



OCTOBER 2020

## Four scenarios for electoral violence: the 2020 Ivorian Presidential and Parliamentary elections

Presidential and parliamentary elections in Cote d'Ivoire are scheduled for October 31, 2020. The past months have seen serious acts of violence during the campaign. As more violence is expected, the central question is *where* this violence is taking and will be taking place and *which conditions* are encouraging it. This policy brief explores the election violence literature and derives four scenarios to explaining and show which of Cote d'Ivoire's 31 regions will be affected for what reasons by electoral violence. A live tracker of these scenarios from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) can be found [here](#). Exploration of violence data highlights that presently, electoral violence is highest in competitive areas. This implies that the incumbent and opposition use violence in 'swing' areas and areas where they need to poach substantial number of votes from the opponent.

The presidential and parliamentary elections in Cote d'Ivoire are scheduled for October 31, 2020. Public expectations in these weeks leading up to the elections are that this contest will involve violence, due to the reigniting of political tensions between the contenders for the Presidency.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Cote D'Ivoire has already experienced an increase

in violence stemming from the preparations for and the reactions to the elections: since August 2020, more than 100 riots and protests have taken place in Cote d'Ivoire, compared to just over 20 in the two months before this.<sup>2</sup>

These acts of violence emerged from several contentious issues including an arrest warrant issued in December 2019 against the potential opposition candidate and former Prime Minister Guillaume Soro; the sudden death of the ruling party candidate Amadou Gon Coulibally in July 2020; the subsequent third term bid by the sitting President Ouattarra in August 2020; the invalidation of 40 out of 44 potential presidential candidates – including Soro – in September 2020; and the unusual number of defections from

1 Jeune Afrique, 'Faut-il désespérer de la Côte d'Ivoire?', *JeuneAfrique.com*, 28 September 2020, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/1049500/politique/edito-faut-il-desesperer-de-la-cote-divoire/>; Deutsche Welle, 'Crainte d'un cycle infernal de violence en Côte d'Ivoire', DW.COM, 24 August 2020, <https://www.dw.com/fr/crainte-dun-cycle-infernal-de-violence-en-c%C3%B4te-divoire/a-54681751>; Amnesty International, 'Protesters Attacked by Men with Machetes, Knives and Sticks', 18 August 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/08/cote-d-ivoire-police-allow-machete-wielding-men-to-attack-protesters/>.

2 ACLED, 12-10-2020.

the ruling coalition.<sup>3</sup> All these events have exacerbated the widespread conviction that a new electoral crisis is looming.<sup>4</sup>

In response to the sharp changes in candidates and particularly the possibility of a third term for Ouattara, leading opposition figures called their supporters out on the streets in August. These protests were quickly quelled by a heavy display of state force. Yet from September 14 onwards, new protests emerged as the opposition leader and former President, Henri Konan Bedie, called for a campaign of civil disobedience. Days after this call, his ally and former rebel leader Guillaume Soro had said that “there will be no election in Cote d’Ivoire”.<sup>5</sup> The current Prime Minister Hamed Bakoyoko responded that the opposition wants “a Cote d’Ivoire burning and in flames” whereas President Alasane Ouattara warned Soro that his place was not in the “election campaign, but in prison”.<sup>6</sup>

But more serious acts of violence are expected during the campaign as heated rhetoric and demonstrations give way to voting and direct competition around the country.<sup>7</sup> Cote d’Ivoire has a recent history

of political violence (from 2002 to 2007) and had a major post-electoral crisis in 2010 which led to at least 3,000 deaths, and a decade-long silence by the opposition. Responses to potential election violence in 2020 include embassy evacuation plans, and the temporary migration of citizens from Cote d’Ivoire and the capital Abidjan.<sup>8</sup>

As violence is expected, the central question is *where* and *which conditions* will encourage or mitigate it. Few observers actually provide predictions as to where to expect violence, and those that do often presume that the same places where violence occurred in 2010 – including Goh-Djiboua, Sassandra-Marahoue and Abidjan – will continue to be hardest hit in 2020 and for the same ethnic reasons.<sup>9</sup>

Research into electoral violence suggests, however, that violence is a tool that is used to secure specific political outcomes. As today’s political landscape is different from 2010, so too are the accompanying incentives for violence. Therefore, this policy brief explores the incentives for violence and combines

3 E.g. Vice-President Daniel Kablan Duncan; Ministre de l’enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche scientifique, Abdallah Albert Toikeusse and Ministre des Affaires Etrangères Marcel Amon Tanoh.

4 International Crisis Group, ‘Côte d’Ivoire: An Election Delay for Dialogue’, Crisis Group, 29 September 2020, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/c%C3%B4te-divoire/b161-cote-divoire-reporter-pour-dialoguer>.

5 Afrique Sur 7, ‘« Il n’y aura pas d’élection » : Voici la recette de Guillaume Soro’, 28 September 2020, <https://www.afrique-sur7.fr/443356-pas-election-recette-guillaume-soro>.

6 France 24, ‘Le débat – Côte d’Ivoire : menaces sur la présidentielle ?’, France 24, 21 September 2020, <https://www.france24.com/fr/20200921-debat-cote-d-ivoire-menaces-sur-la-presidentielle>.

7 E.g. On October 15, Bedie and another opposition leader, Affi N’Guessan, called for a second phase of civil disobedience that called supporters to disturb “all ongoing electoral processes”, Jeune Afrique, ‘Présidentielle en Côte d’Ivoire : Bédié et Affi N’Guessan appellent au « boycott actif » – Jeune Afrique’, *JeuneAfrique.com* (blog),

15 October 2020, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1058447/politique/presidentielle-en-cote-divoire-bedie-et-affi-nguessan-pas-concerne-par-le-processus-electoral/>; France 24, ‘Présidentielle en Côte d’Ivoire : le spectre des violences intercommunautaires resurgit’, France 24, 17 October 2020, <https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20201017-presidentielle-en-cote-d-ivoire-le-spectre-des-violences-intercommunautaires-resurgit>.

8 Interview, Diplomatic Source, Abidjan November 12 2019; Interview, Diplomatic Source, Abidjan November 14 2019. Some expats are known to have negotiated an escape helicopter in their allowance, e.g. Interview with Director in Cacao sector, Abidjan October 9, 2019.

9 Centre for Democracy and Development, ‘Cote D’Ivoire’s High-Stake Presidential Election’, 14 October 2020, <https://cdddelibrary.org/2020/10/14/cote-divoires-high%2%80%90stake-presidential-election/>; Jeune Afrique, ‘Côte d’Ivoire : entre Ouattara et Bédié, les fantômes de l’ivoirité – Jeune Afrique’, *JeuneAfrique.com* (blog), 14 October 2020, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1057913/politique/cote-divoire-entre-ouattara-et-bedie-les-fantomes-de-livoirite/>.

them with the election violence literature to test how likely violence in an ongoing election responds to different incentives.

From the literature on election violence, four scenarios can be derived that indicate which of Cote d'Ivoire's 31 regions and two autonomous districts are likely to be affected by electoral violence. We focus here on pre-election and present election contests, and concentrate on how violence may affect the ability to vote. As pre-election violence has distinct aims compared to post-election violence, we expect that the characteristics of areas and voting groups make them more or less susceptible to being involved or targeted by this form of violence.

## Current political fault lines in Cote d'Ivoire

Ivorian politics is dominated by three parties: the Rassemblement de Republicains (RDR) led by Alassane Ouattara; the *Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI-RDA) led by Henri Konan Bedie and the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI) (still) led by Laurent Gbagbo. As a rule of thumb, elections in Cote d'Ivoire are won when two large parties unite against a third. In 2010, for example, an alliance between the PDCI and the RDR led to the defeat of the FPI and Laurent Gbagbo. The PDCI-RDR alliance transformed into a movement and a new political party, the *Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix* (RHDP).

The 2020 context is different due to three developments. In July 2018 the PDCI-RDR decided to leave the RHDP, supposedly because Bedie was not selected as President Ouattara's successor. Then in February 2019, a part of the RDR network broke away as Guillaume Soro was ousted from the RDR and set up various political parties and a political movement (*Génération et peuples solidaires*, GPS). Soro relies on his being able to tap into significant RDR fractionalization to make his new political

venture possible.<sup>10</sup> Subsequently, in March 2020 a third constituent party, the *Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire* (UDPCI), left the RHDP as well as Marcel Amon Tanoh, a key figure and one of the few Southerners in the Northern-dominated RDR. Both left over disagreements as to who would lead the RHDP, but as both had large constituencies it was a major blow.

All of these breakaway groups joined forces and subsequently sought an alliance with the FPI, or rather two different FPI parties (one led by Laurent Gbagbo and one by Affi N'Guessan). The golden rule of Ivorian politics suggests that a united opposition is likely to be successful against an RHDP effectively formed around the former RDR.

However, there are reasons as to why the golden rule may not apply on this occasion. The RHDP has substantially undercut opposition support to such an extent that the electoral outcome is uncertain. First, when the PDCI-RDR withdrew, the regime convinced and forced a substantial number of the PDCI cadre to remain within the RHDP; this group is sometimes labelled PDCI-Renaissance. Second, the RHDP tried to neutralize Guillaume Soro as his ascent risked splitting the vote in the RHDP heartland (e.g. Tchologo, Denguela). Therefore, Soro was accused of organizing a coup and was subsequently convicted and expelled while many of his cadre were arrested in December 2019. In August 2020, he was also banned as a candidate. Third, the RHDP tried to neutralize the threat posed by the UDPCI and Tanoh. For the UDPCI it sponsored internal dissent against the long-time leader Mabri Toikeusse; this convinced

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<sup>10</sup> In 2016 loyal RDR areas (Poro, Tchologo, Kabadougou, Folon) already witnessed up to 30% of the parliamentary seats being won by independents while in the 2018 municipal and regional elections, RDR big-shots had to become last minute candidates to ensure a win. Presently, heavy infighting over the succession of Ouattara, difficult compromises at the local level and tensions in the Muslim community after a key RDR-ally and unifier Bockarie Fofanah died, are access points for Soro.

a part of the UDPCI to remain.<sup>11</sup> Tanoh was excluded from the elections and, in his base, support for François Albert Amichia, Felix Anoble and Sié HienYacouba – two ministers and the Director-General of Abidjan Harbour – increased as well support for the co-opted Royaume de Sanwi.

Moreover, the RHDP has exploited its incumbent advantage. There are suspicions that voter registration is biased<sup>12</sup> and that the composition of electoral bodies is partisan.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the exclusion of 40 out of 44 candidates benefits the RHDP as it simultaneously turns the vote into a contest between Ouattarra and Bedie and an attempt to split the opposition. The ‘Independent’ Kouadio Konan Bertin (KKB) candidacy encourages division in the PDCI as KKB is a former challenger to Bedie (2015) with a PDCI base. It also targets Soro’s base as KKB presents himself – like Soro – as a youth candidate and an outsider. The Affi N’Guessan’s candidacy (FPI) splits FPI ranks as it forces pro-Gbagbo supporters to vote for the disliked N’Guessan or their former enemy Bedie. Coupled with other measures it is a strategy that seems to be aimed at preventing a *deuxieme tour*.

All of this suggests a closely contested Presidential election that will be characterized by three main uncertainties: will the PDCI-Renaissance in the RHDP command votes in the PDCI heartland (Belier, Gbeke, N’Zi, Iffou)? Will Soro (in exile) be able to mobilize supporters against the RHDP and tap into RDR resentment and split the base? Can the UDPCI and Tanoh convince their regions (Tonkpi and Sud-Comeo) to refrain from supporting the RHDP?

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- 11 It is a tactic that previously brought small parties like PIT (Parti ivoirien des travailleurs), UPCI (Union pour la Côte d’Ivoire), MFA (Mouvement des Forces d’Avenir) and possibly UDCY (L’Union démocratique et citoyenne) into the fold of the RHDP.
  - 12 Jeune Afrique, ‘[Édito] Faut-il désespérer de la Côte d’Ivoire ?’
  - 13 Deutsche Deutsche Welle, ‘L’opposition ivoirienne critique la nouvelle CEI’, DW.COM, 10 January 2019, <https://www.dw.com/fr/lopposition-ivoirienne-critique-la-nouvelle-cei/a-50653347>.

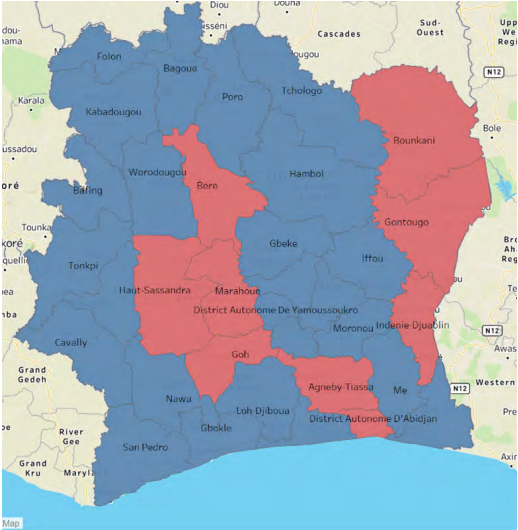
How does this context translate into potential electoral violence? The literature on electoral violence finds that incumbent regimes in particular are responsible for most violence during election cycles.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, this literature suggests that the goal of electoral violence is to ensure the political exclusion of the opposition (the support for).<sup>15</sup> Regimes try to exclude the opposition from campaigning through attacks against or the obstruction of campaign events to lower opposition support; denying parties and supporters the provision of electoral information (via attacks on media outlets, election observers, and NGOs involved in voter education); and excluding opponents and supporters from electoral participation via the intimidation, coercion, and/or the displacement of voters.<sup>16</sup>

Research into electoral violence presents multiple scenarios for *where* electoral violence takes place and *which* communities are targeted in the pre and during election phase. We apply those to Cote D’Ivoire, and find very different possible tracks.

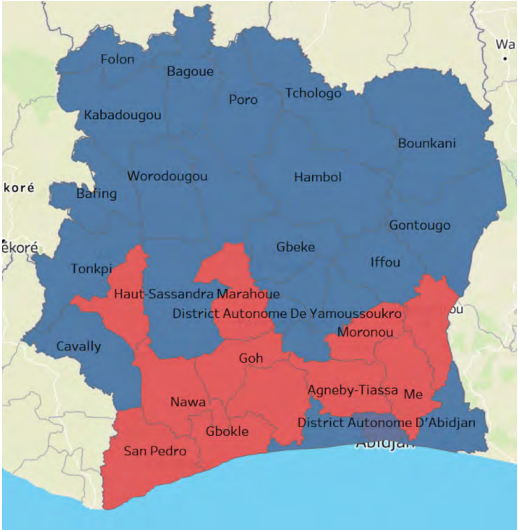
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- 14 Sarah Birch and David Muchlinski, ‘Electoral violence prevention: what works?’, *Democratization* 25, no. 3 (3 April 2018): 385–403, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2017.1365841>; Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Susan D. Hyde, and Ryan S. Jablonski, ‘When Do Governments Resort to Election Violence?’, *British Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 1 (January 2014): 149–79, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000671>.
  - 15 Sarah Birch, Ursula Daxecker, and Kristine Höglund, ‘Electoral Violence: An Introduction’, *Journal of Peace Research* 57, no. 1 (1 January 2020): 3–14, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319889657>.
  - 16 S. P. Harish and Risa Toha, ‘A New Typology of Electoral Violence: Insights from Indonesia’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31, no. 4 (4 July 2019): 687–711, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2016.1277208>.

Figure 1 a/d      Four Scenario for Election Violence

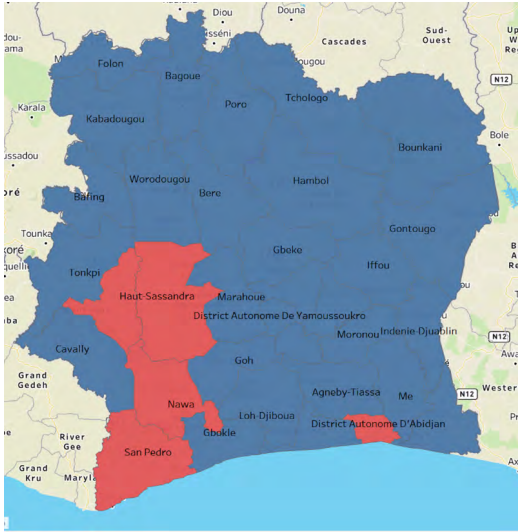
Scenario 1: Ethnically Divided



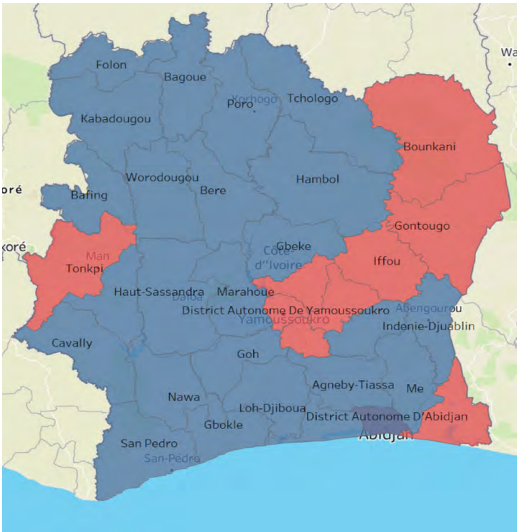
Scenario 2: Opposition Strongholds



Scenario 3: Political Exclusion



Scenario 4: Competitive Areas



Legend:  
Red = electoral violence  
Blue = no electoral violence



### Scenario 1: violence in ethnically divided areas

Electoral violence in the 2010 elections has been frequently cast in ethnic terms.<sup>17</sup> A strong tradition of election violence research contends that ethnic polarization, the exclusion of ethnic groups from power, and the participation of parties representing particular ethnic identities create the greatest incentives for electoral violence. Data on the composition of the three main parties' (PDCI, RHDP and FPI) cadres suggests that all three are generally ethnically inclusive<sup>18</sup>, but electoral maps highlight that each group disproportionately draws from ethnic identities: the RDR majority in the RHDP comes from the Senoufo and Mande in the North (Ouattara's 'base'); PDCI draws on the Baoule and Agni (Bedie's 'base') with the FPI drawing on the Gbete (Gbagbo's 'base') and various smaller Akan tribes (his former wife's 'base').

This scenario suggests that violence is aimed at excluding minorities from voting, and should be highest in areas that are ethnically divided between Mande/Senoufo (RHDP), on the one hand, and most other ethnicities (the opposition), on the other.

Because of more than a century of intra-country migration, minority communities are widespread in Cote d'Ivoire. If this hypothesis holds true, we should see violence occurring in regions that are most ethnically split particularly in nine regions: Abidjan, Indenie-Djubalin, Goh, Agneby-Tiasssa, Haut-Sassandra, Marahoue, Bere and the Zanzan

district (Bounkani, Gontougo). See figure 1a for a map and the annex for underlying data.

### Scenario 2: violence in opposition strongholds

A second scenario is that electoral violence will occur in regions that are generally uncompetitive, or controlled by the opposition.<sup>19</sup> In these contexts, both the regime and the opposition have an incentive to resort to violence. For the opposition, electoral violence is a tool to show strength and maintain territorial control. The regime may use violence in uncompetitive opposition areas to demonstrate strength in a hostile environment.

If this scenario holds true, one should see violence in the core areas of the FPI, PDCI and UDPCI. Moreover, both the regime and the opposition are expected to be involved in pre-electoral violence.

Hence, violence is likely in Gbogle, Nawa, Marahoue, Agneby-Tiassa (a PDCI majority); and San-Pedro, Indenie-Djubalin, Goh, Loh-Djiboua, Moronou, Guemon and Me (FPI). See figure 2b for a map and the annex for underlying data and assumptions.

### Scenario 3: violence in underrepresented regions

A third scenario is suggested by research that points to the strategies of regime survival. More and more research suggests that regimes use appointments as a way to reward supporters and create alliances with new groups.<sup>20</sup> The effect is that in

17 Scott Straus, "It's Sheer Horror Here": Patterns of Violence during the First Four Months of Côte d'Ivoire's Post-Electoral Crisis', *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (1 July 2011): 481–89, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adr024>; Hanne Fjelde and Kristine Höglund, 'Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa', *British Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 2 (April 2016): 297–320, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123414000179>; Benn Eifert, Edward Miguel, and Daniel N. Posner, 'Political Competition and Ethnic Identification in Africa', *American Journal of Political Science* 54, no. 2 (2010): 494–510, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00443.x>.

18 De Bruijne, 2019, Census of nationally relevant elites Cote d'Ivoire.

19 Michael Wahman and Edward Goldring, 'Pre-Election Violence and Territorial Control: Political Dominance and Subnational Election Violence in Polarized African Electoral Systems', *Journal of Peace Research* 57, no. 1 (1 January 2020): 93–110, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319884990>; Sarah Birch, *Electoral Violence, Corruption, and Political Order* (Princeton University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvvsqckd>.

20 Clionadh Raleigh and Daniel Wigmore-Shepherd, 'Elite Coalitions and Power Balance across African Regimes: Introducing the African Cabinet and Political Elite Data Project (ACPED)', *Ethnopolitics* 0, no. 0 (22 June 2020): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2020.1771840>; Leonardo R. Arriola, 'Patronage and Political

‘overrepresented’ areas, regimes are more able to bias voter preferences by building extensive patrimonial ties and neutralize the opposition. But in malapportioned areas of severe and moderate under-representation areas, there are incentives for violence for the opposition and the regime.<sup>21</sup>

The difficulty for this scenario is that data on regional representation is usually lacking or very rudimentary and old, and ministerial appointments are often not kept up to date. To correct for this, we collected data on all present (senior) appointments by the RHDP and their regional background (N=110).

Based on these data, five regions have high malapportionment rates<sup>22</sup> and are more likely to experience violence if this scenario is true: Abidjan, Nawa, San-Pedro, Haut-Sassandra and Guemon. See figure 1c for a map and the annex for underlying data.

#### Scenario 4: violence in competitive areas

A fourth hypothesis is that electoral violence will occur in competitive areas. Most research points out that electoral violence will particularly be evident in ‘swing’ regions and generally competitive areas.<sup>23</sup> The

motivation is that both the incumbents and opposition try to limit community support for candidates to influence turnout numbers. Moreover, violence aims to instil fear directed against contending candidates to limit their ability to campaign.

One way to measure the competitiveness of regions is by looking at past electoral performance. The current Ivorian situation however demands more information to discern competitiveness. All post-2010 elections are characterized by very low turnout numbers due to the fear among FPI supporters, and allied RHDP candidates representing RDR, PDCI and UDPCI, coupled with a massive re-districting effort. It is thus not possible to directly infer political competitiveness from recent election results.

Therefore, we took the results from the last competitive election (the first round of the 2010 elections) as a basis, and recalculated the outcomes for the regional boundaries and new alliances (see the annex). Moreover, nominally ‘loyal’ or ‘majority areas’ that are now contested – areas of the PDCI-Renaissance; UDPCI and Amon Tanoh – also become competitive.

Hence, if this scenario holds true one should see violence in ‘standard’ swing and competitive areas (e.g. Abidjan) as well as in areas that became competitive because the RHDP co-opted sizable numbers of the opposition. This means violence in Abidjan, Sud-Comoe, Belier, Iffou, N’zi, Tonkpi, Yamniousoukro, Bounkani and Gontougo. See figure 1d for a map and annex for underlying data.

Stability in Africa’, *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 10 (1 October 2009): 1339–62,

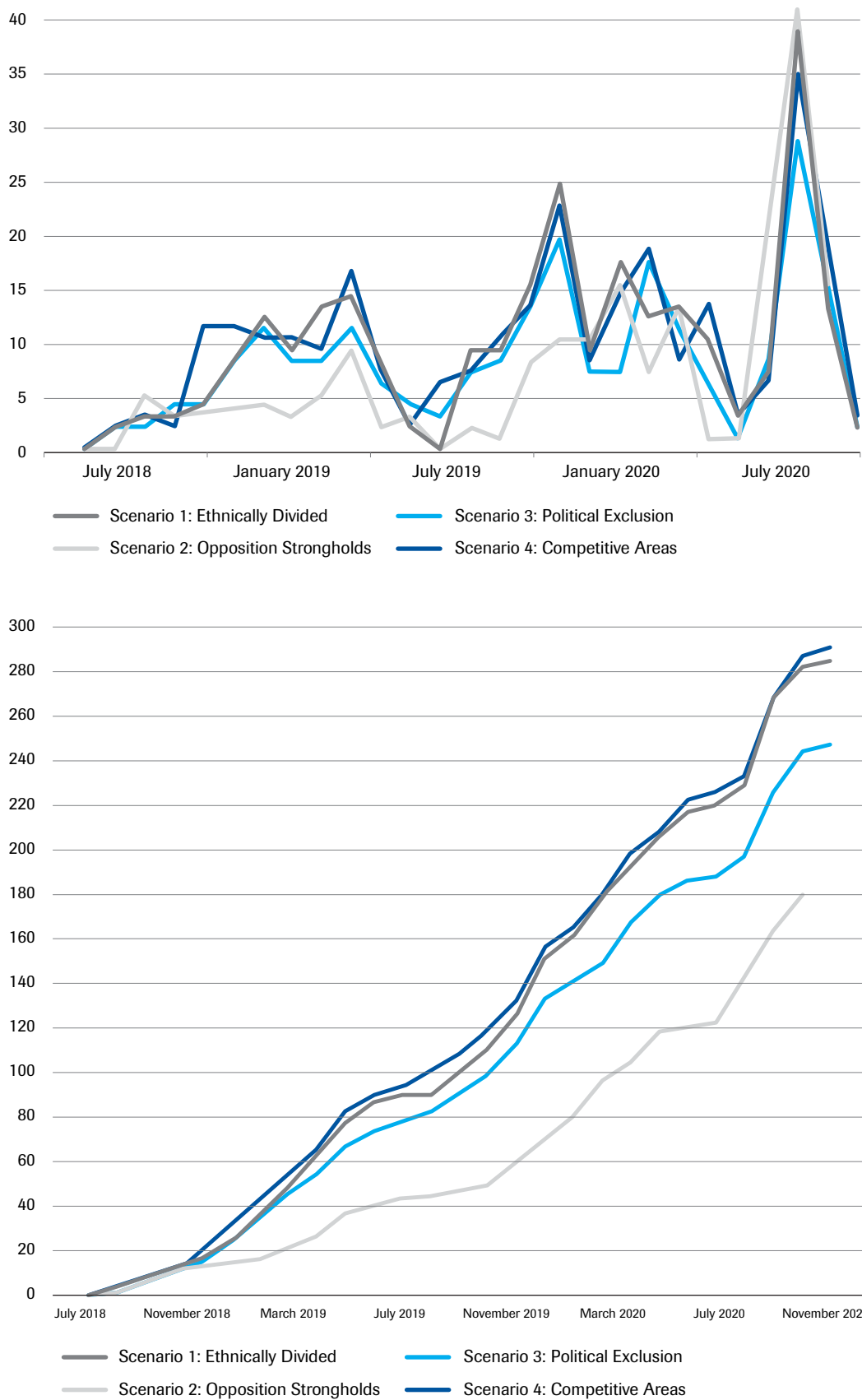
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414009332126>.

21 Ursula Daxecker, ‘Unequal Votes, Unequal Violence: Malapportionment and Election Violence in India’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 17 December 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319884985>.

22 Measured as the difference between the relative share of the region in the total number of appointments and the regional population share in the total population number.

23 Steven I. Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511510458>; Aurélien Evequoz, ‘Electoral Violence in Authoritarian Regimes: Locations and Determinants of Government Coercion’ (University of Geneva, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.13097/archive-ouverte/unige:116727>; Ibrahim Bangura en Kovacs, ‘Competition, Uncertainty and Violence in Sierra Leone’s Swing District’, in *Violence in African Election: Between Democracy and Big Man Politics*, 2018,

<https://www.transitioninternational.com/ti/competition-uncertainty-and-violence-in-sierra-leones-swing-district/>; Mascha Rauschenbach and Katrin Paula, ‘Intimidating Voters with Violence and Mobilizing Them with Clientelism’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 8 April 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318822709>.



**Figure 2 a/b Electoral violence per scenario (monthly and cumulative)**



## Initial support for Scenario 4 (violence in competitive areas)

Which scenario is more likely? Research shows that electoral violence occurs not only on election day but also in the months before polling day to circumvent public scrutiny.<sup>24</sup> Can we see a logic in the current violence and that which has occurred in the recent past? Through the collection of ongoing, real-time, local violence data from Cote D'Ivoire, we are able to assess which scenario is – at this moment – supported by evidence.

Figure 2a and 2b present data on all violence and protests in Cote d'Ivoire since July 2018 (when the PDCI-RDA left the RHDP). Figure 2a presents the monthly number of events for each of the four scenarios. There is a high correlation between scenarios that are particularly clear from the same peaks – e.g. the arrest of Soroistes in December 2019 and the third term announcement by Ouattara (in August 2020). It suggests that national political events are important drivers of political violence and that future national political events (e.g. court rulings) will have a major impact in the weeks and months to come.

However, figure 2b presents cumulative scores of violence for each scenario – to discern which motive is stronger. At this moment before the election day, these data point to electoral violence being highest in competitive areas implying that Scenario 4 (Competition) is best supported by these data.<sup>25</sup> The incumbent and opposition have core support areas but closely contest the outcome in 'swing' areas and areas where they have to poach a substantial number of votes from their opponents. Election violence in Cote d'Ivoire has so far occurred in swing

areas, areas with a PDCI-Renaissance presence, the core area of the UDPCI and the base of Amon Tanoh. It means that we are likely to see more violence in Abidjan, Sud-Comoe, Belier, Iffou, N'zi, Tonkpi, Yammousoukro, Bounkani and Gontougo in the weeks to come.

It should be noted that scenario 1 (Ethnic Division) seems to be supported at face value. Indeed, there has been ethnic campaign rhetoric and some incidents of ethnic violence.<sup>26</sup> However, looking at the specific events in the data highlights that there are hardly any ethnic groups involved and few reported ethnic motives (about 8%). As the electoral success of the RHDP depends on representing itself as an inclusive party that can particularly cater for the PDCI-Renaissance base (Baoule) it seems, *ceteris Paribus*, unlikely that electoral violence during the first and second term will take on a distinct ethnic character.

## Policy suggestions

This policy brief used academic research to present four scenarios of electoral violence showing that most pre-electoral violence takes place or will take place in swing areas, areas with a PDCI-Renaissance presence, at the base of the UDPCI and at the base of Amon Tanoh. These results have four implications for policy makers:

1. **Postponing the elections will not help.** This policy brief finds that electoral violence in Cote d'Ivoire is already taking place in areas that are electorally competitive: Abidjan, Sud-Comoe, Belier, Iffou, N'zi, Tonkpi, Yammousoukro, Bounkani and Gontougo. Both the RHDP and the opposition parties are unsure about support and use various forms of electoral violence to garner votes. The main implication is that delaying the elections – as many advocate –

24 Ursula E Daxecker, 'The Cost of Exposing Cheating: International Election Monitoring, Fraud, and Post-Election Violence in Africa', *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 4 (1 July 2012): 503–16, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343312445649>.

25 This result is robust for alternative specifications such as other start dates and different types of violence.

26 AfricaNews, 'Côte d'Ivoire: Election Tensions Erupt in Fatal Ethnic Clashes', Africanews, 19 October 2020, <https://www.africanews.com/2020/10/19/cote-d-ivoire-election-tensions-erupt-in-fatal-ethnic-clashes/>.

will not structurally alter the incentives for violence.<sup>27</sup> While it may temporarily create the impression of calm, it will give an opportunity for concealed intimidation and a flare up of violence close to any new election date;

2. **Despatching election monitoring missions.** Due to COVID-19 election monitoring missions have been cancelled (EU, ECOWAS, AU). With the rising levels of political violence and the direct relation between electoral violence and political competition, there is an urgent need to dispatch observers that ensure a bare minimum of electoral monitoring. One of the urgent tasks of these missions is not only to have a presence on election day, but to reach out to competitive areas and engage with the population to directly measure citizens' feelings of intimidation;
3. **Commit to halting donor funding to sponsors of violence.** As electoral violence is a strategic tool to gain the upper hand in contentious politics, international actors and donors have to alter the calculations of politicians in Cote d'Ivoire. One effective way to discourage the use of pre-electoral violence is to commit publicly to halting funding to any individual who sponsors electoral violence and subsequently obtains a position. Electoral violence should no longer be beneficial;
4. **Prepare for violence in post-electoral Cote d'Ivoire.** This brief has made a prediction on pre and during election violence but there will be a separate analysis of post-electoral violence. The 2010 elections were particularly violent in the months after the outcome. Furthermore, the determinants of post-electoral violence are different from the determinants of pre-election violence. Yet the first step in preventing post-electoral violence is to limit pre-election violence.

## Annex: Data and Measurement

### Hypothesis 1: Ethnic division:

- Unit of Analysis; fishnet squares of 10km based on GEOPER<sup>28</sup> and corrected with ethnic sub-group maps for Cote d'Ivoire;
- Fishnet squares were aggregated to ADM1 with the relative share of the dominant ethnic group in the fishnet (weighted by population density in the fishnet);
- Per ADM1 politically relevant divisions are noted (Baoule, Agni, Bete, Kru, Other Akan vs. Malinke, Senoufo);
- Herfendahl index created based on a percentage share of the ethnic group in the ADM1 and Status '1' assigned where Herfendahl index shows fractionalization (<.8) as well as politically relevant ethnic divisions.

### Hypothesis 2: opposition areas

- There have not been truly competitive elections since 2010 as the 'real' FPI was in hiding. Equally, RHDP strength from elections is not possible. The PDCI, RDR and UDPCI presented joint candidates for the RHDP;
- The electoral status of a district is determined by the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the 2010 elections. Due to administrative divisions we took department election data<sup>29</sup> and re-districted these to the new regional division;
- Status was determined by adding the votes for PDCI/FPI/UPDCI where a third of all PDCI votes were assigned to the RHDP (proxying the PDCI-Renaissance defection);
- Definitions: Loyal: When the RHDP had more than 65% of the vote; Competitive Majority: When RHDP scored 40-65%; Swing: When closely contested (45-55%); Competitive Minority: When the Coalition scored 40-65%; Opposition Loyal: FPI, UDPCI, and/or PDCI scoring more than 65% of the votes;

28 Julian Wucherpfennig e.a., 'GeoEPR Dataset' (Harvard Dataverse, 29 March 2011), <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/CCF1MM>.

29 <https://www.abidjan.net/elections/presidentielle/2010/resultats/1ertour/>

27 International Crisis Group, 'Côte d'Ivoire'.

- In some case, the RHDP electoral outcomes from 2010-2020 required a change in the landscape (but in no case was this relevant for the calculation);
- Hypothesis 2 presents Opposition Loyal areas.

### **Hypothesis 3: Representation**

- Data based on unpublished work by De Bruijne, 2019 all formal appointments of the RHDP collected since 2019 (keeping it up to date up until the present);
- Calculated percentage share of the region in the total number of appointments by July 2020 and a percentage share of the region according to population;
- Creating a 'disproportionality' rate<sup>30</sup> (defined as the sum of the squared difference between the relative share of the region in the total number of appointments and the regional population share in the total population number) and defined 3% rates as the threshold (which is the base share for 33 regions in one country).

### **Hypothesis 4: Contested areas;**

- See calculation H2;
- Took 'swing' areas and 'competitive minority' areas where PDCI or UDPCI were the largest.






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30 Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell, *The Politics of Electoral Systems* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

### About the Clingendael Institute

Clingendael – the Netherlands Institute of International Relations – is a leading think tank and academy on international affairs. Through our analyses, training and public debate we aim to inspire and equip governments, businesses, and civil society in order to contribute to a secure, sustainable and just world.

[www.clingendael.org/cru](http://www.clingendael.org/cru)  
[cru@clingendael.org](mailto:cru@clingendael.org)  
+31 70 324 53 84

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### About the authors

**Kars de Bruijne** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Clingendael Institute specialized in civil conflict, conflict data, and the security implications of conflicts for Europe. He works on hybrid governance, and elite politics in West Africa and lived and worked in Cote d'Ivoire.

**Prof. Clionadh Raleigh** is the Executive Director at the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). She is also Senior Professor of Political Violence and Geography in the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex. Her primary research interests are the dynamics of conflict and violence, African political environments and elite networks.