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Maintenant, on sait qui est qui: Statehood and Political Re-configuration in Northern Côte d'Ivoire

Abstract.

The transformation of statehood in the rebel-held northern half of Côte d'Ivoire builds on the re-configuration of the social and political order. Though the state, as an institution, has almost ceased to exist, statehood as the practices that refer to it persists. This article examines the negotiations between the different non-state actors with regard to how they shape, through everyday practices, the understanding of what a state should do and what it should not do. The widely used metaphor of "Now, one knows who is who" answers the older expression that one does not know who is who. Before the breakout of the crisis in 2002, it was often difficult to distinguish between security providers and criminals. At the time, police and gendarmerie could be on both sides, while, through the rebellion, role ascriptions became clear and distinct. This article argues that the normative expectations of statehood are hence embedded in the general re-configuration of society that has led to more stability and reliability of social roles.

Keywords: Statehood, social order, rebellion, Côte d'Ivoire.