



Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast announces withdrawal of French troops

Reduction of military presence is latest sign of weakening western influence in region



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French troops parade in the Ivory Coast capital Abidjan. France has around 600 troops in its former colony © Luc Gnago/Reuters

Ian Johnston in Paris 9 HOURS AGO

French troops will begin to withdraw from marking the latest reduction of France’s western influence in the region.

Ivorian president Alassane Ouattara made that French troops would pull out from a

“We can be proud of our army, which has this context that we have decided the conc forces from [Ivory Coast](#),” he said.

[France](#) has about 600 troops in the count withdrawal will involve the handover of a

The announcement comes after Chad and with France in recent months, and is the l standing French military presence on the

Ouattara is considered one of France’s str close alliance with French President Emm condemned countries such as Mali for tur



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such as the Wagner group.

But Ouattara, who is expected to run for a contentious fourth term in the October elections, may be calculating that announcing a symbolic break with France could benefit him politically in a region where growing anti-French sentiment has taken hold, particularly among young voters.

France increased its presence in Ivory Coast during a civil war in the 2000s, but the country is now much more stable than other former French colonies such as Mali and Niger.

“These were all painful divorces and occurring under pressure from nefarious folks, notably Russia. In Côte d’Ivoire [Ivory Coast], it’s a sign of normalisation and possibly even of success,” said François Heisbourg, a former diplomat and special adviser at the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, a French think-tank.

France’s defence ministry said France would work with Ivory Coast to hand over the base by the end of January. “This does not call into question the excellence of the bilateral military relationship. The co-operation plan between the two armies remains in place.”

Macron has previously acknowledged that France has a long history of military presence across Africa.

“We are not shirking our responsibilities, but we are re-evaluating our long-term partnership,” he said in a July speech.

In Senegal, President Bassirou Diomaye Faye said the country would end the presence of all foreign troops by the end of the year. He had already announced the closure of French military bases in November.

Chad’s president abruptly ended the Sahe... in November, and last week France handed over the base to Niger.

French forces fighting jihadist groups in the Sahel have been withdrawing from Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger by military... amid rising anti-French sentiment in the region.

The departures have marked a significant shift in the... region, where several governments have...

In all, France is withdrawing about 1,000 troops from Ivory Coast and Senegal. After



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... France is maintaining about 2,000 troops in Ivory Coast and Senegal. After the French were kicked out of Niger, the US was also forced last year to withdraw about 1,000 troops there and give up its \$100mn drone base near Agadez on the southern edge of the Sahara.

France's remaining military presences — the vestiges of the postcolonial “Françafrique” policy under which France was for decades the most important external power across much of west and central Africa — include a small number of troops in Gabon and a 1,500-strong military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa, which Macron visited last month.

Additional reporting by Aanu Adeoye, west Africa correspondent

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