



Political Stability

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Cover photo: African leaders converge at a gathering. Source jangawolof.wordpress.com

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Editorial

Political Bifurcations and Stability

West Africa's variegation of societies poses great potentials for conflict and instability. It has been argued that a lot of conflicts in the sub region have resulted from divide-and-rule policies and practices of the colonialists and increased neo-colonial actions. But since no society exists in isolation, nations would surely attempt to impact the affairs of others, sometimes unwittingly, at other times as matters of deliberate state policy: West African nations thus ought to chart their own courses. Probably, this is better achieved as a collective, providing the *raison d'être* for studying and understanding political bifurcations.

Bifurcations connote previous stability in systems and characterise complex systems such as the social and political terrains in West Africa with many ethnic, linguistic, political and religious groups. Though the outcomes of these conflicting positions and relations might not be easily determined, adroit management of the transition can lead to more stable systems. West African political and civil leaders are in the best positions to fashion out policies to work with their diversities.

As Professor Okello Oculi argues in this edition (Conversation), beneath all the veneer of religious, ethnic and political colorations to every conflict in this sub region lies the core issues of poverty and access to resources; and the politician that proves most capable of giving people the basics of life shall receive votes from the electorate. Leopold Senghor's 20-year leadership of Senegal in spite of being from minority ethnic and religious groups serves as a classic illustration of Oculi's point.

It would appear evident then that increased political activity is required of West Africans to galvanise people-centred governance. But that itself demands high political maturity to seek the basic needs of all citizens of every nation. The ECOWAS Parliament, as a forum for dialogue, consultation and consensus for representatives of the peoples of West Africa in order to promote integration, must play a pivotal role in achieving this. Members of the Parliament are placed at vantage positions to pick good practices of nations like Ghana and Niger as models for other nations.

On their own, political leaders ought to develop the goodwill by looking beyond primitive accumulation of capital to leaving legacies of people-centred development. Crimes of corruption and nepotism should not be left unpunished, for impunity only allows such bad practices to linger and fester. Formation of coalitions by political parties as was the case in Niger is also an encouraging emerging trend. Formation of coalitions entails consensus building and broadening of political landscape, two important ingredients that will ensure stability in the polity. Sure, West African nations can achieve stability in spite of the bifurcations.

-Odoh Diego Okenyodo



Democracy and Political Futures in West Africa

In the 1980s and early 1990s, authoritarianism and militarism in West Africa led to serious political crisis and civil wars in the sub region. Fratricidal civil wars hit Liberia and Sierra Leone and subsequently Cote d'Ivoire while low intensity warfare broke out in Nigeria's Niger Delta, the Sahelian zone of Niger and Mali, Casamance in Senegal and Guinea Bissau. The restoration of democracy in the region in the 1990s however led to a reduction of tensions and the return of political stability. This return of democracy and crisis over elections are nonetheless leading to a return of structural tensions and political instability in the region.

One element of the post-return-to-democracy crisis is the re-emergence of the old habit of authoritarian ruling incumbents or their families to blatantly refuse to leave power as and when due. When President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo died in 2005, his

son simply took over, in total disregard of the constitution, and it took enormous pressure and threats for ECOWAS under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo to force him to step down and organise elections.

President Olusegun Obasanjo himself nearly precipitated a major political crisis in Nigeria in 2006 when he tried to change the constitution so that he would not have to step down after his two terms in office, the maximum allowed by law. In Niger, President Tandja refused to step down in 2010 when he finished his two terms in office, precipitating major political upheaval and was finally forcibly removed from office through a coup d'état.

At the heart of the rising tensions provoked by elections and political instability is the unwillingness of ruling cabals to cede power democratically. This is best expressed by the twelve-year-old

crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. In December 1999, General Robert Guei carried out a coup because he was afraid that Muslim northerners would win the programmed elections to hold in 2000. The danger, he argued, was that Alassane Outtara must not be allowed to win elections, so he banned Outtara from the contest and declared he himself would run as military head of state.

He disqualified Ouattara from standing in the October 2000 elections, via a politically manipulated Supreme Court judgement, on the grounds that the latter's mother was from Burkina Faso. The exclusion prompted Ouattara's RDR to call for a boycott of the elections. General Guei's attempt to stop the elections in which early results indicated that discontentment as Laurent Gbagbo was winning, led to widespread protests and violent demonstrations by Gbagbo's FPI against Guei. Guei was assassinated and Gbagbo emerged as

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President, maintaining the exclusion policy. The result was civil war in 2002 when northern Muslims in the country declared war and the country was split into two following the outbreak of hostilities.

When Laurent Gbagbo's term in office ended in 2005, he too refused to organise elections on the same grounds as General Guei that Alassane Ouattara might win. He delayed the elections for five years and ruling without an electoral mandate until he was forced to hold elections in 2010 through international pressure. To confirm his worst fears, Alassane Ouattara did win the elections and Gbagbo refused to hand over power until war returned to the country and a combination of troops from the northern patriotic forces, the French army and the United Nations forces marched into Abidjan and arrested him in his bunker after a bloody civil war.

At the heart of the Ivorian crisis are population's dynamics and the reconstitution of political majorities/minorities in the country. Cote d'Ivoire is a country that was not too long ago one of the shining stars of stability and prosperity in the West African region. The prosperity was based on encouraging African immigration. The influx of people into the country led to a situation in which about 40% of the population were descendents of immigrants. For the late President Boigny, it was good for the country. He paid good prices to these farmers for their products, thereby stimulating production that catapulted Cote d'Ivoire into the world's leading producer of cocoa in 1979, the third largest exporter of coffee after Brazil and Colombia, and Africa's leading exporter of pineapples and palm oil. These conditions that catapulted Cote d'Ivoire into a

model of 'African miracle' were soon to become the same reasons for its slip into descent and chaos after the death of Houphouet-Boigny in 1993.

Conflicts were inevitable following the arrival of multiparty politics in 1990 in response to massive protests by students and opposition leaders such as Laurent Gbagbo and his Front Populaire Ivoirien FPI. In the first ever Ivorian multi-party elections in May 1990, Houphouet-Boigny did not only win the elections in which Laurent Gbagbo was the only other candidate, he also sought political accommodation with the north through the appointment of Alassane Ouattara a Malinke from the Northern Mande ethnic group to serve as the country's Prime Minister with the aim of tapping into his international reputation and economic management skills as former Director in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to redeem Cote d'Ivoire economically. The appointment did not only add to an emerging northern consciousness after decades of agonising and complaints about marginalisation and lagging behind the south in socio-economic conditions, it also shifted the battle of the simmering conflicts between Ivorian south and north from economic sphere into the political sphere, with the latter making strong demands through a Charter of the North for:

fuller recognition of the Muslim religion..., more efforts to reduce regional inequalities, greater political recognition of the north political loyalty during the upheavals of the 1980s and ...an end to Baoule nepotism in recruitment to public jobs.

This was the context in which elections and multi-party elections

became the basis for political crisis and civil war.

The surprising case in which elections have not led to political crisis is Guinea. Guinea has not known free and fair elections between 1958 and 2010. The 2010 elections in the country was a direct contest between the rich and powerful Fulani elite under the leadership of Cellou Dalen who had been excluded from power since 1958 or the minority ethnic groups supporting the historic opposition figure and Malinke power broker, Alpha Conde.

Guinea has been ruled by three people since Sekou Toure said no to the French in 1958. He was in power for 26 years from 1958 to his death. Lansana Conte took over and ruled for 24 years until his death on 22 December 2008 when Captain Dadis Camara took over as the youngest person to take over power in the country. He refused to commit himself to the calendar proposed by the international contact group to organise elections and hand over power by the end of the year. Rather, he requested for two years to destroy the drug gangs, unravel corruption, review the constitution, develop infrastructure, improve public morality and organise elections in which he would be a candidate. He was subsequently shot by his own guard and the elections were organised.

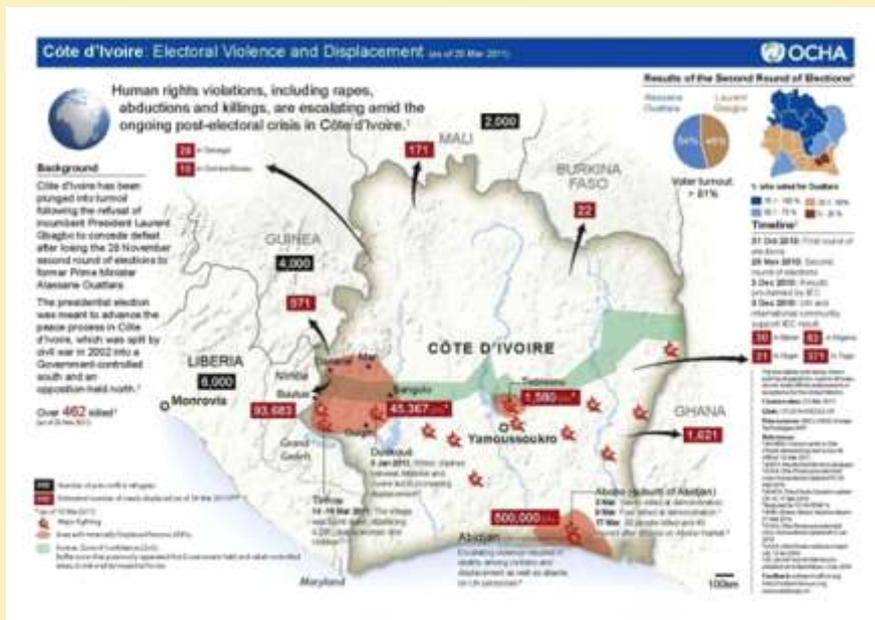
Guinea has had more than its fair share of arbitrary rule. Under Sekou Toure's 26-year rule, plots against the regime were imagined on a monthly basis and an estimated fifty thousand people were killed as suspected coup plotters. Over the next ten years, political crisis could break out in the country and the majority ethnic group in the country, the Peuls who constitute 43% of the population remain totally marginalised from political power due to the gang-up by all the other groups in the country. The

Migration, Population Movements and Elections

We already know from the West Africa Long Term Perspectives Study (WALTPS) that through a combination of rapid urbanisation and loss of livelihoods occasioned by desert encroachment, the population of West Africa is moving southward into a few bustling and bursting cities like Accra, Abidjan, Lome, Lagos and Cotonou, for example. While these movements remain largely within the national boundaries and hardly distort the regional demography of West Africa at the moment, they are significant for two reasons: they are happening simultaneously across the region; and they are likely to reshape the demography of the region over the coming years.

But beside the North-South trend of migrations, we are witnessing significant threads of movement across national boundaries within the region as well. These movements are on the one hand in search of improved livelihood; but they are also happening involuntarily due to conflicts and natural disasters such as floods. In Cote d'Ivoire, the protracted political tussle which followed the Presidential Elections in November 2010 has forced hundreds of thousands to flee their country to seek refuge in neighbouring Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana, while other refugees have made their way as far as Nigeria and Niger.

The implication of these displaced populations on elections and electoral processes are stark. Of the



A map showing Cote d'Ivoire's Post Election Population Displacements: http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-VaRy-_El6uY/TZ8ZiKsRhxl/AAAAAABh4/

countries hosting these refugees, most are at critical points in their electoral circles: Nigeria and Niger have had their Presidential Elections in 2011; Liberians will be electing their President in October 2011 while Guinea is slowly returning to normalcy after its violent post-elections conflict in 2010. Burkina Faso held its election which was marred by allegations of irregularities and violence in 2010 while Ghana and Mali are scheduled to have theirs in 2012.

But what is the implication of having thousands of refugees in a country just before, or after an election? Noting that elections in many West African nations are often pursued on an ethnic basis, sudden changes in the demography of the country (with the arrival of refugees) are often viewed with suspicion by

the political class and thus resisted. In Nigeria, for example, it was alleged that many foreigners mostly from neighbouring and other West African countries had registered as voters and some did attempt to participate in the electoral process. The Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) reported deportation of 87 nationals of Niger Republic arrested at polling centres for "fears that they could be used in electoral malpractice" although they had not as yet committed any electoral offence. The Nigerian authorities were taking this preventive step as the use of aliens to rig the elections was a problem identified in previous elections.

Another report from Nigeria's ThisDay Newspaper indicated that about 10 foreign nationals were arrested for participating in the voter registration exercise earlier in the year. The report quoted an official of

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the NIS informing "citizens and all foreigners, especially Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) citizens and all African nationals residing across the length and breadth of Kwara state that they are not eligible to partake in the ... voters' registration exercise or any electoral activity for that matter; the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as it relates to immigration and citizenship laws forbid their participation and involvement. This also serves to warn foreigners and their Nigerian collaborators that they should desist from taking part in the ongoing registration exercise."

In a similar interview, the Comptroller, Kano State Command of the Nigeria Immigration Service hinted that many of foreigners involved in the electoral process believed that they have lived in Nigeria long-enough and automatically, "that makes them Nigerians" but this is not permissible under Nigerian laws. Closely related to this

is the on-going e-registration of ECOWAS citizens in Nigeria which authorities insist is not for their deportation but to help check trans-border crimes, human trafficking as well as drug related crimes in Nigeria. Although the registration is said to be for a different purposes, it was often discussed as part of the effort to ensure that the general elections were successful.

If such tensions characterise relations between citizens and residents over the electoral process in Nigeria how would Liberia prepare for elections? Already, there are of simmering tensions as food supplies available to refugees have dwindled, thus stretching the resilience of the host communities. Although this situation is expected to be remedied as normalcy returns to Cote d'Ivoire, the management of the refugees in Liberia, especially their welfare and the management of relationships between them and the host communities is likely to significantly influ-

ence the outcome of the Presidential Elections in Liberia. Presently, estimates show that there are 31,000 Ivoirian refugees as against 3.9 million citizens in Liberia. Note that Liberia is still trying to resettle thousands of refugees gradually returning to the country after its civil war; there is the bound to be comparisons and criticism regardless of how the government manages the Ivoirian refugee crises.

Since ethnicity and ethnic tensions have in the recent years hugely affected voting and the electoral processes in West Africa, it is conceivable to let this trend continue over the coming years. Regulating the movement of persons across the region with the view to protecting the opposition from supplementing their votes with alien population or to allow for interested parties to inflate their scores through the alien votes would therefore be of interest to politicians. This is particularly important as the composition of the ethnic groups in the region tend to cut across national boundaries.

Going forward, further research into the patterns of migration in the

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next elections are therefore going to be extremely contentious.

Instability in the neighbouring Guinea Bissau is another factor. In 2009, the President of Guinea Bissau, Joao "Nino" Vieira was gunned down by rampaging soldiers suspecting him of being implicated in the assassination of the chief of army staff. The country has become a narco-state in which factions of the army operate drug runs in collaboration with South American drug barons and have always threatened elected leaders who have tried to curtail their activities. The country also has been unable to pay the army

regular salaries and political instability is the order of the day.

The April 2011 Nigerian elections in Nigeria in which President Goodluck Jonathan, a southern minority Christian defeated a northern Muslim, Muhammadu Buhari, led to riots and the massacre of hundreds of people reminiscent of the 1966 killings that led to the three-year civil war in which one million people lost their lives. The return of very strong ethno-religious and regional tensions related to electoral outcomes is the most serious threat to West Africa's political stability.

As the capacity of the Nigerian

state to act as a neutral arbiter declines and state power is perceived as serving the particularistic interests of one group, the fear of "the other" rises and inhabitants of the state resort to other levels of solidarity such as the religious, ethnic and regional forms in search of security. Religious insecurity is particularly insidious and dangerous because it makes people feel threatened not just in their present lives but also in the hereafter. Ethnic insecurity is also potentially devastating. It provokes serious fears about the preservation of the identity of people. It is in this context that electoral outcomes become generators of political instability.

Dr Jibrin Ibrahim

Case Studies

Explaining Cote d'Ivoire's Democratic and Governance Deficits



Alasane Quattara acknowledges cheers from supporters.

The crux of the Ivorian conflict lies in the politics of xenophobia, exclusion and victimisation, which was adopted by successive political leaders in Cote d'Ivoire after the demise of Houphuet-Boigny. Successive leaders in Cote d'Ivoire such as Bedie, Guei and Gbagbo have exploited this issue for political mobilisation and patronage, leading to what has been described as ethnically motivated bloodshed (Fawale, 2004: 11).

Cote d'Ivoire's experience with the conduct of democratic elections can best be illustrated by the nature of the electoral code established by former President Henri Konan Bedie under what is termed a pseudo nationalist concept of Ivoirite --pure Ivoirianess (Ibrahim & Garuba, 2008: 39). The electoral code stipulated that a presidential candidate must be born of Ivorian parents and reside in the country for at least five years, thereby effectively sidelining Alasane Quattara, his only serious rival. This foundation of politics of exclusion set up by Henri Konan Bedie was reinforced by Laurent Gbagbo who refused to hand over power to the internationally recognised winner of the October, 2010 elections, Alasane Quattara. Under Gbagbo, Cote d'Ivoire, just like other African countries displayed what is being termed the three circuits of accumulation, which generated the conditions for democracy and governance deficit. These are the Primitive Accumulation of Capital (PAC) through corrup-

tion; Primitive Accumulation of Power (PAP) that made politics to be a matter of violence or warfare; and the Accumulation of Terror (AOT) that was demonstrated in the form of militia politics (Momoh, 2006: 76).

In 1995 Bedie introduced the idea of 'Ivorite' or 'Ivoirienness' by amending Article 11 and 35 of the constitution. The amendment was made in such a way that an aspirant for the office of President should:

- (i) Be of direct Ivorian parentage with a proof through presentation of the original birth certificate of both parent;
- (ii) Never have used any other nationality in the past; and
- (iii) Be living in Cote d'Ivoire for a minimum of five years continuously before the date of election.

The constitutional amendment was seen by many as a desecration of the legacy of Houphouet-Boigny who maintained a relatively stable and inclusive political environment. In a significant way it sharpened political differences, deepened ethnic, religious and communal divisions between the north and south, which also paralysed the once vibrant socio-economic and political life of the nation (Alli, 2006: 90). In the light of the provision identified above, Bedie argued that Quattara, a Muslim from the Northern Cote d'Ivoire was a Burkinabe from Burkina Faso. The October, 2010 presidential elections led to a major political crisis where the incumbent president, Laurent Gbagbo refused to cede power despite the electoral commission declaring his main rival Alasane Quattara the winner of the elections with 54.1% of the total vote cast, which ended with a run-off in November, 2010. A recent report of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) revealed that the ensuing political violence led to widespread human rights abuse, forced over one million Ivoirians to flee the country into neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone, with over eight hundred thousand people as internally displaced (OCHA, 2011).

The arrest of Laurent Gbagbo by rebel forces loyal to the internationally recognised winner of the presidential elections, Alasane Quattara opens a new vista in Cote d'Ivoire's political future. The new government under

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United Platform for Opposition Parties: The Niger Example



One of the major impediments to the deepening of the democratic process in West Africa is the overwhelming power and resources incumbent government possess and their propensity to refuse to relinquish power. The recent refusal of Laurent Gbagbo to hand over power after his defeat by Alassane Quattara in the recently concluded Ivorian elections is another example.

In understanding this trend, we must take on board the failure of opposition political parties to act as a check on the government.¹ Future political stability would require the establishment of effective checks and accountability in the hybrid regimes that exist in West Africa as a prerequisite for the democratic deepening² we seek. Some of the factors related to this failure have to do with self centred interests of the leaders of such parties, creation of parties along ethnic and regional lines rather than an all encompassing national party and also the failure of the governments in power to provide a level playing field. This has basically been the trend over the years in West Africa.

The recent Presidential Elections in the Republic of Niger presents a different scenario in which the opposition demonstrated a cohesiveness that ensured a victory for their leader, Mahamadou Issoufou of the PNDS party against Seini Oumarou of MNSD who was said to have strong ties to Mahmoud Tandja the ousted former president.

Since independence in 1960, Niger like most West African countries has had a hard time trying to instil a culture of multi-party democracy. The first 14 years after independence were run by a single-party under

the presidency of Haman Diori and his Parti Progressiste Nigerien (PPN). Military governments under Lt. Colonel Seyni Kountche and Brigadier General Ali Saibou would continue until the early 1990's when the wind of democracy swept through the region. Following the restoration of democracy, constitutional rule was short lived short lived as Col. Ibrahim Baré Mainassara overthrew the government of Mahamane Ousmane, the President and leader of the Convention Démocratique et Sociale (CDS). Mainassara himself was later assassinated and the country returned to civil rule.

Cohesiveness of political parties in Niger, especially those in the opposition started emerging following the return to democracy in 1999 when Mahamadou Tandja emerged as president on the platform of the MNSD party through a coalition with the CDS. In 2004 Tandja would consolidate his reign by winning 65% of the votes to secure a second term. The legislative elections of the same year saw the Convention Démocratique et Sociale (CDS, Democratic and Social Convention), the Rassemblement Social Démocratique (RSD, Rally for Social Democracy), the Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Progrès (RDP, Rally for Democracy and Progress), the Alliance Nigérienne pour la Démocratie et le Progrès (ANDP, Nigerien Alliance for Democracy and Progress), and the Parti pour le Socialisme et la Démocratie au Niger (PSDN, Social Party for Nigerien Democracy) all joining Tandja to win 88 of the 113 seats. The ability of these parties to effectively align was thus established.

The democratic process would later be scuttled as Tandja's refusal to relinquish power would lead to a military coup under the leadership of Djibou Salou who organised the elections of 2011.

As part of the ECOWAS observation team for the 1st and 2nd rounds of the 2011 elections, I could clearly see that tribal differences were set aside, party ideologies and manifestoes were collapsed and united for the sole purpose of defeating Seini Oumarou of the MNSD. This could be clearly seen in the united front put up by the two main opposition candidates in Mahamadou Issoufou (PNDS), an ethnic Hausa and Hama Amadou (MODEN/FA) from the Djerma ethnic group and the rest of the opposition parties. The dominant message during the elections as I witnessed was that of change, that whom they said would end the dominance of those who had failed to deliver to the people of Niger.

Going into the 1st round therefore the intention as I saw was to force a run-off and by the second round all the other parties team up with the party amongst

their ranks that had the highest number of votes. The PNDS, MODEN/FA, CDS, RDS, ANDP, ARD and the UDR all teamed up against the MNSD and at the end of the day forced a 2nd round as Mahamadou Issoufou (PNDS) had 36.16% of the votes and Seyni Oumarou 23.23% of the votes. The remaining 40.6% was shared by the remaining political parties.

The unity of purpose informed from a background of trying to upstage the MNSD would be further brought to the fore as all the other parties rallied behind the PNDS during the run-off elections. At the end of the elections Mahamadou Issoufou with help from the rest of the opposing parties accrued a total of 58.04% against the 41.96% of Seyni Oumarou and therefore emerge victorious.

The Niger example, I believe should serve as an example to political parties within the rest of the

region. There must be focus in surpassing ethnic and regional differences and it is possible to establish a national platform that can serve the general good of the people. This is a lesson to countries such as Nigeria where the opposition has always failed to unite in contests against incumbent parties.

Whether or not this trend becomes embedded in the actions of political parties within West Africa remains to be seen. Projecting into the future, I believe it is significant that for opposition political parties to adequately challenge the ruling parties, forming coalitions by putting aside ethnic and regional differences, ego, creating common grounds etc would go a long way in providing them with possibilities to defeat incumbent governments.

-Terfa Hemen

Candidate (Party)	First Round		Second Round	
	Number of Votes	% of Votes	Number of Votes	% of Votes
Mahamadou Issoufou (PNDS- Tarayya)	1,192,945	36.16%	1,797,382	58.04%
Seyni Oumarou (MNSD-Nassara)	766,215	23.23%	1,299,436	41.96%
Hama Amadou (MODEN/FA Lumanana)	653,737	19.82%	-	-
Mahamane Ousmane (CDS-Rahama)	274,676	8.33%	-	-
Amadou Cheiffou (RSD-Gaskiya)	134,732	4.08%	-	-
Moussa Moumouni Djermakoye (ANDP-Zaman Lahiya)	129,954	3.94%	-	-
Ousmane Issoufou Oubandawaki (ARD Adaltchi-Mutunchi)	63,378	1.92%	-	-
Amadou Boubacar Cissé (UDR-Tabbat)	52,779	1.60%	-	-
Abdoulaye Amadou Traoré	17,630	0.53%	-	-
Bayard Mariama Gamatié	12,595	0.38%	-	-

First and Second Round Results of the Niger Presidential Elections 2011. Source: africanelections.tripod.com/he

Explaining Cote d'Ivoire's Democratic and Governance Deficits

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Quattara must be able to win back the confidence of the people by instituting a government that respects political pluralism at the expense of paying pro-Gbagbo loyalists in their own coin- a move that will further polarise the country. This can best be achieved through a reconciliation process that places emphasis on genuine forgiveness.

Since the security sector was negatively affected by the violence, the government of Cote d'Ivoire under the leadership of Quattara should work with the international community towards undertaking a comprehensive reform of the security sector in order to build a professional security, ensure that the security sector is subjected to civilian control and oversight, address the problem of proliferation of small arms and light weapons through a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme.

In view of the large scale abuse of human rights and killing that took place as a result of the political imbroglio between Gbagbo and Quattara, there is a need for both

the Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide, as well as the International Criminal Court (ICC) to undertake a mission to Cote d'Ivoire in order to investigate issues related to attempted genocide, crimes against humanity and impunity.

The government of Cote d'Ivoire should work with development partners as part of efforts towards amending or reviewing the constitution, as it relates to the article 11 and 35 that set the stage for the politics of exclusion and xenophobia in the country. This is the only way that durable peace, stability and inclusive politics can be guaranteed in the country.

The politics crisis in Cote d'Ivoire provides a great deal of lessons for aspiring despots and sit-tight leaders in Africa, in terms of the limits they can go in circumventing the rule of law and the wish of the people. In the final analysis, the path to electoral democracy and the rule of law in the country lies in Quattara's deviation from the

Cote d'Ivoire

legacy of the past, rooted in the politics of exclusion at the level of ethnicity and religion, greed, patronage and corruption.

With the enormous support and goodwill that Quattara currently enjoys, he cannot afford to let the people down by towing the path of his predecessors. He is now saddled with the big task of bringing Cote d'Ivoire and the Ivorians from the abyss. As he embarks on direly needed confidence building measure among the various divisions in Cote d'Ivoire, the success of such an effort should be predicated on recognising the fact that the threats to peace and security in the country are real, and failure to address them squarely constitute a major drawback for Quattara's image internationally. Thus, ignoring or addressing them as the case may be also requires building popular democracy and institutions that are rooted in justice,

equity and fairness to all regardless of ethnic, religious and regional cleavages. Quattara must also come to terms with three possible scenarios that might play out in the next five years: the stabilisation of democracy and return of economic development; the possibility of a coup d'etat within or outside the army or patriotic forces; and an incipient civil war as Gbagbo forces engage in armed rebellion against his government. For countries such as Liberia in the sub-region that are set for elections, there are lots of lessons to draw from Gbagbo's unconstitutional move to perpetuate himself in power against popular wish, which facilitated his transition from grace to grass.

Chris, M. A. Kwaja

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Migration, Population Movements ...

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region as well as the impact of population movements on electoral process in the region is needed. On the innate linkage between ethnicity and election processes, closer dialogue among political parties both within the countries of the region as well as across the national boundaries is imperative. In this regard, the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS should facilitate these dialogues to help chart the way forward for issue-based political participation in the future as well as allow for citizens of West African countries to move and work freely in any country in the region. Part of ECOWAS' election support to countries electoral circle should include sensitisation on the extent to which non-nationals could

be engaged in the electoral process to ensure that the intricate but vulnerable balance between free movement and national sovereignty as well as democracy and good governance in West Africa is not upset.

Nengak Daniel

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Monthly News and Current Affairs

Compiled by Oluchi Agbanyim

Guinea Gets \$700m for Dispute

Mining giant Rio Tinto said on 22nd April that it would pay the government of Guinea \$700 million after reaching an agreement to resolve



outstanding disputes over iron ore mining blocks in its Simandou iron ore project. The company said in an emailed statement to Reuters that it had signed a settlement to secure Rio's mining title for the southern Simandou blocks, paving the way for some \$10 billion in investment and the first shipment of iron ore by mid-2015. Rio had controlled

all of the Simandou concession but it was stripped of the northern half, and last year Guinea's government said it might also lose the southern blocks, where Rio is looking to partner with China's Chalco. <http://www.kdvr.com/business/sns-rt-business-us-riotinttre7313lc-20110422,0,2726152.story>

Compaore Names Self Defense Minister



Burkina Faso's

President Blaise Compaore has named himself Defense Minister of the country after a mutiny that threatened his 24-year rule in the country. The President now becomes a member of his 29-member cabinet. The trouble started on 21st April when members of the presidential guard began firing into the air, demanding unpaid housing allowances. Compaore responded by dissolving the government and removing the country's security chiefs. Hostilities in the country have been simmering for a long time.

<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/978956--burkina-faso-president-names-himself-defence-minister>

Outtara Investigates Gbagbo

The new government of President Alassane Ouattara in Cote d'Ivoire has announced on 26th April that it had initiated investigations into crimes allegedly committed by ousted President Laurent Gbagbo and his close associates. Gbagbo who had refused to concede defeat in the countries



November 2010 Presidential Polls along with his wife Simone and some 200 close associates were arrested from the presidential residence in the capital Abidjan on April 11, ending nearly five months of violent conflict between rival factions in the West African country. <http://www.rttnews.com/Content/GeneralNews.aspx?Id=1607231&SM=1>

Social Tensions Rise in Senegal

Ahead of the presidential election in 2012, social tensions are on the rise in Senegal. These are fuelled by occasional spikes in the cost of basic goods, the patchy provision of welfare and electricity, and the lack of jobs as well as President Wade's liberal reading of the constitution and intention to run for a 3rd term in office. Singer and businessman Youssou Ndour is becoming a rallying point for the opposition and rumoured to be a key challenger.



http://www.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=RKArticleVW3&article_id=67936391&page_title=Article&rf=0

Investment Laws Meeting In Port Novo Ends

A technical meeting to harmonise the investment laws in West Africa has ended in Port Novo, Benin on 2nd April 2011. The six-day meeting enabled the participants to compare the regional framework called the Community Investment Code (CIC) with the investment laws of Member States, and to use the



reports of the national consultants to determine areas of convergence and divergence. The CIC provisions were later reviewed comprehensively against the provisions of Member States' respective Constitutions, Commercial laws Sector Codes and National Investment Codes.

<http://news.ecowas.int/presseshow.php>

Nigeria Conducts General Elections

Nigeria has conducted a historic General

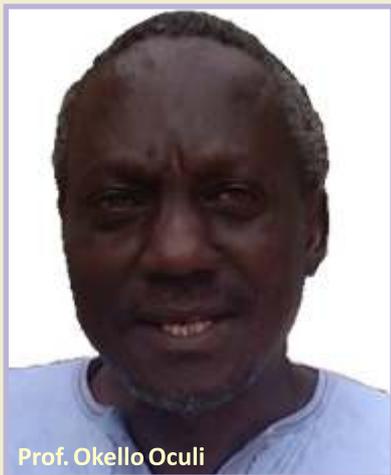


Election to elect its President, Parliament and its State Governors. The elections were held between 9th and 26th April across the country. The elections are thought to be significant improvements on the last exercise in 2007, but there are reports of many irregularities as well as post election violence that has claimed many lives and destroyed properties across the country leading to postponement of the state level elections in some of the states.

<http://www.cddwestafrica.org/>

Bifurcations Conceal Real Interests-Oculi

Ugandan novelist, poet, and professor of Social and Economic Research, Okello Oculi, speaks with the West African Insight team on political bifurcations in the sub region. He argues that ethnicity, religion and other arbitrary lines of division in political conflicts only serve as proxies for anxiety over access to the means of satisfying basic needs. Excerpts:



Prof. Okello Oculi

West African countries increasingly experience political bifurcation, deep divisions along ethnic and religious and other lines, like in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria. Is there a risk of democracy collapsing in these countries over the next ten years?

There is no risk. We see how the Ghanaians have managed theirs. The two major political parties revolve around the Ashanti, the majority who make about 30% of the electorate. The majority of the electorate make about 70%, and they go for what the candidate is offering. So if 70% of people, who are made up of all the other ethnic groups in Ghana, don't vote according to ethnicity, there is no reason to worry about the behaviour of the others. In the Nigerian situation, when Chief Moshood Abiola won, Abiola didn't win because he was Yoruba, he won because people felt generally that

he was somebody who was going to bring a new opening. People felt for the first time that a non Northerner was going to rule. The same kind of sentiment has been carried into Jonathan's victory.

What would you say of Senegal? They have never had a coup d'état in their country.

What Leopold Senghor is not celebrated for is that Senghor showed closeness to the grass-roots. When he came back from France and started to go into politics, he went and slept in the villages, talking overnight with village leaders. Francophone intellectuals usually came in with all the 'swagger' of being educated in Paris; for him to come down and be seen sitting on the ground, eating groundnuts with ordinary people, talking all night, it made such an appeal; it sent his reputation around the people that by the time he started making linkages with the marabouts, who were the religious leaders, who also controlled large groundnut farms, the major cash crops in Senegal and Gambia, the link was made between that rural power and a man who was preaching populism. He became an easy ally of the marabouts. Not only was he an elite, he was also a Christian minority, the Serer, whereas 90% of Senegalese are Wolof, and the Wolof are predominantly Muslims. So for twenty years, the 90% Muslim Wolof voted for this Catholic politician who had managed to get

for himself a populist image and managed to keep it. So I think behind the ethnic identity are people's vital interests. If they feel that you respect their humanity and somehow answer to their needs they would vote for you regardless of religion, ethnicity, etc.

Given the recent assassination of Osama Bin Laden, what is the risk of al-Qaeda forces destabilising West Africa?

Other groups had taken over from Osama, as they say, by the time he was killed. The al-Qaeda units all over the world had taken over with their own little causes around the environments where they are, particularly where there was social injustice. Whether the ruling class uses religion to divert anger away from themselves into anti Islam, fighting jihads, fighting crusades is neither here nor there. Whether that would be translated into other groups in West Africa being cause of fighting against other ethnic groups can only be a matter of speculation.

What are your thoughts on democracy and what should be done to stabilise democracy in West Africa?

So long as people are starving, so long as people see that their living conditions are not improving, those people would be available for mobilisation. Their anger would be mobilised to hit out at somebody they see as the enemy.