

AMERICAN EMBASSY'S NATIONAL DAILY PRESS REVIEW (FEBRUARY 1-29, 2012)

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FEBRUARY 29, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. First results of Sunday's by-elections
2. New developments in voting day violence in Bonon
3. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire
4. Political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire after the vote
5. Rumors on the transfer of the former first lady to The Hague

1. First results of Sunday's by-elections

***Fraternite Matin* (p. 1)** today announces 11 out of the 13 results of Sunday's by-elections citing the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI). According to the paper **(p. 6)** these official results were proclaimed yesterday by the commission, which, it says, was not able to announce results in two constituencies – Facobly, west and Bonon, center – due to violence in these areas on election day. The article also quotes the chairman of the CEI, Youssouf Bakayoko, who promised to announce the results in Facobly and Bonon today. These results have been transferred to the Constitutional Council, reports the paper, which quotes Bakayoko as saying, “The institutional normalization in our country has been achieved as the by-elections are over.” “Our country is henceforth fully engaged on the path of the renewal and stabilization of its socio-political environment,” the head of the electoral commission is quoted as saying.

A report documented by the CSCI, Cote d'Ivoire's civil society council, on Sunday's by-elections also makes news in ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 6)**. "The CSCI denounces the use of state means by certain candidates," writes the paper, which quotes the civil society group demanding that "the government investigate incidents that have marred the campaign and the vote."

While the electoral commission is scheduled to announce today results from the troubled zones of Facobly and Bonon, ***Le Nouveau Reveil* (p. 1)** accuses the RDR party of President Alassane Ouattara of "plotting" against the PDCI-RDA, the party of his ally, ex-president Henri Konan Bedie. The paper claims that the two independent candidates, "close to the PDCI-RDA", who contested the poll in these two areas have won the elections. The paper (**p. 8**) then expresses "surprise" about the delay in the announcement of the results in these two constituencies by the electoral commission.

2. New developments in voting day violence in Bonon

Regarding the voting day attack in Bonon, a prominent headline in ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 1)** suggests that a "mystery" is surrounding the events that led to the death of five persons in this area. "The perpetrators of this attack against the blue helmets will be brought to justice," the paper quotes Ivorian Minister of Human Rights Gnenema Coulibaly as saying. The minister is also reported as saying that "it is unacceptable that peacekeeping soldiers are attacked," after a meeting Tuesday with the head of the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Bert Koenders. The paper also quotes UN spokesperson Hamadoun Toure as saying that "The blue helmets have not killed anybody."

"ONUCI has not killed anybody," says a front-page banner headline that runs across ***Le Patriote***. "Who did kill the RDR supporters?" asks the paper (**p. 2**). "The UN has begun an investigation into the event in Bonon," says a report in ***L'Inter* (p. 5)**. "Event in Bonon: How the RDR is trying to create confusion," says a prominent headline in ***Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 1)**. In an article (**p. 3**) the paper claims that the party of President Ouattara, with the "backing" of UNOCI, is using "disinformation" in a bid "to obscure" the violence that occurred in Bonon.

3. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire

"Insecurity and impunity in Cote d'Ivoire: FRCI and Dozos are killing and Ouattara is not saying anything," reads a prominent headline in ***Notre Voie* (p. 1)**. The article (**p. 2**) suggests that almost ten months after President Ouattara assumed the reins of power, "Cote d'Ivoire is plunged into total insecurity" prompting the population to live in "fear." The situation in Bonon is not "an isolated" event, writes the paper, which claims that in the western town of Facobly, "pro-RDR militiamen destroyed polling stations when they discovered that their candidate was losing the election." The article also describes a "tense" atmosphere in the central town of Gagnoa, where it claims that "unidentified gunmen wearing either military uniforms or dressing like Dozos are assaulting farmers."

"Under Ouattara's regime, violence is gaining ground," says the headline in ***Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 3)**. The paper cites recent acts of violence across the country and concludes that the populations in these areas, where these acts were committed, were subjected to "the rule of force." On the recent incident in Bonon, the article alleges that "individuals believed to be supporters of the RDR have used military arms to prevent the collection of ballots from several polling stations."

4. Political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire after the vote

"Despite considerable efforts and immense means that have been deployed by the authorities in Cote d'Ivoire to get the country back on track, the political future looks gloomy and the important national reconciliation program hangs in the balance," writes *Le Nouveau Reveil* (p. 6). The writer also suggests that "political differences have deepened while tension is growing high among workers faced with the high cost of living coupled with schools that have been slow to resume normal function." "Is the Republic in turmoil?" asks the commentator, which indicates that there is a general feeling that the government's activities have come to halt as Ivorians await the new government and the National Assembly to be formed.

L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 1) hints that former president Henri Konan Bedie has picked Emmanuel Niamien N'Goran, a leading member of his PDCI-RDA party, to be appointed by President Ouattara as the new prime minister. The paper quotes reliable sources as saying that Bedie has already made his proposal to the president.

In a related development, *Soir Info* carries a front-page headline reading: "Disagreement between PDCI and RDR: Bedie and Ouattara to tell each other the truth." According to the paper (p. 3), the two leaders are set to meet in an attempt to forestall a "growing divergence" between the two allies. The report also suggests that events have taken a dramatic turn following the beating up of the chairman of the youth wing of PDCI-RDA, Kouadio Konan Bertin, also known as KKB, during the recent electoral campaign.

5. Rumors on the transfer of the former first lady to The Hague

L'Inter (p. 1) claims to have "signs" of the transfer of the former first lady, Simone Gbagbo, who is being detained in the northern town of Odienne, to the International Criminal Court (ICC). In an article (p. 3), the paper suggests that in addition to rumors of an international arrest warrant issued against Mrs Gbagbo, the release a few days ago of her doctor, who was detained, is being interpreted as a sign of the possible transfer of the former first lady to The Hague.



FEBRUARY 28, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. Results of Sunday's by-elections in 12 constituencies
2. Reactions following voting day violence in Bonon
3. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire
4. Rising food prices in Cote d'Ivoire

1. Results of Sunday's by-elections in 12 constituencies

A front-page headline in ***Fraternite Matin*** says that the results of Sunday's by-election will be announced today by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI). An article (**p. 6**) in this paper also quotes the head of the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Bert Koenders, saying that "the UN will soon proceed to the full certification of the parliamentary elections and make recommendations for coming elections." The report indicates that the head of the UNOCI has expressed "satisfaction" about the electoral process despite an attack perpetrated by unidentified gunmen in the central town of Bonon. "I deplore that incident and I think politicians must live up to their responsibilities," Koenders is reported as saying.

2. Reactions following voting day violence in Bonon

Another report in ***Fraternite Matin*** (**p. 7**) indicates that five persons were killed and four wounded following Sunday's attack in Bonon by unidentified gunmen. A banner headline in ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** (**p. 1**) calls the incident that occurred in Bonon "a war," and quotes the leader of the women's wing of the PDCI-RDA party who condemned an "act of banditry." A report in ***L'Inter*** (**p. 4**) says that many people have fled the area following this incident, adding that UNOCI is investigating the situation in Bonon. According to the paper, the mission has dispatched its military commander to the town in order to evaluate the situation on the ground and investigate events that led to an attack on a UN convey carrying voting materials.

"Gunfire in Bonon: five RDR supporters killed," says a prominent headline in ***Le Patriote*** (**p. 1**) which alleges that pro-RDR supporters were attacked in Bonon. However, a front-page headline in ***Notre Voie*** suggests that "seven persons were killed in Bonon as UN peacekeepers responded to an attack launched by RDR supporters." An article (**p. 3**) in the paper quotes the chairman of the youth wing of PDCI-RDA, Kouadio Konan Bertin, also known as KKB, who has expressed "concerns" about the future of Cote d'Ivoire. KKB, who was elected as an MP during the December 11 parliamentary elections, is also reported as lamenting, "If they can beat up an MP what would they do to an ordinary citizen," after an assault on him before Sunday's by-elections. "The PDCI is facing a monster," says another

article on the same page of this paper which indicates that “Cote d’Ivoire has been hijacked by Ouattara’s army composed of FRCI and Dozos.”

3. Security situation in Cote d’Ivoire

A report in ***Nord-Sud Quotidien* (p. 2)** says that elements of the Forces Republicaines de Cote d’Ivoire yesterday staged a demonstration in the northern town of Odiene to protest their living conditions. ***Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 2)** reports on “growing insecurity” in the central city of Bouake. According to the paper, armed robbery has become commonplace because the police lack the means to restore order.

Meanwhile, a report in ***Soir Info* (p. 4)** quotes the Minister in charge of Defense, Paul Koffi Koffi, who has expressed the government’s commitment to fight the proliferation of arms, racketeering and armed robbery by providing security forces with appropriate tools. A report in ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 8)** says that the authorities have stepped up efforts in order to ensure free movement of people and goods and restore peace throughout the country. According to the paper this was announced by the Minister in charge of Defense during a visit to an FRCI barracks in the central town of Tiebissou.

4. Rising food prices in Cote d’Ivoire

A prominent headline in ***Notre Voie* (p. 1)** says that prices of food commodities have gone up in Cote d’Ivoire. The paper (**pp. 6&7**) publishes a contribution from an independent writer who blames the skyrocketing food prices on “insecurity” and “racketeering of traders by elements of the FRCI.” “Hike of food prices: growing anger in the markets,” says a front-page headline in ***Nord-Sud Quotidien* (p. 7)** which blames the situation on the “bad faith” of traders. According to the paper, the government has taken measures including the dismantling of illegal check-points, rehabilitation of roads and fighting against roadblocks in an attempt to reduce the prices of food commodities.



FEBRUARY 27, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. Sunday's by-elections in 12 constituencies
2. General political landscape in Cote d'Ivoire
3. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire
4. Jail break in Katiola where pro-Gbagbo supporters are detained

1. Sunday's by-elections in 12 constituencies

A report in *Fraternite Matin* (**p. 5**) quotes the head of the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Bert Koenders, as saying that Sunday's vote was "peaceful" and the atmosphere was "good." According to the report, Koenders was speaking on Sunday as he toured polling stations in the south-western town of Fresco during the by-election. Another report in this paper (**p. 4**) quotes the head of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), Youssef Bakayoko, as saying that "the most important thing during these by-elections is not the voter turnout but the seats that parties will be retaining in the National Assembly." Mr. Bakayoko, who was speaking in Agboville, north Abidjan, on Sunday is also quoted by *Nord-Sud Quotidien* (**p. 5**) as saying that "globally, the vote has been peaceful."

Meanwhile, a front-page headline in *Le Patriote* says that four persons were killed and several wounded in the central town of Bonon after unidentified gunmen attacked the headquarters of the RDR, the party of President Alassane Ouattara. According to the paper, the incident occurred a few hours after the polling stations closed. A front-page headline *Le Nouveau Reveil* says the "RDR's candidate and his supporters have caused mayhem in Bonon." In a related development, a report in this paper (**p. 3**) says that the chairman of the youth wing of PDCI-RDA, Kouadio Konan Bertin, was beaten up on Friday during a campaign rally in the locality of Bonon two days before the vote.

Soir Info (**p. 1**) carries a picture of the wounded youth leader narrating his ordeal. The paper also carries a report (**p. 5**) saying that the candidate of the RDR in Bonon has rejected accusations of assaulting the PDCI's youth leader and called the incident "infighting among supporters of the PDCI." Another story on the same page of this paper says that following the assault on their leader all the members of the PDCI's youth wing will be meeting on Wednesday in Abidjan to decide how "to react to the assault suffered by their leader."

2. General political landscape in Cote d'Ivoire

"Will the RHDP explode?" asks a banner headline in *L'Inter* (**p. 1**). An article in the paper (**p. 3**) suggests that acts of violence like the recent assault on the PDCI's youth leader could undermine the unity within the RHDP coalition that is made up of President Ouattara's RDR party, the PDCI-RDA of former president Henri Konan Bedie and two other parties that supported President Ouattara during the 2010 presidential elections. "Is the RDR trying to isolate Ouattara?" asks *Le Nouveau Reveil* (**p. 3**) in reaction to the incident in Bonon.

With more on the current political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire, a report in **Notre Voie (p. 3)** says that the FPI, the party of former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo, is to organize a congress in April, the first since the former president was arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity following the 2010-2011 post-election violence in Cote d'Ivoire. "The world must understand that the FPI stands behind Gbagbo," the paper quotes Laurent Akoun, the FPI's general secretary, as saying during a meeting on Saturday. Regarding investigations being conducted by the National Commission of Inquiry into the 2010-2011 post-election violence in Cote d'Ivoire, the paper quotes a party official as saying, "The FPI is not concerned by this probe and we are asking our supporters not to collaborate with this commission." "We cannot understand how a commission of inquiry could be set up after our friends were arrested," the official is reported as saying.

3. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire

A prominent headline in **L'Inter (p. 1)** quotes a top government military officer saying that he has foiled a coup d'etat. According to the paper, Kone Zakaria, the commander of the Military Police, a government security unit, said this on Saturday during a meeting with local leaders in the southeastern town of Bonoua. With more on security issues, a report in the same paper (**p. 5**) says that Ivorian experts have designed a plan to ensure security in the four-nation Mano River regional block.

4. Jail break in Katiola where pro-Gbagbo supporters are detained

A prominent report in **Nord-Sud Quotidien (p. 1)** says that 18 inmates have escaped from a jail where pro-Gbagbo supporters are being detained. According to the report (**p. 3**), a detachment of the government's Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) prevented the pro-Gbagbo detainees from running away by shooting in the air. The paper quotes a source that blames the jail break on security negligence.



FEBRUARY 24, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. ICC extends Cote d'Ivoire war crimes probe to 2002
2. Security measures enhanced ahead of by-elections to be carried out over the weekend.
3. President Ouattara inaugurates new facility expected to create thousands of jobs
4. US Embassy supports capacity building for Ivorian journalists and civil society efforts to fight corruption

1. ICC extends Cote d'Ivoire war crimes probe to 2002

The [International Criminal Court](#) (ICC) said Thursday that it would expand its investigation into political violence in Cote d'[Ivoire](#) to look into crimes as far back as 2002. The information was reported in today's press and has triggered mixed comments. ***Fraternite Matin (p. 5)*** noted that this development came after the Court chamber "considered that the violent events in Cote d'Ivoire in this period - including the events since 28 November 2010 - are to be treated as a single situation, in which an ongoing crisis involving a prolonged political dispute and power struggle culminated in the events into which the chamber earlier authorized an investigation." Still citing a press statement issued on the occasion, the paper added that the Court concluded that there is reasonable basis to believe that, in the course of these events, acts of murder and rape that could amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity were committed.

Still on the issue, ***L'Inter (p. 2)*** noted that the ICC's decision is likely to comfort partisans of former President Laurent Gbagbo as it seems to target alleged crimes committed by the armed rebellion dubbed Forces Nouvelles which split the country in 2002. According to the paper, ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo and the court investigators are expected soon in Cote d'Ivoire for a fact-finding mission related to the probe.

For ***Notre Voie (p. 2)*** this development is a mammoth victory for former President Laurent Gbagbo. The paper suggested that the move will shed light on the 2002 rebellion and those who supported the dissent movement and will be an occasion to denounce France's role in the country's political turmoil.

However, according to an article by ***Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 3)***, although this development is a real setback for ICC Prosecutor Ocampo, the later is still trying to protect the Ivorian Premier Guillaume Soro and President Alassane Ouattara in this case. Citing Mr. Pascal Turlan, an adviser of the Court Prosecutor, the paper noted that probing alleged war crimes committed by the 2002 rebellion then led by the Ivorian Premier is at the discretion of the Court Prosecutor who can decide either to investigate or to drop the case.

On a separate issue, **Soir Info (p. 6)** noted that Human Rights Watch has called on the Ivorian government to extend the mandate of the national commission tasked with probing war crimes committed during last year's political stand-off. According to the rights group, this extension will allow the commission to properly document its probe.

Still on the issue, **Notre Voie (p. 4)** noted that the rights group has denounced bias in the work of the government-sponsored commission accusing it of lacking credibility. Citing a report published Wednesday by Human Rights Watch, the paper noted that the work of the commission appears to be hasty, one-sided and politically compromised.

2. Security measures enhanced ahead of by-elections to be carried out over the weekend.

Some 3,000 law enforcement agents from the national police, the gendarmerie and the military will be mobilized to monitor security ahead of the by-elections scheduled for this weekend. The information was provided by **Soir Info (p. 8)** which added that the operation dubbed "Phoenix II" aimed at ensuring the parliamentary by-elections are carried out in a peaceful atmosphere.

3. President Ouattara inaugurates new facility expected to create thousands of jobs

President Alassane Ouattara inaugurated yesterday in the central city of Bouake, a new factory expected to employ some 2,400 people. Providing details, **Fraternite Matin (p. 2)** noted that the factory which is specialized in the processing of cashew nuts is part of Singapore-based Olam International. In his address, President Ouattara recommitted his government to supporting the private sector. The address was followed by a guided-visit of the site, the paper added.

4. US Embassy supports capacity building for Ivorian journalists and civil society efforts to fight corruption

A capacity building workshop designed for Ivorian journalists and financed by the US Embassy in Abidjan was concluded yesterday in Abidjan. **Fraternite Matin (p. 13)** reported on the session presided yesterday by US Embassy Public Affairs Officer Jonathan Cebra and the Ivorian Minister of Communication, Mr. Diakite Coty. The twenty seven participants, mostly from the government news agency, *Agence Ivoirienne de Presse* (AIP) were trained on how to report on human rights issues and promote the rule of law in a post-conflict country, the paper said. Made possible thanks to the financial support of USAID through the Office for Transition Initiatives (OTI), the training, according Mr. Jonathan Cebra shows the US interest in a strong press. "The press plays an important role in promoting the rule of law," he reportedly said. Computers and office equipment were handed over to AIP officials to support the rehabilitation of the news agency field offices which were been looted during the post-electoral crisis on the occasion, the paper said.

In a separate report, the paper (**p. 17**) noted that the US Embassy in Abidjan recommitted to supporting the Ivorian civil society in its initiatives aims at fighting corruption and promoting good governance. The announcement was made in the course of a workshop co-organized by the Ivorian Association of International Visitors known as AIVI-USA and the US Embassy in Abidjan. According to AIVI-USA President, Mrs. Viviane Zunon Kipre, the association which gathered Ivorian IV alumni is

embarking on an anti-corruption campaign to promote good governance. IV Gold Star Manlan Ehounou was celebrated on the event, attended by US Vice-Consul Kristen Stolt, the paper added.



FEBRUARY 23, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. Ivorian authorities step up security ahead of February 26 by-elections
2. The state of security in western Cote d'Ivoire
3. Reconciliation process and arrest warrant against pro-Gbagbo supporters
4. Good governance

1. Ivorian authorities step up security ahead of February 26 by-elections

A prominent headline in ***Fraternite Matin (p.1)*** says that Ivorian authorities have stepped up security in the country ahead of the February 26 by-elections. During a meeting yesterday in Abidjan, the Minister in charge of Defense, Paul Koffi Koffi, assured the Independent Electoral Commission: "We put in place measures during the December 11 parliamentary elections; and they worked. We're going to put in place the same measures in the constituencies where the February 26 by-elections are scheduled," reports the paper (***p. 5***). According to the report, the issue of security for both candidates and voters was high on the agenda during the meeting between the minister and the head of the electoral commission.

As the campaign for Sunday's by-elections is underway, ***Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 5)*** calls on the government not to tolerate any violence in constituencies especially those located in the western region. A story in ***L'Inter (p. 3)*** announces that the electoral commission is set to meet today with heads of government and foreign troops in order to hammer out a security plan in the run-up to the Sunday vote.

In a related development, a report in ***L'Inter (p. 5)*** says that the head of the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire, Bert Koenders, has deplored "imbalance" in the coverage of the electoral campaign ahead of Sunday's elections. "The coverage so far differs from the professionalism observed during the campaign for the December 11 parliamentary elections," the paper quotes a statement issued by

ONUCI as saying. The UN mission also “strongly urges the media regulatory bodies to be vigilant in order to prevent any violation of the laws,” reports the paper.

2. The state of security in western Cote d’Ivoire

“How to save the west?” asks a prominent headline in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* (p. 2); while a front-page headline in *Le Nouveau Reveil* blames armed attacks in western Cote d’Ivoire on what it calls “an invisible commando.” The paper (p. 9) reports that six persons were killed and several wounded following a recent attack by unidentified gunmen on the western region of Tai. According to a front-page headline in *Le Patriote*, two people believed to be the perpetrators of the attack in Tai have been arrested.

The continuous attacks on the western region of Cote d’Ivoire threaten state security, says an article in *Soir Info* (p. 8) which deplores the lack of action on the part of the government to crack down on the gangs that are causing mayhem in this part of the country. The article also underscores the porousness of the frontiers in this region, where, it says, armed gangs are threatening to destabilize the government.

Meanwhile, a prominent headline in *L’Inter* (p. 1) announces that 76 persons believed to be mercenaries close to the former president Laurent Gbagbo have been released. According to the report, the so-called mercenaries were arrested last month by Liberian authorities. The report also says that the 76 persons were set free by a court in Liberia on the grounds that they were refugees. In a related development, a report in *L’Inter* (p. 6) says that Ivorian experts are working on a blueprint designed to ensure security in the four-nation Mano River regional block that includes Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea (Conakry), Liberia and Sierra Leone.

3. Reconciliation process and arrest warrant against pro-Gbagbo supporters

“The Beninois police have been instructed to arrest the suspects,” *Le Nouveau Reveil* (p. 2) quotes the Ivorian state prosecutor as saying. According to the paper, the authorities in Benin have decided to execute arrest warrants issued against officials close to the former Ivorian president who are suspected of having committed crimes during the 2011 post-electoral violence in Cote d’Ivoire; and who have sought refuge in Benin. A front-page headline in *Le Nouveau Courrier* claims that Benin President Yayi Boni is “unhappy” as “the secret” behind a possible handover of pro-Gbagbo supporters lands in the media.

In a related development, *Notre Voie* (p. 1) carries a banner headline accusing President Alassane Ouattara of undermining the reconciliation process. “The new arrest warrants issued against officials close to former president Gbagbo are evidence that the reconciliation initiated by President Ouattara is a pure diversion,” writes the paper (p. 2). The paper publishes the list of some 13 personalities, including Brou Amessan Pierre, the former director of RTI, the state-broadcaster, who are allegedly wanted. The paper hints that the arrest warrants against the journalist, 11 former ministers and the former director of Ivorian custom services were delivered on January 20, 2012 by a judge in Abidjan and were transmitted to Interpol in Cotonou. The article further suggests that the 13 persons are accused among other things of “aiding and abetting of theft committed through violence and burglary, embezzlement of public fund and looting of the economy.”

With more on the judicial procedures against officials of the former regime, *Le Nouveau Reveil* (**p. 1**) carries a picture of former first lady Simone Ehivet Gbagbo with a banner headline reading, "Is Mrs Gbagbo en route for The Hague?" The paper quotes a diplomatic source saying that "the order for her transfer to The Hague is ready." The article (**p. 2**) however quotes the source as saying that the execution of the order by the Ivorian authorities has been "delayed" not because they were trying "to protect" the former first lady but because "the authorities were aware that the matter is extremely sensitive and this calls for delicacy in order not to further undermine the national cohesion and to permit the national reconciliation process to succeed."

4. Good governance

A prominent headline in *L'Inter* (**p. 1**) hints that to ensure good governance in the management of the state affairs, President Ouattara has given "firm instructions" to his ministers regarding cases that are pending before the courts. Citing reliable resources, the paper (**p. 3**) discloses that the president wants to see for himself how the courts are handling some cases that have been recently the subjects of prominent stories in the local media.

Meanwhile, *Le Nouveau Courrier* (**p. 3**) and *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (**p. 4**) publish an op-ed signed by Mamadou Koulibaly, leader of the Lider party, who accuses President Ouattara of providing job for Ivorians who belong to his ethnic group. The writer, who describes the method as "ethnic unemployment," claims that under the pretext of a layoff in the public services, the new regime has proceeded with the "systematic replacement of the laid off workers by Ouattara's northern supporters and people from his clan or members of their families." Koulibaly mentions the Abidjan Port Authority, the state broadcaster RTI, among others, where "ethnic group" has been allegedly used as "the first requirement" to qualify for a job.

With more on the good governance in the management of the state affairs, *L'Inter* (**p. 2**) quotes Die Maurice leader of PARCI, a minor party, who has urged the government to refrain from any action that could be interpreted as the promotion of "tribalism and ethnocentrism" in Cote d'Ivoire. The paper quotes Die as saying that it is "unconceivable" that President Ouattara could describe as "a catch-up" recent "massive nominations" of cadres from the north in the public services. "More than 80 per cent of northerners have been appointed in the public administration and private companies. This is not normal. President Ouattara is not the president of only northerners. He is president of all Ivorians," the paper quotes Die as saying.



FEBRUARY 22, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. Ivorian government issues arrest warrants against pro-Gbagbo officials in exile
2. Six killed in raid by unidentified armed band along the country's border with Liberia
3. Ivorian police receives equipment from the French government
4. Paper says PM Guillaume Soro's two-day visit to neighboring Guinea to bolster Ivorian-Guinean ties
5. IMF official says Cote d'Ivoire to be admitted under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative by this summer

1. Ivorian government issues arrest warrants against pro-Gbagbo officials in exile

According to ***Le Patriote (p. 2)*** the Ivorian government has recently issued a dozen arrest warrants against officials of the Gbagbo regime in exile in neighboring countries like Ghana, Togo and Benin. The warrants, the paper said, target individuals allegedly accused of fomenting subversive activities against President Ouattara. A court in Cotonou, Benin has given a go-ahead to the requests which are now being handled by Interpol, the paper added. This development, the paper further said, does not bode well for partisans of the former President including his one-time close associates such as Mr. Alphonse Mangly, Emile Guirieoulou, Ouattara Gnonzie and Brou Amessan Pierre Israel - former Director of the Ivorian Customs Services, Ex- Minister of Interior, former Minister of Communication and former Director of the state-owned television RTI, respectively- who have been listed on the warrants.

However, for ***Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 4)*** this move is inconsistent with the peace and reconciliation processes the Ouattara administration is engaged in. The paper denounced what it termed as deliberate sabotage of the process underway and went on to call on human rights groups to stand against the victor's justice the Ivorian government is poised to implement.

2. Six killed in raid by unidentified armed band along the country's border with Liberia

Six people were killed in an attack by unidentified commandos yesterday in the western town of Tai, along the country's border with Liberia. The information was reported in ***Soir Info (p.3)*** which noted that the night raid targeted a small village known as Zriglo. Ivorian law enforcements agents have been sent to the spot to monitor the situation, the paper said.

With more on the deadly incident, ***Fraternite Matin (p.5)*** noted that the assault has caused mayhem within the local population which is calling on the government to take measures to counter crimes and banditry in the zone where such incidents are recurrent. "Crimes are very high here because of the bad condition of the roads...Criminals take advantage of this situation and are operating freely from

one side to the other,” the paper reported Mr. Kohou Vincent an inhabitant of the village as saying. According to the paper, a similar raid resulted some time ago in the killing of twenty three people.

3. Ivorian police receives equipment from the French government

According to a report by *L'intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 3)* the Ivorian police and gendarmerie received equipment yesterday from the French government. A total of 23 vehicles, 90 computers and other kits were handed over by French Ambassador Jean-Marc Simon to the Ivorian Minister of Interior, Hamed Bakayoko. The donation, the paper said, followed earlier support provided earlier by the French government to help reequip Ivorian law enforcement agents. Mr. Bakayoko thanked the French envoy and called on the Ivorian police and gendarmerie to use this equipment responsibly, the paper added.

4. Paper says PM Guillaume Soro's two-day visit to neighboring Guinea to bolster Ivorian-Guinea ties

Prime Minister Guillaume Soro yesterday concluded a two-day visit to Guinea. The information was reported by *Fraternite Matin (p. 6)* which noted that the purpose of the working trip was to reactivate ties between the two neighboring countries. This effort, the paper said followed a joint commitment by President Alassane Ouattara and his Guinean counterpart Alpha Conde to foster Ivorian-Guinean friendship, the two countries having a long history of cooperation. Welcomed upon his arrival by Guinean Premier Said Mohammed, Mr. Soro had talks with President Alpha Conde and Guinean officials, the paper added. *Nord Sud Quotidien(p. 2)* carried a similar account.

5. IMF official says Cote d'Ivoire to be admitted under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative by this in summer

According to IMF Director for Cote d'Ivoire, Mr. Wayne Camard, the country is likely to be admitted under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative by this summer. The announcement was made in the course of an interview with the UN radio channel ONUCI FM yesterday and reported by *L'Inter (p.10)*. According to Mr. Wayne, though much needs to be done ahead of the admission, the ongoing reforms bode well for the country. Mr. Wayne also recommitted the IMF to supporting the Ivorian government in its efforts to promote good governance.



FEBRUARY 21, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. Campaign for by-elections in 12 constituencies
2. Search for Common Ground's support of the reconciliation process
3. The general political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire
4. Government's push to restore security
5. Good governance and anti-corruption programs
6. World Bank's support to plans to provide jobs for the youth
7. Election of President Ouattara as the new chairman of ECOWAS

1. Campaign for by-elections in 12 constituencies

A headline in Monday's issue of ***Fraternite Matin (p. 1)*** said that 13 out of the 71 candidates in the February 26 by-elections have withdrawn from the race while the campaign for the elections to fill seats in 12 constituencies is underway. The paper (***p. 7)***, which attributed this information to the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), said the electoral body has not given any reason that motivated the decision by the 13 candidates to pull out of the competition.

Fraternite Matin (p. 6) carried in its weekend's edition a statement issued by the CEI calling on candidates in the February 26 by-elections to organize "a peaceful campaign." The statement was issued on the eve of the electoral campaign that kicked off last Saturday. In a related development, a report in ***Fraternite Matin (p. 7)*** quoted Bert Koenders, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and the head of the UN peacekeeping mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) as saying that the December 11 parliamentary elections conformed with "international standards." According to the paper, the head of the UN mission has certified the elections whose results in 11 constituencies were annulled by the Constitutional Council after complaints were lodged over irregularities. "These elections constitute an important step in the entrenchment of democracy" in Cote d'Ivoire, the paper quotes Koenders as saying.

2. Search for Common Ground's support of the reconciliation process

A report in today's issue of ***Nord-Sud Quotidien (p. 2)*** says that the government is to use radio as a tool to foster reconciliation and good governance with the backing of Search for Common Ground. According to the report, Search for Common Ground and CICG, the state-run information and communication department, have launched a radio program in order to inform the public on issues

ranging from politics, government reform programs and other issues that affect the daily life of people. Dubbed "Synergie et Gouvernance," the program will be broadcast by 35 radio stations across the country including Radio Cote d'Ivoire, a state-owned radio and ONUCI FM, the UN radio station with nationwide coverage.

3. The general political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire

In Monday's issue, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 1) pondered the future of Guillaume Soro, the Prime Minister of the current government. The paper (p. 3) hinted that political bargaining has started to find a place for Soro after he quits his post as the head of the government. The paper speculated that Soro, who is also the Minister of Defense in the current administration, is likely to retain this position, or could be appointed as a minister of State or could become the Speaker of the next Parliament. The paper further suggested that President Alassane Ouattara and his ally, Henri Konan Bedie, are consulting on who to pick to replace Guillaume Soro. According to the paper, Jeannot Ahoussou Kouadio, the Minister of Justice and the Minister Economy and Finance, Charles Diby Koffi, both members of the current government, are on the shortlist.

L'Inter (p. 2) also speculated on the name of the next Prime Minister of Cote d'Ivoire saying that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Daniel Kablan Duncan, is likely to take the position.

On another political issue, a front-page headline in *L'Inter* announced that the European Union has unfrozen the assets of 30 supporters of the former of the president Laurent Gbagbo. The paper (p. 3) quoted sources close to the European Union as saying that the decision was taken following "the improvement of the situation in Cote d'Ivoire." The paper published the full list of the personalities whose assets have been unfrozen. Among them are journalists such as Franck Anderson Kouassi, former head of the state CNCA, a media regulatory body; Lahoua Souanga Etienne, a.k.a Cesar Etou, publisher of the pro-FPI Notre Voie Newspaper and Jean-Baptiste Akrou, former director general of the state-owned Fraternite Matin, among others.

"The State prosecutor wants to resign," says a banner headline in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* (p. 1). The article (p. 2) suggests that the State prosecutor Simplicie Koffi Kouadio has threatened to resign due to the bad relationship between his office and the ministry of interior. The report also quotes the prosecutor who has accused the ministry of "interfering" with judiciary procedures. Among the issues that have strained the relationship between the prosecutor and the ministry, the paper mentions the case of one Meambly Evariste, a businessman and candidate in the next by-elections, who it said, was picked up by the police without prior order from the office of the prosecutor.

4. Government's push to restore security

A front-page headline in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* said that the government has taken disciplinary action against 24 gendarmes who were stationed in the eastern town of Arrah during the recent clash between the government's Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) and youths in the region.

A report documented by OFACI, an Ivorian women rights organization, on last year's post-electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire is the subject of a front-page headline in Monday's issue of *L'Inter*.

According to the paper, the report accuses the traditional hunters widely known as Dozos, militias, the FDS, and the FRCI of committing crimes including rape during the violence.

5. Good governance and anti-corruption programs

A report in Monday's issue of *Notre Voie* (p. 3) said that a government-sponsored workshop has recommended that mechanisms should be put in place to evaluate programs aimed at ensuring good governance and fighting corruption in Cote d'Ivoire. According to the report, the conference has also noted that too much power has been put into the hands of the executive power and the lack of independency in the judiciary system in Cote d'Ivoire.

6. World Bank's support to plans to provide jobs for the youth

A report in *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 6) quotes a World Bank official in Cote d'Ivoire as warning that "youth unemployment is a time bomb." According to the paper this was said during a ceremony marking the launch of a multi-billion project aimed at providing jobs for the Ivorian youths.

7. Election of President Ouattara as the new chairman of ECOWAS

A banner headline in the weekend's issue of *Fraternite Matin* (p. 1) described President Ouattara's election as the chairman of the regional West African block ECOWAS, as the "fruit of Cote d'Ivoire's good neighbor diplomacy". With a picture of President Ouattara and his Nigerian counterpart, Goodluck Jonathan on its front page, the paper (p. 4) quotes the Ivorian leader as saying, "We'll pay attention to the democratic process in the sub-region."



FEBRUARY 17, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. President Ouattara named ECOWAS chairman
2. Papers say Ivorian PM Guillaume Soro is at a political turning point
3. Interpol headquarters for West-Africa to be reopened in Abidjan
4. Court adjourns trial of former managers of the Ivorian cocoa and coffee sector accused of embezzlement
5. Opposition paper denounced insider trading
6. The World Bank to finance massive rehabilitation projects

1. President Ouattara named ECOWAS Chairman

According to a report by *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 7) the 40th ordinary session of the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) is being held in Abuja, Nigeria. On the agenda of the session, is the selection of the ECOWAS chairman Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan whose term has come to an end. According to the daily, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara is to be elected as the new chairman of the regional body. In his opening address, the out-going chairman said he is committed to supporting his successor and called on members to extend their support to President Ouattara as he will take over.

L'Inter (p. 9) noted that important challenges are awaiting the regional body which will have to address, among others, the issue of the Touareg rebellion in northern Mali, Boko Haram, and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

For *Le Patriote* (p. 3) this development is a blatant clear that President Ouattara's leadership and diplomacy are paying-off just ten months after he officially took office.

2. Papers say Ivorian PM Guillaume Soro is at a political turning point

According to an article carried by *Soir Info* (p. 3) Ivorian Prime Minister Guillaume Soro is to quit his current position and be appointed as the speaker of the parliament. The move, the paper said, could follow the decision by President Ouattara to appoint a new Prime Minister from his ally PDCI RDA party. Thus, the paper added, after a term of five years, under former President Laurent Gbagbo and President Alassane Ouattara respectively, the Ivorian Premier is to chair the newly-elected parliament.

However, *L'Inter* (p. 3) remains skeptical about such a scenario, arguing that nothing is clear on this perspective. Citing insiders, the paper noted that the political future of the Ivorian Premier is still a mystery.

3. Interpol headquarters for West-Africa to be reopened in Abidjan

Displaced in late March last year as a result of the political crisis, the West Africa branch of the International Criminal Police Organization a.k.a Interpol is to be reopened in Abidjan. The information was reported by **Le Nouveau Reveil (p.2)** which noted that police officers from the sub-region gathered yesterday in Abidjan to discuss the issue. Tasked with curbing transnational crime, the organization is to face challenges related to international terrorism, cyber crime and arms proliferation in the West African region according to the Ivorian chief of police staff General Bredou Mbia. The newly-built premise to house the organization will be handed over by the end of the month, according to General Mbia.

With more on security issue, **Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 4)** noted that at least four people lost their lives in the western town of Kouibly where deadly clashes opposed local inhabitants and settlers yesterday.

4. Court adjourns trial of former managers of the Ivorian cocoa and coffee sector accused of embezzlement

Initially due to be reopened yesterday, the trial of the former managers of the Ivorian cocoa and coffee sector accused of embezzlement and mismanagement was adjourned to March 8. The information was released by **Notre Voie (p. 8)** which noted that the court advocated “logistic arrangements” to be made ahead of the trial of the plaintiffs who have spent two years in jail before being granted bail.

This development came as the paper **(p. 4)** denounced mismanagement and hindrances to good governance. The paper denounced alleged cases of insider trading involving President Ouattara’s close family and immediate circle.

5. The World Bank to finance massive rehabilitation projects

According to World Bank Director for Cote d’Ivoire, Mr. Madani Tall the bank is to finance the rehabilitation of the country’s infrastructure. The information was released yesterday in the course of the press conference. Providing details, **Fraternite Matin (p.9)** noted that a total of CFA Francs 50 billions (approximately US \$100 million) will be made available during the first phase of the projects which will focus on the rehabilitation of roads and power plants. The other phases combined with the country admission under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative will allow for more investment in the recovery of the country, Mr. Madani Tall underscored.



FEBRUARY 16, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. Campaign against child labor
2. Government's efforts to improve security and curb violence
3. The next by-elections and general political atmosphere
4. ECOWAS Summit due to open today in Abuja amidst regional conflicts
5. A new code of ethics for the media in Cote d'Ivoire

1. Campaign against child labor

ONUFI FM, a UN radio station in Cote d'Ivoire, reports today that Ambassador Phillip Carter III met with local leaders in the eastern town of Abengourou over the issue of child labor in cocoa farms. According to the report, the ambassador is on a visit to the region to discuss with the communities obstacles that are impeding development in the region. "We're totally against the use of children in the cocoa farms. The role of children is to go to school. At the same time we're aware of the challenges and we're working with the authorities, members of the civil society and NGOs to curb this scourge. The objective is to eliminate the child labor phenomenon in Cote d'Ivoire."

"Campaign against child labor: the challenges of Dominique Ouattara," says a front-page story in **Le Patriote** which quotes the First Lady, Dominique Ouattara, as calling for "the protection" of children against trafficking and child labor. According to the paper (**p. 7**), Mrs Ouattara made the call yesterday in Abidjan during the launching ceremony of an anti-trafficking steering committee. The First Lady, who is also the chairperson of this committee, is reported as saying, "My duty as a first lady is to see to the wellbeing of the children of my country." She also called for "urgent action" to be taken in order "to fight poverty and the school dropout problems."

"Let's protect our children, they are our future," a front-page headline in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan** quotes Mrs Ouattara as saying; while another prominent headline in **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 1)** says, "Mrs Ouattara to wage war against child trafficking." On the role of the 22-member anti-trafficking steering committee, **Fraternite Matin (p. 11)** says that it will have, among other things, "to initiate programs aimed at eliminating the trafficking and child labor phenomena." The committee, the report says, will also monitor and evaluate projects to be implemented by the government.

2. Government's efforts to improve security and curb violence

The government spokesman, Bruno Kone has called on Ivorians to respect the army, reports **Soir Info (p. 4)**. Kone, who was speaking yesterday in Abidjan after the cabinet meeting, is reported as saying, "It's important that our army is respected." According to the paper, the spokesman was reacting to recent incidents that resulted in a clash between elements of the Forces Republicaines de

Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) and youths in the eastern region of the country. He also said: "It is not the responsibility of the population to decide whether the FRCI should be deployed in a region or not."

Another article on the same page of **Soir Info** indicates that a relative calm is prevailing in the eastern town of Arrah where elements of the FRCI clashed Sunday with youths. According to the paper, security has been reinforced in the area with the backing of UN peacekeepers.

In a related development, **Soir Info (p. 4)** reports that the commander of the military police, Kone Zakaria, has called on the traditional hunters widely known as Dozos to "respect the laws of the country." "You've no right to take the law into your own hands," the military commander is quoted as telling the Dozos during a ceremony.

With more on the violence in the eastern region of the country, a report in **Fraternite Matin (p. 4)** says that the Minister in charge of Defense, Paul Koffi Koffi, has called on the population "to put an end to the violence" that has recently rocked this region. According to the paper, the minister said this when he met with local leaders in the region in order to find ways to prevent similar events from happening in future. The minister also announced a search that will be conducted in the eastern town of Arrah to collect arms. "It is unacceptable that civilians hold guns that they use to shot other persons," Koffi said.

"There are arms caches everywhere," **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 2)** quotes Ane Boni Simeon, an MP in the area as saying. The lawmaker also warned: "If nothing is done, the whole region of Moronou will be set on fire." According to a report in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 4)**, political misunderstanding was the main reason behind the violence in the eastern region. "Politics has divided the Agni and Malinke ethnic groups," writes the paper which indicates that opinion leaders in the region are finding it difficult "to reconcile politics and social cohesion."

Meanwhile, **Le Patriote (p. 1)** carries a banner headline reading: "Clashes in Arrah: the truth behind the FPI-backed attempted coup." According to the paper, youths close to the former president Laurent Gbagbo, are being pushed to fight against the government forces. The paper **(p. 2)** also calls for the end of the "provocation" of the FRCI.

With more on security issues, a report in **L'Inter (p. 4)** suggests that local leaders in the southern town of Dabou and its surroundings have expressed concerns about the security situation in the area. According to the report, the area has, for some time, been the target of the national army due to the alleged presence of pro-Gbagbo militia groups and mercenaries.

"To destabilize the regime, Abehi is recruiting in the west," says a banner headline in **Nord-Sud Quotidien (p. 1)**. According to the paper **(p. 4)**, Jean Noel Abehi, a former Ivorian army commander is "recruiting mercenaries at the Ivorian-Liberian border."

3. The next by-elections and general political atmosphere

A report in **Nord-Sud Quotidien (p. 5)** says that the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) is taking measures in order to pre-empt any disputes after the by-elections due to be held on February 26, 2012. "We'll launch a sensitization campaign to ensure that the elections are not marred by

violence,” the paper quotes a member of the CEI as saying. The paper also publishes a statement issued yesterday by the electoral commission announcing the handover of samples of electoral materials including posters to the candidates. In a related development, the paper **(p. 5)** carries another story saying that the UN Operation in Cote d’Ivoire will soon certify the December 11, 2011 parliamentary elections.

On other internal political issues, **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 1)** announces that the post of the prime minister in the next cabinet will come to the PDCI-RDA, the party of ex-president Henri Konan Bedie.

4. ECOWAS Summit due to open today in Abuja amidst regional conflicts

As leaders from the West African regional block ECOWAS are set to meet today in the Nigerian capital Abuja, **Fraternite Matin** carries a front-page headline announcing that President Ouattara is poised to take command of the organization. The article **(p. 16)** suggests that the summit will mainly focus on conflicts confronting countries in the region. Another prominent headline in **Fraternite Matin (p. 1)** announces that in an attempt to find solutions to conflicts in the sub-region, Benin President Yayi Boni, who is also the new chairman of the African Union, has called for a summit scheduled for February 18, 2012 in Cotonou.

5. A new code of ethics for the media in Cote d’Ivoire

A report in **L’Inter (p. 15)** says that a steering committee made up of heads media regulatory bodies, media professionals and experts are working on a new code of ethics for Ivorian journalists. The report says that the new code will take into account the “new realities” in the area of the press. Meanwhile, **Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 1)** sounds an alarm that the new code could undermine freedom of the press, as journalists will now be asked to reveal their sources.



FEBRUARY 15, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. Government to take measures to curb violence and ensure security
2. Fight against racketeering
3. Trial of former President Laurent Gbagbo at the ICC
4. Trial of top officials involved in coffee and cocoa scandal
5. President Ouattara holds talks with Liberian opposition leader

1. Government to take measures to curb violence and ensure security

A front-page story in ***Fraternite Matin*** says that the government is to take important security measures following the clash over the weekend between Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) and youths in the town of Arrah, eastern Cote d'Ivoire. According to the article (**p. 7**), three persons were killed and dozens were injured during the clash. The report also says that the Minister in charge of Defense, Paul Koffi Koffi, visited the area yesterday in order to sensitize the population about peace and reconciliation. The minister also announced that security will be reinforced through the deployment of a joint security unit composed of elements of the FRCI and gendarmerie, reports the paper. The report also explains that among the causes of the clash was the demand of local youth that the contingent of the FRCI leave the town.

"Despite the minister's peace campaign, tension is still high in the eastern town of Arrah," reports ***Soir Info (P. 4)***. "FRCI won't quit under pressure," says a front-page headline in ***Nord-Sud Quotidien*** which is quoting the minister in charge of defense. The paper also carries an article (**p. 2**) calling on the youths in the eastern region to stop any "provocation" of the government's forces. ***Le Patriote (p. 1)*** denounces what it sees as "a devilish plan" designed by supporters of former president Laurent Gbagbo to "destabilize" the government of President Ouattara.

Meanwhile, a prominent story in ***Notre Voie (p. 1)*** suggests that houses belonging to supporters of the former ruling FPI were destroyed during the clash that opposed the FRCI and youths in the eastern region. The paper also accuses government forces of conducting arbitrary arrests, assaulting the population and destroying properties.

Commenting on the recent violence between government forces and the population in the eastern region of Cote d'Ivoire, ***Le Nouveau Reveil (p.2)*** warns against "any attempt to use ethnicity as a tool to fight the current regime." The commentator thinks that if the youths from the local Agni ethnic group are to be blamed for demanding the departure of the FRCI from their region, the youths of the Malinke ethnic group have no right to back the government forces in clashes with the local population.

On other potential sectarian conflicts elsewhere in Cote d'Ivoire, a front-page headline in ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** indicates that "another feud is looming in Beoumi." According to the article (**p. 8**) the local

farmers in the central town of Beoumi do not want to cohabitate anymore with the herdsmen from the Peulh ethnic group. "The Peulhs have caused much damage and we don't want them here anymore. They were supported by the New Forces. Enough is enough. They must leave our region. We don't want to see them anymore," the paper quotes a farmer as saying.

Meanwhile, a prominent headline in **L'Inter (p. 1)** says that one person was recently killed following fighting between government forces and unidentified gunmen in the south-western Bas-Sassandra region.

2. Fight against racketeering

A report in **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 4)** says that the head of the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire, Bert Koenders, met with security units in Abidjan yesterday as part of collaboration between UN peacekeepers and Ivorian security units. "We've reached a critical moment that calls for the reinforcement of police and gendarmerie in Cote d'Ivoire," the paper quotes the head of the UN mission as saying. The report also says that UN experts are training government forces on how to fight racketeering.

In a related development, a front-page headline in **Le Nouveau Courrier** says that barely two months after President Ouattara's decision to send the FRCI back to military barracks, they are back again on the streets. The article (**p. 5**) mentions Abidjan neighborhoods such as Abobo, Yopougon and Adjame where elements of government forces are visible on the streets.

3. Trial of former President Laurent Gbagbo at the ICC

The lawyer of former president Laurent Gbagbo is the subject of a front-page headline in **L'Inter** which informs readers that "before the June 18 trial of Gbagbo, his lawyer is encouraging people to bear witness against supporters of Ouattara." According to the paper, Emmanuel Altit made the call after a meeting with the interim president of the former ruling FPI, Silvain Miaka Ouretto.

4. Trial of top officials involved in coffee and cocoa scandal

According to a front-page story in **Soir Info**, the trial of the former heads of cocoa and coffee bodies, who have been charged with embezzlement, will resume tomorrow in Abidjan. The article (**p. 7**) indicates that this will be the first time the tribunal will be hearing the accused persons after they were released on bail more than a year ago.

5. President Ouattara holds talks with Liberian opposition leader

Ivorian state television RTI reported that the reconciliation in Liberia after last year's presidential elections was high on the agenda during a meeting Monday between President Ouattara and the leader of the opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), Winston Tubman.



FEBRUARY 14, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. Fanfare in Abidjan as The Elephants return home after their defeat in the African Cup of Nations final
2. Clash between government forces and the population in eastern Cote d'Ivoire
3. Meeting between government officials and a World Bank delegation
4. Good governance and controversy over a rubbish collection bid
5. Ivorian artists to sing for reconciliation in Cote d'Ivoire

1. Fanfare in Abidjan as The Elephants return home after their defeat in the African Cup of Nations final

A picture that runs across the front page of *Fraternite Matin* shows President Alassane Ouattara and the Ivorian soccer players who returned home Monday after their defeat in the just-ended African Cup of Nations competition. Another prominent headline says that the players received a triumphant welcome from both the population and the whole government, and describes this as "fair-play" on the part of the Ivorian president. Receiving the players upon arrival in Abidjan, President Ouattara consoled them: "We've lost the cup but the battle is not yet over," reports the paper (**p. 2**).

"The nation is proud of you," *Le Nouveau Reveil* (**p. 1**) quotes President Ouattara as telling The Elephants upon receiving them. "You couldn't bring the cup, but you didn't lose either," President Ouattara said. Another prominent headline, however, denounces what the paper describes as "acts of anti-patriotism" on the part of supporters of former president Laurent Gbagbo, who, according to the paper, "have celebrated" after the defeat of the Ivorian team.

Soir Info (**p. 4**) carries a commentary full of optimism saying that in less than a year, there will be another African Cup of Nations tournament and "all the hopes will again be focused on soccer to resolve problems that politics could not resolve in Cote d'Ivoire." Meanwhile, *Notre Voie* (**p. 1**) carries a prominent picture of President Ouattara weeping while he holds a player in his hands at the stadium in Libreville on Sunday. Another prominent headline on the front page of the paper says, "The Elephants have fallen down as bad luck was there." "So did Ouattara lose the African Cup of Nations," says a front-page headline in *Le Nouveau Courrier* which blames the defeat of The Elephants on what it sees as "the political hijacking" of the soccer tournament by Ouattara's regime.

2. Clash between government forces and the population in eastern Cote d'Ivoire

A front-page story in ***Fraternite Matin*** says that five persons have been killed and several wounded in the eastern town of Arrah following clashes that opposed the governmental Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) and youths. A report in this paper (**p. 8**) quotes Ivorian army prosecutor Ange Kessy Kouame who described the incident as "a sectarian conflict between the Malinke and Agni ethnic groups." Reporting on the same incident, ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** (**p. 5**) says that shops and houses were looted and torched, while a Member of Parliament from the area has called for "calm." "The authorities have the responsibility to send the FRCI back to their barracks," the paper also quotes the mayor of Arrah as saying.

In a related development, ***Notre Voie*** (**p. 4**) alleges that traditional hunters widely known as Dozos have burned down a village leading to the death of two children in western Cote d'Ivoire.

"It is no longer possible to stage a coup d'etat in Cote d'Ivoire," ***Fraternite Matin*** (**p. 9**) quotes an army officer as saying last week. According to the paper, the deputy-chief of command of the Republican Guard, Ouattara Siaka, was addressing a group of individuals who were arrested in the city of Divo, north Abidjan, following a tipoff that they were preparing a coup.

3. Meeting between government officials and a World Bank delegation

A report in ***Fraternite Matin*** (**p. 17**) says the head of the World Bank delegation that visited Cote d'Ivoire last week has lauded the Ivorian government for measures it has taken in connection with reform of the cocoa and coffee sectors. The report also quotes the World Bank official as saying that there is no "disagreement" between the bank and the Ivorian authorities regarding plans underway as part of Cote d'Ivoire's efforts to achieve the attainment of debt relief under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC)

4. Good governance and controversy over a rubbish collection bid

A report in the weekend issue of ***Fraternite Matin*** (**p. 11**) said that a refuse collection takeover bid that was accorded to Satarem-Green Sol has been "definitely cancelled." According to the paper, the decision was taken last week by ANRMP, a state-run public procurement regulatory body, on the grounds that the bid that led to the selection of Satarem-Green Sol was marred with irregularities.

A front-page story in the weekend edition of ***Le Nouveau Courrier*** said that the decision taken by the state-run public procurement regulatory body was "a blow" to the Minister of Urban and Healthiness, Anne Desire Oulotto. In a related development, a report in ***Notre Voie*** (**p. 9**) alleged that government officials have played a key role in what the paper describes as a "refuse collection scandal." "Ouattara has put the rules on good governance back in the drawer," wrote the paper which accused government officials of being involved in a "corrupt" deal.

Meanwhile, a report in today's issue of ***Fraternite Matin*** (**p. 11**) says that the government has launched a campaign dubbed: "Don't litter my city," a program aimed at keeping cities across Cote d'Ivoire clean.

5. Ivorian artists to sing for reconciliation in Cote d'Ivoire

A report in today's issue of **L'Inter (p. 7)** says that the United Nations Development Program is to help Ivorian singers to produce songs that foster reconciliation and social cohesion. Some of the songs are : "Un Cœur pour ma patrie" and "D'une seule voix pour la Cote d'Ivoire."



FEBRUARY 10, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. Government spokesperson says legislative poll to be rerun in 12 constituencies on February 26
2. A new state-owned airline to take over bankrupt Air Ivoire
3. Opposition paper says the World Bank and the IMF are at loggerheads on reforms in the Ivorian coffee and cocoa sector
4. ICC spokesperson calls on alleged war victims to file common case against former President Laurent Gbagbo
5. Partisans of former leader Laurent Gbagbo plead for the release of dignitaries of the former ruling regime

1. Government spokesperson says legislative poll to be rerun in 12 constituencies on February 26

Following a decision by the Constitutional Council, the legislative poll will be rerun in 12 constituencies on February 26. The announcement made news in most dailies. Providing details, **Fraternite Matin (p. 7)** noted that the date was confirmed at a cabinet meeting yesterday. Candidates vying for these seats have seven calendar days, starting February 18, to campaign, the paper added.

L'Inter (p. 2) noted that this by-election will pave the way for the resumption of the Ivorian Parliament. According to the daily, important tasks - including the ratification of a new defense agreement between France and Cote d'Ivoire - are awaiting the new MPs.

However, an article in **Notre Voie (p. 2)** alleged that President Ouattara has interfered in the decision of the Constitutional Council. According to the daily, the poll was due to be rerun in a total of 25 constituencies where the initial poll was marred with incidents. However, under pressure from the Ivorian leader, the President of the Constitutional Council, Mr. Francis Wodie was forced to announce rerun new elections in only 12 constituencies. The paper went on to denounce maneuvers by President Ouattara to secure a *de facto* majority for his RDR party in the new Parliament.

2. A new state-owned airline to take over bankrupt Air Ivoire

According to Government spokesperson Bruno Kone, a new airline company dubbed Air Cote d'Ivoire is to take over activities of the former Air Ivoire which was declared insolvent. The decision was taken in the course of yesterday's cabinet meeting and reported in ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 2)**. Air France will hold 35 % of the shares of the state-owned company, the paper added.

This development came as an article in ***Le Nouveau Courrier* (5)** denounced foreign hegemony in Ivorian social and economic sectors. According to the daily, unlike former leader Laurent Gbagbo, President Alassane Ouattara tends to favor foreign expertise. The daily went on to denounce a recent decision by the Ivorian government to grant a bid for an audit of the Ivorian intelligence apparatus to former US Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire Lennon Walker.

3. Opposition paper says the World Bank and the IMF are at loggerheads on reforms in the Ivorian coffee and cocoa sector

According to an article in ***Le Quotidien d'Abidjan* (p. 6)** the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are at loggerheads regarding reforms underway in the Ivorian coffee and cocoa sector. The recent reshuffle of the sector is assessed differently by the two financial institutions, the paper argued. This development is likely to hamper efforts undertaken by the Ivorian government to gain debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

4. ICC spokesperson calls on alleged war victims to file common case against former President Laurent Gbagbo

***Le Patriote* (p. 2)** reported on a recent interview of ICC spokesperson Mr. Fady Al Abdallah with the UN radio channel ONUCI FM. In the course of the interview, Mr. Abdallah called on alleged war victims to gather to file a collective suit against former President Laurent Gbagbo accused of war crimes during last year's post-electoral crisis and who is awaiting trial at the ICC.

This announcement came as an article in ***Nord Sud Quotiden* (p. 4)** suggested that Gbagbo's wife, Simone, currently under house arrest in the North West city of Odiene is on the brink of being transferred to the ICC. According to the daily, the move could follow an international arrest warrant the Court is to issue soon against the former Ivorian first lady for her role in the post-electoral violence.

5. Partisans of former leader Laurent Gbagbo plead for the release of dignitaries of the former ruling regime

According to an article in ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 6)**, the Ivorian Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Hamed Bakayoko met yesterday with a delegation of partisans of former president Laurent Gbagbo. The purpose of the meeting was to plead for the release of the dignitaries of the former ruling regime under house arrest since Gbagbo's April 11 arrest. "We came to plead for forgiveness...We want to see the Ivorian family gathered again in all its diversity," the paper reported Mr. Gnamien Yao as saying in an emotion-laden address.



FEBRUARY 9, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. Detention conditions of supporters of former president Laurent Gbagbo
2. The trial of Gbagbo at the International Criminal Court
3. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire
4. The general political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire
5. Meeting between Prime Minister Soro and a visiting World Bank delegation

1. Detention conditions of supporters of former president Laurent Gbagbo

A front-page headline in **Notre Voie** claims that 15 pro-Gbagbo supporters are being detained at MACA, a prison in Abidjan, in "horrible" conditions. In the article (**p. 2**), the paper provides the list of the so-called 15 "political prisoners" alleging that they are detained in "a place for people to die," without "electricity and water." The paper claims that it has been informed about the conditions of the detainees from both family members and lawyers. The paper also quotes a relative of one of the detainees as saying that "the political prisoners who being ill-treated are close to Gbagbo." "The prisoners who are being maltreated have no water or electricity," the paper further quotes a source close to MACA as saying.

"Detained illegally in Bouna: The health of Michel Gbagbo is bad," says a prominent headline in **Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 1)**. According to the paper (**p. 3**), the son of the former president, who has been detained in the northeastern region of Bouna, has grown "slim" and is having "eye problems." Another article on the same page of this paper indicates the court procedures aimed at releasing pro-Gbagbo supporters on bail have been suspended.

2. The trial of Gbagbo at the International Criminal Court

An article in **L'Inter (p. 4)** says that supporters and well-wishers of former president Laurent Gbagbo from both home and abroad are pushing hard in an attempt to save the ex-Ivorian leader from international justice. Among these pressure groups, the paper mentions African and French intellectuals whose role is to gather evidence in order to prove that Gbagbo was not responsible for crimes committed in Cote d'Ivoire during last year's political violence.

3. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire

A report in **Fraternite Matin (p. 5)** says that the army has received important equipment to be used to beef up security in the western region of Cote d'Ivoire. The report says that the donation was made by President Alassane Ouattara.

In a related development, **Soir Info (p. 3)** announces that Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, who is also the Defense Minister, will be visiting major regions to evaluate the security situation across the country. The report says the prime minister will also use the occasion to explain to elements of the government's Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) the role of the new army.

A report in **Nord-Sud Quotidien (p. 3)** quotes a military source as saying that 1,500 ex-combatants have joined the FRCI following their demobilization, while a front-page headline in **Le Patriote** announces the beginning of the implementation of the new defense agreement between Cote d'Ivoire and France a few days after the signing of this accord.

4. The general political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire

A front-page report in **Le Nouveau Reveil** says ex-Ivorian president and leader of the PDCI Henri Konan Bedie has called for a "readjustment" of the alliance between members of the RHDP, a coalition that supports President Ouattara. According to the paper, Bedie made the call yesterday during a meeting of the executive members of his party. The paper quotes Bedie, who told his supporters that his party took the right decision by supporting President Ouattara, but "some adjustments have to be made to ensure a better functioning of our alliance." "There are important issues that we need to address before the local and regional elections," Bedie is also reported as saying.

5. Meeting between Prime Minister Soro and a visiting World Bank delegation

The economic reform underway in Cote d'Ivoire was high on the agenda yesterday during a meeting between Prime Minister Guillaume Soro and a visiting delegation of the World Bank, reports **Fraternite Matin (p. 16)**. "We need strong support and flexibility from the World Bank to achieve the attainment of debt relief under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC)," the prime minister is quoted as telling the World Bank delegation.



FEBRUARY 8, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. President Ouattara returns from France
2. National investigation into the post-electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire
3. Meeting between Laurent Gbagbo and the new leadership of his party at The Hague
4. Rumors on the transfer of Prime Minister Soro to The Hague
5. Female genital mutilation in Cote d'Ivoire

1. President Ouattara returns from France

President Alassane Ouattara said he will seek "wise advice" from his ally ex-president Henri Konan Bedie before forming a new government, reports ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 1)**. With a photo of the two leaders on its front page, the paper says that President Ouattara was speaking yesterday upon his arrival in Abidjan from France. "After the by-elections, I'll work with President Bedie on the way forward. This means I've not yet taken any decision. I have thought about it but I need time and the wise advice of my elder brother Bedie before proceeding to the next step," the paper **(p. 4)** quotes President Ouattara as saying. On his state visit to France, President Ouattara said: "Our meetings were fruitful."

President Ouattara received "a triumphant welcome" yesterday says a prominent headline in ***Le Patriote* (p. 1)** which carries pictures of pro-Ouattara supporters who thronged the airport to meet their leader.

Meanwhile, a front-page headline in ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*** suggests that the "rousing" welcome of pro-Ouattara supporters for their leader could be a source of "division." The paper **(p. 3)** also denounces "a cult of personality." Reacting to President Ouattara's declaration on the formation of the future government, ***Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 5)** deplores an "uncertain" speech on the part of the president.

2. National investigation into the post-electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire

An article in ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 5)** claims that the former ruling FPI party has rejected the report of the National Commission of Enquiry set up by the government to look into the post-electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire. "FPI wishes to denounce this non-inclusive commission and will not recognize the conclusions of its investigations," the paper quotes a statement issued by the party of former president Laurent Gbagbo as saying. The paper also quotes the statement as saying that President Ouattara did not wait for the conclusions of this commission before jailing several supporters of the former regime and transferring Gbagbo to the International Criminal Court. "FPI denounces Ouattara's maneuvers," says a headline in ***Notre Voie* (p. 2)** which publishes the full text of the statement.

In a related development, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 3) reports that Hermann Aboa, a former presenter on state broadcaster RTI, was interrogated yesterday by a Special Enquiry Unit set up by the government. According to the paper, the hearing, the first one since his release from jail on bail, focused on the content of "Raison d'Etat," a TV program that he co-presented during the political crisis in Cote d'Ivoire.

3. Meeting between Laurent Gbagbo and the new leadership of his party at The Hague

The first meeting between former president Gbagbo and Silvain Miaka Ouretto, the interim General Secretary of the former ruling FPI party, held at The Hague on Monday, is the subject of a front-page headline in *Notre Voie*. The paper publishes (pp. 3 & 4) an interview of Ouretto after his meeting with Gbagbo. "We've talked about the way Ivoirians are living and also about the party," the paper quotes Ouretto as saying. "Gbagbo is not the only person who committed crimes during the post-electoral violence," *Le Patriote* (p. 4) quotes the interim General Secretary of the former ruling FPI party as saying. "In 2015, we'll come back to power," Ouretto is reported as saying in *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 4).

4. Rumors on the transfer of Prime Minister Soro to The Hague

A prominent headline in *L'Inter* (p. 1) quotes Ivorian Prime Minister Guillaume Soro who has described as "rumors" recent media reports of his possible transfer to The Hague in connection with crimes committed last year in Cote d'Ivoire during the post-electoral conflict. "Let's let the rumors die from their own poison," the paper quotes the prime minister as saying yesterday in Abidjan after a cabinet meeting.

On a different issue, an article in this paper (p. 2) suggests that supporters of the prime minister have now engaged in the battle for Soro to retain his position in the next government. The paper quotes the leader of a small party, which, it says, is close to the prime minister, as saying, "The PDCI and its occasional allies should know that an electoral promise is not a debt and could change at any time." The article also claims that Soro's supporters have developed a strategy aimed at helping their leader keep his position, and that the recent rumor that the prime minister had been arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Court was part of this strategy.

5. Female genital mutilation in Cote d'Ivoire

A report in *Soir Info* (p. 6) says that 52 percent of women in Cote d'Ivoire are subjected to female genital mutilation. The paper attributes this information to the conclusion of a survey that was jointly conducted recently in eight districts by the United Nations Fund and the Ministry of Family, Women and Children.



FEBRUARY 7, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. Meeting between Prime Minister Soro and Ambassador Carter
2. Plan to fight armed gangs and ensure security in Cote d'Ivoire
3. Meeting between Laurent Gbagbo and the new leadership of his party at The Hague
4. A delegation from the World Bank expected in Cote d'Ivoire in connection with economic reforms

1. Meeting between Prime Minister Soro and Ambassador Carter

***Fraternite Matin* (p. 1)** carries a prominent photo showing Ambassador Phillip Carter III and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro comfortably seated in the Prime Minister's office with a headline suggesting that the U.S. diplomat has "put an end to rumors that the United States was pushing for Soro to quit his post as Prime Minister." "There is nothing like that," the paper (**p. 23**) quotes Ambassador Carter as saying in reaction to rumors in the local press that the American government did not want to see Guillaume Soro occupying the post of Prime Minister in the next cabinet. The paper also quotes Ambassador Carter as saying that the meeting focused on plans to ensure a better coordination of projects that the U.S. and Cote d'Ivoire agreed to implement during the recent visit of Secretary Clinton to Cote d'Ivoire. Ambassador Carter also reportedly saw as "positive" the discussions on projects such as security, military, democratic governance and health.

A prominent headline in ***L'Inter* (p. 1)** claims that Ambassador Carter has finally reacted to the so-called disagreement between the U.S. and Cote d'Ivoire. The report (**p. 5**) says that responding to a question that "People are talking about the U.S.'s opposition to the maintaining of Guillaume Soro as Prime Minister and his transfer to the ICC," Ambassador Carter said: "I don't know the origins of these absurdities. There is nothing like that... We've no problem with the Prime Minister."

"Who said that Obama is angry?" says a prominent headline in ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 1)** which speculates about "a secret message" that President Obama might have sent to the Ivorian Prime Minister. The article (**p. 3**) claims that the fact that Prime Minister Soro could not meet with Secretary Clinton during his recent visit to the United States, the fact that there was no tete-a-tete between the two officials during Secretary Clinton's visit to Cote d'Ivoire, and the "anger" of the U.S. Embassy following the attack on a meeting organized by pro-FPI supporters have contributed to rumors on supposed "reservations" expressed by the American authorities about the Ivorian President and his Prime Minister. The paper also comments that after his meeting last week with the Minister of Communication and his talks yesterday with the Prime Minister, there is no need for the U.S. Ambassador to deliver a speech or to issue a rejoinder to convince Ivorians about the "good relations" between the American and Ivorian authorities. The paper further quotes reliable sources as saying that Ambassador Carter used the occasion to express "the support of the U.S. for efforts being deployed by the Ivorian government." "Phillip Carter III has delivered a direct message from Secretary Clinton and President Obama to Prime Minister Soro," hints the paper.

In another development, a report in ***Fraternite Matin (p. 9)*** says that Prime Minister Soro held talks yesterday with a delegation of officials from the University of Alabama as part of the government's plans to reform the Ivorian education sector.

2. Plan to fight armed gangs and ensure security in Cote d'Ivoire

A prominent headline in ***Le Patriote (p. 1)*** announces that the Ivorian army has declared war on armed gangs and highway banditry in Cote d'Ivoire. "We'll track them down throughout the country," the paper quotes General Soumaila Bakayoko, the Chief of Defense Staff, as saying after a meeting that brought together top military brass yesterday in Abidjan. The meeting, the report says, was to hammer out a plan aimed at fighting armed robbery and restoring security in Cote d'Ivoire.

With more on security issues, a report in ***L'Inter (p. 5)*** says that Prime Minister Soro met with General Babacar Gaye, the military advisor of the UN Secretary General. According to the paper, the question of security, especially the reorganization of the Ivorian security forces after the recent political crisis, was high on the discussion agenda.

3. Meeting between Laurent Gbagbo and the new leadership of his party at The Hague

A front-page story in ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*** says that former president Laurent Gbagbo has given full power to Silvain Miaka Ouretto, the interim General Secretary of the former ruling FPI party. The report **(p. 5)** also says that Miaka received Gbagbo's nod after a three-hour tete-a-tete between the two men yesterday in The Hague where the former Ivorian leader is facing trial in connection with crimes committed during last year's political crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. One of Miaka's major tasks is to harmonize positions and bring together the party's supporters both at home and outside Cote d'Ivoire, the report indicated.

4. A delegation from the World Bank expected in Cote d'Ivoire in connection with economic reforms

A front-page story in *Le Patriote* says that a delegation from the World Bank is expected in Cote d'Ivoire as part of economic reforms underway in Cote d'Ivoire for the attainment of debt relief under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC).



FEBRUARY 6, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. Speculation on relations between President Ouattara and his Prime Minister
2. UN to certify December 11 parliamentary elections
3. The state of security in Cote d'Ivoire
4. Pro-Gbagbo supporter calls for dialogue with the new government
5. Reinsertion of internally displaced people
6. US extends decision to freeze Ivorian stakeholders' assets

1. Speculation on relations between President Ouattara and his Prime Minister

***Le Nouveau Reveil* (p. 1)** carries a picture of President Alassane Ouattara and Prime Minister Soro Guillaume with a prominent headline reading "Is there any problem between Ouattara and Soro?" The paper (**p. 3**) echoes rumors suggesting that "Soro might have sought refuge in the central city of Bouake or Yamoussoukro" in a bid "to escape a possible arrest and transfer to The Hague," where former president Laurent Gbagbo is facing trial in connection with crimes committed in Cote d'Ivoire during last year's political violence.

The paper, however, quotes the prime minister's spokesperson who indicated that these rumors could be linked to the prime minister's absence from public view during the past few days. The spokesperson also denounced "false rumors" being peddled by "ill-intentioned" people, adding that "there is no cloud over the relations between the president and the prime minister. The two men talk and work together every day." The paper also quotes the spokesperson who confirmed that the prime minister was in Yamoussoukro to "to take a rest" and that "Soro will resume official duty on Monday morning in his office in Abidjan."

"Has Soro been arrested and transferred to The Hague?" questions ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 1)** which indicates that, barring the unexpected, the prime minister will be in office today to prepare the agenda for Wednesday's cabinet meeting. Rumors of the prime minister's arrest are also the subject of a front-page headline in ***L'Inter*** which informs readers that Soro is back in Abidjan from Yamoussoukro. "Where was Soro?" says another prominent headline in ***Nord-Sud Quotidien* (p. 1)** which announces that after a week-long absence, the prime minister is back at work today. To rebuke rumors about a presumed disagreement between President Ouattara and his prime minister, ***Le Patriote* (p. 1)** carries a prominent headline reading, "There is nothing wrong between Ouattara and Soro."

Meanwhile, a front-page headline in **Le Nouveau Courrier** casts doubt about the re-appointment of Soro as prime minister in the next government, adding that Soro's days are numbered. The paper goes on to speculate that Soro is actually in a tight corner as the PDCI, the party of Henri Konan Bedie, has stepped up pressure on President Ouattara to live up to his electoral promise to give the post of prime minister to a cadre of this party.

2. UN to certify December 11 parliamentary elections

"Koenders will certify the legislative elections," says an article in **Fraternite Matin (p. 7)**. According to the paper, the head of the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Bert Koenders, held a meeting Friday with the head of the Independent Electoral Commission, Youssouf Bakayoko and the President of the Constitutional Council, Francis Vangah Wodie. Though the agenda of this meeting was not made public, the paper suggests that the recent Constitutional Council ruling resulting in the cancellation of 11 provisional results could be the major issue during the meeting. The paper also believes that this meeting offered the three officials the opportunity to harmonize their positions. The paper, however, quotes Koenders who announced that the UN mission will publish next week the results of its certification after the announcement of the final results of the parliamentary elections.

3. The state of security in Cote d'Ivoire

A report in the weekend issue of **Fraternite Matin (p. 4)** said that the army will dismantle militia groups that continue to operate in Tiassale and Sikensi. "We cannot authorize militia camps to be set up or people who are not allowed to hold guns to be moving freely on the national territory," the paper quotes Paul Koffi Koffi, the Minister in charge of Defense as saying during a visit to the two towns located north of Abidjan.

In a related development, **Fraternite Matin (p. 4)** quotes the Minister in charge of Defense who called on the elements of the government's Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) to be professional. According to the paper, the minister was speaking last week at the end of a workshop designed to take stock of the Ivorian national army.

4. Pro-Gbagbo supporter calls for dialogue with the new government

"The opposition must accept the olive branch offered by the government," **Fraternite Matin (p. 1)** quotes Laurent Dona-Fologo, a leading member of the pro-Gbagbo CNRD coalition as saying in an interview. Dona-Fologo also called on the leadership of the CNRD "to establish relations" with the new government, adding that "one cannot stop loving one's country because one is no longer in power." Dona-Fologo, who is also the first vice-president of the CNRD, further said: "Being in the opposition does not mean that one should prevent the government from ruling."

5. Reinsertion of internally displaced people

A report in the weekend issue of **Fraternite Matin (p. 5)** said that the government has launched a vast program designed to help internally displaced persons return home. According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Daniel Kablan Duncan, the program will cost the government 67 billion FCFA (about

US \$135 million) that will be used for the reinsertion of the internally displaced persons by helping them set up small businesses.

6. US extends decision to freeze Ivorian stakeholders' assets

***Fraternite Matin* (p. 4)** reported that President Obama has extended the decision to freeze the assets of pro-Gbagbo youth leaders Charles Ble Goude and Eugene Djue and ex-New Forces warlord Martin Kouakou Fofie. According to the report, the three people have been accused of blocking the peace process in Cote d'Ivoire since 2006.

FEBRUARY 3, 2012

Today's Top Stories

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1. Ivorian political class divided over the Constitutional Council's decision to overturn results of some parliamentary elections
2. Papers say individuals recently arrested by Liberian police for allegedly plotting a coup in Cote d'Ivoire have links with pro-Gbagbo groups
3. Hundreds of former combatants surrender weapons in Abobo
4. The World Bank to support youth employment and the country's post-crisis reconstruction
5. State-owned paper Fraternite Matin receives state-of-the-art equipment

1. Ivorian political class divided over the Constitutional Council's decision to overturn results of some parliamentary elections

The recent decision by the Constitutional Council to overturn results of the parliamentary elections in 11 constituencies continued to be reported on. An article in ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 5)** noted that the move has triggered mixed reactions among the Ivorian political class. Thus, according to the daily, Mr. Mabri Toikeuse, the leader of the UDPCI (Union pour la Democratie et la Paix en Cote d'Ivoire) and also Minister of Planning and Development, said he was upset by the Council's decision. "I am surprised by the Council's decision to overturn the result in Biankouma where no incidents were reported during the poll," he reportedly said, adding that "Cote d'Ivoire needs democracy and transparency." He called on the Constitutional Council to properly document its decision and to take the necessary measures to ensure the rerun sessions are fair and credible.

From an opposite perspective, Mr. Evariste Meambly, an independent candidate during the poll, welcomed the Council's decision he qualified as a landmark for the country. "I would like to

congratulate the Constitutional Council for taking this decision which echoes the country's thirst for democracy and justice... We are very proud of the Council," he was reported as saying.

These reactions came as the deputy spokesperson for the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Mr. Kenneth Blackman, said the mission is still waiting for details of the Council's decision. "We will react to this development once we have all the details," he said in the course of the mission's weekly press briefing held yesterday and reported by ***Nord Sud Quotidien* (p. 3)**.

2. Papers say individuals recently arrested by Liberian police for allegedly plotting a coup in Cote d'Ivoire have links with pro-Gbagbo groups

According to an article in ***L'Inter* (p. 4)**, individuals recently arrested by Liberian law enforcement agents for allegedly recruiting mercenaries in a bid to destabilize Cote d'Ivoire have close links with pro-Gbagbo groups. Citing an insider recently interviewed by the French wire service RFI, the paper noted that some dignitaries of the former ruling regime currently in exile in neighboring Ghana have been engaged in the recruitment of armed bands in the sub-region to launch attacks in Cote d'Ivoire. Gbagbo's partisans have also contacted members of the Invisible Commando— a dissident group based in Abobo and formerly lead by Sergeant Ibrahim Coulibaly, known as IB, before he was killed during clashes with the Republican Forces of Cote d'Ivoire in April last year. However, according to the paper, Ivorian authorities are closely monitoring the situation.

3. Hundreds of former combatants surrender weapons in Abobo

According to ***Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 3)**, an operation designed by the COMNAT-ALPC – an Ivorian civic group fighting the proliferation of small weapons - was recently organized in Abobo, a neighborhood on the outskirts of Abidjan where heavy fighting was reported during the political crisis. According to the daily, a total of 231 people came in to surrender their weapons, a turnout the paper qualified as low in view of figures on arms proliferation in this area.

***L'Inter* (p. 12)** carried a similar account, adding that the operation was jointly conducted by the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire and will be extended nationwide.

4. The World Bank to support youth employment and the country's post-crisis reconstruction

The World Bank is committed to supporting youth employment and the Ivorian government in its efforts to rehabilitate the country's infrastructure. According to ***Le Patriote* (p. 4)**, the announcement was made by World Bank official Emmanuel Noubisse in the course of an interview with the UN radio channel ONUCI FM. According to Mr. Noubissie, the rehabilitation of infrastructure, the health and education sectors, together with youth employment are the major areas the World Bank support will focus on. It is a total of CFA Francs 350 billion (approximately US \$700 million) that has been mobilized so far to support the country. The multi-faceted support will also promote youth employment with special projects designed for former combatants and war victims, he added.

5. State-owned paper Fraternite Matin receives state-of-the-art equipment

According to ***Fraternite Matin*** (p. 16) President Alassane Ouattara recently offered state-of-the-art equipment to the pro-government daily. The press and printing machines were handed over recently. "This new equipment will increase our competitiveness in the sector," the paper reported Mrs. Zunon Kipre as saying during the site visit yesterday by Ivorian Minister of Communication Souleimane Diakite Coty.

Still on media, U.S. Ambassador Phillip Carter III recently met with the Ivorian Minister of Communication Mr. Diakite Coty. According to ***Notre Voie*** (p. 9) discussions between the two men focused on press freedom and human rights. "The meeting was to further my knowledge on media-related issues here in Cote d'Ivoire and discuss the perspectives in connection with the liberalization of the audiovisual sector," the paper reported Ambassador Carter as saying after the meeting. According to the daily, Ambassador Carter underscored the necessity for media professionals to report responsibly and Ivorian authorities secure press freedom. Mr. Diakite Coty on his part recommitted the government to supporting a free press.

FEBRUARY 2, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire
2. Reactions after the Constitutional Council overturns results of parliamentary elections in 11 constituencies
3. Media-related issues
4. The case of pro-Gbagbo supporters detained in connection with the recent political crisis

1. Security situation in Cote d'Ivoire

A front-page story in ***Fraternite Matin*** quotes the Minister in Charge of Defense, Paul Koffi Koffi, who vowed "to crack down" on militia groups operating in the southern region of Dabou. The defense minister was speaking yesterday during a tour of this area, reports the paper (p. 7), which also indicates that the visit was to crosscheck continuous rumors about the existence of a militia training base in the region. "We're going to be tough. We'll clean the forest where militia groups are based. The government doesn't negotiate with militia groups," the minister is reported as saying.

Another article in this paper (p. 7) announces that government forces are to conduct a nationwide cleansing operation in a bid to flush out remnants of militia groups, mercenaries, gangs, racketeers, armed robbers and anyone holding guns illegally. The operation, the report says, is part of a plan designed to reinforce security throughout the country. "The law will be fully applied," the Minister in Charge of Defense, Paul Koffi Koffi, is reported as saying.

A front-page story in **Le Patriote** says that top military officers are meeting in the southern city of Grand-Bassam to evaluate the military situation in Cote d'Ivoire. Reportedly (**p. 2**) important progress has been made in the country in terms of security during the past few months; and the number of armed robberies has steadily decreased. The paper also quotes the Minister in Charge of Defense who vowed "to track down individuals holding guns illegally."

A front-page story in **Le Nouveau Reveil** indicates that the meeting should result in an action plan to be implemented this year. The report also says that the Minister in Charge of Defense also used the occasion to announce reforms within the army. A report in **Nord-Sud Quotidien** (**p. 4**) announces that the military police, a new security unit, has been installed in the central city of Bouake. The paper quotes Kone Zackaria, the head of this unit, as saying that the troop will be composed of elements from the police, military and the gendarmerie.

"National Army: 140 ex-rebels get promotion without taking exams," says a prominent headline in **Notre Voie** (**p. 1**). The paper (**p. 4**) publishes a list of alleged elements that were upgraded adding that the decree of their promotion was signed by President Alassane Ouattara. The article criticizes the decision on the grounds that it does not take into consideration such values as discipline, integrity and competence that constitute the core of the Ivorian Army.

2. Reactions after the Constitutional Council overturns results of parliamentary elections in 11 constituencies

A prominent headline in **Notre Voie** (**p. 1**) suggests that by cancelling results from 11 constituencies after the December 11 parliamentary elections, the President of the Constitutional Council, Francis Vangah Wodie, has just followed the footsteps of his predecessor during the 2010 presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire. Meanwhile, a report in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan** (**p. 5**) says that the head of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) has taken note of the Constitutional Council's ruling. An article in **Le Nouveau Reveil** (**p. 3**) hints that by-elections could take place before the end of February. "Anger of the candidates," says a prominent headline in **Fraternite Matin** (**p. 9**) which quotes one of the candidates whose election has been cancelled denouncing the way the Constitutional Council announced its decision.

3. Media-related issues

Le Nouveau Courrier (**p. 1**) denounces a violation of freedom of the press in reaction to the arrest of two journalists from *Le Patriote*, including the publisher Charles Sanga. According to the paper (**p. 3**), the two journalists, who were arrested Tuesday by the police for publishing "a confidential document" relating to the Constitutional Council's ruling on the results of the recent parliamentary elections, were released yesterday. The paper claims that the two journalists were arrested following instructions from Interior Minister Hamed Bakayoko.

4. The case of pro-Gbagbo supporters detained in connection with the recent political crisis

A front-page headline in **Le Patriote** quotes the state prosecutor as saying that the trial of pro-Gbagbo supporters, who have been detained for various charges in connection with last year's political crisis, will take place in Cote d'Ivoire before December this year.



FEBRUARY 1, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. Constitutional Council overturns results of parliamentary elections in 11 constituencies
2. Meeting between Ambassador Phillip Carter III and the Ivorian Communication Minister regarding press freedom
3. Security issues
4. Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana to streamline cocoa production and marketing

1. Constitutional Council overturns results of parliamentary elections in 11 constituencies

A front-page story in ***Fraternite Matin*** says that the Constitutional Council has annulled provisional results of the December 11 parliamentary elections in 11 constituencies. The paper also carries pictures of two ministers in the current government saying that they are among those whose elections have been cancelled. According to the paper (**p. 5**), this information was disclosed yesterday in Abidjan by the President of the Constitutional Council, Francis Vangah Wodie. The head of the Constitutional Council who was speaking at a press conference yesterday is reported as saying that the court has accomplished its task in "compliance with the rules" and with "impartiality and transparency." The report further says that Constitutional Council has transmitted its decision to the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) which will organize bye-elections in the constituencies where the votes have been cancelled.

A front-page story in ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** quotes Wodie who also disclosed that "people who died or were absent voted during the parliamentary elections." On the reason why the Constitutional Council has announced its decision only now ***Le Patriote*** (**p. 4**) quotes the head of the Constitutional Council as saying, "Our objective is to make sure that the law is respected." A commentary in this paper (**p. 6**) suggests that Cote d'Ivoire has "really changed" because "for the first time Constitutional Council has rendered its decision with impartiality."

Nord-Sud Quotidien (**p. 2**) sees Wodie's ruling on the electoral disputes as "a lesson to Yao N'Dre," the former president of the Constitutional Council. "The president of the Constitutional Council has taught his predecessor that this institution is not a political tool to be used to help friends who want to cling on power," writes the paper. The paper (**p. 3**) also quotes Alain Lobognon, a minister in the current administration whose election has been cancelled, as saying, "The Constitutional Council is the judge of the election."

"Masquerade of December 11: Wodie rules in favor of FPI," says front-page headline in ***Notre Voie***. The report (**p. 2**) says that "The backing received by some candidates from the government's Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) and the Dozos, the use of state symbols and means," among others are some of the reasons behind the Constitutional Council's decision to cancel the votes in 11 constituencies. The paper also quotes the president of the Constitutional Council as saying, "The interference of the FRCI in the electoral process is not normal." "Wodie rules in favor of Gbagbo,"

reads another front-page headline in **Le Nouveau Courrier**. The paper (**p. 5**) claims that Wodie's ruling over the December 11 parliamentary elections has vindicated accusations of fraud that were leveled against the RDR, the party of President Alassane Ouattara, by the former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo during the 2010 presidential elections.

2. Meeting between Ambassador Phillip Carter III and the Ivorian Communication Minister regarding press freedom

Fraternite Matin (p. 23) reports on a meeting between Ambassador Carter and the Minister of Communication, Diakite Coty Ibrahim, yesterday in Abidjan. "Ambassador Carter wants to help boost human rights and press freedom," reads a prominent headline. "Human rights are the cornerstone of the government of the United States; and the core of this is press freedom," the paper quotes Ambassador Carter as saying. According to the paper, the U.S. diplomat also commended Cote d'Ivoire for its efforts to liberalize the broadcast media.

In another development, **Fraternite Matin (p. 9)** reports that a delegation of the Public International Law and Policy Group, an American non-profit organization, has met with Ivorian authorities. According to the paper, the discussions have focused on how to integrate transitional justice and conflict resolution.

3. Security issues

A prominent story in **Le Patriote (p. 1)** says that Liberian authorities have arrested some 70 people near its southeastern border with Cote d'Ivoire for their alleged involvement in plans to destabilize this country. "They were recruiting people to go and fight in Abidjan," the paper quotes the police in Liberia as saying

With more on security issues, a report in **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 4)** says that military commanders from the West African Mano River member countries recently met in Sierra Leone to map out a security plan. According to the paper, the issue of peace and security in the sub-region, especially in the four nations, including Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea (Conakry), Liberia and Sierra Leone, was high on the agenda.

4. Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana to streamline cocoa production and marketing

A report on **the state broadcaster RTI-TV** said that Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana have formed a joint technical committee to streamline cocoa production and marketing in both countries. According to the report, this committee was formed during a meeting between Ivorian Minister of Agriculture Mamadou Sangafowa Coulibaly and Ghanaian officials. The committee is expected to regulate price differentials and prevent cocoa smuggling across the border to maximize benefit for cocoa farmers, the report said. The report also quoted a Ghanaian official as saying that the decision for the formation of the technical committee to manage cocoa operations in both countries was discussed by President John Evans Atta Mills and his Ivorian counterpart, Alassane Ouattara.

Media affiliation and circulation

Fraternite Matin	State-owned daily newspaper	23,000
L'Intelligent d'Abidjan	Privately-owned daily, leans pro-President Alassane Ouattara	7,000
L'Inter	Independent daily	20,000
Nord-Sud Quotidien	Daily close to Prime Minister Guillaume Soro	10,000
Notre Voie	Daily close to the FPI, the party of Former President Laurent Gbagbo	15,000
Le Nouveau Courrier	Daily close to the FPI, the party of Former President Laurent Gbagbo	10,000
Le Nouveau Reveil	Daily close to the PDCI-RDA, the party of Former President Henri Konan Bedie	17,000
Le Patriote	Daily close to the RDR, the party of President Alassane Ouattara	17,000
RTI TV	State broadcaster	
Soir Info	Independent daily	22,000
AIP	State News Agency	

NOTE: Newspaper circulation figures represent the number of copies printed, not actual sales.

DISCLAIMER

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