Rapporto di ricerca COI Realizzato dall'Ufficio Immigrazione di ARCI nazionale

-aggiornato al 17 aprile 2023

CONTESTO		NOTE
Paese di origine	Costa D'avorio	N/D
QUESITO COI		**NOTE**
Tematica	Salute	Sistema sanitario
Formulazione quesito COI	**1.Informazioni sul trattamento delle persone accusate di stregoneria in Costa d'Avorio, con particolare attenzione al profilo di genere**	

Disclaimer metodologico

1. La presente ricerca, seppur maggiormente focalizzata sul tema delle donne accusate di stregoneria, risulta comunque una indagine di ampio respiro. In questo senso non sono stati analizzati profili specifici (come ad esempio quelli collegati a specifici riti, gruppi tribali). Similmente non è stato analizzato il profilo dell'albinismo o della stregoneria maschile;

3. E' opportuno notare come diverse fonti internazionali indaghino il tema della stregoneria/magia in Costa D'Avorio in misura complessiva e cumulativa con altri Paesi dell'area Subsahariana e dell'Africa dell'Ovest, talora non distinguendo tra le prassi dei singoli Paesi. In questo senso le fonti sono state utilizzate in considerazione della apparente similitudine culturale e analogia di approcci tra i diversi Paesi;

4. Il presente Ufficio resta a disposizione per confrontarsi relativamente alle fonti e ai contenuti citati, oltre che per eventuali approfondimenti rispetto ai quesiti posti e le risultanze emerse

Roma
17/04/2023

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Informazioni sul trattamento delle persone accusate di stregoneria in Costa d'Avorio, con particolare attenzione al profilo di genere

In generale

Per analizzare il quesito posto occorre partire dalla considerazione per cui la credenza nella magia e nella stregoneria risulterebbe estremamente diffusa in Costa D'Avorio (al 2010, a un sondaggio, circa il 95% della popolazione intervistata rispondeva affermativamente):

> "...According to a Gallup survey in 2010, belief in witchcraft is widespread throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from 15 percent in Uganda to 95 percent in the Ivory Coast9. In the latter country witchcraft is also known as 'sorcellerie' – the French word for witchcraft – and according to Leo Igwe, it is more or less a 'national religion'10. For example, many Ivoirians believe that the wife of former president Laurant Gbago, Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, 'possesses powers of witchcraft'11.

> Furthermore, in Ivory Coast there is traditional believe that disabled children are suspected of witchcraft12..."[1]

In via generale, le fonti sottolineano come l'associazione (reale o presunta) di un individuo a pratiche magiche lo può esporre a violenza e ostracismo sociale:

> "...Alleged witches are male and female, children, women and the elderly, and people with disabilities. Allegations of witchcraft lead to violence, social rejection, and other horrific abuses because there has not been any robust mechanism to support, defend and protect the accused in many African societies. ..."[2]

In questo senso risultano diverse fonti media di aggressioni della folla in Costa d'Avorio, o di psicosi collettive, di fronte a presunti attacchi legati a stregoneria e rituali magici. In questo senso, a titolo esemplificativo, l'uccisione di due presunti stregoni (nel passato), accusati di aver ridotto gli organi genitali a fini di riscatto[3]:

> "...ABIDJAN - Angry mobs burned or beat to death two alleged sorcerers in Ivory Coast's commercial capital Abidjan after a shrinking or disappearing penis scare spread from neighbouring Ghana. Police ordered all impromptu gatherings in the city dispersed. Rioters say sorcerers simply touch them and make their penises shrink or vanish by witchcraft to extort cash in return for a cure. Similar cases have been reported in Ivory Coast in recent weeks..."[4]

O, analogamente, il caso di una infezione diffusasi in un villaggio (causando la morte di diversi bambini), e imputata alla apposizione di un feticcia, che hanno portata all'arresto dell'accusato da parte delle forze dell'ordine con le accuse di condotta contraria all'ordine pubblico e ciarlataneria:

> "...Residents of the Ivorian village of Kpo-Kahankro are in shock. In the past two months, over 15 mysterious deaths have plunged the entire community into despair. Dorothée Ahou Kouamé has lost her 3-year-old granddaughter. Authorities say they have found traces of a deadly bacterium on the deceased....[...]---The man accused of installing the object and the owner of the land where the fetish was set were condemned to 5 years in prison on February 9 for disorderly conduct and charlatanism..."[5]

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1 EASO, 2018, COI Query, Ivory Coast, available at: https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1448971/1226_1541497783_civ-120.pdf

2 Humanists International, 2020, "Alleged witches are still killed today, in 2020", says humanist anti-witchcraft activist Leo Igwe , available at: https://humanists.international/2020/04/alleged-witches-are-still-killed-today-in-2020-says-humanist-anti-witchcraft-activist-leo-igwe/

3 Si noti, sul punto, come questa specifica forma di accusa sia spesso collegata a degli stereotipi tribali, essendo spesso accusati gli Hausa di tale pratica: *"...Hausas are often singled out by their long, flowing robes (boubou): the inadvertent brushing of the robe against a passerby is enough to raise the alarm against its wearer. In Mali and Ivory Coast, Fulanis "who look like Hausas" or "boubou-wearing Sahelians" have also been accused of penis snatching. 14 This illustrates how ethnic or regional stereotypes are used to single out penis snatchers in a world of strangers ..."*The dangers of anonymity Witchcraft, rumor, and modernity in Africa, 2012 | HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 2 (2): 205–33 , available at: https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00801575/document

4 IrishTimes, 1997, `Penis-shrinking sorcerers' killed , available at: https://www.irishtimes.com/news/penis-shrinking-sorcerers-killed-1.50215

5 Africanews, 2022, Fear of witchcraft and bacterium collide in case of deaths in Ivory Coast, available at: https://www.africanews.com/2023/02/14/fear-of-witchcraft-and-bacterium-collide-in-case-of-deaths-in-ivory-coast/

Così come episodi di omicidi rituali di bambini per assicurarsi successo e potere (ad esempio in vista delle elezioni):

> "...ABIDJAN (Reuters)- At least 21 children have been kidnapped in Ivory Coast since December and most have been found dead with their bodies mutilated, authorities said, in a wave of ritual killings some residents fear may be linked to upcoming elections..."[6]

Da un punto di vista normativo la stregoneria risulta punita dalla legislazione ivoriana, che specificamente reprime le pratiche di ciarlataneria, stregoneria o magia, atte a turbare l'ordine pubblico o a recare danno a persone:

> "...La pratique de la sorcellerie est pénalement réprimée en Côte d'Ivoire. En effet, l'article 237 du nouveau Code pénal de 2019 punit « d'un emprisonnement d'un à cinq ans et d'une amende de 100.000 à 1.000.000 de francs7, quiconque se livre à des pratiques de charlatanisme, sorcellerie ou magie, susceptibles de troubler l'ordre public ou de porter atteinte aux personnes ou aux biens ».8 Ces mêmes dispositions figuraient déjà à l'article 205 dans les précédentes versions du Code pénal. 9 Par ailleurs, un avocat relève que le Code pénal ne fournit pas de définition juridique des « pratiques de charlatanisme, sorcellerie ou de magie » qu'il réprime pourtan.."[7]

E in questo senso si hanno diverse informazioni di effettive condanne penali per stregoneria (per associazioni e confraternite magiche, tentati sacrifici umani ecc):

> "...De plus, des condamnations pénales pour sorcellerie sont encore prononcées de nos jours. Le site d'actualité Koaci.com rapporte en décembre 2020 que trois sorciers appartenant à une « confrérie de sorciers » dans le village de Slepleu, près de Danané, ont été condamnés à trois ans de prison ferme pour avoir tenté de « sacrifier » une femme à cause d'une « dette de chair ».11 L'Agence ivoirienne de presse (AIP) rapporte par exemple la condamnation en janvier 2018 par le tribunal de première instance de Danané d'une « confrérie de treize sorciers » pour pratique de la sorcellerie.."[8]

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6 Reuters, 2015, Child ritual killings spread alarm, anger in Ivory Coast, available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/ozatp-ivorycoast-killings-idAFKBN0L10GW20150128

7 Dalla stessa fonte, rispetto alla applicazione della normativa in esame, si veda: "...e *plus, des condamnations pénales pour sorcellerie sont encore prononcées de nos jours. Le site d'actualité Koaci.com rapporte en décembre 2020 que trois sorciers appartenant à une « confrérie de sorciers » dans le village de Slepleu, près de Danané, ont été condamnés à trois ans de prison ferme pour avoir tenté de « sacrifier » une femme à cause d'une « dette de chair ».11 L'Agence ivoirienne de presse (AIP) rapporte par exemple la condamnation en janvier 2018 par le tribunal de première instance de Danané d'une « confrérie de treize sorciers » pour pratique de la sorcellerie...* "OFPRA, 2022, Côte d'Ivoire : Les enfants accusés de sorcellerie , available at: https://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/libraries/pdf.js/web/viewer.html?file=/sites/default/files/ofpra_flora/2207_civ_enfants_sorciers_156147_web.pdf

8 Dalla stessa fonte, rispetto alla applicazione della normativa in esame, si veda: "...e *plus, des condamnations pénales pour sorcellerie sont encore prononcées de nos jours. Le site d'actualité Koaci.com rapporte en décembre 2020 que trois sorciers appartenant à une « confrérie de sorciers » dans le village de Slepleu, près de Danané, ont été condamnés à trois ans de prison ferme pour avoir tenté de « sacrifier » une femme à cause d'une « dette de chair ».11 L'Agence ivoirienne de presse (AIP) rapporte par exemple la condamnation en janvier 2018 par le tribunal de première instance de Danané d'une « confrérie de treize sorciers » pour pratique de la sorcellerie...* "OFPRA, 2022, Côte d'Ivoire : Les enfants accusés de sorcellerie , available at: https://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/libraries/pdf.js/web/viewer.html?file=/sites/default/files/ofpra_flora/2207_civ_enfants_sorciers_156147_web.pdf

Da un punto di vista invece antropologico/culturale, le fonti sottolineano come l'accusa di stregoneria sia di fatto uno stratagemma per isolare tutto ciò che non rientra nella norma e che risulta come motivo di preoccupazione e di stigmatizzazione. Una strega in questo senso, viene intesa come una persona che non è d'accordo con tutti gli altri. Colui che, nel villaggio, si ritira dal gruppo. Spiega che quando una persona si ritira dal gruppo quando lo stile di vita della comunità è favorito, questo viene interpretato come un segno di cattiva intenzione e quindi di stregoneria:

> "...Selon Pr Amani N'Goran, psychiatre à l'hôpital de Bingerville, « la culture sert de prétexte à une sélection des enfants. Ces préjugés ne reposent sur rien de scientifique. Tout ce qui sort de la norme est objet de préoccupation et de stigmatisation. Le sorcier, c'est par exemple celui qui ne partage pas l'avis de tout le monde. Celui qui, au village, se met en retrait du groupe ». Il explique que lorsqu'une personne se retire du groupe alors que le mode de vie communautaire est privilégié, cela est interprété comme un signe de mauvaise intention et donc de sorcellerie. D'autres types d'écarts à la norme peuvent se manifester dans les retards de motricité chez l'enfant, les problèmes à l'accouchement, les infections, etc.19…"[9]

Così come talora si trasforma nel mezzo per "spiegare" le disgrazie a livello comunitario o familiare, individuando un responsabile (anche se spesso ciò si traduce in fenomeni di violenza di genere, esclusione e omicidio):

> "...This belief, generally associated with "magic" or "quackery" is part of people's daily lives, both in social and legal spheres. "Witchcraft" is officially recognized and sanctioned as a crime in these countries. But, usually used to explain "misfortune" at the community or family level, accusations of witchcraft result in gender-based violence that justifies social exclusion and even murder ..."[10]

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Effetti

Considerando in generale le conseguenze sociale a una accusa di stregoneria, risulta utile consultare le linee guida preliminari rivolti agli esponenti del Parlamento Panafricano, volte alla a eliminazione delle pratiche dannose altre violazioni di diritti umani connesse alle accuse di stregoneria e attacchi rituali-

In questo senso, risulta come le persone accusate di stregoneria (da sole o con i loro familiari) spesso devono affrontare uno stigma significativo da parte della loro comunità scatenato, a seconda dei casi, anche da parte della stessa famiglia:

> "... People accused of witchcraft, either alone or with their family members, often face significant stigma from their community. Sometimes the stigma is triggered or perpetrated by members of the family of the accused. Since alleged witches and wizards are believed to cause harm, the accused

9 OFPRA, 2022, Côte d'Ivoire : Les enfants accusés de sorcellerie , available at: https://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/libraries/pdf.js/web/viewer.html?file=/sites/default/files/ofpra_flora/2207_civ_enfants_sorciers_156147_web.pdf

10 AWID, 2015, Witchcraft Accusations Perpetuate Women's Oppression in Sub-Saharan Africa , available at: https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/witchcraft-accusations-perpetuate-womens-oppression-sub-saharan-africa

> often faces societal exclusion, abandonment by loved ones, and/or banishment such as the case of elderly women banished into witch camps in Ghana.87..”[11]

Così come l’esposizione a varie forme di trattamenti crudeli, inumani e degradanti, che a volte possono equivalere alla tortura (tra cui processi per ordalia, lapidazioni, percosse e roghi):

> “...persons accused of witchcraft may face various forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, which may amount to torture at times, including trials by ordeal, stoning, beating and burning.95 The harm done to the accused sometimes extend to their family members. 96 For instance, in Malawi and Zimbabwe, suspected witches are forced to consume potentially poisonous fluids, with their survival considered determinative of whether they are witches…”[12]

In altre circostanze, ancora, poiché l'obiettivo degli accusatori sta nell'allontanamento della persona accusata (o in base al fatto che la vicinanza fisica di una presunta strega sia considerata dannosa, o perché si intende diseredare l'accusato), gli accusati vengono scacciati e banditi dalle loro case e comunità:

> “...in some cases, displacement is the very objective of the accusers,106 as many believe that physical proximity of an alleged witch to the community facilitates the alleged witch’s ability to cause them harm.107 In other instances, displacement is motivated by the intent to disinherit the accused. Accused are thus chased away, or banished, from their homes and communities,108 consequently leaving others to enjoy the benefits of any inheritance due to the accused...”[13]

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Profilo di genere

In questo contesto le fonti che indagano gli atteggiamenti della popolazione nei paesi Subsahariani e in West Africa, (inclusa la Costa d’Avorio), sottolineano come la questione di genere risulti svolgere un ruolo rilevante nella determinazione di violenze e attacchi per accuse di stregoneria. In misura statistica infatti, la donna[14] risulta spesso la categoria maggiormente colpita da tali accuse:

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11 The Pan African Parliament, 2021, ACCUSATIONS OF WITCHCRAFT AND RITUAL ATTACKS:TOWARDS ELIMINATING HARMFUL PRACTICES ANDOTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/PAP-Guidelines-EN.pdf

12 The Pan African Parliament, 2021, ACCUSATIONS OF WITCHCRAFT AND RITUAL ATTACKS:TOWARDS ELIMINATING HARMFUL PRACTICES ANDOTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/PAP-Guidelines-EN.pdf

13 The Pan African Parliament, 2021, ACCUSATIONS OF WITCHCRAFT AND RITUAL ATTACKS:TOWARDS ELIMINATING HARMFUL PRACTICES ANDOTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/PAP-Guidelines-EN.pdf

14 Più nel dettaglio, sulle motivazioni che spingono la donna ad essere uno dei bersagli più comuni delle accuse di stregoneria, la fonte sottolinea come la maggior parte di queste accuse siano riconducibili a contesti rurali, e come le stesse si fondino su fattori soggettivi riguardanti la percezione delle donne e le superstizioni ad esse associate. Se a volte alcune di queste superstizioni possono essere riconducibili a fattori fisici, altre volte possono essere invece prese di mira le persone che vivono da sole e che hanno perso i familiari. Altre volte vengono colpite, similmente, le giovani donne quando i loro mariti muoiono (con l’obiettivo dei suoceri di entrare in possesso dei beni del defunto), e infine le donne indipendenti che non intendono conformarsi ai ruoli e allo status socialmente sanciti La famiglia della vittima è a volte la fonte di queste accuse e c'è una tendenza crescente di accuse contro le giovani donne quando i loro mariti muoiono: *“...Eighty percent of them are widows and have no children, these either being dead or living far away from the community. The majority (90%) of such charges are made in rural villages and the base of these accusations rely on subjective factors regarding the perception of women and superstitions that are associated with such. According to Banlog women without a "particularly appealing appearance", as a*

> "...Women make up the majority of people who are the targeted by accusations of withcraft, and are victims of harmful practices as a result, although other groups, including albinos[1], children, and sometimes men, are also victims. In her analysis of social exclusion as a result of witchcraft allegations in Burkina Faso, Professor Denise Sidonie Nebie/Zoma says "Rarely are men accused of witchcraft, or of being soul eaters or consequently excluded from their communities after suffering from violent attacks. Men suspected of such are more often feared and mistrusted by the population..."[15]

In maniera più marcata, si veda come l'accusa di stregoneria tenda a investire generalmente donne considerate non più utili alla società o eccessivamente indipendenti, non allineate alle normi sociali. Similmente, l'accusa di "essere strega" si accompagna alla accuse di pratiche magiche. In questo senso, a titolo di esempio, la nascita di un bambino con albinismo o altre disabilità viene imputato alla colpa della madre (esponendola quindi a violenza di genere, isolamento e stigmatizzazione):

> "...Women disproportionately bear the suffering of HPAWR, often facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Accusation of witchcraft are particularly gendered. The accused are, "insubordinate wives, obstinate daughters-in-law, and elderly infertile women."77 These women are considered no longer useful to society. They are abandoned, or banished, and fall into poverty.78 Interestingly women do not only face the accusation of being witches but also of employing "witchcraft". There is widespread belief that the birth of a child with albinism or other disability is the fault of the mother, and more specifically, a sign of her involvement in "witchcraft"... [..] ...Consequently, women are also more likely to face the gender-based violence and exploitative relationships, unwanted pregnancies, and STIs.83 Poverty and isolation exacerbate women's vulnerability to attack.84 It is for these reasons among others that the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women has identified HPAWR as a form of violence against women ..."[16]

Similmente, su come l'accusa di stregoneria sia alla base della maggior parte degli attacchi collettivi a danno delle donne:

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*result of hunger, diseases, worry, disfigurement or a disability for example, are the main targets of these charges. "These women are singled out on the basis of elements without any legal grounding." People living alone are also the subject of such accusations from other members of the community, especially among the poor, and "a person who has lost all their family members is automatically accused of having eaten them". The victim's family is sometimes the source of these allegations and there is a growing trend of accusations against young women when their husbands die - their in-laws then recover the deceased's property. Nebie/Zoma says these younger women are accused of witchcraft because they defy social norms that are imposed upon them. "Rebellious, economically independent women who insist on their right to speak freely, to choose a spouse, to plan their pregnancy, to be active outside of the home, come and go without prior authorization etc., fall into this category of people accused of witchcraft. In short, women who suffer from social exclusion as a result of witchcraft allegations are usually women without support, who constitute a burden on the family, or women who refuse to comply with their socially-sanctioned roles and status."..."*AWID, 2015, Witchcraft Accusations Perpetuate Women's Oppression in Sub-Saharan Africa , available at: https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/witchcraft-accusations-perpetuate-womens-oppression-sub-saharan-africa

15 AWID, 2015, Witchcraft Accusations Perpetuate Women's Oppression in Sub-Saharan Africa , available at: https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/witchcraft-accusations-perpetuate-womens-oppression-sub-saharan-africa

16 The Pan African Parliament, 2021, ACCUSATIONS OF WITCHCRAFT AND RITUAL ATTACKS:TOWARDS ELIMINATING HARMFUL PRACTICES ANDOTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/PAP-Guidelines-EN.pdf

> "...Women who are targeted by violent mobs are often targeted due to accusations of witchcraft or sorcery. Belief in witchcraft is widespread across Africa. It is often used as "a means of explaining the unequal distribution of good and bad fortune, and the occurrence of otherwise inexplicable misfortune" (La Fontaine, 2012). "Vigilante groups often carry out 'justice' against alleged witches, even in cases where 'witchcraft' is illegal and 'justice' can be enforced by state agents" (Kishi, 2017).."[17]

Risultano quindi notizie da fonti media, relativamente alla uccisione sommaria di tre donne accusate di stregoneria e di aver ucciso uno studente nel villaggio di Benflà:[18]

> Une affaire inédite qui a fait grand bruit dans ce village de Zuenoula, dans le centre-ouest du Pays.
>
> Trois (3) femmes accusées d'être des sorcières ont été tuées dans le village de Bonéfla dans la sous-préfecture de Kanzra, département de Zuenoula, apprend KOACI de sources sur place.
>
> En effet, accusées d'avoir tué en sorcellerie un élève le jeudi dernier, trois femmes ont été publiquement bastonnées par les camarades de l'élève que certains désignent comme des éléments de la Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire (FESCI).

O di due anziane evacuate dalla polizia dal proprio villaggio dove, essendo state accusate di aver "mangiato spiritualmente" un ragazzo, stavano per essere linciate:[19]

> La pratique de sorcellerie des vieilles femmes a été dénoncée par A.V, âgé d 15 ans, frère aîné du défunt. Selon le récit d'A.V, au cours d'une promenade, il a été invité par les quatre vieilles à partager un repas. De peur qu'elles s'en prennent à lui s'il refuse, il leur a obéit. Après cette invitation, dans la nuit du vendredi 20 février, la confrérie se présente à lui dans son sommeil, lui réclamant qu'il leur livrer son petit frère en contrepartie du repas auquel il avait pris part. Une poudre lui est remise afin qu'il la verse mystiquement dans le repas du soir de la famille. Puis l'une d'elle, d'un violent coup de sa canne, frappe l'enfant à la nuque. La scène révolte A.V mais avant qu'il n'ait pu voler au secours de son jeune frère, un second coup lui est asséné.
>
> Le lendemain au réveil, le petit Aka Akessé et ses frères se plaignent de douleurs à l'estomac. L'état d'Aka Akessé s'aggrave très vite, au point où il est transféré aux urgences mais il y succombera parce qu'étant le seul à avoir été ciblé par la confrérie. A. V raconte alors à leur père les agissements des quatre vieilles. Elles sont conduites chez un exorciste dans le village d'Ahorosso, situé à quelques trois kilomètres de Bongouanou. Elles y seront démasquées et elles reconnaissent avoir effectivement « mangé en sorcellerie » le garçonnet.
>
> Grâce à l'intervention des éléments de la brigade de la gendarmerie de Bongouanou, les quatre sorcières ont pu être exfiltrées du village, échappant ainsi à un lynchage de la population en furie. Une procédure judiciaire a été ouverte contre elles, révèle-t-on .

Su questo punto, specificatamente, si noti che l'accusa di aver "divorato spiritualmente" risulti essere una delle accuse di stregoneria tipicamente rivolta verso le donne anziane:[20]

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17 West African Papers n. 34, 2022, Political violence targeting women in West Africa, available at: ttps://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/0b214920-en.pdf?expires=1681535036&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=81947DE0D1FA1C4B2CBD43C5BB1AFA92

18 Koaci, Cote d'Ivoire : a Zuenoula 3 femmes accusees d'avoir tue un eleve en sorcellerie enterrees vivantes, 2020, available at: https://www.koaci.com/article/2020/06/28/cote-divoire/societe/cote-divoire-a-zuenoula-3-femmes-accusees-davoir-tue-un-eleve-en-sorcellerie-enterrees-vivantes_142688.html

19 Afrik Mag, Cote d'Ivoire: quatre vieilles femmes accusees d'avoir "mangè" un garcon de 10 ans, 2015, available at: https://www.afrikmag.com/cote-divoire-quatre-vieilles-femmes-accusees-davoir-mange-un-garcon-de-10-ans/

20 Modern Ghana, 2015, Child Witchcraft Accusations in Ivory Coast, available at: https://www.modernghana.com/blogs/629280/child-witchcraft-accusations-in-ivory-coast.html

In Ivory Coast, witchcraft allegations are rampant. But these allegations are mainly brought against adult males and females, particularly elderly women who are branded 'soul eaters' because the witch's main activity is believed to be what Sheila Walker calls, 'cannibalism at a distance'. Yes witches are believed to be cannibals, not in the literal sense but in the spiritual sense. Though, I must add that, for Ivoirians and yes, for most people across Africa the literal and the spiritual senses of witch cannibalism are one and the same.

It means that witches eat the 'soul' of their victims and in the process make the people sick or kill them. In addition, witches eat the fruits of the victims' labour, and spoil their plants and crops. As Walker further explains, the malevolent witch could, with other diabolical colleagues, "eat the souls of the cocoa pods on a neighbour's or relative's plantation, causing the plants to fail to produce". Those who believe they are victims of witchcraft often attack or kill the suspected 'soul eaters' in an attempt to revenge the witchcraft attacks or cleanse the society of these agents of the devil.

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Bambini

Per completezza di indagine, con specifica attenzione alla Costa d'Avorio, una ulteriore categoria di individui su cui tendono a ricadere le accuse di stregoneria sarebbe quella dei bambini:

> ":..Children accused of practicing witchcraft were placed in the care of pastors, who sometimes reportedly used violence to exorcize them. .."[21]

E in particolar modo quelli portatori di disabilità, considerato un indice di stregoneria (alla luce della considerazione "taboo" della disabilità, praticamente associata a una maledizione:

"..In November 2014 the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), a catholic NGO focussing on child protection, notes that in Côte d'Ivoire, "children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and often neglected." According to traditional beliefs, handicapped children are suspected of witchcraft (BICE, 24 November 2014). Humanium in October 2017 also mentions the discrimination of children with disabilities. According to the article, such children are labelled as children of misfortune, child sorcerers or snake children. Disability is a taboo and according to traditional believes is almost considered a curse (Humanium, 19 October 2017)..." [22]

e ancora:

> "...D'après Aleksandra Cimpric, les violences contre les enfants accusés de sorcellerie en Afrique peuvent être de différents sortes :- Violence anti-sorcière ;- Infanticide ;- Abandon et enfants des rues ;- Déscolarisation ;- Stigmatisation et discrimination.2 .."[23]

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21 USDOS – US Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2013 - Cote d'Ivoire, 27 February 2014 https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1095338.html (accessed on 3 April 2023

22 ACCORD, 2021, Cote d'Ivoire, COI Compilation, available at: https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2060352/ACCORD+COI+Compilation_Cote+d'Ivoire_September+2021.pdf

23 OFPRA, 2022, Côte d'Ivoire : Les enfants accusés de sorcellerie , available at: https://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/libraries/pdf.js/web/viewer.html?file=/sites/default/files/ofpra_flora/2207_civ_enfants_sorciers_156147_web.pdf

Al punto che le spesso l'autismo viene associato a una forma di possessione:

> "...Le Dr Aboudramane Coulibaly, directeur exécutif de l'ONG Vivre debout pour la prise en charge des enfants atteints d'autisme relève que « c'est un problème d'ignorance, c'est ancré (dans les croyances) et il est difficile d'aller convaincre quelqu'un au village que l'enfant autiste n'est pas un possédé ».20 De même, David Kablan, président de la Fondation Joseph Kablan pour l'autisme, indique que les enfants atteints d'autisme sont le plus souvent accusés d'être des « esprits maléfiques, enfants sorciers, possédés ou réincarnations du diable ».."[24]

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24 OFPRA, 2022, Côte d'Ivoire : Les enfants accusés de sorcellerie , available at: https://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/libraries/pdf.js/web/viewer.html?file=/sites/default/files/ofpra_flora/2207_civ_enfants_sorciers_156147_web.pdf

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