

AMERICAN EMBASSY'S NATIONAL DAILY PRESS REVIEW

DECEMBER 7, 2011

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Today's Top Stories

1. **Reactions following Laurent Gbagbo's first appearance before the ICC**
2. **December 11 parliamentary elections**
3. **Media coverage of the electoral process by the community radio stations**
4. **The release of three opposition journalists**

1. Reactions following Laurent Gbagbo's first appearance before the ICC

A banner headline in *Fraternite Matin* (p. 1) announces that after the transfer of former president Laurent Gbagbo to The Hague, International Criminal Court investigators are targeting six other persons from both Gbagbo's and President Alassane Ouattara's sides. An article in this paper (p. 8) quotes an official from the ICC as saying, "Investigations are not yet complete. Gbagbo is just the first to be transferred to The Hague. There are six other persons who could be charged with crimes committed during the November 2010 electoral process in Cote d'Ivoire. Arrest warrants will be issued for these persons irrespective of the side they belong to. I can assure you that the investigations will cover the two sides." The article also suggests that the ICC will neither take into consideration any "immunity" if the person is suspected nor any "amnesty law" that has been passed in the country where the investigations are conducted.

"After Gbagbo, who is the next person to be taken to the ICC?" says a headline in *Le Patriote* (p. 1) which carries pictures of supporters of the former Ivorian president, including the former first lady, Simone Ehivet Gbagbo and Charles Ble Goude, the leader of the Young Patriots movement. The paper (p. 2) also hints that the ICC is looking for six persons allegedly implicated in post-electoral crimes. The article further explains that with Gbagbo already in The Hague, there remain five to be identified. The paper also raises a question about whether the five remaining persons would come from both the Gbagbo and the Ouattara sides.

"Government gripped with panic as Gbagbo speaks at the ICC," says a prominent headline in *Notre Voie* (p. 1). The paper devotes a full page (p. 2) to telling readers how "pro-Ouattara supporters have lost control of their serenity," following Gbagbo's first appearance before the ICC. Another article on the same page suggests that Gbagbo has "impressed" the court confirming his "reputation as an articulate man." The paper also expresses hope that "the ICC would not become a dog that bites innocent children and even babies." *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 5) explains to readers "Gbagbo's defense strategy" at The Hague and calls Gbagbo's appearance at the court "a trial of France's accomplishment in Africa."

Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 1) reports that the state prosecutor has denied Gbagbo's assertion before the ICC that his detention conditions before his transfer to The Hague were "bad." "Gbagbo had never complained about any appalling conditions," Simplicie Kouadio, the state prosecutor is quoted as saying (p. 2). "I'm fine. I'm physically, morally and intellectually up fit," the paper also quotes Gbagbo as saying before his transfer to the ICC. The paper alleges (p. 3) that "Gbagbo had tried to call on his supporters for an uprising during his first appearance before the ICC."

2. December 11 parliamentary elections

"The campaign starts on the wrong foot," writes *L'Inter* (p. 1). The paper carries an article (p. 2) saying that a few days after the electoral campaign began, the situation on the ground has vindicated an alarm that was raised recently by a leading political figure about "risks of violence following the assaults on certain candidates during pre-campaign rallies." The paper reports (p. 2) on threats against candidates, physical harassment, assaults on supporters, destruction of campaign posters and vandalism of campaign headquarters that, it says, have occurred during the few days of electoral campaigning. In another article on the same page, the paper calls on the government's Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire to avoid any "mistakes."

Another report in *L'Inter* (p. 3) says that the Independent Electoral Commission has postponed the elections in the Logouale constituency following the death of the candidate of the RDR, the party of President Ouattara. According to the paper, the candidate died from burns that he sustained in a fire..

"The Dozos are not responsible for security during the elections," *L'Inter* (p. 5) quotes Chief of Defense Staff General Soumaila Bakayoko as saying during a press conference yesterday in Abidjan. General Bakayoko reportedly announced that 25,000 security forces have been tasked with manning security and warned those who might try to disrupt the ongoing electoral process. "We won't allow any black sheep to tarnish the image of the FRCI. Any act of indiscipline will be sanctioned and the perpetrators will be sacked from the army," *Fraternite Matin* (p. 5) quotes General Bakayoko as saying. Meanwhile, a report (p. 7) in this paper says that one person was killed and several wounded in the southern city of Dabou following a clash between the population and elements of the FRCI.

In another development, a headline in *Fraternite Matin* (p. 1) says that the pro-Gbagbo CNRD coalition is split following the decision by some of its members to participate in the December 11 parliamentary elections. "We're not concerned by these elections," *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 1) quotes independent FPI candidates as saying; while a front-page headline in *Notre Voie* says that "16 independent candidates from the FPI have pulled out of the elections." Meanwhile, a headline in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* (p. 1) says that supporters of the FPI party in the northern Ferkessedougou constituency have decided to throw their weight behind Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, candidate in the December 11 elections.

The state-run broadcaster RTI-TV1 yesterday reported that the head of the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire, Gerard Bert Koenders, yesterday spoke about the certification of the parliamentary elections during a press conference in Abidjan. "UNOCI hopes that these elections will be free, fair and transparent. These elections should also help foster reconciliation in Cote d'Ivoire," television footage showed Koenders as saying.

3. Media coverage of the electoral process by community radio stations

On media coverage of the electoral campaign, *Le Jour Plus* (p. 10) publishes a statement issued by HACA, the state broadcast regulatory body, warning community radio stations that are airing propaganda

for some candidates. The statement reminds heads of these radio stations about the law on broadcast media which “bans community radio stations from producing or broadcasting any political program.”

4. The release of three opposition journalists

A headline in *Notre Voie* (p. 1) says: “After 13 days in detention, the three Notre Voie journalists have been acquitted.” A report (p. 4) says that the three journalists who were detained on charges of “incitement to theft, looting and destruction of private assets through the media,” have been cleared and were released yesterday by a court in Abidjan.

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
Le Jour Plus	Privately-owned daily, leans pro-President Alassane Ouattara	15,000
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

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