



# Côte d'Ivoire

## Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

### Africa

### Geography

**Area** 322,463 sq km. On the west African coast between Ghana and Liberia. Rainforest in the south and savannah/highlands in the north.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	21,570,746	2.31%
2020	26,954,068	2.17%
2030	32,550,662	1.82%

There has been a large influx of migrants from surrounding lands over the last few decades, especially Burkina Faso and Mali, interrupted only by the civil strife in 2002–2004.

**Capital** Yamoussoukro 885,267. **Other major city** Abidjan 4.1 million. **Urbanites** 50.1%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 41%. **Life expectancy** 56.8 yrs.

### Peoples

The large and undocumented population of migrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and other surrounding countries means that all figures are estimates.

**Guinean/Akan** 31.7%. 21 groups: Baule 15.8%; the dominant people today. Anyi 4.4%; Attie 2.7%; Anyin/Morofó 1.7%; Akan 1.5%; Abe 1.2%.

**Gur** 24.6%. 21 groups: Mossi 12.0%; Senufo(7) 9.2%; Kulango 1.0%.

**Malinke(3)** 18.7%. 11 groups: Maninka(4) 10.5%; Bambara 4.9%; Julia/Dioula 1.4%.

**Mande** 10.0%. 11 groups: Dan 5.9%; Gouro 2.4%.

**Kru** 9.1%. 28 groups: Bete(3) 3.2%; Guere 1.8%; Dida(2) 1.2%; Wobe 1.1%.

**Other Africans** 4.9%. Fulani(2) 2.1%.

**Other** 0.9%. Arab, French, German.

**Literacy** 48.1%. **Official language** French, used by a high proportion of the population. Julia is the most widespread indigenous language, used as a

trade language in the north and Abidjan. **All languages** 93. **Indigenous languages** 77. **Languages with Scriptures** 5Bi 29NT 33por 16w.i.p.

### Economy

One of the world's largest producers of cocoa, coffee and palm oil – all subject to global market changes in price. Nearly 70% of the population depend on agriculture and related activity, despite government attempts to diversify the economy. Oil and gas production now garner more income than cocoa. The post-independence economic boom attracted massive immigration of job-seekers from surrounding lands, which in turn led to numerous problems. Political woes, from a coup in December 1999 to the conflicts of 2002–2007, drove the economy downward as infrastructures failed and foreign investment disappeared.

**HDI Rank** 163<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 66.4% of GDP. **Income/person** \$1,132 (2% of USA).

### Politics

Independent from France in 1960. Formerly a one-party presidential government under Houphouët-Boigny, who died in 1993. His elected successor was deposed and fled the country during a coup at Christmas 1999. The military-led transitional government oversaw blatantly rigged elections in 2000. Protests forced in a new president – Laurent Gbagbo. After a failed coup in 2002, the nation was subject to an armed rebellion by disaffected northerners who claimed discrimination against them in the political sphere. A peace agreement signed in 2003 saw the fighting (which claimed thousands of lives) calm, with sporadic outbreaks until 2007. A new agreement in that year saw the former rebel leader come onboard as prime minister and militias on both sides begin to be decommissioned, disarmed and integrated into the armed forces. Elections to replace the president have been postponed several times and are years overdue; corruption is alleged to be rife within the corridors of power. Conflict and division in the country are along north-south lines that reflect, to a large degree, ethnic differences, with southern Christian and animist political interest groups attempting to shut out the northern Muslims from power. Tensions will not relax for some time, but Ivoirian stability is essential to the entire region, already one of the world's poorest and most strife-torn.

### Religion

Religious freedom, although the conflicts of 2002–2007 drove out many missionaries and saw an increasing religious demarcation of Muslim north and non-Muslim south. The government remains receptive to mission activity

and development. Traditional religions are generally stronger in the centre and west. Both Islam and Christianity are highly syncretized with African traditional beliefs, making these three religions difficult to precisely enumerate.

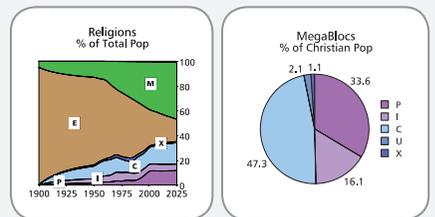
Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Muslim	41.80	9,016,572	3.2%
Christian	33.64	7,256,399	2.9%
Ethnoreligionist	24.09	5,196,393	0.2%
Non-religious	0.27	58,241	3.1%
Baha'i	0.13	28,042	2.3%
Buddhist	0.05	10,785	2.3%
Hindu	0.02	4,314	2.3%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	47	11.29	2,436,000	2.2%
Independent	150	5.40	1,164,000	2.0%
Catholic	1	15.90	3,430,000	3.8%
Orthodox	4	0.18	38,000	2.9%
Marginal	2	0.18	38,000	4.3%
Unaffiliated		0.69	149,000	-2.9%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	325	1,994,186	3,430,000
Assemblies of God	P	535	525,000	815,000
United Methodist Ch	P	853	677,355	800,000
Christian & Miss Alliance	P	1,600	320,000	408,000
Eglise Harriste	I	773	67,987	206,000
Works & Mission Bapt	I	1,850	92,500	185,000
Ashes of Purification	I	190	94,910	158,500

Les Eglises "Reveille"	I	643	65,818	98,727
Evang Alliance (WEC)	P	506	48,031	84,054
UEESO-MICI	P	64	15,351	79,000
Apostolic Pente Mission	I	702	42,143	59,000
Into Africa Project	P	433	22,917	55,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	52	14,500	47,850
Baptist Convention	P	149	22,400	33,600
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	195	8,600	24,596
Assoc of Ev Bapt Chs	P	400	8,000	20,000
Other denominations[175]		2,814	272,275	601,839
<b>Total Christians[204]</b>		<b>12,084</b>	<b>4,291,973</b>	<b>7,106,166</b>

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
<b>Evangelicals</b>			
Evangelicals	10.5	2,256,431	3.0%
<b>Renewalists</b>			
Charismatics	8.9	1,924,968	3.5%
Pentecostals	5.6	1,208,829	3.1%



## Answers to Prayer

- 1 The establishment of a peace agreement** after years of effective civil war and uneasy ceasefires. While all the issues that generated the troubles are not resolved, the return of stability to the country is a point for praise, since economic activity, education, development and rebuilding can now resume – and since the north is once again much more accessible for Christian ministry.
- 2 Continued growth in evangelical churches**, despite the upheavals of the 2002–2007 conflicts. In Abidjan alone, there are probably more than 3,000 churches, most of them relatively new and independent.
- 3 The further consolidation of Christian unity** – this comes in large part through the work of Transformation Africa/Global Day of Prayer, through *Radio Fréquence Vie* (the only national Protestant radio station), and through the work of interdenominational ministries such as The Bible Society, CCCI and GBU/IFES, the Christian publisher CPE, SIM's Pastors' Book Set project and the *Africa Bible Commentary*.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 The country has been essentially divided** between Muslim north and multi-faith but predominantly Christian south. Although peace is established and the nation is moving forward, the loss of life, of infrastructure and of confidence in Côte d'Ivoire's fundamental unity will leave scars on the nation's psyche. Pray for political leaders who are visionary, non-partisan, free of corruption and able to boldly take the nation forward and past this unfortunate episode in Côte d'Ivoire's history. Pray also for a satisfactory solution to the remaining challenge – how to handle the millions of immigrants from neighbouring countries, a problem at the core of the conflict of 2002–2007.

**2** **The Catholic Church** has made a deep impact through an extensive educational system. Catholics are a large minority in the south and among the upper and middle classes as a result. Nominalism is common in the Catholic and Methodist denominations, two of the country's largest. But there are significant numbers of genuine believers in both as well as a vibrant charismatic movement.

**3** **Animism is still strong in Côte d'Ivoire**, despite apparent numerical decline. Although evangelical congregations outnumber sacred fetish groves for the first time in the nation's history, animism's power remains unbroken and penetrates deep into the worldview and practices of both Christians and Muslims. Many believers are affected by the power of African traditional religion, especially through fetish charms and ancestor worship, compromising both their witness and their own life in Christ. Pray that all who have not fully left behind this past might be completely delivered by the power of Jesus. Pray that believers might withstand temptation to revert to old practices of animism.

**4** **Pray for evangelicals and their ministry** in Côte d'Ivoire. Partnerships and teamwork are on the rise, but more progress needs to be made if the growth enjoyed in the 1990s is to be repeated, if the country is to be effectively evangelized and if the Church is to be disciplined.

a) **Protestant and evangelical networks.** The Evangelical Federation of Côte d'Ivoire, despite being nearly 50 years old, has little to show for its efforts. Several new networks have formed as a result, including one specifically for Christians in media. Pray for leadership that knows how to make cooperative ventures work and to bring them to pass.

b) **National strategy for evangelization.** Côte d'Ivoire has a long way to go before the task is even close to being finished. **MANI** (Movement for African National Initiatives) and **CAPRO** are both engaged in research of the nation's people groups in order to stimulate greater mission and church planting endeavours. Both are committed to reaching the unreached by mobilizing the national Church to send missionaries – a grassroots and indigenous movement. Côte d'Ivoire has also played a major role in church and mission consultations for all of Francophone West Africa.

**5** **Knowledge and understanding of the Bible are low**, partly a result of rapid church growth, but also from a cultural lack of regular Bible reading. This naturally affects the maturation and discipleship of believers and whole churches. Many churches endorse prosperity teachings, and ministry can at times focus more upon miracles and healings rather than on the One who is their source or on the study of His Word. However, theological education is growing, both full-time (seminaries, colleges and institutes) and part-time (modular and TEE courses). Nearly every denomination has at least one Bible training institute. The quality of these varies greatly; pray for a greater level of partnership in theological education.

**6** **Evangelical agencies had a late and slow start** compared to other West African lands. **CMA** arrived in 1930 and focused on the Baule in the centre of the country. *Mission Biblique* began in 1927 among the Yacouba and Guéré in the southwest, later joined by **UFM**, and **WEC** began in 1934 among the Gouro and Gban (Gagou). **AoG**, though starting only in the 1950s, now has churches all over the country, surpassing all the other denominations in terms of growth and outreach. The number of mission personnel shrank drastically due to the outbreak of violence in 2002 and has not recovered to former levels. This has in turn cast greater responsibility onto the indigenous church, but foreign missionaries are still welcomed and needed in most aspects of ministry. Evangelism, church planting and Bible translation ministries only scratch the surface of possibilities.

**7** **There are now several African mission agencies;** some are denominational. They work mainly in Côte d'Ivoire but increasingly beyond, targeting the remaining unreached peoples of West Africa and the world. Main areas for prayer:

a) **Missionary training.** **CAPRO** has a missions training institute in Abidjan to serve Francophone West Africa. It is the first such institute for this region. The great challenge is to prepare missionaries for Muslim outreach. A consortium of Methodists, the UEESO and the General Conference Baptists are developing a missionary training school. Pray for these endeavours, and pray that such schools would produce excellent Ivoirian missionaries for the harvest field.

b) **Sending.** Congregations are usually supportive of indigenous missionaries, but leadership can at times feel threatened, and economic strain can limit financial support. Many missionaries

live by faith on very little income. Pray that God might supply all of their needs and that their churches might support them in every possible way.

**8 Peoples that are unevangelized** and without a major church planting breakthrough abound, especially in the north. The perception that Côte d'Ivoire is reached, because of the popularity of Christianity and presence of missionaries in the south, is a false notion that delays the gospel reaching millions in the north.

- a) **The Mande and Malinke people clusters** of the northwest. The Malinke especially are strongly Muslim and mostly unreached. They include the Jula (CMFI and WorldVenture), Koro (Baptists), Mahou (Norwegian Lutherans), Maninka(3) (**SIM, IMB**), Ngan, Wassulu, Worodougou (**CAPRO, UEESO, WEC, SIM**), Jeri Kuo and Ngan. None is more than 1% evangelical, and yet these clusters account for 20% of the country's population.
- b) **The Gur people** cluster of the north and northeast. Most practice African traditional religions, and none of the following is more than 1% evangelical: Lobi (**CAPRO**, Free Will Baptists), Koulango/Bouna (**CAPRO**, Free Will Baptists), Senoufo(5) (WorldVenture), Nafanra, Khisa and Karaboro.
- c) **Other, primarily foreign African peoples.** These include the Soninke, Fulani(2), Hausa, Bozo and Wolof, all of whom have immigrated at some past point from other West African countries.

**9 The large influx of foreigners** rapidly reversed with the outbreak of war. They are returning now, but precisely how many have done so is unknown. While their presence in Côte d'Ivoire is the source of much strife, it is also a timely evangelistic opportunity to reach them when they are separated from close tribal ties. Around 70% of the foreign population is Muslim. At their peak, foreigners made up nearly 30% of the country's total population, but half of that 30% had lived in Côte d'Ivoire for at least one generation.

**10 Islam spread and grew rapidly during the 20th Century**, from 5% in 1900 to near 41.8% today. Tribal groups in the north and pockets of tribes all over the country are becoming Muslim. Urban concentrations of Muslims are high as are conversion rates among new immigrants to the cities. Sadly, many southern Ivoirian Christians have aligned themselves with the president and his political agenda, and have thereby undermined their potential for genuine witness to northerners; foreign Christian witness may be the most effective way to reach the north. Pray that Christians may be zealous to win non-Muslims while they can and to show humility and love for them. Pray for the healing of the north-south ethnic divide created by politicians, which is making outreach to Muslims even harder than before.

## **11 Demographic sectors of society needing the gospel:**

- a) **Abidjan's exploding population** has doubled in the last 15 years to five million in the metropolitan area, making it the third largest city in the Francophone world. It is the strategic key for evangelization of Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Burkina Faso. All people groups of these latter two lands have a significant community in the city, but most are neglected by the Church. Over 2.5 million Muslims, roughly half of the city, are scarcely touched with the gospel. Missionaries from **CAPRO, SIM, CMA** and the Baptists are a mere drop in the bucket of church planting needs. Many new congregations are started every month, but these focus on already-Christian peoples.
- b) **AIDS is a major problem in the country**, although HIV prevalence rates have gone down to 4.7% of the population – still nearly one million people. The large majority of those HIV-positive are women. Both the government and many Christian ministries (CMFI, REMAR, Church of God) are doing good work in terms of awareness, education and care for those infected.
- c) **Young people** are responsive, and wherever churches minister specifically to them, there is fruit – denominations are increasingly introducing student ministry to their work. Liberty to teach Scripture in public schools is an exciting but under-used opportunity through lack of qualified personnel. SU makes a vital contribution in school evangelism and discipleship. The **IFES** Francophone Africa headquarters is in Abidjan, and there are strong GBU/**IFES** groups present. **CCCI** is also well established, with 30 full-time staff, reaching students in several cities.

**12 Christian literature.** Pray for the bookstores and depots of various missions, including The Bible Society, *Maison de la Bible*, **CLC**, CDM and others. Pray for the inter-mission/church Evangelical Publication Centre (CPE) and other publishers, that they might find the means to print books locally at a suitable quality. Currently, many books are printed in Asia or elsewhere. Well-intentioned efforts by outside ministries to sell their literature at subsidized prices keep African authors from publishing more relevant Christian works – because they cannot compete with these lower-priced books. Also needing prayer: lack of qualified staff (especially French-speaking), financial pressures and lack of good distribution outlets and marketing strategies.

**13 Bible translation** is one of the most pressing and demanding ministries for Christian workers. A considerable number of national and expatriate workers are involved in 28 translation projects, many being among the superficially Christianized people of the south. SIL's contribution is especially significant. Three OTs and six NTs were completed between 2000–2009, including the completion of the Jula Bible. Pray also for:

- a) **Distribution of Scripture.** Pray for a wider distribution of Bibles and NTs already translated. Relative poverty and a negative attitude toward reading, especially in one's tribal language rather than in French, are challenges that must be addressed.
- b) **Literacy projects are vital** to make full use of translated Scripture. Pray for SIL, UBS, other missions and local churches endeavouring to bring the gift of reading to Ivoirians.
- c) **Audio Scriptures** are even more important to the many peoples who are oral learners in this land. SIL is focusing on audio formats for Scripture, and **GRN** produces Scripture and Christian teaching in 65 of Côte d'Ivoire's languages.

#### **14 Christian media:**

- a) **Publishing and literature** took a serious blow in the civil conflicts, as stocks were looted, buildings damaged, foreign partners fled the country and economic upheaval decimated business. United Bible Society, **CLC**, CPE (Evangelical Publication Centre) and *Maison de la Bible* were all affected. Pray for these ministries to be restored to the functionality and influence they had before the war. Pray also for the impact of the *Africa Bible Commentary* (Langham) and the **SIM** Pastors' Booksets projects.
- b) **Radio.** *Radio Fréquence Vie* broadcasts in French and Jula. **SIM's** plan is to eventually turn it over to the national Church. Five other cities have relay stations to further broadcast the programmes in French, Jula, Baule, Abidji, Bété, Senufo, Mahouka and other languages. Methodists also recently started their own station. The Evangelical Radio Association in Côte d'Ivoire represents several stations, as Christians seek to utilize this most popular form of media. **TWR** and others produce radio programmes in studios in Abidjan, which are broadcast throughout West Africa and to the whole world. Much radio ministry is funded by private donors, since churches have been slow on the uptake to support this strategic ministry.
- c) **PEMA**, the film studio for the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, based in Abidjan, produces culturally relevant programmes on video for transmission by national television stations across West Africa. Topics such as HIV/AIDS, family life and other relevant social issues get a sound biblical treatment in these programmes.
- d) **The JESUS film** is in use in 12 languages, with another two dubbing projects underway. Praise God for the completion of the film in Jula.
- e) **Christian music writing and recording** continues to be influential in Côte d'Ivoire and indeed from here to the rest of West Africa. Many quality albums and songs have been recorded and produced here. Pray that the messages of the songs remain biblically sound and that the lifestyle of the artists reflects the message.