

Côte d'Ivoire

Country Overview

Politics

Côte d'Ivoire is a democratic republic in West Africa. In October 2015, President Alassane Outarra was re-elected, in elections judged to be credible by the international community, further stabilizing the country after the post-election crises in 2010-2011, when former president Laurent Gbagbo refused to step down from presidency. The next presidential elections are scheduled to take place in November 2020.¹

Economy

Côte d'Ivoire is classified by the World Bank as a lower middle-income economy.² With an economy that has expanded by an average rate of eight percent every year since 2011,³ Côte d'Ivoire is Africa's second fastest growing economy.⁴ This growth has been fueled by increases in the production of major agricultural crops such as cocoa, coffee, and cashew nuts, in addition to increased industrial production. Of the labor force of approximately 8.747 million in 2017, an estimated 68 percent are engaged in agriculture.⁵ Because of its heavy dependence on cocoa, coffee and palm oil, the economy is sensitive to fluctuations in commodity market prices.⁶ The World Bank anticipates that the approaching 2020 elections and the uncertainty surrounding the political climate may result in a decrease in private investment from other nations.⁷

The government of Côte d'Ivoire is actively promoting agricultural processing for cocoa, cashews, and mangoes, and a growth in industries involving gold mining and electricity exports have been noticed beyond the agricultural sector.⁸

Côte d'Ivoire is eligible for trade under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. The US imports goods that include cocoa, oil, rubber, wood and cashew nuts.⁹

Social/Human Development



Côte d'Ivoire is home to more than 60 ethnic groups.¹⁰ These are primarily divided into 5 groups: Akan (28.9 percent), Voltaïque or Gur (16.1 percent), Northern Mande (14.5 percent), Kru (8.5 percent) and Southern Mande (6.9 percent). Another 0.9 percent are identified as 'other' or 'unspecified.'¹¹ The Ivoirian economy was heavily dependent on immigration following independence in 1960. However, as the economy declined in the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of 'Ivoirité' or Ivoirian identity played a central role in the civil conflict that began in 2002 which scapegoated northern Ivoirians (primarily Muslims) and migrants. This conflict, as well as violence following the 2010 elections, resulted in the displacement of over a million people.¹² In addition, 692,000 people are currently considered "stateless" by the UN because citizenship is not officially conferred by birth, but instead through parental lineage, meaning that some families with multiple generations of Ivoirian residents are still considered "foreigners."¹³

Although poverty levels have been declining, the poverty rate is still relatively high, at 46 percent in 2015, compared to 49 percent in 2008.¹⁴ Côte d'Ivoire's Human Development Index score for 2018 was 0.516, ranking the country 165 out of 189 countries.¹⁵

U.S. Department of State TIP Report Summary

U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2 Watchlist

According to the U.S. Department of State *Trafficking in Persons Report*, trafficking and trafficking risk is present in potentially exported supply chains, including agriculture (specifically cocoa, coffee, rubber and livestock) and mining. The report also notes sex trafficking associated with mining regions.

Read the full TIP Report at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

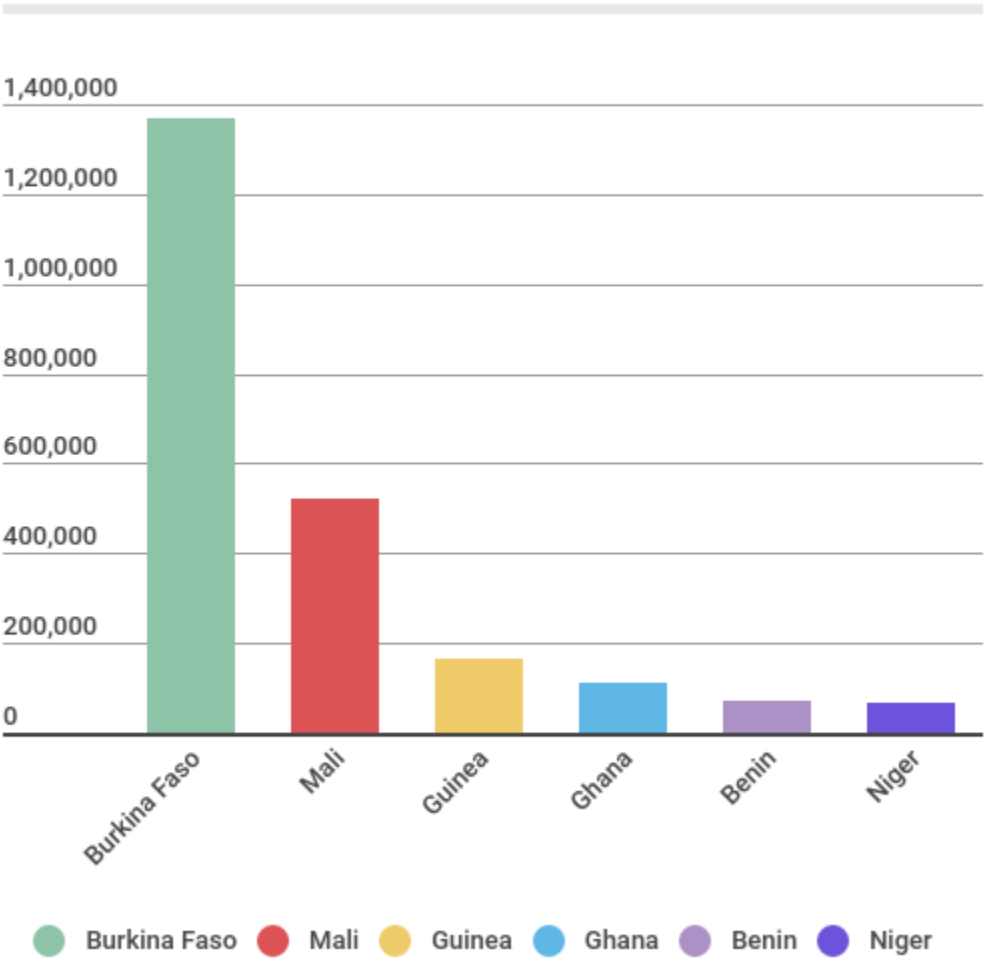
Migrants and Other Vulnerable Populations

Côte d'Ivoire has positive net immigration.¹⁶ About 9.9 percent of the country's population are migrants.¹⁷ The largest source country for migrants is Burkina Faso. Other migrant source countries include West African neighbors such as Mali, Guinea, Ghana, Benin, and Niger.¹⁸ According to the UN High Commissioner



for Refugees (UNHCR), among 696,972 persons of concern in Côte d'Ivoire, 99.3 percent of these are stateless persons.¹⁹

Migrants to Côte d'Ivoire

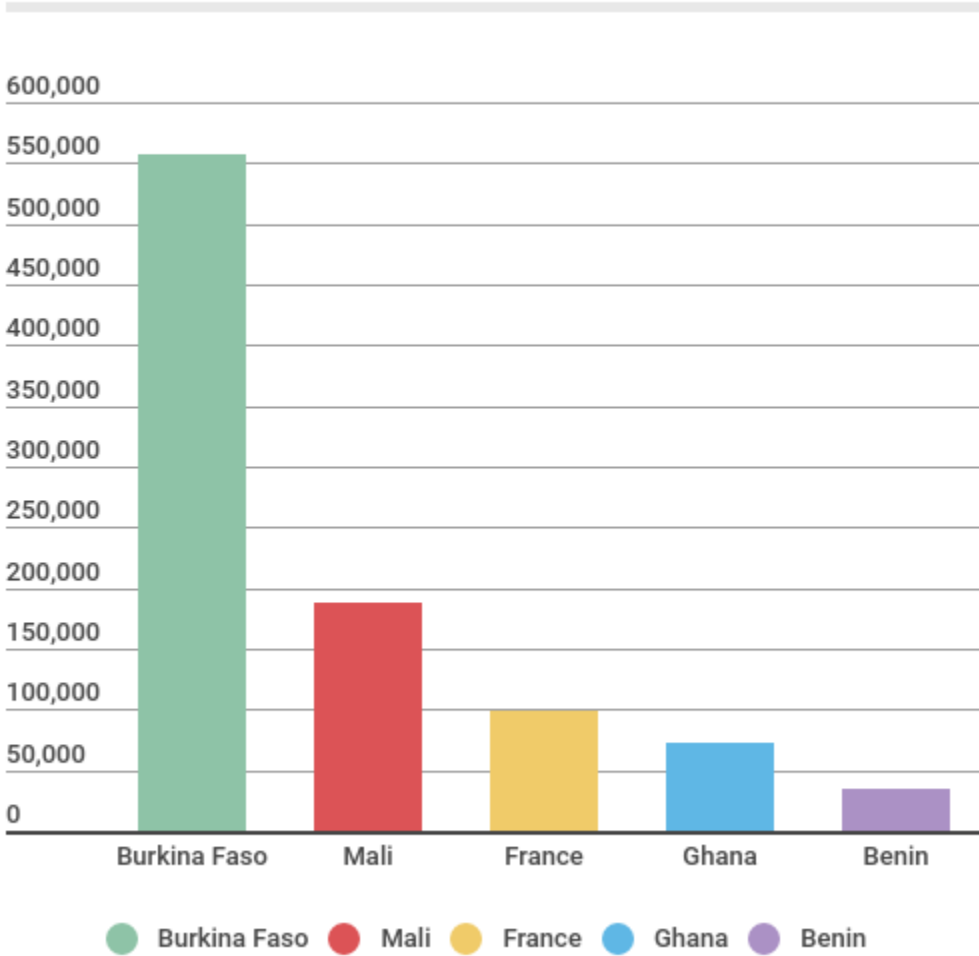


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The top destination countries for migrants from Côte d'Ivoire are Burkina Faso, Mali, France, Ghana and Benin.²¹



Migrants from Côte d'Ivoire



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Exports and Trade

Côte d'Ivoire's top exports in 2018 include cocoa, mineral fuels, fruits and nuts, precious metals and stones, rubber, and cotton.²³



Top Commodity Exports

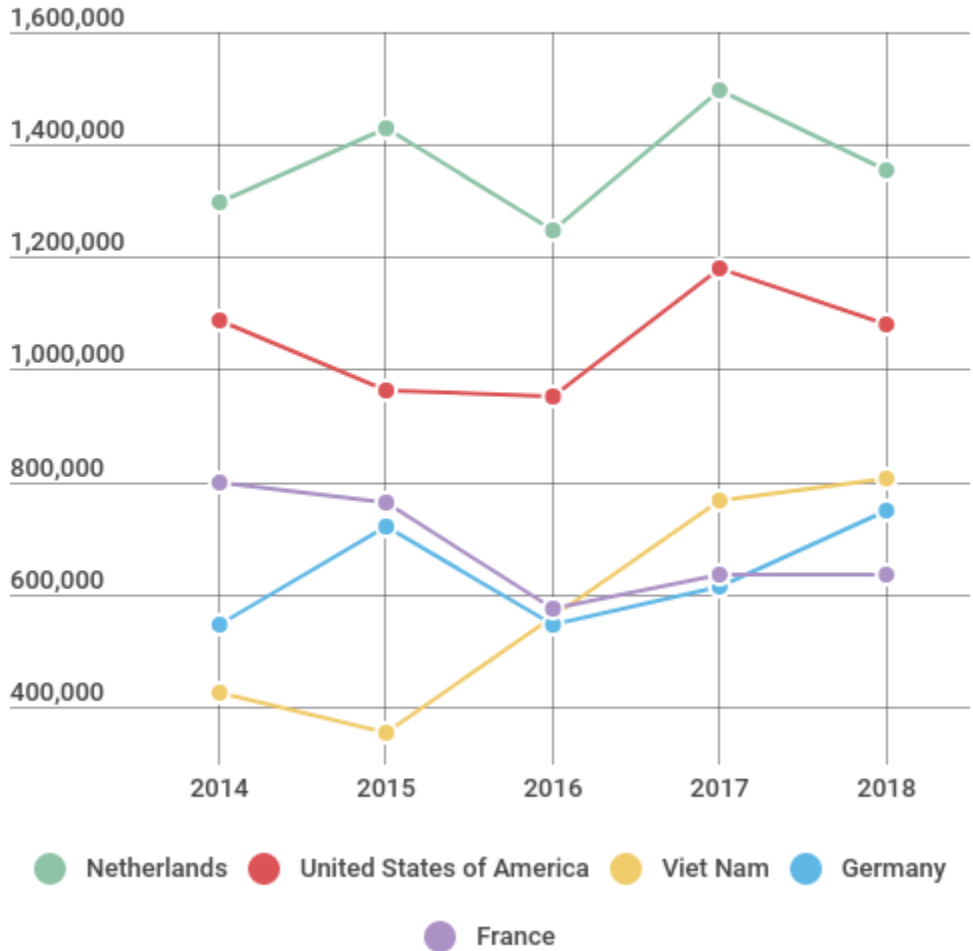


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The top importers of all goods from Côte d'Ivoire are the Netherlands, the United States of America, Vietnam, Germany, and France.²⁵



CDI Export Partners



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Trafficking in Persons Risk Factor Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers' Rights

Freedom of Association



Although the law provides for the rights of workers (with exceptions for police and military members) to form and organize unions, the US Department of State notes that, according to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), employers can refuse to negotiate with unions if they claim that the unions are non-representative. Strikes and collective bargaining are reportedly subject to considerable conditions, which may make them more difficult to implement in practice. Informal sector workers – who make up over 80 percent of the labor force – are excluded from the benefits associated with freedom of association.²⁷ In 2019, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) gave Côte d’Ivoire a rating of 4, characterized for systematic violations of rights, on its 1 – 5+ scale, with lower scores indicating that the country offers better protections of workers’ rights.²⁸

Working Conditions

The law set the minimum wage at 60,000 CFA/month (USD 110) and 25,000 CFA/month (USD 45) for agricultural workers. The legal workweek is 40 hours, with overtime pay beyond that point. At least one 24-hour rest period per week is required. Workers in the informal sector are excluded from legal health and safety protections. Labor inspectors are reportedly insufficient to enforce laws.²⁹

Discrimination

The law prohibits discrimination based on sex, age, national origin, citizenship, race, religion, and social origin, but the U.S. Department of State reports that these laws are not always enforced and that discrimination occurs in practice.³⁰ Discriminatory practice on the basis of gender, nationality, disability, and LGBTI status has remained an issue within the work force.

Forced Labor

The law prohibits forced labor, but the U.S. Department of State has reported that resources, inspections, remediation and penalties are inadequate.³¹

Child Labor

The law sets the legal minimum working age at 16, but states that apprenticeships can begin at age 14. Workers under 18 are prohibited by law



from hazardous tasks. As of the 2015 academic year, education is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 to 16.³²

Civil Society Organizations

The US Department of State reports that “government officials were somewhat cooperative and responsive” to the views and operations of human rights groups. In certain instances, the government has been reported to respond defensively toward such groups, however, and has even incited threats against one leader of an organization.³³

Immigration Policies Limiting the Employment Options or Movement of Migrants

Migrants and foreigners face discrimination when seeking to obtain national identity documents. This increases challenges surrounding in-country movement, and consequently achieving formal employment. Many of these migrants face housing and food insecurity as a result of these legal obstacles.³⁴

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants



Conventions	Status
ILO 29 Forced Labor	In force
ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize	In force
ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	In force
ILO 100 Equal Remuneration	In force
ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor	In force
ILO 111 Discrimination	In force
ILO 138 Minimum Age	In force
ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies	Not ratified
ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor	In force
ILO 97 Migration for Employment	Not ratified

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Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

Côte d’Ivoire scored a 92.1 in the 2019 Fragile States Index, placing it in the “Alert” category, and was ranked as 29 out of 178 countries.³⁶

Level of Crime and Violence

The U.S. Department of State reports that the crime level in Côte d’Ivoire is critical.³⁷ The World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report ranks Côte d’Ivoire at 123/141 for organized crime.³⁸

The U.S. Department of State reports that transnational crime and potential terrorist threats exist, predominantly associated with al-Qa’ida activity originating in Mali.³⁹

State Persecution



The U.S. Department of State notes that statelessness is pervasive as citizenship rights are “derived from one’s parents,” rather than through birth within the nation. Many people living in the country do not have birth registration documentation, especially children born of migrants. UNHCR estimates that the number of stateless persons is 700,000, but admits that even this is likely to be an underestimated figure. Ethnic discrimination is reportedly an issue, and even second or third generation residents may be considered “foreign.” Ethnic conflicts are commonly associated with land disputes as land ownership laws are unclear and inconsistently implemented. The U.S. Department of State reported on a common belief which suggested that “foreigners were responsible for high crime rates and identity card fraud.”⁴⁰

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores Côte d’Ivoire as 35 out of 100, where a 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and a 100 signals “Very Clean”. Côte d’Ivoire is ranked 106 out of 180 on that index.⁴¹ According to the U.S. Department of State, a high level of corruption impedes economic growth and investment. Businesses and citizens reportedly encounter corruption in civil service operations such as judicial proceedings and tax issues.⁴²

Human Rights Watch notes that the government has not responded adequately to corruption.⁴³ Ordinance number 2013-660 has been implemented by the country as a measure of combatting corruption. Several prominent watchdog organizations, including the High Authority for Good Governance and the national financial intelligence agency CENTIF, are involved in exposing corruption. However, it is reported by the U.S. Department of State that these entities have not demonstrated effective competence or drive toward investigating cases of corruption, despite widespread allegation of its prevalence.⁴⁴

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

Côte d’Ivoire is scored in the low human development category, according to the UN Human Development Index, with a rank of 165 out of 189 countries and a score of .516, demonstrating an increase from .454 in 2010.⁴⁵ Many of Côte



d'Ivoire's neighbors actually rank lower, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, and Liberia.⁴⁶

Level and Extent of Poverty

Côte d'Ivoire has a relatively high level of poverty, with 46.1 percent of the population determined to be living in multidimensional poverty according to the UN.⁴⁷

Although poverty levels have been decreasing, economic growth within the country is uneven, with a large degree of inequality. When adjusted for inequality, the Human Development Index score falls to 0.331.⁴⁸ This demonstrates a higher degree of inequality within the country than noted in other sub-Saharan African countries, indicated in those such as Burkina Faso with a score of .303, Mali with a score of .294, Guinea at .310, and Liberia at .314.⁴⁹

Degree of Gender Inequality

The UNDP Gender Inequality Index scores Côte d'Ivoire as having low levels of gender equality, ranking it 157 out of 162 countries with a score of .657.⁵⁰

Gender-based discrimination is prohibited by law. However, in practice women may face economic discrimination, particularly in terms of inheritance laws and land-tenure practices. Although women have legal rights to own land, traditionally women are restricted from engaging in decisions surrounding land acquisition and ownership.⁵¹ Consent from a spouse is often required when wives consider large land transactions. Sons are also more likely to inherit land than daughters.⁵² Women have legal access to financial services, but many are reportedly often unable to meet bank criteria, such as by providing land/property titles.⁵³ The Labour Code prohibits discrimination based on gender, and mandates equal pay among men and women in the work place. However, certain professions restrict the hiring of women employees, indicated by a decree issued by the Labour Code.⁵⁴

A reported 17.8 percent of women possess a secondary education level, compared to 34.1 percent of men. The rate of female participation in the labor market is 48.1 percent, compared to 66.2 percent for men.⁵⁵



Landlessness and Dispossession

The violence following the 2010 elections left hundreds of thousands of people displaced, particularly people from the western and northeast regions of the country. Many of these internally displaced people were left landless, as their land was occupied or sold; many are economic migrants and face discrimination concerning housing and community integration.⁵⁶ The government adopted the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which provides for the protection of land rights of IDPs. The U.S. Department of State noted that the government provided little assistance in practice and IDPs “often resorted to living in informal urban settlements.”⁵⁷

Land tenure is a complex issue; multiple groups may simultaneously make claims on the same land, which can lead to violence or instability. A lack of land title provision intensifies this situation.⁵⁸ Foreign nationals, even those born in Côte d’Ivoire, cannot legally own land. The government has emphasized its efforts to resolve matters of citizenship among stateless people, so that they might be granted rights to inherit or possess land, but these measures have reportedly lacked significant progress.⁵⁹

Environmental Factors

Certain regions are prone to heavy flooding,⁶⁰ especially in Abidjan, where a recent flood in 2019 resulted in some people experiencing homelessness and lack of access to resources.⁶¹ Other environmental challenges include deforestation and water pollution.⁶²

Documented Trafficking Risk in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Cocoa

Cocoa Overview

Côte d’Ivoire is the global leader in cocoa production, producing over 40 percent of the world’s supply of cocoa beans. Cocoa contributes about 40 percent of



national export revenues and comprises about 10 percent of the country's GDP. Approximately 600,000 small farmers produce cocoa.⁶³

Documented TIP Risks in Cocoa

The U.S. Department of State's 2019 *Trafficking in Persons Report* lists forced labor in the production of cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire.⁶⁴ Trafficking has been documented among migrant workers – particularly teenage boys coming from the neighboring countries of Burkina Faso and Mali. Upon their arrival at the isolated cocoa farms, some workers were subjected to unsafe work and living conditions and are not paid.⁶⁵

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's *List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*, cocoa is produced with child labor in Côte d'Ivoire.⁶⁶ The U.S. Department of Labor states that between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, an estimated 2.1 million children participated in child labor during the 2013-2014 period.⁶⁷ However, a recent survey completed by Tulane University found that Côte d'Ivoire experienced a 20 percent decrease in the amount of children who engaged in hazardous work.⁶⁸

Gold

Coffee Overview

Coffee production is highly labor-intensive, particularly in Africa, where nearly all work is performed manually. Tasks include land preparation, weeding, pruning trees, spraying fertilizers or pesticides, hand harvesting, and transporting.⁶⁹ This can have significant consequences for children who might participate in this type of labor.

There is little information available on migrant workers in the coffee sector of Côte d'Ivoire. However, the farmers that grow cocoa in regions where migrant labor and migrant child labor have been documented also often grow coffee.⁷⁰ These anecdotal findings are supported by the fact that both cocoa and coffee are grown in the same forested region of the country.⁷¹ In Côte d'Ivoire, there are anecdotal reports that the intermediaries who facilitate migration and hiring in the cocoa sector are also active in the coffee sector.⁷²

Documented TIP Risks in Coffee

According to the 2019 U.S. Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report*,



coffee is produced with forced child labor in Côte d'Ivoire.⁷³ The U.S. Department of Labor's *2018 List of Goods Made with Forced Labor and Child Labor* indicates that coffee is produced with forced labor in Côte d'Ivoire.⁷⁴



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