

# AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

## CAN THE POLITICAL CRISIS STILL BE RESOLVED BY DIPLOMACY?

*Klaus D. Loetzer / Anja Casper*

It's time to come back down to earth. After a five-year delay, the first round of the Côte d'Ivoire's presidential elections finally went off peacefully and without technical hitches on October 31, 2010, leading many people to think that the country had taken a miraculous turn for the better. But they were soon to be disillusioned. After the run-offs on November 28, both candidates have been sworn in as President and they have both named their Prime Ministers and cabinets.

Laurent Gbagbo, 65, is the socialist leader of the FPI and has been the incumbent president since the disputed elections held in 2000. He entered the second ballot as candidate for the LMP coalition. As the incumbent President, he has control over the country's institutions such as its fiscal authority and state television. And most importantly, he has the backing of the country's armed forces and police. He is still presiding over the country from his presidential palace, but he is internationally isolated. Côte d'Ivoire has been suspended by the Economic Community of West African States (CEDEAO) and the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), based in Dakar. Senegal has frozen Gbagbo's access to the Central Bank's funds.

Ex-Premier Ouattara<sup>1</sup>, 67, an internationally-recognized economist and president of the RDR entered the run-offs as the candidate for the RHDP coalition<sup>2</sup>, an alliance of parties which came together to fight the elections and which sees



Klaus D. Loetzer is head of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Programme "Political Dialogue West Africa" in Cotonou, Benin.



Anja Casper worked for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Benin from 2008 to 2010. She is now working in the European and International Cooperation Department in Berlin.

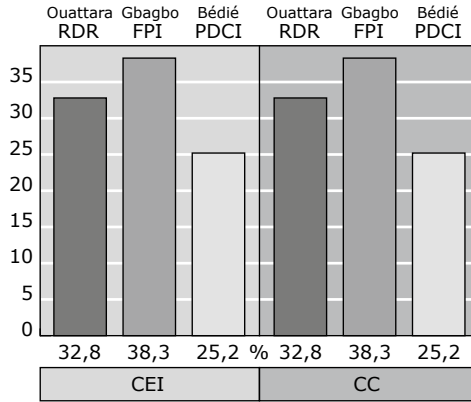
1 | Prime Minister 1990-1993 under Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

2 | Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace.

itself as the natural successor to the nation’s founder and long-serving president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny.<sup>3</sup> The PDCI, led by former president Bédié<sup>4</sup>, which came third in the first round of voting also joined this coalition. Bédié was able to mobilise the majority of his supporters to vote for Ouattara in the second ballot, thus ensuring Ouattara’s victory. However, there was not sufficient solidarity amongst the RHDP parties for them to agree on a joint candidate for the first round. Ouattara was recognized as the victor by the whole international community, including the UN Security Council. He also had the support of the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), of which he is a former head, and as a result has a certain amount of control over the country’s state finances. He is running his government from the Hôtel du Golf, guarded by UN peacekeepers<sup>5</sup>.

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Fig. 1  
**Presidential elections, 1<sup>st</sup> ballot October 31, 2010**

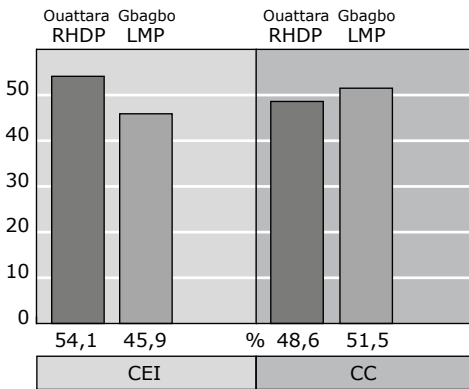


Source: CEI (confirmed by CC), [http://ceici.org/elections/docs/EPR\\_31102010\\_RESUL\\_PROVI\\_CEI\\_03112010\\_A4.pdf](http://ceici.org/elections/docs/EPR_31102010_RESUL_PROVI_CEI_03112010_A4.pdf) (accessed December 14, 2010).

Abbr.: CEI – Commission Électorale Indépendante (Independent Electoral Commission), CC – Conseil Constitutionnel (Constitutional Council), RHDP – Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix, LMP – La Majorité Présidentielle, FPI – Front Populaire Ivoirien, RDR – Rassemblement des Républicains, PDCI – Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire

3 | In office from 1960 to his death in 1993.  
 4 | In office from 1993 to 1999 (coup).  
 5 | UN peacekeeping mission UNOCI (United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire).

Fig. 2

**Presidential elections, 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot November 28, 2010**

Source: CC, <http://news.abidjan.net/h/382101.html> (accessed December 14, 2010).

With two rival presidents being declared after the second ballot, Côte d'Ivoire has politically fallen way behind in terms of the progress that was hoped for after the end of the 2007 civil war. The process which was set in motion at this point, which included preparation for the elections by agreeing a register of voters and an amicable resolution of the thorny problem of citizenship, had awakened high hopes, but more among the international community than among the Ivorians themselves. Otherwise we would not have seen the mass hoarding of food and petrol that broke out even before the first round of voting, and even more so in the lead-up to the second ballot. It is clear that the people had no confidence in the elections going off peacefully, but no-one imagined quite how bad it was going to be. Andreas Mehler, political analyst and expert on West Africa, and Director of the GIGA Institute of African Studies, writes in this respect: "Over the last three-and-a-half years, a power sharing deal between Gbagbo and ex-rebel leader Guillaume Soro has brought a period of relative peace, but has not proven to be the hoped-for overall solution. This power sharing arrangement was clearly only meant for a transitional period".<sup>6</sup> In any case, Mehler continues, hardly anyone was asking the question: "A transition is fine, but where is it leading?"

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6 | Andreas Mehler, "Côte d'Ivoire: kein Ausweg durch Machtteilung," *GIGA Focus Afrika*, N° 10/2010, 1, in: <http://giga-hamburg.de/giga-focus/afrika> (accessed December 16, 2010).

## ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE REMINISCENT OF CIVIL WAR

In light of the current political stalemate, the situation in Côte d'Ivoire is very tense. Despite an official curfew, official sources report that 60 people have been killed and several hundreds injured.<sup>7</sup> Every day there are reports of fresh atrocities, not just coming from the Ouattara camp but also from credible sources such as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay. She places the blame for the nightly killings and abductions on Liberian and Angolan mercenaries, supported by Gbagbo's elite Garde Républicaine. Gbagbo for his part has publicly demanded the withdrawal of UNOCI peacekeeping troops and supporting French units from the country, on the grounds that they are partisan. As a result his security forces have blockaded the temporary offices of Alassane Ouattara at the UNOCI-guarded Hôtel du Golf. UN patrols have been shot at and armed students supporting Gbagbo, the *Jeunes Patriotes*, have been threatening UNOCI staff at night in their homes. If this continues, the position of the UN's blue berets will become increasingly precarious, and increasing their ranks with 500 more soldiers (as agreed on December 20 by the UN Security Council) will do little to improve matters.

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The international community headed by the UN – the EU, USA, African organisations such as the African Union (AU), the West African Economic Community CEDEAO and the West African Central Bank BCEAO – all oppose Gbagbo and support Ouattara as the Côte d'Ivoire's lawfully elected president. The AU's attempts at mediation through South Africa's former president Thabo Mbeki and more recently through AU Commission President Jean Ping have been fruitless. The EU and USA have imposed limited sanctions in the form of travel bans for Gbagbo and his close supporters, but all these actions just seem to make Gbagbo and his camp all the more determined to stand firm.

The danger that "the side which loses the elections will become radicalized"<sup>8</sup>, which Mehler refers to in his article, materialized just two weeks after the elections. The paradox

7 | Copy deadline of this issue: December 22, 2010.

8 | Mehler, n. 6, 6.

is that the *Majorité Présidentielle* (LMP) does not see itself as the loser, although this would seem to be true at first glance. On closer inspection it becomes more complicated. Among a total population of around 21 million, only approx. 5.78 million are eligible to vote because almost half of the Côte d'Ivoire population are minors. This soon puts any electoral majority into perspective. The Gbagbo camp seems keen to lay particular emphasis on this, irrespective of other factors. This is where the danger lies: they know that they manipulated the election results, but they believe this manipulation is morally justified, indeed imperative, because they are convinced that they have a majority. They ignore the fact that many people who were excluded from voting because of questions over their ancestry were supporters of Ouattara. With this conviction, and of course with the backing of the army, the Gbagbo camp feels ready to stand against the whole world.

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#### **PARALLELS WITH ZIMBABWE'S DICTATOR, MUGABE?**

Other factors are at play here. One is the *idée fixe* of liberation from its ex-colonial master, France. In this respect Gbagbo is at one with another dictator who lost an election but who has clung to power against the wishes of the international community: Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, another socialist. He has used the same rhetoric to bring about the economic destruction of his country. This has been going on in Zimbabwe for more than ten years and it is still not over, although the people are literally at a point of economic collapse, as is shown by the widespread return of bartering. There are other parallels: Alassane Ouattara (winner of the 2010 elections) is to Gbagbo what ex-leader of the opposition MDC (Movement for Democratic Change), Morgan Tsvangirai (winner of the 2008 elections), is to Mugabe. In both cases, the political opponent is seen as an agent of the West who defends foreign interests above the true interests of the people. Another parallel which Mugabe and Gbagbo would never mention is nevertheless very obvious. This is the question of tangible interests – in both cases the leader and his henchmen have amassed great wealth through corruption, abused human rights, and once they lose their grip on power they can expect to face charges at the International Court of Justice.

It is tempting to draw a parallel from the situation in Zimbabwe as to how long the current situation can continue in Côte d'Ivoire. The start of the crisis in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the turn of the century 1999/2000, so it has been going on for more than ten years. However, it should not be assumed that the present crisis in Côte d'Ivoire will also last that long. Zimbabwe has a totally different historical background, involving a war of liberation and the attainment of independence in 1980. In Zimbabwe the "Securocrats", the commanders of the security forces such as the army, police and secret service, wield the true power and Mugabe knows he can rely on them. They of course have their own internal disputes, but they would never defect to the Tsvangirai camp because of their view of themselves as revolutionaries and armed fighters in the war of liberation. In Côte d'Ivoire the security forces, particularly the elite Garde Républicaine, also known as the Gard Présidentielle, also guarantee Gbagbo's hold on power. But this is as far as the comparison goes, because, with the possible exception of the Garde Républicaine, their loyalty will not necessarily last forever and there is no similarity with Zimbabwe's totally different situation and history.

**In Côte d'Ivoire the elite Garde Républicaine guarantees Gbagbo's hold on power. But their loyalty will not necessarily last forever.**

Up until 2002 the Ivorian army was dominated by the north. Gbagbo deliberately changed this, filling the critical command posts and higher ranks of officers with his own appointments. In November 2010 the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's regional programme "Political Dialogue West Africa" (PDWA) based in Cotonou organised a congress of regional army officers, which included two participants from Côte d'Ivoire. These participants have remained in contact with their colleagues from Benin, who think it possible that there could at some point be a coup against Gbagbo. This would be likely to involve much bloodshed and could cost Gbagbo and others their lives. The question is, how could this situation arise?

## **GBAGBO USURPS POWER WITH THE HELP OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL**

Laurent Gbagbo, the incumbent president until the elections, is closely linked to the political destiny of Côte d'Ivoire. During the presidency of the nation's founder and first president Félix Houphouët-Boigny, this socialist student leader spent long periods in prison as punishment for his criticism of the one-party regime. Proud of his peasant roots, Gbagbo stood in the 1990 presidential elections for the first time, but won less than 20 per cent of the vote. After the disputed elections of 2000, when allegedly only 37 per cent of the population cast their vote,<sup>9</sup> Gbagbo refused to hand over power. His desire for power is bolstered by his ambitious wife Simone, who was also active in the socialist student movement and who, it is claimed, is not only the power behind the throne but was also implicated in war crimes during the Ivorian civil war. She is also accused of being involved in the murder of a journalist who was investigating corruption in Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>10</sup> When his mandate ran out in 2005, Gbagbo postponed the elections eight times, and a few weeks before the vote he explicitly stated that he would never hand over power to Houphouët-Boigny's successors. In August 2009, so as not to leave anything to chance or to the democratic will of the people, Gbagbo appointed his party crony Paul Yao N'Dré to the post of president of the Ivorian Constitutional Council. According to electoral law, the Constitutional Council has the final say on matters relating to electoral protests and announces and confirms the official result of the elections.

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This appointment of Paul Yao N'Dré to President of the Constitutional Council meant that President Gbagbo had a fellow party member ensconced in the most crucial strategic position when it came to the elections. The appointment

9 | The circumstances are contested. There was violent rioting after first General Robert Gueï, and then Laurent Gbagbo announced themselves victors before all the votes had been counted. It is therefore possible that the count was stopped before all the votes were counted.

10 | Cf. e.g.: france24.com, "Affaire Kieffer – Simone Gbagbo entendue par des juges français à Abidjan," <http://f24.my/f2kVtI> (accessed December 14, 2010).

came under fire from all the opposition parties, who felt it strongly compromised the neutrality of the election process. Nevertheless, the appointment was in fact constitutional, as the previous incumbent had reached the end of his term. It was repeatedly argued that Paul Yao N'Dré should be appointed as a political counterweight to the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), which was dominated by the opposition and of which the Chairman, Yousouf Bakayoko, is a member of the PDCI. They may have had a point, but Gbagbo went on to change the configuration of the Electoral Commission so that it was politically biased.<sup>11</sup> In early 2010 he dissolved the CEI Electoral Commission, with Bakayoko only then taking over as Chairman, and Gbagbo could have dissolved the Commission again if he thought Bakayoko was too partisan.

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Once Bakayoko announced Ouattara's victory with 54 per cent of the vote on the night of Wednesday to Thursday after the elections, the Gbagbo camp weighed in. The final decision lay with Gbagbo's crony N'Dré. The current situation in Côte d'Ivoire highlights the serious shortcomings in many of Africa's constitutional democracies. Constitutional bodies such as the CEI and the Constitutional Council are defined by their Chairmen, who also influence the public perception of these institutions, rather than being meaningful as independent organs of a constitutional state. The weakness of their institutions means that many African nations only have a democratic facade. It was also clearly a mistake to make political appointments to key institutions such as the CC and CEI, but the proposal that the electoral process should be depoliticized by appointing independent experts was rejected by all parties in the lead-up to the elections. At the end of the day, all sides were hoping to gain an advantage by exercising influence on these bodies.

11 | As happened in the Pretoria Agreement, upon which the 2007 Ouagadougou Agreement was based. Cf. *Radio France Internationale* (RFI), "L'accord de Pretoria du 6 avril 2005," [http://rfi.fr/actu/fr/articles/064/article\\_35315.asp](http://rfi.fr/actu/fr/articles/064/article_35315.asp) (accessed January 10, 2011).



Table 1  
**Electoral data**

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> ballot</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup> ballot</b>	
	<b>October 31, 2010<sup>12</sup></b>		<b>November 28, 2010<sup>13</sup></b>	
<b>Population (2008)<sup>14</sup></b>	approx. 20 million			
<b>Regions</b>	19 <sup>15</sup>			
<b>No. of Voting Stations</b>	19,854		20,073	
<b>Eligible Voters</b>	5,784,490		5,780,490	
	<b>absolute</b>		<b>per cent</b>	
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> ballot</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> ballot</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> ballot</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> ballot</b>
<b>Votes Cast</b>	4,843,445	4,689,366	83.73	81.12
<b>Invalid Votes</b>	225,624	99,147	4.66	2.11

Sources: Election results of the CEI<sup>12, 13</sup>

### **ELECTORAL COMPLAINTS: ARITHMETIC RATHER THAN VOTE CHECKING**

Even before the election results were announced, the Gbagbo camp had challenged the legitimacy of the voting in four northern regions,<sup>16</sup> which were controlled by the Forces Nouvelles, and on the Thursday morning they submitted an official complaint to the Constitutional Council. At 3 pm that same day Yao N'Dré cancelled the results of the Electoral Commission, annulled all votes in the seven northern provinces and declared Gbagbo to be the winner. This was all the more surprising in that there had been no time for any kind of vote checking. They simply worked on the arithmetic and annulled enough votes in the northern provinces until Gbagbo had a mathematical majority of more than 50 per cent. This corresponded to around 600,000 votes or approximately 13 per cent of votes cast.

12 | Cf. Overview with detailed election results, Commission Electorale Independante, [http://ceici.org/elections/docs/EPR\\_31102010\\_RESUL\\_PROVI\\_CEI\\_03112010\\_A4.pdf](http://ceici.org/elections/docs/EPR_31102010_RESUL_PROVI_CEI_03112010_A4.pdf) (accessed December 14, 2010).

13 | Cf. electoral data with a detailed breakdown of results, Commission Electorale Independante, [http://ceici.org/elections/docs/EPR2010\\_2T\\_RESULTATS\\_VALEURS\\_02122010.pdf](http://ceici.org/elections/docs/EPR2010_2T_RESULTATS_VALEURS_02122010.pdf) (accessed December 14, 2010).

14 | Cf. other key data: "Die Côte d'Ivoire in Stichpunkten," <http://kas.de/wf/de/71.6530> (accessed December 14, 2010).

15 | Plus city of Abidjan and diaspora (mainly Paris).

16 | (1) Vallée du Bandama (Bouaké), (2) Savanes (Korhogo), (3) Worodougou (Séguéla) and (4) Denguelé (Odienné).

If they had only annulled the votes in the four provinces they had initially complained about, Ouattara would still have retained his majority. This was said publicly by the real hero of the Ivorian election drama, the undaunted United Nations Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire and Head of the UNOCI peacekeeping mission, the South Korean Youn-jin Choi.<sup>17</sup> The votes of expatriate Ivorians living in France were also summarily declared to be invalid.

Another argument made by the Constitutional Council against the legitimacy of the results announced by the CEI was that the Electoral Commission did not announce the result within the legally-required time period. But this breach of electoral rules was actually caused by the Gbagbo camp. As all parties are represented in the independent Electoral Commission, Gbagbo's fellow party members were able to delay the announcement of the election results. In the event of disputed results, the CEI normally makes a decision based on consensus. This resulted in the CEI's results announcement being highly dramatic. To comply with electoral law, the election results must be announced no later than three days after the voting stations have closed, so the latest possible time was midnight on Wednesday. The first attempt was made on Tuesday evening at the Electoral Commission's office in front of live national (RTI) and international (RFI, BBC, CNN, Radio24) TV cameras. Just as the CEI representative was about to announce

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the first results, Gbagbo supporters within the Electoral Commission intervened and physically prevented him from reading out the results. On live TV they snatched the list of results from his hand, while the Garde Républicaine security forces simply looked on. Indeed, rather than protecting the CEI representative, they went on to clear the building of observers, journalists and TV cameras. This marked the end of the independent Electoral Commission which over the preceding months had managed to successfully defend itself against Gbagbo's influence. The independent Electoral Commission could only remain "independent" as long as it gave President Gbagbo the results he wanted, as happened

17 | Cf. "YJ Choi (ONUCI): 'Pourquoi j'ai certifié les résultats du scrutin'", in: *Abidjan.net* (Le Patriote), <http://news.abidjan.net/h/382148.html?n=382148> (accessed December 11, 2010).

in the first round. By Monday evening the Gbagbo camp knew the election result and knew that their candidate had lost. So now they were using every means at their disposal to prevent the announcement of this result. However, the incident at the results announcement made it clear that the CEI had not allowed itself to fall totally under Gbagbo's control. The fact that Gbagbo's supporters only managed to prevent the announcement at the very last minute, and on live TV, just showed the public that the Gbagbo camp wanted to stop the announcement and did not in any way detract from the CEI's results, which have been accepted as legitimate by the international community including the UN and AU.

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### **INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS DECLARE THE ELECTIONS DEMOCRATIC**

At the instigation of the UN Representative, the international community pressed for the election results to be announced quickly, in order to improve the precarious security situation and speed up the transfer of power to Ouattara. The elections were declared to be transparent and fair by the UN, by observers from the West African Economic Community CEDEAO led by Prof. Théodore Holo, President of the Benin Supreme Court, and above all by the 120-member EU observer mission led by the Romanian MEP Christian Preda. At a press conference, Holo stated: "One or two irregularities do not mean that the legitimacy of the whole election has been compromised."<sup>18</sup> Particularly in view of Ouattara's clear victory, we could add. The Carter Center in the USA also repeatedly called for an immediate announcement of the election results.

A few hours after the expiry of the deadline, the results were announced by CEI Chairman Youssouf Bakayoko outside the CEI's offices at the Hôtel du Golf, in front of the international press but in the absence of RTI, the Ivorian state television. The hotel, which was now the headquarters

18 | "Présidentielle/Observation de la mission de la CEDEAO – Pr Holo Théodore (Chef de mission) 'Deux ou trois incidents ne peuvent pas invalider ces élections,'" in: *IVOIRTV.net*, <http://ivoirtv.net/index.php/news/54-politique/545> (accessed January 10, 2011).

of President Ouattara, was guarded by heavily-armed UN peacekeeping units. Here too, the UNOCI Chief Youn-jin Choi played a decisive role. He deployed 150 blue berets to make sure Bakayoko was safely escorted to the Hôtel du Golf. But his continuing interventions incurred the wrath of incumbent President Gbagbo, who threatened to

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declare him *persona non grata* as a result of his interference in his host country's internal affairs. The involvement of the UN Special Representative and the role of the UN in the conflict has since then been hotly debated. Was it legitimate for Choi to speak out so plainly in favour of Ouattara's victory? Choi's special role was based on the 2005 Pretoria Agreement.<sup>19</sup> As a signatory, Laurent Gbagbo agreed to the special role of external institutions and gave away some of Côte d'Ivoire's sovereignty. But this was a *conditio sine qua non*, the only way to break the stalemate. After the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement in July 2007, the UN Security Council passed a resolution, article 6 of which gave the UN Special Representative the power to decide whether all stages of the election process had been carried out in accordance with democratic principles.<sup>20</sup> He was given this mandate for good reason, as was later to become clear. A common thread in all of Laurent Gbagbo's actions is the desire to renege on previous agreements.

Despite all his threats, so far Gbagbo has not taken action against Youn-jin Choi, but after the results announcement he imposed an immediate ban on all foreign TV and radio stations broadcasting from the Côte d'Ivoire. Since then, the people have been treated to socialist-style misleading and one-sided government propaganda by the state TV and radio broadcaster RTI, who also came to Gbagbo's aid during the election campaign. Only people with internet access still have a chance of getting independent information.

19 | Cf. n. 11.

20 | Cf. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1765 (2007), in: <http://undemocracy.com/S-RES-1765.pdf> (accessed January 10, 2011).

## EXCLUSION OF NORTHERN VOTERS

The manoeuvres of the Gbagbo camp meant that voters across the whole north of the country were excluded. As a result, the attempt to start a process of unification in order to close the gap between north and south – something which had been a goal of these elections – suffered a major setback. A driver from the north comments: “The Gbagbo camp has shown us that the Forces Nouvelles were right. I never really understood why we were fighting. We were told we were being attacked from outside. But now we can see that we were fighting for the north’s rights.”<sup>21</sup>

After the first round had gone off largely peacefully, tensions between rival supporters increased in the lead-up to the second ballot. Even early on there were deaths and injuries in the north and west of the country, but also particularly in the densely-populated southern areas of the country’s economic hub, Abidjan. Tensions increased still further in the week following the run-offs and significant violence broke out. On the Thursday after Gbagbo had been declared victor by the Constitutional Council, the situation escalated sharply and the military sealed off all land, air and sea borders for four days. Public statements by politicians of both sides just served to inflame the situation, although both leaders called on their supporters to remain calm and renounce violence. The deteriorating situation aroused anxiety among the population of neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso. They remembered only too well the civil war years of 2002 and 2003 when thousands of Ivorian refugees had flooded over the border. At the moment there are more than three million immigrants from Burkina Faso living in Côte d’Ivoire, who could flee back to their homeland if there is trouble. According to the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), 4,500 people have already fled to Liberia and Guinea (Conakry).

**In the week following the run-offs, significant violence broke out. After Gbagbo had been declared victor by the Constitutional Council, the situation escalated sharply.**

The events in Côte d’Ivoire have provided further proof that in the short-to-medium term “winner takes all” elections cannot be seen as lasting political solutions in

21 | “Le sentiment d’exclusion se renforce dans le Nord ivoirien,” *Abidjan.net* (Reuters), <http://news.abidjan.net/h/382913.html?n=382913> (accessed December 11, 2010).

African multi-ethnic states<sup>22</sup> with serious political conflicts (Zimbabwe is another example). On the contrary, these types of elections often just serve to exacerbate the problems and before, during and to some extent after the ballots lead to increased numbers of refugees, increased violence including deaths and injuries and, in the case of Zimbabwe and elsewhere, instances of torture. This is also attended by (additional) curbs on freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

### **ECONOMIC FALL-OUT AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY**

The political turbulence which has pervaded the country since the announcement of the "double" election victories of 28 November is more than just the result of a disputed presidential ballot. The elections were supposed to finally create a positive direction for the country. For the last 17 years it has been in a phase of political instability, which looks like it is going to continue for the foreseeable future.

Côte d'Ivoire was once the driving force of the West African economy and the region's most stable nation. The country prospered after gaining independence in 1960 and foreign companies, particularly from France, queued up to be part of its nascent industrialization. Côte d'Ivoire profited from the high prices which could be achieved in the world market for its main export goods, cocoa and coffee. This prosperity soon attracted an influx of immigrants from neighbouring Sahel countries, particularly Burkina Faso and Guinea. Founding father and President

**The collapse of raw materials prices on the world markets in the mid-80s triggered a deep economic crisis. Despite this, more and more immigrants flood in Côte d'Ivoire.**

Félix Houphouët-Boigny argued that people should have the right to own the land which they cultivated. But the collapse of raw materials prices on the world markets in the mid-80s ushered in the end of the Ivorian economic miracle and triggered a deep economic crisis. Despite this, more and more immigrants continued to flood in and soon were made scapegoats for all the country's economic and social problems, resulting in their exclusion from Ivorian society. This was accompanied by a change in the national consciousness: previously a true Ivorian was considered to be someone who was involved in building the country,

22 | In the sense of states with many different ethnic groups, as in the majority of African countries.

but now it was all tied up with the question of origins and ancestry and in terms of citizenship it became a political concept. This, despite the fact that today around one quarter of the population has foreign roots.

When President Félix Houphouët-Boigny died at the age of 88 in December 1993, after 33 years in office, there was a power vacuum. Boigny had run the country with an iron hand and his state party, the PDCI, had kept tight control of the country's administrative institutions. Opposition parties were allowed to exist after 1990, but they had no real effect. After Boigny's death, the precarious economic situation was heightened by a political crisis caused by the uncertainty over the President's successor. The collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War played its part in the resulting implosion of the one party system.

The law states that in the event of the death of the incumbent President, the President of the National Assembly should take over as transitional head of government until such time as new elections are held. In this way, Henri Konan Bédié succeeded the state's founder

to become the second President of Côte d'Ivoire. However, many people would have liked to see the economist and technocrat Ouattara at the nation's helm. Ouattara had been Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire since

1990 and enjoyed Boigny's total confidence. Boigny had ruled the country in an authoritarian fashion for thirty years without a prime minister, but when the economy became more precarious he turned to Ouattara, who had studied economics in the USA and spent many years working at the IMF, to consolidate the nation's stricken finances. As a result he was viewed by Boigny's supporters as the "well-deserved and popular" successor. For his part, Ouattara still denies today that he had his sights on being Houphouët-Boigny's successor at that time.

**Boigny had ruled the country in an authoritarian fashion for thirty years without a prime minister. But when the economy became more precarious he turned to Ouattara.**

## **IVOIRITÉ: FROM ELECTORAL MANIPULATION TO A COUP**

Henri Konan Bédié, the constitutional successor, was aware of the PDCI's loss of power and Ouattara's enormous popularity. He tried to hang onto power by making the question of Ivorian nationality and ancestry a campaign

issue, and the racist concept of *Ivoirité* can to a large extent be traced back to Bédié. The word appeared for the first time in the revised election legislation of 1994. Bédié, the instigator of this revision, stipulated that all candidates for the presidential elections to be held in 1995 had to comply with the *Ivoirité* clause which required not only the candidate himself but also both his parents to have been born in Côte d'Ivoire. In this way Bédié was able to prevent his fiercest rival, Prime Minister Ouattara, from standing as a candidate because it was said that one of his parents came from Burkina Faso. Ouattara himself has always denied this, but his objection was not recognised by the Constitutional Court and he was excluded from the 1995 elections. Laurent Gbagbo, founder of the underground FPI in 1982 – the first opposition party to come out against the PDCI – and who had spent some years in exile in France, criticized Bédié's decision and joined with other opposition parties to boycott the election, making Bédié's victory in 1995 a mere formality.

The 1995 presidential elections made it obvious that the political landscape in Côte d'Ivoire had been dominated by the same people for many years: firstly Henri Konan Bédié, who admittedly became President in a constitutional fashion but who never actually had to go to the people. Then Laurent Gbagbo, who for more than 30 years had personified the fundamental opposition to the PDCI state party and who had argued vehemently for a multi-party system. At one time he had been prepared to boycott the elections and hence give up what could have been a very real chance of being elected to the presidency in 1995. But after ten years in power he has also thrown his democratic principles overboard. And finally Ouattara, the technocrat, who as far back as 1993, was considered by many to be Boigny's legitimate successor. Now in 2010 he has in fact been recognized by the international community as the legitimate victor, but there are still questions about his political entanglements and the role he played in the political unrest at the turn of the new century. His opponents accuse him of using the concept of *Ivoirité*, which was originally used as a weapon against him, to drum up support from the people of the north. In the two-hour TV debate between the two candidates

**In 2010 Outarra has been recognized by the international community as the legitimate victor. But there are still questions about the role he played in the political unrest at the turn of the new century.**



held on November 25, 2010, Gbagbo constantly threw the accusation in Ouattara's face: "You are responsible for all the catastrophes in Côte d'Ivoire!"<sup>23</sup>

A second aspect of *Ivoirité* was that it enabled Bédié to exploit the country's economic crisis by making immigrants responsible for all the economic difficulties. But Bédié underestimated the consequences of the concept of *Ivoirité*. After the 1995 elections, this manipulation of the question of identity led to growing discrimination against large sections of the population, who responded with increasing unrest. The immigrants – who mainly lived in the north – were no longer prepared to put

up with being disparaged and deprived of their rights as citizens. Many of them were not allowed to vote or buy land, although they had been born in the country. President

**President Bédié's hold on the country's leadership was slipping, and the resulting political instability led to a coup in December 1999.**

Bédié's hold on the country's leadership was slipping, and the resulting political instability led to a coup in December 1999. It is ironic that Bédié, who had once used the idea of *Ivoirité* to help him become President, should now be driven out of office because of this discrimination which he set in motion against the immigrants in the north, and which even helped one of these immigrants to win a majority.

## **THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: GBAGBO HITS THE FINISHING LINE**

Towards the end of 1999 the country was getting ready for the presidential elections to be held in 2000. Ouattara wanted to stand once again, so in summer 1999 he returned to Côte d'Ivoire. He was elected President of the RDR founded by Djeni Kobina and became the party's new figurehead. He reiterated his claim that his parents were both Ivoirians and submitted his candidacy papers to the electoral bodies. The state expressed doubts about the authenticity of these papers and began proceedings against him for forging documents. He was found guilty and a warrant for his arrest was issued while he was out of the country. This led to growing unrest, with the situation

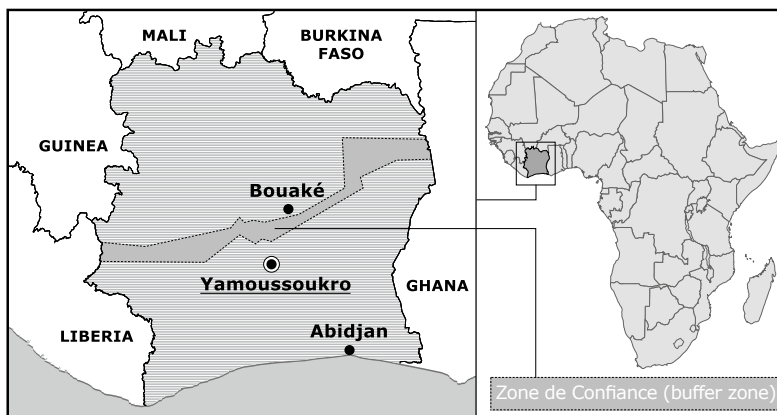
23 | "Présidentielle en Côte d'Ivoire: débat télévisé courtois entre les deux finalistes," in: *Abidjan.net* (RFI), <http://news.abidjan.net/h/381174.html> (accessed December 14, 2010).

quickly escalating in the space of a few weeks. Before 2002, most members of the armed forces had been northerners and as such had suffered from the discrimination which had been directed at them for so many years. They rose up against Bédié. General Gueï, who came from the west and who had been a close confidant of Boigny, took over provisional leadership of the country. Bédié fled abroad and Ouattara returned, knowing that he could rely on Gueï's support. In the lead-up to the elections it now looked as though Gbagbo and the FPI, who had consistently spoken out against the concept of *Ivoirité* and discrimination against immigrants, would now stand in direct opposition to Ouattara and the RDR. Ouattara's popularity had not diminished during his long absence. Gbagbo and Gueï, who was also a candidate, were only too aware of this fact. The General increasingly distanced himself from Ouattara, whose role in the December 1999 coup is still unclear. It was also thanks to the efforts of Gueï that the Constitutional Court once again accused the RDR and Ouattara of making false statements.

History repeated itself when interim president Gueï gained a mandate via referendum to change the electoral regulations, once again making it a requirement that both parents of presidential candidates must be born in the Côte d'Ivoire. Just as in 1995, Ouattara was not allowed to stand. This time Gbagbo did not protest for he knew that his political opponent was very popular and he and Gueï both saw him as their strongest rival. Bédié was also prevented from standing on flimsy procedural grounds. Gbagbo emerged as the victor in 2000, but the elections were marked by violent protests after first Gueï, then Gbagbo was announced as the winner. The supporters of the RDR, whose candidate Ouattara had been excluded from the vote, reacted particularly violently. More than 300 people were killed. The CEI finally announced Gbagbo to be the official winner with almost 60 per cent of the vote, with a turnout of 37 per cent, according to the CEI. The results were widely questioned, but the RDR's demand that the elections should be rerun was ignored.

**Gbagbo emerged as the victor in 2000, but the elections were marked by violent protests. More than 300 people were killed.**

Fig. 3

**Division of Côte d'Ivoire****DIALOGUE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION ENDS  
IN CIVIL WAR**

Gueï initially refused to accept the result, but then fled to the north of the country. Gbagbo, realizing he was in a precarious position, joined with Gueï, Bédié and Ouattara to start a dialogue for national reconciliation. In 2002 Ouattara was officially granted Ivorian citizenship by the Constitutional Court. A few weeks later, the unrest which had been simmering for two years escalated further and on September 19, 2002 a coup attempt led to civil war, in the course of which Gueï was killed and Ouattara fled the country. Ouattara's role was again brought into question: although he accused Gbagbo of inciting unrest by arresting several RDR members who came from the north, the uprising by the northern-dominated army was difficult to explain.

But the coup attempt by sections of the army did not lead to Gbagbo being forced from office. He was still there at the start of the civil war which lasted until 2007 and which led to the country being divided into the rebel-controlled north and the government-controlled south.

The civil war in Côte d'Ivoire should not be simplified by describing it as a conflict between the Muslim north and the Christian-Animist south. The religious divide is more readily explained by the fact that most immigrants who

were denied their rights as citizens because of the concept of *Ivoirité* came from the Muslim countries of the Sahel and hence are Muslims. So the civil war was not a religious conflict, as in Nigeria for example.

**The Ouagadougou Agreement provided for a government of national unity which would bring together the countries different power bases.**

In March 2007 the Ouagadougou Agreement, which was mediated by the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, brought an end to a civil war which had led to the displacement of 1.7 million refugees and the division of the country.<sup>24</sup> It was the last in a long series to resolve the conflict. The Ouagadougou Agreement provided for a government of national unity which would bring together all the countries different power bases. Guillaume Soro, the rebel leader from the north, was appointed Prime Minister. He was not able to stand in the 2010 elections as he was under the legally-stipulated age of 40 years. A few months later, in June 2007, the militias began to disarm and the buffer zone between north and south was dismantled.

After the Ouagadougou Agreement, preparations were set in motion for the presidential elections which had been overdue since 2005. It soon became clear that the planned timeframe of ten months was much too short because of two delicate issues. First of all, the accuracy of the electoral register had to be ensured in order to avoid renewed conflicts on the question of nationality. An accurate electoral register was an indispensable condition for peaceful elections, particularly as the 2002 register excluded many voters and was therefore hotly disputed. But the fact that many Ivoirians do not possess any proof of ancestry meant that clarifying the identity of many people was a political, rather than practical, issue. The question of identity has still not been clearly dealt with, as more than 40,000 entries in the electoral register were rejected.

Another important factor was the disarmament of the former rebel troops in the north and their integration into the armed forces, which proved to be a long and difficult process. Complications with voter registration and rebel disarmament were the two most common causes of the eight election postponements.

24 | Cf. Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, "Das Abkommen von Ouagadougou – Dem Frieden ein Stück näher," <http://kas.de/wf/de/71.6533> (accessed December 15, 2010).

This explains why the process of preparation was so important for holding peaceful elections. But for a long time it looked as if the country's politicians, particularly President Gbagbo, had no real interest in holding elections and in the end only scheduled them as a result of external pressure. Since 2007, Gbagbo has headed up a government of national unity. By constantly postponing the elections he has succeeded in holding onto power for ten years and expanding his party from its initial urban roots into more rural areas. The other parties involved in government also benefited from having access to power and resources. Political declarations and justifications for postponing the elections often appeared half-hearted, as each side knew that after the elections one of them would have to give up their sinecure.

It finally became clear that elections could no longer be avoided and that President Gbagbo could now only play for time. He dissolved his government and the independent Election Commission (CEI) in February 2010, knowing their reformulation would delay the elections by another few weeks. Gbagbo had from the start few opportunities to influence the CEI because it had remained neutral and independent through working with the UN and other international organisations. It is also a requirement that all parties send representatives to the CEI. So dissolving and reforming the CEI was not a strategic coup on Gbagbo's part which would secure his grip on power. Instead, as previously discussed, the key was his appointment of party crony Yao N'Dré as head of the Constitutional Council.

### **THE FIRST ROUND OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS – THE CÔTE D'IVOIRE MIRACLE**

When set against the Côte d'Ivoire's recent history, the run-up, the ballot itself on October 31, 2010 and the immediate aftermath of the first round could be described as "The Côte d'Ivoire Miracle".<sup>25</sup> For the most part

25 | For more detail on this and following cf. Klaus D. Loetzer, "Côte d'Ivoire: Seit fünf Jahren überfällige Präsidentschaftswahlen verlaufen friedlich," *KAS-Länderbericht*, November 5, 2010, <http://kas.de/westafrika/de/publications/21041> (accessed December 10, 2010); cf. also detailed online chronology at <http://kas.de/westafrika/de/pages/9708> (accessed December 10, 2010).

campaigning went off peacefully, apart from election posters being defaced and one or two ill-chosen slogans which Gbagbo used against Ouattara ("Alassane is a liar!") and Bédié against Ouattara ("The one who suddenly got rich!"). Gbagbo not only made use of the state radio and TV broadcasters to help his campaign but also used the state bus company to transport his supporters. Campaigning ended in Abidjan with Gbagbo and Ouattara holding impressive mass rallies of supporters. When

**Ouattara was way ahead of all the other candidates in terms of content, topics covered, presentation, organisation and the use of audio-visual media. In contrast, Bédié seemed tired.**

we assess the campaigns, it is clear that Alassane Ouattara was way ahead of all the other candidates in terms of content, topics covered, presentation, organisation and the use of audio-visual media. In contrast, the 76 year-old Bédié seemed tired. When his advisers tried to spur him on, his retort was "On n'a pas fait campagne!"<sup>26</sup>, adding the argument that, "I achieved much more between 1993 and 1999 than Gbagbo has since 2000"<sup>27</sup> He was the only one out of the fourteen candidates not to take part in a TV presentation, and he refused to print T-shirts, that essential ingredient of all African election campaigns. He also failed to put up any election posters, while the other candidates' photos and slogans were on every street corner.

On the actual day of the election there were no reports of any particular incidents. The international election observers, particularly the EU who had already been in the country for four weeks, confirmed that the election had gone off in a democratic fashion, with transparency and fairness.

Fourteen presidential candidates stood in the first round, including one woman.<sup>28</sup> Gulliaume Soro, General Secretary of Forces Nouvelles (FN), the political arm of the former northern rebels who had been Prime Minister under President Gbagbo since 2007, was not allowed to stand as he was only 39 years old (the minimum age for presidential candidates is 40). The other eleven candidates had no real chance against the political heavyweights Gbagbo,

26 | "We are not campaigning!"

27 | *Jeune Afrique*, November 13-17, 2010, 26.

28 | For an overview see <http://kas.de/wf/de/71.6539> (accessed December 10, 2010).

Bédié and Ouattara. Put together, they only won around four per cent of the vote, the same per centage as the invalid votes, which were very high at 4.66 per cent. This was put down to insufficient voter training programmes, but it should be noted that the UN and other international bodies, with the help of Ivorian NGOs, carried out comprehensive voter training during the run-up to the elections. And in the second ballot the amount of invalid votes halved to 2.11 per cent.

The extremely high voter turnout of 83.7 per cent can only be described as sensational. This was partly due to the fact that voters had gone so long without being able to exercise their right, for example it would have been the first time that a 29-year-old had ever voted. As the population of Côte d'Ivoire is very young (see chart), there was a high proportion of first-time voters. It was also clear that the population, particularly the young, had high hopes of using their vote to bring the country back together and create a better economic future. So the candidates' main campaign topics were youth unemployment and the anticipated peace dividend.

As none of the candidates won an absolute majority in the first round, the Ivorians were obliged to go to the polls for the second time in four weeks, after this democratic right had been denied them eight times in the previous five years. The elections had been constantly postponed because of the sensitive and time-consuming process of voter identification and because of the lack

of progress in disarming the ex-militia and soldiers of the Forces Nouvelles. But more recently the politicians themselves have been increasingly blamed for the failure to hold elections. Since the 2007 Agreement of

**Gbagbo was largely held responsible for postponing the elections, with his critics accusing him of delaying the vote in order to guarantee his own reelection.**

Ouagadougou, all the main political players had been represented in Prime Minister Soro's government, including the ex-rebels. In this kind of all-party government, elections would inevitably lead to at least one side losing their political sinecures. But President Gbagbo was largely held responsible for postponing the elections, with his critics accusing him of delaying the vote in order to guarantee his own reelection.

## OPPOSITION UNABLE TO UNITE ROUND A SINGLE CANDIDATE

By coming third in the first ballot, Henri Konan Bédié of the PDCI took on the mantle of kingmaker.<sup>29</sup> Everything hung on which candidate he told his supporters to vote for in the second ballot. This was to all intents and purposes a foregone conclusion, as the PDCI and RDR had joined together with two smaller parties in 2007 to form the RHDP party coalition. However, this coalition had not managed to unite around a single candidate. As a result, Bédié, Ouattara and Albert T. Mabri of the RHDP-allied UDPCI<sup>30</sup>

**Bédié and Ouattara formed an electoral pact in October, in which they agreed that whichever one of them came first in the second ballot, that candidate would then benefit from the other's votes.**

all stood as candidates, but this latter 48-year-old came fourth with only 2.57 per cent of the vote. Against this backdrop, Bédié and Ouattara formed another electoral pact in early October 2010 in Yamoussoukro, at the graveside of Houphouët-Boigny, in which they agreed that whichever one of them came first in the second ballot, that candidate would then benefit from the other's votes. After seeing the results of the second ballot, we can assume that the majority of Bédié's supporters followed his wishes. The slightly lower turnout of approx. 81.13 compared to 83.7 in the first round suggests that it was mainly PDCI supporters who stayed away in the second round, and particularly those who felt could not in all conscience vote for Ouattara, as Bédié and Ouattara had been bitter enemies after Félix Houphouët-Boigny's death on the question of the president's successor. This was why Bédié dreamed up the political concept of *Ivoirité* in 1994, unaware just how politically explosive this would prove to be. The concept took on a momentum of its own and in the end led to the outbreak of civil war.

Of the 19 regions in Côte d'Ivoire, Ouattara won five in the north, Gbagbo won the eleven central regions and Bédié won only three, two on the central plateau and one in the

29 | Even before the provisional election result had been announced by the CEI, the PDCI had called for a recount in their strongholds, alleging irregularities. The Constitutional Council disregarded this demand for procedural reasons, claiming that the complaint was not presented formally to the Constitutional Council after the official announcement of the election results.

30 | Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire.



south west.<sup>31</sup> One third of voters live in Abidjan (approx. 3.6 million inhabitants in 2008), a city which is divided into ten quartiers. Of these, Gbagbo won seven and Ouattara three (Treichville, Adjamé und Abobo). Bédié was also the loser here: he was unable to win a single quartier in Abidjan, and indeed lost votes to Gbagbo.<sup>32</sup> The Gbagbo camp's belief that Ouattara could only win votes in the north was also proven to be false, though admittedly the majority of the population of the three quartiers which he won, particularly Treichville, had moved there from the north. As both factions had a lot of support in Abidjan, the city became the main flashpoint for confrontations between the hostile camps. The Gbagbo-loyalist security forces kept a particularly high profile in the three quartiers previously mentioned.

### THE CURRENT SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

The behaviour of the Ivorian Defence and Security Forces (FDS), in particular that of the army and Garde Républicaine, will be critical in determining how these power issues play out. After an army uprising resulted in a failed coup attempt in 2002, Gbagbo dissolved the armed forces and rebuilt them with the help of Angola. New appointments were made, as in the past many officers, particularly lower-ranking officers, had been northerners. In 2004 he appointed his close supporter, General Philippe Mangou, to Chief of Staff, thus ensuring that a key position was held by one of his people. Gbagbo told his officers: "If I fall, you fall with me!" which, along with other rumours that are circulating, gives the impression that the army, like the political establishment, are not solidly behind Gbagbo.

However, the regular armed forces only control the south of the country, with the military arm of the ex-rebel Forces Nouvelles, the Forces Armées des Forces Nouvelles (FAFN) still holding sway in the north. Gbagbo could

**Gbagbo could let the division of the country become permanent, as most of the economically-important goods, jobs and tax-generating industries are located in the south.**

let the division of the country become permanent, as most of the economically-important goods, jobs and tax-generating industries are located in the south. Agricultural

31 | Cf. map on RFI site at: <http://rfi.my/hqpLxw> (accessed December 10, 2010).

32 | Cf. *Jeune Afrique*, November 13-17, 2010, 24.

products such as natural rubber, pineapples, palm oil, cocoa, coffee and wood, along with the ports, industrial operations, the trade and services sector, and oil and gas reserves for future extraction are all located along the coast, as is the case in neighbouring Ghana. The north only has a small amount of gold, diamonds and agricultural products such as pineapples, etc, but no export goods such as wood, cocoa or coffee.

A lasting political solution can only be achieved domestically. Support from other African countries could be helpful, even essential. It is important to find "an African-led international mechanism" in order to implement the foreign, particularly western demands for "good governance, democracy and the rule of law", with "the power to back up fine words with firm action".<sup>33</sup> This could be in the form of military intervention by the AU, which however does not necessarily mean foreign soldiers on Ivorian soil. A possible solution could be interaction between the armed forces of neighbouring countries. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's PDWA has created a good foundation for this with its network of senior army officers from West African French-speaking nations.

It is essential that foreign troops such as UN peacekeepers and their French support contingent maintain their neutrality, otherwise they will quickly be viewed as occupying troops with all the attendant security problems for their soldiers and staff. It remains to be seen to what extent the boundaries of neutrality have already been exceeded. In any case, the Gbagbo camp has been exploiting a supposed bias on the part of UNOCI against his political opponent Ouattara.

#### **FOUR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS**

In conclusion, we can briefly outline four scenarios which are currently under discussion.<sup>34</sup> The first two scenarios

33 | Simon Tisdall: "Ivory Coast crisis exposes hollowness of west's fine words," *guardian.co.uk*, December 19, 2010, in: <http://guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/19/ivory-coast-united-nations-france> (accessed December 21, 2010).

34 | Cf. "Pour mettre fin au bras de fer autour du fauteuil présidentiel: Voici les 4 schémas qui s'imposent à Gbagbo et Ouattara," in: *Abidjan.net* (L'Inter), <http://news.abidjan.net/h/384222.html> (accessed December 22, 2010).

depend on the individual behaviour of one of the two protagonists, whereas in scenarios three and four they have to work together, something which is hard to imagine in light of their past history and individual egotism.

### **1. Gbagbo Relinquishes Power**

The first scenario is that Gbagbo recognizes Ouattara's victory and gives in to international pressure. This would be based on acceptance of the election result by the independent CEI. This unexpected relinquishment would have the advantage of freeing Côte d'Ivoire from the political and diplomatic isolation which it has found itself in since December 2, 2010. This particularly relates to actions and measures which depend on international organisations and institutions, such as budget support from the World Bank in 2011, including obtaining the famous Completion Points for the HIPC initiative, which should be gained by the end of March 2011. If the present situation continues, then these important international support actions remain in balance.

### **2. Ouattara Relinquishes Power**

In the second scenario, Ouattara is the one to act by relinquishing the sovereign power invested in him by the voters. In light of his election victory, this would be a kind of "denial of power". It is not clear how the international community would react to this. They would certainly be taken aback, but would be forced to accept a victory by Gbagbo which did not happen, with the resultant lifting of isolation and sanctions. This would be immensely damaging to the meaning and credibility of democratic procedures such as elections.

**If Ouattara is the one to act by relinquishing the sovereign power invested in him by the voters, the international community would be taken aback.**

### **3. A Zimbabwe-Style Power Sharing Agreement**

In the third scenario, the two men agree to share power. Under the terms of the Zimbabwe Agreement, they would share power by one becoming President and the other Prime Minister. However, the power sharing is not working in Zimbabwe and it has the structural disadvantage that under the constitution the President wields more power

than the Prime Minister. Some constitutional amendments were made under the terms of the "Global Power Agreement" (GPA), but Mugabe has simply ignored them, resulting in fruitless disputes over interpretation. But the security forces play a decisive role, and they are normally loyal to the President. And the egos of the two Ivorian protagonists make this scenario unworkable.

#### **4. The Congo Agreement**

The fourth scenario involves a kind of power sharing based on presidential and vice-presidential roles. However, the question as to who becomes President and who "only" Vice-President means that such a scenario is doomed to fail. On top of this, the Ivorian Constitution of August 1, 2000 would have to be amended, and as the example of Zimbabwe has shown, even amendments which are made in writing are still not respected. It would also be necessary to hold a referendum before constitutional changes could be made.

**The more time goes by, the less possibility there seems to be of a solution which allows both protagonists to save face, something which is crucially important in West African culture.**

At the moment it is quite unclear how the situation in Côte d'Ivoire is going to evolve. The more time goes by, the less possibility there seems to be of a solution which allows both protagonists to save face, something which is crucially important in West African culture. The chance of a peaceful and diplomatic solution is fading with every day that passes. If Côte d'Ivoire were once again to sink into civil war, the difficult political consolidation which has taken place since 2002 would be set back years, if not decades. This would also have a devastating effect on neighbouring countries. For one thing, the widespread hope that Côte d'Ivoire would once again become the region's economic driver would be dashed. Many refugees would return to their homes in the Sahel. And many other African countries with illegitimate governments and presidents who are just taking their first steps in political consolidation could point to another example of how the democratic process has led to undemocratic governance. Then there would be very few beacons of democracy left in West Africa.