



U.S. Embassy Abidjan Cote d'Ivoire

Daily Ivoirian Press Review Archive October 2010

This daily press review is compiled by the Information Section of the Public Affairs Office of the American Embassy in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. For questions regarding this service, please contact: Mr. Teko Folli in the Public Affairs Press Office, TekoFX@state.gov.

October 28, 2010

Today's press review focuses on the political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire and messages that the candidates are delivering during the presidential campaigns.

1. With a picture of the Ivorian Chief of Defense Staff, Gal Philippe Mangou, on its front-page, **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Prime Minister)** carries a prominent headline reading: "Nobody will run away." The paper attributes these words to the Ivorian army commander, who was speaking yesterday in a televised address, just a few days before Sunday's presidential elections. In his message, the paper says, Gal Mangou sent "a severe warning to the potential troublemakers and their silent partners," and goes on to quote him as saying: "The security forces will not allow any troublemakers to flee the country after setting it ablaze... because the borders, corridors, and the airport will then be closed and they will be forced to help the security forces put out the fire they have set." "Mangou warns the politicians," says a front-page story in **Le Nouveau Courrier (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)**, while a back-page story in **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-PDCI party)** asks "who is Mangou trying to frighten?"

2. More on the political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire ahead of the Sunday's presidential elections: a prominent report in **Soir Info (an independent daily)** says that prices of food stuffs have suddenly gone up in the capital Abidjan, as the population is trying to get in provisions ahead of Sunday's poll.

3. A front-page in **L'inter (an independent daily)** explains how the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) is preparing for Sunday's votes. According to the paper, the electoral body has already deployed voting materials in the main provinces across the country, thanks to the support of the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The article also says that the voting materials are being set up in the polling centers, but notes that the electoral commission still has a lot on its plate before Sunday's crucial elections.

4. While the presidential campaigns are still underway, a prominent story in **Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)** says incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo has already won Sunday's elections. The paper, which is reporting on a rally organized yesterday by the Ivorian leader in the southern city of Dabou, quotes the presidential candidate as telling his supporters not to vote for those he called "bogus Houphouet heirs."

5. With a picture of the opposition candidate Alassane Ouattara almost buried in a huge crowd, as he took his campaign trail yesterday to Yopougon [NOTE: a suburb believed to be President Gbagbo's political fiefdom], **Le Patriote (a daily close to the opposition RDR party)** carries a prominent headline reading: "Alassane Ouattara buries Gbagbo in Yopougon." "Let's get ready to celebrate on October 31," the paper quotes the

presidential candidate as telling his supporters, after inviting them to go and collect their ID and voter's cards.

6. Under a banner headline that says "Bedie has won the battle in Abidjan," **Le Nouveau Reveil** carries a picture of the Ivorian former president acknowledging cheers from his supporters at a mammoth rally held yesterday at the Abidjan Soccer Stadium. The paper quotes the presidential candidate as telling his supporters: "Don't let anybody steal our victory."

7. Meanwhile, the cover page of **the state-owned daily Fraternite Matin** published on www.abidjan.net warns that a wave of violence threatens Sunday's presidential elections, as gunmen yesterday shot at the helicopter of Malick Coulibaly, the campaign director of President Gbagbo, in the northern city of Korhogo. Reporting on the same issue, **Le Temps (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)** says that one of propellers of the helicopter, which was parked at an airdrome in Korhogo, was damaged by a bullet. [Note: Copies of *Fraternite Matin* were not available in the newsstand this morning. According to the management, the printing of the paper has been delayed due to a technical problem.]

October 27, 2010

The controversy over how the votes in Sunday's presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire will be counted again features prominent headlines in today's press. The dailies also report on the presidential campaign underway in this West African country, with special focus on the political atmosphere, media-related issues, the distribution of ID and voter's cards and security concerns.

1. "October 31 Presidential Elections: Manual Vote Counting to be Taken into Account," says a banner headline in **the state-owned daily *Fraternite Matin***, which attributes the statement to UN Special Envoy in Cote d'Ivoire Y. J. Choi. According to the paper, the UN boss said this yesterday after talks with former Ivorian President Henri Konan Bedie, who is also a candidate in Sunday's presidential elections. "We have reviewed the remaining tasks and talked about necessary measures for the success of the process," the paper quotes Choi as saying. According to the paper, when questioned about how the votes will be counted in Sunday's presidential elections, Choi said: "The manual votes counting will be done in each polling center. Then will follow the transmission of the electoral documents as well as the tally." The paper further quotes the UN boss as saying: "The UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) will transport voting reports and the electronic transmission will be done through the existing means put in place by the Independent Electoral Commission."

2. A report in Le ***Nouveau Reveil*** (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party) informs readers that following the meeting between Bedie and Choi, the opposition coalition, RHDP, published a statement saying that "the transmission of the electoral results will be done physically;" while a prominent headline in ***L'Expression*** (a daily close to the opposition) says that Bedie and Alassane Ouattara, the leader of the opposition RDR party, have rejected the electronic vote counting. ***Nord-Sud Quotidien*** (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister), which also publishes the statement issued by the RHDP, quotes excerpts of the document saying: "The RHDP takes account of the Prime Minister's decision." Another report in this paper says that, with just three days before the presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire, the committee of independent experts set up by Prime Minister Guillaume Soro and tasked with addressing the issue regarding the votes counting is working round the clock. According to the paper, SILS Technology, a local information technology company, and the Swedish information technology company Crypto AG, tasked to work together, are testing the computer programs to be used in Sunday's presidential elections.

3. The presidential elections, especially the distribution of the ID and the voter's cards, were high on the agenda yesterday in Ouagadougou during a meeting between Prime Minister Guillaume Soro and Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore, reports ***Fraternite Matin***. "Preparations are going on smoothly. The ID and voter's cards are satisfactorily distributed; we've exceeded 90 percent of the cards' distribution in Abidjan and 80 per cent in the countryside," the paper quotes Soro as saying after talks with Compaore, the facilitator in the Ivorian peace process. On the presidential campaigning, Soro, the paper says, congratulated the candidates for "their disciplined and civilized

campaign” and encouraged them “to keep the good message.” Another report in ***Fraternite Matin*** informs readers that the distribution of the ID and voter’s cards will close on October 29 in the district of Abidjan.

4. On the media coverage of the campaign, a front-page story in ***Nord-Sud Quotidien*** announces that Bedie has cancelled the 90-minute televised “Face the Voters” program that will feature him today on the state-run RTI-TV. Another prominent headline in ***Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** reads: “Bedie to shun the 90-minute TV show,” while a banner headline in ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** says “Bedie to boycott the RTI-TV program.” The paper further explains that the decision by the opposition leader not to participate in the program stems from the decision of the CNCA – a state-run media regulating GOCI’s radio – to censor a pre-recorded program of the PDCI-RDA’s presidential candidate that was broadcast yesterday by the state broadcaster.

5. In another development, a prominent story in ***L’inter (an independent daily)*** says that militiamen based in the western provinces of Cote d’Ivoire have threatened to block the electoral process. According to the paper, the militiamen yesterday prevented presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara from holding a rally in the city of Guiglo. The report also says that the militiamen have banned any political rallies planned to take place in the region until the government responds to their grievances. The paper quotes a leader of the militiamen disapproving of the government’s decision to integrate elements of the New Forces – the former rebel movement – into the new Ivorian army while the militiamen have not been taken into account.

October 26, 2010

Prominent reports in Tuesday's Ivorian press say that two candidates in the October 31 presidential elections have rejected the Ivorian Prime Minister's proposal to computerize ballots counting after the vote. The dailies also report on the latest developments in the presidential campaign and the recent visit of the Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to Cote d'Ivoire.

1. A prominent story in **the state-owned daily *Fraternite Matin*** says that two presidential candidates – Henri Konan Bedie and Francis Wodie – have disagreed with Prime Minister Soro Guillaume over the computer ballots counting in the October 31 presidential elections. "The Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) should maintain the manual ballots counting," the paper quotes the Ivorian former President Henri Konan Bedie as saying at a political rally yesterday in Abidjan. Bedie, leader of the opposition PDCI-RDA party and candidate in the coming presidential elections, reportedly said: "The FPI [the party of President Laurent Gbagbo] has taken hostage the elections. It has fabricated a computer program to siphon the results of its rivals in order to declare itself winner after the first round of the presidential elections. We cannot accept that. The CEI should maintain the manual ballots counting."

2. Another report in ***Fraternite Matin*** quotes Francis Wodie, the leader of the opposition PIT party, as saying: "I disagree with the electronic ballots counting." According to the paper, the presidential candidate was reacting to the Prime Minister's decision to task the SILS-Technology – a computer company – with counting the ballots in collaboration with a Switzerland company. The paper further quotes Wodie as saying that "logically, this company [SILS-Technology] has nothing to do with the election. This is only the business of the Independent Electoral Commission." In a related development, ***Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)*** carries a prominent headline reading: "Bedie Turns Down Don Mello's SILS." In another article, the paper questions the credibility of the SILS Company, and goes on to wonder whether "the Ivorian Prime Minister can guarantee the neutrality of the company."

3. "NO to SILS, yes to manual ballots counting," writes ***Le Patriote (a daily close to the opposition RDR party)***. According to the paper, the opposition coalition, RHDP, is set to meet today to come out with a common position on this issue. The paper also carries a public statement issued Monday by the electoral commission saying that the body "takes act of the strong recommendation made by the Government and accepts the electronic transmission of the results;" and reaffirms that "the electoral commission is the sole institution vested with power to announce the provisional results of the presidential elections."

4. A report in ***Fraternite Matin*** says the head of the European Union elections observers' team yesterday called on the electoral commission to respect the transparency and the traceability of the electoral results in the coming presidential elections. According to the report, the EU also announced the deployment of some 62 elections observers, who will join some other 32 EU elections observers who have been

deployed across the country since last week. Meanwhile, the diplomatic corps has noted “positive progress” in the peace process underway in Cote d’Ivoire, says another article in ***Fraternite Matin***. The paper quotes a statement issued yesterday by the diplomatic corps which “exhorts the presidential candidates to do their political campaign by abiding to the virtues of civility in order to ensuring that the elections take place in a peaceful atmosphere.”

5. Reporting on the recent visit of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to Cote d’Ivoire, ***Fraternite Matin*** carries a banner headline reading: “We’ve the obligation to be beside you.” The paper attributes this statement to President Johnson Sirleaf, who was speaking Sunday at a diner offered by President Gbagbo.

6. Meanwhile, ***L’inter (an independent daily)*** carries on its front page pictures of the incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo and his rival Henri Konan Bedie with a headline reading: “The campaign is turning violent.” According to the paper, 14 people were injured following a clash that opposed supporters of the two candidates in the eastern city of Niable. Another report in this paper says supporters of the opposition RDR party yesterday attacked the campaign trail of Stephane Kipre, leader of the UNG party close to the ruling FPI party.

7. Finally, on media coverage of the presidential campaign, a report in ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** says that the opposition PDCI RDA party has denounced what it calls “the masquerade” of the CNCA – a state-run media regulating GOCI’s radio and television stations’ coverage of elections. The paper publishes a statement issued by the party of Mr. Bedie accusing the CNCA for editing a pre-recorded program of the PDCI-RDA’s presidential candidate. The paper also hints that the presidential candidate could reconsider his participation in the 90-minute televised “Face the Voters” program, in which journalists question a candidate.

October 25, 2010

Reports in Monday's and weekend's Ivorian press are mainly dominated by the government's decision to resolve the controversy on how to count the ballots during the October 31 presidential elections. The ongoing presidential campaign as well as the political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire in the run-up to the presidential elections; the visit of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to Cote d'Ivoire and a Human Rights Watch's report saying that banditry, violence, and rape have become widespread in Cote d'Ivoire's western regions, are the major issues in the press.

1. A front-page story in Monday's issue of ***the state-owned daily Fraternite Matin*** says Ivorian Prime Minister Guillaume Soro has called back to duty SILS-Technology, a private company that was hired by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) to count the ballots in the coming presidential elections. The paper publishes a statement issued Sunday by the office of the Prime Minister saying that after the CEI's decision to count manually the ballots, "Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, in an attempt to pre-empt any conflict and to find a compromise, has strongly recommended the creation of an independent panel." The statement also said that "the panel, which is composed of experts drawn from the cabinet of the Prime Minister, CEI, office of the mediator [*in the Ivorian peace process*], a Switzerland company called Crypto AG and observers from the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), will in collaboration with SILS-Technology proceed, in a transparent manner, to the transmission of secured presidential election results and guarantee their credibility." "The Prime Minister wishes to inform the Ivorian populations that this panel will carry out its duties without flouting any other measures that have been taken by the CEI, the only institution responsible for the announcement of the provisional results of the presidential elections," the statement also said.

2. Another report in today's edition of ***Fraternite Matin*** says the Prime Minister held talks with the Chairman of the electoral commission, Youssouf Bakayoko and the UN Special Envoy to Cote d'Ivoire, Y. J. Choi. According to the paper, the electoral commissioner, who was speaking after the meeting said: "We have reaffirmed with the Prime Minister that the elections must take place on October 31," adding "to attain this objective, we thought that it was important to reconcile positions taking into account different points of view and to help create an atmosphere conducive for peaceful elections."

3. The Prime Minister's decision regarding the vote counting in the coming elections was also the subject of a front-page story in ***Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)*** which denounces some "incoherence" in a decision that it says is likely "to undermine" the functioning of the electoral commission. The paper further voices concerns about the decision to restore the electronic counting of the ballots, after the electoral body opted for a manual one, adding that this could create "a dangerous precedent and subsequently weaken the electoral commission." ***Le Patriote (a daily close to the opposition RDR party)*** does not comment on the issue, while a prominent headline in ***Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** reads:

“Results of the Presidential Elections: Soro Rejects the Manual Counting.”

4. With more on the debate on how the ballots should be counted, **L’inter (an independent daily)** suggests that the manual counting of the votes could be “dangerous.” The danger, the paper claims, is that in the wake of the October 31 presidential elections, there is a possibility to have three or more self-proclaimed presidents, since each candidate will be using his/her own means to count the ballots; and this could lead to violence. The paper recall what it calls the 2000 scenario and indicates that the three major parties – FPI, RDR and PDCI-RDA – in this year’s election could decide not to wait for the electoral commission before proclaiming their candidates the winner of the competition.

5. With a prominent picture of opposition leader Innocent Anaky Kobena on its front page, **Le Jour Plus (a daily close to the opposition)** carries a headline quoting the opposition leader as saying: “The RHDP will fight if Gbagbo tries to use force to keep power.” Another report in this paper says that the Ivorian Student Federation – FESCI yesterday prevented the opposition PDCI-RDA party to organize a meeting in Abidjan. Earlier over the weekend, **Le Jour Plus** reported that former militiamen are committing acts of violence in Cote d’Ivoire’s western regions; a situation, which according to the paper could threaten the presidential elections.

6. A front-page report in **Soir Info (an independent daily)** says the headquarters of the ruling FPI party was ransacked in the northern city of Katiola following a dispute that opposed supporters of this party and those of the opposition RDR party. According to the paper, the two sides were fighting after they accused each other of destroying their candidates’ posters.

7. “The election must be transparent,” **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the cabinet of the Prime Minister)** quotes US Ambassador Phillip Carter III as saying Friday in Abidjan after a meeting with the Prime Minister on the ongoing electoral process. “The United States thinks that these elections are very important and the process must be clear and transparent to enable Cote d’Ivoire to forge ahead,” Ambassador Carter III reportedly said.

8. “There should be elections in Cote d’Ivoire like elsewhere in the world,” **Le Nouveau Reveil** quotes French President Nicolas Sarkozy as saying during the Francophonie Summit in Switzerland over the weekend. According to the paper, the French president also commended the Francophonie for “its commitment in resolving the political crisis and sending observers for the elections.”

9. On Liberian-Ivorian bilateral issues, a back-page story in **Fraternite Matin** says Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf held talks with her Ivorian counterpart yesterday in Abidjan. According to the paper, President Johnson Sirleaf, who was in Abidjan for a 24-hour official visit, came to show support to the people of Cote d’Ivoire in the run-up to the presidential elections.

10. Finally, a report in ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** says that Human Rights Watch has slammed the Ivorian government for human rights violation committed in the western regions of the country. According to the paper, the report titled: "Afraid and Forgotten: Lawlessness, Rape, and Impunity in Western Cote d'Ivoire," also says that banditry, violence, and rape are widespread in the provinces.

October 22, 2010

The ruling by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) yesterday that the ballots of the October 31 presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire should be counted manually and not electronically has generated mixed reactions in pro and anti-government newspapers. Reports on the latest developments and the atmosphere in this country in the run-up to the vote are also the subjects of front-page stories in the press.

1. **The state-owned daily *Fraternite Matin*** published a public statement issued yesterday by the Independent Electoral Commission ruling that "the transmission and announcement of the electoral results from the polling stations to the commission's headquarters will be carried out physically by designated supervisors to be deployed across the country." The statement also said that "the law allows the commission a three-day deadline to announce provisional results that will be proclaimed by its chairman who will be assisted by members of the central commission." "The commission is committed to ensuring that, with the backing of its partners, all the results will be announced within the deadline," the statement said.

2. In a related-development, ***Fraternite Matin*** quotes the spokesperson of the electoral commission who explained that "the transmission of the results to Abidjan is the responsibility of the electoral commission." According to the paper, Bamba Yacouba, who was speaking yesterday at a press briefing in Abidjan, said that "no other technological means will be used and that the electoral commission will carry out a manual counting of the ballots in every sub-prefectoral, communal, departmental and regional area before the transmission of the results to Abidjan where the head of the electoral commission will announce them." In a separate article, the paper informed readers that the difference between opposing members of the electoral commission over who should count the ballots in the coming presidential elections is now closed as the electoral commission has rejected the computer-assisted-vote-counting proposed by SILS – a private company that was previously hired to do the job. The paper went on to explain that the controversy arose from what some members sitting on the electoral commission saw as a conflict of interest on the grounds that SILS is affiliated to BNETD – a state-run company whose MD Ahoua Don Mello is believed to be close to the incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo.

3. In the wake of the electoral commission's decision to proceed by manual vote-counting, a prominent story in ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily)*** says that the head of the electoral commission, Youssouf Bamba, saved his seat as the crisis over who should count the ballots was resolved yesterday. Reporting on the same issue, ***Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** accuses the opposition coalition RHDP for rebuking the electronic vote-counting proposed by the SILS; while ***Le Nouveau Courrier (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** suggests that the opposition coalition is preparing the ground for electoral disputes. Citing sources close to the electoral commission, the paper further hints that the motive behind the controversy over who should count the ballot was not political but rather has to do with money-generating benefits. "The SILS Dossier Buried," writes ***Le Patriote (a daily close to***

the opposition RDR party), which indicates that the decision was taken by the majority of the electoral commissioners. **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA)** welcomes the electoral commission's decision and calls it "a second victory for the opposition;" but is quick to wonder about the plan to be put in place by the electoral commission to quickly transmit the results from 20,000 polling stations to its headquarters in Abidjan.

4. Meanwhile, **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)** warns about the manual counting of the ballots in the coming elections; adding that this could lead to a political crisis. The paper suggests that while Ivorians will be waiting three days to know who is elected, each candidate may proclaim him/herself president.

5. In a related development, a prominent story in **L'inter (an independent daily)** suggests that the electoral commission is engulfed in a political crisis following the dispute over the ballot counting in the coming elections. It goes on to predict that plans to hold the presidential elections on October 31 hang in the balance. However, the paper hints that Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, the general overseer of the electoral process, won't allow things to get out of hand; and quotes his spokesperson, Alain Lobognon, as saying: "The electoral commission can do anything it wants; but what we want is that its internal crisis should not jeopardize holding the presidential elections on October 31."

6. Another report in **L'inter** also says that the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) yesterday called on the electoral commission to ensure that "the results of the elections conform to democratic standards." According to the paper, this statement was made during a press conference by the UNOCI's spokesperson, Hamadoun Toure.

October 21, 2010

Reports in today's Ivorian press again feature prominently the ongoing presidential campaign and the political atmosphere in the country in the run-up to the October 31 presidential elections. Reports that members of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), the body in charge of organizing the October 31 presidential elections, are divided over who should collect and count the ballots in the coming vote, also lead. Calls from Ivorian religious leaders and the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Courts for peaceful elections in Cote d'Ivoire are the other major issues in the press today.

1. Under a prominent headline that says "tension is growing" ahead of the Ivorian presidential elections, ***Soir Info (an independent daily)*** says that with ten days into the October 31 presidential elections, tension is growing in Abidjan as well as other towns across the country. The article also suggests that the campaign of the country's principal political parties including the ruling FPI party and the opposition PDCI-RDA and RDR led by former President Henri Konan Bedie and Alassane Ouattara respectively is progressively sliding into violence; as supporters of each side are destroying posters of the rivals. The paper mentions an instance where students believed to be close to one of these candidates briefly detained another one; the paper also recalls that the office of the opposition RDR party came under gunfire in the eastern city of Abengourou; and adds that the three political parties are preparing the mood for violence. The paper goes on to speculate that the FPI's strategy consists of "terrorizing" supporters of the PDCI-RDA and RDR to deter them to go the polls on October 31; while the two opposition parties are also preparing to react accordingly to any intimidation to be suffered by the supporters.

2. Another prominent story in ***Soir Info*** quotes US Ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire Phillip Carter III as saying "Washington is watching closely the elections in Cote d'Ivoire." The US diplomat, the article says, was speaking Tuesday in Abidjan after talks with the head of the electoral commission, the body charged with organizing the October 31 vote. According to the report, Ambassador Carter III was accompanying the Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Mary Beth Leonard, who was in Cote d'Ivoire to push for free and fair elections.

3. Another prominent story in ***Le Courrier d'Abidjan (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** however echoes what it calls "trouble" on the way to the polls in Cote d'Ivoire. The paper carries a picture of the Chairman of the ruling FPI party, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, and quotes him accusing the opposition RDR party of "provocation" and warning that such acts of provocation could lead to "violence"; and hence compromise plans to hold peaceful elections in Cote d'Ivoire. The report further quotes Affi N'Guessan alleging that "political meetings organized by his party in areas like Abidjan, Korhogo and Danane were disrupted; while in the zones formerly under the control of the New Forces – former Ivorian rebel movement – ex-combatants refuse to close down pirate radio stations which are doing propaganda for the RDR candidate." "The RDR is actually simulating attacks against its own offices as a pretext to perturb the electoral campaigning," the paper quotes Affi N'Guessan as saying.

4. In a separate article however, **Le Courrier d'Abidjan** quotes Ouattara's spokesperson Anna Oulotto who denounced "a manipulation" on the part of the ruling party "to confiscate power." Oulotto, the article says further described Affi N'Guessan's accusations as "baseless and untrue."

5. A prominent story in **Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)** quotes Affi N'Guessan pressing the government to call out of the army in order to ensure that security prevails during the elections in Cote d'Ivoire. "It's extremely urgent to call out of the army to maintain order alongside the Center of the Integrated Command in order to guarantee that the elections are secured and peaceful," the paper quotes the Chairman of the ruling FPI party as saying.

6. Meanwhile a front-page story in **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)** quotes an Ivorian Catholic cleric calling for peace as the country is preparing for the presidential elections. "Nobody will gain if the country slides into mayhem," the paper quotes Arch-Bishop Jean-Pierre Kutwa as saying during a meeting organized yesterday by an Ivorian inter-faith group. In a related development, a report in **the state-owned daily Fraternite Matin** says that the Vatican Envoy in Abidjan yesterday called on the electoral commission to exercise neutrality in the discharge of its duties in order to ensure that coming elections are free, fair and transparent. With more on the role of the religious leaders in the coming elections, **L'inter (an independent daily)** announces that leaders from different religious organizations will organize a non-denominational session on Saturday to pray for peace during the electoral process.

7. As Ivorians are preparing for a crucial presidential election, **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)** says the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Courts, Luis Moreno-Ocampo recently warned Ivorian political leaders about any crimes that would be committed in connection with the October 31 presidential elections; and invited them to learn from what happened in Kenya.

8. The controversy over who should count the ballots after the October 31 presidential elections is the subject of a prominent story in **Fraternite Matin**, which expressed concerns about suspicions leveled against the private company that is tasked with doing the job. According to the paper, some members of the electoral commission questioned the credibility of the company on the grounds that it is affiliated to BNETD – a state-own company. The paper further says that the electoral commission has set a panel to look into the matter in order to propose solutions; but warns that the dispute over the body that should tally the ballots could jeopardize the electoral process.

October 20, 2010

The fever of the political campaign again features prominently in today's top stories in the Ivorian press. Reports that members of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), the body in charge of organizing the October 31 presidential elections, are divided over who should collect and count the ballots in the coming vote, lead. The distribution of the ID and voting cards and the meeting between the visiting Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Mary Beth Leonard, with Ivorian political stakeholders ahead the presidential elections are also major issues in the press today.

1. With a picture of the Chairman of the electoral commission, Bakayoko Youssouf, on its front front-page, **Le Jour Plus (a daily close to the opposition)** says that a contract signed by the former electoral commissioner tasking a private company with tallying ballots after the October 31 presidential elections generated uproars amongst members of the electoral commission. According to the article, some members of the electoral body believe that entrusting this task to a company whose Managing Director happens to be a member of the opposition PDCI-RDA party could lead to "fraud" when it comes to counting the ballots. The report also says this suspicion was quickly rebuked by other members of the electoral body on the grounds that each party contesting the presidential elections will have a representative in the polling stations. The report further says the boss of the electoral commission has set up a panel tasked with resolving the difference. The paper goes on to comment that this controversy, which appears just a few days to the much-awaited presidential elections, could be seen as what it calls "a conspiracy crafted by the enemies of peace."

2. Under a prominent headline that says "Maneuvers to Delay the October 31 Presidential Elections," **L'inter (an independent daily)** suggests that the head of the electoral body could be the main target. The paper suspects a ploy/diversionary tactics designed to discredit and paralyze the electoral body. "What hell is going on at the electoral commission?" asks **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)**; while another prominent article in **Le Patriote (a daily close to the opposition RDR party)** suggests that "the electoral body is on the verge to collapse." "Who wants to destabilize again the electoral commission?" says a banner headline that runs across **L'Expression (a daily close to the opposition)** which denounces what it sees as "an artificial palaver" designed to halt the electoral process.

3. Commenting on the same issue, **Soir Info (an independent daily)** suggests that the announcement of the results of the coming presidential elections will constitute a turning-point in the ongoing Ivorian electoral process. The paper goes on to explain that the electoral procedure demands that results should be announced publicly at each polling station before voting documents are transmitted to the electoral commission.

4. "Washington is following closely the elections in Cote d'Ivoire," a report in **Le Patriote** quotes Ambassador Phillip Carter III as saying yesterday in Abidjan after a meeting with the electoral commissioner. According to the report, the US diplomat was accompanying the Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State,

Mary Beth Leonard, who is in Cote d'Ivoire in connection with the October 31 presidential elections. The report also quotes Ambassador Carter III who is convinced that "the Ivorians have the necessary capability to organize transparent, free and fair elections." ***L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily)*** and ***Le Nouveau Courrier (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** also report on the meeting between the USG's delegation and the electoral commissioner.

5. On another development, a prominent story in ***Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)*** focuses on the role of the security forces in the political campaign underway in the country. "It's forbidden for the Defense and Security Forces to take part in the electoral campaigning," the paper quotes Prof Ouraga Obou, an expert in Constitutional Law and Political Sciences as saying in an interview. Prof Obou, who referred to the Article 30 of the Ivorian Electoral Code, however stated that "the Defense and Security Forces have the right to vote."

6. On the situation on the ground, a report in ***Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** says that supporters of the opposition RDR party attacked the campaign trail of one of President Gbagbo's campaign directors, Mrs Marie-Odette Lorougnon in Attecoube in the District of Abidjan. Another report in this paper says that the Sunnite Muslim Community in Cote d'Ivoire is embarked on a campaign for peaceful presidential elections. A prominent story in ***Soir Info*** also says that the office of the opposition RDR party in the eastern town of Abengourou was attacked yesterday by unidentified gunmen.

7. A report in ***the state-owned daily Fraternite Matin*** says that the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) is training some elements of the Center of the Integrated Command – the joint Government and New Forces security unit tasked with manning security during the electoral process. According to the paper, the 3-day capacity building training is taking place in the northern city of Seguela and is sponsored by the UN Police (UNPOL) in partnership with the European Union.

8. Regarding the distribution of the ID and voting cards, a front-page story in ***Fraternite Matin*** says the Ivorian authorities have put in place a bureau to counter rumors and to receive complaints from individuals who report that their cards have been snatched by people believed to be security forces. With more on the distribution of the ID and voting cards, the paper publishes a statement issued yesterday by the Cabinet of the Prime Minister announcing that the exercise will close on October 23 in the district of Abidjan, October 27 in up country and October 29 abroad.

October 19, 2010

A political alliance signed Monday by the four major Ivorian opposition leaders ahead of the October 31 presidential elections is the dominant issue in today's press. The dailies also report on the latest developments and the general atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire, as presidential candidates are on campaign trail across the country as well as a meeting yesterday between the Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Mary Beth Leonard, and the head of the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire.

1. With a picture of Cote d'Ivoire's principal opposition leaders singing in unison on its front page, **the state-owned daily *Fraternite Matin*** informs readers that the four members of the Rally of the Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) – an opposition alliance – yesterday signed in Yamoussoukro a deal aimed at “restoring the foundations of the Republic and fostering economic revival” in Cote d'Ivoire. The document, the report says, further seeks among other things, “the establishment of good governance, a sound public service and the institution of a compulsory national service.” According to the paper, the manifesto, which was signed by former Ivorian President Henri Konan Bedie, former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara, as well as Innocent Anaky Kobena and Albert Mabri Toikeusse, respectively leaders of the MFA and UDPCI opposition parties, is grounded in values promoted by the founder of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, the late Felix Houphouet Boigny. Speaking after the signing of the agreement, the leader of the opposition Rally of the Republicans (RDR), Alassane Ouattara, was reportedly full of optimism that “the RHDP is poised to win the elections,” adding: “The single party, which will rule Cote d'Ivoire, is on the offing.”

2. “The RHDP Sealed Gbagbo's Fate in Yamoussoukro,” says another prominent story in ***Le Jour Plus (a daily close to the opposition)***. The deal is also the subject of a prominent story in ***Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)*** which carries a banner headline reading: “RHDP Vowed to Kick Gbagbo out of Power.” The paper quotes Mr. Bedie, who described the political deal as “a far-reaching political act.”

3. “I won't be defeated,” ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** quotes incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo as saying. According to the paper, the Ivorian leader said this in an interview with the *French weekly newspaper Jeune Afrique*. It further says that President Gbagbo, who spoke with optimism about his victory in the coming presidential, was however quick to tone down his ambition saying “when it comes to elections, the zero risk does not exist.”

4. On the situation on the ground, a front-page story in ***Fraternite Matin*** quotes the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) as saying that the presidential campaign underway in this country is running smoothly. Excerpts of a UNOCI's statement published by the paper said: “The beginning of the campaigning is taking place in a calm and peaceful atmosphere in accordance with democratic rules.” The statement also indicates that the UN Special Envoy, Y. J. Choi met yesterday with the Head of the Independent Electoral

Commission (CEI), Youssouf Bakayoko “to evaluate the electoral process and to coordinate actions in order to resolve logistics problems.”

5. On the USG’s support in the coming presidential elections, a report in ***Le Jour Plus (a daily close to the opposition party)*** says that the head of the UN mission in Cote d’Ivoire held talks yesterday with the Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Mary Beth Leonard. Regarding preparations underway in the run-up to the presidential elections, the paper quotes the US diplomat as saying: “We hope and are confident that the Ivorian people, the political stakeholders and all those who are involved in the preparations will work for the good organization of the vote.”

6. In a related development, a report in ***Fraternite Matin*** says that the electoral commission has tasked NGOs and other members of the civil society with leading an awareness campaign aimed at encouraging the populations to get their ID and voting cards and to show a sense of civility during the electoral process. The NGOs and the civic groups will also have to use posters provided by the electoral body to sensitize the populations on how to help create an atmosphere conducive for a peace during the coming elections. “We can succeed in conducting a violence-free election,” the paper further quotes Ivorian Prime Minister Guillaume Soro as saying.

7. Meanwhile, a front-page story in ***L’Intelligent d’Abidjan (an independent daily)*** says that the campaign trail of Ivorian opposition leader Alassane Ouattara was attacked yesterday by unidentified men. According to the paper, one gendarme and a journalist were injured as a result of the incident. With more on the atmosphere prevailing during the electoral process, a report in ***Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** quotes Ivorian youth leader Charles Ble Goude, who warned against “provocation.” Ble Goude, who is also Gbagbo’s campaign director for the youths reportedly, accused opposition activists for “destroying Gbagbo’s posters.” Ble Goude however called on his supporters “not to respond to the provocation,” and urged the Ivorian Prime Minister to create “conditions for a peaceful election.”

8. Finally, a front-page story in ***Soir Info (an independent daily)*** says that members of the electoral commission, the body tasked with organizing the October 31 presidential elections, are divided over who should collect and count electoral results. According to the paper, some members of the body – including its chairman – have decided to entrust this task to a private company while others insisted that the electoral commission should remain the only institution responsible for the collect, counting and announcement of the provisional results of the coming elections.

October 18, 2010

A discussion between the US Ambassador in Cote d'Ivoire, Phillip Carter III and Ivorian journalists on the electoral process underway in Cote d'Ivoire is one of the major issues in today's Ivorian press. The dailies also look at the political atmosphere, as the campaigns for the October 31 presidential elections are underway. The role of the religious leaders in the coming elections, the distribution of the ID and voting cards and the decision by the UN to extend for another six months sanction on Cote d'Ivoire are the major issues.

1. Under a front-page headline that says "October 31, the confidence of the US Ambassador," ***L'inter (an independent daily)*** informs readers that the importance of holding democratic elections in Cote d'Ivoire was the subject of a discussion between a section of Ivorian journalists and Ambassador Carter III over the weekend. Ambassador Carter, the paper says, used the occasion to state that the October 31 presidential elections constitute "a chance for Ivorians to turn the page, to forge ahead for new perspectives and especially to help Cote d'Ivoire to join the club of democratic States in Africa." The report further says Ambassador Carter III, who was flanked by the visiting Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Mary Beth Leonard, expressed "optimism" in view of the ongoing political campaigns and the willingness of the different political actors and the civil society to organize peaceful elections. "Everybody is aware that the conduct of these elections is important for the future of Cote d'Ivoire," the paper quotes Ambassador Carter III as saying. A position, which the paper says, was shared by the Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. On the involvement of the USG in the coming elections, the paper quotes Ambassador Carter III who announced that US election observers will be deployed throughout the country.

2. "If everybody wants peaceful elections, you'll have them," ***the state-owned daily Fraternite Matin*** quotes Ambassador Carter III as saying during his discussion with the press on Saturday. The paper quotes excerpts of a statement issued by the US Embassy on Saturday saying: "The United States supports the people of Cote d'Ivoire's aspirations for renewed democracy, and we share your eagerness for elections that will help move the country beyond political stalemate to lasting unity." The report also says the USG is convinced that "credible elections are key to resolving the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire and are central to political reconciliation." On bilateral issues, the paper quotes both Ambassador Carter III and Mrs Mary Beth Leonard who announced that "democratic elections in Cote d'Ivoire are the pre-conditions for the country's eligibility for AGOA." The paper also reports that despite the risk that could result from the ongoing electoral process, the two US diplomats expressed their "confidence" as to the smooth conduct of the elections. "The government has the means to provide security during the elections," the paper quotes Ambassador Carter III, who further said about the issue of security during the October 31 vote that "it's not a question of security forces; but a question of mentality and leadership...."

3. Under a banner headline that says “the elections in Cote d’Ivoire are important for Africa,” **Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)** attributes this statement to Ambassador Carter III, who was speaking Saturday in Abidjan during a discussion with Ivorian journalists. “These elections could serve as an example for all the African countries,” the paper quotes Ambassador Carter III as saying. “The US does not support any candidate,” **Le Nouveau Courrier (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)** quotes Ambassador Carter III as saying, while a report in **Le Jour Plus, a pro-opposition daily**, quotes the American diplomat as saying: “The government is capable of ensuring security for all if it wants.” **Le Patriote (a daily close to the opposition RDR party)** publishes the full text of the statement issued by the US Embassy on Saturday with a headline reading “The US for fair and peaceful elections.” Other dailies including **the independent Soir Info, L’Expression (a daily close to the opposition), Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister), RTI-Radio Cote d’Ivoire (the state-owned Broadcasting Corporation) and www.djibitv.com, an online privately-owned TV**, report on the discussion between Ambassador Carter III, the visiting Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State and the press over the weekend, highlighting the calls from the two diplomats for free and transparent elections.

4. In a related development, **Le Patriote** reports that the Obama Administration has sent a top official to Cote d’Ivoire in connection with the October 31 elections. According to the paper, the Director for West African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, Mary Beth Leonard, who is currently in the country, held talks Saturday with Alassane Ouattara, the leader of the opposition RDR party, and also a candidate in the coming presidential elections. The report quotes Ambassador Carter III, who was accompanying the Director for West African Affairs, as saying that “she is tasked with supervising and ensuring the transparency of the elections.”

5. On the situation on the ground, pro and anti-government dailies today devote large columns reporting on the presidential campaigns. **Notre Voie** carries a picture of the incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo addressing a mammoth rally in the central region of Cote d’Ivoire where he promised to set up a body to fight against corruption. A prominent report in **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)** quotes former Ivorian President Henri Konan Bedie who told supporters that “I have the blessing of Houphouet,” ahead of his rally set to be held today in Yamoussoukro, the Ivorian political capital. **Le Patriote** devotes its front page comparing President Gbagbo and Ivorian opposition leader Alassane Ouattara, calling them respectively the problems and the solutions of Cote d’Ivoire.

6. In a related development, a report in **L’inter** quotes Vatican Envoy in Cote d’Ivoire Ambroise Madtha who urged Ivorians “to only accept results from the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI).” A report in **Fraternite Matin** also quotes the Vatican Envoy who called on the Ivorian political stakeholders “to work for a peaceful atmosphere” during the electoral process. The Catholic Cleric said this over the weekend during a meeting with independent candidates contesting the coming elections, reports the paper. **Fraternite Matin**, which also reports on a press conference addressed by

Monsignor Paul Ahouanan, says that the Ivorian cleric expressed concerns about mistakes on some ID cards and voting cards. Reporting on the same event, **L'Expression** says that Monsignor Ahouanan also expressed concerns "the circulation of arms in the entire country," at the time when Cote d'Ivoire is preparing for presidential elections.

7. Regarding the distribution of the ID and voting cards, **L'Expression** reports that the exercise will close at the end of this week in the district of Abidjan to enable to be extended to the other parts of the country. The paper attributed the information to the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister, Koffi Koffi Paul. With more on the distribution of the ID and voting cards, a report in **Fraternite Matin** quotes the deputy head of the CEI as saying on Friday that so far nearly 52 percent of the cards have been distributed in the district of Abidjan.

8. The UNSC's decision to extend for another six months financial and travel sanctions on Cote d'Ivoire was the subject of front-page stories in the weekend's issues of many Ivorian dailies. "UN Embargo on Arms Alleviated," said a front-page story in **Fraternite Matin**. According to the paper, in a unanimously adopted resolution, the 15-member body said it would review the measures no later than three months after the organized of the October 31 presidential elections.

9. Another report in the weekend's issue of **Fraternite Matin** said the European Union has deployed some 120 election observers throughout the country ahead of the October 31 presidential elections.

October 15, 2010

The electoral process was again in the limelight of today's national press; as the electoral campaign officially starts today. The communiqué of the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission, the press briefing of the Ivorian Prime Minister's spokesperson to shed light on the dual distribution of voter cards and national IDs ahead of the presidential poll and the message of the facilitator of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement calling on candidates and the Ivorian people to act responsibly for a peaceful outcome of the electoral and peace processes received major coverage. The mood of the pre-campaign made news as well.

1. The official vote campaign opened today at 12:00 A.M. according to the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), Mr. Youssouf Bakayoko. ***Fraternite Matin (a state-owned daily)*** published the verbatim statement made yesterday by the chairman of the CEI in which he called on the fourteen bidders for the presidency to abide by the code of good conduct they recently ratified and which commits them to preserve a peaceful atmosphere throughout the process. "These elections shall open a new era of peace for the country," Mr. Bakayoko reportedly said, as he called on the Ivorian people to join hands to overcome the "two remaining challenges," i.e.: a peaceful campaign and the vote itself. "The Commission is committed to fair and transparent elections," he said, wishing good luck to the different candidates.

Still on the issue, ***Le Nouveau Courrier (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** noted that the Independent Electoral Commission will soon initiate a sensitization tour to inform the population on the voting process and to train them to vote.

2. Initiated last week in Abidjan, the dual distribution of voter cards and national IDs is being progressively extended upcountry. The information was provided by ***Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)*** which reported on the press briefing of the Ivorian Premier's spokesperson, Mr. Meite Sindou. Addressing rumors and allegations of theft of voter cards and IDs and bullying of certain individuals said to belong to the national security and defense forces, Mr. Meite argued that these incidents were baseless and called on the voters to ensure they have their cards to take part in the electoral process.

In a related report, ***Le Nouveau Courrier*** noted that some 8.268.13 voter and IDs cards have been distributed so far. The distribution is due to end on October 23 in the region of Abidjan, the paper added.

3. In a statement made yesterday, the facilitator of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA), Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore congratulated the Ivorian political stakeholders and the Ivorian people for achievements made in the electoral process and called on the different actors to act responsibly throughout the sensitive campaign period to safeguard these achievements. The information was reported by ***Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)*** which added

that the facilitator of the OPA extended his acknowledgments to the international community for their sustainable support in the process.

In a similar address, ***L'intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily)*** noted that the UN Special Envoy in Cote d'Ivoire, Mr. Y.J Choi called on the different actors and their partisans to commit to the principles of democracy and avoid violence to ensure a positive outcome of the process.

4. The pre-campaign was again highlighted by political meetings. ***Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** noted that the Ivorian leader received a warm welcome yesterday as he landed on the western city of Man. President Gbagbo, the paper said, is due to launch his campaign from this war-torn city.

Le Jour Plus (a daily close to the opposition) informed readers that the leader of the RDR party, Mr. Alassane Ouattara was forced to call off a meeting yesterday at the National University of Abidjan. According to the daily, misunderstandings between the organizers of the meeting and members of the student union, known as FESCI are to be blamed for the cancellation.

October 14, 2010

The distribution of the voting and ID cards is the major issue in today's Ivorian press which also reports on the political fever in Cote d'Ivoire in the run-up to the October 31 presidential elections. The question about how much the presidential candidates are spending and who pays for the presidential campaigns is also a major issue in the press. The dailies also report on the visit of former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard who held talks with President Laurent Gbagbo yesterday in Abidjan. The case of Guy-Andre Kieffer, a Franco-Canadian journalist who disappeared in Abidjan since April 2004 is a major topic in the press.

1. A prominent story in **the state-owned daily *Fraternite Matin*** says the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) has now completed the transportation of all the voting and ID cards throughout the entire country. This was announced Wednesday by UNOCI spokesperson Hamadoun Toure during a press conference in Abidjan, reports the paper, which also quotes the UN official who noted that there has been an improvement in the distribution of the voting and ID cards in the Ivorian economic capital Abidjan. Toure also reportedly said that the UN mission is considering taking "exceptional measures" in order to help the bodies involved in the exercise to make the voting and ID cards available in some regions that have a high number of voters. The paper further announces that UN Special Envoy Y. J. Choi is due to meet today with the Chairman of the Constitutional Court, Paul Yao N'Dre, to talk about the progress in the electoral process, especially the distribution of the voting and ID cards.

2. While measures are being taken to improve the distribution of the voting and ID cards, a report in ***Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling party)*** says that the exercise is thrown into confusion in many centers in Abidjan. According to the report, some requesters cannot find their cards though they have their names on the voter list. "I have spent the whole day and only to be informed by the electoral agents that they can't find my documents," the paper quotes a requester as saying. ***Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)*** also reports on the same problems facing the requesters. Another report in this paper says there has been a large turnout in Yamoussoukro, while the distribution of the voting and ID cards is threatened in the north-eastern region of Zanzan. The exercise, which was planned to commence yesterday, was delayed because the electoral agents tasked to supervise the exercise were absent or contested, says the report.

3. Meanwhile ***Nord-Sud Quotidien*** informs readers that President Laurent Gbagbo has signed the last decrees; removing the remaining obstacles on the way to the October 31 presidential elections. The paper attributed this information to sources close to the cabinet of the president; adding that the signing of those decrees is a sign that the polls will effectively take place according to schedule.

4. On Security issues, a brief report in ***Le Nouveau Courrier (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** says that a contingent of 200 Togolese soldiers arrived in Cote d'Ivoire to support UN troops in this country. The report further mentions that 200

Senegalese soldiers have also been sent to Cote d'Ivoire to beef-up security during the electoral process.

5. A front-page story in **Notre Voie** says some 20 Ivorian functionaries have presented FCFA 500 million (about \$ 1.1 million USD) to incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo to support his presidential campaign. The report calls the contributors "Les Amis de Laurent [the friends of Laurent]", most of them are presented as managing directors and heads of state's companies.

6. The question about how much the presidential candidates are spending and who pays for the presidential campaigns is also a subject of a prominent headline in **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)**. "Gbagbo disburses FCFA 2.6 billion (\$ 5.5 million UDS) for his presidential campaign," says a banner headline in this paper, which also alleges that the incumbent president is using tax payers money to pay for his campaign. The paper also publishes a document allegedly obtained from the Ministry of Defense saying that 3.500 soldiers will be deployed to ensure that security prevails during President Gbagbo's 36 days of campaigns.

7. On another development, **L'inter (an independent daily)** quotes the visiting former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard as saying that "big corruption undermines the development of the State." According to the paper, the French top official was speaking yesterday in Abidjan during a forum organized by the Ivorian Ministry of Economy and Finance on the topic "the power of the public an engine for development." Reporting on the same forum, **Fraternite Matin** quotes Rocard as saying that "agriculture is the key to development in Cote d'Ivoire." The paper also reports on a meeting between the French former Prime Minister and President Gbagbo. On the October 31 presidential elections, Rocard reportedly said: "The President has assured us that things will move smoothly and that the voting will take place according to plan."

8. Finally, the case of Guy-Andre Kieffer, a Franco-Canadian journalist who disappeared in Abidjan since April 2004, is again a major issue in **Fraternite Matin** which reports on a disagreement opposing Ivorian and French investigators. The paper publishes excerpts of a statement issued by the office of the Ivorian State Prosecutor rejecting allegations that the office has turned down a demand introduced by a French judge investigating the case to meet Ivorian judges sitting on the case.

October 13, 2010

An UN-sponsored meeting on election observation, a security plan signed yesterday by government, New Forces and foreign military forces and rumors of attacks from the neighboring Liberia are the major issues in today's Ivorian press. The dailies also report on media-related issues in the ongoing electoral process and a campaign aimed at eradicating the yellow and dengue fever in Cote d'Ivoire.

1. A prominent report in ***the state-owned daily Fraternite Matin*** quotes the head of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), Youssouf Bakayoko, who called on the international election observers arriving in Cote d'Ivoire as part of the October 31 presidential elections to remain "neutral". "It's your neutrality that reinforces the credibility of your assessments," Bakayoko reportedly said yesterday during an UN-sponsored meeting in Abidjan. The meeting, the paper says, was organized by the United Nations Operations in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and brought together members of the diplomatic corps, international and regional organizations. The report also quotes the UN boss envoy in Cote d'Ivoire, Y. J. Choi, who pledged for "more election observers to be sent to Cote d'Ivoire to reinforce the credibility of the vote."

2. Another prominent story in ***Fraternite Matin*** says that top Ivorian and foreign military commanders yesterday agreed on a blue-print that seeks to ensure security during the ongoing electoral process. The plan, the paper says, was signed by commanders of Cote d'Ivoire National Army, the New Forces Armed Forces, La Licorne (French troops based in Cote d'Ivoire) and the UN forces during a meeting with the Ivorian Prime Minister in Abidjan. The paper also quotes Ivorian Chief of Defense Gal Philippe Magou who explained that the plan is a component of the Center of the Integrated Command (CCI) – a joint government and New Forces security unit tasked with ensuring security during the electoral process in Cote d'Ivoire. Gal Magou, the paper says, also pointed out "some logistic problems" that are likely to hold back its full implementation. According to the report, Prime Minister Guillaume Soro gave the assurance that instructions will be given to the Minister of Economy and Finance to provide the necessary means in order to enable the forces to maintain security during the elections.

3. Still on the security issues, a report in ***L'inter (an independent daily)*** says that 800 new recruits from the New Forces Armed Forces have been trained in maintaining security during the elections. According to the paper, the training was organized the National Commission Against the Proliferation and Illicit Circulation of Light Weapons and Small Arms.

4. While Ivorian and foreign troops are jointly working to ensuring that security prevails during the October 31 presidential elections, another report in ***L'inter*** says that militiamen based in western Cote d'Ivoire are threatening to sabotage the political campaign and the October 31 vote. According to the paper, the militiamen are demanding the payment of their war allowances. In a related development, a prominent story in ***Soir Info (an independent daily)*** says a huge number of Liberians, including

former rebels of the Movement for the Liberation of Liberia (MODEL), have recently crossed over to Cote d'Ivoire. The article suggests that the sudden presence of those Liberians in the western region of the country has thrown fears among the populations. Some of the Liberians are reported as saying "we've come to collect our ID and voting card."

5. With the October 31 presidential elections just around the corner, a prominent article in **Soir Info** suggests that Cote d'Ivoire is likely to become, during the coming days, the center of a shuttle diplomacy. The paper hints that many foreign officials are expected in the capital Abidjan as part of good offices missions ahead of the crucial vote. The paper mentions officials like the Chairman of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping; the Chairman of the EU Commission, Manuel Jose Barroso; James Victor Gbeho, the Chairman of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well as Presidents Abdoulaye Wade and Amadou Toumani Toure of Senegal and Mali respectively, who are expected in Cote d'Ivoire in an attempt to diffuse tension in the run-up to the elections.

6. A report in **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the cabinet of the Ivorian Prime Minister)** says that the ECOWAS is working in partnership with a German institution on "the role of the security forces in the electoral process in West Africa." The program, the paper says, seeks to ensure a better collaboration between security forces and electoral stakeholders in the region especially Cote d'Ivoire. The program also includes a comparative study of recent cases in countries such as Ghana, Guinea (Conakry), Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Togo and Nigeria.

7. Regarding the role of the media in the coming elections, **Fraternite Matin** quotes Ivorian Communication Minister Ibrahim Sy Savane as saying that every media outlets have the responsibility to ensure that equity prevails when covering the electoral process. The minister, the paper says, was speaking yesterday in Abidjan during a meeting with a delegation of Reporters Sans Frontiers, a French organization which fights for press freedom and denounces the violations of the human rights all over the world.

8. On health issues, a report in **Fraternite Matin** says the health authorities in Cote d'Ivoire have embarked on a nationwide campaign aimed at stemming the spate of the yellow and dengue fever in this country. The mosquito abatement program, which was officially launched yesterday in Bingerville, in the outskirts of the capital Abidjan, includes manual spaying to kill mosquitoes and larvae.

October 12, 2010

The fever of the presidential campaign underway in Cote d'Ivoire hits the front page of many pro and anti-government newspapers today and during the weekend. The dailies also comment on the ongoing distribution of ID and voting cards as well as security and media-related issues related to the next presidential election slated for October 31. The visit of Ghana's President John Evans Atta Mills to Cote d'Ivoire over the weekend and a conference on youth and leadership organized by the US Embassy are other major news items in the press.

1. A prominent banner headline in Monday's issue of ***Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** said that the ruling FPI staged a mammoth rally over the weekend in Abidjan to officially announce the nomination President Laurent as candidate for the presidential elections slated for 31 October. The paper, which devoted several large columns to reporting on the event, called the gathering an American-like show. The paper called President Gbagbo "the candidate of the people," and quoted the Ivorian leader who pledged: "We'll fight for the will of the people to be respected."

2. "The battle is over," said a banner headline in ***Le Patriote (a daily close to the opposition RDR party)*** ahead of the presidential elections with a photo gimmick of the Ivorian opposition leader, Alassane Ouattara, receiving a rousing welcome from supporters in the northern city of Korhogo on Saturday. Addressing the gathering, the opposition leader reportedly said: "Gbagbo has brought you war, but with me you'll be fine." On a similar tone, ***Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the opposition PDCI-RDA party)*** in its weekend's issue told readers that there was a demonstration of force on Friday in the western region of Duekoue, as former Ivorian President and candidate of the PDCI-RDA party in the coming elections, Henri Konan Bedie, toured the region as part of the pre-presidential campaign going on in Cote d'Ivoire. "I am waiting for you on October 31," the paper quoted Mr. Bedie as telling his supporters.

3. Reporting on the campaign messages of the various candidates in the coming elections, ***the state-owned daily Fraternite Matin*** noted that each of the presidential aspirants is sowing "the good message." In a related development, the paper quoted an Ivorian Catholic cleric telling the people of Cote d'Ivoire "not to vote for those who are inciting hatred."

4. Looking into the possible aftermath of the October 31 presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire, ***Soir Info (an independent daily)*** in its weekend's issue suggested that the West African country is poised for "a historic voting," but was quick to point out that the polls could be full of "risk". According to the paper, recent political rallies held across the country by various candidates vying for presidency have been marred by incidents, prompting the paper to ring the alarm bell about what it sees as "signs of imminent political deflagration." The paper also reported on instances where a top aide to President Gbagbo was held by militiamen operating in western Cote d'Ivoire over "war allowances." It also hinted that a specter of an attack from MODEL, a former Liberian rebel movement, is hovering over this region, as they were said to be threatening to

invade the western region to press the government in Cote d'Ivoire to pay them "war allowances." The article also said that the government in Cote d'Ivoire is concerned about the delay in the deployment of elements of the Center of Integrated Command (CCI) – the joint government and New Forces unit tasked with manning security during the electoral process; and the lack of means needed by the CCI to operate at a full scale.

5. With more on the political atmosphere in Cote d'Ivoire in the run-up to the presidential elections, **Soir Info** quoted French President Nicolas Sarkozy as saying: "The situation is very complicated." According to the paper, this statement came a few days after the visit of a French top official to assess the situation in this country.

6. Meanwhile, a front-page story in today's edition of **Fraternite Matin** says at its actual capacity, the Center of Integrated Command can respond to the populations' security concerns. The paper attributed this statement of Gal Nicholas Kouakou, the commander of the joint security unit, who also assured that "security will be provided everywhere and at anytime" during the elections. Still on security issues, a front-page story in **L'inter (an independent daily)** says that La Licorne (the French troops based in Cote d'Ivoire) won't quit the country after the elections. The paper further hints that the 950-men French contingent, which operates under the UN mandate, will be transformed into "a peace consolidation force after the October 31 presidential elections."

7. According to a prominent report in the weekend's issue of **Fraternite Matin**, a 300-man contingent from Togo and Senegal will be sent to beef-up security in Cote d'Ivoire during the elections. This was announced by UNOCI's spokesperson Hamadoun Toure last week reported the paper.

8. With a few weeks to go to the polls in Cote d'Ivoire, **Fraternite Matin** quoted Ghana's President John Evans Atta Mills as saying: "We're here to support the Ivorian people to conduct peaceful elections." According to the paper, the Ghanaian president was speaking last Friday in Abidjan at the end of a state visit to Cote d'Ivoire.

9. The role of the media in the coming presidential elections also makes headline in **Fraternite Matin**. Speaking to the paper, the Chairman of the state-run National Press Council, Eugene Die Kacou, has called on the Ivorian journalists "to show a sense of professionalism" while reporting on the electoral process. Another article in this paper says that the state-owned National Council for Audio-Visual Communication has banned polling surveys relating to the coming elections.

10. A report in today's edition of **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the cabinet of the Ivorian Prime Minister)** says the government is taking measures to resolve problems associated with the distribution of the ID and voting cards. According to the paper, the decision came following reports of confusion noted at certain centers. In a related development, the paper announces that the exercise has started in remote areas across the country.

11. **Le Nouveau Reveil** reported on a conference on youth and leadership organized by the US Embassy on October 7. The program featured Assale Tiomoko, a

journalist/writer, who attended President Obama's African Youth Leaders Forum in Washington in August.

October 8, 2010

The ongoing distribution of voter cards and national IDs, said to be plagued with dysfunctions, the meeting between the chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission and the different candidates for the presidential election, as well as the mood of the pre-campaign made major headlines in today's press.

1. The distribution of voter cards and national IDs, launched last Wednesday in the district of Abidjan, is subject to technical difficulties. "A *Total Mess*," read a banner headline in ***L'Inter (an independent daily)***. The daily noted that the process is not running as expected and criticized the slow pace of the operation. According to the paper, a lot of technical details are still to be settled to ensure the process is conducted satisfactorily.

L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily), on its part, reported that distribution centers are overtaken by the long queues of petitioners and blamed the absence of staff from the National Identification Office (ONI), tasked with the distribution of national IDs, as responsible for the dysfunction.

With more on the topic, ***Fraternite Matin (the state-owned daily)*** noted that Ivorian Prime Minister Soro Guillaume announced yesterday technical measures to be taken to speed up the distribution process. "Technical shortcomings are plaguing the operation but these are going to be solved," Prime Minister Soro was reported as saying in the course of a visit to assess the operation in a distribution center of Abidjan. "We hope most voters will have their voter cards and national IDs before the poll," the paper reported the Ivorian Premier as saying. However, voter cards could still be available in the different voting sites on the very day of the election, Mr. Soro added, as he called Ivorians to rush to obtain their cards before the big day. The Ivorian Premier was accompanied by the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), Mr. Youssouf Bakayoko, the Special Envoy of the Facilitator of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement, Mr. Boureima Badini, and Japanese Ambassador in Cote d'Ivoire, Okamura Yoshifumi.

2. As announced, candidates vying for presidential office received yesterday official electoral equipments composed of banners, posters and ballot specimens to be used during the campaign period slated for October 15 through 30. Reporting on the ceremony, ***Le Nouveau Courrier d'Abidjan (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)*** noted that the different bidders received a total of 5,000 ballot samples and some 100,000 official paper shows. An electronic version of the final voter list and a repertoire of the different voting centers and sites were included in the kit handed over. On the occasion, the paper added, the different bidders signed a code of good conduct which committed them to safeguard peace throughout the process and act responsibly to preserve national cohesion.

4. A fact-finding mission led by Dmitry Titov, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, is in Cote

d'Ivoire to assess the electoral process underway. The information was reported by ***Fraternite Matin***, which noted that the UN delegation met yesterday with the Ivorian Premier. "As indicated by the recent Security Council, it is important to remain cautious and ensure nothing jeopardizes the holding of these much-awaited elections," Mr. Dmitry said. "These elections must definitely be inclusive, fair and transparent," the UN official added.

5. The electoral front was again highlighted by upcountry political meetings and rallies. ***Le Nouveau Reveil*** (a daily close to the former ruling ***PDCI-RDA*** party) published prominent articles on the visit of PDCI opposition leader Henri Konan Bedie in the western city of Duekoue. According to the paper, thousands of partisans welcomed Mr. Bedie all along the road and as he stepped into the city.

Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling ***FPI*** party) noted that a total of 25,000 people attended President Gbagbo's meeting yesterday in the northern city of Korhogo.

October 7, 2010

The distribution of the much-awaited voter cards and national IDs was the major issue in the national press today. Dailies also reported on the forthcoming visit of Ghanaian President John Atta Mills to Cote d'Ivoire and Prime Minister Soro's meeting with the UN Special Envoy in Cote d'Ivoire.

1. The distribution of voter cards and national IDs started yesterday in Abidjan. Most dailies reported on the much-awaited operation. ***Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)*** noted that the operation was launched at 12:50 p.m. in ten districts of Abidjan –including Bingerville and Anyama. Only three other zones are still on the waiting list, the paper said. According to Mr. Fakhry Konate, the aide of the Ivorian Premier in charge of the operation, the distribution process is being conducted in a satisfactory way, and measures are being taken to dispatch the materials to the respective centers. The operation, Mr. Fakhry said, is due to be extended today upcountry.

In a related statement made yesterday, ***Soir Info (an independent daily)*** noted that the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) called voters to report to their respective enrolment centers to get their voter cards and national IDs. Mr. Bamba Yacouba recommitted the Commission to holding the poll according to plan and called on the different actors to act responsibly to safeguard a peaceful environment throughout the process.

With more on the issue, ***L'Inter (an independent daily)*** noted that the delay in the distribution operation stemmed from a lack of technical and logistical coordination between the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI). According to the daily, though the transportation of these materials was primarily assigned to the UN, the operation was conducted by government vehicles, hence the delay.

2. In a related report, ***Le Mandat (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA party)*** noted that the Ivorian Premier had a working session with the UN Special Envoy in Cote d'Ivoire, Mr. Y. J. Choi. According to the daily, the major issue addressed was the distribution of the electoral materials. Mr. Choi recommitted the UN to supporting the process. "Logistical means and staff will be mobilized for the timely distribution of these materials," he said. According to the UN official, two other challenges have to be met ahead of the poll. These are to provide shelters to the 3600 open-air voting sites and the recruitment and training of the 60,000 agents to be deployed in the different voting sites.

3. On the electoral front, ***Fraternite Matin (the state-owned daily)*** noted that, as time is running out, the different bidders for the presidency are engaged in what could be called "the last minute race" to attract upcountry voters. The paper reported that the Ivorian leader, President Gbagbo, and opposition heavyweight Alassane Ouattara are

both in the northern part of the country to this end, while opposition leader Henri Konan Bedie is announced to be visiting the western region of the country.

4. Ahead of the poll, and to ensure the different candidates receive fair state media coverage during their campaign, the Ivorian Prime Minister recently decided to suspend television and radio channels operating in the zone under the command of the New Forces. Reporting on the issue, *Notre Voie* (a daily close to the ruling FPI party) noted that these "pirate media" are preventing the national television channel (RTI) from covering the country, adding that the decision of the Ivorian Premier is still pending implementation.

With more on the issue, *Soir Info (an independent daily)* reported the reaction of the president of the national media regulatory council (CNCA), Mr. Franck Anderson Kouassi. The reason for closing these media, according to Mr. Kouassi is to ensure the Ivorian people have the same level of information wherever they are in the country. On his part, New Forces military officer Bamba Sinima indicated that negotiations between the Ministry of Communication and the management of these media are needed to find an inclusive solution on the issue, the paper further added.

Fraternite Matin noted that the issue was addressed yesterday in the course of a press briefing by the spokesperson of the New Forces, Mr. Sekongo Felicien. Mr. Sekongo, the paper said, highlighted the positive outcome of this decision, as it aims at ensuring peaceful, credible and transparent elections.

5. Ghanaian President John Atta Mills is due to visit his Ivorian counterpart President Gbagbo today. The information was reported by *Fraternite Matin* which noted that the working and courtesy visit could be to discuss bilateral relation between the two neighboring countries.

October 6, 2010

Today's news was again dominated by the electoral process. Dailies reported on an interview with an official of the New Forces' political branch who shed light on the mission of the New Forces during this sensitive electoral process and on a World Bank co-sponsored regional workshop to advocate measures to fight against money laundering in western African states.

1. As part of their pre-campaign activities, most candidates for the prospective poll – including President Gbagbo- are holding political meetings in Abidjan and upcountry. **Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)** reported on the recent visit of President Gbagbo in Bongouanou and Dimbokro (eastern region). "You should give your vote to a candidate who is bold and has a clear vision for the country", the Ivorian leader was reported as saying in his address. The meeting, the paper said, gathered thousands of people.

Still on the issue, **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA party)** informed readers that the leader of the opposition PDCI party, Mr. Henri Konan Bedie, is to visit the western region of Cote d'Ivoire known as the Moyen-Cavally region. According to the daily, opposition leader Konan Bedie, who ruled the country from 1993 to 1999 and was ousted by a military putsch, is much awaited in the region. A series of meetings are on the agenda of the visit scheduled for tomorrow, the paper added.

With more on the issue, **L'Inter (an independent daily)** noted that the Ivorian leader Gbagbo and opposition heavyweight Alassane Ouattara are charming voters of the northern part of the country. According to L'Inter, the two rival candidates are simultaneously scheduled to hold meetings in northern city of Korhogo over the weekend.

2. According to **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA party)**, the ruling FPI party is fomenting trouble to confiscate power in the event of a defeat of its candidate. The daily argued that an operation dubbed "la finale des finales," consisting of creating total chaos and vandalizing voting sites, is being elaborated by militants of the pro-governmental student union known as FESCI.

3. Most dailies reported on the interview by Mr. Konate Sidiki, the Ivorian Minister of Tourism and influential member of the New Forces' political branch. **L'Expression (a daily close to the opposition RDR Party)** published the full interview. In a wide-ranging address, Mr. Konate noted that the New Forces will remain neutral throughout the process as they are acting as "referees".

In a similar report, **L'Inter (an independent daily)** noted that Mr. Sidiki Konate called on the different bidders to be fair and responsible. "The loser should in honor acknowledge his defeat and avoid using violence," the paper reported him as saying. Mr. Sidiki also added that the New Forces will be campaigning for a peaceful process while the different bidders are on the electoral front. **Fraternite Matin (the state-**

owned daily), Soir Info (an independent daily) and L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily) carried a similar report.

4. Money laundering remains a major challenge African states are faced with according to the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), which recently co-organized with the World Bank a regional workshop to advocate measures to fight the practice. Providing details, **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily)** noted that the workshop held from October 5 to October 7 in Abidjan was designed to enhance the participants' understanding of the risk-based approach to anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism. According to Mrs. Mariam Ibrahim Toure, GIABA Secretary, competent authorities, including supervisory agencies, are required to take necessary legal or regulatory measures to prevent criminals from taking control of financial institutions.

October 5, 2010

The electoral process was again in the limelight of today's national press. Dailies reported on the general political atmosphere highlighted by a series of meetings and pre-campaign activities.

1. Scheduled to start today, the distribution of voter cards and national IDs has been postponed to Friday. Most dailies reported on the postponement. **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA party)** and **Soir Info** (an independent daily), noted that the delay stemmed from pending technical requirements to be met. Speaking yesterday on the international French radio channel, RFI, the spokesperson of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), Mr. Bamba Yacouba, underscored that measures are being taken for the efficient packaging and dispatching of the bulk of materials received. Three or four days are needed to complete the operation, Mr. Bamba said; hence the reported delay.

In a similar report, **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)** added that the distribution is due to start first in Abidjan and that the Integrated Command Center (ICC) is tasked to ensure the operation is conducted in a secured atmosphere.

A sarcastic banner headline in **L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily)** noted that Ivorians have been deceived once again with the postponement of the much-awaited operation.

2. Candidates vying for the presidency are summoned to attend an important meeting on Thursday at the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI). The information was reported by **Fraternite Matin (the state-owned daily)**, which noted that the purpose is to provide the different bidders with an electronic version of the final voter list, the repertoire of voting stations and polling sites, and samples of voting ballots and banners.

3. Ahead of the prospective poll and to ensure a peaceful atmosphere throughout the electoral period, the National Commission in charge of the fight against the proliferation of small and light weapons has initiated a series of workshops to raise awareness. **Fraternite Matin (the state-owned daily)** noted that the Commission was recently in the northern city of Korhogo. Addressing the topic: "My weapon is my voting ballot," state Commissioner Ange Kesy called on army and law enforcement personnel to act responsibly and avoid jeopardizing the peace and electoral processes by reckless actions. "A voting site should in no way become a war zone," Mr. Ange Kesy warned. **L'intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily)** carried a similar report.

4. On the social front, the pre-campaign period is dominated by political campaigns and rallies. President Gbagbo was in the central city of Toumodi yesterday. "I am here to put things in order," the Ivorian leader was reported as saying in his address.

Le Patriote (a daily close to the opposition RDR Party) reported the interview of opposition leader Alassane Ouattara recently published in the pan-African weekly Jeune Afrique. In a wide-ranging interview, the leader of the RDR party outlined his political and economical plans he intends to implement if elected.

5. The recent visit of French official Claude Gueant continued to be reported on. **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)** noted that, according to insiders, the visit bodes well for the future relationship between the two countries and is a sign of a new era of win-win cooperation between the two nations.

Soir Info (an independent daily), on its part, noted that France is to support Ivorian authorities for the release of Colonel Yao N'Guessan, an Ivorian national arrested in the USA in connection with an alleged arms smuggling plot. According to the daily, in the course of his recent visit, French official Claude Gueant and the Ivorian leader addressed the issue. Insiders noted that French authorities could therefore back Ivorians for a partial lifting of the UN arms embargo to allow Ivorian authorities to import legally non-lethal and anti-riot equipments as part of security requirements ahead of the poll.

October 4, 2010

News reported today and over the weekend said that voter card and national IDs are available and ready for distribution. French official Claude Gueant's working visit and the general political atmosphere ahead of the poll also made major headlines.

1. "This is an historic moment (...) we have been through doubts, hurdles and skepticism; and today, I am proud of Cote d'Ivoire and the Ivorian people," Prime Minister Soro was reported as saying last Friday when receiving his voter and ID cards. Reporting on the official kick-off ceremony in its weekend edition, **L'intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily)** noted that the Ivorian Premier underscored that the operation paved the way for the actual holding of the poll of October 31 and puts an end to the crucial issue of identification which has raised so many controversies. Prime Minister Soro also called for a timely and efficient distribution of these materials, the paper added.

In a separate development, the paper noted that a total of 5.932.894 ID cards and 5.725.721 voter cards are to be distributed ahead the poll.

With more on the topic, **Le Mandat (a daily close to the opposition)** noted that the cargo aircraft carrying the voter and ID cards was delayed for four hours due to technical reasons. The delay, the paper said, triggered much speculation and rumors.

2. On bilateral relations, French official Claude Gueant was in Cote d'Ivoire over the weekend in the framework of a working visit. Most dailies reported on the meeting he had with the Ivorian leader in Yamoussoukro and opposition heavyweights Henri Konan Bedie and Alassane Ouattara. **Fraternite Matin (the state-owned daily)** noted that President Gbagbo and Mr. Gueant had a two-hour closed door meeting and published the press statement of the French official. "I told the different political stakeholders that France has no favorite candidate (...) It is up to Ivorians to elect their President, and we hope the poll will be fair and transparent," the paper reported Mr. Gueant as saying.

Still on the visit, **Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)** noted that France could echo Cote d'Ivoire's call for a partial lifting of the UN arms embargo to allow Ivorian authorities to import legally non-lethal and anti-riot equipments as part of security requirements ahead of the poll. The announcement, the paper said, was made by Mr. Gueant in the course of a press conference concluding his visit.

3. Still in connection with the prospective poll, **L'inter (an independent daily)** noted in its Saturday release that the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) is to coordinate the electoral observation mission throughout the process. The decision came out of the session of the UN Security Council last week, the paper said.

4. **Notre Voie (a daily close to the ruling FPI party)** noted that, with 27 days left before the presidential election, more and more political rallies are being reported. The Ivorian leader bidding for a second term was in Bouake yesterday. Addressing a rally, President Gbagbo said the Political Agreement of Ouagadougou was a "master key"

which has helped harmonize bilateral relations between Cote d'Ivoire and its neighboring countries –namely Burkina Faso- and even beyond, with France. The recent visit of French official Claude Gueant supported this view, President Gbagbo argued according to the daily.

5. The alleged failed arms smuggling plot which has resulted in the arrest of an Ivorian high-ranking army officer by American law enforcement agents was again in the press. **Le Mandat (a daily close to the opposition)** updated readers on the case, saying that at least six government officials are involved in the plot. The paper added that the prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Gary G. Fry of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California and Trial Attorney Ryan Fayhee of the Counterespionage Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division. The investigation is being conducted by the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the paper added. **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA party)** published a similar story, adding that Colonel Yao N'Guessan is still under custody.

October 1, 2010

Friday's news was highlighted by reports on the prospective presidential election and technical arrangements ahead of the much-delayed poll. A meeting between Prime Minister Soro and the management of state media, an interview with French Ambassador Jean Marc Simon and the visit of a delegation of the African Union made major news. US Ambassador Carter's ongoing consultations with Ivorian political stakeholders were also reported on.

1. As announced yesterday, Prime Minister Soro is due to receive today samples of voter and ID cards. The information was confirmed by **Nord-Sud Quotidien (a daily close to the Ivorian Prime Minister)**, which reported the statement made yesterday by his spokesperson, Mr. Meite Sindou, on the national TV channel RTI. An official ceremony is scheduled to be held today at the Prime Minister's office, the paper added. According to Mr. Meite Sindou, the distribution of these cards is due to start as of Tuesday and underscored a major achievement in the electoral process.

Still on the issue, **Le Mandat (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA)** carried a similar report, adding that the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and the national identification agencies i.e.: ONI, CNSI and INS, are respectively tasked with the distribution of these materials.

2. With more on technical arrangements ahead of the poll, **L'Inter (an independent daily)** noted that the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) will support Ivorian authorities for a secure distribution of electoral materials, including ballot papers and booths, voter and ID cards throughout the country. According to UNOCI's spokesperson, Mr. Hamadoun Toure, who was speaking yesterday in the course of the UN mission's weekly press briefing, the logistical support is due to start today through October 16. The support, Mr. Hamadoun said, will be carried out in three different phases.

3. A meeting between Prime Minister Soro Guillaume and the management of national state media is scheduled today. **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA party)** informed readers that the meeting followed a working session the Ivorian Premier had with the Minister in charge of Communication, Mr. Sy Savanne, the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), Mr. Youssouf Bakayoko, and actors involved in the electoral process. Discussions, the paper said, will focus on how to ensure candidates for the presidency have equal access to state media as granted by the electoral law.

L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (an independent daily) carried a similar report, adding that the aim is to monitor state media to ensure social cohesion and peace are not jeopardized during this sensitive period.

4. A delegation of the African Union (AU) met yesterday with the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission, Mr. Youssouf Bakayoko. "We have come to show our support to the Commission," **Le Nouveau Courrier (a daily close to the ruling FPI**

party) reported AU Ambassador Ruben Maye Nsue as saying. According to the daily, the AU delegation remains upbeat on the positive outcome of the electoral process.

5. On the margin of an interview with **Le Temps(a daily close to the ruling FPI party)**, French Ambassador Jean Marc Simon was reported as saying that the visit of French official Claude Gueant few days before the holding of the much-delayed presidential poll is to open a new chapter of mutual cooperation between the two countries. French official Claude Gueant is due to start tomorrow a two-day visit in Cote d'Ivoire.

6. US Ambassador Phillip Carter met yesterday opposition leader and former President Henri Konan Bedie. Reporting on the courtesy call, **Le Nouveau Reveil (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA)** noted that the two men mainly discussed the electoral process underway. "The United States hopes that these elections will be fair and transparent and call on the different actors to commit to peaceful elections, Ambassador Carter was reported as saying. Ambassador Carter also underscored that the US, through various channels, including the UNDP and bilateral programs, support the process underway.

Le Mandat (a daily close to the former ruling PDCI-RDA) carried a similar report.