

Cote D'Ivoire - Human Rights Scorecard ¹

Ivory Coast, officially named the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, is a country located in West Africa. Ivory Coast's political capital is Yamoussoukro and its economic capital and largest city is the port city of Abidjan. Ivory Coast experienced political instability from 1999-2011, which ended with a civil war in 2010-2011. Following this war, with the support of the UN and the Organization of African States, Alassane Ouattara became president and a new period of stability began.

Official language: French

Ethnic groups: 42.1% Akan, 17.6% Voltaiques/Gur, 16.5% Northern Mandé, 11% Krous, 10% Southern Mandé, 2.8% other

Government: Unitary presidential republic

- President: Alassane Ouattara
- Prime Minister: Daniel Kablan Duncan

Death penalty: Abolitionist for all crimes

Population: 23.3 million

Life expectancy: 58.34 years

Under-5 mortality: 58.7 per 1000

Adult literacy: 56.9 percent



Section 1: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Partially respected ²

There are several reports of deaths during arrests and protests, although it is often unclear how the deaths occurred.

Freedom from disappearance



Partially respected ³

There are reports of two politically-motivated abductions in the western part of the country.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Partially respected ⁴

Opposition groups have made allegations of torture of political prisoners by the current regime, but no independent evidence has been brought forth.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Largely disrespected ⁵

Although prohibited by the constitution, the Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire continue to arrest and detain suspects illegally. The UN reports incidents of detention in undisclosed and unauthorized facilities.

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Partially respected ⁶

Ordinary criminal cases are generally fair and with an independent jury. However, the lack of indictments against pro-government elements indicate that the judiciary is subject to political influence. The judiciary also lacks adequate resources and is inefficient.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Partially respected ⁷

The constitution prohibits such arbitrary interference, but is not always respected. Members within the opposition party report frozen bank accounts, and the army occupies several private residences and businesses illegally.

Section 2: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)⁸



Score: 30.17, Rank: 86 / 180 – Highly controlled, limited or intimidated⁹

Although faring better than in prior years, the media has yet to achieve independence from political leaders. The media is very diverse and journalists no longer experience outright repression, but opposition newspapers are more closely surveyed than government ones.

Freedom from academic censorship



Respected¹⁰

There are no governmental restrictions on academic freedom.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Partially respected¹¹

The law allows for freedom of assembly, but groups usually have to apply for permission to hold demonstrations. The government has been criticized by international observers for denial of political groups' requests for assembly. Arbitrary force is sometimes used against protestors.

Freedom of religion



Respected¹²

Religious freedom is provided for by the constitution, and there are no significant reports of societal or governmental discrimination based on religion.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Respected¹³

The Ivorian government generally provides asylum and protection for refugees, extending protection to them even after they lose refugee status. Statelessness remains extensive, but the government has opened avenues for foreigners born in Cote D'Ivoire before 1973 to receive citizenship.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)^{14 15}



4 / 7 – Partly free¹⁶

Press freedom is somewhat restricted, particularly that of opposition newspapers, and freedom of assembly is not always respected.

Section 3: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc..

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)¹⁷



4 / 7 – Partly free¹⁸

Recent presidential elections have been peaceful and credible. However, political parties often form around ethnic lines, very few women participate in public, and the rights of assembly of opposition political parties are sometimes restricted.

Section 4: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)¹⁹



Score: 32%, Rank: 107 / 168 – Highly corrupt²⁰

Laws providing criminal penalties for corruption are not implemented efficiently by the government. Corruption is prevalent in the police, judiciary, military, customs, tax offices, and other government institutions.

Section 5: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Respected²¹

Human rights groups, both international and domestic, generally operate without government interference. Government officials were largely cooperative and responsive to their findings and allegations.

Section 6: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Rights of women (World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index)²²



Score: 60.6%, Rank: 133 / 145 – Very unequal rights²³

Ivorian law prohibits discrimination based on gender, but women still experience extensive economic discrimination. Women have little to no representation in government, and face harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation and dowry deaths.

Rights of Children (KidsRights Index Overall Score)²⁴



Score: 47%, Rank: 143 / 165 – Slightly vulnerable²⁵

Schooling is mandatory for children until the age of 16. Despite legislation protecting the rights of children, there are many incidents of physical and sexual abuse, child sex trafficking, and traditional forced marriages of girls as young as 14.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Largely disrespected²⁶

Although the law prohibits discrimination based on disabilities and requires the government to provide training, jobs, and accessible facilities, there is no evidence that the government enforces these laws. Many disabled persons live on the streets for lack of economic opportunities.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Largely disrespected²⁷

Ethnic discrimination is a problem in Cote D'Ivoire. Violence erupts between different ethnic groups, and the police sometimes harass and abuse non-Ivorians living in the country.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Partially respected^{28 29}

Homosexuality is not criminalized in Cote D'Ivoire, and there are no recent reports of security forces abusing members of the LGBT community due to their sexual orientation. However, societal discrimination is widespread.

Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Partially respected³⁰

Workers have the right to form or join unions of their choice, to strike and collective bargain, and to be protected from anti-union discrimination. Strikes are difficult to organize and maintain, and most workers in the informal sector are excluded from legal protections.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Largely disrespected³¹

The government has recently increased efforts to enforce laws prohibiting forced or compulsory labour, but financial penalties were insufficient to deter violations. Forced labour continues to occur in small-scale and commercial agricultural production and in the informal sector.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Largely disrespected³²

The legal minimum working age is 16, but the government has only been able to enforce this in large multinationals and in the civil service. Child labour remains a widespread problem, particularly in cocoa/coffee plantations and gold mines. Approx. 40% of children from 5-14 are working.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Partially respected³³

The law establishes a minimum wage, maintains a standard legal workweek at 40 hours, and establishes health and safety standards. Enforcement is not enough to deter many violations, but effectively protects the right of workers to remove themselves from dangerous situations.

Right to employment



3.9% - Reasonable unemployment³⁴

The unemployment rate is relatively low in Cote D'Ivoire and is projected to remain consistent over the next few years.

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Cote D'Ivoire." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252673#wrapper>.

³ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a "disappearance" is different than simple arbitrary detention because a "disappearance" is considered permanent.

⁴ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁵ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁸ The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

⁹ "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>.

¹⁰ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Cote D'Ivoire." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252673#wrapper>.

¹¹ "Cote D'Ivoire." World Report 2016: Cote D'Ivoire. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/cote-divoire>.

¹² "Cote D'Ivoire." International Religious Freedom Report for 2014. January 1, 2015. Accessed June 9, 2016.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2014&dliid=238206#wrapper>.

¹³ "Cote D'Ivoire." World Report 2016: Cote D'Ivoire. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/cote-divoire>.

¹⁴ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

¹⁵ Freedom House's Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed June 9, 2016.

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2016/methodology>.

¹⁶ "Cote D'Ivoire." Freedom in the World 2016: Cote D'Ivoire. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/c-te-divoire>.

¹⁷ See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed June 9, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2016/methodology>.

¹⁸ "Cote D'Ivoire." Freedom in the World 2016: Cote D'Ivoire. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/c-te-divoire>.

¹⁹ Transparency International (TI) publishes a "Corruption Perceptions Index" annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows:

80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

²⁰ "Cote D'Ivoire." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <https://www.transparency.org/country/#CIV>.

²¹ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Cote D'Ivoire." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252673#wrapper>.

²² This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

²³ "Cote D'Ivoire." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/economies/#economy=CIV>.

²⁴ This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

²⁵ "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed June 9, 2016. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

²⁶ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Cote D'Ivoire." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252673#wrapper>.

²⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

²⁸ "ILGA State-Sponsored Homophobia." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. May 2015. Accessed June 9, 2016. http://old.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2015.pdf. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

²⁹ ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.

³⁰ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015 Cote D'Ivoire." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2016. Accessed June 9, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252673#wrapper>.

³¹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³² Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³³ Ibid. U.S Department of State. See also a well-done Wikipedia comparison of wage, income and work week metrics across countries at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country

³⁴ "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. October 2013. Accessed June 9, 2016. http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/WCMS_233936/lang-en/index.htm.