

National Daily Press Review April 23-30, 2012

American Embassy's National Daily Press Review

If you are using this material, please include this disclaimer.

This daily press review is compiled by the Information Section of the Public Affairs Office of the American Embassy in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. The opinions expressed in these reviews in no way reflect the views of the United States Government and are presented for informational purposes only. The accuracy of reports contained in this summary has not been confirmed by the Embassy. For questions regarding this service, please contact: Mr. Folli Teko in the Public Affairs Press Office, TekoFX@state.gov.

April 30, 2012

Today's Top Stories

-

1. Former president Gbagbo's FPI quits inter-Ivorian talks
2. U.S, Senator commends the Ivorian First Lady for her commitment against child labor
3. Malian military junta rejects ECOWAS decisions

1. Former president Gbagbo's FPI quits inter-Ivorian talks

Talks between the government and opposition parties, dubbed "the republican dialogue," were held over the weekend in the seaside town of Grand-Bassam according to reports in today's press.

***Fraternite Matin* (pp. 2-5)** underscored that the two-day session, advocated by the Ivorian Premier Jeannot Ahoussou-Kouadio, was primarily aimed at providing the framework for a permanent dialogue between the Ivorian government and the opposition. "Building democracy not only calls for government actions but also the commitment of the opposition which has its role," the paper reported Mr. Mamadou Koulibaly, former speaker of the Ivorian Parliament and president of the LIDER party as saying. According to the daily, four topics were on the agenda of the meeting which brought together government officials and Ivorian political shareholders. Discussions included the setting up of what should be a permanent platform between the government and opposition parties, the reshuffling of the Independent Electoral Commission and the release of political detainees.

Still on the issue, ***Le Patriote* (p. 2)** noted that though the FPI participated in the initial discussions, the party's representatives left before the final communiqué was released. Thus, the paper said, the FPI did not sign the final document which is seen as the roadmap for the government and opposition talks.

***Aujourd'hui* (pp. 2-6)** argued that the FPI deliberately boycotted the event. According to the daily, the FPI has thus avoided a trap set by the Ivorian government whose charm offensive aims at silencing the opposition.

In a separate development, the paper noted that the FPI held on Saturday in Abidjan what it called its third convention. On the occasion, the paper said, FPI interim president Miaka Oureto recommitted the party to supporting former president Laurent Gbagbo. "We are about to triumph and soon Gbagbo will be back home," the paper reported him as saying.

Le Temps (p. 5) carried a similar account, adding that former president Laurent Gbagbo, who is awaiting trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC), is rather optimistic and was able to watch his party's convention live.

With more on the FPI convention, **L'Inter (p. 6)** noted that five decisions came out of the event. According to the daily, the FPI leadership said priority must be given to the release of the country's former leader and officials of the party arrested in the wake of Gbagbo's April 11 arrest last year. Efforts to revitalize the party and to enhance political alliances are also among the decisions, the paper added.

2. U.S. Senator commends the Ivorian First Lady for her commitment against child labor

According to an article in **L'Inter (p. 13)** the Ivorian First Lady remains committed to the fight against child labor. Meeting over the weekend with U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, Mrs. Ouattara, the paper said, handed over to the U.S. legislator a plan of action designed to crack down on the phenomenon which has had a perverse impact on the country's cocoa production. "I want you to be our defendant at the cocoa processing firms and international partners in order to secure their support in this endeavor," Mrs. Ouattara reportedly said as she welcomed Senator Harkin. On his part, the paper said, Sen. Harkin commended Ivorian authorities for achievements made and said he looks forward to continuing to work with the Ouattara administration on the implementation of the Framework of Action to support the implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol aimed at eliminating child labor in the cocoa industry.

Still on the issue, the paper noted in a separate development that a delegation of U.S. Senators headed by Tom Harkin met with the Ivorian leader to discuss similar issues.

In a related development, **Fraternite Matin (p. 13)** noted that as part of the agenda of the U.S. Senators' visit to Cote d'Ivoire, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Tom Frieden visited a health care facility in the Abidjan neighborhood of Marcory. On the occasion, the paper said, Dr. Frieden called on Ivorian authorities to continue their efforts in the fight against the HIV AIDS epidemic and other diseases perceived as a hindrance to the country's development. He recommitted the U.S. government to continuing to support the country in addressing these challenges.

3. Malian military junta rejects ECOWAS decisions

According to a report in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 3)**, the military junta in Mali denounced decisions by the regional bloc ECOWAS on how the country's transition should go forward. In a statement made Saturday, the leader of the junta, Captain Amadou Sanogo, complained that he was not consulted on the decisions made at the ECOWAS meeting in Abidjan last week and that Mali is sticking to the accord soldiers signed with ECOWAS in early April.

April 25, 2012

Today's Top Stories

-

1. President Alassane Ouattara vows all crimes and killings will be properly probed
2. Guillaume Soro to chair the kickoff session of the National Assembly
3. Gbagbo's FPI to hold a convention as the Ivorian government initiates dialogue with opposition parties
4. Ivorian Finance Minister pleads for debt relief and investors

1. President Alassane Ouattara vows all crimes and killings will be properly probed

President Alassane Ouattara concluded Monday his maiden visit as head of state to the western regions of the country. *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 6)* noted that on the margin of this visit the Ivorian leader had an encounter with the press. In a wide-ranging interview President Ouattara recommitted the government to supporting the victims of the post-electoral crisis and vowed that those found responsible for killings during last year's unrest will be punished. "The investigations are under way to shine the light on crimes, especially those committed in this region and the rule of law will prevail," the Ivorian leader was reported as saying. According to the daily, President Ouattara also committed to addressing security and land tenure issues and said he remains upbeat about the reconciliation process.

With more on the issue, *Le Patriote (p. 5)* noted that the Ivorian leader is to be commended for meeting the challenge of visiting a region tagged as being fiercely opposed to him.

This assessment is, however, not shared by *Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 5)* which noted that the rather fast-paced visit has had no tangible impact on the lives of people living in these areas. According to the daily the Ivorian leader has again sold "puff dreams."

2. Guillaume Soro to chair the kickoff session of the National Assembly

According to a report by *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 5)*, members of the National Assembly are due to gather today in Yamoussoukro to kick off activities of the Parliament. The daily noted that the session is to be chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament, Guillaume Soro. President Ouattara and some foreign envoys are also scheduled to attend the event, the paper added.

Still on the Ivorian Parliament, *L'Inter (p. 3)* noted that an orientation session designed for the deputies and civil servants of the National Assembly is to follow today's opening session. According to the daily, this orientation, made possible thanks to the U.S. government support, primarily aims at familiarizing the new legislators with their roles and functions in a bid to allow them to fulfill their representational, law making and oversight roles and responsibilities in an effective manner. U.S. Embassy Development Counselor Glenn Slocum is to co-chair the session, the paper added.

With more on the issue, *Fraternite Matin (pp. 6-7)* questions the scope of the oversight role the National Assembly can have on government actions. According to the daily, legal provisions

theoretically allow the deputies to ensure government actions are in accordance with the Constitution and invest them with a right to oversight its actions. **Soir Info (p. 11)**, on its part, noted that among issues to be discussed at the Parliament is the land tenure problem. According to the daily amendments to the legal provisions regulating land issues are needed as the current law ratified in 1998 seems obsolete.

3. Gbagbo's FPI to hold a convention as the Ivorian government initiates dialogue with opposition parties

According to an article by **Fraternite Matin (p. 6)** former president Laurent Gbagbo's FPI party is unlikely to take part in talks dubbed "the republican dialogue" that the Ivorian government is initiating with opposition parties. The information, the paper said, has been given by the party's interim president Sylvain Miaka Oureto who said the dates set for the event conflict with a convention his party is poised to hold. Slated for April 28 and 29 in Grand Bassam, the move aims at offering a platform of exchange between the government and the opposition, the paper said, arguing that the FPI being out of the process could be real setback.

4. Ivorian Finance Minister pleads for debt relief and investors

An article in **Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 4)** informed readers that Ivorian Finance Minister Charles Diby Koffi is heading a delegation attending the IMF and the World Bank annual meetings in Washington. According to the daily, on the margin of this event Mr. Diby met with foreign partners, including officials from JP Morgan, and pleaded on the occasion for their assistance in the reconstruction of the country's economy.

APRIL 24, 2012

Today's Top Stories

-

1. President Ouattara vows judicial actions against those who committed crimes
2. Government-opposition political dialogue
3. Ivorian National Assembly to convene tomorrow
4. Primary school teachers on strike

1. President Ouattara vows judicial actions against those who committed crimes

A prominent headline in **Le Nouveau Reveil** says that President Ouattara has been "horrified" by the level of killing committed in Duekoue, a town in western Cote d'Ivoire that was hard-hit by the post-electoral violence. "No criminal will be spared," vowed President Ouattara who was speaking at a rally organized yesterday as part of his tour of the western regions. The president also pledged "to address

the land tenure problem” in the region, reports the paper (**p. 7**), while another report (**p. 8**) quotes members of the public as saying, “We’re for reconciliation.”

A front-page headline in **Fraternite Matin** says that President Ouattara, whose visit ended yesterday, also promised change through “reconciliation” and the fight against “impunity.” “All those who committed crimes will be punished,” the paper (**p. 16**) quotes President Ouattara as saying. According to the paper (**p. 18**), the visit has rekindled hope among the population. “The population of Bangolo is committed to reconciling among themselves and to rallying behind your peace and unity program,” the paper (**p. 18**) quotes the MP representing the area as saying.

Meanwhile, a banner headline in **Nord-Sud Quotidien** casts doubt about the president’s promise to settle the land tenure issue and reconcile the population in the regions. “Can Ouattara save the west?” asks a prominent headline in the paper (**p. 4**) which quotes a political analyst suggesting that “The president cannot force people to reconcile.” The commentator says that speeches will not help save the people living in the hard-hit western regions of Cote d’Ivoire, but rather “good intentions” can do so. The article also suggests that the political split is so deeply rooted in these regions that they are also confronted with the problem of insecurity. The commentator advises that to restore relative calm in this region, the authorities will have to reinforce security and review the laws on land tenure in Cote d’Ivoire. The commentator further advises that the parliamentarians who will be tasked with addressing the situation on the ground should take time to figure out the real causes of the conflict.

Reporting on the president’s visit to the western region, **Notre Voie (p. 1)** carries a banner headline saying, “Ouattara doesn’t want reconciliation as he threatens the exiles and refugees.” Another article in this paper (**p. 2**) claims that traditional hunters, widely known as Dozos, have taken the population in the west “hostage.” According to the report these traditional hunters have “invaded” the cities visited by President Ouattara during his tour.

2. Government-opposition political dialogue

A report in **Fraternite Matin (p. 4)** says that an Ivorian political leader yesterday called for “broad-based governance,” as a way to accelerate the reconciliation process underway in Cote d’Ivoire. “We encourage the Prime Minister to spare no effort in order to enable all the political forces in Cote d’Ivoire, as well as the civil society groups, to take part in the governance and the management of state affairs,” the paper quotes Innocent Anaky Kobena, leader of the MFA party as saying yesterday in Abidjan after a meeting with Prime Minister Jeannot Ahoussou Kouadio. “We need all the intelligence and the will because Cote d’Ivoire must be totally reconciled,” Anaky Kobena reportedly said.

3. Ivorian National Assembly to convene tomorrow

A report in **Le Patriote (p. 2)** says that the Speaker of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro, will officially take office today as the House is scheduled to convene its first ordinary session in the political capital Yamoussoukro. Another article in this paper (**p. 3**) elaborates on the different groups to be formed within the National Assembly and the House’s commitment to respect gender balance. According to **Fraternite Matin (p. 24)**, the MPs gathered ahead of today’s session under the chairmanship of the Speaker to renew the House’s different institutions.

4. Primary school teachers on strike

State broadcaster RT1 yesterday carried a report saying that primary schools in the district of Abidjan were closed down as a result of a two-day strike called by teachers to press for better conditions.

APRIL 23, 2012

Today's Top Stories

1. President Ouattara's first visit to the war-devastated Ivorian western regions
2. The trial of former president Laurent Gbagbo at the ICC
3. Cote d'Ivoire-U.S. relations

1. President Ouattara's first visit to the war-devastated Ivorian western regions

"I'm the president of all Ivorians," a prominent headline on the front page of **Le Nouveau Reveil** quotes President Ouattara as telling people over the weekend during his visit to the western regions of Cote d'Ivoire. Speaking at a gathering in Toulepleu, the president reportedly said (**p. 8**), "Let's not repeat any longer past disagreements and disputes in our country." Regarding the reconciliation process along with investigations into crimes committed during the post-electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire, President Ouattara said (**p. 11**): "We want to build a state of law," and "those who have committed crimes will have to appear before justice." The president also called on "all our brothers living in exile in Liberia and Ghana to return home," reports the paper (**p. 13**). "This visit will help rekindle hope and restore a lasting peace in the region," the paper (**p. 6**) quotes the mayor of Toulepleu as saying.

A prominent headline in **Fraternite Matin** says that President Ouattara's first visit to the western regions as president marks "a new beginning" for the people in these regions. "I'm here to offer an olive branch to all," the paper (**p. 15**) quotes the president as saying as he met with the populace of the region. Commenting on the rationale behind the president's tour of the regions, the paper says (**p. 17**) that the visit is to promote "peace and reconciliation." The president, the paper says, also pledged "to compensate" the victims of the recent political crisis. "Let's join hands to work together in the interest of Cote d'Ivoire," the president is reported as saying (**p. 19**). According to the paper (**p. 20**), President Ouattara also promised to settle "once and for all the problems relating to land tenure" in Cote d'Ivoire. "The previous laws did not tackle the root of the issue, I'll see to that," President Ouattara said.

President Ouattara's visit to the western regions marks "the resurrection" of Man, says a banner headline in **Le Patriote** (**p. 1**). "Let's turn the page on hatred and violence," the paper quotes the president as saying. "The population in the west has turned the page on Gbagbo," writes **Nord-Sud Quotidien** (**p. 1**). "I'm here to tell you that peace has returned to the country," the paper (**p. 4**) quotes the president as saying.

"Ouattara in the west with a suitcase full of promises," says a front-page headline in **Notre Voie**. An article in this paper (**p. 7**) suggests that President Ouattara has set conditions for the return of

Ivorian refugees to their country. According to the paper, the president, during his speech, has completely ignored the land ownership problems that the native populations in the regions are confronted with. The paper quotes the president as saying that the land problems will be "settled" without explaining how and when this will be done. Another article on the same page says that the population in Guiglo has demanded that the president disarm the traditional hunters widely known as Dozos.

2. The trial of former president Laurent Gbagbo at the ICC

L'Inter carries a front-page headline wondering whether former president Laurent Gbagbo will be set free by the International Criminal Court where he is being tried for crimes committed during the recent political violence in Cote d'Ivoire. The paper (**p. 6**) tries to link this possibility to recent statements reportedly made by Ivorian officials saying that they were suspending any transfers of people accused of crimes during the recent crisis because Cote d'Ivoire's judicial system has resumed functioning and can try those people. Through this statement, comments the paper, the authorities have succeeded in saving five other Ivorians from being taken to The Hague for trial. The commentator goes on wondering if the former president could be brought back home to be tried for crimes that he was accused of.

3. Cote d'Ivoire-U.S. relations

A report in *Nord-Sud Quotidien* (**p. 8**) says that the Ministry of Health has launched recently an HIV/AIDS hotline to enable the public - especially youth - to get information about the disease. The report also says that the project was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy and other partners.

Another report in *Le Quotidien d'Abidjan* (**p. 9**) says that the U.S. Embassy has pledged to help set up a cultural center in the northern town of Ferkessedougou. According to the paper, the pledge was made last week when a delegation from the embassy visited the town.

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.