

Impunity for Rights Violators in Cote d'Ivoire Côte d'Ivoire President Alassane Ouattara [granted](#) amnesty to over 800 people implicated in serious human rights violations in the 2010-2011 post-election crisis, a decision many feel denied justice to victims and their families. President Ouattara excluded members of the military and armed groups that committed "blood crimes" from amnesty, around 60 people, in spite of Ivorian judges indicting far more than that over the past seven years of proceedings. This has left many confused and concerned about who will indeed face justice for the crimes committed.

After the 2010-2011 post-election crises, Côte d'Ivoire took steps to rebuild and reconcile its fractured country, establishing a National Commission of Inquiry and prosecuting actors on both sides of the conflict. As it is party to multiple international and regional treaties, including the Geneva Conventions and Rome Statute, Côte d'Ivoire has a legally binding obligation to investigate and prosecute the atrocity crimes, but the amnesty measures granted by President Ouattara directly contradict the spirit of truth, justice, and reparations that the treaties represent.

Many major international human rights and humanitarian organizations have denounced the decision, with 11 organizations releasing a joint statement saying, "there should be no amnesty for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious human rights violations committed in Côte d'Ivoire's 2010-11 post-election crisis." The statement also noted that Côte d'Ivoire's own history shows that impunity for atrocity crimes can enable further violations and test the resilience of already-fragile states of stability.

**** Please note that there will be no RtoPWeekly this month, but we will resume publication with an update on these events and crisis situations around the world in September.*

Catch up on developments in...

[Burma/Myanmar](#)

[Burundi](#)

[CAR](#)

[DRC](#)

[Gaza/West Bank](#)

– [Iraq](#)

– [Libya](#)

[Nigeria](#)

[South Sudan](#)

[Syria](#)

[Venezuela](#)

[Yemen](#)

[Other](#)

Burma/Myanmar:

The United Kingdom [assumed](#) the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council on 1 August and established the Rohingya refugee crisis as a priority for the Council this month. The UK Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Karen Pierce, also mentioned the importance of following up on the events occurring in Burma and continuing to make progress on the implementation of the MoU, allowing UN agencies to start talks with the Burmese and Bangladeshi governments to “make a credible plan to bring refugees back home in security, dignity, and safety.”

Japanese and Burmese representatives [held](#) a meeting on 6 August to discuss possible solutions for the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis. The Japanese Foreign Minister suggested establishing a new commission to conduct a free and transparent examination into the alleged human rights abuses in Rakhine State.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, [asked](#) governments from the Asia-Pacific region to show solidarity regarding the Rohingya and offer more support and protection “until solutions are found for refugees.” He also of the importance of working towards a comprehensive solution in order to allow people from the Rakhine State to stay in Burma and not be forced to leave their homes to begin with.

Burundi:

Prior to the 39th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), civil society organizations (CSOs) [released](#) a letter on 8 August, calling on the body to return the Commission of Inquiry for Burundi. The letter, which Coalition member Human Rights Watch released, outlines the ongoing necessity of the Council’s work to monitor, document, and report on the human rights situation ahead of the 2020 elections and encourage the government’s cooperation and adherence to relevant UN special mechanisms, treaties, and presence in the country.

Central African Republic:

Three UN Peacekeepers from the Republic of Congo were [found](#) guilty of the murder of 11 civilians while they were on mission in the Central African Republic. In spite of the gravity of their crimes, the perpetrators only received three-year sentences, leaving human rights organizations dismayed at the lost opportunity to promote justice, accountability, and end

impunity for atrocity crimes. Human Rights Watch called it a “slap on the wrist,” and noted that the case not only sets a dangerous precedent for how these cases are handled, but also that the many of the family and community members felt justice was not served.

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Moise Katumbi, former Governor of Katanga and one of President Kabila’s biggest opponents, [announced](#) his intention to return to the DRC on 3 August, despite the likelihood of his arrest. Katumbi, who went into self-imposed exile in 2016, planned on submitting his presidential candidacy. The discrepancy in treatment between Jean-Pierre Bemba and Katumbi’s returns by President Kabila continues to raise suspicion about the credibility of the elections, as Katumbi was ultimately refused entry into the DRC on 7 August and unable to submit his candidacy.

President Joseph Kabila did not [file](#) for an unconstitutional and term-defying re-election. Registration closed on 8 August ending years of speculation about the strength of its democracy. The ruling coalition instead nominated former Minister of the Interior Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary. Ramazani, a close ally of Kabila, was sanctioned by the EU in 2017 for alleged human rights violations. Other candidates officially include Jean-Pierre Bemba, Felix Tshisekedi, and Vital Kamerhe.

Gaza / West Bank:

Gaza peace talks [continue](#) to progress between Israel and Hamas. The potential deal would allow Palestinians more access to goods, airports, and crossings in exchange for Hamas ceasing to use incendiary kites. Airstrikes [launched](#) by Israel on 9 August “struck dozens of targets” in the Gaza strip, killing at least three Palestinians, risking derailment of the ongoing peace negotiations.

The Jerusalem Post [reported](#) on 5 August that “three people were wounded when the Israeli Defence Forces opened fire at Palestinians” protesting at the border with Israel on Sunday.

Israeli cabinet member, Zeev Elkin, [stated](#) on 6 August that “Egypt is no less responsible” for the dire humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza. As UN mediation over Gaza continues, some Egyptian officials have stated that they “would resist any attempt” by Israel to push the responsibility for the situation on to Cairo.

Iraq:

On 3 August, The Guardian [reported](#) on the “collective trauma, grief, and loss” plaguing the children of Mosul due to living through constant war throughout their childhoods. Save the children affirms the need for psycho-social assessments and support for all children impacted.

According to an Al Jazeera report [produced](#) on 8 August, many wives of ISIL fighters in Iraq

whose husbands have been killed or imprisoned now fear attacks if they return to Mosul. One commented that “if you’ve been branded as an ISIL family, it’s too dangerous to return.”

Libya:

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) [estimates](#) that over “100 bodies of Europe-bound migrants” escaping violence in Libya have been found by Libya’s coast guard since the beginning of 2018, with around 12,600 “intercepted or rescued” within that same time frame, according to a report released on 6 August.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) [launched](#) their “reconciliation is good” media campaign on 6 August to raise citizen awareness about peaceful conflict resolution and the importance of rejecting violence in Libya. The initiative seeks to educate civilians about the need for “a culture of tolerance, respect for human rights, cultural diversity, solidarity and the rejection of violence.”

Nigeria:

On 2 August, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) [denounced](#) the forced returns of Nigerian asylum seekers and refugees from Cameroon. Over 800 Nigerian refugees and asylum seekers have suffered from forced returns from Cameroon since the beginning of 2018. UNHCR asked the Cameroonian government to stop forced returns and respect its obligations under international law.

South Sudan:

On Friday, 3 August, President Salva Kiir [announced](#) his intention to sign the latest peace agreement, which features a power sharing deal reinstating Dr. Riek Machar as First Vice President. He added that he willingly made compromises in order to ensure all parties involved would respect the agreement, and is optimistic about its implementation since it was negotiated without pressure from the international community. Opposition forces in South Sudan also [voiced](#) their intentions to continue debates over the future of South Sudan, saying they were not keen on signing the peace agreement, but did so with the assurance that future debate and negotiations for power-sharing and political reform. Parties [signed](#) the peace deal on Sunday, 5 August.

South Sudan expert, Douglas Johnson, has [commented](#) on the likelihood of the agreement’s implementation and success, providing an analysis of the agreement’s contents. The UN Mission in South Sudan's (UNMISS) Chief, David Shearer, also [commended](#) the deal, and urged all sides to continue negotiations for integrating and developing

comprehensive security plans to ensure its success.

Syria: Since 2011, the Syrian government has reportedly [conducted](#) attacks on over 450 hospitals, which would be a severe breach of international law. Emergency medicine has been “driven underground,” to the point that “cave hospitals” are being built to avoid air strikes destroying crucial infrastructure.

The US-led coalition in Eastern Syria is [preparing](#) training and security projects in efforts to initiate a “stabilization” process in the area. This includes training locals to look for improvised explosive devices and training police to deal with prisons for “former ISIS members” is being instituted.

A map [produced](#) by Al Jazeera on 7 August provides a useful demonstration as to which parties control the various territories in Syria after the most recent government offensive in the South-Western region.

Venezuela:

On 1 August, Peru's Foreign Minister [acknowledged](#) the possibility of asking the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for a preliminary investigation into Venezuela regarding reported human rights violations.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) [announced](#) on 7 August that approximately 117,000 Venezuelans have claimed asylum in 2018, surpassing the total number of Venezuelan asylum seekers last year. The Agency also welcomed Brazil's decision to reopen its borders to arrivals.

Ecuador [declared](#) a humanitarian state of emergency on 8 August as new arrivals from Venezuela have climbed to 4,200 a day. The measure aims to expedite medical, social, and immigration assistance to new arrivals.

Yemen:

On 5 August, [ongoing](#) fighting between pro-government and rebel forces in Hodeidah resulted in over 80 deaths and 100 injuries. Parties hope the city's port will not close, cutting off aid supplies to Yemen.

On 9 August a Saudi-led airstrike [hit](#) a school bus in the Saada province, killing 43 people and injuring 77. The Red Cross (ICRC) noted that most victims were “under the age of 10.” The bus was travelling through a market at the time it was hit.

Other:

Women offer and occupy a unique role in peacekeeping, and their meaningful participation has been proven as beneficial to the process, yet their deployment numbers in UN Peacekeeping missions remain low. [PassBlue](#) released a status update and insight into the situation, analyzing recruitment methods, and barriers to entry including gender-bias in the countries from which they come.