

AMERICAN EMBASSY'S NATIONAL DAILY PRESS REVIEW

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1. Updates on the security situation

Dailies continue to report on the recent violent clashes that opposed rival groups in the southern city of Sikensi. Providing an update of the situation two days after the incident, L'Inter (p. 4) noted that the atmosphere remains tense and volatile despite the presence of police and gendarmerie elements dispatched along with UN troops to monitor the situation. The incident, which took an inter-ethnic turn opposing Abidji against Malinke, left four people dead and has paralyzed activities in the city, the paper said.

In a similar account, Soir Info (p. 4) underscored that traditional hunters known as dozos, originally from the northern part of the country and who fought alongside the Republican Forces of Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) during the post-electoral crisis, are accused by local residents of being involved in the deadly incident. In a separate development, the paper (pp. 4 to 5) noted that measures have been taken by the government to monitor the situation and investigations are underway, according to a military spokesperson who called on for calm. "We are embarked on the reconciliation process and no one should take justice into their own hands," he reportedly said.

Still on the issue, an article in L'Inter (p. 4) denounced the recurrent incidents involving FRCI elements. According to the daily, these incidents are jeopardizing President Ouattara's projects and pose a threat to national cohesion and reconciliation.

This assessment is in part shared by the Ivorian civil society group Convention des Associations et Organisations Libres de la Societe Civile de Cote d'Ivoire (CLCI) according to Fraternite Matin (p. 7). Speaking yesterday in the course of a press conference, CLCI President Mr. Mamadou Diarrassouba reportedly denounced a loss of trust within the FRCI on the one hand and between the army and civilians on the other hand; hence these recurrent incidents. He called on for a national summit on the Ivorian army. "A lot needs to be done to make the FRCI a responsible and efficient army," he reportedly said. He also condemned the recent deadly clashes and stressed the need to respect the authorities.

With more on security and human rights issues, RTI reported in its 8 p.m. news bulletin on a meeting between the U.S. Embassy Defense Attaché Lieutenant-Colonel Christopher Ginther and Cote d'Ivoire's military prosecutor, Ange Kessy. The meeting was held to discuss U.S. support for Cote d'Ivoire in the security and human rights sectors, the report said. "The U.S. helped us in restoring peace and they remain concerned by the issues of human rights and the rule of law in our country... the meeting was to discuss these issues," Kessy was reported as saying.

2. A meeting between President Ouattara and FAO Director Jacques Diouf

President Alassane Ouattara met yesterday at his office with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, Mr. Jacques Diouf. Providing details, *Fraternite Matin* (p. 15) noted that the meeting between the two men was to discuss cooperation between Cote d'Ivoire and the UN agency whose mandate is to achieve food security and fight hunger. Prior to his meeting with the Ivorian leader, Mr. Diouf met with Mr. Sangafowa Coulibaly and Mr. Adjoumani Kobenan, the Ministers in charge of Agriculture and Animal Resources, respectively. According to the daily, a total of FCFA 23 billion (approximately US \$46 million) has mobilized by the FAO over the last four years to support the country.

3. Economic issues and domestic affairs

In a bid to outline 2012-2015 development perspectives, government officials recently met in Grand Bassam. The information was reported by *L'Inter* (p. 11) which noted a strategic development plan was adopted at the end of the session which was presided over by the Ivorian Minister in charge of Development, Albert Mabri Toikeusse. The plan, the paper said, is an integrated tool to serve as a guideline for the government in its development policy.

Still on domestic affairs, most dailies reported on the release of Colonel Guia Bi Poin, the former head of an elite unit known as CECOS under the Gbagbo regime. Arrested in connection with allegations of mass murders, his release, according to *Soir Info* (p. 3), followed a decision by an Abidjan court yesterday.

Finally, an article in *L'Inter* (p. 3) noted that Laurent Gbagbo's step-daughter, Marie-Antoinette Singleton, was denied a visit to her father after officials from the International Criminal Court rejected her request. The daily suggested that the decision could stem from Ms. Singleton's hard-line rhetoric against Ivorian authorities she accuses of having "ousted" the ex-leader.

Note: Opposition newspaper *Aujourd'hui* was not published today; it has been suspended by the Conseil National de la Presse, Cote d'Ivoire's print media regulator.