The Many Lives of a Peacekeeping Mission: The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

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Abbreviations

AU	African Union
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
DFS	UN Department of Field Support
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECOFORCE	ECOWAS Peace Force for Côte d'Ivoire
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations
LMA	Linas-Marcoussis Agreement
MINUCI	UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire
OPA	Ouagadougou Peace Agreement
PDCI-RDA	Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire–Rassemblement démocratique africain
SRSG	Special representative of the secretary-general
SSR	Security sector reform
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
UNOCI	UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Executive Summary

The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) completed its mandate on June 30, 2017, after more than thirteen years. In the presidential statement marking the mission's completion, the Security Council requested "the Secretary-General to undertake within a year…a comprehensive study of the role of UNOCI in the settlement of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire since its establishment." This request presents an opportunity to examine the many stages or "lives" of a peacekeeping operation, something often overlooked.

UNOCI was created following a failed coup in 2002, when soldiers of the Ivorian armed forces tried to topple then-President Laurent Gbagbo. The insurgency developed into a rebellion, with rebel forces taking control of the northern half of the country. In response, both France and regional actors intervened militarily and launched a series of mediation efforts. It was in this context that the UN Security Council created UNOCI as an ambitious and full-fledged multidimensional peacekeeping operation in 2004.

In the wake of the contested 2010 presidential elections, UNOCI entered a second phase. These elections prompted a crisis that tested the mission's cooperation with French forces, the unity of the Security Council, the mission's cooperation with regional actors, and the mission's capacity to deal with a sudden deterioration in the security situation. Ultimately, UNOCI adopted a robust approach, and the crisis was resolved by force with the ouster of Gbagbo.

With the ascension of President Alassane Ouattara in 2011, UNOCI entered the third and final phase of its deployment. During this phase it tried to support a democratically elected government that had reached power through violence. The mission began its drawdown in 2013, and in 2017 it handed over to the UN country team with no follow-on mission in place.

In the end, UNOCI was able to lift Côte d'Ivoire out of its most serious crisis since independence. It faced numerous challenges, however, and its evolution offers lessons that could be applied to other peacekeeping operations:

- **Consent of the host state:** UNOCI illustrated the difficulty of operating with the fragile consent, and at time even the hostility, of the host government. It was caught in the unique position where achieving its mandate required the removal of the head of state.

- **Support of a permanent member of the Security Council:** France influenced UNOCI in many ways: it initiated the debate in the Security Council on its creation, was the penholder on all Security Council resolutions, and deployed troops. While it was hard for the mission to escape this influence, the Security Council generally showed unity behind France.

- **Mandate of certification:** UNOCI had an almost unique mandate: the certification of election results. While the UN's certification role was controversial, and it contributed to making armed confrontation inevitable, it also bound all stakeholders to the results, helping preserve the unity of the country and of the Security Council.

- **Robust peacekeeping:** The robust approach UNOCI took in the post-election crisis was controversial, with some accusing the UN of taking sides. Nonetheless, because UNOCI took this militarily robust approach in parallel with the Secretariat's politically robust approach and in coordination with the French Operation Licorne, it was successful.

- **DDR/SSR processes:** The "deal" between the government and the rebels was to hold elections in return for proper disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) in the north. However, progress on SSR was delayed and remained incomplete when the mission left.

- **Sanctions and arms embargoes:** The Security Council imposed an arms embargo and targeted sanctions on individuals in Côte d'Ivoire. However, this sanctions regime did not play a significant role in putting pressure on the parties.

> "On ne sort pas d'une guerre comme d'un
> dîner-gala."
>
> *Laurent Gbagbo*

Introduction[1]

The creation of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) traces back to a failed coup in September 2002, when soldiers of the Ivorian armed forces tried to topple then-President Laurent Gbagbo, who had been in office since October 2000. Although the insurgents did not succeed, their movement developed into a rebellion. The rebels, who later coalesced under the name Forces Nouvelles, took control of the northern half of the country, splitting Côte d'Ivoire in two: the government-run south and the rebel-held north. Their demands included inclusive elections, recognition of issues of citizenship and nationality, and the resignation of the head of state. In this context, both France and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened militarily. The French intervention contributed to the establishment of a buffer zone that created a situation of "neither war nor peace" ("*ni guerre ni paix*") until the conflict that broke out during the 2010–2011 post-election crisis. After 2011, UNOCI entered another period in which it tried to support a democratically elected government that had reached power through violence. That period ended in 2017 with the closure of the mission and its handover to the UN country team with no follow-on mission in place.

The Security Council passed fifty-one resolutions on UNOCI during its thirteen years of existence. On the ground, the mission had 11,058 uniformed personnel at its maximum strength, with an annual budget of $584 million (in June 2013). The council has used every tool at its disposal to solve the Ivorian crisis, including political missions, mediation, arms embargoes, sanctions on individuals, the use of force, referral to the International Criminal Court, and a peacekeeping operation. In the end, UNOCI was able to lift Côte d'Ivoire out of its most serious crisis since independence. Since then, the country has been making progress, though numerous challenges remain.

In its presidential statement on June 30, 2017, the Security Council requested "the Secretary-General to undertake within a year, and within existing resources, a comprehensive study of the role of UNOCI in the settlement of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire since its establishment" and "look[ed] forward to the results of this study, including further lessons learned and recommendations…in the context of its ongoing work to enhance the overall effectiveness of United Nations peace-keeping."[2] This request presents an opportunity to examine the many stages or "lives" of a peace-keeping operation, something often overlooked.

This paper intends not only to contribute to this important learning process but also to go beyond the scope of the study requested by the UN secretary-general to examine the trajectory of UNOCI over the years. It provides a historical account of the various phases of the Ivorian crisis, from 2002 and the early days of the rebellion through to the signature of the various peace agreements and the aftermath of the post-election crisis. It examines how throughout this period UNOCI evolved and adapted to the circumstances and cooperated with regional actors and the French force on the ground, and how the Security Council dealt with the central elements of the Ivorian dossier. This report also attempts to draw lessons from UNOCI for other peacekeeping missions regarding their relationship with their initiators in the Security Council, the host nation, and the actors in the subregion and region, as well as how they can implement their mandates with the tools put at their disposal by the council.

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1   Parts of this paper are based on the author's chapter "United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)" in *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Joachim A. Koops, Norrie MacQueen, Thierry Tardy, and Paul D. Williams, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

2   UN Security Council, *Statement by the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/PRST/2017/8, June 30, 2017.

The Origins of the Ivorian Crisis

Following its independence in August 1960, Côte d'Ivoire lived for thirty-three years under the autocratic and patrimonial political system led by President Félix Houphouët-Boigny (see Box 1 for a timeline).[3] His party, the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire–African Democratic Rally (*Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire–Rassemblement démocratique africain*, or PDCI-RDA) was the sole constituent of the country's one-party system until 1990, when he organized multiparty elections. The opposition was led by Laurent Gbagbo, who had created the Ivorian Popular Front (*Front populaire ivoirien*, or FPI) in 1982. In 1990, Houphouët-Boigny appointed a prime minister for the first time, choosing Alassane Dramane Ouattara, a respected economist with regional and international experience who led a splinter group from the PDCI-RDA, the Rally of the Republicans (*Rassemblement des Républicains*, or RDR), after the succession crisis.

During the first twenty years of independence, the country enjoyed what some economists called the "Ivorian miracle," benefiting from the production and trade of coffee and cocoa. Côte d'Ivoire became a regional hub for business, attracting migrants from across West Africa. Houphouët-Boigny even encouraged the influx of foreign workers by introducing liberal land ownership laws under the slogan "the land belongs to those that develop it."[4] As a result, a large proportion of the people in Côte d'Ivoire, in both younger and older generations, is from outside the country (roughly 25 percent of the population in 1998),[5] and many people move between the country's Sahel regions and the coastal and forest ones.[6] But economic prosperity began to fade in the late 1980s with a drop in the prices of cocoa and coffee, and severe economic difficulties dominated the following decade, in particular after the devaluation of the West African CFA franc in 1994.

Houphouët-Boigny, also referred to affectionately by the Ivorians as the "old man" or "*le vieux*," died on December 7, 1993, at a time of economic crisis and without any clear or planned political succession, except an institutional one (the speaker of the parliament and designated constitutional successor, Henri Konan Bédié, assumed the presidency). The struggle for political power among a few members of the Ivorian political elite began from that date, creating instability and sowing the seeds for future crises. This political instability was fueled by economic difficulties and the intensification of the debate on national identity. This debate escalated due to the so-called "poison of *Ivoirité*" injected into the country's politics by President Bédié with the aim of preventing Alassane Ouattara (of alleged mixed Burkinabé-Ivorian descent) from participating in the presidential elections of 1995.[7] Bédié used *Ivoirité* to push through changes to the electoral code and the constitution requiring both parents of a presidential candidate to be Ivorian. This introduced a "tribal element" into the political debate, which remained at the heart of future crises.[8]

In sharp contrast to Houphouët-Boigny, Bédié almost completely stopped efforts to balance the different ethno-regional interests and parties and began favoring people from his own ethnic group, the Baoulé. This came to be termed the "*baoulisation*" of state institutions.[9] Indeed, one crucial

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3 Before being elected to the French parliament, Félix Houphouët-Boigny was a tribal chief, a medical aide, a union leader, and a planter. He served in several ministerial positions within the French government before leading Côte d'Ivoire after independence.

4 Jean-Pierre Chauveau and Jean-Philippe Colin, "La question foncière à l'épreuve de la reconstruction en Côte d'Ivoire: Promouvoir la propriété privée ou stabiliser la reconnaissance sociale des droits?," *Les Cahiers du Pôle foncier*, no. 6, 2014.

5 Although the number of Muslims and Christians is roughly equal, the vast majority of non-Ivorians is Muslim (70 percent). The north is predominantly Muslim, but about 70 percent of all Muslims live in the south. Arnim Langer, "Côte d'Ivoire's Elusive Quest for Peace," Centre for Development Studies, *Bath Papers in International Development and Wellbeing*, no. 11, 2010, p. 10.

6 Christian Bouquet, "The Misuse of Democracy in Côte d'Ivoire," *L'Espace Politique* 3, no. 3 (2007).

7 "Ivoirité does not mean anything specific, and that is its strength. In 1995 and 1996, President Bédié popularized this concept, whose objective was 'to forge a common culture for all those living on Ivorian soil, foreigners and nationals.'" Marc Le Pape, "Les politiques d'affrontement en Côte d'Ivoire 1999–2003," *Afrique contemporaine* 2, no. 206 (2003), p. 34.

8 As Alassane Ouattara explained in an interview, "This is the new electoral code that has tribalized the debate. The origin of one another was not a concern in Côte d'Ivoire.... I condemn an electoral law that emphasizes the identity of the parents, the distant origin of so-and-so, and that encourages people to think about politics in ethnic or regional terms. It becomes a point of fixation. It's bad for democracy and it's bad for national unity." *Jeune Afrique*, September 28–October 4, 1995.

9 Langer, "Côte d'Ivoire's Elusive Quest for Peace," p. 7. see also Maja Bovcon, "France's Conflict Resolution Strategy in Côte d'Ivoire and Its Ethical Implications," *African Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (2009), p. 3.

aspect of Houphouët-Boigny's approach—or what sociologist Francis Akindès has termed "*le modèle Houphouétiste*"—had been his use of economic incentives to co-opt actual and prospective political challengers into the system. Another factor that had contributed to maintaining political stability was Houphouët-Boigny's system of ethnic quotas, which was aimed at balancing representation of different regions and ethnic groups within the main state institutions.[10]

Bédié's approach slowly fragmented the country. In December 1999, a successful coup staged by soldiers who had returned from their deployment to the UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) and who had not received their bonuses overthrew Bédié and installed General Robert Guéï, former chief of the army, as head of state. As noted by political analysts Fabienne Hara and Gilles Yabi, "It was the country's first coup, and a major illustration of the growing political instability and fractures within the armed forces."[11] According to the journalist Guy-André Kieffer, the opposition parties' talk of political and societal exclusion and the domination of the Ivorian state by the Baoulé likely had a significant impact on the attitudes of the young noncommissioned officers involved in the coup d'état.[12]

The presidential elections of October 2000 were marked by chaos and violence. They were organized without the participation of Bédié, and Ouattara was excluded by the Supreme Court. Laurent Gbagbo won the elections with 59.4 percent of the vote, but Guéï declared himself the winner despite winning only 37 percent. This triggered massive protests by supporters of Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front and a shift in allegiance by the security forces toward Gbagbo. Guéï had to flee the country. Gbabgo became president in the context of an election he himself qualified as "calamitous" and amid instability and violence. In January 2001, a failed coup d'état took

place, partly due to the lack of representation of northerners in his government, which remained a constant until he lost the elections in November 2010.

West Africa analyst Maja Bovcon summarized the origins of the conflict: "The Ivorian crisis is a truly multi-layered conflict where ethnicity appears to become a relevant distinguishing factor only after being tightly related to other issues such as economic crisis, economic and political discrimination, land, immigration policy, succession struggle and, above all, the concepts of autochthony and citizenship."[13] It is primarily a struggle for the management of resources in which the north-south divide is secondary—what some have called "a war of succession" rooted in a complex mix of politics and personalities. As a former deputy special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG) remembered, "I don't think we [the international community] fully understood that we were grappling not only with personal ambitions (of which there were plenty) but also the reordering of a patronage state, which was no longer a viable construct after the demise of Houphouët-Boigny."[14]

A Historical Account (2002–2017)

EARLY DAYS OF THE CIVIL WAR

At a time of deep societal divisions and discrimination, Côte d'Ivoire's civil war started with simultaneous attacks against military installations in Abidjan, Bouaké, and Korhogo on September 19, 2002, by a group of pro-Guéï soldiers who had been purged from the national army by the Gbagbo government. While they were defeated by the national army in Abidjan, the rebels gained control of Bouaké and Korhogo, dividing the country in two.[15] General Guéï was killed, and Ouattara fled the country.

10 Ibid., p. 13. Côte d'Ivoire hosts multiple ethnic groups of West Africa. For a detailed account of the origins of the conflict, see Francis Akindès, *The Roots of the Military-Political Crises in Côte d'Ivoire* (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2004); Christian Bouquet, *Côte d'Ivoire: Le désespoir de Kourouma* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011); Mike McGovern, *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire* (Chicago: Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2011).

11 Fabienne Hara and Gilles Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," in *Responding to Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations*, Jane Boulden, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 149.

12 Guy-André Kieffer, "Armée ivoirienne: Le refus du déclassement," *Politique africaine* 2, no. 78 (2000).

13 Bovcon, "France's Conflict Resolution Strategy in Côte d'Ivoire and Its Ethical Implications," p. 2.

14 Alan Doss, *Other People's Wars: Peacekeeping, Protection and the Promise of Peace* (forthcoming).

15 The Forces Nouvelles comprised about a dozen "comzones" (commanders of zones) who prevailed by force over contingents of 300 to 500 soldiers.

Box 1. Timeline of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire

1960	Côte d'Ivoire becomes independent from France under President Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who holds power until his death in 1993.
1990	Opposition parties are legalized; Houphouët-Boigny wins Côte d'Ivoire's first multiparty presidential election, beating Laurent Gbagbo of the FPI.
1993	Henri Konan Bédié succeeds Houphouët-Boigny as president.
1995	Bédié is reelected in a poll boycotted by opposition parties protesting candidacy restrictions and alleged electoral manipulation.
1999	In July, former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara returns home to run against Bédié for president in 2000. In December, a protest over military pay turns into a coup led by Robert Guéï, ousting Bédié.
2000	Throughout the year, electoral tensions rise, notably regarding the process of distributing national identity cards, reported harassment of northerners, and the presidential candidacy of Guéï. Constitutional changes approved by a July referendum, widely boycotted in the north, require both parents of presidential candidates to be Ivorian-born citizens. A state of emergency is imposed before a widely boycotted presidential election on October 22nd. The vote count is suspended, and Guéï claims to have won the election. Laurent Gbagbo, the majority vote winner, organizes anti-Guéï protests. Guéï flees.
2002	In September, a mutiny by soldiers (primarily of northern origin) over pay and conditions of service turns into an attempted coup d'état. After clashes with loyalist forces in the south, rebel units withdraw and rapidly take control of the northern half of the country. They form a political movement, later called the Forces Nouvelles, and eventually establish a basic administrative state in the areas they control.
2003–2010	A situation of "no war no peace" prevails despite eight peace agreements.
2010–2011	A post-election crisis breaks out following the election of Ouattara as president of Côte d'Ivoire.
2015	Ouattara is reelected to a second term.
2016	A legislative election and constitutional referendum take place.
2020	The next presidential election is scheduled to take place.

When evacuating their citizens, French soldiers of the forty-third battalion (*bataillon d'infanterie de marine*, named the "43rd BIMa") also established themselves in Yamoussoukro, becoming a de facto buffer between north-based rebels and south-based government forces. As explained by Fabienne Hara and Gilles Yabi, "By creating a line of demarcation, France attracted accusations of partiality from both sides, with the rebels arguing that the deployment of French troops was preventing them from moving southward to launch a new attack on Abidjan while government forces accused France of preventing them from moving northward to recapture Bouaké from the rebels."[16] Nevertheless, other observers considered that the French also prevented further violence.[17] According to political scientist Bruno Charbonneau,

> The French military interposition might have prevented a civil war and limited the bloodshed, but it also imposed basic parameters for the future peace negotiations. In dividing the country in two, it legitimatized the north-south narrative of confrontation, thus enabling the agency of rebels to become Forces Nouvelles as a legitimate political opposition and

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16 Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," pp. 150–151.

17 Jean-Marc de La Sablière, *Dans les coulisses du monde* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 2013), pp. 245–250. As explained by Alan Doss, "While France had no wish to see the rebellion take over the country, it had never demonstrated much enthusiasm for Gbagbo either." In *Other People's Wars*.

interlocutors in [future] peace negotiations.[18]

An attempted coup subsequently degenerated into a war between government forces and breakaway army troops who called themselves the Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (*Mouvement patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire*, or MPCI), and later the New Forces (*Forces nouvelles*), and who claimed to represent the disenfranchised north.[19] The main grievances put forward by the insurgents related to land ownership laws, the criteria of eligibility for presidential elections, the question of identity cards, and the political domination of the north by the south.[20] They called for Gbagbo's resignation, the organization of free and fair elections, and the end of discriminatory politics based on the concept of *Ivoirité*. As pointed out by Dorina Bekoe, an expert in Africa's security challenges, "The 2002 rebellion became framed in terms of northern exclusion and the historical domination of the south over the north."[21]

From September 2002 to January 2003, the civil war was marked by confrontations between government forces and rebels, the capturing of towns followed by massacres of civilians, aerial helicopter attacks in the west, targeted kidnappings and assassinations, and large-scale sexual violence.[22] There also emerged "patriotic" groups (in particular the "young patriots," or "*jeunes patriotes*," led by Charles Blé Goudé) and militias aligned with the president to counter both the rebellion and the political opposition. The connections of some members of the Forces Nouvelles with Burkina Faso, as well as "the recruitment of Liberian and Sierra Leonean mercenaries by both Ivorian rebel groups and government forces, added a regional dimension to the conflict."[23] As UNOCI's second SRSG, Pierre Schori, put it, this was an internal crisis that "became over the years regionalized [through ECOWAS], Africanized [through the African Union], and globalized [through the UN]."[24]

Indeed, given the importance of Côte d'Ivoire both to the region and to France, both intervened in the crisis and its resolution. First, France took action: three days after the attempted coup, the country sent military reinforcements and began Operation Licorne at the request of the Ivorian president (and not in response to defense agreements with Côte d'Ivoire).[25] The operation was principally concerned with the protection of the large French community in the country (there were 15,000 French citizens living there at the time), but it "inexorably transformed a referee into a third party to the conflict."[26] Originally a contingent of 700, by July 2003 Operation Licorne had 4,000 troops.

Second to intervene was the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which led the first peace negotiations on September 29, 2002, in Accra, Ghana ("Accra I"; see Table 1 for a list of peace agreements). A high-level contact group (consisting of representatives from Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo) led the mediation effort (see Figure 2 for an overview of mediation efforts). On October 17, 2002, the Forces Nouvelles unilaterally signed a cease-fire agreement, which France agreed to enforce until its troops could be relieved by ECOWAS troops.

Follow-on talks began in Lomé, Togo, leading to "rapid agreement on military issues but [which] stalled on the political agenda of the rebel groups, who were insisting on the removal of President Gbagbo, a constitutional review and the holding of

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18 Bruno Charbonneau, "War and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire: Violence, Agency, and the Local/International Line," in *The Politics of International Intervention: The Tyranny of Peace*, Mandy Turner and Florian P. Kühn, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 184.

19 Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," p. 149.

20 Langer, "Côte d'Ivoire's Elusive Quest for Peace," p. 9.

21 Dorina Bekoe, "The United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire: How a Certified Election Still Turned Violent," *International Peacekeeping* 25, no. 1 (2010), p. 5.

22 UN Security Council, *Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the Recommendations of the Security Council Mission to West Africa*, UN Doc. S/2003/1147, December 5, 2003.

23 Gilles Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire," in *Security Council Resolutions under Chapter VII: Design, Implementation and Accountabilities*, Blanca Antonini, ed. (Madrid: FRIDE, 2009), p. 76. See also International Crisis Group, "Côte d'Ivoire: 'The War Is Not Yet Over,'" *Africa Report* no. 72, November 28, 2003.

24 Pierre Schori, "ECOWAS and the AU in Cooperation with the UN," in *Regional Organizations and Peacemaking: Challengers to the UN?*, Peter Wallensteen and Anders Bjurner, eds. (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 160.

25 According to the French authorities, the defense accords can only be activated in case of an external aggression, and "nothing was planned in the case of a civil war." The French decision not to activate those accords was interpreted by Gbagbo and his supporters as a betrayal, as they considered that the coup had been supported by an external actor (Burkina Faso). Jean-Christophe Notin, *Le crocodile et le scorpion: La France et la Côte d'Ivoire (1999–2013)* (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 2013).

26 Ibid.

Table 1. Agreements on the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire (2002–2010)

Date	Agreement	Content
September 2002	Accra I	The ECOWAS heads of state and government met to discuss a general framework to resolve the crisis. The summit was followed by a meeting of the ECOWAS Defense and Security Commission, which recommended that immediate arrangements be put in place to deploy ECOWAS troops to Côte d'Ivoire. **Results**: Cease-fire supervised by Operation Licorne
October–November 2002	Lomé	The two parties reaffirmed their commitment to the cease-fire agreement, pledged to refrain from human rights abuses, and acknowledged the need to preserve the territorial integrity of Côte d'Ivoire and to respect the country's institutions.
January 2003	Linas-Marcoussis Agreement (LMA)	Ivorian political forces agreed on the way to peace and reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire, including the creation of a Government of National Reconciliation to be headed by a nonpartisan, consensual prime minister. **Results**: Revision of the constitution, including eligibility criteria for the president; Government of National Reconciliation with the project of disarming all armed groups
March 2003	Accra II	Ivorian political forces recommended reinforcing the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement in terms of power-sharing and creating a fifteen-member National Security Council.
July 2004	Accra III	Ivorian political forces agreed to new measures to address the key obstacles to the peace process, in particular the criteria for eligibility of the president, legislative reforms on citizenship, and a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program. **Results**: Revision of Article 35 of the constitution, which prevented Ouattara from running for president; reintegration of the rebels into the government
April 2005	Pretoria I	Ivorian political leaders agreed to enhance the certification role of UNOCI, to rectify outstanding issues related to disarmament and dismantling of militias, and to accept the principle that all parties signatory to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement would be eligible to stand a candidate in the presidential elections. **Results**: Organization of elections under UN supervision
June 2005	Pretoria II	Ivorian political leaders reviewed the implementation of the Pretoria agreement and agreed on the principle of the legitimacy of targeted UN sanctions against anyone viewed to be slowing down the peace process.
March 2007	Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA)	The Ivorian government and Forces Nouvelles came to a comprehensive political agreement on ending the conflict. **Results**: Power-sharing, with Guillaume Soro becoming prime minister, and organization of elections in 2010

fresh elections."[27] At a meeting in Dakar on December 18th, the ECOWAS leaders decided that an ECOWAS Peace Force for Côte d'Ivoire (ECOFORCE) would be deployed by December 31, 2002. It was expected to comprise 3,200 military personnel from Benin, Ghana, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. However, it suffered from a number of difficulties, including lack of planning capabilities, lack of logistical assets, delays in setting up the basic force headquarters, lack of coordination and organizational skills, understaffing, and overall deficiencies of equipment and funding.[28] The first 172 soldiers of ECOFORCE arrived only on January 18, 2003, followed by 1,100 on March 6th. Mandated to control the cease-fire line until the ECOWAS force could be deployed, the French were essentially alone for five months. In fact, "divided by internal rivalries and petty quarrels and with no funds to support a peacekeeping force," the ECOWAS leaders "left France with little option but to take both the military and political roles more directly in hand."[29]

In the face of a costly military deployment and support to the ECOWAS force and increasing anti-French mobilization by pro-Gbagbo partisans, France started pushing for greater burden sharing and the "multilateralization" of its involvement in Côte d'Ivoire through the Security Council. As it started to encourage a move toward a full-fledged UN peacekeeping operation, it faced some initial resistance from other council members, including the budget-wary United States, which foresaw a more limited role for the UN in the crisis.[30] Ultimately, these difficulties led France to organize its own peace talks at Linas-Marcoussis from

January 15 to 24, 2003, and to get the UN more involved. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) planned a possible takeover and "re-hatting" of ECOFORCE into a blue helmet operation as early as December 2002.[31] The progressive transfer of conflict resolution responsibilities from ECOWAS to France and on to the UN had started.

FROM THE LINAS-MARCOUSSIS AGREEMENT TO THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 2004

The peace talks at Linas-Marcoussis were chaired by the chairman of the French Constitutional Council, Pierre Mazeaud, assisted by Kéba Mbaye (a judge from Senegal), Seydou Diarra (a former prime minister of Côte d'Ivoire and AU special envoy), Mohamed Ibn Chambas (the executive secretary of ECOWAS), and Ahmedou Ould Abdallah (the SRSG for West Africa). In short, "it was a French-driven initiative with inputs from regional organizations and the UN."[32] The resulting peace deal, signed in January 2003, addressed the main cause of the Ivorian conflict: the debate over *Ivoirité*. It provided for the revision of the constitution (in particular Article 35)[33] and the establishment of a transitional Government of National Reconciliation (headed by a nonpartisan, consensual prime minister) until the holding of presidential elections (scheduled for 2005).[34] In fact, "it was essentially a legal agreement rather than a political settlement" and lacked national ownership.[35]

Indeed, one of the major bones of contention for Laurent Gbagbo was that the French government never accepted that "the conclusion of the Linas-

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27 Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," p. 152.

28 The ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire was largely financed and equipped by France, with other logistical and financial assistance provided by Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. See Adekeye Adebajo, *UN Peacekeeping in Africa: From the Suez Crisis to the Sudan Conflicts* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011), p. 153.

29 International Crisis Group, "Côte d'Ivoire: 'The War Is Not Yet Over,'" p. 27.

30 Arthur Boutellis and Alexandra Novosseloff, "Côte d'Ivoire," in *The UN Security Council in the 21st Century*, Sebastian von Einsiedel, David M. Malone, and Bruno Stagno Ugarte, eds. (New York: IPI/Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2015). According to Jean-Marc de La Sablière, then the French permanent representative to the UN, his American counterpart John Negroponte told him he agreed to the deployment of a political mission "as a final settlement" ("*pour solde de tout compte*"). The US administration also considered, in the tense context of the Iraq crisis, that France should solve the problems itself in its "*pre-carré.*" In *Dans les coulisses du monde*, p. 247. According to one interlocutor, the Chinese and the Russians were also not, at the outset, in favor of such UN involvement. Interview, Geneva, May 2018.

31 UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Côte d'Ivoire*, UN Doc. S/2003/374, March 26, 2003, paras. 40–43.

32 Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," p. 153.

33 Article 35 of the 2000 Constitution stated that candidates for the presidency must be "of Ivorian origin, born of a father and a mother of Ivorian origin." See Nick Branson, "Constitution-Making in Côte d'Ivoire," Africa Research Institute, October 2016.

34 UN Security Council, *Letter Dated 27 January 2003 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/2003/99, January 27, 2003.

35 Doss, *Other People's Wars.*

Marcoussis Agreement (LMA) gave not only international recognition and legitimacy to the rebellion, but also acknowledged most of its grievances."[36] This perception set up the LMA for failure from the start.[37] Gbagbo never accepted what he saw as a French-led deal that he referred to as "proposals." Instead, he sent a representative to sign it in a clear move to distance himself from it. For the international community, this became a weak spot in the agreement.[38] Several days after, on February 2nd, 100,000 people demonstrated in Abidjan against the "French occupation" of the country and the power-sharing agreement that had been signed in France three days after the signing of the LMA. The follow-up agreement signed in Accra in March 2003 ("Accra II") was intended to take away some of the overwhelming French touch on the LMA but had little success.

Nevertheless, the Security Council endorsed the LMA in Resolution 1464 on February 4, 2003, and welcomed the existing deployment of ECOWAS and French troops. This retroactively legitimized interventions and a peace process that had already been initiated. After the signing of another cease-fire agreement, the Security Council decided in Resolution 1479 on May 3, 2003, to establish a UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) to monitor implementation of the French-brokered agreement

and form a liaison group of about seventy military observers to build confidence and trust between the armed groups.[39] Albert Tévoédjrè from Benin was appointed SRSG, head of MINUCI, and chair of the LMA monitoring committee (see Table 2 for a list of SRSGs).

The Security Council visited Côte d'Ivoire in July 2003, and in November 2003 a delegation from ECOWAS led by the foreign minister of Ghana went to UN headquarters to appeal to the Security Council to consider strengthening ECOFORCE and transforming it into a UN peacekeeping force.[40] The fact that another UN peacekeeping mission was created in neighboring Liberia (UNMIL) in September 2003, gave grounds for the arguments of those who wanted a similar mechanism in Côte d'Ivoire (as a regional approach to the crisis) and lifted some of the American reservations. From then on, the fate and evolution of both missions were linked.

On February 4, 2004, with Resolution 1528 the Security Council created an ambitious and full-fledged multidimensional peacekeeping operation: UNOCI. On April 4, 2004, ECOFORCE re-hatted its troops and handed over to UNOCI, whose initial authorized strength was 6,240 uniformed personnel (see Figures 1 and 5).[41] It took the mission eight months to fully deploy in an unstable

Table 2. UNOCI heads of mission and SRSGs

February 2003–January 2005	Albert Tévoédjrè	Benin
April 2005–February 2007	Pierre Schori	Sweden
Nine months with no SRSG		
October 2007–August 2011	Choi Young-jin	South Korea
October 2011–June 2013	Albert Gerard "Bert" Koenders	The Netherlands
July 2013–June 2017	Aïchatou Mindaoudou Souleymane	Niger

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36 Giulia Piccolino, "David against Goliath in Côte d'Ivoire? Laurent Gbagbo's War against Global Governance," *African Affairs* 111, no. 442 (2012), p. 8.

37 Jean-Marie Guéhenno described it as an agreement "with many false starts." In *The Fog of Peace: A Memoir of International Peacekeeping in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), p. 100.

38 Tobias Koepf, "The Problems of French-Led Peace Operations in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa," *International Peacekeeping* 19, no. 3 (2012), p. 335.

39 This group was first headed by Brigadier General Abdul Hafiz from Bangladesh, who, a few years later, was appointed as UNOCI's force commander as Côte d'Ivoire entered a post-election crisis. See his account: "My Peacekeeping Mission Experience," *Daily Star*, February 26, 2018.

40 For Hara and Yabi, this was "a clear recognition by the regional organization of its incapacity to sustain a full-fledged and autonomous peacekeeping force in a large country such as Côte d'Ivoire where the proliferation of armed militias and re-arming of both governmental and rebel forces were not pointing to a quick resolution of the conflict." In "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," p. 145.

41 UN Security Council Resolution 1528 (February 27, 2004), UN Doc. S/RES/1528. On the planning, design, and modalities of UNOCI's deployment after an assessment mission of the Secretariat, see also UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire*, UN Doc. S/2004/3, January 6, 2004.

environment and while Gbagbo was trying to renegotiate parts of the LMA. He also expected that the deployment of armed UN peacekeepers would help him deal robustly with the rebellion.[42]

In January 2004, the Government of National Reconciliation took concrete steps to redeploy the state administration and provide basic services in Forces Nouvelles–controlled areas. After the signature of a third follow-up agreement in Accra in July ("Accra III"), President Gbagbo announced on October 12th that he would only submit the amended version of Article 35 to the National Assembly once the rebels had disarmed. In response, the rebel forces refused to meet the October 15th deadline to start disarming.

Tensions mounted, and in November 2004 they culminated in the Forces Nouvelles formally refusing to disarm, as the government had not made any real progress in preparing for elections. On November 4th, the national armed forces (*Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire*) launched air attacks against the rebel positions in Bouaké and the northern town of Korhogo. In Abidjan, large numbers of "young patriots" forcefully tried to take over the Golf Hotel, where several Forces Nouvelles ministers were residing, and expelled Prime Minister Seydou Diarra of the Government of National Reconciliation. Following the attacks, the rebel leader, Guillaume Soro, declared the LMA and Accra III "null and void."

On November 6th, an air strike by the armed forces hit the French forces in Bouaké, killing nine French soldiers and one American citizen. France responded by destroying the Ivorian air force and broke all ties with Laurent Gbagbo for some time. On November 10th, an evacuation of foreign nationals began, and several diplomatic missions were temporarily closed; in two weeks some 9,000 expatriates left the country. For a moment, the Ivorian crisis faced a new peak, as thousands of "young patriots" took to the streets of Abidjan. Throughout the crisis, UNOCI troops tried to quell

tensions by maintaining close contact with both parties or working to preserve the integrity of the zone of confidence.[43] Overall, however, there had been "a loss of confidence in ONUCI's preventive presence," the scale of which nobody had been able to predict.[44]

The French military retaliation was criticized by some and presented by Gbagbo as evidence that the conflict was primarily a battle for independence from the country's former colonial power. Security Council members, however, expressed their unambiguous solidarity with France's Operation Licorne and condemned the violation of the cease-fire by government forces. Little by little, France had been able to forge a consensus in support of the peacekeeping operation in Côte d'Ivoire in the council and build a shared analysis of the crisis (even if there had at times been different views within the council regarding support to President Gbagbo).[45]

The Security Council imposed an arms embargo (Resolution 1572 of November 15, 2004) and targeted sanctions on individuals. The secretary-general then recommended an increase in the strength of UNOCI—an additional 1,226 military personnel and three formed police units[46]—that was endorsed seven months later with Resolution 1609 (June 24, 2005). Resolution 1682 (June 2, 2006) later authorized a further increase of up to 1,500 additional personnel.[47]

However, the impact of this intense and multifaceted council activity (including a second visit to the country in June 2004) did not result in greater compliance by the parties. Some UNOCI officials at the time attributed this to the fact that these decisions were not accompanied by the pressure needed for the parties to comply. They "expressed frustration at the wide gap between the numerous statements against impunity emanating from Council resolutions and presidential declarations and [the council's] reluctance to take concrete action against the perpetrators of human rights

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42 Analysis of Alan Doss: "There was a (mistaken) assumption by Gbagbo that the deployment of armed UN peacekeepers would automatically aid the regime in place." In *Other People's Wars.*

43 For a history of the zone of confidence, see Dabié Désiré Axel Nassa, "La zone de confiance, une frontière de deux Etats constitués?," 2007, available at https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00130425/document .

44 Doss, *Other People's Wars.*

45 On the variations of opinion within the French executive branch, see Notin, *Le crocodile et le scorpion.*

46 UN Security Council, *Fifth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2005/398, June 17, 2005, para. 72.

47 UN Security Council, *Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2006/2, January 3, 2006, paras. 42–53.

Figure 1. UNOCI's deployment map and zone of confidence

violations and the political actors who encouraged them."[48] Côte d'Ivoire remained deeply divided, and the security situation remained precarious (especially in the west of the country). Moreover, a "serious decline of the Ivorian economy" further fueled political tensions, together with continued "human rights abuses both in the south and in the north, with little or no effort being made to curtail the widespread culture of impunity."[49]

THE PRETORIA AGREEMENT AND UNOCI'S MANDATE

The inability of the Security Council to shape the behavior of Ivorian authorities through successive resolutions paved the way for the return of the AU, taking over from the failed ECOWAS and French attempts to resolve the crisis politically. It is in this context that on April 1, 2005, Pierre Schori (from Sweden) arrived at the helm of UNOCI (see Table 2).[50] On April 6, 2005, a new agreement was signed in Pretoria under the auspices of the AU mediator, South African President Thabo Mbeki, which called upon the UN to play an enhanced role in the organization of the upcoming general elections.

Security Council Resolution 1603 (June 3, 2005) therefore requested the designation of a high representative for the elections "to verify all stages of the electoral process" and "to provide all the necessary guarantees for the holding of open, free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections."[51] In short, the country "needed UN assistance and an election certification mechanism as a remedy to the total lack of confidence between the Ivorian parties."[52] Intentionally, the high representative was autonomous from UNOCI to avoid the latter "becoming entangled in electoral disputes to the detriment of its peace-keeping/protection role."[53] But the two entities were requested to share information, and the UN mission therefore had to deploy electoral advisers throughout the country under the framework of its mandate.

The constitutional term of President Gbagbo came to an end on October 30, 2005, but elections had not yet been organized. Security Council Resolution 1633 (October 21, 2005) supported the establishment of a ministerial-level international working group and a mediation group (both co-chaired by the SRSG), which was mandated to draw up a road map for holding the elections. However, these continued to be postponed, and the security situation remained unstable, leading to the recurrent obstruction of UNOCI's movement and operations.

In December 2005, Charles Konan Banny replaced Seydou Diarra as prime minister. Soon after, the first cracks in African unity began to emerge: the AU Peace and Security Council, where South Africa had influence, would usually take positions that helped Gbagbo, while ECOWAS (led by Nigeria) would take a harder line. Ivorian parties skillfully played one institution against the other.[54] The strategy adopted by Gbagbo and his political clan or "system"[55] was to maintain the status quo and procrastinate presidential elections. Moreover, Gbagbo adopted anti-colonial rhetoric and tactics that over time "increased his legitimacy and authority as president, defender of Ivorian sovereignty, and leader of a 'second decolonization' as he touched on some sensitive issues to many Ivoirians," as well as Africans in general.[56]

On November 1, 2006, the Security Council passed Resolution 1721, which renewed and strengthened the mandate of the prime minister and extended the president's term for a "new and final transition period not exceeding 12 months." The French permanent representative to the UN acknowledged that with Resolution 1721 the Security Council went "too far too quickly," and that the unity of the council was only a façade that would lead to an impasse.[57]

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48 Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire," p. 98.

49 UN Security Council, *Fourth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2005/186, March 18, 2005, para. 80.

50 Pierre Schori was also a member of the Socialist International, like the Ivorian president.

51 António Monteiro of Portugal was appointed in July 2005, then replaced by Gérard Stoudmann of Switzerland in April 2006.

52 Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire," p. 104.

53 Interview, Geneva, May 2018.

54 Guéhenno, *The Fog of Peace*, p. 107.

55 "Le système Gbagbo," *Jeune Afrique*, September 28, 2010.

56 Charbonneau, "War and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire," p. 186.

57 La Sablière, *Dans les coulisses du monde*, p. 256.

Figure 2. Mediators and mediations in Côte d'Ivoire
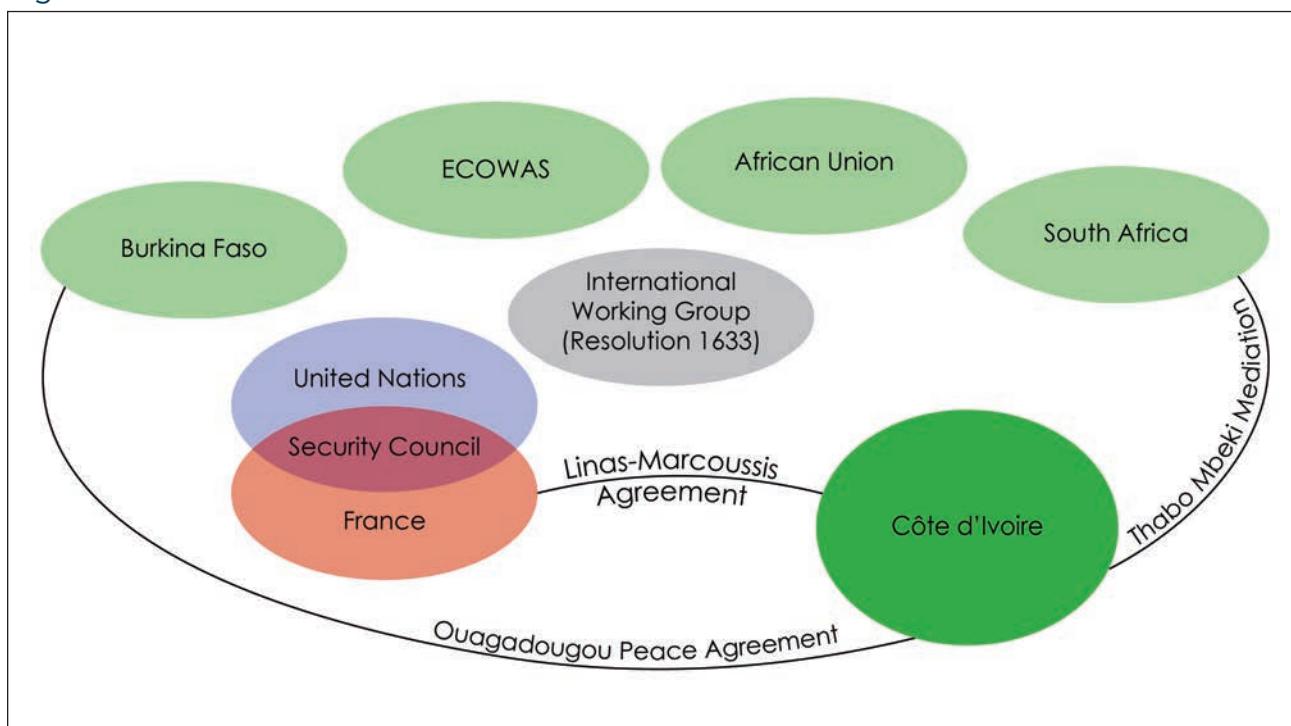
FROM THE OUAGADOUGOU PEACE AGREEMENT TO THE ELECTIONS

The political agreement that UNOCI lacked from the start came three years after, but even then the UN did not contribute to it in any way; it was an agreement made by the parties themselves, as they were also becoming "tired" of the situation.[58] In mid-2006, President Gbagbo engaged in "direct dialogue with the *Forces nouvelles*, with the exclusive facilitation of his former regional adversary, the president of neighboring Burkina Faso," Blaise Compaoré.[59] This "home-grown" solution to the Ivorian crisis led to the adoption of a new peace agreement—the eighth since 2002—the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement (OPA), signed on March 4, 2007. Under a new power-sharing agreement, Guillaume Soro became prime minister (which marginalized the opposition leaders,

Ouattara and Bédié), and the zone of confidence was dismantled in July 2008.[60] President Gbagbo also proposed the enactment of a new amnesty law, indicated his intention to launch a national civilian service for young people and an assistance program for resettling displaced persons, and suggested that elections be held by July 2007.[61]

The Ouagadougou peace process differed in important ways from earlier peace initiatives. None of the political opposition parties were invited to the talks, and for the first time President Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro held direct talks without the presence of an international mediator. Another important difference was that the negotiations were conducted over a period of one month, while "previous deals were rushed through and patched together in a matter of days under pressure from foreign countries."[62] According to international

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58 In his memoirs, Jean-Marie Guéhenno recalled that one of the first things President Gbagbo said in 2007 to the then new Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was "everybody is tired." In *The Fog of Peace*, p. 111.

59 Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire," p. 105. According to Giulia Piccolino, "The pre-negotiations that led to the launch of the direct dialogue had started in secret during the second half of 2006, while the International Working Group was unsuccessfully trying to step up the pressure on the warring parties. For the first time since the beginning of the Ivorian peace process in 2002, Gbagbo had a key role in taking the initiative, although the agreement was not as purely internal as his words might suggest. Mbeki was involved in the pre-negotiation phase and, more visibly, the direct dialogue was to be based on the support of ECOWAS and on the 'facilitation' of Blaise Compaoré." In "David against Goliath in Côte d'Ivoire?," p. 18.

60 In its place, the parties decided to introduce a "green line" of seventeen observation points manned by international peacekeepers who would be gradually replaced by mixed Ivorian patrols composed of an equal number of Forces Nouvelles and government troops.

61 UN Security Council, *Twelfth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2007/133, March 8, 2007, para. 7.

62 "Turmoil in Côte d'Ivoire," *The Economist*, March 10, 2007, p. 44.

relations scholar Giulia Piccolino,

> Diplomats close to the Gbagbo regime were candid in admitting that one of the objectives of the direct dialogue was "to keep the UN out".… UN officials were, however, able to persuade the Ivorian parties that excluding UNOCI was not realistic, as the support of an impartial actor was still needed in order to implement many practical aspects of the new agreement.[63]

The dialogue was in effect "internal" in that it implied the dismissal of the mechanisms of international supervision established by the AU Peace and Security Council decision of October 6, 2005, and by Security Council Resolutions 1633 and 1721. Indeed, the international working group spontaneously dissolved shortly after the signing of the OPA. The agreement "was received favorably, in part because of a lack of alternatives," and largely because it was a direct "entente" between the parties to the crisis.[64] Despite the fact that the UN and the international community as a whole were sidelined and had no choice but to accompany this new process, this agreement created new hope, as it was also a form of mutual recognition between the rebels and President Gbagbo.[65] The government was able to redeploy soldiers in the north for the first time, and both sides could now focus on the identification program (aimed at issuing national identity documents to those eligible) and thus prepare to hold the elections.

In this context, "the UN was expected to continue to work on the technical arrangements needed for an effective disarmament and a credible election."[66] After nine months without leadership (Pierre Schori had left on February 15th at the request of the Ivorian authorities), Choi Young-jin from the Republic of Korea was appointed SRSG to Côte d'Ivoire on October 18, 2007. President Gbabgo, after initial reluctance, was pleased to have an SRSG who was neither European nor African ("neither meat nor fish").[67] In the new context of the OPA, Choi considered his mandate to be one "of assistance to the Ivorian population and its leader"—a mandate of "assistance without illusion."[68]

The OPA provided relative stability to the country, although armed militias and youth groups continued operating in Yamoussoukro and some cities on the coast. However, "the implementation of the OPA by those who elaborated and signed it became an open-ended process, leaving UNOCI and the Security Council in a very uncomfortable position."[69] Between 2007 and 2008, several supplements to the OPA were negotiated,[70] and the Security Council renewed the mandates of all the tools created to deal with the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire as technical rollovers (sanctions, the group of experts, UNOCI, and the partnership with Operation Licorne). The council also condemned the delays in holding the elections and continued to support the implementation of the OPA, though with diminishing conviction. In his twenty-first report, the secretary-general tried to establish benchmarks for progress in the implementation of the OPA, but the parties to the conflict never respected the timelines or made progress.[71] Some started to talk of the OPA as a "Potemkin agreement."

In 2009, the secretary-general seemed resigned that "it is the political will and calculations of the main Ivorian political players that will ultimately determine whether or not the election date will be respected."[72] At this time, he was thinking of slowly

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63   Giulia Piccolino, "The Dilemmas of State Consent in United Nations Peace Operations: The Case of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire," in *Peacekeeping in Africa: The Evolving Security Architecture*, Thierry Tardy and Marco Wyss, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

64   Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," p. 162.

65   For a good account of the OPA, see also Simon P. Alain Handy and Toussaint Charles, "L'accord politique de Ouagadougou. Vers une sortie de crise pérenne en Côte d'Ivoire?," *Annuaire français des relations internationales* 9 (2008), pp. 653–667. See also International Crisis Group, "Côte d'Ivoire: Can the Ouagadougou Agreement Bring Peace?," *Africa Report* no. 127, June 27, 2007.

66   Guéhenno, *The Fog of Peace*, p. 112.

67   As Choi Young-jin remembered being called by Laurent Gbagbo in his memoirs, *La crise ivoirienne: Ce qu'il fallait comprendre* (Paris: Éditions Michel Lafon, 2015), pp. 13, 43.

68   Ibid., p. 19.

69   Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire," p. 107.

70   The first at the beginning of 2007, the second and third at the end of 2007, and the fourth at the end of 2008.

71   UN Security Council, *Twenty-First Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc, S/2009/344, July 7, 2009.

72   Ibid., para. 52. A number of external observers considered President Gbagbo deserving of his nickname of "the baker" ("*le boulanger*" "*qui roulait les gens dans la farine*").

reducing the size of UNOCI.[73] In fact, as analyzed by Giulia Piccolino, "The OPA can be seen as a sort of middle ground between the recognition that the 'stalemate game' could not continue indefinitely and the institutionalization of the mutually profitable no-war no-peace situation."[74] Reunification had stalled.[75]

But as time passed, the continuous postponement of the presidential election appeared unsustainable, even for Gbagbo. Many of his African peers considered that after two presidential mandates without elections, his legitimacy was fading. Already in November 2009, UNOCI had completed the identification and voter registration operation. Surprisingly, in August 2010, based on a proposal by the Independent Electoral Commission, Prime Minister Soro announced that the presidential elections would be held on October 31st (first round) and November 28th (second round). On September 9th, a presidential decree authorized the issuance of national identity cards to the 5.7 million Ivorians on the final voters' list.[76] The SRSG certified the final voters' list on September 24, 2010. President Gbagbo accepted the calendar, seemingly convinced by opinion polls that he was now in a position to win.

FROM THE POST-ELECTION CRISIS TO A NEW PHASE FOR CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND UNOCI

The calendar for elections was meant to be six and a half months; it ultimately required thirty. As Fabienne Hara and Gilles Yabi put it,

> The stakes for 2010 presidential elections were high. For the Ivorians, it was the culmination of a nearly two-decade-long battle for power and the succession to Houphouët-Boigny. For the international and regional communities, it was a chance to end a

frustrating peace process and to start withdrawing from an expensive peacekeeping commitment.[77]

But in a context where President Gbagbo and his clan were not ready to hand over power to anybody, the outcome could not be peaceful.[78] This was all the more so as Gbagbo's expectations of victory turned out to be wrong: he won the first round but not the second, due to a seemingly unnatural alliance between Ouattara and Bédié (who had previously promoted the concept of *Ivoirité* to keep Ouattara out of power; see Figure 3).[79]

On December 2, 2010 (more than three days after the legal deadline), the chair of the Independent Electoral Commission, from his office in the Golf Hotel, declared Alassane Ouattara the winner of the elections with 54.1 percent of the vote to Gbagbo's 45.9 percent.[80] The same day, the Security Council issued a press statement welcoming the announcement of the provisional results by the electoral commission. Election observers from the AU, ECOWAS, EU, International Organisation of La Francophonie, and Carter Center also declared Ouattara the winner. SRSG Choi certified the outcome of the second round of the elections as announced by the electoral commission on the basis of government tallies and reports from UN peacekeepers deployed around the country to monitor the security situation and from the more than 300 international election observers.[81]

However, the president of the Constitutional Council declared this announcement to be "null and void," and on December 3rd he proclaimed "the final results" of the presidential elections, announcing that Gbagbo won with 51.4 percent of the vote versus 48.6 percent for Ouattara. No recount was organized in the areas with disputed

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73 See UN Security Council, *Nineteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2009/21, January 8, 2009; and Resolution 1865 (January 27, 2009), UN Doc. S/RES/1865.

74 Piccolino, "David against Goliath in Côte d'Ivoire?," p. 20.

75 UN Security Council, *Letter Dated 20 April 2011 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 (Panel of Experts)*, UN Doc. S/2011/271, April 27, 2011, para. 4.

76 See UN Security Council, *Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2010/537, October 18, 2010, paras. 2–21.

77 Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," pp. 162–163.

78 On October 26, 2010, in an interview with *Jeune Afrique*, Laurent Gbagbo said, "I won't be defeated. I am here, I'll stay" ("*Je ne serai pas battu. J'y suis, j'y reste*").

79 According to Klaus D. Loetzer and Anja Casper, "Bédié and Ouattara formed an 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." In "After the Presidential Elections in Côte d'Ivoire: Can the Political Crisis Still Be Resolved by Diplomacy?," Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2011, p. 72.

80 Laurent Bigot, "Côte d'Ivoire: Mais qui a gagné la présidentielle de 2010?," *Le Monde*, May 27, 2016.

81 But "initially SRSG Choi hesitated to make a pronouncement of the elections, fearing that direct involvement at an early stage would forfeit UNOCI neutrality and leverage, as well as jeopardizing the safety of international personnel. However, under significant diplomatic pressure, particularly from France, the United States, and the United Kingdom, he soon confirmed Ouattara as the winner." Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011."

Box 2. Chronology of the post-election crisis

October 31, 2010	The first round of the presidential election is held with a participation rate of 83.73 percent.
November 6, 2010	The Constitutional Council proclaims the results of the first round.
November 11, 2010	The UN certifies the results of the first round.
November 28, 2010	The second round of the elections is held with a participation rate of 83.7 percent.
December 2, 2010	The Independent Electoral Commission declares Alassane Ouattara the winner of the presidential election with 54.1 percent of the vote.
December 3, 2010	In the afternoon, the president of the Constitutional Council invalidates the results given by the Independent Electoral Commission, proclaiming Laurent Gbagbo the winner of the presidential election with 51.4 percent of the vote.
	In the evening, the SRSG certifies the results of the second round in line with the Independent Electoral Commission.
December 7, 2010	ECOWAS approves the election results and asks Gbagbo to leave office immediately.
December 9, 2010	The AU Peace and Security Council recognizes Ouattara as the elected president and suspends Côte d'Ivoire from the organization.
December 18, 2010	Gbagbo asks UNOCI and Operation Licorne to leave Côte d'Ivoire.
December 20, 2010	The European Council adopts targeted sanctions against individuals, including Gbagbo and his wife. UNOCI's mandate is renewed for another six months.
December 23, 2010	The Council of Ministers of the West African Economic and Monetary Union specifies that only representatives of the Ouattara government would have access to the country's accounts. The World Bank freezes its aid to Côte d'Ivoire. The UN General Assembly acknowledges the victory of Ouattara.
January 19, 2011	Resolution 1967 authorizes the deployment of an additional 2,000 blue helmets.
January 28, 2011	The AU decides to create a panel of heads of state to deal with the crisis.
March 10, 2011	The AU reaffirms Ouattara as the only legitimate president.
March 17, 2011	The Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire are created as the country's new official military (loyal to Gbagbo).
March 28, 2011	The armed forces begin their offensive with the taking of Toulépleu.
March 30, 2011	Resolution 1975 authorizes UNOCI "to use all necessary measures…to prevent the use of heavy weapons" against the civilian population.
March 31, 2011	UNOCI and Licorne take control of the airport in the Battle of Abidjan.
April 4, 2011	For the first time the UN uses attack helicopters against camps in Akouédo and Agban to counter the use of heavy weapons by Gbagbo.
April 10, 2011	UNOCI and Licorne undertake their second joint operation against Gbagbo forces.
April 11, 2011	Gbagbo is arrested in the presidential residence.
April 12, 2011	The Ivorian armed forces lend their allegiance to Ouattara.

Figure 3. 2010 presidential election results

Presidential elections, 1st round, October 31, 2010

Source: Independent Electoral Commission of Côte d'Ivoire (confirmed by Constitutional Council)
(accessed December 4, 2010).
http://ceici.org/elections/docs/EPR_31102010_RESUL_PROVI_CEI_03112010_A4.pdf

Presidential elections, 2nd round, November 28, 2010

Source: Constitutional Council
accessed December 14, 2010
http://news.abidjan.net/h/382101.html

votes, as the SRSG had certified the result of the election. On December 4th, Gbagbo took the oath of office before the Constitutional Council in Abidjan, while Ouattara took his in writing from the Golf Hotel—something they both had promised not to do in their face-to-face debate on November 25th.[82] Both started to form separate administrations in Abidjan, and the stalemate was complete: "Gbagbo had power without legitimacy, while Ouattara had legitimacy without power."[83]

The attitude of Gbagbo's political clan led to a peculiar situation where the winner of the presidential elections was unable to settle into power and had to capture it through force. In the following months, none of the diplomatic and mediation efforts undertaken by African countries and organizations were able to overcome this impasse.[84] As SRSG Choi explained, Gbagbo's hope "was to succeed in imposing a fait accompli; that was the beginning of the crisis."[85]

As a result, a war of attrition began that resulted in an estimated 3,000 deaths, 200,000 Ivorian refugees, and 300,000 internally displaced persons before the arrest of Gbagbo on April 11, 2011.[86] The security situation degraded quickly as each side mobilized its respective supporters: the army pledged its support to Gbagbo, and the Forces Nouvelles renamed itself the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire in support of Ouattara.

UNOCI forces were caught in the middle, unprepared (the SRSG had prevented any contingency planning on possible post-election scenarios). It tried to remain impartial, but this was untenable, since its role certifying the results and the decisions of the Security Council led it to protect the elected president and his government (nicknamed the "Golf Hotel Republic"). It was logistically strangled and directly targeted by Gbagbo's forces.[87] Gbagbo accused UNOCI of "collaborating" with "rebel forces" and, on December 8th, asked it to leave the country. The UN had temporarily relocated its nonessential staff to the Gambia two days earlier, while the rest of the staff had to either stay home or make their office in Sébroko (UNOCI's headquarters in Abidjan) their new home.

The unity of the subregion, region, and international community also began to fade away. The AU sent former South African President Thabo Mbeki for emergency consultations with the two Ivorian stakeholders in order to find a "legitimate and peaceful solution to the crisis" in the form of a power-sharing arrangement. ECOWAS suspended Côte d'Ivoire and endorsed the results certified by the SRSG.[88] In New York, the Security Council was divided on the outcome of the election: the "legalists" (France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States) wanted to stick to the letter of previous council resolutions and to the certification role of the SRSG; the "sovereignists" (Brazil, China, Russia, and South Africa) were not comfortable with what they considered to be the council's interference in Ivorian internal affairs.[89]

African nonpermanent members Gabon, Nigeria, and South Africa were also divided. On the one side, Nigeria, presiding over ECOWAS, led an unambiguously anti-Gbagbo front and briefly contemplated a subregional military intervention together with Burkina Faso and Senegal. In the middle, the Ghanaian president opposed military action to oust Gbagbo and did not want to take sides; for him, a military intervention meant jeopardizing his country's business interests with its neighbors, threatening the lives of about one million Ghanaians living in Côte d'Ivoire, and risking the outbreak of a possible refugee crisis in Ghana.[90] On the other side, South Africa, more favorable to the incumbent president, reengaged in

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82 During the TV debate between the two rounds, "the candidates reiterated their commitment not to unilaterally proclaim themselves the winner of the polls and reaffirmed their pledge to accept the results." UN Security Council, *Twenty-Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/211, March 30, 2011, para. 9.

83 Adebajo, *UN Peacekeeping in Africa*, p. 159.

84 See UN Security Council, *Twenty-Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/211, March 30, 2011, paras. 25–38.

85 Choi, *La crise ivoirienne*, p. 181.

86 UN Security Council, *Twenty-Eighth Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/387, June 24, 2011, paras. 40, 46.

87 "The continued attempts by forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo to obstruct the activities of peacekeepers and to sever the Operation's supply lines have made it challenging for UNOCI to implement all aspects of its mandate." UN Security Council, *Twenty-Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/211, March 30, 2011, para. 66.

88 Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011."

89 "Moscou et Pékin contraignent l'ONU à ajourner un texte sur la Côte d'Ivoire," *Le Monde*, January 15, 2011. See also Boutellis and Novosseloff, "Côte d'Ivoire," pp. 689–690.

90 See Charbonneau, "War and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire," p. 190.

the Ivorian crisis, even deploying a navy ship off the coast of Côte d'Ivoire in an attempt to assert its continental leadership and counter Nigeria, its rival for a proposed permanent African seat on the Security Council.[91]

Month by month, the security situation worsened as pro-Gbagbo forces increasingly used heavy weapons against civilians in various neighborhoods of the capital city and other parts of the country. UNOCI headquarters and patrols were also targeted, as there was no unity among the senior mission leadership and troop-contributing countries on how to handle these actions from pro-Gbagbo forces. Although President Ouattara was initially reluctant to use the military option, he eventually agreed to it, and on March 30th the ex-rebels took the western town of Toulépleu. Three days later, they arrived on the doorstep of Abidjan in what some nicknamed "a tropical blitzkrieg."[92]

In the Security Council, the "legalists" prevailed over the "sovereignists," and UNOCI was instructed "to use all necessary measures…to prevent the use of heavy weapons" against the civilian population (Resolution 1975 of March 30, 2011).[93] On April 3rd, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wrote to French President Nicolas Sarkozy to request that French forces participate in strikes on sites held by forces loyal to Gbagbo.[94] It had become evident to the "legalists" that "an international intervention was the only thing that stood between Gbagbo and a prolonged civil war."[95]

These provisions were used by UNOCI, in coordination with Licorne, on April 4th when "two UN MI-24 helicopters swooped down on the city along with French Puma and Gazelle attack helicopters [and] targeted Gbagbo strongholds used to store heavy artillery and munitions" in areas around the presidential palace and residence and several military camps.[96] The situation further escalated on April 9th when Gbagbo's forces launched an attack on the Golf Hotel with mortars and heavy machine guns, which was successfully repelled.[97] On April 11th, Gbagbo, his wife, and members of his family, staff, and cabinet were apprehended by the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire in the presidential residence. Gbagbo was then flown to The Hague to face international prosecution, becoming the first former head of state to be taken into custody by the International Criminal Court.[98]

It took five months of convincing Gbagbo to hold elections, four months of diplomatic negotiations, and one week of war to end a ten-year crisis. The country was still divided, and there was a general impression among the public that the side that had won the elections had instead won the war but not the elections.[99] Some even called Gbagbo's ouster a coup d'état.[100]

DOWNSIZING OF UNOCI AND THE TRANSITION TO THE UN COUNTRY TEAM

As stated by the secretary-general, "The apprehension of former President Gbagbo closed a painful chapter in the history of Côte d'Ivoire."[101] It also inaugurated a new era for the UN presence in the country. SRSG Choi was replaced by SRSG Bert Koenders (from the Netherlands; see Table 2), and UNOCI had to shift its priorities to support a new president who wanted to take full ownership of the post-crisis process.

Remaining pockets of insecurity, especially in the west, lasted about a year (including in particular a

91 For a detailed account of the roles played by Angola, South Africa, and ECOWAS member states in the current Ivorian crisis, refer to International Crisis Group, "Côte d'Ivoire: Is War the Only Option?," *Africa Report* no. 171, March 3, 2011, p. 12.

92 "Les secrets d'une offensive éclair," *Jeune Afrique*, April 8, 2011.

93 The Security Council had previously authorized, in the framework of inter-mission cooperation, a temporary redeployment of three infantry companies and an aviation unit from UNMIL (Liberia) to UNOCI (Resolutions 1951 on November 25 and 1962 on December 20, 2010). It also increased the authorized strength of military personnel by 2,000 (Resolution 1967, on January 19, 2011).

94 Bruce Crumley, "Anatomy of an Intervention: Why France Joined the U.N. Action in Abidjan," *Time*, April 6, 2011.

95 Marco Chown Oved, "In Côte d'Ivoire, a Model of Successful Intervention," *The Atlantic*, June 9, 2011.

96 Ibid.

97 UN Security Council, *Twenty-Eighth Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/387, June 24, 2011, para. 6.

98 On January 28, 2016, at the opening of his trial at the International Criminal Court, Laurent Gbagbo pleaded not guilty to charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including complicity in murder, rape, inhumane acts, and persecution.

99 Interview with Professor Francis Akindès, Abidjan, November 12, 2017.

100 On this debate, see also Bruno Charbonneau, "The Imperial Legacy of International Peacebuilding: The Case of Francophone Africa," *Review of International Studies* 40, no. 3 (2014), pp. 622–628.

101 UN Security Council, *Twenty-Eighth Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/387, June 24, 2011, para. 78.

direct attack on UNOCI peacekeepers on June 8, 2012, during which seven military personnel from Niger were killed near the border with Liberia). However, the security situation rapidly stabilized soon after. The economy was on a fast track to recovery, helped by the steadfast support of the international community. As the secretary-general acknowledged in his report of December 2012, "All of these remarkable achievements reflect the genuine commitment and willingness among many of Côte d'Ivoire's leaders and its people to turn the page and work together towards a more secure, stable and prosperous future."[102]

In early 2013, UNOCI started its progressive drawdown. This coincided with the start of the new SRSG Aïchatou Mindaoudaou Souleymane (a former minister of foreign affairs of Niger and former president of ECOWAS; see Table 2). There was pressure to put the closing of the mission on the table of the Security Council. The UN was in search of a clear success in peacekeeping. France and its colleagues in the council wanted to reduce the budget of peacekeeping operations as they were deciding on two new major multidimensional operations in Mali and the Central African Republic. At the same time, the Ivorian authorities wanted to show the rest of the world that with 9 percent annual growth, their country did not need that kind of help anymore, particularly as it was getting ready to join the Security Council itself. A convergence of factors therefore led to the decision of the Security Council to extend the mandate of UNOCI "for a final period until 30 June 2017" (Resolution 2284 of April 28, 2016).

In its drawdown, the mission had to keep its full operational capacity to support and secure the organization of a series of elections: presidential (October 2015), legislative (December 2016), and a referendum on a new constitution (October 2016). The mission therefore looked at innovative arrangements for inter-mission cooperation. It strengthened its cooperation with UNMIL by enhancing formal liaison and information sharing

and adopting a joint road map for the border region.[103] It also created a "regional quick-reaction force" of 650 soldiers, "configured and equipped 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."[104]

At the political level, SRSG Mindaoudou used her good offices to help decrease tensions between the political parties. Three days after the October 2015 presidential election, the Independent Electoral Commission published provisional results revealing that President Ouattara had obtained more than 83.6 percent of the vote. (The participation rate, however, was less than 55 percent, down from more than 80 percent five years earlier.)[105] As the secretary-general concluded, "With the successful holding of the presidential election on 25 October, Côte d'Ivoire has reached a critical milestone in consolidating its long-term peace and stability."[106]

The French Operation Licorne ended in January 2015 and was transformed into the French Forces in Côte d'Ivoire with a contingent of about 400 soldiers.[107] UNOCI left Côte d'Ivoire militarily in April 2017 and terminated all operations in January 2017. The UN Secretariat was divided as to whether there was a need for a follow-up mission, but the host country and the Security Council prevented that option from even being considered. As a result, UNOCI handed over to the UN country team in June 2017.

UNOCI's Achievements and Limitations in the Implementation of Its Mandate

Looking at the different phases of the Ivorian crisis shows the extreme challenges UNOCI faced from the beginning of its deployment in 2004. These challenges started with the UN Secretariat's mixed feelings about the mere existence of the mission

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102 UN Security Council, *Thirty-First Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2012/964, December 31, 2012, para. 66.

103 UN Security Council, *Special Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2013/197, March 28, 2013, para. 28.

104 UN Security Council, *Thirty-Fourth Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2014/342, May 15, 2014, para. 68.

105 "Présidentielle ivoirienne: La carte des résultats et du taux de participation région par région," *Jeune Afrique*, October 29, 2015.

106 UN Security Council, *Thirty-Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2015/940, December 8, 2015, para. 76.

107 These forces serve mainly as a reservoir of troops and provide a logistical support base for the forces engaged in the Sahel-Saharan strip (such as Operation Barkhane). They also provide training to Ivorian armed forces.

Entrance of UNOCI, Sébroko, 2013. Alexandra Novosseloff.

due to France's strong push for its creation and divisions among regional powers and organizations that produced divergent mediation processes. UNOCI was created as a multidimensional mission taking over from a political mission and a subregional force. This was a pattern followed at the time by the UN missions in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL/UNAMSIL), Liberia (UNOMIL/ UNMIL), and even the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), whereby UN missions that started with limited observation responsibilities later transformed into full-fledged peacekeeping operations.

UNOCI had to cover a number of mandated tasks, including monitoring the cease-fire, providing support to humanitarian activities, assisting in the restoration of civilian policing, developing disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs, and supporting the implementation of peace processes in a divided country where weapons still circulated widely. It also had to implement a unique mandate to certify the election results for which it was ill-prepared and that created debates on its positioning as an impartial peacemaker (see Figure 4 for UNOCI's initial mandate).

Moreover, the Security Council requested the mission to focus on goals (presidential elections and DDR) that the parties refused to comply with throughout almost its entire mandate. The degree to which the host nation cooperated with UNOCI thus varied enormously and shaped its ability to deliver on the mandate. As with many if not all other peacekeeping operations, UNOCI also failed to meet the expectations of a population in search of peace. UNOCI was nevertheless useful in achieving a certain degree of stability and in returning the country to normalcy. (See Figure 6 for a number of takeaways regarding the various aspects of UNOCI's mandate and its relationship with its stakeholders).

Figure 4. UNOCI's initial mandate

Paragraph 6 of Resolution 1528 (27 February 2004) decidesthat the mandate of UNOCI, in coordination with the French forces, shall be the following:

Monitoring of the ceasefire and movements of armed groups
(a) To observe and monitor the implementation of the comprehensive ceasefire agreement of 3 May 2003, and investigate violations of the ceasefire,
(b) To liaise with the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the military elements of the Forces Nouvelles in order to promote, in coordination with the French forces, the re-establishment of trust between all the Ivorian forces involved, as stated in its resolution 1479 (2003),
(c) To assist the Government of National Reconciliation in monitoring the borders, with particular attention to the situation of Liberian refugees and to the movement of combatants,

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement
(d) To assist the Government of National Reconciliation in undertaking the regrouping of all the Ivorian forces involved and to ensure the security of their cantonment sites,
(e) To help the Government of National Reconciliation implement the national programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the combatants (DDR), with special attention to the specific needs of women and children,
(f) To coordinate closely with the UN missions in Sierra Leone and in Liberia in the implementation of a voluntary repatriation and resettlement programme for foreign ex-combatants,
(h) To guard weapons, ammunition and other military materiel handed over by the former combatants and to secure, neutralize or destroy such material,

Protection of United Nations personnel, institutions and civilians
(i) To protect UN personnel, installations and equipment, provide the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel and, without prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of National Reconciliation, to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, within its capabilities and its areas of deployment,
Support for humanitarian assistance
(k) To facilitate the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance, inter alia, by helping to establish the necessary security conditions,

Support for the implementation of the peace process
(I) To facilitate…the re-establishment by the Government of National Reconciliation of the authority of the State throughout Côte d'Ivoire,
(m) To provide oversight, guidance and technical assistance to the Government of National Reconciliation…to prepare for and assist in the conduct of free, fair and transparent electoral processes linked to the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, in particular the presidential election,

Assistance in the field of human rights
(n) To contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire with special attention to violence committed against women and girls, and to help investigate human rights violations with a view to help ending impunity,

Public information
(o) To promote understanding of the peace process and the role of UNOCI among local communities and the parties, through an effective public information capacity, including the establishment as necessary of a United Nations radio broadcasting capability,

Law and order
(p) To assist the Government of National Reconciliation…in restoring a civilian policing presence throughout Côte d'Ivoire, and to advise it on the restructuring of the internal security services,
(q) To assist the Government of National Reconciliation…in re-establishing the authority of the judiciary and the rule of law throughout Côte d'Ivoire.

Figure 5. Contributions to UNOCI

February 2004
Security Council
Resolution 1528
Creation of UNOCI

November 2004
Renewed tensions
Air attacks against rebels
and French camp in Bouaké

March 2007
Ouagadougou Peace
Agreement

November–December 2010
Presidential election

March 2011
Battle of Abidjan

June 2012
Direct attack on
peacekeepers in the West

January 2013
Start of UNOCI drawdown

October 2015
Presidential elections

April 2016
Security Council
Resolution 2284
Final extension
of UNOCI mandate

Date	Troops	Total	Annual Cost
March 2004	106		$378M
July 2004	4,735	5,016	$378M
January 2005	5,843	6,224	$378M
July 2005	6,060	6,458	$368M
January 2006	6,702	7,594	$368M
July 2006	6,894	7,806	$465M
January 2007	7,850	8,994	$465M
July 2007	7,833	9,161	$471M
January 2008	7,840	9,138	$471M
July 2008	7,830	9,119	$475M
January 2009	7,832	9,220	$475M
July 2009	7,024	8,394	$492M
January 2010	7,198	8,550	$492M
July 2010	7,194	8,554	$485M
January 2011	7,578	9,024	$485M
July 2011	8,974	10,443	$646M
January 2012	9,418	10,945	$646M
July 2012	9,399	10,967	$575M
January 2013	9,361	11,018	$575M
July 2013	8,497	10,011	$584M
January 2014	8,233	9,683	$584M
July 2014	6,906	8,444	$494M
January 2015	6,076	7,617	$494M
July 2015	5,248	6,880	$403M
January 2016	4,977	6,585	$403M
July 2016	2,601	3,502	$153M
January 2017	1,805	2,396	$153M
April 2017	17		$153M

Source: United Nations

SUCCESSES IN RESOLVING THE CRISIS AND ACHIEVING STABILITY

Despite a difficult start, a ten-year status quo, and a major post-election crisis, UNOCI was able to achieve a number of its objectives in the country. It allowed a return to political normalcy, if not the longer-term goal of full reconciliation. It contributed to stability by creating a climate conducive to peace through "joint patrols and other activities with the Ivorian security forces."[108] It maintained a constant link with all parties to the conflict and organized reconciliation meetings between various groups. Through the deployment of its troops throughout the country, UNOCI was also often able to prevent the escalation of local conflicts. The strength of its deployment (from 6,240 uniformed personnel in April 2004 at its initial authorized strength to 11,058 uniformed personnel in June 2013 at its maximum strength) allowed it to have good coverage of the ground (see Figure 5).

With Operation Licorne, it also served as a buffer between the national armed forces and the Forces Nouvelles in the zone of confidence, preventing most infiltrations from both sides (except in 2004 when Gbagbo decided to "reconquer" the north), as well as during the post-election crisis, saving lives. After the 2010–2011 crisis, UNOCI was there to help "the national authorities to stabilize the security situation, with particular focus on Abidjan and the west, including the border areas."[109] At that point in time, UNOCI had deployed more than 5,000 uniformed personnel in Abidjan alone. UNOCI and UNMIL helped their respective national authorities to monitor and address cross-border security challenges. The mission was therefore instrumental in "restoring normalcy in Côte d'Ivoire [after] the violent post-presidential election crisis."[110]

After the post-election crisis, UNOCI promoted dialogue between the government and the opposition. This enabled a climate conducive to holding new elections in 2015 and 2016, even if it was unable to put enough pressure to obtain the adoption of a law on the financing of political parties and the status of the political opposition. This dialogue allowed the gradual unfreezing of assets, the release of some political prisoners, and the participation of the opposition in the political life of the country.

In parallel to these security and political tasks, UNOCI conducted a series of less visible but nevertheless useful activities that required long-term assistance and monitoring. For example, UNOCI's civil affairs component worked in close cooperation with the National Steering Committee on the Redeployment of the Administration (*Comité national de pilotage du redéploiement de l'administration*) to facilitate the return of civil servants to a number of locations. UNOCI also provided security assistance during the redeployment of administrators to Forces Nouvelles–controlled areas.[111] Its community-based projects also helped foster local support for the peace process. According to one NGO representative, "UNOCI has overall brought a lot to the people and the local communities when it provided a number of services in lieu of the state or local authorities; in general, people saw its means but never really understood its mandate."[112]

UNOCI constantly monitored and reported on violations of human rights. When the post-election crisis was over, it put pressure on the new authorities to address impunity and ensure accountability for gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by all parties.[113] It assisted the government in establishing the new National Human Rights Commission. Finally, through the UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UN humanitarian agencies, UNOCI helped the Ivorian authorities return up to 80,000 internally displaced persons and over 70,000 refugees, primarily Liberian.[114]

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108 UN Security Council, *Fourth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2005/186, March 18, 2005, para. 5.

109 UN Security Council, *Twenty-Eighth Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/387, June 24, 2011, para. 54.

110 UN Security Council, *Twenty-Ninth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/807, December 30, 2011, para. 70.

111 UN Security Council, *Third Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2004/962, December 9, 2004, para. 36.

112 Interview with NGO representative, Abidjan, November 2017.

113 UN Security Council, *Twenty-Ninth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/807, December 30, 2011, para. 75.

114 UN Security Council, *Fourth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2005/186, March 18, 2005, para. 63.

UNOCI also launched several public information strategies to counter "disinformation, jingoistic propaganda, hate media and other media-managed action" aimed at inciting violence and derailing the peace and reconciliation process. It thus created UNOCI FM radio station, based in Abidjan, which also broadcast in Bouaké and Daloa. This station continuously provided "neutral and impartial information, regular news bulletins, information from humanitarian agencies and messages of peace, including from Ivorian civil society and religious leaders."[115]

FRAGILE CONSENT OF THE HOST STATE

UNOCI illustrated the difficulty of operating with the fragile consent, and at time even the hostility, of the host government. In most of the peacekeeping contexts of the past twenty years consent has been weak and subject to change, and it should never be taken for granted.[116]

The consent of Côte d'Ivoire was fragile because the Security Council resolutions and the presence of the UN in the country were geared toward a goal (elections) that the head of state and his supporters feared. Therefore, consent could only be obtained through pressure. As a result, Gbagbo and his supporters accepted the Security Council resolutions with little intention of complying with them. According to Giulia Piccolino, Côte d'Ivoire was a case of "consent under pressure."[117] As noted by the secretary-general, "At every critical turn of the peace process, some of the main political leaders have resorted to calculated obstruction of the peace process, exploiting loopholes in the peace agreements, using legal technicalities and often inciting violent acts by their followers" to their own ends.[118]

In this political game, the SRSGs were often easy scapegoats caught between the need to get along with the national authorities and to move forward the process decided by the Security Council. Most SRSGs left at the request of the Ivorian authorities. In this context, both the Security Council and the

Secretariat had relatively little leverage over the host government and a defiant President Gbagbo, who remained generally hostile to the presence of UN peacekeepers in his country and continued to see them as a threat to his power.

This is also the reason any political process was doomed to fail from the start, in particular if undertaken by external actors, as the host state would see it as a threat. External efforts were therefore limited to the provision of good offices, mainly by subregional and regional actors. But these attempts never lasted, as they were conceived in isolation from one another and reflected various and divergent agendas, resulting in congestion at the negotiating table. As pointed out by the secretary-general himself,

> The international community cannot replace or substitute the political will of the Ivorian leadership and people to move the peace process forward in conformity with the agreements they freely entered into. Ultimately, the Ivorian leaders bear full responsibility for finding a way out of the crisis and making the hard decisions and visionary compromises that are urgently required.[119]

A peacekeeping operation will always be in a difficult situation when the authorities of the host state fundamentally disagree with its mandate and see its presence as a limit to their sovereignty. Ultimately, if a head of state wishes to remain in power, there is little chance they will negotiate their departure.

Moreover, from the outset the Security Council supported a peace agreement (the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement) that was not supported by the host government and that never constituted a real pathway to peace. Nevertheless, it became "a reference for peace even though it was in trouble right from the start":

> The UN (and other major players) anchored itself to a strategy that was not working but one that we could not (or would not) change. We applied several patches—Accra, Pretoria, Ouagadougou—but we could not fix the structural bugs that made the Linas-Marcoussis program inoperable.… Neither side was

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115 UN Security Council, *Third Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2004/962, December 2004, para. 36.

116 On the issue of consent, see Sofía Sebastián and Aditi Gorur, *U.N. Peacekeeping & Host-State Consent: How Missions Navigate Relationships with Governments*, Stimson Center, March 2018, available at www.stimson.org/sites/default/files/file-attachments/UN-PeacekeepingAndHostStateConsent.pdf .

117 Piccolino, "The Dilemmas of State Consent in United Nations Peace Operations."

118 UN Security Council, *Tenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2006/821, October 17, 2006, para. 70.

119 UN Security Council, *Fourth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2005/186, March 18, 2005, para. 86.

ready—or exhausted enough—to make the necessary compromises.… The parties to the conflict were not ready for peace, or rather a peace that did not secure their main objective: political power.… Instead, the force of arms ultimately carried the day.[120]

After the post-election crisis, the Ivorian authorities partnered with UNOCI as they needed the mission to stabilize the country. UNOCI thus became an operation supporting decisions made by an elected government. In passively supporting the host state, the UN lost another kind of impartiality. This was particularly the case when the mission did not raise its voice when the government failed to take appropriate steps to support the implementation of human rights protections and the administration of justice or to properly address reconciliation and security sector reform.[121]

HEAVY PRESENCE AND SUPPORT OF FRANCE

France, the former colonial power of Côte d'Ivoire, influenced UNOCI in many ways: it initiated the debate in the Security Council on the creation of a peacekeeping mission; it was the penholder on all Security Council resolutions on Côte d'Ivoire and greatly influenced its analysis of the situation; and it deployed troops, first to support the ECOWAS force and then to support the peacekeeping mission with a parallel force that was instrumental in the management of the post-election crisis. For France, these elements were all interrelated.[122]

France used its position in the Security Council to secure UN involvement and share the burden of stabilization. As Jean-Marie Guéhenno put it, "For most members of the council, France 'owned' Côte d'Ivoire, and if there was trouble, it was for France to fix it."[123] Given its colonial legacy and close political and economic ties with Côte d'Ivoire, France played the leading role and defined the UN

agenda, on which there was sometimes internal equivocation.[124] Throughout the crisis, "France repeatedly intervened as a peace-broker, peacekeeper and peace-enforcer,"[125] at times with great reluctance, and at other times with great impatience. It pushed for robust political and operational action from the Security Council and UNOCI during the post-election crisis. Indeed, as many interlocutors acknowledged, "Without the French military intervention, the fighting might have continued for much longer as neither UN nor rebel forces seemed capable to defeat Gbagbo's forces in Abidjan."[126]

However, the French presence and involvement in the crisis was also controversial, and many of its aspects were contradictory. On the one hand, it made it difficult for the UN to remain neutral or even impartial, as France drove the agenda. But by the same token, to many observers, UNOCI never would have succeeded without Licorne, and Licorne never would have succeeded without UNOCI.

On the other hand, France's presence and interests left the UN in the back seat in the areas of mediation (which was also undertaken by regional and subregional powers) and security. It served as a safety net for the UN mission and allowed it to act robustly during the post-election crisis. France increased the size of Licorne during the crisis (up to 4,000) before significantly reducing it (to 400 since 2013). It was also an instrument of continuous French involvement. As such, "France's security role in Côte d'Ivoire ran contrary to the military disengagement, as well as the 'multilateralisation' of crisis management and 'Africanisation' of peacekeeping, which Paris had advocated and professed to follow since the mid-1990s."[127]

France also shaped the UN's agenda after the

120 Doss, *Other People's Wars.*

121 On justice, see International Center for Transitional Justice, *Disappointed Hope: Judicial Handling of Post-election Violence in Cote d'Ivoire*, April 2016, available at www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Report-CDI-Prosecutions-2016-English.pdf ; and Netton Prince Tawa and Alexandra Engelsdorfer, "Acceptance of the International Criminal Court in Côte d'Ivoire: Between the Hope for Justice and the Concern of 'Victor's Justice,'" in *After Nuremberg. Exploring Multiple Dimensions of the Acceptance of International Criminal Justice*, Susanne Buckley-Zistel, Friederike Mieth, and Marjana Papa, eds. (Nuremberg: International Nuremberg Principles Academy, 2017), available at www.nurembergacademy.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Cote_d_Ivoire.pdf .

122 As put bluntly by Jean-Marc de La Sablière, "Our commitment on the ground justifies that we seek to remain masters of the game." In *Dans les coulisses du monde*, p. 246.

123 Guéhenno, *The Fog of Peace*, p. 93.

124 See Notin, *Le crocodile et le scorpion.*

125 Marco Wyss, "*Primus inter Pares?*: France and Multi-Actor Peacekeeping in Côte d'Ivoire," in *Peacekeeping in Africa: The Evolving Security Architecture*, Thierry Tardy and Marco Wyss, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 132.

126 Charbonneau, "The Imperial Legacy of International Peacebuilding," p. 626.

127 Ibid.

post-election crisis, especially when it considered that the UN mission could be closed in a country that was experiencing 9 percent growth per year. It convinced its partners on the Security Council of the agenda's relevance, even at the expense of some of the remaining tasks related to the monitoring and investigation of human rights abuses and the fight against impunity, progress on security sector reform, and governance.

THE UN'S ROLE IN CERTIFYING THE ELECTION RESULTS: A RELEVANT MANDATE?

As pointed out by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, "Elections are rarely the shortest route to peace." He considered "the basic flaw" of the management of the Ivorian crisis to be "the reliance on an election to resolve fundamental differences."[128] Indeed, research has shown that "the risk of elections contributing to the flare-up of conflict is higher when they are held in post-conflict situations, characterized as they are by mutual

distrust…. Elections cannot settle a military conflict that negotiations or victory have failed to end."[129]

This is one of the lessons of the post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010 and 2011. Because one side wanted to win at any cost, the elections could not constitute an exit strategy. On the contrary, "The contested election outcome heightened political tension and sparked political violence" and "put the self-proclaimed Gbagbo government at odds with the Security Council, regional organizations, and key donor governments involved in monitoring, vetting, or helping to administer the electoral process."[130] As noted by Fabienne Hara and Gilles Yabi,

> Conditions for presidential elections were far from ideal, even though they had been delayed several times in order to ensure adequate preparation.… By the time of elections in October and November 2010, only the identification and registration of all voters had been completed; the other necessary conditions

Box 3. The five benchmarks of certification[131]

> *Excerpt from the secretary-general's sixteenth progress report (April 2008)*
>
> In keeping with the provisions of Security Council Resolution 1765 (2007), my Special Representative has elaborated a five-criteria framework for certifying all stages of the electoral process. The framework defines broad benchmarks that will enable my Special Representative to assess whether:
>
> (a) a secure environment exists during the period leading to the elections and allows for the full participation of the population and the candidates in the process;
>
> (b) the electoral process is inclusive;
>
> (c) all candidates have equitable access to State-controlled media and whether the latter remains neutral;
>
> (d) the electoral lists are credible and accepted by all parties; and
>
> (e) the results of the elections are determined through a transparent counting process and are accepted by all or are challenged peacefully through the appropriate channels.
>
> These benchmarks were defined in consultation with all national and international partners. My Special Representative is continuing consultations with all parties in order to ensure a common understanding of each benchmark and to secure agreement on a "red-lines" approach in conducting the certification process. The certification will be conducted in close coordination with the Facilitator of the Ivorian peace process who plays a key role in the mediation and arbitration of that process. My Special Representative will also consult widely with all major players in preparing his assessment of the electoral process.

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128 Guéhenno, *The Fog of Peace*, pp. 93–114.

129 Doudou Sidibé, "Peace Processes in Côte d'Ivoire: Democracy and Challenges of Consolidating Peace after the Post-electoral Crisis," ACCORD, 2013, pp. 4–7.

130 Nicolas Cook, *Cote d'Ivoire's Post-election Crisis*, Congressional Research Service, January 28, 2011.

131 UN Security Council, *Sixteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2008/250, April 15, 2008, para. 32.

for peaceful elections, including the reunification of the country and disarmament, were not achieved.[132]

Nevertheless, elections had been at the heart of all peace agreements in Côte d'Ivoire since 2002 and were considered the only possible exit strategy. Elections were also at the heart of an almost unique mandate for a UN mission: the certification of election results (see Box 3).[133] Certification was introduced into UNOCI's mandate by the 2005 Pretoria Agreement, Security Council Resolution 1603 (June 24, 2005), and the creation of the office of the high representative for the elections (see Box 4).[134] UNOCI was in charge of certifying the results of the elections but not organizing them; as described by SRSG Choi, it was "a certifier without being an actor," and that is what made the UN's role in Côte d'Ivoire unique.[135] The mission was considered "an additional safeguard to guarantee the credibility of the elections," both in the conduct of the electoral process and in the results of the poll: "Candidates may ignore the conclusions of an

observation mission, but it is more difficult to do so with a UN-led certification process," the UN secretary-general stated.[136]

More than the election itself, what was controversial was the possibility of contesting its results. A certification process was therefore needed to avoid such a crisis. But that rationale may have been naïve in a context where one party wanted to win at any cost. The Gbagbo government saw UNOCI's certification role as an infringement on Ivorian sovereignty. As time passed, Gbagbo became more and more opposed to it, and the OPA did not mention any role for the UN in the certification of the election. Moreover, most Ivorians saw UNOCI more as "a tool for giving advice than as a tool with an executive authority" that could "substitute a decision of the Constitutional Council."[137]

Resolution 1765 acceded to Gbagbo's request for a reduced role for the UN in the elections by terminating the mandate of the high representative

Box 4. The changing role of the high representative for the elections after 2007[138]

Excerpt from the secretary-general's thirteenth progress report (May 2007)

The only issue on which the Ivorian parties initially expressed divergent views was the role the UN should play in the electoral process and, in particular, the certification and arbitration roles of the High Representative for the elections. While Prime Minister [Guillaume] Soro and the opposition parties expressed the view that, since the issue had not been addressed by the Ouagadougou agreement, the role of the United Nations in the electoral process remained unchanged, the President initially objected to the certification and arbitration roles of the High Representative for the elections. In a letter addressed to Mr. [Hédi] Annabi [assistant-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations] dated 18 April, the President contended that the role of the United Nations in the electoral process should be limited to observation and technical advice. The President also cited a letter dated 27 March 2006 addressed to me [the secretary-general] by the facilitator, in which he had expressed the same view. The opposition parties, however, expressed very strong views in support of the certification role of the High Representative, pointing out that that role was provided for in the Pretoria agreement and was based on a delicately negotiated compromise after the parties had failed to agree on the demand of the opposition parties that the elections should be organized and conducted by the United Nations.

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132 Hara and Yabi, "Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2011," p. 171.

133 This was not in fact the only certification mandate given to a UN mission, as there had also been one in Timor-Leste and Nepal, but it was the first of that dimension. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the UN was not in charge of organizing the elections, only of certifying the results.

134 No precise manual on how to certify the elections has been written. Only much later, in 2008, a "five-criteria framework for certification" was put forward by the SRSG to guide the certification process. See Box 3.

135 Choi, *La crise ivoirienne*, p. 159.

136 UN Security Council, *Twenty-Seventh Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2011/211, March 30, 2011, para. 75. See also Lori-Anne Théroux-Bénoni, "Lessons for UN Electoral Certification from the 2010 Disputed Presidential Poll in Côte d'Ivoire," Centre for International Governance Innovation and Africa Initiative, *Policy Brief no. 1*, June 2012, p. 3.

137 Interviews, Abidjan, November 2017. According to another expert, "Gbagbo acquiesced because he saw some tactical advantage and never believed it would turn against him as it did. But a lot of Ivorians were not unhappy with the arrangement as it promised them more open and transparent elections." Interview, Geneva, May 2018.

138 UN Security Council, *Thirteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2007/275, May 14, 2007, para. 31.

for the elections.[139] According to Dorina Bekoe, that move "affected UNOCI's power and authority to implement the certification mandate," such as by investigating electoral offences or noncompliance with the OPA, effectively criticizing the electoral process, or taking actions to encourage a course correction.[140] The certification process went from being accepted by the Ivorian parties to being reluctantly tolerated by one of them. Under such circumstances, the process was likely to face serious difficulties and to contribute to an accumulation of tensions.

What led to the crisis was not the certification of the results itself but the absence of a post-election deal, the "winner-takes-all" approach to the election, and the fact that Gbagbo saw the election as a means to confirm his government's legitimacy. Under such circumstances, the certification process became an instrument for the UN to be politically robust in enforcing the results of the elections, even through forceful action, and to build a coalition to put pressure on the loser.

It also led the UN to clearly take sides with the winner of the elections. This was controversial for many Ivorians, for some member states, and for former mediators such as Thabo Mbeki, who considered that the UN had overstepped its mandate and gone down the path of "regime change."[141] But having certified that the winner of the election was Ouattara, the SRSG could not have

Military Adviser General Babacar Gaye (left) and UNOCI Force Commander General Abdul Hafiz (right) visit the troops providing security at the Golf Hotel in Abidjan, where President Alassane Ouattara and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro were residing, December 21, 2010. UN Photo/ Basile Zoma.

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139 With Resolution 1765, the Security Council "*decide[ed]* to terminate the mandate of the High Representative for the Elections, decide[ed] therefore that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Côte d'Ivoire shall certify that all stages of the electoral process provide all the necessary guarantees for the holding of open, free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections in accordance with international standards, and *request[ed]* the Secretary-General to take all the necessary steps so that the Special Representative has at his disposal a support cell providing him all the appropriate assistance to fulfill this task." Russia and China opposed a more intrusive role for the council in Ivorian internal affairs that would have implied, for example, the designation of ministers.

140 Bekoe, "The United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire," pp. 7, 9.

141 See Mbeki's interview: "What the World Got Wrong in Côte D'Ivoire," *Foreign Policy*, April 29, 2011.

contradicted himself by looking for an alternative (e.g., a power-sharing arrangement) that would have prolonged the uncertainty. In an answer to Mbeki, Vijay Nambiar (then chef de cabinet of the secretary-general) considered that "there should be zero tolerance for desperate acts by rulers seeking to stay in power against the will of the people. The post-election violence was a direct result of Mr. Gbagbo's refusal to accept defeat and his repeated rejection of all efforts to find a peaceful solution."[142]

A ROBUST APPROACH TO THE POST-ELECTION CRISIS: PARTIAL IMPARTIALITY?

The outbreak of the post-election crisis tested the partnership between Licorne and ONUCI, the unity of the Security Council behind the certification process, the cooperation of UNOCI and the council with regional actors, and the capacity of the peacekeepers (and of the UN mission as a whole) to deal with a sudden deterioration of the security situation. The robust approach that was chosen a couple months into the crisis was controversial, with some considering that the UN had taken sides. In the context of the Libyan intervention (launched in March 2011), "This use of force by UN peacekeepers and French troops blurred the lines between human protection and regime change and raised questions about the role of the UN in overriding Côte d'Ivoire's Constitutional Council, about the proper interpretation of Resolution 1975, and about the place of neutrality and impartiality in UN peacekeeping."[143] This spread the feeling that Ouattara did not win the elections but won the war with the help of the international community.

The Ivorian case also raises the issue of using force to achieve a protection of civilians mandate. In this case, this was made possible by the presence (and availability) of French troops on the ground backed up by a politically robust Security Council. However, the joint UN-French military intervention following Resolution 1975 did not create as big and lasting a controversy as the simultaneous intervention in Libya, for a number of reasons.

First, the use of force in Côte d'Ivoire was tactically limited in scale and framed as a direct response to Gbagbo using heavy weapons against civilians. Second, as Ouattara was the legal president-elect, the removal of Gbagbo did not qualify as "regime change" per se, even if the term was used by some. Finally, the military intervention was swift and decisive, with limited collateral damage, and did not lead to the collapse of the state. This "successful" use of force involving UN peacekeepers has likely contributed to increasing the willingness of council members (but not of troop-contributing countries) to authorize the use of military force for protection purposes. Nonetheless, they continue to disagree over the practical interpretation of such mandates and the need for peacekeepers to remain impartial.

The partnership between UNOCI and Licorne was key to this successful use of force and offers some lessons on how a peacekeeping operation and a more robust parallel force can mutually support each other. Licorne served as a reserve force (or a reinforcing force) for UNOCI and helped the peacekeeping operation sustain its use of force in the face of a serious degradation of the security situation and the reluctance of some countries to contribute troops. In the words of DPKO's military adviser, it was "a back-up force which gave a strategic depth" to UNOCI.[144]

In particular, Licorne gave UNOCI the military strength it was missing when its SRSG interfered with the military command of the operation by forcing his force commander to resign in the middle of the crisis. UNOCI illustrated the need for more strategic oversight from DPKO on the way a mission is run in times of crisis. In fact, owing to the weakness of the mission leadership, the secretary-general, the under-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations, and DPKO's military adviser had to give direct instructions to the SRSG and the force commander. With the support of French authorities, it was they who decided to engage in a preemptive strike on the heavy weapons used by Gbagbo.

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142 Vijay Nambiar, "Dear President Mbeki: The United Nations Helped Save the Ivory Coast," *Foreign Policy*, August 17, 2011.

143 Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, "The New Politics of Protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the Responsibility to Protect," *International Affairs* 87, no. 4 (2011), p. 18.

144 Interview with General Babacar Gaye, former DPKO military adviser, New York, 2011.

INCOMPLETE DDR AND SSR PROCESSES

From the start, the "deal" between the government and the rebels was to hold elections in return for proper disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) processes in the north. As with the elections, several disarmament deadlines slipped by, as the rebels and militias refused to start disarming as long as the legal and political reforms envisaged under the LMA and the OPA had not been adopted and free and fair elections held. As a consequence, despite various attempts, the DDR process only started in 2012, after the post-election crisis, when the Ivorian government created the Authority for DDR (*Autorité pour le désarmement, la démobilisation et la réintégration*, or ADDR). This process was launched in the absence of an SSR strategy, which limited its possible success, as most rebels and militias wanted to integrate into the national defense and security forces.

The DDR process aimed to include "all individuals over 18 years of age who had participated in the fighting in 2002 and/or the post-elections crisis"—an estimated 110,000 former combatants.[145] In 2013, following initial verification efforts by the government, that caseload was revised to 74,000, including former combatants from both sides and former militia members meeting the eligibility criteria. In the end, between 2013 and 2015, 69,000 ex-combatants enrolled in the DDR program. These included not only the "real" ex-combatants (around 13,000 persons) but also those associated with combatants, militias, or self-defense groups and youth in trouble with the law to make reintegration more socioeconomically inclusive.

But the lists given to UNOCI by the ex-"comzones" were never properly vetted, and many ex-combatants never went through the DDR program.[146] Moreover, "only a limited number of weapons, most of them unserviceable, were collected during the disarmament process."[147] According to a March 2016 report of the secretary-general, "Throughout the disarmament process a total of 43,510 armaments, including 14,121 weapons, were collected. Many interlocutors pointed to the discrepancy between the number of former combatants enrolled in the process and the number of serviceable weapons handed over."[148]

Other weaknesses of the DDR program have been pointed out by researchers and NGOs. The DDR process has often been qualified as a "process of the winner" that was entirely controlled by former comzones who were its main beneficiaries.[149] The process has therefore favored the reintegration of pro-Ouattara ex-combatants over pro-Gbagbo ones. Human Rights Watch estimated that only 13 percent of pro-Gbagbo groups were disarmed.[150] According to other observers, "Thousands of fighters have skipped the process while former rebel leaders have been allowed to influence who is processed."[151]

No former comzone has ever been indicted. The new president chose peace over justice. This created a heavier burden on SSR later, did not build trust within new defense and security institutions, and even led to a situation where many ex-combatants kept weapon caches, highlighting the challenges of transitional justice in Côte d'Ivoire.[152]

145 UN Security Council, *Thirty-First Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2012/964, December 31, 2012, para. 35.

146 As explained by Aline Leboeuf, "The comzones are the combatants who held positions of responsibility within the FAFN (armed forces of the Forces Nouvelles) and controlled areas of northern Côte d'Ivoire formally before 2006. The comzones are certainly not so visible or maybe even as powerful as before. However, they completely escape the reforms of the Secretariat of the CNS [National Security Council, or *Conseil national de sécurité*]. For a French analyst, they are a kind of 'plaster' on the hands of Ouattara; they stick, they are bulky, Ouattara cannot get rid of them, and he is indebted to them.... It is very likely that the comzones remain simply an element of the new genetic code of the Ivorian army." In "La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne," *Institut français des relations internationales*, March 2016, p. 32.

147 Arthur Boutellis, "The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire: A Source of Conflict and a Key to Peace," International Peace Institute, May 2011, p. 10. As pointed out by Aline Leboeuf, "With regard to weapons and ammunitions, an effort has been made, under DDR, to register and identify them as belonging to a given battalion, and no longer to a comzone, so that when the latter changes battalion, the weapons remain in the battalion he is leaving. However, the ease of obtaining weapons in Côte d'Ivoire remains disconcerting." Ibid., p. 35.

148 UN Security Council, *Special Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2016/297, March 31, 2016, paras. 38–39. See also Kathleen Klaus et Patrick Zadi Anderson, "Élections présidentielles ivoiriennes 2015: Intérêts locaux et perspectives pour la paix," *Bulletin FrancoPaix* 1, no. 6 (June 2016).

149 Benjamin Olagboyé, "Analyse comparative du DDR en Sierra Leone et en Côte d'Ivoire: Dynamiques postconflit et réconciliation," *Bulletin FrancoPaix* 1, no. 6 (June 2016).

150 Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2015: Côte d'Ivoire," available at www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/cote-divoire .

151 "Ivory Coast's Former Rebels Weigh Politics and Guns," Reuters, May 7, 2015.

152 Ibrahima Bayo, Jr., "Mutineries/Côte d'Ivoire: Affaire de la cache d'armes, une guerre des chefs larvée?," *La Tribune Afrique*, October 10, 2017.

The effect of an incomplete DDR process and the absence of a clear strategic plan for SSR had an impact on the way SSR was conducted after the post-election crisis.[153] Traditionally, leaders of Côte d'Ivoire have viewed the army with suspicion. They have limited its means and strength while keeping small, equipped loyal units and ultimately "giving" the task of ensuring internal security to France (which has maintained a presence at Port-Bouët for decades).[154] The fact is that "the constant presence of the French military force in Côte d'Ivoire, a force that was, according to bilateral defense accords, responsible for the defense of the sovereignty and integrity of the Ivorian territory, practically reduced the Ivorian military to a simple gendarmerie incapable of defending its own territory and people."[155] Moreover, none of the peace agreements, including the last one, emphasized SSR: "The Ouagadougou Agreement narrowed the focus of the security-sector reform almost solely to the reunification of the Ivorian Defense and Security Forces and the Forces Nouvelles, postponing the question of developing the country's new security-sector policy and architecture until after the elections when a strong, elected president would take office."[156]

In this context, as pointed out by Arthur Boutellis, "One of the key decisions President Ouattara made since the beginning of the post-electoral crisis was to sign a decree on March 17, 2011, creating the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire…as an attempt to symbolically unify ex-rebel Forces Nouvelles and those members of the national Defense and Security Forces that would side with Ouattara."[157] But with entrenched divisions, parallel chains of command, numerous factions (divided along ethnic, political, and economic lines), irregular armed networks, and the

recruitment of foreign mercenaries, it was hard to rebuild the army. The army needed to have the trust of the president and of the government and required long-term structural reforms.[158]

Progress toward such reforms began in April 2012 when the Ivorian authorities created a National Security Council and a Working Group on Security Sector Reform. Resolution 2000 (July 27, 2011) mandated UNOCI to support the government's efforts on SSR and to elaborate its national strategy. As a result, a series of laws were adopted that provided the appropriate strategic frameworks and tools for setting up the army. The structures created on paper, however, did not translate into effective SSR.

The lack of effective SSR remains a driver of fragility in Côte d'Ivoire, and the state does not have the means to sustain its current 23,000 soldiers.[159] The recurrent mutinies in Abidjan and Bouaké, initially motivated by claims for bonuses for bringing Ouattara to power in 2010 and 2011, are symptoms of larger shortcomings in SSR. This was underlined by the final report of the secretary-general:

> The protests in January 2017 by Ivorian soldiers, who were followed by gendarmes and other related personnel, demonstrated the remaining fragility of the Ivorian security sector. While the Government managed to reach an agreement with the protesters without any security incident, those protests showed an institutional gap in terms of training and discipline within the armed forces, which remains one of the key challenges for the security sector.[160]

These events, however, served as a wake-up call, and since then, the Ivorian authorities have seriously engaged in reforming the army, with a planned reduction to around 13,000 personnel.[161] The planned deployment of Ivorian national forces

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153 DDR and SSR were not synchronized; those units reported to two different deputy SRSG.

154 Interview with Christian Bouquet, "Côte d'Ivoire: Une succession manquée," *La documentation française*, June 2011, available at www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/dossiers/cote-divoire/bouquet.shtml .

155 Bovcon, "France's Conflict Resolution Strategy in Côte d'Ivoire and Its Ethical Implications," p. 13.

156 Boutellis, "The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire," p. 8.

157 Ibid., p. 13. See also Moussa Fofana, "Des forces nouvelles aux forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire: Comment une rébellion devient républicaine," *Politique africaine* 2, no. 122 (June 2011).

158 Philip Martin, Giulia Piccolino, and Jeremy Speight, "Rebel Networks' Deep Roots Cause Concerns for Côte d'Ivoire Transition," *IPI Global Observatory*, October 12, 2017. Even earlier, Houphouët-Boigny used to say, "The Ivorian army is the BIMa" and "with no army no coup." Notin, *Le crocodile et le scorpion*.

159 As explained by Aline Leboeuf, "The Ivoirian army is largely a 'social peace army.' It was composed in 2014 of 23,000 'registered' men, who the government pays so that they do not end up manning roadblocks. Another expert explains that the budget of the Ivorian army plans to feed 25,000 men but that in fact it feeds 50,000 because about 30,000 associates are also fed and gravitate toward the mixed units." In "La réforme du secteur de sécurité à l'ivoirienne," p. 29.

160 UN Security Council, *Final Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2017/89, January 31, 2017, para. 65.

161 The reduction of the personnel in the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire has started with a first wave of voluntary departures of about 1,000 soldiers in December 2017, and a second wave of more than 2,000 sent to retirement. Interview, March 2017.

to the UN peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic has helped move forward this reduction.

SANCTIONS AND THE ARMS EMBARGO: AN INAPPLICABLE INSTRUMENT

Eight months after the creation of a multidimensional peacekeeping operation, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo (Resolution 1572 of November 15, 2004) and targeted sanctions on individuals. The resolution allowed only supplies of arms and related material and technical training and assistance intended solely for the support of or use in the process of restructuring the defense and security forces. Such supplies had to be approved in advance by the Côte d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee. Later, Resolution 1584 (February 1, 2005) created a group of experts and mandated UNOCI and Licorne to monitor this arms embargo. Early in the process, the secretary-general acknowledged that "the Mission's monitoring role [would] be limited primarily to the collection and analysis of information and to random inspections by small teams of military observers and civilian police officers, supported, if required, by detachments of the UNOCI and Licorne forces."[162] In Resolution 1643 (December 15, 2005), the Security Council also decided that all states should prevent the import of rough diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire.

In 2006, UNOCI created a dedicated cell (the Integrated Embargo Monitoring Unit) comprising three to four persons with arms and diamonds expertise. Despite its limited capacity, that unit—to date a unique initiative in a peacekeeping operation—helped improve monitoring of the arms embargo and train peacekeepers on ways to monitor it.

But this sanctions and arms embargo regime suffered from the start from a lack of compliance by the parties to the conflict and neighboring countries,[163] a fundamental inability to control porous borders, the presence of more than 4,500 mercenaries in the two camps, and the extensive circulation of small and light arms in the country. Moreover, according to Giulia Piccolino, there has been a

> contrast between the intrusiveness of Resolutions 1633 and 1721 on paper and the extreme weakness of the mechanisms for punishing non-compliance. None of the protagonists of the crisis, whether on the side of Gbagbo or the [Forces Nouvelles], were ever hit by sanctions during this period. Albeit having such a power, UN Sanctions Committee was reluctant to apply targeted sanctions against those who "blocked the peace process," as this implied a political and sensitive judgment.[164]

For Arthur Boutellis, "The 2006 sanctions were imposed against a few individual 'spoilers' in reaction to targeted attacks on the UN and not as a response to the politicians behind them that were stalling the overall peace process."[165] In fact, the UN group of experts monitoring sanctions on Côte d'Ivoire reported that despite the arms embargo, northern and southern Ivorian parties were able to rearm and reequip themselves.[166]

Most sanctions were lifted soon after President Ouattara was installed. In April 2015, the Security Council decided to extend for another year a modified arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the targeted travel and financial sanctions on individuals deemed to threaten reconciliation in the country. The Security Council unanimously voted in April 2016 (Resolution 2283) to remove a twelve-year-old arms embargo and travel and financial sanctions, "welcoming the progress achieved in the stabilization of Côte d'Ivoire."

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162 UN Security Council, *Fourth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2005/186, March 18, 2005, para. 31–32.

163 For example, Angola gave $200 million to help Gbagbo pay the salaries of his civil servants during the post-election crisis. Anne Khady Sé, "L'impuissance africaine en Côte d'Ivoire," *SlateAfrique*, March 4, 2011.

164 Piccolino, "David against Goliath in Côte d'Ivoire?," p. 17.

165 Boutellis, "The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire," p. 7.

166 Ibid., p. 7; UN Security Council, *Final Report of the Group of Experts Submitted in Accordance with Paragraph 11 of Security Council Resolution 1842 (2008)*, UN Doc. S/2009/521, October 9, 2009.

Figure 6. Key takeaways for other peacekeeping operations

Consent of the host state
Before 2007, when President Gbagbo decided to conduct his own peace process at Ouagadougou, there had been seven peace agreements in which the UN participated but was never in the lead. All Ivorian peace agreements have been concluded either in Africa or in France, in places that had direct and divergent interests in the crisis. In the end, UNOCI monitored a cease-fire and, to a lesser extent, a peace agreement, but it could not enforce them on reluctant parties to the conflict. A peace agreement is all the more difficult to secure when regional actors are divided.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the international community was confronted with a strategic denial of consent, which left the Security Council with few options to enforce its resolutions. UNOCI was caught in a unique position where achieving its mandate required the removal of the head of state.

Ultimately, if heads of state wish to remain in power, there is little chance they will negotiate their departure. The facilitators were parties to the conflict and prevented the UN from playing a bigger role as an impartial broker.

Support of a permanent member of the Security Council
It is hard for a UN mission and for the Secretariat to "escape" the weighty presence of a permanent member of the Security Council that is willing to deploy troops on the ground and do the heavy lifting if a situation deteriorates. France is almost a unique case, where its role in the Security Council served the deployment of its troops, which in turn supported the mission authorized by the Security Council. In such a situation, the country holding the pen on council resolutions has a clear advantage.

But overall, the Security Council stood firmly behind France through the different lives of UNOCI and showed a certain level of unity. French involvement helped safeguard the unity of the Security Council to accept the risks inherent in using force and to give "impartial forces" the military superiority (especially by air) essential to dissuasive and determined action (despite early tensions such as Russia's attitude over interference in the internal affairs of a member state). UNOCI is an example of what the Security Council is able to achieve when united.

Mandate of certification
In general, elections should not be considered a process for ending a crisis, but a step toward peacebuilding. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, because one party to the crisis (Gbagbo's clan) would not leave power under any circumstances, the crisis could only be ended militarily. In this context, the certification process furthered the inevitability of an armed confrontation. The post-election crisis was a military outcome, not a political one, and that left a stain on the post-conflict phase. What was controversial was the way UNOCI used force to enforce the results of the election.

The UN's certification role may have initially been controversial because the result of the elections led to a crisis where both parties resorted to force. However, it bound all stakeholders to the results and, in the end, both the legality of the process and the unity of the country were preserved. In a way, it allowed for the unity of the Security Council.

Robust peacekeeping
Operation Licorne was, according to numerous experts and decision makers, the spine or backbone of UNOCI throughout its existence. In times of serious crisis, the militarily robust approach was successful as it operated in parallel with a politically robust approach deployed by the Secretariat (DPKO) and the Security Council, in coordination with the French authorities, whether in New York, Paris, or Abidjan. This approach also allowed coordination on the ground between Licorne and UNOCI (on the use of helicopters in particular).

The post-election crisis and its management by the UN mission also revealed the importance of senior leadership, and its unity, to the success of a peacekeeping operation, and the need for stronger backstopping from DPKO in times of crisis.

DDR/SSR processes
The basic deal in Côte d'Ivoire (DDR/SSR and elections) blocked any serious SSR process during the crisis, and progress toward SSR only happened after the "completion" of the DDR program. The exit strategy of a mission should comprise an emphasis on the composition and behavior of new national security forces.

There is therefore a need for the UN to approach SSR not only through an institutional lens but also through an operational one. DDR programs should be conceived from the start in coordination with an SSR strategy. DDR and SSR units should enhance their coordination both at the mission level and at UN headquarters and involve all the uniformed components of a mission. A common vision of SSR should be built as early as possible to guide DDR.

Sanctions and arms embargoes
The sanctions regime did not play any significant role in putting pressure on the parties, as they were able to rearm and reequip themselves despite its existence. Many countries in the region circumvented it. The interaction between a peacekeeping operation and a sanctions regime should be better thought through, including the means given to missions to put pressure on violators of these embargoes and their ability to monitor these measures. The experience of a permanent unit dedicated to monitoring arms embargoes or other types of sanctions regimes could be replicated. The Security Council should not give unrealistic mandates to monitor arms embargoes, as this would fall outside the means of UN peacekeeping missions.

Conclusion: The Continued Political Fragility of Côte d'Ivoire

In its last presidential statement on Côte d'Ivoire, on June 30, 2017, the Security Council stressed "that there is important work ahead to further advance peace and justice and to secure equitable prosperity for the benefit of all Ivoirians." It also underlined

> the need for continued progress, following UNOCI's withdrawal, in the fight against impunity, the advancement of national reconciliation and social cohesion, the full and equal participation of women in government and public institutions, the reform of the security sector, the promotion and protection of human rights, including through the work conducted by the National Human Rights Commission, as well

as the management of refugee returns, statelessness, and land tenure.

If continuous economic growth (8.8 percent in 2016) allowed the country "to turn the page of the crisis" very quickly, its benefits are not yet felt in the shopping basket of the average Ivoirian.[167] The poverty rate is higher today than at the beginning of the crisis (46.8 percent versus 38.4 percent in 2002, according to the World Bank), and migration from Côte d'Ivoire has increased from an estimated 2,000 people in 2014 to at least 16,000 in 2016.[168] Furthermore, lack of political reconciliation, land issues, local identity grievances, and uneven redistribution of resources remain potential seeds of conflict.[169] As pointed out by the secretary-general in 2016, "Healing the wounds of the past, and addressing the grievances of the present, will also require action aimed at addressing the root

Residents of a village near the Liberian border, 2016. Alexandra Novosseloff.

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167 Ousmane Zina, "Côte d'Ivoire: Du 'scénario du triomphe de l'éléphant' à une crise sociale de la reconstruction post-conflit?," *Études Africaines Comparées*, no. 5, May 2017.

168 Interview, Abidjan, November 2017.

169 Kathleen Klaus and Patrick Zadi Anderson, "Élections présidentielles ivoiriennes 2015: Intérêts locaux et perspectives pour la paix," *Bulletin FrancoPaix* 1, no. 6 (June 2016).

causes of the Ivorian conflict, including with respect to land tenure, nationality and identity, as well as the consolidation of an effective and accountable security sector."[170] Moreover, the possibility of a first democratic change in power in 2020 has not been adequately discussed. Many fear that political competition might again take a violent path,[171] although better redistribution of resources could lower the risk.

Nevertheless, despite the many challenges faced by the mission, UNOCI's management of the post-election crisis is what ultimately made it a success story. The presence of peacekeepers on the ground and their actions changed the course of history by upholding the results of democratic presidential elections and ultimately forcing out the defeated incumbent. In the mandate and posture of UNOCI, there was a pre- and post-2011.

After 2011, following its deployment under Gbagbo and the post-election crisis, UNOCI entered a third and final phase in a country that was deeply divided but filled with potential to advance on the path of longer-term stabilization,

national reconciliation, and peacebuilding. Its "sister mission" in Liberia took the same path of closing down one year later, on March 30, 2018 (Resolution 2333 of December 23, 2016). A peacekeeping operation always has to leave at some point. When it does, it does not mean the country has no more challenges to face. Peacekeeping is a tool that creates space for nationally owned political solutions, but it is up to the country, and in particular its politicians, to follow through and consolidate the peace.

As the peacekeeping operation was leaving, Côte d'Ivoire was elected as a nonpermanent member of the Security Council in June 2017. Its arrival to the council in January 2018 was a sign of the country's progress toward stability and sustaining peace. Its deployment of 450 blue helmets to the peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is another step toward the normalization of the country and its active contribution to the work of the council for the maintenance of international peace and security.[172]

170 UN Security Council, *Special Report of the Secretary-General on UNOCI*, UN Doc. S/2016/297, March 31, 2016, para. 77.

171 Francis Akindès, "'On ne mange pas les ponts et le goudron': Les sentiers sinueux d'une sortie de crise en Côte d'Ivoire," *Politique africaine* 4, no. 148, December 2017, pp. 5–26.

172 "Côte d'Ivoire: Vers une participation à la Minusca?," *Jeune Afrique*, April 5, 2018 ; "La Côte d'Ivoire annonce l'envoi de 450 Casques bleus en Centrafrique," AFP, April 26, 2018.
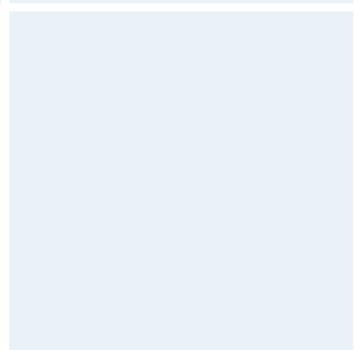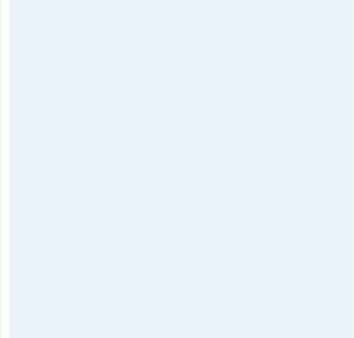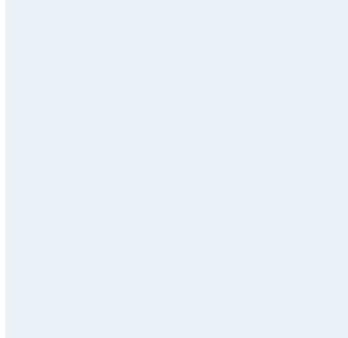
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