

# INTRODUCTION

---

The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, once a bastion of stability and increasing prosperity in the generally unstable West African region, has been embroiled in conflict since a failed coup attempt by renegade soldiers in September 2002. The violence that followed the attempted putsch quickly morphed into a highly complicated civil war, and the country itself has now been effectively split into two, with the legitimate government of President Laurent Gbagbo controlling the southern half, and anti-government forces controlling the northern half. It is a conflict that has been characterized by relatively little in the way of active hostilities between combatants, but which has spawned widespread and egregious abuses against civilians. And while apparently internal, it is a conflict that has profound regional dimensions.

When it became evident that a major humanitarian catastrophe loomed, France, the country's former colonial master and chief foreign backer, quickly reinforced its 600-strong permanent military presence in the country (the result of a Defence Pact signed in the 1970s) to a 4 000-strong force, which deployed to separate the warring parties. This deployment effectively underscored the division of the country into two parts. The French intervention was followed by the deployment of army contingents from West African states acting under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), known as the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI).

Negotiations spearheaded by ECOWAS and supported by France led first to a ceasefire agreement, in Lome, Togo, on 13 January 2003, and then to the signing by the various warring parties, in January 2003, of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement in Paris, France. The Agreement emphasized "strict compliance" with the ceasefire agreement, which was "made possible and guaranteed by the deployment of ECOWAS forces supported by French forces." It reiterated the need to "maintain the territorial integrity of Côte d'Ivoire and respect for its institutions and to restore the authority of the State," and it provided for the immediate setting up of a transitional government of National Reconciliation. The Agreement called on ECOWAS, France and the UN to "arrange for their forces to guarantee" the regrouping and subsequent disarmament of all forces, including "mercenaries," involved in the conflict.<sup>1</sup>

On 4 February 2003, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1464, which legitimized the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, and backed the continued operations of the French military operation - known as Licorne - as well as ECOMICI. ECOMICI was subsequently enlarged with an additional 1,100 troops in March 2003, and was brought under the command of Major General Khalil Fall (of Senegal). On 13 May 2003, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1479, establishing a United Nations mission for Côte d'Ivoire known as MINUCI, and detailing the role of the UN in facilitating the return to peace and the observance of Linas-Marcoussis. On 27 February 2004, the UN Security Council authorized a full peacekeeping operation for Côte d'Ivoire and mandated nearly 7,000 UN personnel to monitor and help implement the comprehensive peace agreement. The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was authorized for an initial period of 12 months, starting on 4 April 2004, on which date the mandate of MINUCI ended. The ECOMICI forces were subsumed under the UN flag as part of the UNOCI force, with the formal handover of ECOMICI to UNOCI taking place on 5 April 2004.

The interventions in Côte d'Ivoire provide the most recent example of a trend towards 'hybrid operations' in Africa – operations, such as those in Sierra Leone, Liberia, DRC and now Burundi, in which the UN takes over and re-hats regional peacekeeping forces already on the ground in a conflict zone. In Sierra Leone, the UN took over and re-hatted West African troops who were already engaged in peace-enforcement, and British forces bolstered the UN mission when it was in crisis. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC, the French-led EU *Operation Artemis* deployed rapidly to avert further bloodshed in Bunia and the Ituri district. In Côte d'Ivoire, the French Licorne force has provided and continues to provide a credible backstop for regional and UN forces on the ground. Whatever we call these new kinds of engagement, the importance to the entire West African sub-region – and indeed to Africa - of achieving success with the Ivorian peace process, cannot be overstated.

As a result, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) decided to convene a workshop on peace implementation in Côte d'Ivoire, in part to help meet the need for better understanding of ECOWAS contributions to peace support operations in West Africa. The workshop, held at the KAIPTC in Accra from 31 May to 2 June 2004, was a joint initiative of the KAIPTC and the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF). When KAIPTC and ZIF began planning for a "lessons learned" workshop, in late 2003, the exact nature of the developments in the Ivorian peace process could not be foreseen. It was clear, however, that the international and regional involvement would still be ongoing by June 2004, and it was therefore decided that the theme of the workshop should

be “challenges of peace implementation”, rather than lessons learned.

The timing of the workshop remained delicate, coming so soon after the deployment of UNOCI and amidst ongoing setbacks, primarily at the political level, in the implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement. It was therefore necessary to amend the programme several times, to accommodate the withdrawal of participants who had urgent operational priorities to attend.<sup>2</sup> It must be accepted that there is seldom an opportune time to reflect on progress with an ongoing peace implementation process. Nevertheless, it was possible to bring together a committed group of over 60 participants - diplomats, senior military officers, and policy analysts who are or were closely involved in the peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts in Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>3</sup>

Participants were informed that the presentations of the panelists, as well as the essence of the ensuing discussions, would be captured, edited and published for the purpose of providing a wider audience with a better understanding of the challenges of implementing peace in Côte d’Ivoire. The intention is not to produce long lists of recommendations to the UN or to ECOWAS, as both organizations have suffered an overdose of such exercises in recent years. (The few recommendations that are indeed noted, were proposed mainly by UN and ECOWAS staff themselves.) The purpose of this report is rather to gather as much of the information shared during the workshop as possible, to document it as accurately as possible, and to disseminate it to all who are interested in the promotion of peace in Côte d’Ivoire.

The structure of the report is semi-chronological, inasmuch as it begins with an overview of the origins and nature of the conflict in Côte d’Ivoire, and provides a brief perspective on French involvement in the country and in Africa. The focus on the role of the French is carried through to a synopsis of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the intervention of the Licorne force in Côte d’Ivoire. The report then covers efforts by the ECOWAS to resolve the crisis, from intense peace-making diplomacy through to the deployment and operations of ECOMICI, the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d’Ivoire.

Although all agreed that it was too early for a thorough analysis of UNOCI, the report provides some detail of the planning, deployment and concept of operations of the UN Mission in Côte d’Ivoire – including a few lessons from the start-up phase. This is followed by an overview of the planning that is in place for the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, an aspect that is critical for effective UNOCI mandate implementation at the operational level.

The report continues with an overview of progress with peace implementation at the political level and the role of the Monitoring Committee. It concludes with a summary of the Ivorian peace process to date, and an assessment of what is needed to take this forward to a successful conclusion. Here, we relied heavily on information provided by Ambassador James Aggrey-Orleans who, as a veteran diplomat and principal political advisor to UNOCI, helped participants to grasp the “big picture”.

The authors took some liberty in adding some secondary sources to enhance the depth and scope of the two sections that follow. For the rest, we have rather unashamedly plagiarised our participants under cover of the Chatham House rule, though some general references to individual presenters are provided in footnotes.