

Parliamentary elections in Côte d'Ivoire – consolidation of Alassane Ouattara's power

Dr. Stefanie Brinkel

The parliamentary elections in Côte d'Ivoire took place on 27 December 2025, shortly after the presidential elections, and were strongly shaped by this dynamic. They followed only a few weeks after the re-election of President Alassane Ouattara (RHDP), who won the presidential election on 25 October 2025 with 89.77 per cent of the vote in the first round, excluding the most promising opposition candidates, and who now governs the country for a fourth consecutive term. Around 8.7 million voters were called upon to elect the 255 members of the National Assembly. The elections also took place in a situation in which key opposition forces are fragmented. Shortly after the presidential election, the opposition party PPA-Cl, led by Laurent Gbagbo, called for a boycott of the parliamentary elections.

Consolidation of RHDP hegemony

According to preliminary results published by the Ivorian Electoral Commission (CEI)¹, the ruling party *RHDP* won 197 of the 255 seats (77 per cent). The *PDCI-RDA* secured 32 seats (13 per cent), while independents won 23 seats (9 per cent). With this clear victory, the *RHDP* further expands its parliamentary control in the Ivorian National Assembly. It achieved particularly strong election results in the north of the country, historically a stronghold of the party, and consolidated its influence in the south and west, which have traditionally been more opposition-oriented. The country's largest opposition party, the *PDCI-RDA*, suffered a significant setback.

The proportion of women in parliament is also declining and is estimated at around 10 per cent. This underlines persistent gender disparities and highlights the limitations of internal party recruitment and financing of female candidates.

The parliamentary elections have led to a clear consolidation of power for the ruling party *RHDP*, which enjoys a comfortable majority in parliament. This implies a strong ability of the legislature to push through legislation, while at the same time the risk increases that mutual checks and balances between the branches of government may no longer be guaranteed and that pluralistic debates in parliament will become more difficult.

¹ The final results are expected in mid-January 2026 after the Constitutional Council has reviewed any possible appeals.

Legitimacy problem remains structural

Voter turnout, estimated at around 35 per cent, is very low and has even declined slightly compared with 2021. According to current analyses, voter mobilisation varied significantly by region and was strongest in the north. In urban centres, turnout was extremely low according to current information (for example 13 per cent in Yopougon, 10 per cent in Cocody and 14 per cent in Gagnoa).

The call for a boycott by the *PPA-CI*, the Christmas and New Year holidays, and the Africa Cup of Nations, which has been ongoing since December 21, very likely contributed to the low voter turnout. Nevertheless, this lack of mobilisation also fundamentally points to a persistent lack of interest among citizens and a deep-seated mistrust of the Ivorian electoral system. While the government is formally strong, the result is based on a thin participation base in society.

With regard to the security situation, it can be noted that election day in Côte d'Ivoire was largely peaceful. Nevertheless, there were reports of incidents and irregularities. These included, among other things, delayed openings of polling stations due to logistical difficulties in distributing electoral materials, as well as attempts to sign result protocols prematurely before the close of voting. In addition, there were reports of technical problems with the use of tablets for voter identification and power outages that delayed the publication of results. Allegations of fraud were raised in some locations. Attempted damage to property and local clashes were also reported. Trust in institutions remains a key deficit.

Conclusion and outlook

The parliamentary elections have brought stability at the government level, but not democratic consolidation in the broader sense. Without targeted measures, there is a risk of a growing disconnect between the formal political order and societal participation.

In a politically significant statement on 29 October 2025, Ibrahime Coulibaly-Kuibiert, President of the Ivorian Electoral Commission, spoke out in favour of a fundamental reform of the electoral commission after the parliamentary elections. According to him, consideration should be given to a new institutional model capable of ensuring lasting peace and trust in the electoral process. Of central importance remains the updating of the voter register. Although the constitution requires this to be carried out annually, the last revision took place in 2024.

In Côte d'Ivoire's long struggle for legitimacy and reconciliation, it will be crucial in the coming months to promote national dialogue and push ahead with institutional reforms. At the most fundamental level, the task is to regain and sustainably strengthen citizens' trust.

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