



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Côte d'Ivoire

Decision adopted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at its 176th session (Geneva, 3 to 19 February 2025)



Riot police (left) face members of the political party Generations and Peoples Solidarity (GPS) in front of the party's headquarters in Abidjan on 23 December 2019, after police intervened to evacuate party members.
SIA KAMBOU / AFP

CIV-07 – Alain Lobognon
CIV-09 – Guillaume Soro
CIV-10 – Loukimane Camara
CIV-11 – Kando Soumahoro
CIV-12 – Yao Soumaïla
CIV-14 – Issiaka Fofana
CIV-16 – Sess Soukou Mohamed

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage
- ✓ Lack of fair trial proceedings
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity

A. Summary of the case

This case concerns the situation of seven former Ivorian members of parliament who have faced violations of their fundamental rights since 2019 in the exercise of their parliamentary mandate. The violations they suffered occurred in the context of the presidential elections of October 2020, when the outgoing president Mr. Alassane Ouattara was

Case CIV-COLL-01

Côte d'Ivoire: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victims: Seven opposition members of parliament

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1)(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaints: January 2019; February and November 2020

Recent IPU decision: October 2022

IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing: Hearing of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire at the 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali (October 2022)

Recent follow-up:

- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Speaker of the National Assembly (October 2022)
- Communication from the complainant: January 2025
- Communication to the authorities: Letter to the Speaker of the National Assembly (November 2023)
- Communication to the complainant: January 2025

declared the winner, thus obtaining a third term in breach of the provisions of the Ivorian Constitution, according to the opposition.

Some former members of parliament, including Mr. Alain Lobognon, Mr. Loukimane Camara, Mr. Kando Soumahoro and Mr. Yao Soumaïla were accused of causing public disorder and endangering State security. They were arbitrarily arrested and detained between 2019 and 2020. They were released on bail in September 2020 until the end of their trial, when they were convicted of causing public disorder and sentenced to nine months in prison on 14 May 2021. As they had already served their sentence while on remand, they were free.

Mr. Alain Lobognon was released on 23 June 2021, at the end of his trial, after having served his sentence. He was sentenced to 17 months in prison and deprivation of his political rights for five years. In February 2023, the Court of Appeal acquitted Mr. Lobognon of the charges against him and reinstated his political rights.

The former Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Guillaume Soro, is also among the former members of parliament charged. He was sentenced in April 2020 to 20 years in prison and the deprivation of his political rights, for misappropriation of public funds. On 23 June 2021, Mr. Soro was also sentenced to life in prison for conspiracy and endangering state security. The complainants continue to assert that the proceedings to which Mr. Soro was subjected, and the prison sentences handed down against him, are part of a process of politically motivated persecution aimed at preventing him from exercising his political rights in Côte d'Ivoire. In the judgment of 23 June 2021, former members of parliament Mr. Issiaka Fofana and Mr. Mohamed Sess Soukou were also found guilty of attempting to endanger state security and were sentenced to 20 years in prison. All three men are currently in exile.

On 22 February 2024 Mr. Issiaka Fofana received a presidential pardon from the Head of State as part of efforts to consolidate peace in the country. There are currently no legal proceedings against him.

During a hearing with the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at the 145th IPU Assembly in October 2022, the Ivorian delegation stated that all the former members of parliament had been released, and that some of them had been placed under judicial supervision. The authorities also said that the settling of the cases of several former members of parliament was to be seen against the background of a process of reconciliation initiated by the government in power and motivated by a policy of appeasement.

On 21 August 2024, former member of parliament Mr. Kando Soumahoro was tried by the court responsible for trying *flagrante delicto* offences (*Tribunal des flagrants délits*) and sentenced to three years in prison, including two years non-suspended. He was accused of causing public disorder and of attempting to reform the Generations and Peoples Solidarity (GPS) political party – the opposition movement formerly led by Mr. Guillaume Soro that had been dissolved by the Abidjan Criminal Court on 23 June 2021. Although this conviction was not related to his parliamentary mandate, and does not fall within the Committee's mandate, the complainants said it showed that former members of parliament close to Mr. Guillaume Soro were still being prevented from fully exercising their rights and continued to have proceedings brought against them as soon as they showed their opposition to the government in power.

Presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire are scheduled to take place in October 2025. Notwithstanding the various convictions that prevent him from taking part in this election, Mr. Guillaume Soro, still in exile, has announced his candidacy.

B. Decision

The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

1. *Notes* the information concerning Mr. Alain Lobognon, whose civil and political rights were reinstated in February 2023; *notes* also that Mr. Issiaka Fofana has received a presidential pardon; and *decides* to close these two cases pursuant to section IX, paragraph 25(b) of its Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints, considering that they are no longer subject to any restrictions of their fundamental rights, which means that their cases have been resolved in a satisfactory manner;
2. *Is concerned* about the restrictions allegedly imposed on the former members of parliament who are currently in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly about their inability to exercise their civil and political rights in an unrestricted manner; and *remains concerned* also about the convictions of Guillaume Soro and Mohamed Sess Soukou, which, according to the complainants, are not based on any tangible evidence proving the charges against them;
3. *Recalls* the fruitful meeting it had with the Ivorian authorities at the 145th IPU Assembly in October 2022, and the measures for improved political relations taken to foster a climate of peace, including the release of all detained former members of parliament; *welcomes* the presidential pardon granted in February 2024; and *calls on* the Ivorian authorities to take all necessary measures to guarantee the rights of the former members of parliament, lift the restrictions placed on the exercise of their fundamental rights and foster the definitive resolution of the cases under examination;
4. *Encourages* the Ivorian authorities, in this electoral year when tensions could lead to new violations against certain members of the National Assembly, to take all necessary measures to guarantee the fundamental rights of all current and former parliamentarians, including the right to freedom of expression, in order to ensure that the political debate reflects all opinions, including those that are unfavourable to the Head of State and to government policy;
5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the Minister of Justice and the complainant, as well as to any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
6. *Decides* to continue examining the case.