

National Daily Press Review APRIL 2-26, 2013

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

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American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 26, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **Papers say Sunday's elections have unveiled malaise within the ruling RHDP coalition**
2. **President Alassane Ouattara meets with African parliamentary leaders**
3. **French petroleum company Total says it has found oil off Cote d'Ivoire's shore**
4. **The UN to send peacekeepers to neighboring Mali**
5. **Papers say Sunday's elections have unveiled malaise within the ruling RHDP coalition**

As both the RDR and the PDCI parties continue to trade accusations of vote rigging after Sunday's mayoral and regional elections, Ivoirian papers argued that a deep malaise is noticeable within the ruling coalition. According to *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 6) conflicts of interest and rivalries are plaguing relationships between the two major parties forming, together with the UDPCI and the MFA, the ruling RHDP coalition. The daily opined that Sunday's vote, described as a race among "brothers" turned out to be a merciless fratricidal battle that left several people injured. The paper went on to question the resilience of the RHDP to these challenges and said these developments do not bode well for the ruling RHDP coalition ahead of the 2015 presidential election.

Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 3) for its part said the government's call for an end to the post-electoral violence came too late. The paper alleged that the violence was a foretaste of what President Ouattara and his RDR party are planning for the 2015 presidential race.

With more on the issue, ***L'Inter* (p. 2)** said International Crisis Group has warned about the dangers that excluding party of former president Laurent Gbagbo from the political scene could have on the country's stability. "The continued exclusion of the FPI could lead to similar troubles to what we have been experiencing," Rinaldo Deoagne, the think-tank Analyst said.

2. President Alassane Ouattara meets with African parliamentary leaders

According to an article in ***L'Inter* (p. 3)** the Ivoirian president met yesterday in Abidjan with a delegation of African parliamentary leaders. Discussions, the paper said, focused on cooperation between African lawmakers and ways to reinforce them. Prior to this meeting, the delegation which included the president of the Parliament of the Congo, Justin Koumba, met with Guillaume Soro, the chairman of the Ivoirian National Assembly. In his address, Mr. Koumba said the Congo and Cote d'Ivoire are facing similar challenges. "We are both in search of peace, reconciliation and development," he said. "To achieve reconciliation, we voted a general amnesty law," he added as he called on the Ivoirian parliament to consider this scenario.

3. French petroleum company Total says it has found oil off Cote d'Ivoire's shore

French company Total said it has discovered a major oilfield off the coast of Cote d'Ivoire. The information was reported by ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 4)** which noted that the company said the well confirms an extension of reserves in the Tano basin, which hosts the giant Jubilee field in Ghana. "The data acquired during drilling are being analyzed to develop a program to appraise the reservoirs discovered and explore identified prospects further east in the block, near recent discoveries in Ghana," the company said in a statement.

4. The UN to send peacekeepers to neighboring Mali

The UN Security Council yesterday approved a resolution to send peacekeepers to northern Mali. According to ***Fraternite Matin* (p. 27)** under Resolution 2100, a peacekeeping mission is to take over from the Africa-led International Support Mission for Mali (AFISMA) and the French troops currently on the ground to confront islamists and Tuareg separatists.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 25, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **Ivoirian government condemns post-electoral violence**
2. **Former ruling FPI suspends party members and call for demonstration**
3. **Disgruntled ex-combatants stage sit-in**

1. Ivoirian government condemns post-electoral violence

A banner headline in ***Fraternite Matin*** says the government has condemned the recent post-electoral riots following the April 21 municipal and regional elections. "We condemn these acts of violence... this is unacceptable," the paper (**p. 4**) quotes government's spokesperson Affoussiata Bamba-Lamine as saying yesterday after a cabinet meeting chaired by President Alassane Ouattara.

Another front-page headline in ***Fraternite Matin*** quotes the Speaker of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro, who called on the candidates who took part in the local elections "to accept the verdict." Soro, who was speaking yesterday at the opening session of the Parliament, also urged the defeated candidates to "play fair." Another prominent headline in this paper (**p. 1**) reports that the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) has warned the perpetrators of the recent violence. "The perpetrators and organizers of this violence will have to account for them," CEI's spokesperson Inza Diomande is reported as saying.

With more on the condemnation of the post-electoral violence, ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*** carries a front-page headline saying that Interior Minister Hamed Bakayoko has warned "the bad losers."

In a related development, the pro-opposition daily ***Notre Voie***, which believes that the recent local elections were marred with "massive fraud," accuses the head of the electoral commission, Youssouf Bakayoko of "exposing the country to another war."

Le Patriote carries stories accusing the PDCI of being sore losers in certain elections (p.3) across from stories accusing the PDCI of vote fraud (p.2) in the elections that they won. ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** carries stories accusing the RDR of having stolen the election in Yopougon (p.2) in which it was announced victorious and of attempting to do the same in Treichville (p.3) where the initial CEI results indicate a PDCI victory.

2. Former ruling FPI suspends party members and call for demonstration

A front-page story in ***Notre Voie*** says the former ruling FPI has announced plans to stage anti-government demonstrations following what the party sees as "electoral masquerade." According to the paper (**p. 2**), this was announced yesterday by the party's executive at a press briefing yesterday in Abidjan. "We will stage demonstrations," the paper quotes the party's spokesperson, Richard Kodjo, as saying. "The FPI does not recognize these elections," a front-page headline in ***Le Temps***, quotes Mr. Kodjo as saying; while a prominent headline in ***Le Patriote*** claims that the party of the former Ivoirian president Laurent Gbagbo is calling for "uprising."

In the related development, a report in ***Fraternite Matin*** (**p. 13**) says the former ruling FPI has confirmed its decision to suspend the party's members who took part in the recent local elections. "Members of FPI who were elected and all the party's supporters who participated in the April 21 local elections have been suspended," the paper quotes Mr. Kodjo as saying.

3. Disgruntled ex-combatants stage sit-in

A front-page story in ***Fraternite Matin*** says ex-combatants organized a sit-in yesterday in the central town of Bouake to demand the release of their spokesperson. The paper (**p. 13**) reports the disgruntled combatants as saying that the leader, one Kone Youssouf, was kidnapped a day before by individuals in plain clothes.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 24, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **Post-poll violence continues as the electoral body releases results**
2. **The future of the ruling RHDP coalition seems unknown after the RDR party and the PDCI accused each other of frauds and hardliners are emerging from both sides**
3. **The European Union's Court of Justice maintains sanctions against former president Laurent Gbagbo and his allies**

1. Post-poll violence continues as the electoral body releases results

Incidents of violence continue to be reported in Abidjan and upcountry as the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) – the body tasked with the organization of Sunday's poll – continues to release results. According to *L'Inter* (p. 2) the situation was combustible in Adjame where the police clashed yesterday with demonstrators. A similar situation was reported in Plateau where law enforcement agents used teargas to confront an angry mob of protestors.

L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 6) noted that at least two people were killed and two others were injured in the incident in Adjame. According to the daily, a large number of candidates and their supporters are protesting vote fraud and are challenging results released by the CEI. A banner headline in the paper suggested that the situation is deteriorating.

2. The future of the ruling RHDP coalition threatened by RDR and PDCI accusations of fraud and recriminations

As results of Sunday's combined mayoral and regional elections are being announced, distrust and resentment have emerged between President Ouattara's RDR party and its PDCI ally. Both parties, members of the ruling RHDP coalition, are accusing each other of fraud. *Le Nouveau Reveil* (pp. 1-4) complained about large-scale vote rigging and explicitly accused its RDR ally of overturning, with what it called the "blatant support" of the CEI, results in several constituencies. "This time we are not going to allow this rigging...We will react and have already reached out to lawyers," the paper reported Roland Adiko, PDCI's Deputy Secretary in charge of elections as saying. According to the paper, the PDCI's victory in Yopougon, Abidjan's biggest neighborhood, is being stolen. The paper went on, arguing that the RDR is worried about its hegemony which does not bode well for president Ouattara's party ahead of the 2015 presidential race.

Aujourd'hui (p. 4) carried a similar account, citing PDCI youth branch leader Bertin Konan Kouadio as warning that his party will not back down. "This is enough...we have already been wronged in Yopougon and I won't let it happen again elsewhere," he said.

For its part, *Le Patriote* (p. 1-3) said the RDR has secured more seats overall than its PDCI ally which, the paper said, is calling its supporters to stir up problems. The paper denounced the rhetoric of violence that PDCI candidates have been using throughout the process. The paper called on PDCI

candidates to use legal means to settle any electoral disputes and argued that fraud was also reported in districts won by PDCI candidates.

The paper reported in a separate development that it is a common knowledge that the RDR has always had the largest number of mayors throughout the country. "This has been the case since 2001 while we were still an opposition party," the paper reported RDR spokesperson Joel Nguessan as saying as he reiterated his call for candidates who had lost in the elections to accept their defeat and to congratulate the winners.

3. The European Union's Court of Justice maintains sanctions against former president Laurent Gbagbo and his allies

According to an article in *Fraternite Matin (p. 8)* the European Union's Court of Justice (EUCJ), on Tuesday confirmed the sanctions issued against the Ivoirian former president Laurent Gbagbo and members of his entourage. The daily noted that the court's decision came after a petition for the lifting of said sanctions submitted by the ex-leader was rejected. These sanctions include freezing assets and travel bans, the paper added.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 23, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. Vote counting continues amid violence after Sunday's local elections in Cote d'Ivoire

A front-page story in the independent daily, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*, says the first results of Sunday's local elections released by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) have sparked violence in many regions including Abidjan. According to the paper (**p. 5**), score of people were injured yesterday following violent incidents in the Abidjan neighborhoods of Koumassi and Treichville. Another front-page story in this paper claims that preliminary results gave independent candidates a large victory.

A report in *L'Inter* (**p. 4**) says 30 independent candidates have been elected as mayors after the release of preliminary results from 86 constituencies. Another front-page report in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* says President Alassane Ouattara's RDR party has won 24 seats against 29 for the PDCI-RDA party of former president Henri Konan Bedie and 39 for independent candidates.

Still on post-election violence, a report in *Soir Info* says one person was killed and four wounded in the southwestern town of Grand-Lahou. "Chaos in Koumassi, Marcory and Treichville," reads a front-page headline in pro-government daily *L'Expression*.

A front-page headline in *Aujourd'hui*, a daily close to the former ruling FPI party, accuses President Alassane Ouattara's RDR party of "staging violence after being defeated in its strongholds." "The RDR is sowing terror," reads a banner headline in *Notre Voie*, another pro-FPI daily newspaper, which quotes the party as saying only 15 percent of voters turned up for Sunday's local elections.

With more on the incidents after Sunday's local elections, *Le Nouveau Courrier* carries a front-page headline warning that these incidents should be seen as a bad omen for the 2015 presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire. The paper (**p. 5**) also suggests that the incidents could lead to "friction" between President Ouattara's RDR party and Bedie's PDCI-RDA party, the two major allies of the ruling RHDP coalition.

The difference between these two parties also features prominently in *Le Nouveau Reveil*, which accuses the RDR of "playing to Ouattara's interests." "RDR's supporters tarnish the image of the regime," reads a headline in this paper (**p. 2**), which quotes the leadership of the PDCI-RDA decrying "massive vote rigging" in the Abidjan neighborhood of Yopougon.

In a bid to scale down the tension, the ruling RDR party has called on those who have lost to congratulate the winners, reports *Le Jour Plus* (**p. 4**).

Meanwhile a front-page story in the state-run *Fraternite Matin* quotes the Supreme Court as saying that electoral petitioners have five days, beginning from the date of the announcement of the official results, to contest the results of Sunday's elections. "Candidates who are contesting the results should send petitions to the Independent Electoral Commission," the paper (**p. 7**) quotes Pierre Claver Kobo, a magistrate from the Supreme Court, as saying.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 22, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **Low turnout at Sunday's local elections in Cote d'Ivoire**
2. **Mining companies to have a say in government mining reform**
3. **Prime Minister Duncan meets foreign investors, World Bank officials on trip to Washington**
4. **Teachers end their strike**

1. Low turnout at Sunday's local elections in Cote d'Ivoire

Reports in the Ivoirian press today say turnout in Sunday's regional and municipal elections in Cote d'Ivoire was low. A front-page headline in ***Fraternite Matin*** notes that the vote was "generally peaceful," but did not "pull in much of a crowd." "The big question mark is voter turnout," reads a headline in the paper (**p. 4**), which quotes head of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) Yousouf Bakayoko as saying that the turnout may be around 30 percent.

Other print outlets close to the government, including ***Nord-Sud Quotidien*** (**p. 2**), emphasize the peace that prevailed during the vote and notes that voters were slow in turning up in certain polling stations. Meanwhile, a report in this paper (**p. 7**) claims that the vote was marred with violence in the northern town of Ferkessedougou, where the office of the CEI was burned down. The paper also features a statement issued by the Ministry of Communications reminding the press that only the electoral commission can announce results of the elections.

According to a front-page report in ***Le Nouveau Reveil***, the office of the electoral commission in the Treichville neighborhood of Abidjan was vandalized, while another report claims that government forces destroyed ballots in the northern region of Doropo.

"People are not very interested," an article in ***Le Jour Plus*** (**p. 4**) quotes Mr. Bakayoko as saying yesterday after visiting polling stations in the Abidjan neighborhood of Cocody, while reports in ***Le Patriote*** (**pp. 7&8**) says there were small crowds in polling stations in other major cities such as Bouake (central) and San Pedro (southwest).

Soir Info carries a front-page headline describing the turnout at Sunday's vote as "disappointing," and reports (**p. 4**) that the vote could not take place in the town of Bettie, in eastern Cote d'Ivoire, because of violent incidents.

A prominent headline in opposition paper ***Notre Voie*** describes Sunday's vote as "Gbagbo's win over Ouattara." Another front-page headline in this paper trumpets the success of the boycott of the elections by the FPI, the political party of former Ivoirian president Laurent Gbagbo, in saying, "Ivoirians stayed away from the regional and municipal elections."

Other opposition papers, such as ***Le Nouveau Courrier***, describes the vote as a "regional and municipal masquerade," and carries a banner headline suggesting that the poor turnout was the result

of President Alassane Ouattara's "unpopularity." "Sunday's elections are indication that Alassane Ouattara holds the minority in this country," reads a front-page headline in **Aujourd'hui**, while a front-page headline in **Le Quotidien d'Abidjan** sees Sunday's vote as, "a total failure."

L'Intelligent d'Abidjan explains that the decision by former president Gbagbo's party to stay away from the elections cannot be cited as the sole reason of the low turnout during the vote. The low turnout at these local elections is not something new, the paper (**p. 5**) quotes the head of the electoral commission as saying. But an article in this paper (**p. 4**) reports a disillusioned Ivoirian as saying, "We can no longer expect anything from these politicians. We cannot vote for people who will go feed their family while we are hungry."

2. Mining companies to have a say in government mining reform

A report in **Fraternite Matin (p. 25)** says mining firms operating in Cote d'Ivoire are demanding further discussion on the government mining reform program. "The actual mining code is excellent but it can be improved if it is more attractive and more competitive," the paper quotes the president of Randgold Resources, Mark Bristow, as saying. "Mining companies are calling for the review of the mining code," reports **Notre Voie (p. 8)**, while a report in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 2)** says industrial firms operating in the mining sector have expressed concerns about the cost of production in Cote d'Ivoire.

3. Prime Minister Duncan meets foreign investors, World Bank officials on trip to Washington

A report in **Fraternite Matin (p. 25)** says Ivoirian Prime Minister, Daniel Kablan Duncan, has called foreign investors to do business in Cote d'Ivoire. According to the paper, he extended the invitation during a visit to Washington, D.C. where he attended conferences organized by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

4. Teachers end their strike

A front-page report in **L'Inter** says teachers and other civil servants, on strike last week to demand better working conditions, have suspended their strike. This was announced yesterday by ISEF, a coalition of teachers' trade unions, while calling on the government to find a solution to their demands, reports the paper (**p. 12**). Meanwhile a front-page story in **Aujourd'hui** accuses the trade unions of betraying the striking teachers.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 19, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **CEI president says candidates for Sunday's elections will be held accountable for violence**
2. **FPI leadership takes disciplinary actions against party dissidents**
3. **Former president Laurent Gbagbo's son Michel brought to Abidjan for medical treatment**

1. CEI president says candidates for Sunday's elections will be held accountable for violence

With two days left before Sunday's regional and municipal elections, the president of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), Mr. Youssouf Bakayoko, warns candidates that they will be held responsible in case of violence during the process. Speaking in an interview with *Fraternite Matin* (p. 6), Mr. Bakayoko says all has been set to allow for a peaceful process. "We have overcome a lot of challenges to ensure the vote will be fair and peaceful," Mr. Bakayoko said, adding that security measures have also been reinforced. "I call on the different candidates to be responsible and use legal ways to settle all disputes that may arise. The world is looking at us and all those who call for hatred and violence will be held accountable."

Still on Sunday's elections, *Nord Sud Quotidien* (p. 3) notes that some 600 soldiers from the Republican Forces of Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) have been deployed to the western part of the country, near the Liberian border, to monitor security. The security situation in the region remains volatile after a series of deadly attacks last month, the paper says.

2. FPI leadership takes disciplinary actions against party dissidents

According to an article in *Notre Voie* (p. 2), the leadership of the opposition FPI party has decided to ban 15 of its members accused of not abiding by the party's stance to boycott Sunday's election. The 15 individuals include incumbent mayors who have decided to ignore the party's decision to boycott the elections and are vying for another term. "As per the decision of the FPI central bureau, all FPI members engaged in one way or another in these elections are banned from the party," the statement read. The paper published the list of the 15 individuals now banned from the FPI.

3. Former president Laurent Gbagbo's son Michel brought to Abidjan for medical treatment

Detained in a prison in Bouna, in northeast Cote d'Ivoire, since his arrest in April 2011, the son of former Ivoirian president Laurent Gbagbo, Michel Gbagbo, was helicoptered yesterday to a health care facility in Abidjan as a result of a serious health condition. The information is reported by most papers close to the former ruling FPI party including *Notre Voie* (p. 3), which notes Michel has been "illegally detained" for two years by the Ivoirian government. *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 3) says this is the second time Michel has been brought to Abidjan for medical treatment.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 18, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **UN hails "considerable progress" in Cote d'Ivoire security but calls on the government to ensure fair justice**
2. **Despite great strides forward, challenges lay ahead on the road toward reconciliation, says Ambassador Carter III**
3. **Speculation continues after former ruling FPI calls for an alliance with PDCI party**

1. UN hails "considerable progress" in Cote d'Ivoire security but calls on the government to ensure fair justice

According to a report in *Nord Sud Quotidien* (p. 4), the United Nations hails the "considerable progress" in the security situation in Cote d'Ivoire, two years after the country's post-electoral violence. Addressing the Security Council on Tuesday, UN Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, said, "the progress achieved in the last two years shows that Cote d'Ivoire could resume its historic role as the anchor of stability and prosperity in the region." Mr. Mulet's 22-page report, which evaluates achievements made to establish long-term stability in Cote d'Ivoire, also highlights the need for the Ivoirian government to ensure fair justice. "All those who are accused of having perpetrated serious crimes, regardless of their status or political affiliation, must be prosecuted in order to end the vicious cycle of impunity," the UN official said. The paper added that among other recommendations, Mr. Mulet suggested the reduction by one battalion of the UN current peacekeeping mission in the country.

Still on the report, *L'Inter* (p. 2) notes that Mr. Mulet urged the government and the opposition to intensify discussions with an eye toward paving the way for political reconciliation.

In a related story, *Le Quotidien d'Abidjan* (p. 3) says that ahead of a possible reduction of UN peacekeepers in Cote d'Ivoire, President Alassane Ouattara recently requested the UN consider the deployment of drones to enhance its security monitoring capacity. The daily, citing "insiders" says the demand for these unmanned military aircrafts was rejected.

2. Despite great strides forward, challenges lay ahead on the road toward reconciliation, says Ambassador Carter III

Speaking yesterday in Yamoussoukro, United States Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire, Phillip Carter III, said that there is still a long way to go to achieve reconciliation in the war-torn country.

Ambassador Carter's address made news in several of today's papers. *Fraternite Matin* (p. 9) reports that the Ambassador insisted that the issue of land tenure is a key component to reconciliation and maintaining stability, and he called on the government to efficiently address this complicated question. "In the long run, it is not possible to achieve reconciliation without addressing and resolving the issue of land tenure which begins at the national level," Ambassador Carter is reported as saying. He also underscored that reconciliation hinges on progress towards accountability and

impartial justice, and warned that a lack of accountability undermines confidence in the judicial system.

Opposition papers **Notre Voie (p. 5)** and **Le Nouveau Courrier (P. 6)** give their take, saying that the "relationship between President Ouattara and the U.S. has turned ugly." Specifically mentioning the issue of "victor's justice," the dailies quote the Ambassador as saying, "Violation of human rights and war crimes were committed by all sides of the conflict...yet up to this point, with the exception of some low-ranking soldiers, all of the individuals who have been detained and charged for their role in the post-electoral violence come from one side of the conflict." They also mention that the Ambassador called on the government to keep its commitments for fair justice and to continue to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

3. Speculation continues after former ruling FPI party calls for an alliance with PDCI party

A few days after the former ruling FPI party called on the PDCI party to join them for an alliance against President Alassane Ouattara's RDR party, speculation continues in the media. **Le Patriote (p. 2)** says the PDCI may have a "plan B" and could be reaching to the FPI as part of a political maneuver ahead of the 2015 presidential elections. The paper denounced the "ambiguous" reaction from PDCI officials on the FPI call and said the future of the ruling RDR-PDCI coalition is uncertain with this development.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 17, 2013

Today's Top Story

April 21 local elections: Head of UN mission calls for transparent vote

The regional and municipal elections scheduled for April 21 in Cote d'Ivoire continue to be the major issue in the Ivoirian press. A front-page headline in the pro-government newspaper *L'Expression* quotes the head of the UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire, Bert Koenders, as calling for "transparent" elections. Mr. Koenders, the report says, was speaking yesterday in Abidjan after a meeting with President Alassane Ouattara. "Can we avoid a second post-electoral crisis?" asks a headline in this paper (**p. 2**) which highlights the ongoing war of words, violent incidents, death threats and intimidation orchestrated by candidates and their supporters during the campaign.

"UN calls for transparent elections," reads a front-page headline in *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*. According to the paper (**p. 3**), Mr. Koenders also expressed concerns about rhetoric during the campaign that incites hatred and xenophobia.

An article in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* (**p. 2**) says the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and Ivoirian civil society have joined together to denounce what they see as "violation" of the code of conduct by candidates in the upcoming local elections. Apart from verbal and physical intimidation, NDI and Ivoirian civil society also decry the destruction of posters of candidates and the use of state vehicles by candidates during the campaign.

On security during the vote, a front-page story in *L'Inter* highlights measures to be taken by the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire. According to the paper, Mr. Koenders, after his meeting with President Ouattara, promised to deploy UN forces along with government troops during the vote.

Meanwhile, a front-page story in *Le Quotidien d'Abidjan*, a daily close to the former ruling FPI party, quotes disgruntled former combatants threatening to "disrupt" the vote if the government does not pay them what they see as their fair allowance. "Without war allowances, there will be no elections on April 21," a front-page headline in the paper quotes the former combatants as saying.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 16, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **As teachers continue strike, students gather to call on government to react**
2. **Electoral body sets up measures to mitigate fraud in upcoming elections as violence continues**
3. **The Kuwait Fund to finance a road construction project along the Ivoirian border with Burkina Faso**

1. As teachers continue strike, students gather to call on government to react

Most Ivoirian public schools teachers are still on strike after failed talks between the teachers union and the government this week. According to an article in *Notre Voie (p. 9)*, in a bid to press the government to react, hundreds of pupils demonstrated yesterday on the streets in Abidjan. Carrying banners that read slogans such as, "We want classes to resume," "Pay the teachers" and "Out with Kandia," the angry pupils unsuccessfully tried to access the office of Minister of Education Kandia Camara. They were stopped by police dispatched to the scene to monitor the situation. The daily says that the situation could worsen should the government continue to play "cat-and-mouse" with the teachers and refuse to seriously address their concerns.

In a related development, *L'Inter (p. 14)* reported that several people were injured when pupils and gendarmes clashed yesterday in the west-central city of Bouafle. According to the daily, the violence followed an attempt by an angry mob of pupils to interrupt a test taking exercise ahead of end-of-year exams to demonstrate their frustration with the ongoing strike.

2. Electoral body sets up measures to mitigate fraud in upcoming elections as violence continues

The Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) - the body tasked with organizing the ongoing mayoral and local elections - says it is taking measures to prevent possible fraud during the voting, scheduled for this Sunday, April 21. The announcement, according to *Fraternite Matin (p. 5)*, was made by CEI spokesperson Diomande Inza. The measures include steps to ensure only trustworthy agents are recruited as polling station managers, and that each candidate has, in each voting site, a representative to oversee the voting process. Moreover, measures have also been taken to ensure the results are carefully monitored.

The CEI announcement came while localized violence is still being reported during the two-week campaign. According to *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 5)*, the atmosphere was tense in the city of Seguela in northern Cote d'Ivoire where a clash between PDCI Secretary General Alphonse Djedje Mady and RDR Acting Secretary and current mayor Amadou Soumahoro was narrowly avoided yesterday. According to the daily, Mr. Djedje Mady and the PDCI candidate for the city's mayor seat have been barred access to the city after supporters of incumbent Mayor Soumahoro prevented them from campaigning in the town.

3. The Kuwait Fund to finance a road construction project along the Ivoirian border with Burkina Faso

The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has agreed to finance the Bouna-Doropo-Burkina Border Road Project. The information was reported by *L'Inter (p. 12)* which noted that the CFA 6.1 billion (approximately US \$12.2 million) project will expand commercial activities in the region by facilitating free movement of people and goods. The loan agreement was signed yesterday by the Ivoirian Finance Minister Niale Kaba and Kuwait Fund executive Abdelaziz Khelef.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 15, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **Former ruling FPI party seeks alliance with the PDCI, maintains its decision to boycott the mayoral and regional elections**
2. **Violence transpires over the weekend during campaigns for mayoral and regional elections**
3. After Visit to France, President Ouattara announces an official visit of French leader François Holland
4. **Japan writes off Cote d'Ivoire's debts**

1. Former ruling FPI party seeks alliance with the PDCI, maintains its decision to boycott mayoral and regional elections

According to an article in *Fraternite Matin* (p. 11), the leadership of the former ruling FPI party is calling on the PDCI party – the country's pioneer political party and an ally of President Alassane Ouattara's RDR party – to join the FPI in its "fight for democracy in Cote d'Ivoire." In a statement issued yesterday, FPI Acting President Sylvain Miaka Oureto said the time has come for the PDCI to distance itself from the ruling RDR, arguing that the former has always been the "fool" in its alliance with the RDR.

Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 3) carried a similar account, adding that the FPI's move is meant to safeguard a declining democracy in Cote d'Ivoire since President Alassane Ouattara came to power. "It is not too late...we can still join hands to preserve democracy in our country by refusing to go through this mockery of an election," the statement read.

This development came as COJEP (The Pan African Congress of Young Patriots), a pro-FPI youth organization said it was working to ensure the mayoral and regional elections were boycotted by its supporters. "We have designed an operation dubbed 'electoral desert' to ensure no one shows up the day of the election," *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 3) reported Roselin Bly, the newly-elected president of the youth group, as saying. "This is a way to pay tribute to former president Laurent Gbagbo to whom the country owes its achievements towards democracy," he added. The FPI youth branch known as JFPI has also called for a similar boycott, the daily added.

2. Violence transpires over the weekend during campaigns for mayoral and regional elections

According to *Soir Info* (p. 2) several people were injured in clashes while campaigning over the weekend. In Koumassi, at least six people were injured when an angry mob ransacked the campaign headquarters of a candidate. A similar incident was reported in the seaside city of Grand Bassam, the paper added.

L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 2) noted that two people were killed over the weekend in Yopougon after an unidentified gang carrying heavy weapons, including RPGs and other military rifles, assaulted a

grocery store. The assault caused mayhem in the neighborhood where people, terrified by the gunfire, remained locked up in their houses for hours.

3. After Visit to France, President Ouattara announces an official visit of French leader François Holland

According to *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 3)*, President Ouattara arrived back to Cote d'Ivoire on Saturday after a two-week visit to France. Speaking to reporters upon his arrival, President Ouattara said his French counterpart recommitted the French government to supporting ongoing efforts to rebuild the Ivoirian economy and make reforms of the security sector. The two men agreed to meet soon in Abidjan, the paper added.

4. Japan writes off Cote d'Ivoire's debts

According to a report in the weekend edition of *Fraternite Matin (p. 12)*, Japan has written off Cote d'Ivoire's debt to its country, amounting to CFA 110 billion (approximately US \$220 million). "The government of Japan has decided to write off the Cote d'Ivoire's entire overdue loans," the paper reported Japan Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire Susumu Inoue as saying during the signing ceremony held Friday in Abidjan. According to Ambassador Susumu, this debt relief will allow the government to make available additional funds to help implement its development plan. The debt relief is part of financial incentives that followed Cote d'Ivoire's qualification for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) status, the paper said.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 12, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **On the margin of a meeting with French leader François Holland, President Ouattara reaffirmed the government's efforts to achieving reconciliation**
2. **Ivoirian soldiers on trials for abuses**
3. **Disgruntled ex-soldiers from the Forces Nouvelles staged a street demonstration, threatened elections in Bouake**
4. **Think-tank Transparency International calls on the Ivoirian government to champion the fight against corruption**

1. On the margin of a meeting with French leader François Holland, President Ouattara reaffirmed the government's efforts to achieving reconciliation

On a private visit to France, President Alassane Ouattara met yesterday with his French counterpart François Holland. According to *Fraternité Matin (p. 9)* although discussions focused on developments in Mali, the two men also talked about bilateral issues and the Ivoirian government's ongoing efforts to achieve reconciliation.

"Achieving reconciliation will take time but we are committed to reconciling and bringing together all Ivoirians," *L'inter (p. 4)* reported President Ouattara as saying.

According to the same daily, the President commented to the press about the recent law passed by the National Assembly which authorizes the President to bypass the National Assembly and rule by decree. "The National Assembly is meant to assist and oversee the government, but it only meets twice a year while we have urgent matters to expedite," President Ouattara offered to justify the move. "I am committed to democracy and I assure you this law is not intended to prevent the National Assembly from playing its role," he added.

2. Ivoirian soldiers on trials for abuses

Seven soldiers from the Republican Forces of Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) are being tried by a military court in Abidjan in connection with a deadly incident in 2011 in the central town of Vavoua, when members of the Republican Forces opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators, killing five civilians. Providing details, *L'inter (p. 2)* said the seven soldiers - including two Burkina Faso nationals - are accused of manslaughter and human rights abuses.

Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 4) carried a similar account, adding that all the accused rejected the allegation.

3. Disgruntled former combatants staged a demonstration in Bouake, threatened the mayoral election

Angry ex-soldiers from the military branch of the *Forces Nouvelles* paralyzed activities in Bouake as they demonstrated yesterday in the streets and blocked the city's main checkpoint. ***Soir Info* (p. 6)** said that early yesterday morning the ex-soldiers, led by a Kone Youssouf gathered and proceeded to the check-point they have occupied for hours, thus preventing people from entering or exiting the city. "We fought for 13 years without receiving any salary and now we have been left aside," the paper reported Kone Youssouf as saying. The demobilized soldier complained he and his brothers in arms have not been integrated into the regular military and paramilitary and are the victims of the nepotism of the national army. "What we are requesting now is cash compensation ranging from CFA 20 to 40 million (approximately US \$ 40, 000 to 80, 000) for each soldiers," Mr. Kone said, arguing that the situation may become difficult if their demands are not addressed in a timely fashion and warned that the future of the mayoral and regional elections may depend on a response.

"Soro's army stirred up against Ouattara" was the banner headline of ***Le Quotidien d'Abidjan***. The paper **(p. 2)** carried a similar account and added that the government has until April 21 to address the issue.

4. Think-tank Transparency International calls on the Ivoirian government to champion the fight against corruption

According to an article in ***L'inter* (p. 4)** the Berlin-based NGO Transparency International has reached out to the Ivorian government and has called for more action to fight corruption. This was the bottom-line of a meeting between Transparency International official Chantal Uwimana and Mr. Meite Sindou, the Ivoirian Secretary for Good Governance. "You must work to change reality....I know this is not something you can achieve overnight but you must commit to good governance and start sensitizing people to fight corruption," Mrs. Uwimana said.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 11, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **President Ouattara to rule by decree**
2. **Ivoirian government launches security reform program**
3. **April 21 local elections: Daily speculates on hot spots**
4. **News commentaries mark two year anniversary of Gbagbo's arrest**

1. President Ouattara to rule by decree

A vote carried out yesterday by the Ivoirian National Assembly granting President Alassane Ouattara the power to make decisions concerning the economy by decree this year is the major issue in the Ivoirian press today. "National Assembly yesterday passed a law giving power to the President of the Republic to rule by decree," reads a front-page headline in **Fraternite Matin**. A report in this paper (**p. 10**) says a large majority of National Assembly members supported the measure. The paper also comments that with this vote, the National Assembly has given the president the freedom to implement economic programs aimed at spurring the country's post-war recovery and enable it to become an emerging economy by the 2020. In an attempt to justify the vote, the paper quotes Article 75 of Cote d'Ivoire's Constitution which stipulates that "The President of the Republic, for the purpose to implement his/her program, shall seek from the National Assembly the approval to rule by decree during a limited period."

Other pro-government dailies were supportive of the decision. "MPs allow Alassane Ouattara to resolve certain issues by decree," writes **La Matinale (p. 8)**. "National Assembly okays Ouattara's demand to rule by decree over economic issues," writes **L'Expression (p. 3)**. **Le Patriote** carries a front-page headline calling the vote "a green light" granted by the National Assembly to allow the president to rule on economic programs. "Ouattara has lawmakers' carte blanche to rule by decree," writes **Nord-Sud Quotidien, (p. 6)**.

"Can Ouattara rule by decree?" asks a front-page headline in **Le Nouveau Reveil**, a daily owned by the PDCI-RDA, the party of President Ouattara's ally, former Ivoirian president Henri Konan Bedie. "I asked the MPs to support the bill," the paper (**p. 7**) quotes PDCI-RDA's majority speaker in the parliament, Gaston Ouassena Kone, as saying. Honorable Kone is also reported as saying that President Ouattara, after his election, is working for the country and has asked the party to help him "speed up the post-war economic recovery." "We the MPs have to facilitate his work by providing him with the legal means to enable our country to quickly return to being a player on the international stage," Honorable Kone is reported as saying.

A report in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan**, an independent daily (**p. 5**), quotes Minister of Interior and Security Hamed Bakayoko – who was speaking on behalf of the government – describing the vote as "democratic progress" in Cote d'Ivoire.

From the opposition's perspective, *Notre Voie*, (p. 8) calls the vote "blank check" offered by Ivoirian lawmakers to President Ouattara. "I am for democracy and I voted against this law," *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 6), quotes Gnagbo Kakou, an independent MP in as saying. One MP is quoted in this paper as questioning the rationale behind the decision to vote for this law, while another lawmaker said: "The National Assembly should not be allowed to make decisions such as this." *Aujourd'hui*, carries a front-page headline reading, "National Assembly makes legal Ouattara's dictatorship."

2. Ivoirian government launches security reform program

A report in *Fraternite Matin* (p. 9) says the Ivoirian government has launched a program aimed at reforming the country's security sector. Minister Bakayoko, who helped launch the program yesterday, explained that the reform has become necessary due to "dysfunction" in the security apparatus as a result of the successive crises the country has endured. Reporting on the same program, *Le Patriote* (p. 2) says the program will include legal issues, training, equipment and international police cooperation.

3. April 21 local elections: Daily speculates on hot spots

With just over a week to go before the April 21 municipal and regional elections, a front-page story in *Le Patriote* highlights areas that are likely to be hot spots during the vote. The paper (p. 3) mentions areas in the western, northern and the northwestern regions of the country where the vote could turn violent. Meanwhile, a prominent headline in *Le Nouveau Reveil* says the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) has warned "troublemakers." "The CEI can suspend candidates from the competition," another front-page headline in this paper quotes the election body as saying.

4. News commentaries mark two year anniversary of Gbagbo's arrest

A commentary in the Ivoirian independent daily, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 4) suggests that, two years after former Ivoirian president Laurent Gbagbo was captured on April 11, 2011, Cote d'Ivoire is still swinging between "renaissance and doubt." The paper notes that during the last two years Cote d'Ivoire's economy has grown significantly, but that there are still obstacles to overcome to enable the population to feel the effects of this growth.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 10, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. Campaign for April 21 local elections underway amid violence
2. New attack on police station raises security concerns in Cote d'Ivoire
3. Ivoirian education minister calls on striking teachers to resume work

1. Campaign for April 21 local elections underway amid violence

Reports in the Ivoirian press say the ongoing campaign for the April 21 local elections has been marred by incidents of violence in certain areas of Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire's financial capital. "Tensions are mounting," reads a front-page headline in *Nord-Sud Quotidien*, which quotes supporters of two different candidates accusing each other of assault and vandalism.

L'Inter (p. 5) also reports on incidents in Koumassi, a neighborhood in Abidjan, where the police yesterday tried to prevent a clash between supporters of rival candidates. Reporting on the same incidents, *Le Nouveau Reveil* carries a prominent headline saying that the campaign has turned violent after "the revolt" of supporters of the PDCI-RDA party, the party of former Ivoirian president Henri Konan Bedie.

In a related story, *Fraternite Matin* (p. 1) carries a statement issued by the state-run print media regulatory body, Conseil National de la Presse (CNP), calling on journalists to abide by press laws during the electoral process. The statement (p. 7) reminds Ivoirian journalists from both state and private news outlets to publish balanced news as they cover the campaign in the run-up to the April 21 municipal and regional elections.

2. New attack on police station raises security concerns in Cote d'Ivoire

An attack on a police station in the Abidjan neighborhood of Yopougon on Monday hits the front page of the Ivoirian press today. *Notre Voie* carries a prominent headline claiming that the attack was launched by "an invisible commando." The paper (p. 8) quotes eyewitness reports saying that the assailants arrived at the police station in a taxi wearing plain clothes. The report also mentions that no one was injured in the attack.

According to a front-page headline in *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*, the identity of the assailants remains "a mystery." The report (p. 2) also says the gunmen partially burned down the police station before running away. Another article on the same page of the paper suggests that Monday's attack could be a move to test a security unit that was recently put in place by Ivoirian authorities to curb insecurity in Abidjan or "a rehearsal" before a larger attack in the future.

With more on security issues in Cote d'Ivoire, a report in *Fraternite Matin* (p. 11) says Ivoirian Chief of Defense Staff Gal Soumaila Bakayoko is visiting villages in the western region of the country recently raided by unidentified gunmen reportedly from neighboring Liberia. The visit, the paper

reports Gal Bakayoko as saying, is to see for himself the situation on the ground and to boost the morale of government troops currently taking part in a military exercise code named "Gnanhou."

3. Ivoirian education minister calls on striking teachers to resume work

Two days after the start of a nationwide strike called by Ivoirian primary and secondary school teachers, *Fraternite Matin* carries a front-page headline saying, "The government will respect its promises." The paper (*p. 12*) attributes this statement to Minister of National Education and Technical Training Kandia Camara, speaking yesterday at a press briefing. "Efforts have been made to satisfy your demands; we will continue these efforts but we want you to exercise patience," the minister is also reported as telling the striking teachers.

"Kandia Camara refuses to surrender," reads a prominent headline in *Le Nouveau Reveil*, while a front-page headline in *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* reports Mrs. Camara as saying that the striking teachers, who were arrested, will be prosecuted. A front-page story in *Notre Voie* sees this statement from the Minister as a declaration of "war" on teachers.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 9, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **Most public schools closed as teachers' unions launch a nationwide strike**
2. **Campaigns for mayoral and regional elections rage**
3. **Ivoirian government to streamline public expenses, lessen payroll burden**
4. **Ivoirian troops trained ahead of deployment to Mali**

1. Most public schools closed as teachers' unions launch a nationwide strike

Most Ivoirian secondary and primary schools remain closed today as a result of a strike called by teachers' unions. According to *L'Inter* (p. 12), the ten-day strike came after inconclusive talks between the government and the country's major teachers union known as *Intersyndicale du Secteur Education Formation* (ISEF). "The government is repressing us and is sending the police to arrest our members and hamper the movement but we are not going to back down," the paper reported ISEF Secretary Diomande Mamadou as saying. "We have the right to speak up and request what the state owes us without being punished," he added.

In a related development, the paper said that six people are being detained in connection with the strike.

Still on the issue, *Le Patriote* (p. 10) noted that measures are being taken by the government to ensure peace and security in the country's public schools. Citing Kouyate Abdoulaye, an aide to the Ivoirian Minister of Education, the paper said legal actions may be initiated against activists should the movement turn violent. "It is your right to go on strike but you cannot prevent others from reporting to work," Mr. Kouyate was quoted as saying.

2. Campaigns for mayoral and regional elections rage

Launched over the weekend, campaigns for mayoral and regional elections continue throughout the country. Most reports in today's press were related to rallies and campaign events being held by a variety of candidates to win the support of voters. According to an article in *Nord Sud Quotidien* (p. 2), some candidates, especially those affiliated with the ruling RDR party, are using their relationship with Ivoirian president Alassane Ouattara to convince voters to vote for them. The paper denounces this practice, arguing that campaigns must be based on the strength of the candidates and their proposals, and that the candidates should not be using the president's name as a "key" to get elected.

The former ruling FPI party, at a rally over the weekend, said they were not concerned by the election. *Notre Voie* (p. 5) reported FPI official Marie Odette Lorougnon as saying, "We are not concerned by these elections, will not participate in any campaign activity and will not vote."

3. Ivoirian government to streamline public expenses, lessen payroll burden

According to an article in ***Fraternite Matin (p. 16)***, the Ivoirian government is committed to reducing public expenses by finding ways to decrease the payroll burden. The information, the paper says, was announced yesterday during a workshop designed by the International Monetary Fund-sponsored group AFRICTAC. The daily noted that according to Abdourahmane Cisse, an aide to the Ivoirian Economic Minister, approximately 42 percent of the country's income is used to pay salaries, a situation that prevents the government from making available more money for other vital sectors of the country. According to AFRICTAC Director Jean Le Dem, the workshop participants will come up with proposals on how to streamline the government's expenses and pave the way for a comprehensive development plan.

4. Ivoirian troops trained ahead of deployment to Mali

Some 235 Ivoirian troops were recently trained by French forces ahead of their deployment to Mali. The information was reported by ***Fraternite Matin (p. 10)*** which noted Ivoirian units will officially work in a logistics capacity.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 8, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. Campaign for April 21 local elections gets underway
2. Ivoirian and Liberian ministers meet over security issues
3. Ivoirian public school teachers on strike
4. Ambassador Carter's outreach trip to the north and western Cote d'Ivoire

1. Campaign for April 21 local elections gets underway

The two-week campaign, launched on Friday in the run-up to the April 21 regional and municipal elections, is the major issue in the Ivoirian press. A front-page story in the weekend issue of **Fraternite Matin** said the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) has assured "perfect security" during the campaign. "The government of Cote d'Ivoire is responsible to ensure that security prevails and we can guarantee perfect security during the elections," the paper (**p. 4**) quoted CEI's spokesperson Inza Diomande as saying.

In a message on Friday, CEI president Youssouf Bakayoko called on candidates "to have a peaceful campaign and to respect each other," **Le Nouveau Reveil** (**p. 3**) said in its weekend edition. However, a front-page headline in today's issue of this paper says the campaign for the local elections began amid violence in the eastern town Agnibilekro. According to the paper (**p. 12**), one person was injured over the weekend following a clash between supporters of President Alassane Ouattara's RDR party and the PDCI-RDA party of former Ivoirian president Henri Konan Bedie.

In a related story, a front-page story in **Soir Info** quotes a spokesperson of the former ruling FPI party as saying, "We will not recognize the results of this masquerade." According to the paper (**p. 5**), the party said this after a meeting over the weekend in Abidjan, where they again called on supporters to stay away from the local elections.

On another political development, a front-page story in **Le Nouveau Courrier** says the Congres National de la Resistance pour la Democratie (CNRD), a movement that supports former Ivoirian president Laurent Gbagbo, is calling for large demonstrations to be held on April 12 across the country. The demonstrations, the paper (**p. 5**) says, will mark the two-year anniversary of the arrest of the former president who was captured on April 11, 2011 during the post-electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire.

2. Ivoirian and Liberian ministers meet over security issues

A report in **Fraternite Matin** (**p. 9**) says Ivoirian Minister of Security and Interior Hamed Bakayoko met on Friday with Liberian authorities over security along the border between their two countries. The agenda for the one-day working session also focused on the progress on the humanitarian and refugee situation.

Reporting on the same meeting, *L'Expression* carries a front-page headline saying that Liberian authorities will soon proceed with new extradition of mercenaries who allegedly killed UN peacekeepers. "The assassins of the seven blue helmets to be extradited soon," reads a related headline in *Le Patriote* (p. 2).

3. Ivoirian public school teachers on strike

A prominent headline in *Le Temps* says, "Teachers are on strike today." According to the paper (p. 3), the strike has been called by Mouvement des Instituteurs pour la Defense de leurs Droits (MIDD), a union for primary school teachers, to protest a salary cut suffered by the teachers following a previous strike in which they were involved. The paper also says the strike could be extended to other public services.

According to a front-page story in *Le Nouveau Courrier*, the schools will be closed for ten days as a result of the strike. Meanwhile, a front-page story in *Le Patriote* quotes the head of the Syndicat National des Enseignants du Second Degre de Cote d'Ivoire (SYNESCI), a secondary teachers' union, as calling on striking teachers "to show discipline and to return to work."

Meanwhile, a report in *Fraternite Matin* (p. 14) says the government has agreed to pay a 25 percent bonus to public school teachers. According to the paper, this decision was made on Friday following a meeting between Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan and the teachers unions.

4. Ambassador Carter's outreach trip to the north and western Cote d'Ivoire

Reports on U.S. Ambassador Phillip Carter's outreach trip to the western, northern and central regions of Cote d'Ivoire are in the media today. "Odiene deserves the attention of investors," a front-page headline in *Le Patriote* quotes Ambassador Carter as saying after a meeting with officials in the town. A report in *L'Expression* (p. 11) says the U.S. Ambassador is monitoring closely the situation in the run-up to the April 21 local elections. Reporting in its weekend issue on the Ambassador's trip to Man, in western Cote d'Ivoire, *L'Inter* (p. 3) quoted Ambassador Carter as saying, "We will help President Alassane Ouattara to make Cote d'Ivoire an emerging economy by the year 2020."

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

APRIL 5, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **Prime Minister outlines achievements made so far and ongoing efforts to address the country's challenges**
2. **Exhumation of mass graves begins in Abidjan**
3. **New report by Human Rights Watch calls on President Ouattara to turn his rhetoric of impartial justice into reality**
4. **Cote d'Ivoire crossed off the list of most dangerous countries for journalists**

1. Prime Minister outlines achievements made so far and ongoing efforts to address the country's challenges

Ivoirian Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan met yesterday in Abidjan with the press to discuss achievements the government has made in addressing the country's major challenges. *Fraternite Matin (pp. 4-5)* said an "upbeat" Kablan Duncan underscored that peace, security and national reconciliation as well as the recovery of the economy are of paramount importance for the government and that steps were being taken. Citing the creation in August last year of a national security council tasked with monitoring security nationwide and a task force dubbed CCDO (*Centre de Coordination des Decisions Operationnelles*) to expedite the disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion of former combatants, the Ivoirian Prime Minister insisted that the government efforts have started to pay off. According to the daily, Mr. Kablan Duncan recommitted the government to supporting the reconciliation process and to work out how to rebuild the country's war-torn economy.

L'Inter (p. 4) said that Mr. Kablan Duncan noted in his interview that the government is reluctant on a general amnesty law as suggested by the former ruling FPI party. "Some 3,000 people lost their lives during the crisis and justice must be rendered for them," he said, adding that time must be given for justice to do its job and that interference must be avoided.

The Ivoirian Prime Minister's vision is not shared by *Notre Voie (p. 4)* which qualified his words as "puff dreams." The paper went on, denouncing what they called a "failed charm offensive" and accused the Ouattara administration of selling dreams to Ivoirians.

2. Exhumation of mass graves begins in Abidjan

As announced by the government, the exhumation of mass graves said to be of people killed in the violence that hit the country after the disputed 2010 elections started yesterday in Abidjan. The information was reported by *Soir Info (p. 8)* which noted that the operation is meant to allow families of the victims to give decent burials to their loved ones and is a step towards achieving justice and reconciliation. "A total of 57 sites have been reported nationwide and 36 mass graves just in the neighborhood of Yopougon, a then-stronghold of forces close to former president Laurent Gbagbo," the Ivoirian Minister of Justice and Human Rights was reported as saying before the exhumations

began. "The operation is due to last one year and is likely to pave the way for fair and transparent trials," he added.

3. New report by Human Rights Watch calls on President Ouattara to turn his rhetoric of impartial justice into reality

A recent report by New York-based advocacy group Human Rights Watch (HRW) says that the Ivoirian government has so far failed to charge any of President Ouattara's supporters over the post-electoral violence of 2011 and denounced a prevailing "victor's justice." Opposition papers, including **Le Temps (pp. 4-5)**, **Le Quotidien d'Abidjan (p. 4)** and **Notre Voie (pp. 2-3)** echoed the group's concerns about partial justice and published large excerpts of the report. According to **Notre Voie**, the 82-page report dubbed "Turning Rhetoric Into Reality: Accountability for Serious International Crimes in Cote d'Ivoire," analyzes the country's uneven efforts to hold to account those responsible for serious international crimes committed following the November 2010 presidential election. The report says that despite President Ouattara's formal commitment to bring all of those responsible to justice, regardless of political affiliation or military rank, prosecutors have so far charged only forces close to former president Gbagbo and none from his camp.

"President Ouattara's expressed support for impartial justice rings hollow without more concrete action to bring justice for victims of crimes committed by pro-government forces," Human Rights Watch official Param-Preet Singh said in the report. "If Cote d'Ivoire is going to break from its dangerous legacy in which people close to the government are beyond the reach of the law, it needs credible prosecutions of those responsible for crimes on both sides of the post-election conflict," she added, calling on Cote d'Ivoire's international partners – including the European Union, the United Nations, France, and the United States – to increase diplomatic pressure and financial support for impartial accountability.

A similar account appeared in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 6)** and **L'Inter (p. 2)** which noted that the group also calls on the International Criminal Court to probe allegations of crimes involving supporters of the current Ivoirian president.

4. Cote d'Ivoire crossed off the list of most dangerous places for journalists

According to a report in **Nord Sud Quotidien (p. 10)**, Cote d'Ivoire has been removed from the Reporters Without Borders list identifying the most dangerous places in the world for journalists. The daily noted that the announcement was made during the third annual meeting of Union of African Journalists held last month in Casablanca, Morocco.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 4, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **April 21 local elections: Religious and traditional leaders engaged in peace campaign**

2. **Ivoirian human rights group calls more for freedom of expression in Cote d'Ivoire**

1. **April 21 local elections: Religious and traditional leaders engaged in peace campaign**

The regional and municipal elections scheduled for April 21 in Cote d'Ivoire continue to feature prominently in the Ivoirian press. A front-page headline in *Fraternite Matin* says religious and traditional leaders meeting yesterday with the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) called for a peaceful vote. The report (**p. 6**) says the meeting was initiated by the electoral commission to encourage religious and traditional leaders to help create "an environment conducive to peace during the electoral process." The religious and traditional leaders also committed themselves to campaign for transparent elections, the report says.

Another report in *Fraternite Matin* (**p. 6**) on the April 21 vote says Chairman of the CEI Youssouf Bakayoko yesterday met with military commanders from the Ivoirian government, United Nations and France. The meeting, the report says, was to work out a security plan in advance of the vote. The plan, the report also notes, includes special measures to be taken in western Cote d'Ivoire in light of recent attacks in the region.

2. **Ivoirian human rights group calls for more freedom of expression in Cote d'Ivoire**

A report released by an Ivoirian human rights group is on the front page of opposition paper *Notre Voie* carrying a headline reading, "Freedom of opinion and expression: A new report slams the government." According to the paper (**p. 2**), the report, which was documented by Ivoirian League for Human Rights (LIDHO), denounces the destruction and unlawful occupation of media houses and headquarters of political parties, suspension of print news outlets close to the opposition, arrest and imprisonment of journalists and opposition supporters, assaults and threats against opposition leaders during public demonstrations and a ban on opposition meetings. The report, which covers the period from April 2011 to November 2012, also criticizes the fact that "reports of investigations into abuses and human rights violations in Cote d'Ivoire have never been published," says the paper.

A front-page report in *Le Temps* says the report also recommends the release of political prisoners.

On a different human rights issue, *Fraternite Matin* (**p. 10**) says the Ivoirian Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CI-CPI) has called for the end of impunity in Cote d'Ivoire. According to the paper, the coalition yesterday demanded Ivoirian authorities prosecute all those responsible for crimes in this country. "CI-PCI says no to amnesty," says a headline in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* (**p. 3**), while an article in *Soir Info* (**p. 3**) says the CI-PCI is demanding the International Criminal Court extend warrants to other individuals who allegedly committed crimes in Cote d'Ivoire during the political crisis of 2011.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 3, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. Ivoirian army vows to restore security in western Cote d'Ivoire

2. Disarmament of former combatants in western Cote d'Ivoire

3. Preparation for April 21 local elections underway

1. Ivoirian army vows to restore security in western Cote d'Ivoire

With a photo of Ivoirian Chief of Staff of Defense Gal Soumaila Bakayoko on its front page, **Fraternite Matin** says the military will deploy an additional 600 troops to western Cote d'Ivoire as part of efforts to restore security in the region. The front-page headline also says the Ivoirian troops to be deployed in the west will be backed by Liberian security forces. According to the paper (**p. 7**), this was announced by Mr. Gal Bakayoko during a press briefing yesterday in Abidjan after a recent series of attacks perpetrated by unidentified gunmen along the border between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. The plan to secure the western region will also include military exercises with UN and French troops, the paper quotes a top military officer as saying at the conference.

Reporting on the same subject, **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 3)** reports Mr. Gal Bakayoko as saying the Ivoirian military needs more sophisticated equipment to keep the western region safe.

2. Disarmament of former combatants in western Cote d'Ivoire

In a related story, a disarmament program launched by the Ivoirian government after the 2011 post-electoral violence also featured prominently in the press today. **Fraternite Matin (pp. 4&5)**, quotes the head of the disarmament program, Fidele Sarassoro, as saying, "No former combatants will be left out of the process."

However, a report in opposition daily **Notre Voie (p. 3)** suggests that some ex-fighters based in the western towns of Guiglo and Toulepleu have expressed concerns about the disarmament program. The article also quotes some of the fighters as saying that some of them who fled to Liberia are now afraid to return home. Another story on the same issue quotes the head of the disarmament program who announced "the repatriation" of foreign combatants.

On another security issue, **Notre Voie** carries a front-page headline claiming that President Alassane Ouattara is trying to reorganize the Dozos [*Note: traditional hunters*] in order to "keep a grip on power." The paper (**p. 2**) also alleges that the reorganization plan of the Dozos has been worked out by Minister of Interior and Security Hamed Bakayoko. A story in **Le Temps (p. 3)** describes the reorganization of the Dozos as "a sham."

In a related development, a front-page report in **Soir Info** says Kone Zakaria, an Ivoirian military officer who is also a leading member of the Dozos association, has warned Dozos not to oppose the government's plan to restructure their association.

3. Preparation for April 21 local elections underway

The April 21 local elections in Cote d'Ivoire are also a major issue in the dailies today. A report in **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 3)** says the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) will present today samples of voting ballots to the candidates. CEI spokesperson Diomande Inza is quoted as saying, "it will be difficult for anybody to rig the upcoming elections." Meanwhile a front-page story in this paper suggests that the recent attacks in western Cote d'Ivoire is likely to put the vote at risk in this part of the country.

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

April 2, 2013

Today's Top Stories

1. **April 21 local elections: Electoral commission announces new voting procedures**
2. **Government unveils special plan to increase security in western Cote d'Ivoire**
3. **Government reduces prices of gas**

1. **April 21 local elections: Electoral commission announces new voting procedures**

A front-page story in the weekend issue of *Fraternite Matin* says the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) has announced new measures regarding voting procedures ahead of the April 21 regional and municipal elections. "Without a valid voting card, one can vote if he or she has the new identity card and has his or her name on the register of voters," the paper (**p. 7**) quoted August Miremont, a member of the CEI as saying. Another measure announced by Mr. Miremont is that voters "can also vote with his or her green identity card or with his or her identity testimonial if the person has his name on the register of voters." The paper, which described this decision as "good news," said this will enable those who have lost their new identity card to exercise their right to vote.

In a related development, *Le Nouveau Reveil* (**p. 4**) publishes a statement issued by the CEI demanding candidates in the upcoming local elections abide by the electoral law and to avoid any campaigning before the official start date of April 6, 2013.

While the electoral commission is working on the April 21 polls, an article in *Notre Voie* (**p.4**) suggests the fact that the former ruling FPI is not taking part in the local elections is "a paradox." The paper blames the Ivoirian government for having maneuvered to have the "biggest" political party in Cote d'Ivoire exempted from the elections.

2. **Government unveils special plan to increase security in western Cote d'Ivoire**

The security situation in western Cote d'Ivoire is one of the main issues in the Ivoirian press today. "Security in the west: An emergency plan is underway," reads a front-page headline in *Fraternite Matin*. According to the paper (**p. 8**), this was announced by Minister of Interior and Security Hamed Bakayoko on Saturday in the western town of Bolequin. The report also mentions that the visit of Mr. Bakayoko to the region comes just a few days after gunmen carried out a series of attacks in the region.

Another report in *Fraternite Matin* (**p. 9**) says the former ruling FPI party has denied any implication in these attacks. "The FPI, which is aware the Ivoirian people cherish development and peace will never burn down Cote d'Ivoire," the paper quotes Richard Kodjo, FPI's spokesperson as saying.

L'Inter (**p. 4**) also quotes Mr. Kodjo, who blames the situation on difficulties to resolve land issues in this region. "The land issue is a bomb that will explode in the hands of Ouattara," the paper quotes the FPI's spokesperson as saying.

Meanwhile, a report in **Soir Info (p. 4)** says eleven people, including three women, were arrested in connection with the recent attacks in the west. According to the paper, the eleven suspects have been transferred to the MACA, a prison in Abidjan.

The issue of security in western Cote d'Ivoire also featured prominently in the weekend editions of the Ivoirian print outlets. "Attack in the west: UN declares war on assailants," said a front-page headline in **Nord-Sud Quotidien**. "We are committed to stabilizing the country and the people," the paper (**p. 3**) quoted the head of the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire, Bert Koenders as saying.

According to **Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 4)**, Mr. Koenders announced during a press conference on Friday that the UN mission will deploy two helicopters in a bid "to boost the mission's capacity and support the government's Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire" ahead of the April 21 local elections.

3. Government reduces prices of gas

A front-page story in **Fraternite Matin** says the government has decided to reduce the price of gas in order to help the population cope with the high cost of living in Cote d'Ivoire. According to the paper (**p. 25**), this was announced recently by Minister of Petrol, Mining and Energy Adama Toungara.

Meanwhile, a front-page report in **Notre Voie** said that the measure was more of "a curse than a blessing." According to the paper, even though the government has decided to cut down the price of gas, it could increase soon the prices of other commodities such as electricity and power.

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.