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Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire: Exclusion of main opponents in presidential election

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The exclusion of the main opposition candidates from the presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire on 25 October 2025 casts a shadow over the vote and fuels the risk of political violence in a country marked by a long history of electoral crises.

For the past thirty years, presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire have been the source of serious political tensions that have led to violence, such as during the 2020 election when more than 85 people were killed, not to mention the hundreds injured. The elections of 25 October do not seem, alas, to be an exception to the rule.

The opposition out of the game

The major element of the crisis is the exclusion from the electoral list, for various reasons, of candidates such as Charles Blé Goudé, former youth minister, Guillaume Soro, former prime minister, and above all the two main opponents: the businessman Tidjane Thiam, of the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), and the former president Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the African Peoples' Party (PPA-CI). These bans on running remove all credibility from the election and could generate political tensions, aggravated by the community dimensions linked to the establishment of these leaders in their regional strongholds.

This fragility of the electoral process can also be explained by other grievances: the fourth term of the current president, Alassane Ouattara, made possible by the constitutional change of 30 October 2016 that he initiated to circumvent the ban on more than two successive terms; an electoral list of eight million people out of a total of more than twelve million potential voters; a discredited independent electoral commission; a justice system considered to be at the orders of the government.

Mobilization for voter inclusion

The first protests took place on 9 August in Abidjan, the capital, where thousands of demonstrators, mainly from the PDCI and the PPA-CI, took to the streets. This success will probably encourage opponents to keep up the pressure. Especially since an organization like the PDCI, founded by Houphouët-Boigny, who ruled Côte d'Ivoire for more than three decades, has strong roots throughout the country. On the other hand, the government, as usual, will override it and will not take the risk of a political opening leading to an inclusive electoral framework.

On the strength of his economic success, which is certainly real but very unequal, with persistent inflation, unemployment and weak health infrastructure, Alassane Ouattara has opted for a forced passage. For these elections, the state's resources will be mobilized for its campaign. Already, a wave of repression is falling on opponents, especially those of the PPA-CI, who are particularly targeted. Thus, executives of this party such as former defence minister Moïse Lida Kouassi or ex-ambassador Boubacar Koné are in police custody. In Côte d'Ivoire, as in most African countries, elections have only one purpose: the preservation of authoritarian power under a democratic veneer.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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