Côte d’Ivoire

Country Overview

Politics

Côte d’Ivoire is a democratic republic in West Africa. In October 2015, President Alassane Ouattara was re-elected in elections judged to be credible by the international community, further stabilizing the country after the post-election crisis in 2010-2011.

Economy

Côte d’Ivoire is classified by the World Bank as a lower middle-income economy. With a GDP that grew to 8.4 percent in 2015, Côte d’Ivoire is ranked by the World Bank as the sixth fastest growing economy in the world. This growth has been fueled by production increases in major agricultural crops such as cocoa, coffee, and cashew nuts and increased industrial production. Of the labor force of approximately 8.34 million in 2015, an estimated 68 percent were engaged in agriculture. The government participates in price guarantee schemes for farmers. Because of its heavy dependence on cocoa, and other agricultural products such as coffee and palm oil, the economy is sensitive to fluctuations in commodity market prices.

The government of Côte d’Ivoire is actively promoting energy, agribusiness, rural development, transportation with transshipment and port expansion, telecommunications, water, and sanitation sectors for expansion.

Côte d’Ivoire is eligible for trade under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. The US imports goods including cocoa, oil, rubber, wood and cashew nuts.

Social/Human Development

There are an estimated 60 ethnic groups in Côte d’Ivoire, which are primarily divided into 5 groups: Akan (32.1 percent), Valalique or Gur (15 percent), Northern Mande (12.4), Krou (9.8 percent) and Southern Mande (9 percent). Another 21.7 percent are identified as ‘other’ or ‘unspecified.’ The Ivorian economy was heavily dependent on immigration following independence in 1960. However, as the economy declined in the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of ‘Ivoirité’ or Ivorian identity played a central role in the civil conflict that began in 2002, scapegoating northern Ivoirians (primarily Muslims) and migrants. That
conflict, as well as violence following 2010 elections, displaced over a million people. In addition, a large number of people (over 60 percent of the population) are considered “stateless” by the UN, because citizenship is not officially conferred by birth, but instead through parental lineage, meaning that some families with multiple generations of Ivoirian residents are still considered “foreigners.”

Although poverty levels across the population have been declining, the poverty rate is still relatively high, at 46 percent in 2015, compared to 49 percent in 2008. Poverty is highly concentrated in rural areas that often lack access to basic services. Côte d’Ivoire’s Human Development Index score for 2015 was 0.462, ranking the country 172 out of 188 countries


U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2

According to the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report, trafficking and trafficking risk is present in potentially exported supply chains including agriculture (specifically cocoa, coffee, pineapple, rubber, and animal breeding), mining, and construction. The report also notes sex trafficking associated with mining regions.

Read the full TIP report at: https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271171.htm

Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

Côte d’Ivoire has positive net immigration. About 12 percent of the country’s population are migrants. The largest source country for migrants, by far, is Burkina Faso. Other migrant source countries are also West African neighbors including Mali, Guinea, Liberia, Benin and Togo. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 60 percent of the population is considered stateless and over 30 percent of the population is considered internally displaced.
The top destination countries for migrants from Côte d’Ivoire are Burkina Faso, France, Liberia, Ghana and the United States. 16
Migrants from Côte d'Ivoire

- Burkina Faso: 540,779
- France: 89,937
- Liberia: 40,985
- Ghana: 30,359
- United States of America: 25,976

Legend:
- Burkina Faso
- France
- Liberia
- Ghana
- United States of America
Exports and Trade

Côte d’Ivoire’s top exports in 2016 include cocoa, fruit and nuts, mineral fuels, rubber and gold.

Top Commodity Exports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Machinery</td>
<td>505,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber</td>
<td>726,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Fuels</td>
<td>820,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and Nuts</td>
<td>893,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa</td>
<td>5,732,237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top importers of all goods from Côte d’Ivoire, according to mirror data, are the United States, France, Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.
Côte d’Ivoire Export Partners (USD)
Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers’ Rights

Freedom of Association

Although the law provides for the rights of workers (with exceptions for police and military members) to form and organize unions, the US Department of State notes that, according to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), employers can refuse to negotiate with unions if they claim the unions are non-representative. Migrant workers may not fully be able to participate in unions, as foreigners cannot hold union positions until they obtain formal residency. Strikes and collective bargaining are reportedly subject to considerable conditions, which may make them more difficult to implement in practice. Informal sector workers – who make up over 80 percent of the labor force – are excluded from legal Freedom of Association protections.

Working Conditions

The law set the minimum wage at 60,000 CFA/month (USD 109.77) and 25,000 CFA/month (USD 45.73) for agricultural workers. The legal workweek was 40 hours, with overtime pay beyond that point. At least one 24-hour rest period per week is required. Workers in the informal sector are excluded from legal health and safety protections. Labor inspectors are reportedly insufficient to enforce laws.

Discrimination

The law prohibits discrimination based on sex, age, national origin, citizenship, race, religion, and social origin, but the U.S. Department of State reports that these laws are not always enforced and that discrimination occurs in practice.

Forced Labor

The law prohibits forced labor, but the U.S. Department of State has reported that resources, inspections, remediation and penalties are inadequate.
Child Labor

The law sets the legal minimum working age at 16 – with an exception for apprenticeships that can begin at 14. Workers under 18 are prohibited by law from hazardous tasks. As of the 2015 academic year, education is compulsory for students up to age 16.22

Civil Society Organizations

The US Department of State reports that human rights groups “generally operated without government restriction” and that “government officials often were cooperative and responsive to their views.”23

Immigration Policies Limiting the Employment Options or Movement of Migrants

Under a 2004 decree, migrants face discrimination in formal employment. Foreigners can only be hired if no Ivorian can be hired after two months.24 Foreigners are also prohibited from holding union positions.

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILO 29 Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 100 Equal Remuneration</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 111 Discrimination</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 138 Minimum Age</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 97 Migration for Employment</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

Côte d’Ivoire scored a 97.9 in the 2016 Fragile States Index, placing it in the “Alert” Category. However, this represents a 21-point improvement over the 2015 score, making it one of the ‘most improved’ countries in terms of political stability, likely owing to the largely peaceful and credible 2015 elections.26

Level of Crime and Violence

The US Department of State reports that the crime level in Côte d’Ivoire is critical.27 The World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report ranks Côte d’Ivoire at 113/144 and 127/144 for business costs of violence and crime and organized crime respectively.28

The US Department of State reports that transnational crime and potential terrorist threat exist, predominantly associated with Al-Qaeda activity originating in Mali.29

State Persecution

The U.S. Department of State notes that statelessness is pervasive as citizenship rights are “derived from one’s parents rather than by birth within the country’s territory.” Many people within the country do not have birth registration documentation. UNHCR estimates the number of stateless persons at 700,000. Ethnic discrimination is reportedly an issue and even second or third generation residents may be considered “foreign.” Ethnic conflicts may be commonly associated with land disputes as land ownership laws are unclear and inconsistently applied. The US Department of State reported the “common belief that foreigners were responsible for high crime rates and identity card fraud.”30

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores Côte d’Ivoire as a 32 out of 100, where a 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and a 100 signals “Very Clean. Côte d’Ivoire is ranked 107 out of 168 on that index. According to the US Department of State, there is a high level of corruption that impedes economic growth and investment. Businesses and citizens reportedly encounter corruption in civil service functions such as judicial proceedings and tax issues.31

Human Rights Watch notes that the government has not responded adequately to corruption, and reports that security forces loyal to President Ouattara have benefitted from corruption in the cocoa, timber, diamond sectors.32 Laws intended to combat corruption are reportedly inadequately enforced.33
Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

Côte d'Ivoire is scored in the low human development category, according to the UN Human Development Index, with a rank of 172 out of 188 countries and a score of .462, an increase from .376 in 1980.34 However, many of Côte d’Ivoire’s neighbors actually rank lower, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, and Liberia. Côte d’Ivoire’s relative prosperity likely accounts for the high level of regional migration into the country.

Level and Extent of Poverty

Côte d’Ivoire has a relatively high level of poverty, with nearly 60 percent of the population determined to be living in multidimensional poverty according to the UN.35 Although poverty levels have been decreasing, economic growth within the country is uneven, with a large degree of inequality. When adjusted for inequality, the Human Development Index score falls to 0.265, a loss of over 38 percent. This demonstrates a higher degree of inequality within the country than noted in other sub-Saharan African countries.36

Degree of Gender Inequality

The UNDP Gender Equality Index scores Côte d’Ivoire as having low levels of gender equality, ranking it 151 out of 155 countries.37 Gender-based discrimination is prohibited by law. However, in practice, women may face economic discrimination, particularly in terms of inheritance laws or traditional land-tenure practices. Although women have legal rights to own land, only 25 percent of women reported owning land compared to 37 percent of men in a 2012 survey.38 Under civil code, widows can inherit property, but in many areas, widows are expected to return to their familial home region. Sons are also more likely to inherit their father’s land than daughters.39 Women also have legal access to financial services, but women are reportedly commonly unable to meet bank criteria, such as land/property titles. Some banks may require women to have their husband’s approval when seeking loans.40 The Labor Code prohibits discrimination based on gender, but does not mandate equal pay for equal work.41

Approximately 14 percent of women have a secondary education level, while about 30 percent of men do. The rate of female participation in the labor market is 52.4 percent, compared to 81.4 percent for men.42 Women make up approximately 11 percent of the formal work force.43
Landlessness and Dispossession

The violence following the 2010 elections left hundreds of thousands of people displaced. Many of those displaced were left landless as their land was occupied or sold. The UNHCR reported in 2014 that the majority of refugees who attempted to return to their homes were homeless. However, at the end of 2014, the government adopted the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which provides for the protection of land rights of IDPs. The US Department of State noted that the government provided little assistance in practice and IDPs “often resorted to living in informal urban settlements.”

Land tenure is complex and multiple groups may simultaneously make claims on the same land, which can lead to violence or instability. Foreign nationals, even those born in Côte d’Ivoire cannot legally own land. Recent changes, however, have made foreign nationals born in Côte d’Ivoire between 1961 and 1973 eligible for citizenship – meaning thousands of immigrants and their descendants can now own land.

Landlessness is a driver of rural poverty as populations without access to land have reduced opportunity to grow food crops. In some regions, environmental degradation and population pressures are further decreasing access to land.

Environmental Factors

In response to flooding, the government forcibly evicted thousands of people in the greater Abidjan area, leaving some of them homeless and without access to resources.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Cocoa

Cocoa Overview

Côte d’Ivoire is the global leader in cocoa production, producing over 40 percent of the world’s supply of cocoa beans. Cocoa contributes about 40 percent of national export revenues and 10 percent of the country’s GDP. Approximately 600,000 small farmers produce cocoa.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Cocoa

The U.S. Department of State’s 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report lists forced labor in the production of cocoa in Côte d’Ivoire. Trafficking has been documented among migrant workers – particularly teenage
boys coming from the neighboring countries of Burkina Faso and Mali. Upon their arrival at the isolated cocoa farms, some workers were subjected to unsafe work and living conditions and not paid. According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, cocoa is produced with child labor in Côte d’Ivoire. A 2015 report published by Tulane University found that child labor increased from 790,000 children in 2008-2009 to 1.15 million children in 2013-2014. It is important to note that this increase was likely due in part because cocoa production overall increased significantly.

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Endnotes

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/CIV.pdf
14 International Office of Migration. http://www.iom.int/world-migration#source
16 International Office of Migration http://www.iom.int/world-migration#source
http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/252885.pdf
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