

Congolese Democratic Social Party, and disbanded a political meeting. According to witnesses, the police beat some of the participants. Around 30 arrests were made.

ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

Several cases of arbitrary arrests and detentions were reported during operation Mbata ya Mokolo targeting DRC nationals, including refugees and asylum-seekers legally living in Congo. Opposition party members, trade unionists and their family members were also frequently subject to arbitrary arrest and detention by the police.

On 4 January, police arrested Tamba Kenge Sandrine and her four children. They were released the same day without charge. The arresting officer had come to arrest her husband, Kouka Fidele, because of his trade union activities, and arrested his wife and children instead. Kouka Fidele spent several months in hiding, fearing arrest.

Jean-Bernard Bossomba "Saio", a refugee from the DRC was arrested by the police on 22 May and detained in a national police cell in Brazzaville until 22 July. No formal charges were made. A former army officer in the DRC, he said that he feared for his security if returned there.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Reports were received in September alleging that Congolese police officers were raping women, including within refugee and asylum-seeker communities. At the end of the year, no action was known to have been taken by the authorities to investigate the allegations.

A five-year-old girl was raped, allegedly by police who, according to relatives, took her and other family members from their home in Brazzaville during the night. Officers separated the girl from the group before forcing them all to board a ferry to Kinshasa, DRC. The child was taken to hospital on arrival in Kinshasa, where it was confirmed that she had been raped. In September, Amnesty International researchers referred the girl to a specialized

medical centre for additional treatment and psychological support.

IMPUNITY

Police officers suspected of committing serious human rights violations continued to enjoy impunity. Congolese soldiers accused of serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, while serving in regional peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic were not investigated.

In May the authorities announced that 18 police officers involved in human rights violations during the Mbata ya Mokolo operation had been suspended from their duties. It was not clear if the suspension remained in force at the end of year or if the authorities had conducted any investigations to establish whether police officers had been responsible for violations.

In June the African Union announced that it would open investigations into allegations of Congolese members of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) being implicated in the enforced disappearance on 24 March of at least 11 people in the Central African Republic. However, by the end of the year, no such investigations were known to have been initiated by the authorities.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

Head of state: **Alassane Ouattara**

Head of government: **Daniel Kablan Duncan**

Côte d'Ivoire was examined by the UN Universal Periodic Review mechanism which raised concerns about the adequacy of the government's action on several issues including on women's rights and the lack of (or selective) accountability for crimes committed during the post-electoral

violence in 2010-2011. Hundreds of detainees awaited trial in connection with post-electoral violence. Côte d'Ivoire refused entry to more than 400 Ivorian refugees who had fled to Liberia during the post-electoral crisis. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people continued to face discrimination.

BACKGROUND

In December 2013, the government renewed the mandate of the Special Investigation Commission tasked with investigating crimes committed during the 2010-2011 post-electoral violence as well as the mandate of the Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation (CDVR). The CDVR published its findings in December 2014 and expressed concern about selective justice.

In April 2014, Côte d'Ivoire was examined by the UN Universal Periodic Review mechanism, which raised concerns about the adequacy of the government's action on several issues including: action to ensure accountability for crimes committed during the post-electoral violence in 2010-2011; measures taken to implement the national reconciliation process; efforts to ensure an open and free election campaign before the 2015 presidential elections; steps to ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society; and women's rights, including measures to prevent sexual violence.

In July 2014, Côte d'Ivoire refused entry to over 400 Ivorian refugees who had fled to Liberia during the post-electoral violence. Côte d'Ivoire claimed it was to prevent the spread of the Ebola Virus Disease, which was present in Liberia, but UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, had ensured that every refugee had had a medical screening. Despite the screenings more than 35,000 Ivorian refugees were waiting in Liberia for the Ivorian authorities to reopen the border.

In November, the government agreed to pay the outstanding wages and bonuses claimed by soldiers who had protested over two years of back pay and housing

benefits. Also in November, the opposition party, Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), confirmed Laurent Gbagbo's candidacy for the 2015 Presidential elections, despite the fact that he is awaiting trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC). In December, the Abidjan Tribunal declared Laurent Gbagbo's candidacy inadmissible.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

In January and May, more than 180 political prisoners held in relation to post-electoral violence of 2010-2011 were released, some on a provisional basis in view of an upcoming trial in 2015. More than 600 detainees were awaiting trial in connection with the violence. Some political prisoners held in the Maison d'Arrêt et de Correction (MACA) Abidjan prison staged a hunger strike to protest against detention conditions and the slow judicial process. Three political detainees died in custody in the MACA in unclarified circumstances.

In July, the Minister of Justice announced that the investigation into the disappearance of journalist Guy André Kieffer would be reopened, as would the investigation into the death of Yves Lambelin, head of the Société immobilière et financière de la côte africaine (SIFCA) who was killed during the post-electoral crisis.

The trial of 83 people, including Simone Gbagbo and Michel Gbagbo, wife and son respectively of the former President Laurent Gbagbo, and former senior officials of the Gbagbo administration, began in late December 2014. The accused face charges including threatening state security and the creation of armed groups.

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

Former President Gbagbo remained in ICC custody. In June, the ICC confirmed the charges against him and committed his case to trial. He will be tried for crimes against humanity. The trial is currently set for July 2015.

In March, Côte d'Ivoire surrendered Charles Blé Goudé, accused of crimes against humanity committed during post-electoral violence, to the ICC. In December, the ICC confirmed four charges of crimes against humanity against him and committed him to trial.

In December, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the ICC rejected Côte d'Ivoire's challenge to the admissibility of the case against Simone Gbagbo, who was charged by the ICC in February 2012 with murder, sexual violence, persecution and other inhuman acts, allegedly committed during the post-electoral crisis. Côte d'Ivoire has filed an appeal against the decision.

RIGHTS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX PEOPLE

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people faced increasing discrimination. In January, the office of Alternative Côte d'Ivoire, an organization working for the rights of LGBTI people living with HIV, was ransacked by a large mob. Computers were stolen, walls were daubed with homophobic slogans and a staff member was badly beaten. Police refused to respond or investigate the incident. The Director of Alternative Côte d'Ivoire's house was also later attacked. A security forces member was reportedly among the attackers. Several staff members subsequently went into hiding.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Eight years after the dumping of toxic waste in Abidjan no medical study had been conducted to assess the long-term health implications of exposure to the waste. The company that made and sent the waste to Abidjan - oil trader Trafigura - has never disclosed the full information about the waste content and its potential impact; nor has it been properly held to account for its role in the dumping. In October 2014, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) confirmed that it will carry out an environmental audit of the dump sites in 2015.

ABUSES BY ARMED GROUPS

In December 2013, the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) released a report on the Dozo, a group of traditional hunters who fought on behalf of Alassane Ouattara during the post-electoral crisis. The report documented serious human rights violations allegedly committed by members of the Dozo between March 2009 and May 2013, including unlawful killings, illegal arrest and detentions, looting and extortions. At least 228 people were killed, 164 others injured by bullets, machetes and knives, and 162 arbitrarily arrested and illegally detained. In addition, 274 cases of looting, arson and extortion were verified and confirmed, including in the regions of Gbôklé, Haut-Sassandra, Gôh, Cavally, Guémon, Tonkpi, Marahoué, Nawa, Indenie-Djuablin, Poro and Moronou.¹

1. Côte d'Ivoire: The Victors' Law - the human rights situation two years after the post-electoral crisis (AFR 31/001/2013)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR31/001/2013/en

CROATIA

Republic of Croatia

Head of state: **Ivo Josipovic** Head of government: **Zoran Milanovic**

Discrimination against Croatian Serbs and Roma continued. Same-sex partnerships were legally recognized. The rate of investigation and prosecution of war crimes remained at a low level.

DISCRIMINATION

Croatian Serbs

Croatian Serbs continued to face discrimination in public sector employment and the restitution of tenancy rights to social housing vacated during the 1991-1995 war.