



Armed Conflicts Report

Côte d'Ivoire (2002 - first combat deaths)

Update: January 2009

Summary

Type of Conflict

Parties to the Conflict

Status of Fighting

Number of Deaths

Political Developments

Background

Arms Sources

Economic Factors

Because there have been few reported conflict deaths over the past two years (less than 25 per year), this armed conflict is now deemed to have ended.

Summary:

2008 The 2007 peace accord continued to hold throughout 2008. Election preparations continued, with the date changing numerous times and finally being delayed until 2009. Citizenship identification processes took place throughout 2008 as well as the development and implementation of laws to address land ownership, both of which are seen as root causes to the conflict. Demobilization of militia groups did not proceed according to plan and was criticized for being delayed. Conflict was minimal throughout 2008, with between 10 and 15 deaths, reflecting the positive changes that are going on within the country. The peace agreement, although shaky, represents the country's best chance at lasting peace. The elections in 2009 could bring renewed violence if they are perceived as unfair by groups within the country, especially from the New Forces rebels who remain armed.

2007 The signing of the Ouagadougou peace accords in March 2007 have led to increasingly positive changes in Côte d'Ivoire. The agreement saw the end of a long-time rivalry between President Laurent Gbagbo and New Forces rebel leader Guillaume Soro who Gbagbo appointed to be his Prime Minister. Working together the men have created a new interim government, demilitarized a buffer zone that had separated the north and south for five years, and have begun a voter identification process to ensure citizens a vote in the upcoming elections (tentatively scheduled for October 2008). While there have been many positive changes, there is still violence in the country, most notably a June assassination attempt on Prime Minister Soro. Cocoa smuggling also continues along the northern border, and many are still suffering extortion at the hands of government and rebel officials.

2006 Skirmishes between protestors and United Nations peacekeeping forces resulted in the deaths of at least 10 people, while ethnic conflict and land ownership issues in the west killed an estimated 100 to 500 people. The postponement of elections, the reluctance of President Gbagbo to cooperate with a UN peace roadmap, the continued proliferation of small arms and the persistent smuggling of illicit diamonds have all hampered the Ivory Coast peace process. The appointment of a new Prime Minister, Charles Konan Banny, was seen as a positive move but reports are that his efforts were impeded by the President as well as time and support constraints.

2005 Armed violence resulted in over 200 deaths as ethnic groups clashed in western Ivory Coast while sporadic clashes between rebels and the government and pro-government militias took place across the UN-protected buffer zone separating the two sides. Little progress was made implementing the Linas-Marcoussis

peace accord and subsequent agreements.

2004 Sporadic clashes between rebel and government forces and informal inter-ethnic conflict continued in 2004, resulting in the deaths of at least 275 people. All sides signed an August agreement and a UN peacekeeping force was approved to supervise the disarmament process and ensure security until after October 2005 elections. When disarmament did not begin as scheduled, rebels withdrew from the unity government and government forces bombed rebel strongholds killing more than two dozen people, including nine French soldiers. In response, France bombed an Ivorian airbase, killing several Ivorian troops and threatening a resumption of the war. However, peace was restored in a new plan brokered by South African President Thabo Mbeki.

2003 The Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement, reached in January by the government and three rebel movements, led to a national unity government mandated to govern until elections are held. National (French), regional (ECOWAS), and international (United Nations Mission in the Cote d'Ivoire) peace support operations, all operating with UN Security Council authorization, were deployed to bolster the peace agreement. In spite of the formal cessation of hostilities following a May cease-fire, reports of civilian massacres by both government and rebel forces continued to circulate and inter-communal clashes occurred sporadically throughout the year.

Type of Conflict:

State control

Parties to the Conflict:

1) Government, led by President Laurent Gbagbo who took power in disputed elections in 2000. The elections followed a 1999 coup and a short-lived period of military rule. In adherence with the Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement of January 2003, President Gbagbo appointed Seydou Diarra as Prime Minister to head the transitional power-sharing national reconciliation government, until elections could be held. In 2006, a new Prime Minister was appointed in the person of Charles Konan Banny. The government consisted of forty-one ministers, nine of whom came from the rebel movements. In 2007, as part of the March peace accord, President Laurent Gbagbo appointed Guillaume Soro, leader of the New Forces rebel group, as his Prime Minister.

"Ivory Coast's government has agreed to name rebel leader Guillaume Soro as prime minister under a plan to reunite the world's top cocoa grower, the rebels and foreign mediators said on Tuesday." [Reuters, 27 March, 2007]

"Democracy was restored in 2000 with a disputed election that brought Gbagbo to the presidency. A southerner and a Christian, Gbagbo was accused by many in the mostly Muslim north of exploiting ethnic and religious divisions." [*The Washington Post in Guardian Weekly*, March 13-19, 2003]

2) Militias loyal to the government: Nearly a dozen pro-government militias operate in the South and West of the country. These include large militias (numbering 5,000 or more members) such as the Group of Patriots for Peace (itself an umbrella group of 6 militias), the Front for the Security of the Centre-West (FSCO), the Front for the Liberation of the Great West (FLGO) and the Young Patriots (also an umbrella group consisting of pro-government student organizations). In addition, a number of smaller mostly urban-based militias exist that go by such names as the Bees, Gazelles, Ninjas and Panthers. The Young Patriots as well as the Ivorian students union (known by its acronym Fesci) have taken on a new and violent role that may become increasingly difficult for the government to contain. Other militia groups such as the FLGO claim they are disarming in an effort to support the latest peace agreement. Violence was minimal in 2008.

"We've realized that since the signing of the...peace deal, we have no more reason to exist. Anyone possessing an arm from today does so illegally and not in the name of the FLGO..." [Reuters, 19 May, 2007]

and

3) Foreign fighters - Following the outbreak of violence in 2002, there were reports of British, French and South Africans mercenaries employed by the government to assist in countering the insurgency. It is also alleged that Angola provided troops and military equipment to the government. Fighters from previous conflicts in neighbouring states, i.e. Liberia and Sierra Leone, reportedly entered Cote d'Ivoire to fight for whichever party paid them. France became directly involved in the conflict in 2004 when it bombed an Ivorian airbase in response to an Ivorian air raid that killed nine of its soldiers. After the signing of the 2007 peace accord, France removed only 500 of the 3,500 troops they have committed to the Ivory Coast. The United Nations and France committed to keeping the peacekeeping effort within the Ivory Coast and the mission was extended until July 31, 2009.

"France, a major player on the ground and within the UN Security Council, announced last week that of the 3,500 French troops currently in place in Zone of Confidence, the buffer zone dividing the government controlled south and rebel-held north, it would withdraw only around 500 troops." [IRIN, 29 March, 2007]

versus

4) Rebels - The largest of the three rebel groups, the Patriotic Movement of Cote d'Ivoire (MPCI) led by Guillaume Soro, initiated the armed uprising in the country's north in September 2002. The smaller two organizations, the Ivorian Popular Movement for the Great West (MPIGO) and the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP), became militarily active in the western region of the country shortly afterwards. The three groups joined forces in 2003 and are now collectively referred to as the 'New Forces'. A large majority of the former New Forces rebels are in support of the March 2007 peace accords and Soro's election as Prime Minister, however there are still some New Forces rebels that are working against the Ouagadougou peace accords. These disaffected rebels are speculated to have been the perpetrators of a June 2007 assassination attempt on Soro. As of late 2008, the New Forces rebels have not been fully disarmed.

"Several people have been arrested after Friday's attack in the rebel stronghold of Bouake, which analysts have suggested may have been carried out by disaffected New Forces fighters angry over the peace deal that led to their former leader Soro being appointed prime minister.: [Reuters, 1 July, 2007]

allied with

5) Foreign Fighters - It is widely reported that fighters from previous conflicts in neighbouring states, i.e. Liberia and Sierra Leone, entered Cote d'Ivoire to join the fighting, often, but not exclusively on the side of the rebels. The Ivorian government reported the presence of Liberian government security forces in their territory, fighting against Ivorian forces.

"Now, two more recent rebellions in the west are evoking bitter memories of neighbouring wars, with refugees reporting redundant rebels pouring over from Liberia and Sierra Leone... The Brussels-based thinktank, the International Crisis Group, has reported that thousands of youths have been recruited in Liberia to cross into western Ivory Coast." [*Le Monde in Guardian Weekly*, February 13-19, 2003]

"[Defence minister] Kadet said Ivory Coast had detected among its attackers 'military officials of the highest levels from the Liberian regular army.' While Ivory Coast's government has claimed before to have come under attack for cross-border raids launched in Liberia, Thursday marked the first insistence that regular Liberian security forces were involved. Liberia denied the accusations... Liberia, a nation rife with armed thugs after more than a decade of civil conflict, acknowledges that fighters have crossed over from its territory to join the ranks of two Ivorian rebel factions operating in the west. But it says they are mercenaries, not sanctioned by the government." [*Associated Press*, January 23, 2003]

6) United Nations Security Council-sanctioned peace support operations, which are providing a buffer between the rebel-held north and the government-controlled south of the country. These forces are provided by France, which has deployed 4000 soldiers to protect foreign nationals and assist in the maintenance of a cease-fire. Also, the United Nations Operation in Cote D'Ivoire replaced the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (MINUCI) in 2004 and placed under its command the troops of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

regional peacekeeping force deployed in early 2003. The new peacekeeping force of more than 6,000 troops supervised elections in October 2005 and will oversee an upcoming disarmament program. As of 2007, there are more than 7,000 UN troops stationed in Cote d'Ivoire with the key responsibility of dismantling a buffer zone between that separated the government troops to the south and the rebel troops of the north prior to the March peace agreement. The United Nations mission in Cote D'Ivoire (UNICO) has finished the dismantling of the buffer zone and continues to play a peacekeeping role within the country to ensure free, open, fair, and transparent elections. The UNICO mission has officially been extended until July 31, 2009.

"United Nations peacekeepers in Ivory Coast have finished dismantling a buffer zone separating government forces from rebels who seized the country's north in a 2002-2003 civil war..." [Reuters, 15 September, 2007]

"Mixed brigades composed of 10 rebel and 10 government troops and four U.N. police (UNPOL) patrol within the limits of the former buffer zone while more U.N. troops now man a "green-line" of 17 observation posts which will gradually disappear." [Reuters, 15 September, 2007]

Status of Fighting:

2008 In 2008, fighting decreased significantly as the government made slow but steady progress towards addressing the root causes of the conflict, citizen identification and land claims. The green line, which was previously known as the "zone of confidence" between the north and south had its last military post dismantled by UNICO this year. Citizens are beginning to move freely in between the north and south and public service officials have been allowed to travel back into the North by the rebels who still occupy posts there. Although they have not disarmed, the rebels have not provoked any conflict, most likely because the peace agreement is being visibly implemented, with ID cards being issued and voter registration programmes being planned by the government. Violence in 2008 was minimal and limited to land claim conflicts in the North. Although many were injured in protests and attacks on government buildings throughout the country, the number of deaths incurred due to the conflict is under twenty.

2007 Tensions have decreased since the March signing of the Ouagadougou peace accords, as former foes President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro have been working together to implement the accords. This includes: creating a new transitional government; organizing free and fair Presidential elections; merging the Forces Nouvelles and the national defense and security forces through the establishment of an integrated command centre; dismantling the militias, disarming ex-combatants and enrolling them in civil services programmes; and replacing the 'Zone of Confidence' separating north and south with a 'green line' to be monitored by the UNOCI. The issue of registering and identifying Ivorian citizens remains a huge challenge for the government, but in September voter identification began. While elections have been pushed back again (to October 2008), the new peace agreement is being implemented on a much more substantial level than in previous attempts and fighting has diminished dramatically as a result. There are still some issues along the main trucking routes however, as army and rebel officials are still extorting money from merchants passing through, and there were surges of violence displayed throughout the former Zone of Confidence in the first half of the year.

"Ivory Coast's army and New Forces rebels have agreed to deploy a joint force of 180 troops to begin taking control of a buffer zone patrolled by UN and French forces..." [IOL, 3 April, 2007]

"Burning a small pile of rusty rifles and machine guns, militias which backed the government in Ivory Coast's 2002-2003 civil war completed their disarmament on Saturday, taking the country one step closer to reunification." [Reuters, 19 May, 2007]

"Voter identification, one of the most contentious parts of the peace process, began in September, but mobile courts issuing papers to thousands of undocumented citizens, enabling Ivorians among them to vote, are being rolled out slowly." [Reuters, 2 November, 2007]

2006 Sporadic clashes between pro-Gbagbo supporters in the south and rebel forces in the north continue to occur on a fairly regular basis coupled with ethnic violence and land ownership issues in the western region of the country. There have also been reports of attacks on United Nations Peacekeeping forces as well as repeated violations of both UN imposed arms and diamond trade embargoes. Peace negotiations continue between rebel forces and the President, Laurent Gbagbo, but conflict still simmers over the stalled

demobilization of forces and the government's failure to register and identify Ivorian citizens. The debate surrounding who constitutes an ethnic 'Ivorian' has also served to feed occurrences of violence, as rebels in the north refuse to demobilize until they receive identification cards. A failure to meet an October deadline for elections for the second year in a row and the UN-imposed extension of Gbagbo's Presidency have also served to strain peace relations between the parties.

"On the streets of the rebel-held north, fighters insist that they will not hand over their weapons until they have their [identification] documents in their hands." [*IRIN*, March 22, 2006]

"The UN Security Council on Friday added 1 500 peacekeepers to its mission in Ivory Coast in renewed efforts to restore order in the troubled West African country. The increase, which lasts until the middle of December, is meant to address council concerns about the persistence of the crisis in the Ivory Coast and obstacles to peace there." [*The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 5, 2006]

"There exists in the west of the country a problem related to land ownership, which also runs along ethnic lines. The trouble spots are about 100km north of Guiglo, the regional epicenter of violent anti-UN protests that left five people dead in January." [*The Mail and Guardian Online*, July 25, 2006]

2005 The uneasy truce between rebels and government forces was broken on several occasions as militias loyal to the government clashed with rebels within the UN-protected buffer zone separating the two sides. Government forces were attacked by rebels operating from Mali and Burkina Faso. Violent inter-ethnic conflict in western Ivory Coast resulted in the deaths of over a hundred people, mainly civilians.

2004 Clashes between rebels and government forces continued sporadically, despite a peace deal signed in 2003. A government attack on an opposition protest in March reportedly resulted in over 120 deaths and inter-ethnic clashes in the "Wild West" of the country involving "informal gangs" also continued. Following a rebel refusal to begin scheduled disarmament fighting flared in November. When government forces bombed rebel areas several French peacekeeping soldiers were killed. The attack prompted the French to bomb an Ivorian airbase, destroying several planes.

2003 A May ceasefire, and a July "end of the war" declaration signed by the Ivorian government and the rebels, remained intact for most of the following months. Although few major clashes occurred between the warring parties, there were reports of widespread government and rebel attacks upon civilians, however. There were also reports of inter-ethnic clashes, likely due to heightened tensions from the insurgency, which resulted in dozens of deaths.

Number of Deaths:

Total: According to government and media estimates, over 4,000 people have been killed in the conflict since 2002, many of whom were civilians.

"The current conflict has killed more than 3,000 people, according to government estimates, and displaced more than a million." [*Associated Press*, April 30, 2003]

2008 In September, 10 people were killed in a land claim dispute. Five others were also victims of land claims disputes and protests throughout the year.

2007 In June, 4 people were killed as unidentified attackers launched a rocket at a plane that was carrying Prime Minister Guillaume Soro in an assassination attempt. Analysts allege that the attack was the work of disaffected New Forces rebels, unhappy with Soro's appointment to Prime Minister. There were 5 additional deaths reported in January when a main border post between Ghana and the Ivory Coast was attacked by rebels. Furthermore, violent activity increased in the former Zone of Confidence where more than 30 gunshot victims were reported in the first five months of the year.

"In June, at least four people were killed when unidentified attackers fired a rocket on a plane carrying Mr. Soro as it landed at the airport in Bouake, situated in the north of Cote d'Ivoire." [*AllAfrica*, 5 September, 2007]

"Several people have been arrested after Friday's attack in the rebel stronghold of Bouake, which analysts have suggested may have been carried out by disaffected New Forces fighters angry over the peace deal that led to their former leader Soro being appointed prime minister.: [Reuters, 1 July, 2007]

2006 Although definite information about casualties has remained difficult to obtain, reports are that between 100 and 500 civilians have died as a result of ethnic violence, land disputes and banditry. Further information states that at least three members of government security forces have been killed as the result of a raid on military barracks in the country's largest city, Abidjan and numerous protestors have also been killed in clashes with government, rebel and UN peacekeeping forces. As health practitioners continue to flee the violence, it is also expected that rates of HIV/AIDS infection and casualties will continue to rise.

2005 Approximately 60 combatants and at least 135 civilians were reported killed in ethnic clashes and in fighting between the government, its militia allies and rebels.

2004 Although there are conflicting and contradictory reports, at least 275 and as many as 600 people died in 2004.

2003 According to independent sources, between 1,000 and 1,500 people were killed in Cote d'Ivoire in 2003.

"The conflict in Cote d'Ivoire ... claimed the lives of nearly 1,000 people in the past year." [The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2003-2004*]

Political Developments:

2008 The buffer zone between the north and south was completely de-militarized by UNICO in 2008. The election date, originally set for June, was moved to November, and then into early 2009. As of December 2008 an official date has not been set, although the UN is pushing for voter registration to occur by the end of January and elections to occur in the first quarter of 2009. UNICO extended its peacekeeping mission in Cote D'Ivoire until July 31, 2009, and it is speculated that forces will remain in Cote D'Ivoire until after the elections take place. The UN Security Council also voted to renew its ban on arms and diamond trade with Cote D'Ivoire until October 31st, 2009 but the council also vowed to review the sanctions no more than three months after open, fair, free and transparent elections are held.

2007 On March 4, President Laurent Gbagbo and New Forces rebel leader Guillaume Soro signed a peace agreement that was brokered with the help of Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaoré. The Ouagadougou accords are the first peace agreement brokered internally and call for a new government; a combined government army and rebel military; free, fair and transparent Presidential elections; a voter identification system; and the demilitarization of the 'zone of confidence'. Gbagbo appointed Soro as Prime Minister shortly after the accords were signed, and the two former enemies have been working side by side in an attempt to implement the accords. A slow start has left critics wondering about the validity of the accords, but progress has continued throughout the year. The return of the more than 700,000 internally displaced persons within Cote d'Ivoire to their homes and coffee and cocoa plantations is seen by analysts as one of the most difficult challenges facing the government.

"Last month the buffer zone was removed. Since the end of April, combined patrols of government soldiers and former rebels have been operating in the area to ensure protection for people and goods – taking over from the U.N. and the French soldiers present under Operation Unicorn (Operation Licorne)." [IPS, 14 May, 2007]

"Identification is a delicate issue in Cote d'Ivoire, where millions of northerners – descendants of migrants from neighbouring states who helped feed the post-independence boom – have been denied both land rights and citizenship...Under the Ouagadougou accord, the process of providing birth certificates and certificates of nationality should have begun about a fortnight ago. But it has yet to start." [IPS, 14 May, 2007]

"Demobilisation of combatants, stockpiling of weapons and dismantling of militias will start from December 22, 2007, led by the Integrated Command Centre and under the supervision of (U.N. and French) impartial forces..." [Reuters, 29 November, 2007]

"Soldiers and combatants who meet selection criteria will then be able to enroll in the new national army. Those not selected will be reintegrated into civil society with help to start their own small business or find work, officials say. An 18-month programme is also being planned to provide vocational training for around 40,000 ex-combatants on both sides." [Reuters, 29 November, 2007]

2006 The peace process and voter registration remains uncertain as elections originally scheduled for October 2006 were postponed until July 2007. The appointment of Charles Konan Banny to the post of Prime Minister has facilitated the beginning of the demobilization process, but many question the achievability of the task of demobilizing thousands in the north as well as providing them with identification papers. Providing identification papers for Ivorian citizens has become a central element of the conflict, as rebel forces in the north will not disarm until Gbagbo's government recognizes them as citizens allowing them to vote in future elections. The United Nations also resolved to grant President Laurent Gbagbo a new, one year term, to end with democratic elections taking place in the summer of 2007. This extension has sparked debate as the President wishes dissolve the cabinet of Prime Minister Banny as well as deviate from UN-planned peacekeeping roadmaps. In addition, increases in the trade of arms and conflict diamonds following 2005 UN embargoes continues to fuel insecurity.

"Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny has breathed new life into Cote d'Ivoire's ailing peace process, analysts say, but they warn that the former banker still has much to do, including disarming thousands of rebel and pro-government fighters and ensuring that millions of potential voters receive long-awaited identification papers before elections can take place." [IRIN, March 22, 2006]

2005 The government and rebels signed the Pretoria agreement in April 2005 according to which both sides declared an end to hostilities, the New Forces agreed to return to the coalition government and future talks were set on the formation of a united national army and disarmament. However, as with similar prior agreements, there was little implementation of the provisions by the end of 2005. Elections scheduled for the end of October were postponed for a year. A UN resolution disputed by rebels and the government appointed Charles Konan Banny as Prime Minister and head of government while President Gbagbo's mandate was extended by one year with reduced powers. The UN Security Council extended its peacekeeping mandate to January, 2006 and sent an additional 850 troops.

2004 Although opposition parties left the government in protest early in the year, an August agreement saw all sides agree to implement political reforms set out in the 2003 peace deal including a disarmament program. The UN Security Council unanimously endorsed a motion to send a large peacekeeping force to supervise disarmament and ensure security during October 2005 elections. The new UN force will absorb the current West African and replace the French peacekeeping forces currently operating in Cote d'Ivoire. Following renewed fighting in November, peace was restored when both sides agreed to a plan created by the African Union and South African President Thabo Mbeki. In November the UN imposed a new 13 month arms embargo on the country.

2003 The January Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement between rebel factions and the government heralded the UN Security Council's authorization of continued French and ECOWAS operations in support of implementation of the agreement. In May, the Security Council also authorized and deployed a UN peace support operation, consisting of approximately 75 military liaison officers and military observers. The peace agreement called for President Gbagbo to remain in power until elections are held, to which rebel leaders were reluctant to agree, and the creation of a transitional power-sharing government including both rebels and previous government officials, which many loyalists considered to be too generous to the insurgents. These reservations hindered the full implementation of the peace agreement although both sides participated in a disarmament process that began in December.

Background:

Once one of Africa's most stable countries, Cote d'Ivoire plummeted into civil war in September 2002 when mutinous soldiers attempted to overthrow President Gbagbo. Although the coup failed, it led to the outbreak of wide-scale civil conflict with roots in the decades-old tension that has existed between the mainly Muslim population of the north and the Christian and animist southern population. A major source of this tension is the

perceived discrimination of northerners, who argue that they have been politically marginalized for years, a point reinforced by the exclusion of Allassane Ouattara, a popular northern politician, from the 2000 Presidential election. The presence of large numbers of immigrants within Cote d'Ivoire, largely due to the employment opportunities available in the cocoa industry, has escalated inter-ethnic tensions. The political instability of the last decade, which arose from the struggle for power after the 1993 death of long-time leader President Houphouet-Boigny, also contributed to the outbreak of violence in 2002. In late 2002, the rebels seized the northern half of the country, while the government maintained control of the south. After five years of civil unrest and unimplemented peace agreements, President Gbagbo and rebel leader Guillaume Soro signed the Ouagadougou peace accords in March 2007. Over the course of 2007, these accords began to be implemented and are said to be the most successful attempt at peace to date. During 2008, the accord continued to be implemented and the election date has now shifted to early 2009.

Arms Sources:

An UN Security Council arms embargo has been in place since November 2004. In July 2005 the government was found in breach of the embargo after a shipment of 22 military vehicles, believed to be of Russian or "East European origin" were uncovered by UN inspectors. The UN also began investigating Israel for its alleged arms sales to the government. Prior to the embargo, the government purchased weapons from Romania, Belarus, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Israel, the UK and Angola, including military helicopters and tracked combat vehicles. The government claims that rebel forces have obtained arms from neighbouring states recovering from extended periods of civil conflict – Liberia and Sierra Leone. Small arms proliferation continues to be a severe impediment to the peace process as they are increasingly being used in acts of banditry as well as in the drug trade. Unidentified forces were also successful in stealing weapons in a January 2007 raid on a Ghanian-Ivorian border post. Since the Ouagadougou accords were signed in March 2007, there has been a real effort at disarmament within Cote d'Ivoire. There have been several arms burning rallies, and 22 December was set as the date for both the current government army and rebel militia to disarm. The government plans to rebuild a new national army from the ground up, with non-qualifying ex-combatants being offered vocational training as a way to reintegrate them into society. In 2008, government plans for disarmament and the new army were delayed due to the massive undertaking of issuing ID cards, addressing land claims and registering voters. The combatants in the North are still armed, and in April of 2008 the UN accused both the army and militia groups of violating arms embargoes by engaging in military exercises.

"Demobilisation of combatants, stockpiling of weapons and dismantling of militias will start from December 22, 2007, led by the Integrated Command Centre and under the supervision of (U.N. and French) impartial forces..." [Reuters, 29 November, 2007]

"The proliferation of light weapons has reached worrying proportions in Cote d'Ivoire," says Ali Ouattara, president of the Ivorian chapter of Amnesty International. "It stems from the porousness of borders that characterizes the countries of our sub-region, and is linked to different armed conflicts which preceded the Ivorian crisis." About 10,000 small arms are estimated to be in circulation in Cote d'Ivoire, some are used in armed robberies and drug trafficking." [*Inter-Press Service*, May 18, 2006]

Economic Factors:

Cote d'Ivoire is the world's largest cocoa producer, producing almost half of the world's chocolate worth roughly \$350 million a year, and placing a great deal of value and importance on land. Diamonds are also mined in the north of the country and used by rebels to finance their operations. Connections between militias, security forces, political elites and various economic interests make war very profitable and peace significantly less so for many of those involved in the conflict. The United Nations-imposed diamond embargo appears to have had little effect on the trade of the illicit gems. A 2006 UN report asserts that between 9 and 23 million USD in Ivorian conflict diamonds have made their way into the global market. Although northern rebels repeatedly deny the extraction and smuggling of the stones through countries such as Ghana and Mali, a UN report has estimated that they have amassed millions of dollars in diamond revenue. In 2007, the UN Security Council reasserted the arms and rough diamond ban on the Cote d'Ivoire until October 31, 2008, with the aim of ensuring the implementation of the new Ouagadougou peace accords. They also included targeted measures such as the freezing of funds and travel restrictions on certain individuals. Meanwhile, even with the March

signing of the agreement, there are still reports of cocoa smuggling by the northern rebel New Forces who offer much lower taxes to neighbouring countries than those payable to the state. In 2008, the ban on trade for diamonds and arms was renewed until October 31st, 2009. The UN promised to review the sanctions no more than three months after a free, fair, open and transparent election is held.

"Merchants sending cocoa this way said their main cost was a 150 CFA franc per kg tax payable to the New Forces for which they receive a waiver document to show at roadblocks. They said extortion was less costly than in the southern half. State taxes and industry levies on cocoa exported through the ports total 269 francs (\$0.59) per kg and one Fengolo merchange, Hamed Yeo, said large trucks had to pay bribes of 300,000-400,000 CFA to government soldiers on their way there." [Reuters, 30 October, 2007]

"Diamonds are still being smuggled out of war-divided Ivory Coast via Mali and Ghana in violation of a UN embargo despite rebel assertions to the contrary, according to a UN report. The UN report also said criminal networks had been breaking an arms embargo on the Ivory Coast, using international courier firms to import shipments of small arms." [Reuters, December 18, 2006]

"Smugglers in war-divided Ivory Coast are violating a United Nations-imposed ban on diamond sales, illegally exporting the gems to neighbouring countries for overseas sales, according to a draft UN report. The draft report, which has not yet been published, says \$9 million to \$24 million worth of diamonds mined in the rebel-held north are being sold on the international market each year via brokers in Ghana and Mali." [UN News Centre, September 14, 2006]

Project Ploughshares
57 Erb Street West
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6C2
tel (519) 888-6541 fax (519) 888-0018 Email: plough@ploughshares.ca