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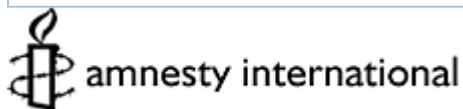
Bilagsnr.:	160
Land:	Elfenbenskysten
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Amnesty International Report 2013 – The State of the World's Human Rights – Côte D'Ivoire
Udgivet:	23. maj 2013
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	6. august 2013

[EN](#) | [DE](#)

- **Source:**
AI - Amnesty International
- **Title:**
Amnesty International Report 2013 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Côte D'Ivoire
- **Publication date:**
23 May 2013
- **ecoi.net summary:** Annual report 2013 (covering 2012) [ID 247929]
- **Countries:**
Côte d'Ivoire
- **Original link** <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/cote-divoire/report-2013>

Recommended citation:

AI - Amnesty International: Amnesty International Report 2013 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Côte D'Ivoire, 23 May 2013 (available at [ecoi.net](http://www.ecoi.net))
http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/247929/358215_en.html (accessed 06 August 2013)



Amnesty International Report 2013 - The State of the World's Human Rights - Côte D'Ivoire

Head of state

Alassane Ouattara

Head of government

Daniel Kablan Duncan (replaced Jeannot Kouadio-Ahoussou in November, who replaced Guillaume Soro in March)

Throughout the year people were arbitrarily detained and tortured against a backdrop of continued insecurity and attacks by unidentified armed combatants. Many people were displaced as a result. Freedom of the press was under attack and newspapers banned. Legal proceedings at national and international levels were slow; many detainees remained in detention without trial. Impunity continued, notably for supporters of the authorities who committed international crimes during the 2011 post-election crisis. The dialogue and reconciliation process was stalled.

Background

Insecurity persisted throughout the year, with attacks launched by unidentified armed combatants against military targets. There were military and civilian casualties as well as ethnic and political tensions between security services and civilians. Attacks increased after June when seven peacekeepers with the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) were killed along with 10 civilians in the south-west of the country by militias from Liberia. These attacks triggered new population displacements and led to waves of arrests. The authorities accused the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), the party of former President Laurent Gbagbo, of orchestrating them and declared that they had foiled several attempted coups and plots to destabilize the government. The FPI denied these accusations.

As part of the process to reform the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), initiated in December 2011, a military police force was created to end abuses committed by the army. In practice, however, the force arbitrarily detained and tortured real or supposed opponents. In addition, throughout the year elements of the armed forces as well as Dozos (state-sponsored militia) continued to arbitrarily detain and torture people with total impunity.

In a context of mutual distrust between the government of President Ouattara and the FPI, attempts to resume political dialogue failed. The FPI continued to condition its participation in political life on the release of its members arrested after the post-election crisis, including Laurent Gbagbo.

Members of ethnic groups (including Bétés and Guérés) who were generally accused of being supporters of former President Gbagbo were targeted on ethnic grounds, notably in the west of the country where Dozos reportedly prevented returning internally displaced people from accessing their land or imposed arbitrary payments.

Arbitrary detention

More than 200 people suspected of threatening state security, including members of the FPI, faced illegal detention, mostly in unrecognized places of detention. Many were still detained without trial by the end of the year while others were released after paying a ransom.

- In March, 77 people were arrested on suspicion of attempting to destabilize state power. All were former members of the Defence and Security Forces (FDS, former regular army) and were held in an FRCI camp in Abidjan. They were released without charge after two months.
- In August, an FPI member was detained in Abidjan by two men in plain clothes and accused of being a militiaman. He was released two days later after his parents paid a ransom.

Torture and deaths in custody

The FRCI regularly resorted to torture and other ill-treatment against people suspected of armed attacks and political plots. Suspects were sometimes held for long periods in unrecognized places of detention before being brought before a judge and transferred to prison.

- In March, a member of the former regular armed forces, detained in an FRCI camp in Abidjan, was undressed, handcuffed to an iron bar, beaten and had molten plastic poured on his body.
- In August, police staff sergeant Serge Hervé Kribié died on the day he was arrested while being subjected to electric shocks in the FRCI command post in San Pedro. His fate remained unknown to his family for three weeks.

Refugees and internally displaced people

In June, an estimated 13,000 people were displaced after violent incidents in villages situated between Taï and Nigré along the border with Liberia. By the end of the year, some 160,000 Ivorians remained displaced, including an estimated 80,000 internally displaced people and nearly 60,000 refugees in Liberia. Armed attacks against civilians and military personnel provoked protection concerns as well as continued inter-communal mistrust and fresh displacements, mainly in the west of the country.

Human rights violations and abuses in the west

Insecurity remained persistent in the west of the country. Members of ethnic groups, including Guérés, who were perceived to have been supporters of Laurent Gbagbo, were targeted by FRCI and Dozos and were victims of extrajudicial killings, beatings, torture, unlawful arrests and enforced disappearances.

In July, members of the Dioula community, with the active involvement of Dozo fighters and FRCI soldiers, attacked a UNOCI-guarded displaced persons' camp at Nahibly, outside Duékoué, which was home to approximately 4,500 people. The attack was reportedly launched in retaliation for alleged crimes by camp-dwellers, including the killing of four people in Duékoué. At least 13 displaced people were killed. Many were severely injured, including being tortured with drops of molten plastic and beaten. Dozens were arbitrarily arrested, many of whom remained disappeared.

In October a mass grave was discovered in Duékoué containing bodies thought to be those of people who disappeared after the camp was attacked. An investigation was opened but had made little progress by the end of the year.

Freedom of expression

There were numerous violations of the right to freedom of expression.

- In September, the National Press Council suspended for six days all the daily newspapers close to the opposition party FPI, stating that photographs and captions relating to former President Gbagbo and former ministers prolonged the post-election crisis.

Justice system

Eighteen months after the post-election crisis, only people associated with former President Gbagbo's government had been arrested. No members of the former Forces Nouvelles, nor any military officials or civilians responsible for serious human rights abuses supporting President Ouattara, had been brought to account.

Delays and shortcomings to the legal proceedings against relatives and aides of former President Gbagbo raised concerns that they may be held for a lengthy period without trial, or that they will be subject to trials which fail to meet international standards of fairness.

Between May and July, eight people were charged with genocide, including Simone Gbagbo, wife of former President Gbagbo.

On 20 December, the provisional release was announced of nine close aides of former President Gbagbo, mainly detained in the north of the country.

International justice

In February, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) authorized the Prosecutor to investigate other relevant crimes committed between September 2002 and 2010.

While both sides were accused of international crimes, the ICC investigations focused on alleged crimes committed by the administration of former President Gbagbo.

Investigations into former President Gbagbo, transferred to the ICC in November 2011, barely progressed. In November, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for the former first lady, Simone Gbagbo, for alleged crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, other forms of sexual violence, other inhumane acts, and persecution committed during the post-election crisis.

Steps towards ratification of the Rome Statute were undertaken. In December, Parliament adopted a bill to amend the Constitution, thereby removing all domestic legal barriers to ratification. A week later, Parliament adopted a bill authorizing ratification, which remained to be enacted.

Impunity

The government repeatedly stated its willingness to try those responsible for crimes committed during the post-election crisis. In August, a national commission of inquiry, set up to investigate the violence committed during the post-election crisis, submitted its report and concluded that both sides had killed hundreds of people. However, by the end of the year no judicial proceedings were known to have been instigated against alleged perpetrators.

Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Created in July 2011, the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission faced organizational and financial difficulties and was called to "review and accelerate its activities" by UNOCI in May. In June, it publicly denounced illegal arrests, but public calls for reconciliation and dialogue were not followed by concrete developments.

Corporate accountability

Six years after the dumping of toxic waste that affected tens of thousands of people in the Abidjan area, many victims had yet to receive adequate compensation. At the end of the year, the authorities had still not taken measures to ensure that all of the registered individuals whose health was impacted were able to access the state compensation scheme, which had been suspended. An investigation into the misappropriation, in 2010, of part of the compensation paid by the oil trading company, Trafigura, to victims who had taken the company to court in the UK, did not make progress by the end of the year. Although the Minister of African Integration was dismissed by the President in May over his alleged role in misappropriation of the funds, no further action appears to have been taken by the authorities to recover the missing money or progress investigations into those involved.

Country Reports

- [The toxic truth: About a company called Trafigura, a ship called the Probo Koala, and the dumping of toxic waste in Côte d'Ivoire](#)
- [Côte d'Ivoire: Time to put an end to the cycle of reprisals and revenge](#)

Country Visits

No information on visits available

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