

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Côte D'Ivoire is a state party to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol, as well as to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its First Optional Protocol. According to a U.S. State Department report dated March 2002, Côte D'Ivoire had not implemented legislation providing for asylum status in accordance with the convention, and their domestic immigration law did not designate a separate legal status for refugees.¹ However, the government does recognize the right to asylum, and it cooperates with the UNHCR with respect to refugee assistance.² Detention of asylum seekers is uncommon in Côte D'Ivoire, according to UNHCR Abidjan.³ In 2000, there were 2,242 asylum seekers, one of whom was detained. In the first nine months of 2001 there were 2,359 asylum seekers, and none were detained. At the end of 2001 Côte D'Ivoire did have in detention 67 refugees, including six minors and one female.

Asylum seekers and refugees have access to legal assistance funded by UNHCR. Our research did not uncover information regarding the nature of the proceedings, time-limits on detention, and the review of decisions to detain. UNCHR reports that although it does not visit prisons or detention centers in a systematic manner, they do on occasion visit detained persons of concern to UNHCR.

Detainees are separated by gender and have access to cooking facilities, and cultural and religious practices are permitted. There is access to medical aid from ICRC and, on occasion, UNHCR.

¹ US STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT ON IVORY COAST 2001, §2d (March 4, 2002), *available at* <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8355.htm> (last accessed Sept. 13, 2002).

² *Id.*

³ Information in the remainder of this section derived from e-mail correspondence from UNHCR Abidjan to Jaya Ramji, Debevoise & Plimpton (Dec. 27, 2001) (on file with Debevoise & Plimpton).