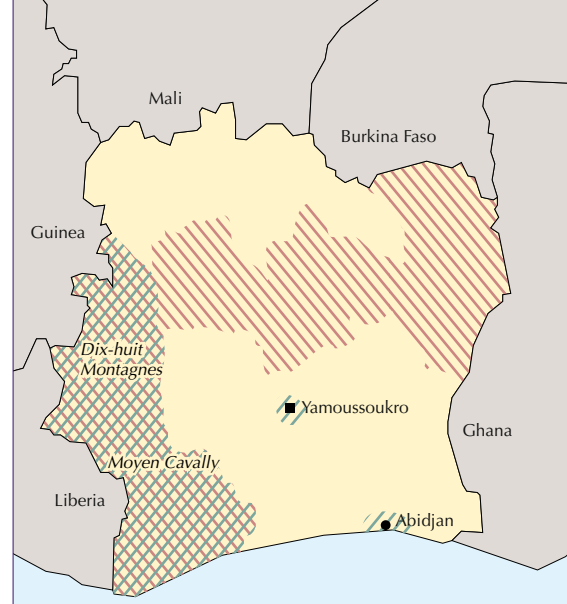


# Côte d'Ivoire



## Quick facts

Number of IDPs	Undetermined
Percentage of total population	–
Start of current displacement situation	2002
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	1,100,000 (2003)
New displacement	500



Seven years after civil war erupted in Côte d'Ivoire, it was not known how many of the over 700,000 people who had fled were still displaced at the end of 2009. Almost all IDPs were hosted by friends and family, and there were no country-wide mechanisms to monitor returns. In mid-2009, the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) used a figure of approximately 42,000 IDPs in the west of the country where monitoring mechanisms were in place.

The politicisation of ethnicity during the economic decline of the 1990s had caused escalating tensions and eventually armed conflict which led the country to be split between the south under government control and the north held by the rebels of the Forces Nouvelles ("New Forces"). Thousands of civilians, especially government and public sector employees, left the north to seek shelter in the south, mostly within the economic capital Abidjan. Meanwhile, in the western "cocoa belt" of Moyen Cavally and Dix-huit Montagnes, tensions over land between indigenous communities and economic migrants escalated and caused massive displacement.

The 2007 Ouagadougou Peace Agreement gave IDPs real hope for an end to their displacement. However, the process has since suffered from delays in its implementation, including the repeated postponement of national elections. In 2009, the country was still divided between a government-controlled south and a centre-north where Forces Nouvelles members were still performing administrative duties despite the re-deployment of government administrators. At the end of the year, it was not clear whether the benefits of implementing the Ouagadougou Agreement outweighed the existing incentives for all parties to maintain the current situation of "neither war nor peace".

In 2009, new displacement occurred in the west, due to land disputes and inter-communal tensions which sometimes followed the return of IDPs. Ongoing tensions over land and property also stopped many people returning. Attacks and armed robberies continued in 2009, especially along highways in the west, despite the deployment of joint government and Forces Nouvelles patrols. Displaced women and girls were particularly vulnerable to the widespread threat of sexual violence.

Accessing the basic necessities of life has proved difficult in areas of displacement and return, for IDPs and host communities. Social services are inadequate or absent, particularly in the north and west, and food insecurity is high where displacement

has interrupted agricultural cycles. Displaced women and girls have more frequently had to resort to prostitution as a means to ensure they and their family have some income.

Return has been the only option promoted so far by the government. Return movements have mostly been spontaneous, but some IDPs have received support to return from both government and national and international agencies. No data is available on IDPs who may have integrated in the place to which they were displaced or successfully settled in another area. Until solutions are found to guarantee equal access to land and land ownership, address rampant criminality and human rights abuses and the prevalent impunity of perpetrators, the attainment of durable solutions is still a distant prospect.

The restitution of IDPs' property and access to their land remains politically charged; in the north there are concerns about restitution of property illegally occupied or taken by members of the Forces Nouvelles, and in the west land has been occupied by people who remained in villages, by other IDPs or by newly-arrived migrant workers. With the government set on the implementation of the 1998 Rural Land Law as the only legal framework available to settle disputes in rural areas, the specific impact on IDPs should be considered to avoid unintended discrimination.

In 2009, the humanitarian community decided to focus on IDP protection and resettlement in the west, and nutrition and food security in the north. In 2009, OCHA started pulling out of Man and Zou in western Côte d'Ivoire as part of its strategy to gradually reduce its country programme. Meanwhile, international donors prioritised development assistance, in line with the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator set up a local transitional fund to bridge the gap between decreasing humanitarian funding and anticipated development funding, but by the end of 2009 no donors had contributed.

The Ministry of Solidarity and War Victims is the government's focal point on IDP issues. Its impact is limited by the lack of coordination within the government, institutional support and funding. Although a national legal framework upholding the rights of IDPs was still not finalised in 2009, Côte d'Ivoire was among the countries which signed the Kampala Convention.