

Ivory Coast

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)

I. UNOCI Activity Summary

Overview

Originally established in 2004 to oversee a fragile ceasefire after a period of civil war, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) has undertaken various institution-building functions but faced its largest challenge when a contested 2010 election resulted in major political violence. Throughout its deployment, UNOCI has been supported by French forces active in the country. It is also the site of various modern innovations in UN peacekeeping, including a sanctions monitoring cell, regional troop redeployment frameworks with other peacekeeping operations, and a quick reaction force.

Background

Since its independence from France in 1960, Côte d'Ivoire has been a leading economic power in West Africa, attracting multinational companies, foreign investment, and millions of regional migrants from the surrounding countries. Its relationship with France is strong and France continues to exert political and economic influence the country. Similar to other countries in the region, Côte d'Ivoire's predominately Muslim north is less developed than its south, which is largely Christian.

In the 1960s and 1970s, then-President Félix Houphouët-Boigny promoted large-scale migration from the region into Côte d'Ivoire and from northern and central Côte d'Ivoire to the western region to support economic growth driven by the production of cocoa and coffee. Even during this period of prosperity, local resentments against outsiders gave birth to a concept of "Ivoirité," or the state of being a true Ivoirian,^[1] which would transform into something far more dangerous after the 1980s and 1990s brought economic downturn alongside decreased available arable land. Discrimination and political movements against the "non-native" population, often referred to as *Burkinabé* regardless of their heritage and whether or not they were born in Côte d'Ivoire, continued to grow. Exclusionary tactics made it easier to allot government postings, business licenses, and school admissions in an era of diminishing resources.^[2]

After Houphouët-Boigny's death in 1993, instability mounted throughout the country that would eventually burst out in Côte d'Ivoire's civil wars. Ill-defined but politically powerful, Ivoirité became a useful tool to brand rivals as outsiders or foreigners. Former National Assembly President Henri Konan Bédié used Ivoirité to devastating effect in the lead-up to the flawed 1995 presidential elections, where he undercut former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara by attacking his origins rather than his reformist stance. As Siddhartha Mitter has noted, "the efficacy of the ad hominem attack on Ouattara and the general questioning of those of 'foreign origin' made *ivoirité* the touchstone of Ivorian life—easy to denounce when employed by one's enemies, but difficult to resist."^[3] Opposition parties boycotted the election, in which Bédié won 96% of the vote. In 1998, a land law was passed which allowed only Ivorian citizens to own rural land, immediately calling huge numbers of land claims into dispute.^[4] These initial land disputes stoked tensions and prefigured bloodier land disputes, displacement, and reprisals a decade later.

On 24 December 1999, General Robert Guéi deposed Bédié and sought to exploit a new conception of Ivoirité that differentiated Ivoirians regionally between north and south.^[5] Soon after the coup, tension between Guéi's supporters and primary opposition candidate Laurent Gbagbo led to political unrest. Although Gbagbo won the subsequent election, opposition to his own rule persisted.^[6] The two parties were able to form a unity government in August 2002, but the security situation quickly deteriorated and by the end of August two rebel groups were holding territory in the north. Over time, the three main rebel groups came together as the Forces Nouvelles (FN), led by Guillaume Soros. Quickly, the country was split in half with Gbagbo's government controlling the capital and the south, and Soros' FN controlling the north.

The 2002 coup and resulting series of political and military crises led to a series of international, bilateral, and sub-regional peacekeeping interventions. Between 500,000 to 1 million people were displaced in the violence immediately following the coup, 98 percent of whom lived with family located elsewhere in the country, not in camps.^[7]

ECOWAS, French, and UN Involvement

The most involved actors in early stabilization efforts were the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and France, Côte d'Ivoire's longtime military advisor and former colonial ruler. France sent troops to Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002 in what would become Operation Licorne, a force of 4,000 at peak. Their stated goal was to protect French citizens, but, even at the beginning of hostilities, each side of the conflict claimed the French were supporting the other side.^[8] ECOWAS decided on 29 September 2002 to dispatch a peacekeeping force, the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI), and planned to have 2,386 troops in the country by 31 December 2002, though only 500 had been deployed by the following February.^[9]

ECOWAS and France worked with the AU and UN to oversee negotiations culminating in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement of 24 January 2003. The agreement installed a "Government of National Reconciliation" tasked with preparing for elections after a DDR process, and attempted to strengthen institutions and undo the damage of Ivoirité-driven politics. Security Council resolution 1464 (4 February 2003) endorsed Linas-Marcoussis and retroactively approved ECOMICI and Operation Licorne under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. A small political mission, the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), was established by resolution 1479 (13 May 2003) to support facilitation the agreement, including via a military liaison component, and with ECOMICI and Operation Licorne providing it military backing for a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

Transition to UNOCI

France, unconvinced of ECOMICI's ability to monitor the ceasefire, pushed for the creation of a UN peacekeeping operation,^[10] a request endorsed by Gbagbo. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was authorized by resolution 1528 (27 February 2004), absorbing ECOMICI troops and MINUCI components. UNOCI's goal was to support the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. Its Chapter VII mandate focused on overseeing the ceasefire and end of hostilities, promoting law and order, facilitating humanitarian assistance, elections, promoting law and order, security sector reform (SSR), and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). UNOCI's initial authorization included 6,240 personnel, including 200 military observers and up to 350 civilian police officers.

Operation Licorne was authorized by resolution 1528 to use all necessary means in support of UNOCI, including in areas outside of UNOCI control, and in protection of civilians. Operation Licorne's Rapid Reaction Force provided a dynamic support beyond UNOCI's capabilities, and French officers within UNOCI served as liaisons between the UN and French forces such that they "operated together with separate but permanently liaised command and control structures."^[11]

Resolution 1609 (24 June 2005) later increased UNOCI's military cap by 850 and its police component by 725, and resolution 1682 (2 June 2006) increased the personnel cap by 1,500. Resolution 1865 (27 January 2009) reduced troops from 8115 to 7450, though resolution 1942 (29 September 2010) increased overall personnel to 9,150 temporarily for upcoming elections. UNOCI's numbers were periodically enhanced by a unique inter-mission cooperation framework with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), discussed in a subsequent section. Following the outbreak of violence after the election, also discussed below, resolution 1967 (19 January 2011) increased personnel dramatically by 2,000.

Arms Embargo and Sanctions

In response to government attacks on UNOCI in late 2004, resolution 1572 (15 November 2004) imposed an arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire, placing travel restrictions on individuals involved in the conflict and freezing their assets. The resolution also established a Sanctions Committee to oversee implementation of the resolution. Resolution 1584 (1 February 2005) subsequently authorized UNOCI and Operation Licorne to monitor the arms embargo and requested the Secretary-General establish a Group of Experts to monitor UNOCI and Operation Licorne's activities relating to arms flows and to monitor arms flows in the region.

Resolution 1643 (15 December 2005) continued the arms embargo and also imposed diamond sanctions on the country, with UNOCI to contribute to their implementation. UNOCI subsequently established a unique Embargo Cell within its mission structure in August 2006, per the advice of the Group of Experts. The Cell works with the Group of Experts and the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme on monitoring and enforcement, with positive results.^[12] The Group of Experts reported (S/2006/964, 12 December 2006) that the Cell "resulted in a tangible improvement in the methodology, quality and number of inspections carried out and

the creation of databases. There is also better liaison within UNOCI and with Licorne." The Group of Experts has consistently praised the work of the Embargo Cell in its reports, but has noted the need for the UN to provide more specialized staffing to the Cell, a request that appears to have been largely unmet. ^[13]

Inter-mission Cooperation

Starting in 2005, UNOCI found itself at the center of a unique new cooperation structure between regional UN peacekeeping operations that also included the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). In light of shared security needs, DDR processes, and cross-border flows of arms, refugees, and fighters between the three countries, the Secretary-General proposed a new cooperation structure (S/2005/135, 2 March 2005). Security Council resolution 1609 (24 June 2005) answered the Secretary-General's call, outlining joint air patrols for national borders, cross-border land patrols, coordination on border crossing points, cross-country operations for certain borders, and DDR coordination. The resolution indicated that permission would be needed from troop-contributing countries to redeploy troops across missions temporarily, with their same troop caps remaining based on their home mission.

The framework was referenced in resolution 1657 (6 February 2006), in which one UNMIL infantry unit was temporarily redeployed to UNOCI. A more significant impact was observable in resolution 1951 (24 November 2010), which rotated up to three infantry companies and an aviation unit with two military helicopters from UNMIL to UNOCI for stabilization purposes after the fall election run-off in Côte d'Ivoire. Resolution 2062 (26 July 2012) also loaned three armed helicopters from UNMIL to UNOCI for use on the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border.

Quick Reaction Force

In 2014, the Secretary-General built on the resolution 1609 inter-mission cooperation framework in a report (S/2014/342, 15 May 2014) that proposed the creation of a regional quick reaction force in UNOCI that would also support UNMIL, in order to “address incidents in Côte d’Ivoire and, at the same time, to rapidly respond in Liberia in the event of a serious deterioration in security.” Resolution 2162 (25 June 2014) acted ambitiously on this report, authorizing the establishment of the quick reaction force with the primary task of implementing UNOCI’s mandate but with the ability to deploy to Liberia to enforce UNMIL’s mandate. The force was structured such that the Secretary-General could deploy the force to Liberia as needed with the consent of the Liberian government and troop-contributing countries, with Security Council authorization needed only if the deployment exceeds 90 days. All UNOCI and UNMIL helicopters were authorized to be used in both countries.

Mediation Attempts, Setbacks, and Lead-up to Elections

When Gbagbo’s constitutionally limited term came to an end in 2005, ECOWAS, the AU, and the UN pushed for elections. South African President Thabo Mbeki acted as a mediator for the AU and was eventually able to bring the government and the FN together to sign the Pretoria Accord on 6 April 2005, and the Pretoria Declaration on 29 June 2005.

In January 2006, the UN proposed an election framework that limited Gbagbo’s power, leading to massive demonstrations in Abidjan and several other cities. Attacks on UN offices, buildings, and personnel led to all non-essential personnel being evacuated to Gambia. On 7 February 2006, the Security Council also sanctioned two members of the regime: Charles Blé Goudé, the leader of the Young Patriots militia group, for advocating violence against the UN and foreigners, participation and leadership in militia violence, intimidation of the press and opposition, and obstruction of UNOCI and Operation Licorne; and Eugène Ngoran Kouadio, for the same offenses.^[14] Also listed was Martin Kouakou Fofié, a military commander of the FN, based on his forces’ involvement in the use of child soldiers, abductions, forced labor, sexual abuse, extrajudicial killings, and obstruction of UNOCI and Operation Licorne, though the FN had not been involved in the violence.^[15] Later that year, the Security Council increased UNOCI’s mandate by 1,500 personnel via resolution 1682 to allow UNOCI to maintain its positions and activities in a dangerous security environment. UNOCI then deployed personnel to unstable districts throughout the country.^[16]

The Secretary-General then convened ECOWAS-AU-UN peace negotiations in New York. In November 2006, the Security Council adopted resolution 1721 (1 November 2006), which extended the president’s term for another transitional 12 months and strengthened the mandate of the prime minister. Gbagbo immediately reacted negatively to the resolution and called for an “Africanization” of the peace process. He was able to delay an additional three years before elections were finally held in 2010.

On 4 March 2007 Gbagbo and then-secretary-general of FN, Guillaume Soro, signed the Ouagadougou Peace Accord, mediated by then-president of Burkina Faso Blaise Compaoré and ECOWAS. The agreement, which enjoyed broad support, consisted of four main components: 1) identifying the population and providing identity documents; 2) scheduling and organizing presidential elections to be supervised and certified by the UN; 3) SSR, primarily creating new security forces; and 4) restoring state authority throughout all of the states’ territory.^[17] The primacy of citizenship and enfranchisement in the peace agreement reflects the depth of the division over who qualified for true “Ivoirité.”

Elections were finally scheduled for 31 October 2010, with a run-off on 28 November 2010. Gbagbo competed against former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara. UNOCI provided technical, logistical, and security support to the elections, with the head of UNOCI certifying the results.

Post-electoral Violence and Stabilization

Delayed since 2005, the 2010 elections sparked yet another political and military crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.^[18] The delay was due in part to the failure to implement provisions in the agreement for creating a unified national army and disbanding non-state armed groups. As a result, a winner-take-all election was held, with each party controlling its own armed forces and its own territory. Gbagbo permitted the elections to proceed on the mistaken assumption that he was sure to win. As the results came in, there was clear evidence for discrepancies by both parties, but the weight of evidence pointed towards a Ouattara victory. While the constitutional mechanisms for ascertaining the outcome remained deadlocked, the institutions followed the party affiliations of their respective heads, the UN SRSG declared for Ouattara. Gbagbo refused to give up power. In succession the UN, AU, EU and ECOWAS endorsed the result. The ensuing violence threw the country into turmoil. As the country descended into even greater violence, the AU established a High-Level Panel for the resolution of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.^[19] Some African leaders had expressed displeasure at the large role the UN was playing in what they saw as an African conflict that should be resolved by Africans.^[20] The AU Peace and Security Council expressed its concern over the elections being "a fait accompli," and the AU suspended Côte d'Ivoire. Mbeki returned to Abidjan to reprise his role as a mediator. He sought a power-sharing agreement, on the argument that neither contender could rule the country without the consent of the supporters of the other. He did not succeed. The former Burkinabe Foreign Minister Djibril Bassolé, also sought a negotiated settlement, more amenable to the agenda of Ouattara. That failed, and the AU sought a new mediator and settled on the controversial choice of Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga.^[21]

With backing from the AU, UN, and ECOWAS, Ouattara organized the former FN rebels into the Forces Républicaines de la Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI). At the same time, rising violence, especially in Abidjan, further convinced the international community and some African leaders that Gbagbo must go. When the FRCI launched an offensive, France and Nigeria sponsored resolution 1975 (30 March 2011), which called for Gbagbo to stand down and an end to the continued violence against civilians and also imposed targeted sanctions against Gbagbo, his wife, and three other members of their party. Gbagbo and his supporters fought back against the targeted sanctions by robbing the nations banks and bringing its financial system to a standstill.^[22] Resolution 1975 also strengthened a protection of civilians mandate and focus to the UNOCI and Operation Licorne mandates. Echoing other outbreaks of ethnic violence, the use of Radiodiffusion Télévision Ivoirienne (RTI) to incite discrimination and violence was strongly condemned in Resolution 1975.

African leaders who continued to support Gbagbo saw UNOCI actions to protect civilians following the elections as support for the FN, and a breach of impartiality and neutrality. UNOCI, however, saw its actions to protect itself and civilians under attack from heavy weapons in the capital as appropriate activities in line with their mandate.^[23]

Without UN support, Gbagbo supporters believe, the FN/FRCI could never have defeated Gbagbo's forces.^[24] In April 2011, the FRCI and the international community (UNOCI and Operation Licorne) forced Gbagbo from the presidential residence. Ouattara's forces, UNOCI and Operation Licorne troops arrested Gbagbo on 11 April 2011 and transferred him to the custody of Ouattara's government. A month later, Ouattara was sworn in as president.

As Ouattara took office, looting and fighting among groups loyal to Ouattara and groups loyal to Gbagbo continued. Reports of reprisal killings led to calls for UNOCI to take more aggressive action to protect civilians.^[25] UNOCI troops began patrolling Abidjan, controlling key bridges and intersections, gathering arms and ammunition, and receiving demobilized pro-Gbagbo fighters.^[26] Security Council in resolution 1980 (S/RES/1980, 28 April 2011) encouraged non-state armed groups to disarm and demobilize and charged UNOCI with aiding the Ivorian government in collecting the arms. In the face of continued crisis, the UN redeployed three infantry companies from UNMIL to UNOCI via UN Security Council resolution 1951.

By this time, the humanitarian crisis had deepened and 70,000 Ivoirians had fled to Liberia with 40,000 newly displaced within Côte d'Ivoire.^[27] Many of those fleeing belonged to the Guéré ethnic group (predominant in western Côte d'Ivoire who are ethnically and linguistically linked to the Krahn in Liberia). They are traditionally supporters of Gbagbo.^[28] The UN estimated around 3,000 people were killed in the crisis following the election.^[29] Both Gbagbo and Ouattara supporters committed atrocities. In the early days after the election, pro-Gbagbo militias and Liberian mercenaries slaughtered hundreds after identifying them by ethnicity, especially those who could not speak Guéré.^[30] In retaliation, the FRCI killed Guéré villagers and burned entire villages to the ground.^[31]

Concerned about the human rights abuses committed in Côte d'Ivoire, the UN Human Rights Commission established an independent international commission of inquiry.^[32] Finding that many human rights abuses had been committed, it recommended a focus on bringing perpetrators to justice and national reconciliation.^[33] The government of Côte d'Ivoire also created a Special Investigation and Examination Unit (CSEI) to investigate crimes committed during the post-election crisis.^[34] The failure of the CSEI to appropriately investigate and prosecute the Republican Forces (FRCI) prompted claims of victors' justice.

Following the 2010 elections and investigations into human rights abuses and crimes against humanity, the International Criminal Court (ICC) charged Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé with four counts of crimes against humanity committed during the election violence. They are being tried together. The Ivoirian government turned Gbagbo over to ICC custody in 2011, but Blé Goudé did not surrender to the ICC until 2014.

SSR and DDR

One of UNOCI's key goals, especially since the 2010 elections, has been to implement SSR. Despite this international attention, corruption within the security forces is rampant and security officers continue to extort citizens on a regular basis.^[35] This extortion is particularly worrying because the brunt of it is born by those perceived as foreigners, especially *Burkinabé*.^[36] The extortion also reflects the failures of DDR as many of the individuals manning unlawful checkpoints were volunteers fighters or fought as irregulars alongside FN.^[37] 30 June 2015 was the deadline for former combatants to enter the DDR process,^[38] but DDR needs remain acute.

Since the electoral crisis, the Secretary-General has noted ongoing SSR challenges, including weak civilian oversight of the military, which also lacks equipment, training, and discipline, as well as insufficient police training and capacity.^[39] Political and organizational problems remain acute in a security sector whose disorganization has been "exacerbated by mistrust resulting from the political affiliations of some of its members and the absence of a unified chain of command."^[40]

Despite these challenges, the Secretary-General has noted "improved capacity and increased presence of the national security agencies [...] across the country."^[41] The National Security Council, newly created in 2012 with UNOCI support, has also been evaluated as effective and has identified both short- and long-term SSR strategies for the country that emphasize decentralization and national ownership.^[42] UNOCI has also trained at least 7,000 police officers in human rights and child protection, assisted in improved parliamentary oversight of the security sector, and supported the drafting of police-related legislation.^[43] With UNOCI support, the government established a national training program for the gendarmerie from 2015-2019.^[44]

After the Crisis

The 2014 *Global Peace Index* suggests that "a return to all-out conflict, as experienced during 2010-2011, is unlikely in the current political environment."^[45] Relative stability has been accompanied by a corresponding reduction in UNOCI forces: resolution 2112 (30 July 2013) announced a reconfiguration by

which UNOCI would consist of 6,945 troops and staff officers, with 192 military observers, by 30 June 2014. Resolution 2162 (25 June 2014) further reduced the troop cap to 5,245, while authorizing the above mentioned quick reaction force to deploy to Liberia to assist UNMIL if necessary. Despite the overall improvement in security, small-scale conflict has continued. As UNOCI focused on SSR and DDR, reprisal attacks against Gbagbo supporters and presumed Gbagbo supporters continued through 2013 with many detained without charge and tortured.^[46] Land grabbing and land tenure disputes accompanied the continuing violence.^[47] Ethnicity was central to these conflicts as many Guéré had fled and their land was taken over by other ethnic groups. The Guéré saw these ethnic groups as outsiders, particularly as *Burkinabé* foreigners. Those now possessing the land countered that the Guéré were attempting to dispossess them of land they had legitimately acquired, and that the land claims were one more tactic among many others to try to terrorize the “foreigners” and drive them off the land.^[48]

UN and international attention focused on the presidential elections of 25 October 2015, in which Ouattara achieved an overwhelming re-election victory with 84% of the votes, though with lower turnout than 2010. The Secretary-General welcomed the results as lawful.

UNOCI is current led by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Aïchatou Mindaoudou (Niger), with Simon Munzu (Cameroon) serving as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and M'Baye Babacar Cissé (Senegal) serving as the triple-hatted Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator, and Humanitarian Coordinator. UNOCI's budget for 2014-2015 was \$493.57 million.

As of 30 June 2015, UNOCI's uniformed personnel consisted of 5,259 troops, 174 military observers, and 1,480 police, including formed police units. UNOCI and the French force supporting UNOCI are authorized through June 2016. Over the course of the mission, troops and police were contributed from all over the world, and African countries were notably well-represented.^[49] UNOCI has suffered 135 deaths in its 11 years of operations, the majority of them military.

II. Key Issues, Dilemmas, and Lessons from UNOCI

1. Peacekeeping Cannot Substitute for Political Solutions and Solid Accords

Peacekeeping in Côte d'Ivoire, as elsewhere, is a fundamentally political process and not merely a technical one, dependent on strong accords with broad societal support. Deployed to enforce peace agreements worth little more than the paper they were printed on, UNOCI had the impossible task of trying to enforce peace and protect civilians during a civil war. Without a political solution it could only operate at the edges of an intractable conflict, serving many adapting roles, from SSR leader, to peacekeeper when there was no peace to keep, to elections facilitators. As was recognized in the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations in 2015, peacekeeping is one of several tools that must be employed alongside preventative diplomacy and mediation in order to bring about effective long-term solutions.

2. Opportunities and Challenges with Inter-Mission Cooperation

The innovative inter-mission cooperation framework between UNOCI and UNMIL (and UNAMSIL, prior to its closure at the end of 2005) offers an intriguing potential model for more regionally focused, flexible deployments in peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General noted in a 2015 report (A/70/357-S/2015/682, 2 September 2015) the potential of inter-mission cooperation and the quick reaction force, indicating his intent to “further explore rapid and time-bound transfer of assets and capabilities from existing missions to meet crises or start-up needs.”

While a truly regional peacekeeping operation, with offices in multiple countries and troops that can move freely across several borders, is unlikely at this time, UNOCI is at the vanguard in flexible regional deployments in UN peacekeeping. Modern peacekeeping operations remain grounded largely in single states, but working within traditional Westphalian boundaries is increasingly ill-suited for dealing with a preponderance of cross-border actors and conflict drivers. The inter-mission cooperation framework responds to the reality of regional interdependence, as well as the need to share resources given limitations in peacekeeping budgets, troop numbers, and equipment.

UNOCI's quick reaction force in particular is an interesting counterpoint to the Force Intervention Brigade within the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). While the former is premised around inter-mission cooperation and the latter on offensive operations with or without the government, they both reflect experiments with flexible and dynamic sub-units within larger operations.

Assuming that such initiatives continue, challenges may include reluctance among troop-contributing countries to see their personnel dispatched across different security contexts in various peacekeeping operations, as well as displeasure among missions that may suddenly find themselves short-staffed due to redeployments. It will remain particularly important to have mechanisms to train redeployed troops in their temporary new mission contexts: past experience has shown that regional and sub-regional peacekeeping forces do not always understand and fully enforce their new mandates when they are re-hatted into UN forces.^[50]

3. Potential of the Embargo Cell

UNOCI's Embargo Cell was unique to UN peacekeeping, offering a means for ongoing monitoring of sanctions even while the Group of Experts was not in the country. Victoria Holt and Alix Boucher have suggested that "Ideally, peace operations with this type of mandate would create such a cell, use opportunities for experts to provide training, and develop formal mechanisms for cooperation between the panel [e.g., Group of Experts] and the peace operation."^[51] Despite the positive evaluation of the Embargo Cell, it appears to have been consistently short of specialized staff to conduct the monitoring work necessary to implement sanctions. The failure to allot additional human resources to the Cell despite the large size of UNOCI may indicate a broader disconnect between the sanctions-related work of Groups of Experts (managed by the Department of Political Affairs) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Small staffing adjustments could have large positive impacts in future missions.

4. SSR and DDR: Just Going Through the Motions?

The failure of SSR and DDR underpinned the 2010 post-election crisis. Now a focus for UNOCI, SSR efforts have not been sufficiently robust. A recent report by the Secretary-General found that "the human rights situation was characterized by report of arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, ill treatment, racketeering, extortion and sexual and gender-based violence against women and children."^[52] High levels of impunity for crimes perpetrated by state security forces remain. While mission fatigue is setting in, SSR is a critical focus for the remainder of the mission.

As of 1 May 2015, 50,121 former combatants, including 3,780 women, had received DDR services.^[53] DDR is a mission priority and a key to a durable peace, yet after nearly a decade of attempting to undertake DDR, the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire has found that "the presence of non-registered military elements and the large quantities of weapons and ammunition that remain unaccounted for are a concern... Security sector reform recorded mixed results because the legal framework has not been fully established and the police and the gendarmerie are underequipped, raising concern about their capacity to ensure public safety and order."^[54]

A new follow-on political mission might be able to reinvigorate this process and rally international and regional support. Though deeply involved in mediation throughout the conflict, the AU and ECOWAS haven't been engaged in SSR, even as ECOWAS is seeking a greater role in SSR and peacebuilding in the region.

5. Elections as a Flashpoint

Côte d'Ivoire had no history of fair and successful elections prior to 2015. Even during UNOCI's deployment, elections were not held as scheduled. The focus on elections was strategic, but without rule of law and political reconciliation, the elections could not move Côte d'Ivoire towards recovery. Most critical was the failure to complete SSR/DDR programs prior to holding elections, so that a divisive election on a winner-takes-all basis was held at a time when the country was divided into territories controlled by the armed forces of, respectively, the government and opposition. Gbagbo was able to delay elections for a shocking six years, and only with military force was he convinced to concede defeat.

This political manipulation and the violence surrounding the elections indicate what is increasingly clear in peacekeeping contexts in conflict-affected societies: a focus on elections as a reconciliation tool, or worse, an exit strategy, can have highly counterproductive results. Without sound institutions and accountability to the public, elections can divide societies that are still recovering from intense instability, with losers fearing disenfranchisement or worse and thereby unlikely to yield peacefully.

Alternatively, with greater investment in institutions and a bigger stick, the UN, France, the AU and ECOWAS may have been able to convince Gbagbo to hold elections earlier and to create stronger incentives for armed groups to buy into the electoral process. Without political commitment, the elections did not move the peacebuilding process forward and were flashpoints for violence.

6. France's Special Role in Francophone Africa

In Côte d'Ivoire as in other Francophone African countries, as Bruno Charbonneau finds, "the French state can intervene and interfere militarily in African political affairs, with or without UN legal authorisation, largely because of the context-specific dynamics of its relationships with Francophone African states."^[55] France's continued presence in Côte d'Ivoire and its many other former colonies in Africa undermines its position as an impartial actor, complicating its participation in peace operations. At the same time, the French military is both a capable force and willing to mobilize for peacekeeping operations across Africa unlike other strong military powers. In the early 2000s in particular, France's role as a peacekeeper and mediator in Côte d'Ivoire was paramount. A slight mid-2000s blip away from a foreign policy commitment to neo-colonialism notwithstanding, France has indicated it will continue to remain deeply invested in its former colonies. France remains the penholder (drafting lead) at the Security Council for issues related to Côte d'Ivoire.

III. UNOCI Literature Review Analyses and Scholarly Works:

Bovcon, Maja. "France's Conflict Resolution Strategy in Côte d'Ivoire and its Ethical Implications." *African Studies Quarterly* 11:1 (2009): 1-24.

Bovcon's work provides a useful window into the evolving forms of Ivoirité that have been used by the country's political figures to consolidate power or legitimize their rule. It also examines French interests and actions in its former colony.

Carter Center. International Election Observation Mission to Côte d'Ivoire. 2010 Presidential Elections and 2011 Legislative Elections. Atlanta: Carter Center. Available from

https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/cote-divoire-2010-2011-elections-final-rpt.pdf.

The Carter Center, a seasoned international elections observer, provides an extensive report on its observations of the 2010 elections in Côte d'Ivoire. The Center's reporting, critical of the government's attempts to reject Ouattara's victory, provided one basis by which the international community backed Ouattara, with dire results for Gbagbo.

Charbonneau, Bruno. "International Intervention in Cote d'Ivoire: The Changing Specificity of a Francophone Space." In *Peace Operations in the Francophone World: Global Governance Meets Post-Colonialism*. Bruno Charbonneau and Tony Chafer, eds. **Cass Series on Peacekeeping**. New York: Routledge, 2014,

A critical view of French intervention in its former colonies, this chapter puts the international intervention in Côte D'Ivoire into the broader frame of Francophonie.

Human Rights Watch. "Côte d'Ivoire: Extortion by Security Forces." New York: Human Rights Watch, July 2015. Available from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/29/cote-divoire-extortion-security-forces>.

This Human Rights Watch report outlines continued abuses by the Ivorian security sector and suggests the shortcomings of SSR efforts in the country thus far.

Mbeki, Thabo. "What the World Got Wrong in Côte D'Ivoire." *Foreign Policy*. 29 April 2011. Accessed 13 August 2015. Available from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/04/29/what-the-world-got-wrong-in-cote-divoire>.

As a former mediator in the country, Mbeki argues that elections were held at the wrong time in Côte d'Ivoire and were not used as an opportunity to discuss the long-term future of the country. Mbeki notes that the AU has continued to be denied the opportunity to address African problems, and suggests that the UN abandoned its neutrality unwisely.

McGovern, Mike. "The Ivorian Endgame." *Foreign Affairs*. 14 April 2011. Accessed 13 August 2015. Available from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/west-africa/2011-04-14/ivorian-endgame>.

This article provides a concise overview of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire that goes beyond the simplistic Christian-Muslim narrative, while also warning over the need for neutrality in light of the international response to the disputed 2010 elections.

Mitter, Siddhartha. "Ebony and Ivoirite: War and Peace in Ivory Coast." *Transition No. 94 (2003): 30-55*.

This article describes Bédié and Gbagbo's skilled use of Ivoirité to undercut their political opponents. It also chronicles observations by Ivorian communities abroad.

Schori, Pierre. "ECOWAS and the AU in Cooperation with the UN: The Case of Côte d'Ivoire." In *Regional Organizations and Peacemaking: Challengers To the UN?* Peter Wallensteen and Anders Bjurner, eds. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Schori's work explores lessons from UNOCI that can be applied to future UN-regional cooperation in peacekeeping under Chapter VIII. He also provides an account of the mediation processes active during UNOCI's deployment.

Relevant Resolutions, Reports, and Agreements

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European Parliament. Resolution on the Situation in Côte d'Ivoire. B7-0707/2010. 16 December 2010.

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Pretoria Declaration. 29 June 2005.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Human Rights Watch, "'That Land Is My Family's Wealth': Addressing Land Dispossession after Cote d'Ivoire's Post-Election Conflict" (New York: Human Rights Watch, October 9, 2013); available from <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/10/09/land-my-familys-wealth/addressing-land-dispossession-after-cote-divoires-post>.

[5] Maja Bovcon, "France's Conflict Resolution Strategy in Côte d'Ivoire and its Ethical Implications," *African Studies Quarterly* 11:1 (Fall 2009): 3.

[6] Under Gbagbo, the dangerously exclusionary politics continued, with an expanded definition of foreigners that also included second-generation immigrants born in the country as well as internal migrants. See Maja Bovcon, "France's Conflict Resolution Strategy in Côte d'Ivoire and its Ethical Implications," *African Studies Quarterly* 11:1 (Fall 2009): 3.

[7] Walter Kaelin, "Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons: An Essential Dimension of Peacebuilding," Briefing Paper (UN Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned), 4 (accessed 3 September 2015), available from http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/doc_wgll/comparative_lessons_internal_displacement/13_03_2008_background_note.pdf.

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[9] Though ECOMICI faced challenges in establishing its headquarters, equipment, and coordination, the consensus within ECOWAS over its deployment already represented a dramatic improvement over the fractious deployment of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia in 1990, a trend that further improved with the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) in August 2003. See Maja Bovcon,

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[16] Alex J. Bellamy and Paul Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping* (Polity, 2010), 148.

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[19] African Union, Communiqué of the 259th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, PSC/AHG/COMM (28 January 2011).

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[23] "Presidential Elections. UNOCI Resources - United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire."

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[36] Ibid.

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[47] "‘That Land Is My Family’s Wealth’: Addressing Land Dispossession after Cote d’Ivoire’s Post-Election Conflict."

[48] Ibid.

[49] Over the course of the mission, the following countries have contributed military personnel: Bangladesh; Benin; Bolivia; Brazil; Cameroon; Chad; China; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; Ethiopia; France; Gambia; Ghana; Guatemala; Guinea; India; Ireland; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Malawi; Morocco; Namibia; Nepal; Niger; Nigeria; Pakistan; Paraguay; Peru; Poland; Republic of Korea; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Russian Federation; Senegal; Serbia; Spain; Togo; Tunisia; Uganda; Ukraine; Uruguay; Yemen; Zambia; and Zimbabwe. Police personnel have been contributed by: Argentina; Bangladesh; Benin; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Djibouti; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Egypt; France; Ghana; Jordan; Madagascar; Mauritania; Niger; Nigeria; Pakistan; Rwanda; Senegal; Switzerland; Togo; Tunisia; Turkey; Ukraine; Uruguay; Vanuatu; and Yemen.

[50] The UN observed such confusion in various cases, such as when ECOMOG in Sierra Leone was absorbed into UNAMSIL, or when the African-led MISCA force in the Central African Republic was absorbed into MINUSCA.

[51] Victoria Holt and Alix J. Boucher, "Framing the Issue: UN Responses to Corruption

and Criminal Networks in Post-Conflict Settings," *International Peacekeeping* 16:1 (January 2009): 27.

[52] United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2015/320 (7 May 2015).

[53] Ibid.

[54] United Nations, Letter Dated 13 April 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1572 (2004) Concerning Côte d’Ivoire Addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2015/252 (13 April 2015).

[55] Charbonneau, "International Intervention in Cote d’Ivoire: The Changing Specificity of a Francophone Space," 1