all UN agencies was to ensure continuing access to victims of the civil unrest in the country and secure humanitarian corridors and repatriation routes for refugees and displaced people.

The source said the coordination mechanism will maintain regular contacts with different military forces operating in the country to facilitate the delivery of life-saving supplies to those in need of humanitarian assistance in areas controlled by the government as well as in the north, centre and west of the country which have been taken over by rebels.

According to the source, it will also conduct training programmes to improve the understanding of different military players in the country of the role and mandate of humanitarian organisations.

The Ministry of Defence would set up a coordination mechanism in Abidjan where all relevant partners would be represented to guarantee a participatory and transparent process, he said.

A similar structure was to be established in areas held by insurgents where civil populations were in need of humanitarian assistance, the source added.

The ongoing crisis in the country has forced some 400,000 people to flee the central and northern regions towards the south, while an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 people have fled the western town of Man and sought refuge in towns like Daloa, Duckoué, Bouaflé, Issia and others in the western region, he said." (UN OCHA, 8 January 2003)

"In the three IDP camps in Duckoué, 2,908 IDPs benefited from WFP food assistance through the NGO Solidarités during the week of 5 - 11 June. Solidarités is also implementing a new feeding system through canteens in each of the camps for better managing of food and beneficiary targeting.

A total of four supplementary feeding centers and one therapeutic feeding center for malnourished children implemented by WFP and Action Contre la Faim (ACF) are operational in Duckoué. From 5 to 11 June some 71 children were admitted and assisted." (UN OCHA, 15 June 2003)

"The number of internally displaced people (IDP) in Man city is estimated at 1,731 persons not residing at the Transit Centre. As soon as verification is completed by Red Cross volunteers, WFP will start food distributions.

During the week, WFP carried out a field visit in Biankouma town, from where WFP had received a request for food assistance for over 32,000 IDP's. The mission was not able to verify this IDP number and follow-up visits are required.

WFP food distributions to 5,305 IDP's started in four IDP centres in Guiglo on 12 May. WFP has continued a census of IDP's in Zagne and Bloléquin this week. In Zagne, 316 IDP's that reside at the Catholic Mission are receiving WFP assistance." (WFP, 16 May 2003)

"WFP Rapid Emergency Need Assessments were carried out in Logoualé, Gonguinée II and Mahapleu. In Logoualé, 35 km from Man, the communities are victims of looting and pillaging.

WFP received a list of 650 families in need of food aid from a local organisation. However, the situation needs to be further evaluated before any food assistance is given.

The most needed food items could be found on the market. Gonguinée II, 17 km from Man, suffered from intense fighting due to its proximity to the Man airport.

The mission noted a general deterioration of living conditions, such as lack of repair of the only water pump in the village. Food assistance is urgently needed for 720 people in order to prevent further deterioration of nutrition conditions.

Manapleu, 24 km from Danané, was victim of violent attacks in December and April. In the absence of operational sanitation facilities, MSF-Holland is providing basic health care.

Concerns over new attacks seriously affects food production activities in the communities. The communities are also concerned that food aid might increase the risk of new pillaging" (WFP, 9 May 2003).

" (b) The first WFP flight landed at Man Airport on 25 April, constituting a first step for WFP and the entire humanitarian community in Côte d'Ivoire for better access to Man city and the western part of the country.

[...] From 24 to 30 April, WFP assisted more than 70,000 displaced and other vulnerable people across the country." (WFP, 2 May 2003)

"...The first WFP food convoy of 15 tons of food arrived in Man in the western part of the country on 21 April. Another cargo of 15 tons was expected on 24 April. WFP plans to target seven Primary Schools in Man, where food distribution to 4,000 children will be carried out four days a week.

All seven schools have met the basic requirements to implement an emergency school-feeding programme. Transport arrangements have been agreed with local authorities.

(c) In Bouaké in the North, a total of 21,056 beneficiaries are supported by WFP through various food aid activities, including 14,240 children and mothers supported in cooperation with Action Contre la Faim, 1,210 families supported through Food for Work programmes and 2,766 people also supported by ICRC through institutional support programmes. WFP's implementing partner CARE has not yet resumed its activities in Bouaké.

Joint WFP and "Ecole pour Tous" support to an educational programme in Bouaké has nearly been completed. As part of an emergency school feeding initiative, 17,500 pupils will be receiving food through 12 educational groups. Implementation will start next week with food deliveries.

(d) In Korhogo, a total of 173 vulnerable families, amounting to 1,227 persons, received 10.8 tons of food during the week. The food was distributed in Haoussabougou parish and Waragniène village, mostly to women and children. WFP plans to visit a sample of cotton producers, to assess the food situation among the families.

From Yamoussoukro in the centre of the country, a total of 151.8 tons of food was distributed to 18,700 IDP's. In Daloa, 56.6 tons of food was distributed to 3,400 IDP's." (WFP, 25 April 2003)

"WFP is currently present at the inter-agency UN office in Man, where it is assessing the humanitarian needs and its strategies for future interventions in the area, which will include emergency feeding to IDPs and other food insecure/vulnerable groups affected by the crisis, an emergency school feeding programme, and a seed protection ration programme.

They report that the humanitarian situation in Man is "not bad", with ICRC providing assistance to IDPs, mostly Burkinabe farmers, through the Ivorian Red Cross and church groups. MSF-Belgium is providing medical assistance to both local and displaced populations at Man Hospital. Large numbers of children are taking part in educational activities.

MSF-Netherlands has undertaken a vaccination campaign in the region. WFP further reports that coffee prices for producers in the region have plunged, with serious effects on their food security in the coming months.

Food reserves are low in rural areas due to IDP presence in host families, and the upcoming agricultural season is at risk due to inadequate seed stocks. WFP staff is lodging at the office premises and observing an in-house 19:30 curfew.

Concerns remain high regarding the reported militarisation of Niela refugee camp, where UNHCR and WFP are assisting over 8,000 particularly vulnerable refugees. UNHCR is leading inter-agency efforts to assist IDPs in Guiglo, following a request for assistance from local authorities." (UN OCHA, 21 April 2003)

"(a) A joint security and humanitarian mission was conducted to Bloloquin, giving WFP access to the area for the first time since the crisis began. The humanitarian situation in Bloloquin is critical.

The hospital is closed, the food security situation is precarious, there is no electricity or water and schools and the market are not functioning. According to local authorities and the Red Cross there are 20,000 IDP's in Bloloquin and 5,000 in Keibli.

Access to the West and to the Northeast from Bouaké is restricted due to fighting. In Korhogo in the North, demands for WFP assistance by individuals and NGO's is increasing, suggesting that the food security situation in the area is becoming more difficult.

(b) In Man coffee growers are anticipated not to be able to market their produce this season, which will have a negative economic impact on many rural households.

In Man, WFP will initially provide emergency feeding to IDP's, implement Emergency School Feeding, and launch a seed protection programme. In collaboration with MSF, WFP may also begin a selective feeding programme in Man. WFP food aid distribution in the area is expected to begin next week.

(c) WFP distributed 14.6 tons of food aid to 3,729 IDP's in Guiglo, consisting of one-week basic rations. In Guiglo, Daloa, and Duékoué, WFP continued to work with local Crisis Committees and Solidarity and Social Affairs representatives on the registration of IDP's and vulnerable groups. In Yamoussoukro and Prikro, WFP distributed 28 tons of general rations to 3,550 IDP's.

In Bouaké WFP and implementing partners distributed 54 tons of food aid to 21,036 beneficiaries. WFP sub offices continued to make progress in identifying partners and establishing contact with local authorities, especially in the West, in preparation for distribution of much needed food aid in this area.

A vulnerability ranking was conducted in Bouaké, taking into consideration 15 indicators of urban household economy and food security." (WFP, 17 April 2003)

"(b) During the week WFP carried out food distributions to all IDP sites in Duekoué and Guiglo. A total of 7,263 IDP's in Guiglo and 800 IDP's in Duekoué received food supplies for one month.

The March food distribution was completed to Liberian refugees in Niela Camp under the current PRRO project to a total of 8,729 refugees. WFP supported the repatriation of Liberian refugees with high-energy biscuits through UNHCR/CARITAS in the border of town of Tabou.

Between 02 February and 25 March, 3,043 packets were distributed to 762 refugees. In Korhogo, WFP completed the registration of people eligible for food assistance in Waraniene village.

Distribution to approximately 5,000 beneficiaries will commence on receipt of salt and oil. In and around Bouaké, food distributions to vulnerable people continued: 12,000 children and mothers received wet feeding in collaboration with Action Contre la Faim (ACF), who received 33 tons of food for distribution.

260 women also received Food for Work (FFW) family rations and 30 malnourished children received supplementary feeding.

(c) WFP supplied food to four education centres under UNICEF's "Back to School" initiative in Bouna, close to the border with Ghana. On 03 April 5 tons of rice, corn-soya blend and oil was distributed to 1,300 children.

In addition, WFP distributed 25.2 tons of food to 7,000 IDP's in Tiebissou, Bouaflé and Duekoué. WFP's supplementary feeding programme in Duekoué also supported 150 malnourished children and mothers in collaboration with the Ivorian Red Cross.

In Abidjan, an additional 18,570 children were included in the School Feeding Programme for displaced children, which now supports a total of 52,710 children who have fled or been relocated to host families in areas held by the Ivorian Government." (WFP, 4 April 2003)

UNDP school lunch programme helps displaced children continue their education (May 2003)

- The programme supported by UNDP is enabling students forced from their home by the crisis to continue their schooling
- The programme opened 6,000 new schools canteens for 65,810 displaced children

"The school lunch programme that helped boost primary enrolment in Côte d'Ivoire is now enabling students forced from their homes by civil conflict to continue their schooling, promoting peace and raising awareness about the threat of HIV/AIDS.

UNDP has supported the programme since 1999, when the School Canteens Department of the Ministry of Education and Training launched it as a pilot project in 277 schools. It now operates in nearly 3,500 schools, almost half the country's primary schools, reaching more than 345,000 children.

"The programme is based on community mobilization and participation," said Odette Loan, its director. It helps set up village committees to operate the school canteens, focusing on women's participation, and encourages communities to provide land to grow food for their canteens. Friends of the World Food Programme, a civil society group, presented Ms. Loan with their "Leaders in the Fight Against Hunger" award this year in recognition of her work.

Healthy lunches improve students' nutrition, helping them do better in school and stay enrolled, which also bolsters efforts to reduce poverty. This has encouraged more families to enrol their children, particularly girls, in rural areas where children may have to walk several kilometres to school.

When she was only seven, Ms. Loan walked six kilometres to the nearest school. Memory of the hunger that gnawed at her during the day spurred her to start the programme. It has helped boost primary school enrolment by almost 40 per cent, she reports.

UNDP has provided nearly US\$800,000 in funding, with the UN Office for Project Services and the World Food Programme working with the School Canteens Department to implement it. The Government provides 40 per cent of the budget, and local communities and students' families also give support.

The programme has responded to the crisis caused by the civil conflict that erupted last year by opening 600 new school canteens for 65,810 displaced children. It is also helping 123,000 displaced children attend school through services provided at canteens already in operation.

[...] To help communities cope with crisis, particularly around Abidjan, the capital, where many displaced families are sheltered, it is providing teachers and community activists with training on promoting peace, human rights and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. So far, 680 teachers have received training through an initiative supported by France and UNDP. Psycho-social counselling is also provided to children traumatized by the conflict.

In areas where classes were suspended following occupation by rebel forces, the programme worked with UNESCO to reopen schools so that children would not lose a year of schooling." (UNDP, 28 May 2003)

FAO provides agricultural inputs for IDPs in Côte d'Ivoire (April 2003)

- In April FAO was assisting 6,500 vulnerable households
- The project is supposed to distribute 145 tonnes of seed and farming equipment to aid remote areas, particularly those with high concentration of IDPs

"FAO is aiding some 6,500 vulnerable households through a US\$359,000 project that will distribute 145 tonnes of seeds and farming equipment to aid areas of the country particularly affected by the crisis and with high concentrations of IDPs.

IDP presence in host families and general food insecurity in unstable areas has resulted in the consumption of seed stocks, jeopardizing the next planting, which should already be underway." (UN OCHA, 21 April 2003)

UNDP assists IDPs and host families (April 2003)

- Part of the 530,030,000 FCFA of non-food items and working capital, provided by the UNDP is directed to 300 IDP families
- The other part is a subsidy directed to 20 host families

« Trois cent soixante déplacés et vingt familles d'accueil ont reçu, vendredi, à la salle des fêtes de la mairie d'Adjamé des dons du programme des Nations unies pour le développement (UNDP).

C'est au total 530.030.000 FCFA dont une partie en équipements et fonds de roulement pour s'installer dans le petit commerce et une autre partie (2 000 000F) comme subvention à 20 familles hôtes qui ont été offerts. Le sourire de M. Youssouf Sylla, premier magistrat de la commune, de même que celui de la chefferie traditionnelle d'Adjamé, avaient là toute leur signification.

Cet événement s'inscrit dans le cadre de la poursuite des activités du programme d'appui à la base pour la reconstruction, la réinstallation et l'intégration sociale (ABRIS) initié par le Pnud. La commune d'Adjamé qui compte 790 déplacés en est la troisième bénéficiaire de la zone 1 après celles de Treichville et Yopougon.

Comme il a eu à le faire dans les communes précédentes, M. Claudio Caldron, représentant-résident du Pnud Côte d'Ivoire, a remis les chèques symboliques des montants des équipements et subventions. Les équipements sont constitués de parasols, de box hygiéniques, de réfrigérateurs, de kit cellulaires, de machines à coudre etc.

Des comptes ouverts à la Coopec leur permettront de constituer une épargne afin d'avoir accès à des ressources additionnelles et de développer leurs activités. Le président de la cérémonie, le ministre du plan et du développement, M. Britto Boniface qu'est venu soutenir son collègue de la réconciliation, M. Sébastien Dano Djédjé, a exprimé ses remerciements à l'UNDP. Il a demandé aux déplacés de faire bon usage du matériel reçu. » (Gouvernement de Côte d'Ivoire, 25 June 2003)

"On 10 April UNDP launched the first activities in favor of IDPs and host families within the framework of the ABRIS programme (appui à la base pour la reconstruction/réinstallation et l'intégration sociale) in Yamoussoukro and Bouafle.

ABRIS aims to support the Government in assisting IDPs and host families through technical, logistical and financial aid in responding to the urgent needs of these populations and improving their living conditions. Another UNDP project, aimed at building peace and fostering reconciliation in Cote d'Ivoire, has received Belgian funding of approximately US\$100,000.

The support will allow the Civil Society Collective for Peace Support Project, an initiative involving religious leaders, human rights and pro-democracy organizations and others, to continue conflict resolution efforts underway since 19 September, originally funded by Canada and the European Union." (UN OCHA, 21 April 2003)

UN to set up a humanitarian structure to reach displaced people in need (January 2003)

- UN agencies plan to set up a civil-military cell in Abidjan
- The new structure supported by OCHA and WFP was to ensure continuing access to victims of the civil unrest
- The new structure aims at securing humanitarian corridors and repatriation routes for refugees and displaced people
- A similar structure was to be established in areas held by insurgents where civil population were in need of humanitarian assistance

"United Nations agencies in Cote d'Ivoire's commercial capital, Abidjan, will "as soon as funds are available" set up a civil-military cell in the city.

The World Food Programme (WFP) was therefore appealing to donors for US \$99,000 to cover the operational costs for a period of six months, a source from WFP told IRIN on Wednesday.

The new structure, supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and WFP on behalf of all UN agencies was to ensure continuing access to victims of the civil unrest in the country and secure humanitarian corridors and repatriation routes for refugees and displaced people.

The source said the coordination mechanism will maintain regular contacts with different military forces operating in the country to facilitate the delivery of life-saving supplies to those in need of humanitarian assistance in areas controlled by the government as well as in the north, centre and west of the country which have been taken over by rebels.

According to the source, it will also conduct training programmes to improve the understanding of different military players in the country of the role and mandate of humanitarian organisations.

The Ministry of Defence would set up a coordination mechanism in Abidjan where all relevant partners would be represented to guarantee a participatory and transparent process, he said.

A similar structure was to be established in areas held by insurgents where civil populations were in need of humanitarian assistance, the source added." (UN OCHA, 8 January 2003)

Selected activities of international organisations and NGOs (2002-2003)

ICRC distributes aid to returning IDPs (2003-2004)

- In the eight months from August 2003, ICRC distributes non-food items to 175,000 returnees in western Cote d'Ivoire
- The relief efforts have focused on the districts of Toulepleu and the sub-prefectures of Zouan Hounien, Bin Houyé and Tai, along the border with Liberia
- ICRC technicians accompanied by volunteers from CRCI have disinfected 525 wells from which villagers were afraid to drink because of rumours of contamination
- In parallel ICRC assist also IDPs in Guiglo Camp and the transit centres at Zouhan Hounien and Danané

"The ICRC has just completed a vast distribution of basic necessities in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of people displaced by war who have returned to their home villages.

Over the last eight months, 175,000 individuals benefited from this aid, the aim of which was to ease their relocation in regions affected by the fighting last year.

Farming tools, clothing for adults and children, blankets, sleeping mats, soap, buckets, cooking utensils, plastic sheeting and mosquito nets were distributed in eight districts and sub-prefectures to benefit 253 villages.

In accordance with its standard working procedures, the ICRC had first carried out an assessment to determine the needs of the people in the various areas and also a painstaking census to ensure that the distributions would be fair.

In addition, a pilot project was begun in partnership with a national non-governmental organization to help women residents of the regions particularly affected by the war to do farm work. Some 3,000 women from

approximately 100 villages near Bin-Houyé, Zouhan-Hounien and Danané belonging to farming associations received tools and five kinds of seed, which should enable them to increase their production of vegetables." (ICRC, 27 Apr 04)

"After several months in the bush or with relatives, residents of the villages are heading home to rebuild their houses and resume farming. To facilitate this process, the ICRC has given over 90,000 people soap, plastic sheeting, blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen utensils, buckets, clothing and, in selected villages, tools.

Relief efforts have focused on the district of Toulepleu and the sub-prefectures of Zouhan Hounien, Bin Houyé and Taï, which lie along the Liberian border and have been particularly badly hit by looting and destruction. The distribution of aid started on 5 August and is still under way. Rain has made access to some villages difficult, so the programme will continue for the next few weeks.

In most of the villages visited, over half the population has returned and life is returning to normal. To raise the confidence of the population, ICRC technicians accompanied by volunteers from the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire have disinfected 525 wells, from which villagers were afraid to drink because of rumours of contamination.

In parallel with these efforts to help people who are returning home, the ICRC and the National Society are continuing to assist the thousands of displaced persons in Guiglo Camp and the transit centres at Zouhan Hounien and Danané." (ICRC, 15 September 2003)

ICRC and National Red Cross Society provide assistance to IDPs (2003)

- ICRC coordinates the response to the crisis on behalf of other components of the Red Cross movement
- CRCI started a programme aimed at feeding IDPs in the ten municipalities of Abidjan in August 2003
- As of May 2003, 200 persons a day sheltered in transit centre set up by ICRC in Man
- As of April 2002, four IDP centres in Bong County housing more than 18,000 IDPs were managed by the Red Cross, and ICRC was providing medical assistance and constructing shelters for IDPs in Duekoue and Guiglo
- 200 IDPs received food and other items in Danané where the only medical facility currently providing care is the Red Cross dispensary
- In the northern and western parts of the country, ICRC is distributing medical supplies for over 80 health centres and chemical and spare parts for 63 water-treatment plants

"Over a year since the outbreak of the armed insurrection in Côte d'Ivoire, the situation remains uncertain. Diplomatic efforts have recently been increased in an effort to break the political deadlock. The overall humanitarian situation, particularly in the north and west, continues to be worrisome.

As lead agency, the ICRC has been coordinating the response to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of other components of the Movement. The ICRC has been supporting the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire (RCSCI) in providing emergency assistance to civilians affected by conflict. The ICRC has authorization and security guarantees from all parties and as a result has access to most of the country.

Red Cross action in Côte d'Ivoire essentially focuses on:

- protection activities for persons at risk who are not, or no longer, participating in hostilities (particularly detainees and civilians)
- supporting public structures that maintain vital services (water, health care and electricity) for civilians by carrying out cross-border operations

- emergency assistance to persons displaced by the conflict, returnees and residents in conflict-affected zones
- restoring family links and reuniting unaccompanied children with their families
- promoting international humanitarian law to prevent or limit the worst excesses caused by conflict." (ICRC, 25 Nov 03)

"Since conflict erupted in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002, the spotlight has been on the plight of victims in armed opposition-held territories.

Yet thousands of people fled to the country's largest city of Abidjan, and they are finding life just as difficult. Many face hunger, disease and a lack of shelter as their host families can no longer meet their basic needs.

In light of this precarious situation, the Cote d'Ivoire Red Cross (CRCI) has started a programme tagged "Red Cross Food Basket" to assist thousands of displaced persons in the ten municipalities of Abidjan. The programme, funded by the Spanish Red Cross, was introduced when it was observed that a lot of displaced people and their relatives were trooping to the Red Cross office to ask for food and other basic necessities.

Red Cross volunteers work with local government authorities, who announce the dates and venues of food distribution to displaced persons in different municipalities of Abidjan. So far, the 600 most vulnerable families – or 10,741 people - have benefited from the programme." (IFRC, 18 August 2003)

"The ICRC and the Red Cross society of Cote d'Ivoire continue to provide medical and other assistance to war-affected populations and IDPs throughout the country.

ICRC reports that an average of 200 persons a day have been sheltering in the transit center set up by ICRC in Man, and over one thousand have so far received food and other supplies. In the western town of Danane, the only medical facility currently providing care is the Red Cross dispensary, and some 200 IDPs there have recently received food and other items.

In Duekoue and Guiglo the ICRC has begun constructing some 100 shelters for IDPs in preparation for the imminent rainy season. In the north and west of Cote d'Ivoire ICRC is distributing medical supplies for over 80 health centers as well as chemicals and spare parts for 63 water treatment plants, to ensure access to safe drinking water for the war-affected in those areas.

ICRC further reports that currently only 25% of hospitals and health centers in the north are working." (UN OCHA, 16 May 2003).

"The ICRC and the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire are providing assistance for persons displaced by armed clashes in the western part of the country, near the Liberian border, whose situation remains a cause for concern.

Since March, an average of 200 persons a day have been sheltering in the transit centre set up by the ICRC in Man. Over one thousand have so far received food and other supplies (mats, soap, buckets, blankets, tarpaulins) in the centre.

Another 200 displaced persons have recently received food and other items in Danané, where the only medical facility currently providing care is the Red Cross dispensary.

To improve hygiene conditions for displaced persons in Duekoué and Guiglo, and in preparation for the rainy season, the Red Cross has started to build some 100 shelters equipped with showers and latrines, and to set up garbage cans. The four centres have also been disinfected and fumigated.

In Tabou, the Red Cross has provided non-food relief for another 1,500 people from western and south-western Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

In the northern and western parts of the country, the ICRC is distributing medical supplies for over 80 health centres and chemicals and spare parts for 63 water-treatment plants.

This should make it possible to meet the health needs of the population once again.

The ICRC is also regularly reminding military and political authorities of their obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians, whether residents or displaced persons." (ICRC, 7 May 2003)

"The present conflict has caused a de facto split between the north of the country, which is in rebel hands, and the government-controlled south; the Red Cross maintains vital links between both parts of the country by facilitating transportation for governmental and private organizations that maintain vital services necessary to the population's survival, such as health care and the delivery of safe drinking water; since September 2002, the ICRC has organized 34 humanitarian convoys across the front lines.

By its presence in conflict zones and visits to places of detention and health facilities on both sides of the front lines, the ICRC strives to provide the protection to which medical staff and persons who are not, or are no longer, taking part in the hostilities are entitled to under international humanitarian law (IHL) family members have been separated by conflict and are often without news of their loved ones; the Red Cross has set up a message distribution system and organizes family reunions for children who have been separated from their families.

[...] Due to the permanent presence of the RCSCI and the ICRC throughout the country since the crisis broke out in September 2002, the ICRC was able to assess, on a daily basis, the humanitarian situation on the spot.

At this stage, the main humanitarian consequence of the conflict for the civilian population is economic hardship in general and, in particular, the disruption in the provision of essential services to the territory under the control of the rebels in the north and west of Côte d'Ivoire. A further deterioration with both humanitarian and economic implications cannot be excluded.

Hundreds of people have died during the five-month conflict. On many occasions, the Red Cross identified and prepared for proper burial dead bodies abandoned in streets. Hundreds of people have also been wounded and many of them did not receive any medical attention.

Again, the Red Cross established mobile clinics, gave first aid treatment and evacuated the most urgent cases to nearby hospitals that were still functioning. Many military persons and civilians were arrested in connection with the conflict, and the ICRC has conducted visits to them on both sides.

[...] The Red Cross has treated through mobile medical clinics thousands of IDPs, carried out water and sanitation work in IDP centres and provided food and non-food items to the most vulnerable who were unable to cope or found themselves without any support.

The Red Cross also intervened with the belligerents, reminding them of their obligation to respect, in all circumstances, the basic rules of IHL, notably to spare and protect civilians not taking part in hostilities." (ICRC, 27 February 2003)

"Following the launching of a rebel front in the west, an ICRC team based in Man has received the necessary security guarantees and has carried out an initial evaluation in Danané, a town on the Liberian border.

The ICRC also provided medical supplies, facilitating the work of volunteers from the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire and of medical personnel at the hospital.

In Daloa, the local Red Cross mobile clinic has treated more than 1,200 displaced persons living in various places near the front line, such as Bonoufla and Zahibo.

To improve hygiene and access to drinking water for these displaced persons, the Red Cross has disinfected some 50 wells and built six toilet/shower blocks, each of which has its own septic tank.

Near the south-west front, two Red Cross transit centres, at Tabou and San Pedro, are taking in displaced persons from the areas where fighting is going on.

The Red Cross is providing 500 hot meals a day, and is organizing transport for those who wish to join their families or relatives in other parts of the country.

Thanks to Ivorian Red Cross volunteers and the ICRC presence in Abidjan, Bouaké, Korhogo and Man, the Red Cross is operational on the ground. It has authorizations and security guarantees giving it access to all victims of the conflict." (ICRC, 15 January 2003)

Save the Children and ICRC reunite displaced children with their families (April 2003)

- Save the Children is tracking IDP children that have been separated from their families while fleeing violence, those at risk of separation and exploitation, child soldiers, to reunite them with their families
- They also try to provide them protection
- The ICRC set up a message distribution system for family members separated by the conflict
- In the rebel-held towns of Bouaké, Korhogo, Bouandiali, Danané, Man and Ferkessédougou, people can go to the Red Cross and write "Je me porte bien" ("I am well") cards, which are then collected and forwarded to relatives

"Save the Children UK is tracking IDP children that have been separated from their families while fleeing violence, children who are at risk of separation and exploitation, and child soldiers, in an ongoing effort to reunite them with their families and provide protection to them, in cooperation with humanitarian partners and UN agencies.

The situation is particularly acute in the west, and resources to help these children are limited" (UN OCHA, 11 April 2003). Fighting in Lofa results in separation of families (December 2000-August 2001)

SCF has documented over 6,000 cases of child separation as result of new displacements in Lofa county

Separated children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse

Reunification efforts are made difficult by multiple waves of displacement in the country

ICRC in concert with National Societies is helping re-establish contact both within and across borders in the region

"Between February and June of this year [2001] 241 children (145 boys and 96 girls) from current conflict related displacement were identified and rapidly reunified with their families, mainly by SCF's CBO partners. 153 children (89 boys and 64 girls) are waiting reunification.

[...]

"Many displaced children became separated from their families; SCUUK has documented over 6,000 such cases, and there are now new family separations as a result of the recent displacement of people from Lofa County.

Separated children are often particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. They can be recruited as soldiers in the fighting forces or, as in the case of young girls, may be abducted as wives or domestic slaves, forced into exploitative labour or commercial sex or into abusive foster care situations and suffer long term or perhaps permanent family separation. Most of the teenage girls who were reunited with their families were either pregnant, were already mothers, or had experienced either sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. Some of the boys and girls have experienced multiple foster care or have lived in abusive foster family situations. Some of those who came into conflict with the law also suffered from abusive treatments at the hands of the law enforcement agencies.

Seven years of war and displacement have hampered reunification efforts: in some cases parents and other family members have died; in others they have moved so many times that they are impossible to trace. But even when parents or relatives can be found, reunification may be difficult. Families may not be able to support their children or, if the child has been separated for a long period, reintegration can be too traumatic. As a result, children do sometimes drop out of their families." (SCF 2 August 2001)

"There is also a major need to help separated families re-establish contact [...] the tracing network is being strengthened to respond to increased needs; so far the ICRC has set up tracing antennae in all the camps to enable separated families to make use of the Red Cross message network to re-establish contact with their family members; the family reunification of unaccompanied children (UACs) will be extended to include Liberian refugees children and displaced UACs." (ICRC 31 July 2001)

"The Red Cross tracing network in the three countries of the region [Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone] is instrumental in restoring family links between displaced people, refugees and returnees and their relatives who have been separated. Between January and September [2000], the ICRC, together with the Sierra Leone Red Cross, handled more than 46,000 Red Cross messages (RCMs) inside Sierra Leone as well as between Sierra Leone and other countries. In Liberia 2,437 RCMs were handled in cooperation with the Liberian Red Cross Society and 7,638 RCMs were handled by the ICRC in Guinea over the same period." (ICRC 15 December 2000)

"Many displaced children became separated from their families; SCUK has documented 4,993 such cases, and there are now reports of further separation as a result of the recent displacement of people from Zorzor town.

[...]

Seven years of war and displacement have hampered reunification efforts: in many cases all the family members are dead. In others they have moved so many times that they are impossible to trace. But even when parents or relatives can be found, reunification may be difficult. Families may not be able to support their children. Or, if the child has been separated for a long period, difficulties during the reintegration process could lead to the children dropping out of their families.

[...]

"At present, there are an estimated 20,000 separated children in Liberia and neighbouring countries. SCUK has helped to reunite over 2,000 of these children in Liberia alone with their families." (SCF 24 November 2000)

"ICRC is reuniting separated families

"For family members separated by the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, often without news of their loved ones since the crisis began, the Red Cross set up a message distribution system. In the rebel-held towns of Bouaké, Korhogo, Bouandiali, Danané, Man and Ferkessédougou, people can go to the Red Cross and write "Je me porte bien" ("I am well") cards.

Some 1'500 such cards were collected and distributed to the people's families in government-controlled areas. The same system was adopted for Ivorians who found refuge in Guinea and Liberia. Some 200 messages were collected and forwarded to relatives.

Red Cross teams in reception centres for displaced people identify children separated from their families by the conflict. Nine such children were successfully reunited with their families after appeals (with photographs) were broadcast on television.

The Red Cross also accepted tracing requests for elderly and sick people, living alone in conflict zones, and the ICRC handled protection requests for people considered by their relatives to be in danger. Since 9 September 2002, more than 400 such requests have been treated. (ICRC, 27 February 2003)"

"I am OK"

For family members separated by the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, often without news of their loved ones since the crisis began, the Red Cross has set up a message distribution system.

In the rebel-held towns of Bouaké, Korhogo, Bouandiali and Ferkessédougou, people can go to the Red Cross and write cards that state simply "I am OK".

Some 900 such cards were collected and the people's families in government-controlled places were contacted. The same system was adopted for Ivorians who found refuge in Guinea and in Liberia.

Families of persons visited by the ICRC in prisons were informed that the visits had taken place, so as to relieve their anxiety.

Children separated from their families by the conflict are identified by Red Cross teams in reception centres for displaced people. Eight children were reunited with their families after their photographs were broadcast on television.

The Red Cross accepted tracing requests for elderly and sick people living alone in war zones, and the ICRC handled protection requests for people considered by their relatives to be in danger." (ICRC, 15 January 2003)

HRW briefs the UN Security Council on the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire (April 2003)

- HRW tells the UN Security that the human rights situation in western Côte d'Ivoire is deteriorating
- HRW is providing compelling description of the severe human right abuses on displaced civilians
- In areas where access is very limited, extensive abuses, killings, rapes and systematic looting of civilian property is taking place
- HRW says that the Security Council should take actions to address the crisis

"Human Rights Watch writes to apprise members of the Security Council of the deteriorating human rights situation in western Côte d'Ivoire, and to recommend actions that the Security Council should take to address the crisis.

Unless immediate steps are taken to contain the conflict in the west of the country and the human rights abuses that have accompanied it, the fragile peace in Côte d'Ivoire may collapse and further threaten regional stability.

The situation in western Côte d'Ivoire requires the Security Council's attention due to the urgent need for protection of civilians as well as the cross-border character of the conflict.

As described below, both government and rebel forces have introduced Liberian fighters into the fighting in western Côte d'Ivoire, and the conflict there increasingly is becoming an extension of the neighboring Liberian war.

Over the past two months, Human Rights Watch has gathered information from refugees and displaced civilians in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso who provide consistent and compelling descriptions of the severe human rights situation.

It is clear that extensive abuses, including killings, rape, and systematic looting of civilian property, are taking place in areas where access is very limited, making independent documentation and verification very difficult. This underscores the critical need for further investigation of abuses in the west.

Background to the current fighting

The current area of concern stretches roughly between Toulepleu and Danane, on the Liberian border, east to Man and Guiglo.

On November 28, 2002, two new rebel groups -- the Movement for Justice and Peace (Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix, MJP) and the Ivoirian Popular Movement for the Great West (Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest, MPIGO) -- emerged and captured Danane and Man.

They then continued south to take Toulepleu and Bloléquin in early December. Since December 2002, the area has become the main theater of the Ivoirien conflict.

A ceasefire agreement was signed by the MJP and MPIGO rebel groups and the government on January 13, 2003. However, the agreement has been violated numerous times by both sides.

Until April 9, 2003, rebel forces controlled north of Toulepleu and government forces controlled Toulepleu town and the road west to Bloléquin. As of April 11, 2003, a government offensive was moving north and was reported to have captured Zouan-Hounien.

Abuses of civilians in western Côte d'Ivoire

Both the government and the rebel forces have been responsible for violations of international humanitarian law, including rape, attacks on civilians, systematic looting of civilian property and executions of suspected enemy sympathizers.

At least two massacres have been reported in the area in March 2003, in Bangolo and Dah, with at least one hundred civilian deaths from the two incidents.

According to civilians who fled these two locations, Liberians and Ivoiriens fighting for the government of Côte d'Ivoire were responsible for the killings in Bangolo, while rebel fighters were responsible for the killings in Dah. Human Rights Watch was not able to travel to these sites and further investigation is required.

Both the government and the rebel forces have also been responsible for reprisal killings, particularly when towns have changed hands. This was the case in Man in December 2002, when a loyalist counteroffensive captured the town and held it for approximately ten days, and in Toulepleu, which was captured by rebels in December 2002 and then re-taken by the government in January 2003.

Reprisal killings by government forces have often been based on ethnic, national, or political affiliation, while rebel forces have targeted government officials or suspected government sympathizers. It is essential that both warring parties protect civilians and make every effort to minimize civilian casualties in any future offensives in the area.

Even where conflict on the ground has not targeted civilians, government helicopter gunships have been responsible for civilian casualties.

Human Rights Watch has documented several incidents in which civilians have been the victims of indiscriminate attacks by helicopter gunships. A December 2002 attack on Mahapleu, for instance, resulted in at least nine civilian victims when a helicopter gunship fired into a crowd of civilians at the local market from a distance of sixty meters, a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

The government's renewed use of helicopter gunships in Bin-Houyé and Danane during the week of April 7, 2003, may be a cause for concern, although it is not yet clear whether these attacks were limited to military targets.

It must be added that in several incidents, the rebel forces also bear responsibility for not clearly separating military targets from civilian sites. For example, the deployment of military forces near civilians led to civilian deaths in a helicopter attack on Vavua town in December 2002.

Thousands of Ivoirien and ECOWAS nationals have fled the western region via Liberia only to be refused entry at the Guinean border.

The recent intensification of the Liberian war has trapped thousands of civilians who now must choose between two untenable options – remaining in Liberia amidst growing conflict or returning to western Côte d'Ivoire.

Liberian involvement with rebel forces in western Côte d'Ivoire

One of the alarming developments in the west has been the recruitment and use of Liberian fighters by both rebel and government forces. Some of these fighters have been implicated in serious human rights abuses in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Human Rights Watch interviewed civilians who fled Danane, Zouan-Hounien, and other towns and villages controlled by rebel groups in the past few months. According to these accounts, the western rebel forces contain Ivoirien, Sierra Leonean, and Liberian fighters.

However, Liberians constitute the largest proportion of the western rebel forces. Victims interviewed by Human Rights Watch consistently stated that English-speaking Liberians were responsible for systematic looting of civilian property – regardless of the ethnicity of their victims – accompanied by assault and, in some cases, the rape of women and girls.

Credible sources have stated that among the Sierra Leoneans fighting alongside the rebels are some former RUF fighters, including Sam Bockarie ("Mosquito"), who was recently indicted by the Sierra Leone Special Court.

Liberian involvement with government forces in western Côte d'Ivoire

Several hundred of the Liberians fighting alongside the government forces are former refugees who have either been recruited or felt compelled to join the government forces in order to demonstrate their loyalty in the face of increased anti-Liberian feeling in Côte d'Ivoire.

According to civilians who fled Toulepleu, Bloléquin and other villages under the control of government forces, the majority of the armed forces in these locations are Liberians, although there are also some local Ivoiriens among the fighters.

Human Rights Watch documented cases of systematic looting of property and rape of civilians in this area.

Human Rights Watch also gathered accounts of children among the Liberian fighters on both sides, many of whom are as young as nine and according to one description, "cannot even control the weight of their guns."

While both the government and rebel forces bear responsibility for introducing Liberian combatants into the Ivoirien conflict, it is apparent that neither side exerts full control over their Liberian fighters, and that western Cote d'Ivoire has become an extension of the neighboring Liberian war.

The abuses are manipulated by both the government of Côte d'Ivoire and the rebel groups through political rhetoric and local media in order to further their respective political agendas. This trend threatens to undermine the recent steps to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Recommendations

The gravity of the situation in western Cote d'Ivoire demands Security Council action. Human Rights Watch recommends that the Security Council take the following steps:

Immediately call on all parties to the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire to respect human rights and international humanitarian law regarding treatment of civilians and other non-combatants, and to hold accountable members of their forces responsible for abuses;

Establish a human rights monitoring mission in Cote d'Ivoire, with appropriate human, financial and technical resources, which reports to the Security Council.

The monitoring mission should have the mandate to report on violations of human rights and humanitarian law by all sides to the conflict, including Liberian combatants, and should make recommendations about mechanisms for holding perpetrators accountable.

The monitoring mission should have as extensive a field presence as possible, including in Daloa, Bouaké, San Pedro, and, security permitting, Man. The mission's reports should be made public;

Call on all states in the region – including Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, and Zambia – to commit to returning any individuals indicted by the Special Court of Sierra Leone who flee into their territories, to assist in their apprehension, and to otherwise cooperate with the Special Court;

Call on all neighboring states, in particular Guinea, to keep borders open to all civilians fleeing the conflict in western Côte d'Ivoire, including nationals of ECOWAS countries attempting to enter via Liberia;

Urge ECOWAS forces together with French forces supporting them, to ensure that civilians are protected from physical violence in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1464 (2003)." (HRW, 14 April 2003)

References to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Known references to the Guiding Principles (as of June 2004)

- References to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation
- Other references to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)
- Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages
- Training on the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

References to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

None

Other references to the Guiding Principles (in chronological order)

"OCHA is working closely with the Ministry of Health, Solidarity, Social Security and the Handicapped to implement an appropriate mechanism for the localization and monitoring of IDPs nationwide. ICRC continues to remind military and political authorities of their obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians, be they residents or IDPs." (UN OCHA, 16 May 2003)

Availability of the Guiding Principles in local languages

None

Training on the Guiding Principles

OCHA and UNICEF-CI training workshop: OCHA and UNICEF-CI jointly organised a workshop in Abidjan on 14 and 15 May to develop a Code of Conduct for all humanitarian workers in Cote d'Ivoire, as well as a strategy to improve assistance and protection of vulnerable groups, including refugees, the sick and wounded, minorities, the elderly, handicapped individuals, women and children, and particularly IDPs. The workshop which was part of the effort to increase complementarity between humanitarian and military initiatives, was attended by Government Ministries, UN agencies and local and international NGOs as well as the FANCI (Ivorian national armed forces), ECOMICI and French Operation Licorne representatives.
Sources: UN OCHA; UNICEF
Date: 14-15 May 2003
Document: "On the basis of the consensus reached during the seminar, humanitarian actors will soon finalise a Code of Conduct for all humanitarian workers in Cote d'Ivoire and will revise their strategies for assistance to and the protection of vulnerable populations, particularly internally displaced populations (IDPs)" (UN OCHA, 16 May 2003).

OCHA and UNICEF-CI training workshop: OCHA and UNICEF-CI jointly organised a workshop in Abidjan on 16 May directed to the impartial forces ECOMICI and the French Operation Licorne Forces to the sensitise them on humanitarian intervention.
Sources: UN OCHA; UNICEF
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