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Source: Issouf Sanogo / AFP via Getty Images

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IVORY COAST: Incumbent President's Removal Unlikely Despite Tensions

Summary: Incumbent President Alassane Ouattara will likely hold a third term despite calls for his removal. Current opposition tactics will almost certainly fail due to ineffective protests, the country's economic growth under Ouattara, and support for his presidency from military and other governmental institutions.

Electoral Tensions: On 31 October, Ivory Coast's presidential election triggered political unrest as Ouattara sought to obtain a third term. Ouattara gained approval from a constitutional court to bypass Ivory Coast's two-term presidential limit. Opposition leaders and protestors label the attempt for a third term as a "coup" and called for a peaceful transition of power. Since August, clashes between Ouattara supporters and opposition groups killed 30 Ivorians, a relatively low figure compared to the electoral conflict of 2010. Ouattara rose to power in 2010 amidst violent conflict after Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo refused to concede electoral defeat to Ouattara.

Economic Strength: The Ivorian economy's growth under Ouattara will likely allow him to retain the support of the country's business and agricultural sectors. Following Ouattara's ascension to power in 2010, Ivory Coast's GDP increased at an average of above 8% annually. Economic growth, especially in the vital cocoa industry, led to increased foreign investment and brought more stable cocoa prices for farmers. These economic improvements will probably lead agricultural farmers and Ivorian/foreign business firms to support Ouattara's re-election and retention of power. Other economic sectors such as mining and tourism continue to be under-developed but may expand if political stability remains satisfactory to foreign investment firms.

Ivorian Military and Jihadism: The Ivorian military will likely continue to support Ouattara amidst fears of terrorism from regional jihadist groups. The Ivory Coast borders Burkina Faso and Mali, which suffer from instability caused by jihadist organizations. On 10 June, jihadists attacked military outposts on the border with Burkina Faso, killing 10 soldiers. Ouattara's response to the attack included the arrest of several suspected perpetrators, the construction of a military zone along the border with Burkina Faso, and stronger border surveillance procedures. These counterterrorism measures will probably bring Ouattara support from military leadership. Stronger security measures against jihadism may also garner Ouattara support from the population, especially demographics living along the borders with Sahelian countries.

Government Support: In October 2016, Ivory Coast's parliament approved revisions to the constitution, making Ivorian presidents eligible for a third term. Ouattara's governing party utilized the revisions to nominate him as their candidate for the October 2020 elections. The current government continues to back Ouattara's re-election with no major factional infighting or splinters from the ruling party. Government support for Ouattara includes a ban on all outdoor protests and prohibitions on certain opposition figures as electoral candidates. The Ivorian Independent Electoral Commission's decision to prohibit certain opposition leaders almost certainly displays support of Ouattara's third term. The Ivorian parliament's legalization of third

terms and the ruling party's nomination of Ouattara also signify strong support in Abidjan's political institutions for his re-election.

Outlook and Implications: Protests and opposition leaders calling for Ouattara's removal will likely fail. Opposition leaders' unwillingness to mobilize a non-peaceful transition and the relatively modest scale of the protests will almost certainly enable Ouattara's retention of power. Ivorian security forces' restraint in combating protestors may deter more violent and widespread conflict. The protesters and opposition leaders' probably fear repeating the devastation of the 2010 conflict, and almost certainly remain unwilling to escalate any current conflict.

The Ivorian business and agricultural sectors will likely support Ouattara and remain opposed to any conflict due to the resulting instability. Economic growth and increased foreign investment fostered by Ouattara's policies will likely lead farmers and business firms to support his retention of power. The agricultural and business sectors probably fear that Ouattara's removal could lead to economic contraction, cocoa crop destruction, and loss of foreign investment. Ivorian and foreign investors also might see Ouattara's retention of power as a stabilizing factor that will allow the growth of the country's under-developed economic sectors.

Ouattara's policies against terrorism may elicit support from the Ivorian military. The strengthened border security policies and creation of a special militarized zone might garner support from other countries fighting Salafi-jihadism in the Sahel. Stronger border security may also lead to increased support from the general public, especially those living in the more dangerous areas bordering Mali and Burkina Faso.

[Max Olson]

LEBANON: Hariri's Return May Improve Political Situation While Prolonging Protests

Summary: Saad al-Hariri's return to premiership may resolve Beirut's short-term political deadlock but will likely extend civil protests, due to public concerns of a continuation of Beirut's sectarianism.

Development: On 28 October, the Hezbollah-allied Amal party released a statement citing a hopeful outlook following the return of Hariri to power. A majority of Beirut's parliamentary blocs appointed Sunni politician Hariri to his fourth premiership on 22 October. He resigned from his previous term on 29 October 2019, following civil resentment of political corruption and stagnation eruption into protests. Hariri pledged to form a new government and address issues including Beirut's economic status. Sunni Muslims traditionally retain the premiership, making Hariri's return emblematic of the sectarianism that initially incited Lebanon's protests.

Analysis: Hariri's return to premiership may temporarily stabilize Beirut's politics, while potential public dissatisfaction of the status quo may ignite and prolong protests. The current sectarian system initially provoked Lebanon's 2019-20 protests, which will likely reignite in light of Hariri's reappointment. Hariri will almost certainly attempt to emphasize dedication to economic and political stability to quell public dissent, but the public may see his reappointment a sign of the government unwilling to change the system, likely prompting protests.

[Sinclare Hardy]

CHINA: Military Alliance with Russia Probably Intended to Display Strength

Summary: Beijing will likely accept Moscow's suggested bilateral military alliance, resulting in cooperation between China and Russia to intimidate of other nations.

Development: On 22 October, Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke of the possibility of a China-Russia military alliance. The suggestion follows several joint military exercises with China and good relations between Russia and China. Putin stated that the military alliance remains unneeded, but that the goal remains improving the defense capabilities of China's army.

Analysis: Beijing will likely accept Moscow's military alliance proposal on the basis of efficient military cooperation in past joint exercises. Moscow's specification of defense aid indicates that leaders of both countries believe that Chinese involvement in a conflict remains likely. Russia likely sees a benefit in assisting China with its offensive military maneuvers through the potential challenging of Western influence in Asia, prompting the proposed alliance. Even if Beijing does not make a statement regarding its acceptance of the alliance, an increase in joint military events will likely occur. In agreeing to the alliance, China and Russia will publicly display a united force that may intimidate weaker regions giving China an advantage in any potential conflict.

[Savannah Gallop]

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Russian Aid Indicates Growing Interest in Africa

Summary: Moscow's growing influence in the Central African Republic (CAR) likely displays increasing Russian interest in sub-Saharan Africa.

Development: On 24 October, five members of the Russian military arrived in the CAR to set up a representative office for the Russian Defense Ministry. The previous week, Moscow sent 20 armored cars to Bangui. Moscow's previous aid to Bangui included supplying military arms, equipment, and training to the CAR, including aid from the Moscow-affiliated private military company Wagner Group (PMC). Moscow also secured mining exploration concessions and displayed an interest in further development of natural resources in CAR.

Analysis: Increased Russian military presence in the CAR indicates a continuation of Moscow's interest of expanded influence in Africa. Moscow likely continues supplying military aid to garner Bangui's consent for mining and drilling rights. Moscow will probably provide modern mining and drilling equipment to the CAR, which Bangui will need to extract its domestic resources, resulting in strengthened relations between the two countries. Further, Moscow's provision of military training and equipment to the CAR may make it a more appealing defense partner to Bangui, deepening Moscow's influence. Moscow will likely continue to increase its influence in Africa through military equipment sales and donations, deploying PMCs, and by providing military training and advisors in additional countries, following success in the CAR.

[Rhett Caron]

SYRIA: Bread Crisis Likely to Raise Awareness and Prompt Remedial Action

Summary: Damascus citizens waiting in line for hours and forced into cages for bread will likely capture international attention and call for action against these conditions.

Development: On 30 October, an unknown source leaked images of Damascus citizens waiting in iron cages to queue for bread. Reports claimed Damascus soldiers forced the citizens into the cages, sparking an uproar of public condemnation. Earlier in October, Damascus introduced new laws limiting the amount of bread readily available for citizens putting many families at risk of starvation. Additionally, reports state Damascus citizens also wait in line for hours at a time in hot temperatures for bread. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that in these lines, women tolerate harassment, men physically fight, and soldiers completely ignore the elderly. Many individuals took to social media to criticize President Bashar al-Assad, the mistreatment of Syrian citizens, and the perceived deteriorating economy. A report from the United Nations (UN) stated that 90% of the Syrian population lives in poverty, and Damascus has not yet attempted to find relief for those in crisis.

Analysis: The mistreatment of citizens during the bread crisis will likely call global attention to Assad's handling of Syria's economic issues and may provoke an international reaction. Activists and opponents of Assad may label the treatment of citizens human rights violations. The increased attention to the treatment of citizens may also draw attention to the worsening economic state of Syria and prompt mobilization of leaders, possibly including the UN. The current protests on social media about the treatment of citizens will likely continue to grow and continue to raise awareness. The increased recognition of the crisis and maltreatment of citizens may prompt Damascus to find a solution to decrease public disapproval and boost Assad's image. Organizations including the UN and SOHR may also seek to increase its presence in Syria to better report on and potentially mitigate the treatment of citizens and the economic crisis.

[Tianna Sardelli]

CHILE: Decision to Rewrite Constitution Could Lead to Uncertain Period

Summary: Dissatisfaction with Chile's current constitution and protests resulted in a referendum to draft a new constitution, likely pushing President Sebastián Piñera into a period of uncertainty for the rest of his presidency.

Development: On 25 October, Chile held a referendum for the drafting of a new constitution. Worsening protests combined with economic turmoil and police brutality highlighted the shortcomings of the current Pinochet-era constitution. The referendum to draft a new constitution won by 78% of the vote. Voters approved a 155-seat constitutional convention composed of citizens and lawmakers, including members from marginalized indigenous communities, to draft the new constitution. Piñera expressed support for the referendum and drafting of a new constitution, citing its potential to unite the Chilean people and bring peace to the country. Piñera's support for the referendum divided his right-wing backers, causing tension within his administration and diminishing his popularity further.

Analysis: Piñera's support of the decision to draft a new constitution following social and economic inequality and worsening protests despite a lack of support from party members will almost certainly result in a diminished governance. The decision to draft a new constitution resulted in a further decreased approval rating for Piñera, likely hurting his chances of re-election. Without party support, Piñera will face difficulties in passing new legislation and may face challengers within his party in the next election. Piñera will almost certainly face pressure from both opponents and supporters of the new constitution, potentially creating a gridlock in the government. Political division and civil unrest could push Piñera into a period of uncertainty for the remaining 14 months of his presidency, limiting his governing abilities and influence within Chile.

[Emma Sanders]

About GSIS

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's (ERAU) Bachelor of Science in Global Security & Intelligence Studies (GSIS) degree program at our Prescott Campus blends both academic and professional studies to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become future leaders in intelligence, security, and law enforcement. The program provides students with a sound foundation in the liberal arts, including international relations, foreign languages and cultures, international law, foreign policy, political and military history, and other essential topics.

About EE

Eagle Eye Intelligence (EE) is an intelligence and research organization led by the students of the GSIS program at ERAU in Prescott, Arizona.

Dr. Philip E. Jones founded EE and Embry-Riddle's GSIS program in 2002, following a career with the Central Intelligence Agency and consulting work in international development and global security. Professor Dale R. Avery, a former career intelligence analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency and Office of the Director of National Intelligence, serves as EE's faculty advisor.

EE strives to provide actionable intelligence and analysis to its customers during the academic year. We are driven by a number of goals – continuous development, nonpartisanship, interdisciplinary studies, global awareness, and professionalism.

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Riley Coder, a senior in the GSIS program, currently serves as EE's Editor in Chief. For questions or comments, contact the team at editorsee@gmail.com or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708.

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