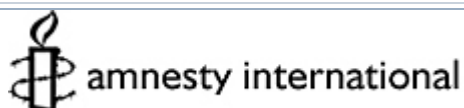


Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	133
Land:	Elfenbenskysten
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Annual Report 2012
Udgivet:	24. maj 2012
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	27. juni 2012

Title	Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Côte d'Ivoire
Publisher	Amnesty International
Country	Côte d'Ivoire
Publication Date	24 May 2012
Cite as	Amnesty International, <i>Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Côte d'Ivoire</i> , 24 May 2012, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4fbe394552.html [accessed 8 June 2012]
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Amnesty International Annual Report 2012 - Côte d'Ivoire

Head of state : **Alassane Ouattara**

Head of government : **Guillaume Soro**

Death penalty: **abolitionist for all crimes**

Population: **20.2 million**

Life expectancy: **55.4 years**

Under-5 mortality: **118.5 per 1,000**

Adult literacy: **55.3 per cent**

The violence that followed the disputed presidential election in November 2010 caused the most serious humanitarian and human rights crisis in Côte d'Ivoire since the de facto partition of the country in September 2002. Hundreds of people were unlawfully killed, often only on the grounds of their ethnicity or presumed political affiliation. Women and adolescents were victims of sexual violence, including rape, and hundreds of thousands of people were forced to flee their homes to seek refuge in other regions of Côte d'Ivoire or in neighbouring countries, especially Liberia. Both sides committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, and in October the International Criminal Court opened an investigation into some of these crimes.

Background

The November 2010 presidential elections led to a political stalemate after outgoing President Laurent Gbagbo refused to recognize the victory of Alassane Ouattara. After three months of sporadic fighting, at the end of March forces loyal to Alassane Ouattara

launched an offensive and occupied almost all the areas held by forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo. In April, soldiers with the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the French Force Licorne bombed the artillery deployed by troops loyal to Laurent Gbagbo, who was eventually arrested.

Human rights violations and abuses continued to be committed after April, and in the economic capital Abidjan real or perceived supporters of former President Gbagbo were targeted. In Abidjan and the west of the country, thousands of people fled their homes and went to neighbouring countries, including Ghana. By the end of the year, more than 250,000 refugees and displaced people had not returned home for fear of attacks or reprisals.

In December, legislative elections that were boycotted by the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), the party of former President Gbagbo, led to a decisive victory for the coalition supporting President Ouattara.

In September, a national Truth, Reconciliation and Dialogue Commission was officially inaugurated by President Ouattara but had not begun its work by the end of the year.

Abuses by armed groups

Pro-Gbagbo security forces

During the first four months of the year, pro-Gbagbo security forces extrajudicially executed and arrested people during demonstrations, in the streets or in their homes. Some were victims of enforced disappearance and most were Dioulas, a generic term designating those with a Muslim name or from the north of Côte d'Ivoire or other countries in the sub-region.

- In January, Bamba Mamadou, nicknamed Solo, a football player, was beaten to the ground and shot dead by security forces patrolling in the Banfora Adjamé neighbourhood of Abidjan.
- In February, security forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo shelled densely populated areas of Abobo, a district of Abidjan, killing many people, including women and children.

Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI)

The Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), created in March by Alassane Ouattara, killed and tortured real or presumed supporters of Laurent Gbagbo, notably in the west of the country.

- In April, Basile Mahan Gahé, Secretary General of the trade union organization Confédération Dignité, was tortured after being arrested by the FRCI. He was reportedly made to face a mock execution and was pounded on his back with the flat side of a machete blade.
- In May, three military officers were arrested by the FRCI in Yopougon. Two were released but the third, Mathurin Tapé, who was a Bété (the ethnic group to which Laurent Gbagbo belongs), remained unaccounted for by the end of the year.
- After the arrest of Laurent Gbagbo, dozens of his real or presumed supporters were arrested and detained arbitrarily. A number of military and police personnel were held in a Korhogo military camp, in reportedly life-threatening conditions. By the end of the year, some of these detainees had been released but others, including Simone Gbagbo, wife of the former President, had been charged with offences against state security and economic offences and were still held without trial.

Abuses by militias

Young patriots and other pro-Gbagbo militias and Liberian mercenaries killed scores of people in Abidjan as part of a pattern of reprisals and retribution against real or perceived supporters of Alassane Ouattara.

- In May, Liberian mercenaries entered the village of Gobroko, near the town of Sassandra, and reportedly killed at least 23 Dioulas. Most were from neighbouring countries, including four from Nigeria, five from Mali, one from Benin and 10 from Burkina Faso.

Militias composed especially of Dozos (traditional hunters) that supported Alassane Ouattara killed and tortured real or presumed supporters of Laurent Gbagbo, notably members of specific ethnic groups in the west of the country.

- In May, a group of Dozos attacked an encampment outside the village of Bédi-Goazon, 450 km west of Abidjan, killing four men and injuring many others.

Duékoué massacre

At the end of March and beginning of April, several hundred civilians were unlawfully killed by forces of both sides to the conflict in the town of Duékoué and surrounding villages.

Liberian mercenaries and militias loyal to Laurent Gbagbo killed a number of Dioulas while entering compounds often inhabited by several families. After taking control of

Duékoué, the FRCI, supported by Dozos and armed elements in plain clothes, led a manhunt in the Quartier Carrefour area, where the population was mainly Guérés. They entered the compounds, demanded money and looted houses. Women and girls were made to leave and hundreds of men and boys were summarily executed.

Violence against women and girls

Pro-Gbagbo militia members raped women accused of supporting Alassane Ouattara, in some cases with the involvement of security forces loyal to the former President. FRCI members were also responsible for rape and other crimes of sexual violence against women and girls.

- In May, Laurence Banjneron, aged 27, was killed while resisting rape by FRCI soldiers in the village of Toulepleu, near the Liberian border. After killing her, a soldier reportedly later shot and killed her husband, Jean-Pierre Péhé, when he arrived to inquire about his wife.

Freedom of expression – journalists

A number of journalists were arrested for their links with the former regime of Laurent Gbagbo or for criticizing the new authorities.

- In July, Herman Aboa, a journalist from Radio Télévision Ivoirienne, was arrested and charged with endangering state security and incitement to racial hatred. He was released in December after the prosecution dropped all charges against him.
- In November, three journalists with the FPI newspaper *Notre Voie*, including the editor César Etou, were arrested and charged with incitement to theft, looting and destruction of the property of others through the press. They were released in December after a court dismissed the charges.

Refugees and asylum-seekers

As a result of the post-electoral violence and human rights violations and abuses, hundreds of thousands of people fled their homes either to other parts of the country or to neighbouring countries, notably Liberia. At the height of the crisis there were more than one million refugees and internally displaced people. People attempting to return home were often victims of violence and many found their homes occupied by others. By the end of the year, more than 250,000 had not returned home for fear of harassment or retaliation.

International justice

In October, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) authorized an investigation into crimes against humanity and war crimes perpetrated by both sides in Côte d'Ivoire, limited to the post-electoral crisis since 28 November 2010. However, the Pre-Trial Chamber also asked the Prosecutor to present information on potentially relevant crimes committed between 2002 and November 2010, when some of the most serious crimes took place. In response, the Prosecutor detailed specific incidents that may also amount to crimes falling under the jurisdiction of the ICC, including the use of child soldiers.

In October, during a visit to Côte d'Ivoire, the ICC Prosecutor stated that between three and six people carrying the greatest responsibility for crimes under international law committed in Côte d'Ivoire would be investigated. In November, former President Gbagbo was transferred to the ICC in The Hague, Netherlands, following the issuing of an arrest warrant.

Corporate accountability

Five years after the dumping of toxic waste that affected thousands of people, many of the victims had not received compensation from the oil-trading corporate group Trafigura. At the end of the year, victims still did not have access to information relating to possible health consequences, and a number of sites where the toxic waste was dumped had not been fully decontaminated.