

Côte d'Ivoire: The Unattainable Disarmament of Rebel Groups

Dr. Bertin G. Kadet

Researcher/Lecturer

Ecole Normale Supérieure d'Abidjan, RCI

Email : bertinkadet@yahoo.fr

Address: CP 8220, Com. 7 Tema, GHANA

Phone Number: +233 264 271 407

Abstract

The just-ended Ivorian socio-political crisis (2002-2011) calls on the need to put into perspective the obstacles facing the country in its efforts to get out of a security deadlock. The dynamic that governed the settlement of the conflict failed to lead to the disarmament of the rebel groups who took up weapons against the democratic institutions of the country. This stems from an interpretation of the international management devices of this crisis. As a matter of fact, since the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement is perceived as institutional procedures towards a validation of the armed violence in Côte d'Ivoire (West Africa), it remains the symbol of a biased political compromise. In fact, Ivorian rebel groups never proved able to disarm until a military solution was found to the crisis, thus turning the former aggressors into new leaders of the country.

Keywords: Côte d'Ivoire, crisis, rebellion, agreement, disarmament, security, peace.

Résumé

La récente crise socio-politique ivoirienne (2002-2011) interpelle sur la nécessaire mise en perspective des difficultés de ce pays à sortir de l'impasse sécuritaire. La logique ayant présidé au règlement du conflit n'a pas milité en faveur du désarmement des groupes rebelles ayant pris les armes contre les institutions démocratiques de ce pays. Cette situation découle d'une interprétation des dispositifs internationaux de gestion de cette crise. En effet, perçus comme des procédures institutionnelles de validation de la violence armée en Côte d'Ivoire (Afrique de l'Ouest), l'Accord de Linas-Marcoussis demeure le symbole d'un compromis politique biaisé. De fait, les groupes rebelles ivoiriens n'ont jamais pu désarmer jusqu'à ce qu'une issue militaire soit trouvée à la crise, faisant des anciens agresseurs les nouveaux dirigeants du pays.

Mots clés : Côte d'Ivoire, crise, rébellion, accord, désarmement, sécurité, paix.

Introduction

On the night of September 18 to 19, 2002, a coup is attempted against the regime of President Laurent Gbagbo in Côte d'Ivoire (West Africa) while on official visit to Italy. Insurgents attack military targets (barracks, armories, gendarmerie and police academies), strategic sites (prefecture buildings, town halls, State television and radio) and the homes of important figures in the country as well as civilians. This procedure suggests that it is not simply a mutiny or spontaneous

actions, but rather « *an attempt to change the nature of the regime, a coup d'état* »¹. Following their failure to take up Abidjan, the insurgents fall back to the center and north of the country. The attempted coup turns into a rebellion and plunges Côte d'Ivoire in an armed conflict with a North-South division of the country. To solve this crisis, the international community chooses to conduct negotiations between the legal government and armed gangs. Several peace agreements along with twenty UN resolutions are then signed between the actors in the crisis, but fail to bring peace to the country. In reality, despite efforts by the international community, rebel groups refuse to be disarmed. Finally in April 2011, those who took up arms against their country succeed in achieving their coup with support from international forces and become the new leaders of Côte d'Ivoire.

The research question is to find out the policy mechanisms through which informal armed bands succeed in not being disarmed, and finally seize the state power in the country, while the peace process is ongoing with backing from international political agreements including those of the United Nations. This interrogation is all the more crucial as the international community, including the UN is against armed violence and promotes peace in the world.

Methodologically, the study uses various documentary sources on this long military and political crisis. This includes political agreements and resolutions from institutions, government decisions, books, study reports or reports by international or military experts. Given the poisoning and demonization campaigns carried out against the political regime of that period, some comments are biased and subjective. Whenever possible, we take a close look at the content of official crisis management arrangements, including the political agreements signed by the parties to the conflict. Our analysis is also based on our personal experience as attentive observer of those events, and especially as political player who sat in the inner state power during this period (Kadet, 2011: 193-237). The facts reported here therefore also stand out as our testimony to those events. We will however try to confront our views with those of other authors.

This paper intends to show the complexity of the crisis in three parts. The first part analyzes the logic in the resolution of the Ivorian crisis, particularly through a consideration of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement which is an international management device of this conflict, and subsequent political agreements in order to show the challenges of the rebel war. This part also tries to determine whether disputants implement the agreements in order to restore peace. The second part examines the role of the United Nations as a major player in the management of the crisis. Eventually, the third part highlights the issue of disarmament, a process that experienced multiple twists and turns, but which determines peace and security in the country.

I- The dynamics of the political settlement of the Ivorian crisis and the question of disarmament of the rebel groups

The resolution of the Ivorian socio-political crisis is supported by various peace agreements. While recognizing the importance of agreements negotiated under the auspices of the African political and economic organizations including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement negotiated under the auspices of France and the UN Security Council resolutions (UN) remain the ones having a real impact on the security situation in the country, particularly in the disarmament process. Therefore, analyzing these devices deserve the attention of the researcher in order to grasp the momentum and understand the real issues of the Ivorian rebellion. This is the purpose of the following developments.

¹ Declaration of Pascal Affi NGuessan, Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire relating to the attack of September 19, 2002, Ivorian Broadcasting Television, Abidjan.

1- The Round Table and the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the challenges of the rebel war

After two unsuccessful attempts to solve the conflict at the subregional level (Accra I Agreement, 2002; Lomé Agreement, 2003), the French government convenes the Ivorian parties in conflict for a round table in Paris for solutions. As far as its organization, resolutions and implementation are concerned, the Linas-Marcoussis Round Table raises more concerns than hope for peace.

Concerning the way the conference was organized, analytical elements support the assertion that the Linas-Marcoussis conference was site for the expression of a balance of power between actors involved in the Ivorian conflict and also the opportunity to obtain an agreement aimed at weakening the Gbagbo regime. As a matter of fact, the French Government convenes the Ivorian political parties and rebel groups for negotiations from 15 to 24 January 2003. However, they do not to invite the Ivorian President into such discussions that should lead to decision-making, while those who attacked the country he is leading are taking part into that conference. Then, the Agreement aiming at finding a solution to the crisis is endorsed on January 25, 2003 in Paris, Centre Kléber. At this stage, the meeting is extended to African Heads of State including President Laurent Gbagbo, France, the UN, the International Monetary Fund and the European Union. One will note that the Ivorian President is just invited on January 24, 2003 towards endorsing the will of the real aggressors of his country. Besides, this is even the content of the statement made on the eve of the meeting by French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin on January 14 in France Parliament House:

« The Government is the instigator of a conference between the parties. Our goal is clear, even if it is ambitious: peace, reconciliation and reconstruction for Côte d'Ivoire. For us to succeed, we must address the problems undermining Côte d'Ivoire since the death of President Houphouët Boigny: the Ivoirité, the Land Law and the status of foreigners ».

Through this statement, the French government knows in advance what they are expecting from the Round Table without having heard the parties in conflict. Another element of analysis is that the number of delegations taking part in the Round Table is in favor of the opponents of the Ivorian regime. Indeed, the ten invited delegations include political parties and the rebels group. Political parties' delegations are as follows: the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI): 5 people; the Rally of Republicans (RDR): 5 persons; the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI-RDA): 5 persons; the Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI): 5 persons; the Ivorian Labour Party (PIT): 1 person; the Movement of Future Forces (MFA): 1 person; the Democratic Union and Citizens (UDCY): 1 person; the Rebel groups: 9 people divided between the Ivorian Great West Popular Movement (MPIGO), the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP), the Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI). Those three movements were baptized by the organizers of the conference as « the New Forces » speaking with a single voice. Their delegation includes political and military leaders of the rebellion while the military leaders of the opposing party, the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) are not taking part in the meeting. Another fact is that one of the moderators in the Round Table discussions in the person of Seydou Diarra will be appointed Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire at the end of the meeting. Finally it should be noted that through the game of the alliances created, the RDR, the PDCI-RDA, the UDPCI, the MFA and the three rebel movements (MPCI, MPIGO, MJP) form the Group of 7 (G7) united by one ideology known as the Houphouëtism, name given after the first Ivorian head of state Felix Houphouët-Boigny whose long term in office (1960-1993) exerted political governance favoring France, the former colonial power. The Houphouëtist group has 25 members out of the 32 persons around the table. The PIT and

UDCY are two small parties; they mainly focus on their own recognition. The FPI which is a party created by President Gbagbo calls for a new vision of Côte d'Ivoire through a political, economic and social reconstruction of the country, as well as the diversification of the country's partners. This party has 5 representatives. This number will get narrowed down to four when one of its representatives decides to leave the room as a way of challenging the attempt of « constitutional coup » by the French moderator and chairman of the Round Table, the Magistrate Pierre Mazeaud ².

As can be noticed, the participation of the Ivorian Government in the Round Table is discarded. In the same trend, the power imbalance governing discussions favors the opposition. This reflects a desire to weaken the regime of President Gbagbo and minimize the number of those who are able to defend that regime. In addition, the rebels are members of a coalition actively supported by the main organizer of the conference. This suggests a predominance of the views of the Group of 7 in the debates and means that the rebels are placed in the best conditions to request for more, not to disarm.

In its content, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement reveals contradictions. Certainly the Agreement reaffirms the need to « *preserve the territorial sovereignty of Côte d'Ivoire, respect for institutions and the restoration of the authority of the State* »; it also reaffirms « *its commitment to the principle of accessing to power and exercising same in a democratic way* ». Meanwhile at the same time, the agreement calls for the immediate release of all those who introduced armed violence by attacking the country and its institutions (Linas-Marcoussis, 2003). Furthermore, the Agreement calls for the establishment of a « *national reconciliation government* » led by an irremovable Prime Minister until the next presidential election, Prime Minister having « *the executive power.* » However, the Ivorian political system is a presidential system, not a parliamentary system. The Prime Minister is just the first of the Ministers; he is appointed by the President of the Republic; the only powers he has are those assigned him by his principal. Having recognized and proclaimed respect for Ivorian institutions (Linas-Marcoussis), is it normal to request that the Prime Minister have all the powers of the one who appoints him?

Concerning disarmament, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement obliges the government of President Laurent Gbagbo to dismiss the Ivorian youth recruited into the army since 19 September 2002 (Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, 2003, Chapter VII). However, the rebels change their name in a bid to be acceptable, becoming the « new forces ». The Agreement even recommends an amnesty law to absolve them of their crimes. In other words, the Linas Marcoussis Agreement demands impunity for aggressors.

Based on such facts, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement reveals that part of the international community stands in favor of a rebellion at the expense a State and its elected government contrary to the UN principles, the Charters of the African Union and ECOWAS. This agreement wants the government of President Laurent Gbagbo to give way to a National Reconciliation Government by the end of the conference holding at Centre Kléber in Paris on 24 January 2003. This National Reconciliation Government must have the prerogatives of the Head of State, in particular as regards the defense and the restructuring of the army. By forcing the Ivorian Head of State to accept rebels in his government, by stripping him of his key powers, the Linas-Marcoussis acknowledges and validates the coup of the rebels. The above observations indicate that the Linas-Marcoussis Round Table is a constitutional coup against President Laurent Gbagbo. In this respect, the organizers of the Linas-Marcoussis Round Table and the Agreement it led to are not encouraging the rebel groups to engage in a disarmament process.

² Pierre Mazeaud has been a member of French Constitutional Council from 1998 to 2004, and he was named as President of this institution on February 27, 2004 by President Jacques Chirac.

This is the main reason why there are challenges in implementing this agreement. In practice, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement enables the formation of a National Reconciliation Government on 13 March 2003. Progress is also achieved on the militarily front including the signing of a comprehensive agreement on cessation of belligerence acts on May 3, 2003 between the FANCI and the « New Forces »; a halt to the fighting on May 24 and the designation of cantonment sites for ex-combatants. Between Côte d'Ivoire and neighboring countries, a normalization of relationships emerges through the opening of secured transportation corridors to Mali and Burkina Faso. On 4 July 2003, a declaration of the end of the war is signed.

However, the political situation has kept deteriorating because of the difficulties experienced by the Prime Minister of the Reconciliation Government, Seydou Diarra in implementing some provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis including those empowering him to exercise « the powers of the executive ». Since International laws must apply in the observance of the Ivorian Constitution, it is impossible for the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the guarantor of the Basic Law of the country, to have himself evicted by his Prime Minister, especially when he realizes that the purpose of the game is to eject him from power. Faced with this deadlock, adjustments are made to the Linas-Marcoussis agreements through other meetings (Accra II Table Round, March 7, 2003 and Accra III, 30 July 2004, Pretoria Agreement I, 5- 6 April 2005 and Pretoria Agreement II, 29 June 2005).

Through these agreements, the rebels become members of the National Reconciliation Government, but they announce they will not disarm on the scheduled date (15 October 2004). This certifies that the New Forces remain in the logic of violence and rebellion, denying all legal, moral and political basis to the National Reconciliation Government, which is a way of challenging the international community (Bangré Habibou, 2004). It follows that the disarmament of the rebels, which is central to the peace process, is not performed. In his study on the issue of the security sector in Côte d'Ivoire, Arthur Boutellis (2011) noted that the lack of political will on the part of the government and the lack of trust between conflicting parties are the reasons that are often put forth to justify the reluctance of the rebels in integrating the Ivorian security forces and to allow the revival of the disarmament process: « *the lack of political will on the part of the government and the failure to build trust between the parties are often cited as the primary reasons for the failure to integrate security forces and launch a successful DDR ahead of the elections* » (Boutellis, 2011: 6)³. Such an assessment is inadequate since, for that political will to be expressed and for there to be trust between people who are shooting at each other, the rules enacted to bring them to order should not be suspected of being bias. Meanwhile, the Linas-Marcoussis process supporting the crisis showcases this as demonstrated in our analysis (supra). The lack of disarmament is primarily attributable to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement whose political calculations failed to find appropriate solutions to the Ivorian socio-political crisis.

As analysis indicates, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and all subsequent agreements are jointly validating a constitutional coup in order to supersede the institutions of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. This is the logic for understanding the management of the Ivorian crisis. Armed gangs who attacked a sovereign State are legitimized and promoted to the rank of credible interlocutors. This view is shared by Colonel Georges Peillon, a former spokesman for the French Licorne force in Abidjan. This former senior officer of the French army now turned into an entrepreneur acknowledges: « *Marcoussis was a fool's bargain; people who were ourcasts were labelled.* » (Aujourd'hui, 2015: 8). Under such conditions, it is appropriate to find an alternative solution to resolve this crisis, hence the direct dialogue with the rebellion initiated by the Ivorian president.

³ Arthur BOUTELLIS is a Senior Policy Analyst at the International Peace Institute focusing on peacekeeping operations. Before joining IPI he worked with the United Nations in Burundi (BINUB) in East Africa, Chad and the Central African Republic (MINURCAT) and Haïti (MINUSTHA).

2- The Ouagadougou Political Agreement (APO) and its tedious enforcement

The return to a lasting peace is related to the outcome and success of two complementary processes including the DDR process aiming at the disarmament of former combatants and the electoral process with the goal of electing the President of the Republic in 2005. In order to achieve these goals, and learning from previous peace agreements, President Laurent Gbagbo initiates a process of direct dialogue with the rebellion, which brings about the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (APO) signed on 4 March 2007 in the Burkinabe capital under the mediation of President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso. Above all, the Ouagadougou agreement signifies a process of appropriation by the Ivorians, a process of management of a crisis that hitherto has remained in the hands of the international community. Did this device of peace meet the expectations of the country?

From a general point of view, the APO addresses the following complementary areas: the general identification of the populations; the electoral process; the defense and security forces; the restoration of State authority throughout Côte d'Ivoire; the institutional framework for implementation; measures to consolidate national reconciliation, peace, security and the free movement of people and goods; monitoring mechanisms and consultation. However, in the context of this study, we need to examine the provisions on security and defense to show how the mechanism put in place helps promote the disarmament of the fighting forces.

Particularly concerning the security sector, Chapter 3 of the APO states that « *Parties recognize that the national army should be a reflection of the national unity and cohesion and guarantor of the stability of the republican institutions; they have agreed to restructure and rebuild the two armies towards the development of new defense and security forces committed to the values of integrity and republican morality.* »

To this end, the Agreement puts forth various concrete measures including the establishment of an Integrated Command Centre (CCI) under the joint command of the Chief of Staff of the FANCI and the Chief of Staff of the FAFN (art.3.1). This new body is responsible for unifying the fighting forces and implementing the restructuring measures of the Ivorian Defense and security Forces (art. 3.1.1.). To reach this goal, the CCI has six core missions (art. 3.1.3.), including the development of a defense and security policy, the implementation of a National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programme under the supervision of the Impartial Forces. In addition to the above, other measures were taken in 2007 and 2008 including four complementary agreements in order to accelerate enforcement of that Agreement, including the 27 March 2007 Additional Agreement, the 28 November 2007 second and third Additional agreements, the 22 December 2008 fourth Additional Agreement. These additional agreements set new dates for the grouping and disarmament of former combatants, the storage of weapons and the dismantling of militias by 22 December 2007 (APO III, 2007: Article 1). Recruitment in the Civic Service is also planned over the same period as well as financial measures for the monthly support of the ex-combatants until their integration or reintegration or reinsertion (International Crisis Group, 2008: 15). The fourth Additional Agreement (2008) sets out procedures for carrying out disarmament-related tasks. The question now is whether the signatories agree to apply the provisions of those agreements.

Regarding the latter concern, President Laurent Gbagbo, the guarantor of the unity of the country, takes various steps towards peace: on 17 October 2002, he signs the first act of peace in this crisis, the cease-fire with the rebels for that matter, thus clearly indicating the way to resolve the Ivorian crisis. Added to this are the negotiations that followed (Lomé, Linas-Marcoussis, Accra, Pretoria and Ouagadougou), the 8 August 2003 Amnesty Act and the enforcement of Article 48 of the Ivorian Constitution authorizing exceptionally Alassane Dramane Ouattara and

Henri Konan Bedié to stand for the presidential election, thus testifying to the will of the Ivorian head of state to favor dialogue and compromise in the search for solution. In such a context, the Ouagadougou Political Agreement consolidates the already existing good spirits. The APO is an extra motivation that drives the Head of State to multiply acts of goodwill in the quest for peace. Thus, on 12 April 2007, that is a month following the signing of the APO, President Gbagbo passes a second amnesty law to further reassure and strengthen the spirit of appeasement. On the military front, he obtains the voluntary disarmament of the vigilante groups called Great-West Resistance Front (FRGO) in Guiglo on May 19, 2007. In his presence and in the presence of the representatives of the international community, several hundred of war weapons are laid down by FRGO elements and the first flame of peace is lit from the city of Guiglo. The impetus from Guiglo immediately touches on Bouaké which in turn organizes a flame of peace in late June 2007. Other individual measures concerning rank promotion or advancement are then taken towards easing the election environment.

April 2009 is a decisive step in resolving issues on the security of elections. In a statement broadcast on both radio and television on Thursday April 30, 2009, the President of the Republic announces the deployment of 8,000 security officers to secure the presidential election. This quota will be made up of equal number of elements from both the New Forces and the Defense and Security Forces. In deciding to deploy this unit, the Ivorian Head of State only applies Article 3 of the APO Additional Agreement IV pursuant to which three thousand and four hundred (3,400), then six hundred (600) FAFN elements trained to uphold security as part of the Pretoria Agreement be committed to said tasks, alongside the Côte d'Ivoire National Armed Forces (FANCI). In addition, pursuant to Articles 3 and 4 of the fourth APO Additional Agreement, President Gbagbo enables the establishment of Composite Companies for the Security of Election (CMSEs) throughout the national territory (RCI Minidef, 2009). Such composite companies are made up of elements from the « New Forces », gendarmes and policemen from the regular forces. They are tasked to secure rallies and political meetings, to secure and protect sites, polls and electoral rights of way, to maintain order, to protect individuals and authorities. On the inauguration day of President-elect, the mission of the CMSEs ends. Willing to build trust between the former rebels and the government of Côte d'Ivoire, the Ivorian Head of State grants (RCI, 2009) admission of 300 elements from the « Armed Forces of the New Forces, FAFN » in the National Police School as of the academic year 2010. This unusual step is made pursuant to Article 6 of the Pretoria Agreement recommending the recruitment of FAFN trainee non-commissioned officers in the National Gendarmerie. In the same vein and enforcing the fourth Ouagadougou Additional Agreement, the President of the Republic takes a decree (RCI, 2009) granting three thousand four hundred (3,400) elements of the « Armed Forces of the New Forces, FAFN » the status of volunteer in the National Gendarmerie and Police forces. Six hundred (600) other elements (Pretoria Agreement) participate in election security missions. This quota receives a flat monthly allowance of 50,000 francs CFA (about \$ 100).

Complementing security measures, mixed brigades of gendarmerie and mixed police stations made up of officers from both forces were deployed in various localities in the country. It should be recalled that as part of its operations, the Integrated Command Centre (CCI) is theoretically made up of eight thousand (8,000) men. In compliance with Article 3 of Additional Agreement IV, half of this total number is to be provided by the « New Forces ». Shortly before the election, 13 mixed gendarmerie brigades are activated, with a staff of 315 agents over 390 planned. For mixed police stations, 12 are activated with a total workforce of 613 staff over 840 planned. Alongside the establishment of such mixed units, other important units of the National Police are deployed in areas at risk including the cities of Abengourou, Agboville, Bouna, Daloa, Divo, Duékoué, Gagnoa, San Pedro, Soubré which often experience tensions between populations under normal circumstances. In an often overheated electoral context, the risks are even greater.

It is then necessary to provide a safety tool that can contain possible clashes. Therefore, specialized police units are set up in some regions. This is the case in Divo where a Republican Security Company (CRS) is inaugurated on August 23, 2010. This National Police unit specializing in keeping public order is limited in number in the country. Emergency units including Fire Brigade are already activated in San Pedro, Gagnoa and in the Northern Highway in the town of Nzianouan. Establishing such bodies aims at securing the October 31 presidential election and other upcoming elections.

In view of the above, it should be noted that contrary to the argument that there is a lack of political will and confidence in the management of the crisis (Boutellis 2011, op.cit), President Gbagbo got fully committed in implementing his share of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. However, despite efforts towards ensuring a peaceful environment, there are still concerns about the election as rebel groups have still not disarmed two months into elections. This finding is also shared by Boutellis who points out that « *Disarmament had always been a contentious issue. Weapons are often considered an insurance policy by former rebel movements, and in negotiations the Force Nouvelles conditioned their disarmament on both the identification of the population as well as the integration (numbers and ranks) of forces (Boutellis, 2011: 10).* »

In reality, disarming rebel groups is a recurrent concern with no real solution. On the eve of the presidential election, update of the disarmament as claimed by the « new forces » is as follows: in 32,777 profiled or registered ex-combatants, 17,119 are demobilized, 5,000 are Volunteers for the National Army (VAN) 4,000 are planned or engaged in mixed security forces. Thus, the demobilized, the VAN and the elements of mixed security forces represent a total of 26,119 men who have theoretically disarmed. In reality, this is much less because in 5,000 VAN, only 2,560 are real and in 4,000 security officers, half of them are neither operational nor deployed. It is therefore 21,679 (17,119 + 2,560 + 2,000) ex-combatants that have been disarmed (CCI, August 2010). ». These figures show that we are off the mark because one remembers that in the midst of the crisis, the leaders of the rebellion announced a staff of 35,000 to 40,000 men in their ranks. With what we are witnessing, one can assess the extent of the overstatement as the Integrated Command Centre cannot meet the required quota to be sent to brigades and mixed police stations as demanded to « new forces », to be assigned to mixed Gendarmerie brigade and police stations. Furthermore, the scheduled deadlines of the premium or direct assistance amounting to 500,000 CFA francs (\$ 1,000) that should be paid to the demobilized in full settlement fail to be met.

Finally, the process of disarming ex-combatants of the « New Forces » did not yield the expected results. Right from the symbolic « Flame of Peace » operation in Bouaké (July 2007) to the first round of the presidential election in October 2010, theoretically 11,098 (32,777 - 21,679) ex-combatants were yet to be disarmed, which represents a significant war force. In light of such an achievement, one may rightly question the involvement of the UN whose special representative present in the country is handling the crisis.

II- The involvement of the United Nations Organization and its impact on disarmament

The United Nations intervene in the Ivorian crisis through resolutions, declarations and especially through a country-based operational body: the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The UN has expressed support and solidarity to Côte d'Ivoire under other circumstances; however, in the context of the 2002 crisis, 4 February 2003 Resolution 1464 marks the starting point of its intervention. A consideration of UN resolutions on the Ivorian crisis, however, confirms that beyond the hope it raised, the supranational organization adopted measures that legitimized the rebellion, weakened Ivorian institutions and subsequently brought

about the downfall of President Laurent Gbagbo's regime and its replacement by the houphouetist coalition (April 2011).

1- Legitimizing rebel groups

Since its creation at the end of World War II, the UN have been playing a role in maintaining peace and security in the world. In Africa where crises are recurrent, the supranational organization is very active on all armed or unarmed conflict fronts in order to restore peace. In the Ivorian dispute, the UN have not deviated from their mission. But for a long time, its intervention in Côte d'Ivoire will continue to be questioned. Authors from various specialties have examined the UN's role in the Ivorian crisis through books or articles. The contribution of the Côte d'Ivoire national Jean-Jacques Konadjé is one of the most recent ones (2014) on this subject. In his approach, the author places the UN intervention in Côte d'Ivoire within the context of its international mission, recalling the UN's response procedures in conflicts. Then, he presents the Ivorian crisis through its historical foundations lying in the ruling of the first head of state Felix Houphouët-Boigny. He makes reference to the contradictions of the Houphouëtist system. He describes the military and political crisis the country faced from 2002 to 2010 as an intrastate crisis. For this researcher, « unlike the interstate conflict between the armies of two states, the Ivorian crisis pitted the Ivorian citizens », hence its peculiar nature (Konadjé, 2014: 92). He continues by stating that the UN intervened in the Ivorian conflict because « the ability of France which is a country involved in the conflict as a neutral country, was limited, especially if the crisis persists. » He then adds that an anti-French sentiment was growing among the Ivorian people, especially after the signing of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. These anti-French demonstrations were seen as a desire for emancipation vis-à-vis the former colonial power (Konadjé, 2014: 93). The author also claims that the UN intervention slowed down the escalation of violence in the country.

Beyond this point and also beyond the documentary and educational interest of the work by this researcher, the way he describes the war in Côte d'Ivoire raises questions. Indeed, is the fact that Ivorian armed groups are firing at each other on the national territory enough to describe the conflict in the country as an « *intra-state* » conflict? The Ivorian conflict remains all the more complex as one wonders who provided weapons to armed groups for them to attack a sovereign State. Where and how did those armed groups get formed? Who are their financial, political or diplomatic supports? For us, answering these interrogations will help qualify the Ivorian conflict. In addition, the media hype orchestrated by the international media to tarnish the image of the Ivorian regime and direct pronouncements by leaders from some African and Western countries show that the direct exchanges of Kalashnikov gunshots between soldiers on a physical military theater are not sufficient to restrict this conflict in the sphere of the Ivorian territory alone.

As far as we are concerned, Jean-Jacques Konadjé published his book three years following the post-electoral phase of the Ivorian conflict. Given the abundance of available sources on the Ivorian crisis, he knows the facts as they truly occurred in Côte d'Ivoire. In addition, the real sponsors of the Ivorian drama now appear openly since the fall of the Gbagbo regime. Therefore, a number of parameters need to be taken into account while processing conflict-related facts. Certainly military oppositions took place on the Ivorian territory and some civilian or military officials of the rebellion are Côte d'Ivoire nationals. However, reports of all non-governmental organizations on the conflict, those of the UN itself prove that Burkina Faso served as a rear base for rebels and war weapons were provided to those rebels from Burkina Faso. In addition, support from some European countries to the rebels and the Houphouëtists (the Group of 7 or G7) is also proven as evidenced by the designing, conduct and findings (supra) of the Linas-Marcoussis conference as well as « *the very controversial position of France in the*

conflict » (Konadié, ditto: 95). Ivorians expressed discontent through demonstrations when they realized that France which is the principal ally of their country was not so neutral in this unique conflict, which is far from a desire of emancipation vis-à-vis any former colonial power.

Besides, during the post electoral phase of the conflict, the French army got committed to the « New Forces » for the fall of President Gbagbo's regime based on Resolution 1975 by the UN Security Council of 30 March 2011. Aside this, all « New Forces » political leaders, without exception, became leading members of the RDR, Alassane Ouattara's party. In the December 2011 parliamentary elections, former rebels Guillaume Soro, Moussa Dosso, Alain Lobognon and many others ran under the banner of the RDR and not as representatives of the « New Forces ». The sudden disappearance of the « New Forces » and subsequent merging into the RDR right after the fall of Gbagbo's regime mean that those armed groups were actually on a destabilization mission on behalf of that party. In February 2012, on the occasion of the first visit of Alassane Ouattara to France, President Nicolas Sarkozy of the French Republic welcomes the return of the Houphouëtist governance system in Côte d'Ivoire in a vibrant tribute to his friend, the new Ivorian head of State. These are indications that the Ivorian conflict was not a concern to Ivorian citizens alone. Although external states involved are not theaters of armed clashes, they were actually involved in the conflict. And because those invisible actors operated under shadows, the role of the UN remained complex during the crisis.

It should be noted that the decisions taken by the Security Council contributed to legitimizing the rebellion. By the time the UN gets involved in the Ivorian crisis in 2003, the first Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) summit on the issue was held in Accra (29 September 2002); in the same trend, the Linas-Marcoussis conference (24 January 2003) made findings known. The UN then endorses the findings of these two meetings. In all its resolutions, the supranational organization affirms its commitment to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Côte d'Ivoire; yet it fails to take a consistent stance against the armed groups that attacked a sovereign State. On the contrary, those informal armed groups are called « political forces » (Res.1527 of February 4, 2004), meaning they are granted the same legal consideration as are Ivorian legally constituted political parties. Furthermore, instead of requiring the restoration of the State authority throughout the Ivorian territory, the UN makes mention of a transition period in Côte d'Ivoire (rés.1479 7). In this spirit, the Security Council decides to establish a political liaison office in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) complementing the French forces in order to facilitate the implementation of the Linas Marcoussis Agreement (Rés.1479, 2, 3, 5) and to prepare ahead of that political transition in the country. In 2004 the MINUCI is replaced by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) staffing 6,240 soldiers as well as 350 civilian police force (Res. 1528 of 27 February 2004). The UN presence comforts rebel groups who have already been enjoying unspoken support from French authorities (Linas-Marcoussis, 2003).

From our point of view, the difficulty experienced by the UN lies in the fact that all Security Council resolutions on the Ivorian crisis are initiated by France (Boutellis, op. Cit). How could the then French government, visibly backing the rebels Group, objectively defend the positions of that side in this conflict? We believe that UN Security Council resolutions which are supposed to reflect the required neutrality rather reflect the French position throughout the management of this crisis. This is the rationale behind the fact that despite condemnations for form's sake by the Security Council and the UNOCI military build-up, the Ivorian rebellion is convinced of support from the international community. Therefore, the Ivorian rebellion's attitude never wavered in the direction of disarmament. Its members kept maintaining the country divided into two and multiplying acts of violence. This results in a weakening of the country's institutions.

2- The weakening of institutions and the subsequent fall of the regime

UN resolutions also contributed to the weakening of state institutions. These include resolution 1572 of 15 November 2004 imposing an embargo on Côte d'Ivoire following a military operation launched by loyalist forces targeting the city of Bouaké, the stronghold of the rebellion from 4 to 6 November 2004 and resolution 1633 of 21 October 2005 establishing an international Working Group (IWG) responsible for legislating on behalf of the Ivorian Parliament and for organizing presidential elections in October 31, 2006. In a context in which the international community is expected to actually disarm rebels and restore the authority of that State, the Ivorian populations failed to warmly welcome such resolutions. Certainly Resolution 1633 also requires the disarmament of the New Forces, which was never done.

In addition, the fall of the Ivorian regime occurs on April 11, 2011 following intense bombing of the regular forces and the official residence of the Ivorian Head of State by a military coalition made up of the rebel army, the French forces and the forces of the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (rés.1975 March 30, 2011. What gave way to this situation is the second round of the presidential election (28 November 2010) meant to restore peace. The outcomes are contested by both candidates Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara. On the one hand, the Constitutional Council which is the highest court legally empowered to proclaim the final results of the election in the country, proclaims Gbagbo victorious and inaugurates him in accordance with the law. On the other, the president of the Independent Electoral Commission responsible for proclaiming the provisional results of the election experienced a foreclosure; but he was against all odds seen on the state television at the campaign headquarters of the candidate who lost the election and there, he calls on not the national media, but only the international press, and announces figures according to which Alassane Ouattara is the actual winner of that election. The controversy takes on another dimension when the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Côte d'Ivoire, You Jin Choi who admits the victory of the candidate proclaimed as a loser by the Constitutional Council which is the highest court in the land. Immediately, the Western media relay the information to their various networks. This new situation plunges the country back into uncertainty.

Facing the imbroglio, President Laurent Gbagbo offers a peaceful solution in a broadcast message to the nation on December 31, 2010 as follows: *« We need to understand how the year 2010 which was announced as the year of election, the year that ends the crisis is ending in perplexity. While Ivoirians are suffering the violence of an armed rebellion internally, they are the subject of an international hostility since the announcement of the results of the presidential election on 28 November 2010. This is unfair! We question the attitude of the international community towards us; an attitude never experienced anywhere else during an internal political crisis within a State ... Therefore, I am proposing an evaluation committee in charge of establishing the facts and the truth about the elections in Côte d'Ivoire. I am confident the truth will triumph. We have the right and the truth with us. »*

President Gbagbo's call is rejected by the international community. The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon even states publicly that the recounting of the votes as proposed by President Gbagbo is an « injustice done to Ouattara »; meanwhile the UN had just accepted a recount of votes in Haiti.

Finally, the international community chooses a military approach as a solution to the problem. One notices that it took ten years (2002-2011) to the coalition of Houphouëtists to achieve the longest coup in the Ivorian political history. Meanwhile, this outcome is as a result of Resolution 1975 of 30 March 2011 being used as the official umbrella to trigger the final assault against the army and the Ivorian regime. In the end, the rebel groups that do not disarm are promoted from

the rebellion to the state power. This is apparent from the testimony by French Colonel Georges Peillon « *until the 2010 events and the arrest (of Gbagbo), I admit that I was amazed; I told myself the bandits are in Abidjan ... But obviously, they had the consent of that famous international community to take power in Abidjan.* » (Peillon, 2015: ditto). This situation made the politologist Vincent-Sosthène Fouda saying: "UNO, the organization which speaks in the name of the international Community did not play the role that Ivorians and the public opinion waited from it. The disarmament of the rebels and the introduction of peace in the one of its Member States which is Côte d'Ivoire were not assured. In that, the UN organization with its representation which is the ONUCI is responsible for all the potential skids "(Fouda, 2015: 55).

III- Between ambitions and realities, what solutions for disarmament?

After taking power in April 2011 with military support from the « New Forces » the new Ivorian Head of State, Alassane Ouattara appoints (RCI, 2012) a new administrative and technical body to handle disarmament: the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, socio-economic reintegration (ADDR). The purpose of this body is to restore security, to consolidate peace and national reconciliation. The success of this operation will depend on the lasting peace and security in the country.

1- Ambitions and realities

ADDR is the body in charge of disarmament since the signing of the Linas Marcoussis Agreement (2003); it comes after the National Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Community Rehabilitation (PNDDR / RC) programme established before the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement (March 2007) and the National Reintegration and Community Rehabilitation Programme, PNRRC (ROI 2007: No. 140). Since the authorities who established this new disarmament body were more or less the main rebellion leaders from 2002 to 2010, it's logical for us to expect an acceleration of the process (Kadet, 2014). Pursuant to the DDR policy letter of the Ivorian government (RCI, 2012: ditto), the operation aims at getting back 64,777 ex-combatants into the Ivorian socio-professional circuit from 2013 to 2014 after their disarmament. Before the electoral dispute-related events in December 2010, 32,777 former rebels were eligible to DDR; 9,000 of those former rebels were directly integrated into the army and the paramilitary forces in accordance with the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement. 23,777 armed ex-combatants are remaining. During the same period, 22,898 elements from self-defense militia groups were taken into account by the DDR program, making a total workforce of 46,675 eligible former combatants between 2007 and 2010, with another group of 18,102 post-election fighters. These two figures bring the number to 64,777 eligible ex-combatants to DDR in 2013 and 2014.

To achieve this objective, the aim of operational areas are summarized in the following concrete actions: to prepare ex-combatants to return to civilian life; to group, to disarm and to demobilize former combatants; to repatriate exiled ex-combatants and alien ex-combatants non-residents in Ivory Coast; to reintegrate ex-combatants in the socio-economic fabric; to rehabilitate the social and economic infrastructure of the ex-combatants' host communities.

The operation targets ex-combatants who participated under various groups into the consecutive armed conflicts as a result of the September 2002 events or those of the post-electoral crisis from December 2010 to April 2011. This includes the ex- fighters from the rebel « New Forces », who are not included in the new Ivorian army now called « Côte d'Ivoire Republican Forces or FRCI » (RCI, 2011); soldiers from the Ivorian regular army, the National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire or FANCI who are not members of the FRCI; ex-combatant members of traditional

armed groups; persons associated with FRCI; ex-combatants from self-defense groups; alien ex-combatants living in Côte d'Ivoire; non-resident alien ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire that must be repatriated; exiled Ivorian ex-combatants that must be repatriated.

In reviewing the list of targets involved in the disarmament, we can deduce that the concern of Ouattara's government is to cast a wide net, taking into account all the forces that, at one time or the other, played a role in the armed conflicts that destabilized Côte d'Ivoire over the past decade.

For the year 2013, a first batch of 30,000 ex-combatants is offered socio-professional integration opportunities. When ex-combatants are grouped in a reception center then disarmed, those who meet the criteria for recruitment in the army, the police or the gendarmerie integrate those institutions. The others receive specialized training leading to jobs in various industries including pastoralist jobs, prison guards, craft workers, private security officers, customs officers, Water Resources and Forestry Service employees, drivers in public or private transport. Finally, other former combatants simply go back to school to resume their studies. All those integration projects are funded by UN agencies including UNDP and UNOCI.

In fact and although disarmament operations cover the entire country, the northern part is the place where the first committed projects yield measurable results. In the Savannah District (Korhogo) for instance, 1,930 ex-combatants are reintegrated into the various vocational courses, being 49.55% of the target in that administrative district (Doumbia, 2013: 6). In addition, as part of the 10,065 craft workers' project, 789 ex-combatants are currently undergoing training in Bouaké on behalf of this district and that of Denguelé (Odienné). In the other Ivorian conflict-prone regions, the DDR is still in the process of informing and raising the awareness of the ex-combatants involved. According to Alassane Ouattara, Ivorian Head of State, 10,000 ex-combatants have been effectively demobilized at the current stage of project implementation, being 15.43% of the total workforce. On the disarmament and reintegration of the remaining 55,000 former combatants, an investment of 90 billion CFA francs or \$ 150 million is required (Soir Info No. 5706, 2013: 2; Inter No. 4597, 2013: 2). Rather than looking at the financial difficulties of the State, what if the disarmament problem was to be found in the very behavior of the rebellion?

2- How to overcome challenges ?

Implementing the disarmament of the ex-combatants is facing a two-fold resistance: firstly, the reluctance of former warlords and secondly, the influence of traditional « Dozo⁴ » hunters who are auxiliaries to the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire, FRCI (Amnesty International, 2013: 16).

The first challenge facing the disarmament process lies in the warlords whose attitude has become vicious since the change of regime in Côte d'Ivoire. The former rebel leaders who were undertaking illegal exploitations in the North of Côte d'Ivoire from 2002 to 2010 are now in Abidjan, the economic capital of the country thanks to the post-electoral crisis from December 2010 to April 2011. Although they have all been promoted to positions of responsibility in the Ivorian administration since the advent of Alassane Ouattara, those warlords have not given up

⁴ "Dozo" refers to traditional hunters, especially big game and wild beasts hunters. They are an important traditional brotherhood in the Mandingo space covering part of the territories of Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. Ivorian rebellion utilized the "Milicia Dozo" as Fode Sankoh's Kamajors during Sierra Leone Civilian war.

the illegal exploitation of the country's economic resources particularly the gold and diamond mines in lieu of official State bodies. For this purpose, they establish parallel armies that control the major cities and the whole country as noted by the UN experts group: « *At present, within the regular FRCI force, there is a parallel body on which the security system relies for any effective intervention* » (United Nations, S / 2013/605: 8). For instance, the city of Korhogo in the north of the country has been under the exclusive control of the immovable warlord Fofié Kouakou since 2002. The Abidjan metropolis in the south is divided between the warlords Issiaka Ouattara alias Wattao (removed from office in August 2014), Cherif Ousmane, Koné Zakaria, Touré Hervé alias Vetcho and Jah Gao. These former rebel leaders have advantageously placed their men at strategic places that they scour for their personal profit in the Abidjan metropolis and within the country. Thus, Hervé Touré alias Vetcho and his men control the south-east of the country starting from the town of Grand-Bassam down to the town of Noé close to the border with Ghana. In the Central West, the town of Issia and its surroundings are the preserve of warlord Losseni Fofana and his men. In the southwest, San Pedro port city is exploited by Bema Ouattara, a henchman of Wattao according to investigations by weekly Jeune Afrique (LNC No. 879, 2013: 2). Warlord Issiaka Ouattara alias Wattao justified the presence of the parallel forces of FRCI saying:

«The elements we are telling you about are my best elements. They are ready to do the job. As regards their index numbers, I am in discussion with the Chief of Staff to study the case of those hundreds of elements. What you need to know is that many elements are not serious with work. And I am against this boycott that I rather denounce. You have to understand once and for all that those soldiers known as soldiers without index numbers are those providing security to millions in Abidjan. We should therefore celebrate and congratulate them. I am proud of them.» (United Nations, S / 2013/605: 52).

Actually, those auxiliaries FRCIs work on behalf of their leaders and not in the interest of the Ivorian state they are expected to serve. Faced with such situations, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Authority (ADDR) is powerless. The impotence of the body in charge of disarmament raises uncertainties about the future of the very process; this is confirmed by the report of the UN Panel of Experts in item 6, on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire:

« As regards the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, the Panel believes Government may not be able to achieve the goals set out in resolution 2112 (2013) namely the disarmament and reintegration of 30,000 ex-combatants by the end of 2013. From reliable sources, 9,422 soldiers were demobilized on 5 September and 9,600 weapons were collected. The Panel notices that zone commanders continue to exert a strong influence on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to the extent that they appoint the soldiers that need to be considered for demobilization and disarmament operations. Those commanders are capable of maintaining control over military networks inside and outside the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) and by so doing, they are serving their own financial, military and political interests. The Panel is concerned about this situation as those bodies influence the handling of security conditions and do not systematically report to the FRCI through the appropriate channels.» (United Nations, S / 2013/605: 4)

It is no secret that the current Ivorian regime is indebted to those warlords who form its backbone. But at the same time, this is a kind of organized mafia that illegally exploits the country's resources. Since 2002, the Alassane Ouattara regime has proved unable to fight the predation that has been going on for thirteen years. It is high time the UN whose experts regularly produce reports on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire took concrete measures to deter those warlords and salvage the common resources of the country.

The second difficulty in the implementation of disarmament in Côte d'Ivoire is the influence of the auxiliary « Dozos ». Originally, this term refers to traditional hunters, especially big game and wild beasts hunters. In the Mandingo space covering part of the territories of Mali, Guinea,

Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, the « Dozos » are an important traditional brotherhood. Those operating in Côte d'Ivoire hail mainly from Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The collective memory recalls Sam Bukari and Fode Sankoh's Kamajors or Sierra Leoneans « Dozos », notorious fighters during the civil war in that country whose brotherhood members are utilized in the Ivorian rebellion.

The general weakening of regular security forces following the military coup (1999) and the rebel war (2002-2010) revealed the « Dozos » as fighters, first within Guillaume Soro's rebel troops (New Forces), then as auxiliaries to the pro-Ouattara forces as they enabled him to take power by force in April 2011. Since that date, the « Dozos » numbering 6,000 men to date are the backbone of the new Ivorian army called the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (2011) with leading figures such as Zakaria Koné, Cherif Ousmane who do not hesitate to claim membership of the brotherhood.

Despite the good image they enjoy, the « Dozos » who are everywhere in Côte d'Ivoire are both a source of public insecurity and an obstacle to the disarmament of armed groups. Claiming that the fact of possessing firearms is a cultural trait of their community, the « Dozos » refuse to disarm. Their position seems all the more reinforced as it is encouraged by the current regime that uses them as militia parallel to regular forces as evidenced by Hamed Bakayoko, the Minister of the Interior of the Ivorian government:

« Our country has experienced a war and during that war, the Dozos contributed to the liberation of the country. I would like to thank them. There is no shame in acknowledging and assuming this because this is the truth. So the State of Côte d'Ivoire is not ashamed of admitting this, of assuming and saying thank you ... We count on you, we know that if you are well organized, you can help President Alassane Ouattara succeed in this mission ... » (LNC, 2012: 2).

In all Ivorian cities and most remote villages, members of the « Dozos » brotherhood set up roadblocks on pathways despite calls from government (RCI, PR / MPRCD / MEMI, 2012 : No. 4347). They often do not hesitate to assume the right to disarm elements of the regular forces at some roadblocks (Le Jour Plus, 2013: 8). Although they are indexed in all UN and NGOs reports for serious violation of human rights (Amnesty International, 2013: 15, 39-50), members of that brotherhood are not called to order and this is happening less than one year into the next presidential elections in the country slated for October 2015. Without an aggressive security clean-up policy consisting in taking weapons away from those tribal militias and sending them back to their original home, the Ivorian people will not enjoy serenity. Certainly, one cannot prevent human mobility, and therefore the Dozos have the right to move throughout Côte d'Ivoire; however, every citizen should be able to feel free with the assurance that they will not be assaulted by non conventional parallel forces.

As it stands, the disarmament issue is far from resolved since former rebel members refuse to get rid of their bad habits. Owing to difficulties inherent in the nature of a regime whose highest authorities consist of former warlords, there are serious doubts on the success of this process which is however long awaited by the country. The concern of Ivorians is all the more justified as the head of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Authority, Fidèle Sarasoro himself was a victim of an assault with heavy weapons perpetrated by those parallel forces in July 2013 on the Ferkessédougou-Kong road in northern Côte d'Ivoire, a stronghold of the former rebels (United Nations, S / 2013/605: 6). Also, during the last quarter of 2015, Côte d'Ivoire will once again be engaged in an electoral process while significant quantities of war weapons are still held by uncontrolled armed gangs. The DDR Authority head seeks assistance from former militia leaders in order to speed up the disarmament of such groups (Inter Abidjan, 2015: 4). The

necessary appeal to these groups, however, should be extended to the Dozo tribal militias which are true destructive weapons and whose disarmament will continue to undermine the security sector.

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to show that despite the existence of international peace tools supporting the peace restoration process in Côte d'Ivoire, rebel groups that took up weapons against the country in 2002 have so far not disarmed. In the search for elements justifying this development, our analysis examined political mechanisms for managing the security aspect of the Ivorian conflict so as to identify deadlocks. It also highlighted efforts by protagonists to domesticate those tools before questioning the issue of disarmament. What can we learn from these inventories? Compiling available data reveals that the rationale behind the resolution of the Ivorian conflict failed to bring about the disarmament of rebel groups. In fact, the resolution of this crisis happens to be the disclosure of a game of interests. On the International scene, external actors (ECOWAS, AU, France, the UN) endorsed agreements whose contents fail to tally with the Ivorian institutional realities. In a way, those agreements are perceived by Ivorians as measures to validate what the rebellion failed to have with their weapons. The causes of the crystallization of Ivorians' frustrations lie in the Linas-Marcoussis Round Table whose resolutions constitute a form of celebration of the armed violence. Due to the complicit silence observed by the international community vis-à-vis the armed groups, national institutions have been discredited throughout this crisis. In April 2011, after a decade of prevarication, the conclusion is that the resolution of the Ivorian crisis confirms that the political and diplomatic dialogue is subordinated to the armed violence. However, a consideration of the acts of peace posed by the conflicting parties in accordance with the various crisis agreements certifies that President Laurent Gbagbo applied his share of the political compromise. However, this was not the case with the rebels who display a defiant posture vis-à-vis national institutions and the international community. Indeed, rebel groups have continued to enjoy political dividends from this crisis by maintaining the country under division since 2002. They have never really agreed to lay down their weapons which serve as a means of political pressure. Comforted by the passivity of the international community during the crisis, rebel groups have led this latter to develop a biased reading of the Ivorian situation. This dynamic is indeed sustained by procedures legitimating the rebellion, procedures that can be perceived through the controversy of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and subsequent agreements, the weakening of Ivorian institutions and, ultimately, the victory of the coalition of the Houphouëtists supported by the France-UN forces in April 2011.

Although they are ultimately on power, rebel groups continue to hold weapons in particular through the tribal militias and warlords. In this process, the presence of France which is a permanent member of the Security Council was instrumental, so much so that one is wondering if the UN that worked on this outcome were not enrolled in an insider trading. Beyond this question, the persistent refusal to disarm by rebel groups and their auxiliaries « Dozo militia » in the country continues to raise concerns among populations. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and France are still in place. It is their duty to bring those groups to order. In any event, the Ivorian situation raises the broader issue of the management of armed conflicts in Africa. Similar cases are ongoing in Africa especially in Mali, in Central African Republic and in Nigeria. Those are armed conflict-torn states and some of them are engaged in similar processes requiring the involvement of external actors. Should the Ivorian case serve as an example, then the neutrality of external actors as regards the management of the conflict remains an interrogation towards a lasting peace and security on the continent.

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