



Security In Cote D'ivoire – Transhumance, **Maritime Domain And Elections**

John Pokoo and Susan Nelson

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Introduction

As Cote d'Ivoire deepens its post-conflict reconstruction efforts, key issue-based threats to its security are in the areas of piracy and other maritime crimes, farmer-herder clashes over transhumance and election-related violence. These threats are capable of driving notions of inclusivity, exclusivity and victimhood among its ethnically diverse population. In this paper, we examine the nature and manifestations of the above-mentioned threats.

This paper is the result of a field study in Cote d'Ivoire, to explore the issue-based threats to security in West Africa. The paper focuses on Cote d'Ivoire and adopts a combination of history and the norm diffusion paradigm¹, first, to explore the evolution of these interlinked issues in Cote d'Ivoire, and secondly, to explore how the country has tapped into regionally negotiated normative frameworks to contain the possibility of these issues further impacting negatively on its security.

Context

Cote d'Ivoire is the largest economy among the French-speaking member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Until 1993 when their first President, Felix Houphouët-Boigny, died after 33 years' reign, Cote d'Ivoire was among the most peaceful states in West Africa. The country slipped into violence during the transition period following the death of President Houphouët-Boigny. Election-related violence erupted in the country in 1995, which developed into a series of internal conflicts by 2004². Consequently, the country hosted a UN peacekeeping operation between 2004 to 2017 in which neighboring ECOWAS states provided troops and police.³ At the same time, challenges associated with cross-border transhumance— i.e. the practice of moving livestock (mainly ruminants) from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle⁴ - are also associated with violent clashes between farmers and nomadic cattle breeders in the country. Such clashes are partly responsible for strained inter-communal relations in parts of the country and

also, produce violent confrontations between state security personnel and civilians in rural communities. The clashes also promote stereotyped perceptions associating particular social groups with either the farming communities or the nomadic pastoralist communities. Finally, located along the shores of the Gulf of Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire is vulnerable to piracy, illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing and other forms of transnational organized crimes at sea.

Transhumance in Cote d'Ivoire

Transhumance is a form of livestock rearing practice marked by the migration/movement of herds of livestock from one grazing ground to another. Transhumant livestock refers to livestock bred through transhumance. The leading livestock-producing countries in West Africa include Nigeria - 41.8%, Niger -14.2%, Mali -12.7% and Burkina Faso 11.9%. Furthermore, in West Africa, the animals referred to in the discourses of cross-border transhumance are ruminants, particularly, camels, cattle, sheep and goats⁵ but the main type of ruminants that constitute the subject of the discussions in this paper are cattle. The paper maps out relevant dimensions of how la Cote d'Ivoire's transhumance challenges feed into the broader West African security/insecurity debates.

The West African sub-region is classified into three zones based on the directional movement of transhumant livestock. There are the Western, Central and Eastern zones. Cote d'Ivoire falls under the Central Zone which includes movements on the territories of Mali, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo. The consuming markets in this zone are led by Cote d'Ivoire and to a lesser extent, Ghana and Togo. Transhumant herds are received from Mali, Burkina Faso, and lately, Niger, Nigeria and Benin.

In the 1970s following the drought in the Sahel, the government of Cote d'Ivoire took steps to domesticate transhumance within the context of national self-reliance to ensure internal supply of its livestock needs. However, as a result of changes in national policy direction over time, especially, the introduction of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-

¹Finnemore, M. and Sikkink, K., 1998. International norm dynamics and political change. *International organization*, pp.887-917.

²Salihu, N., 2016. Peacekeeping in Cote d'Ivoire. *Annual review of peace support operations in Africa*, p.73.

³Boutellis, A., 2011. *The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire: A Source of Conflict and a Key to Peace*. International Peace Institute.

⁴FAO & ECOWAS, (2012). *The cross-border transhumance in West Africa proposal for action plan*.

⁵Ibid.

sponsored Structural Adjustment Programme in the country in the early 1980s which sort to divest the state from economic activities, the above-mentioned national intervention could not entirely replace the traditional cross-border transhumance. Instead, domestic transhumance was transformed and it co-exists with the traditional cross-border transhumance producing different levels of violence in the context of incidences where animals graze on farmlands and destroy crops. Furthermore, compared to the contribution to the national economy, sedentary farming in Cote d'Ivoire occupies much higher importance than the livestock sector. As a result, national attention is focused more on farming and until 2005,⁶ there was no legislation protecting the interests of the livestock sector as there were for farmers and their farms. Furthermore, the recent conflicts in the country helped to undermine the effectiveness of public institutions in the country. The weakened state institutions tend to struggle to address the spate of historical clashes between farmers and herders in that country and the associated claims and counter-claims for compensation for destroyed farm produce. Against the above background, the hunters' network (locally referred to as the "Dozo" but now infiltrated by young and militant ex-combatants) has stepped in as a traditional "police" network that has also become a factor in the ensuing clashes⁷.

Lastly, locals feel the local government leaders who often intervene in such clashes, tend to side with the herders. This perception tends to affect any sense of trusting relations that could underpin amicable settlement of farmer-herder clashes in Cote d'Ivoire as a pacific mediation strategy.

National Dynamics

In Cote d'Ivoire, while sedentary farming contributes 34% to the GDP⁸ of the country and 66% of export earnings, livestock is an evolving economic activity in the country, contributing about 4.5% to agricultural GDP and 2% of total national GDP. However, its

contribution to strengthening food security and ensuring economic diversification is never in doubt. According to figures for 2007, which is the latest national data set available, consumption of beef in Cote d'Ivoire constitutes 48% of the annual 130,523 Tons Carcass Weight Equivalent (TCWE) of livestock needs in the country. The cattle breeds raised in the country are the N'damas, the Baoulés and Zebus breeds. The total cattle production in the country was 15,082 TEC (2007). This production level covered 23.4% of the national consumption of beef. The deficit is filled by imports. The national requirements of the extra livestock needs open the window for and justify the need for a structured livestock sector that seeks to transform the operations of cross-border transhumance in the country⁹. These measures began in the 1970s but continue with mixed impacts including notable social tensions.

Before 1972, the country relied on the flow of cattle from the Sahel for its livestock needs. However, following the drought in the Sahel in 1972-73 which threatened access to livestock products in Cote d'Ivoire, the government-initiated measures to regularize, institutionalize and develop the livestock sector in the country. It introduced a defining programme called the Société de Développement des Productions Animales (SODEPRA) which was responsible for research, extension, design and implementation of all projects and programmes in the livestock sector -mainly cattle, sheep and goats, pigs and poultry¹⁰.

For the purposes of this paper, SODEPRA employed technical and sanitary measures by establishing stations for cattle rearing, distributing free breeds of N'Dama cattle and Djallonke sheep to farmers in the North, Central and South-Eastern parts of the country with funding from the State and external financial aid. Its activities included (a) management and training of livestock farmers, including vaccination and sanitary protection of livestock, construction of night parks, the subsidy of inputs through external financial aid, support for equipment and promotion for the establishment of networks, (b) the installation of pastoral infrastructures for sedentary herds and the reception of Sahelian transhumant, (c) sanitary

⁶Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, (2005). Decree No. 95-817 of 29 September 1995.

⁷Interviews with a cattle breeder from Bounia, north of Cote d'Ivoire in Abidjan, March 2021.

⁸According to the World Bank, the 2020 GDP of Cote d'Ivoire is estimated at US\$61.348 billion. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=Ci>; (accessed: 27 September 2021)

⁹See the website of Centre National De Recherche Agronomique: <http://www.cnra.ci/descprog.php?id=14&prog=Productions%20d%27%E9levage&act=present> (Accessed: 18 February, 2017)

¹⁰Coulibaly, D.M. (2013). Politique de développement de l'élevage en cote d'ivoire, Paper presented at 9th Conference of Ministers in Charge of Animal Resources in Africa, Abidjan.

and statistical control of animals entering the country, (d) Ensuring quality standards and dissemination of selected animal and plant material, and (e) research and development. Through SODEPRA, large tracts of land mostly far from communities were set aside as station areas for breeding and sale of cattle with the direct involvement of the State.

Its impact was much felt in the period 1972-1994 when livestock production increased 2.5 folds. The actions carried out during these two decades contributed to the birth of a “rearing” mentality among the peasant and also, the structuring of the sector in a country where livestock was, and still is not a well-established tradition¹¹.

However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-backed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in that country caused disengagement of the State from direct production and marketing of livestock activities, leading to the dissolution of SODEPRA in 1993 and the creation of a number of research and advisory structures to assist the private sector actors. Some of the structures that emerged include: l'Agence Nationale d'Appui au Développement Rural (ANADER), created in 1994, for analysis and diagnosis; The National Laboratory for the Support of Agricultural Development (LANADA) - established in 1991 to provide funding and advice; The Inter-professional Research and Agricultural Council (FIRCA) set up in 2002; and the liberalization of the veterinary profession though the government still maintained responsibility for certain functions such as vaccination against diseases deemed to be contagious (e.g. rinderpest, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, “peste des petits ruminants”, avian influenza, etc.) and surveillance of diseases in the field. These set of structures were deployed to assist the private sector in ensuring sustained access to the livestock requirements in Cote d'Ivoire.

The disengagement of the State from the development of the livestock sector brought back several sub-state actors into the management of the livestock sector with less coordination and parallel but competing for local parochial interests. The new actors include the peasant farmers' association, the pastoral associations and the local government and local traditional leadership. The combined under-performance

of the above actors shows their weakness regarding the way the structures created by the SODEPRA programme are managed including uncontrolled activities of cross-border transhumance herds who continue to traverse the territories of Cote d'Ivoire and its neighbours – mainly, Mali and Burkina Faso. The existing challenges are further compounded by a very complicated land administration regime that in one breath, allows private ownership and in another breath, prevents foreigners from owning land which brings about claims and counter-claims for ownership of pieces of land by clans and families throughout the country. Thus, the exit of SODEPRA against the background of a predominantly farming society was bound to generate tensions within civil society relating to:

- (i) Land administration;
- (ii) Regulatory framework in favour of farmers;
- (iii) Stereotyping and unhelpful general public perceptions;
- (iv) The “Dozo” (militant hunters network); and
- (v) Weak and compromised regulatory institutions.

Incidences of violent clashes between farmers and herders have occurred in the country since 2012. For example, the Directorate of Animal Nutrition and Operational Management (DNAGEP) of the Ministry of Animal and Fishery Resources stated that in 2014, some 698 cases of farmer-herder conflicts occurred throughout the country including incidences of the destruction of crops in several localities in the north of the country, such as Tiémé, Koonan, Katiola, Touba and Bako. The economic value of such losses was estimated at 93 000 000 FCFA¹².

concern the development of arable land. One study showed that less than 4% of agricultural land was registered with title deeds. Also, in the West-Central towns of Sakassou and Béoumi, the conflicts became acute and took political dimensions in March 2012. Local farmers accused the former war rebels (whom they perceive to be politically aligned to the current government) of high-jacking the hunters' network in the country locally referred to as the “Dozo” (the Dozo has become the local vigilante group for farmers, assisting with tracking down and seizing transhumant livestock that graze or trespass on farms on behalf of the farmers) and using the Dozo network to rather favour the herdsman. In the view of locals, sometimes the herdsman will pay the Dozo to retrieve their seized

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Interviews with Environmental Expert, Diomande Raky Epse Hamza, CNCMR, Abidjan, March 2021

cattle from the farmers and local authorities become helpless when this happens¹³.

Furthermore, in Bouna, a town in the northeastern part of the country, 17 people perished on 23/24 March 2016 in farmer-herder clashes with 35 law enforcement officers sustaining various degrees of injuries¹⁴. Later, the Prime Minister, then Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan announced that the death toll from the above-mentioned incident rose to 33 with injuries to 52 law enforcement officers while 2,640 persons were displaced¹⁵.

The clashes of Bouna in 2016 which resulted in numerous casualties have raised tensions and strained relations between civil society and the law enforcement agencies. For example, at the time of the field research for this study, an unrelated incident in Bouna (a town near the north-eastern borders of the country with Mali) had resulted in clashes between the local community and the gendarmerie in which one gendarme was feared dead.

Some National Intricacies

(i) Land administration

Land administration in Cote d'Ivoire was influenced by French colonialism which began in 1893. The post-independent state chose to build a socially integrated country that is large enough to give to the individual an illusion of the infinite. The idea of a one-party state led by its founding President Houphouët-Boigny and the policy of voluntary integration of foreigners was to melt away ethnic cleavages into one big national society where everybody had a sense of belonging. The traditional society responded by welcoming foreigners who migrated into their communities by apportioning parcels of land to these foreigners mostly from Burkina Faso and Mali, to enable them settle and engage in economic activities such as farming under what became known as "tutoring"¹⁶. In 1980, migrants were given the right to vote and that enhanced their right to citizenship. Over time, the migrants and migrant communities increased in numbers and also access to the economy. The indigenous people lost their leverage and began to assert themselves.

(ii) Regulatory framework

The electoral law of 1980 was amended in 1994 and restrained the political rights granted to migrants in 1980. In 1998, the introduction of the Rural Land Act permitted private ownership of land but prevented foreigners from owning land (i.e. they rented land from the State)¹⁷. Since then, incidences of multiple sale of land and claims and counter-claims of land ownership by indigenous communities continue to rise especially in the Western parts of the country where 80% of the land-related cases are located. The 1998 Act gave farmers ten years to register their land. But as most of them did not know, the deadline was extended for ten years by a new law on rural land in August 2013, and only 20,000 hectares out of 23 million (i.e. 0.09% of the agricultural area) have been registered to date. Under the current regime, ownership of land is established on the basis of its registration in the land register and after the acquisition of a land title but the costs involved are prohibitive. The war caused further displacement and tensions as internally displaced persons returned to find others occupying their lands. Access to land for transhumance occurs within a very delicate land management framework.

In spite of these developments, the National assembly is yet to pass a law to regulate the relations between farmers and herders in Cote d'Ivoire and to protect their respective interests. The existing administrative regulation rather protects farms against the destruction of crops by advancing transhumant cattle herds. Decree No. 95-817 of 29 September 1995, lays down rules for compensation for the destruction of crops while the Inter-Ministerial Order No. 247 / MINAGRI / MPMEF / MPMB of 17 June 2014, sets out the compensation scale for crops destroyed and specifies rules and formulas for calculating compensation rates for crop destruction. This decree updates the compensation rates for crop destruction¹⁸.

(iii) The character of public regulatory institutions

At the village level, there are pastoral associations, peasant farmers' associations and the village chief. These three actors constitute the committee that intervenes when incidences of crop destruction occur.

¹³See: <http://ccfd-terresolidaire.org/fdm/2012/264-mars-2012/cote-d-ivoire> (Accessed: 20 February 2017)

¹⁴See AfricaNews: <http://fr.africanews.com/2016/03/25/cote-d-ivoire-17-morts-dans-un-conflit-entre-eleveurs-et-agriculteurs/> (Accessed: 20 February, 2017).

¹⁵See: <http://news.abidjan.net/h/589606.html> (Accessed: 20 February 2017)

¹⁶Babo, A. (2010). Conflits fonciers, ethnicité politique et guerre en Côte d'Ivoire, Alternatives Sud, VOL. 17.

¹⁷Geopolis. (2014). <http://geopolis.francetvinfo.fr/le-foncier-rural-source-de-litiges-en-cote-divoire-37721> (accessed: 10 December 2016)

¹⁸<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/639171550597562684/text/Draft-Environmental-and-Social-Systems-Assessment-ESSA-Enhancing-Government-Effectiveness-for-Improved-Public-Services-P164302.txt#:~:text=It%20specifies%20the,for%20the%20destruction,> (assessed 02 September 2021)

They engage with each case through persuasive approaches to get the farmer and the breeder to solve their problems amicably. When a case is not resolved at the village level, the case is elevated to the level of the 'prefet' or 'sub-prefet'²⁰ who deploys the gendarmerie, first to assist the Ministry of agriculture to assess the extent and value of the damage caused, and second, to enforce the outcome of the assessment by getting the breeders to pay the compensation so assessed. There are major concerns about the effectiveness of the above arrangement. Indeed, interviewees mentioned the local perception that the officers at the village, town and 'prefet' levels are sometimes compromised in terms of accepting inducements (sometimes cattle) from the breeders, which affects their swift delivery of justice .

(iv) The "dozo"

The Dozo is a network of traditional hunters who in the last decade have transformed to perform security duties. During the war, many of them fought alongside forces in the country's north and are estimated to be about 200,000 throughout the country²². Regarding transhumance, the Dozo traditionally assisted local farmers to track down transhumant livestock involved in crop destruction. Interviewees variously lamented that these militant vigilante groups maintain their fleet of vehicles; they are armed; they tend to defy local law enforcement authorities; they have their kraals or holding areas where they keep seized cattle, and they have their rates for their services for which farmers and herders involved in the same case are obliged to honour²³. In effect, in a particular case of destruction of farm produce involving a farmer and a herder, once the "Dozo" gets involved, it is not enough for any of the primary parties to abandon their interest in the case and bring it to amicable closure. The "Dozo" must be "satisfied" independently before they also abandon their interest in the particular case. For example, the "Dozo" would charge an amount of 10,000 - 25,000CFA for each cattle kept per day but there is no accountability

for the funds so generated²⁴. Their interest in prolonging cases is, therefore, not in doubt.

(v) Mapping general public perceptions

As a result of the way domestic transhumance evolved in the country, the general public perception is that livestock rearing is the preserve of foreigners mostly from Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea. There is little recognition of the expansive involvement of locals who continue to invest in the sector as a profitable venture. One interviewee indicated the involvement of women in the livestock sector and also the issue of mixed farmers who combine farming and livestock rearing²⁵. Indeed, more people from the different economic and social sectors have invested in livestock rearing in Cote d'Ivoire. For example, some local families assign members to accompany Fulani in transhumance. They send them supplies regularly. The above suggests that the transhumance enterprise in Cote d'Ivoire is evolving as a national economic sector and that its negative and positive impact must be conceived from a national perspective and appropriate public education is required in that regard. In that way, the challenges associated with transhumance could be innovatively conceived. Any stereotyped approach to the issue could be problematic.

In practice, however, breeders refuse to build a place where animals could stay at night. The animals stay in the bush with people watching over them. The Association Pastorale Bundialle which is a key player in the management of the station areas created by SODEPRA has recommended that one breeder should not watch over more than 50 cattle but in reality, individuals watch over more than 160 cattle²⁶. The association has further recommended that cross-border breeders must have local representatives in communities before they traverse such communities but they often do not comply.²⁷

¹⁹Views from various interviews conducted in Abidjan, March 2021.

²⁰A tier in the Francophone countries' local government system. It translates as 'department.'

A department is similar to a district or region.

²¹Interview with official of Centre National de Coordination du Mecanisme de Response a l'Alerte Precoce (CNCMR), Abidjan, March 2021

²²Côte d'Ivoire: les chasseurs traditionnels Dozos veulent combattre les jihadistes. Available at: <http://news.abidjan.net/h/588215.html> (Accessed: 18 December, 2016)

²³Interview with Centre National de Coordination du Mecanisme de Response a l'Alerte Precoce (CNCMR), Abidjan, March 2021

²⁴ibid

²⁵Interview with Dr. Coulibaly Amara, University of Alhassani Ouattara du Bouake, Abidjan, 19 December, 2017.

²⁶Interview with Mr. Siriki Konate, General Secretary of Association Pastoral at Bundialle in northern Cote d'Ivoire, Abidjan, 19 December, 2016.

²⁷ibid.

Maritime Security

The sources of threats to Cote d'Ivoire from its coastal areas and maritime domain are potentially deadly but also, diverse, appearing as interlinked and intractable series of crimes connected to trade, landings, markets and marine products supply chains. Such crimes also feed on the broader weaknesses and relationships with its immediate neighbours.

For example, in 2009, the United Nations system established the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI) comprising Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia to address the issue of transnational organized crime including drug trafficking. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), WACI, together with the signing of the Freetown Declaration on 17th February 2010, led to the establishment of Transitional Crime Units (TCU) in the four countries already mentioned to facilitate targeted responses to drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes in, particularly, Cote d'Ivoire.²⁸ Again, in 2020, the Navy of Cote d'Ivoire seized 411 kilograms of cocaine 250 kilometres off the shores of Abidjan wrapped in plastic bundles labelled with French fashion house, Louis Vuitton and Pacena Black, a dark beer from Bolivia.²⁹ Furthermore, Amnesty International reports that in 2006, 540,000 litres of chemical wastes from the floating off-shore oil refining operations of Trafigura, a multinational trading company were dumped at 18 sites around Abidjan, the capital of Cote d'Ivoire. The dumping operations directly killed 15 persons in the Djibi area near Abidjan while many more suffered from symptoms like breathing difficulties, vomiting, headaches, weeping eyes, nosebleeds and skin lesions.³⁰ Again, a 2014 INTERPOL study of fisheries crimes in the West and Central Gulf of Guinea highlights several activities of illegal unreported and unreported (IUU) fishing activities in the waters of Cote d'Ivoire³¹. Such criminal activities feed on and deepen other crimes such as corruption, food and

hygiene regulation fraud and human trafficking.

However, threats to security and safety in the Gulf of Guinea, are not peculiar to Cote d'Ivoire. As a result, at the regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a sub-region Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS) with six (6) core pillars aimed at ensuring safety, security and a sub-regional blue economy³². Again, in 2014, ECOWAS collaborated with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) to sponsor the Yaoundé Declaration, Yaoundé Code of Conduct and the Protocol Additional to the Yaoundé Code of Conduct³³. While the Declaration formally joined up the authorities of ECOWAS, ECCAS and the GGC in addressing safety and security issues in the Gulf of Guinea, the Code of Conduct outlined contextual maritime crimes in the Gulf of Guinea and outlined state and regional level actions for addressing same. Finally, the Protocol set out in detail, the structure, mandate and interlinkages associated with the operations of the Inter-regional Coordination Centre for managing safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea based in Yaoundé in Cameroon created by the Declaration³⁴. For the above reasons, state parties to these regional maritime agreements, are expected to adopt national-level strategies committing to the inherent norms in the Yaoundé Declaration and the Yaoundé Code of Conduct.

In response to the above, Cote d'Ivoire adopted a "state action at sea (in French: action d'états de la mers) framework to provide a maritime domain awareness mechanism among relevant ministries and public agencies. However, the framework consciously preserves the functional autonomy of the individual maritime institutional actors. The framework is expressed in the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat of the Inter-ministerial Committee for State Action (SEPCIM) in 2016 under the Office of the Prime Minister to coordinate its action at sea. SEPCIM, therefore, comprises 15 ministries of state

²⁸See UNODC (2021). Cote d'Ivoire. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/westandcentralafrica/en/cote-d-ivoire.html> (Retrieved: 04 June 2021)

²⁹Rueters, 2020 (5 Feb.). Ivory Coast Navy seize record cocaine haul off coast. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ivorycoast-drugs-idUSKBN1ZZ2KA> (Retrieved: 03 June 2020)

³⁰Amnesty International, 2016 (19 Aug.). Ten years after toxic waste dumping, victims in the dark. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/08/ten-years-after-dumping-victims-in-the-dark/> (Retrieved: 02 June 2021)

³¹INTERPOL, 2014. Study on fisheries crimes in the West African coastal region. Available at: [file:///Users/johnpokoo/Library/Mobile%20Documents/com~apple~CloudDocs/Documents/CMP%20KAIPTC/KAIPTC2021/Projects2021/IUU%20fishing%20project2021%20\(Japan\)/INTERPOL%20Study%20on%20Fisheries%20Crime%20in%20the%20West%20African%20Coastal%20Region%20EN.pdf](file:///Users/johnpokoo/Library/Mobile%20Documents/com~apple~CloudDocs/Documents/CMP%20KAIPTC/KAIPTC2021/Projects2021/IUU%20fishing%20project2021%20(Japan)/INTERPOL%20Study%20on%20Fisheries%20Crime%20in%20the%20West%20African%20Coastal%20Region%20EN.pdf) (Retrieved: 05 June 2021)

³²ECOWAS, 2014. ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS). Available at: <https://www.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/EIMS-English-final.pdf> (Retrieved: 14 May 2021)

³³The implementation of the three protocols together constitutes the Yaoundé architecture for maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea.

³⁴ibid

with mandates bordering on maritime security, safety at sea and the blue economy. The overall objectives of SEPCIM are to ensure safety and security in the maritime domain in Cote d'Ivoire but also, provide maritime governance and leadership, coordinate agencies and be the focal point for maritime security issues as well as the Blue economy.

The SEPCIM concept in Cote d'Ivoire is underpinned by the 2011 security sector reform (SSR) in the country, the June 2013 Summit of African Heads of State in Yaoundé, Cameroun and the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS). It is the offshoot of the National Security Strategy of 2012 of Cote d'Ivoire. SEPCIM is backed by a State Action at Sea Decree following the adoption of the National Security Strategy by the Government Ministerial Council in November 2014³⁵.

It operates as a special Prime Ministerial Committee with selected Ministers and heads of Maritime-related agencies as members. The Committee has a permanent Secretariat that supports the work of the Committee on a daily basis. The Committee intends to appoint maritime prefects in the two maritime divisions in Abidjan and San Pedro in future to address riverine and other far-off issues.

However, much as the SEPCIM framework is capable of promoting inter-agency collaboration, it is not set up as a directive or operational mechanism but rather, a platform for fostering a trusting relationship among the maritime-related agencies in the country. Its potential drawback could manifest in its ability to elicit leadership and accountability from relevant public agencies concerning collective responses to particular forms of maritime crimes.

Elections

Until 1993 when their first President, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, passed away after 33 years of reign, Cote d'Ivoire was among the most peaceful countries in West Africa. The country slipped into violence during the transition period following the death of President Houphouet-Boigny. Election-related violence erupted

in the country in 1995, which developed into a series of internal conflicts by 2004³⁶. Consequently, the country hosted a UN peacekeeping operation between 2004 to 2017 in which neighboring ECOWAS countries provided troops and police³⁷. The 2010 elections occurred under unstable conditions and the country degenerated into further conflicts after elections that brought current President Ouattara into office for the first time. During the violence associated with that election, about 3,000 persons died and the conflict unfolded along ethnic lines. In the just-ended 2020 Presidential election, 85 persons were killed: 34 before the election; 20 on election day; and 31 after the polls.³⁸ Elections, therefore, constitute yet another threat to security in Cote d'Ivoire. But election-related violence is not peculiar to Cote d'Ivoire alone in West Africa. Indeed, as a result of the challenges associated with elections in West Africa, ECOWAS adopted the supplementary Protocol on democracy and good governance in 2001³⁹ which abhors subversion of rule of law in national elections. Along those lines, the sudden decision of the President to contest as one of the candidates in the 31 October 2020 elections became complicated in the context of sub-regional norms around democracy and rule of law, and it was the first time that Ivoirians were experiencing such a situation.

In Cote d'Ivoire, the core legislations that governed the October 2020 elections are the electoral code⁴⁰, the independent election commission law⁴¹ and the constitution⁴².

For example, under Article 3 of the Electoral Code of 2020, all nationals of 18 years and above, are legible to vote. Additionally, the Code outlines standards that must be met to ensure the attainment of a free and fair election. These include an electoral register that is publicly accessible, reference to duly constituted electoral constituencies, and procedures to follow if a candidate becomes incapacitated during the election process. Again, the Code states that a polling station should have, not less than 600 registered voters (Article 21). As an Advisor at the Office of National Security alluded to in Abidjan, the challenges with

³⁵Interview with Naval Captain Charles Bamele, SEPCIM, Abidjan, March 2021

³⁶Salihu, N., 2016. Peacekeeping in Cote d'Ivoire. Annual review of peace support operations in Africa, p.73; and Bah, A.B., 2010. Democracy and civil war: Citizenship and peacemaking in Côte d'Ivoire. African affairs, 109(437), pp.597-615.

³⁷Boutellis, A., 2011. The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire: A Source of Conflict and a Key to Peace. International Peace Institute.

³⁸Reuters, 2020 (11 Nov.). Elections-linked clashes have killed 85 in Ivory Coast, the Government says. Available at: <http://cms.trust.org/item/2020111152133-9piza> (Retrieved: 29 May 2021)

³⁹ECOWAS, 2001. Protocol A/SP1/12/01 ON democracy and good governance supplementary to the Protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security.

⁴⁰Republic of La Cote d'Ivoire, 2020. Ordonnance No. 2020-356 du 08 avril 2020 portant revision du code electoral.

⁴¹Republic of La Cote d'Ivoire, 2020. Lois relatives a la commission electorale independante (CEI).

⁴²Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, 20216. Loi no. 2016-886 du 8 novembre 20216 portant constitutions de la Republic de Boutellis, A., 2011. The Security Sector in Côte d'Ivoire: A Source of Conflict and a Key to Peace. International Peace Institute. Cote d'Ivoire.

elections in Cote d'Ivoire are not about the law. Rather, it is about the adamant and uncompromising interpretation of the law by the contestants and their followers. According to Paulin Yewe, Defense and Security Advisor at the Office of National Security in Abidjan, "individual players in the election field tend to interpret the law to suit their needs". Such often misguided interpretations are directed at mobilizing and consolidating social and political capital toward elections. The skewed interpretations of the law tend to degenerate the country into violence. Mr. Yewe stated that electoral violence arises when parties point accusing fingers at each other's candidates. He noted that in the last elections, there was violence even before the announcement of the participation of the current president as a candidate.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Like many other ECOWAS member states, Cote d'Ivoire faces potential threats to its security from multiple sources. Key among such threats relate to the farmer-herder clashes over transhumance, the maritime domain, and elections. In all the cases, some progress has been made in terms of the adoption of relevant legislation to guide law enforcement but also, institutional structures for combating such threats. What is possibly lacking is the ability of these legal and institutional frameworks to ensure coordination during operations, but also the ability of actors to recognise and conform to ethical standards available in the rules and regulations that drive national responses to such threats.

The utilisation of the continental frameworks, norms and protocols for addressing the aforementioned threats in la Cote d'Ivoire, especially with respect to elections, needs to be strengthened to provide a solid guiding national framework for the supervision of the entire national electoral processes in that country.

Cote d'Ivoire has made significant progress in coordination of the various bodies that govern the maritime domain and needs to build stronger partnerships, collaboration and cooperation with neighbouring countries to effectively address issues of maritime security.

Issues of youth unemployment and radicalization, extremism and natural resource governance among others need to be given serious attention as drivers of conflict and the government needs to pay particular attention to these threats.

Accordingly, the paper recommends persistent capacity development of personnel in the aforementioned sectors and issue areas on best practices together with the provision of appropriate equipment and tools that enables operational level personnel to effectively respond to threats to national security (no matter the form it takes) on behalf of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire.

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