

UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission
in the Central African Republic



REPORT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)



FROM **1 APRIL 2016**
TO **31 MARCH 2017**



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



MINUSCA

"There is an urgent need to disarm the armed groups - who remain far too powerful and retain the potential to reignite the conflict - as well as to restore State authority and rule of law, and to ensure the security of all civilians. [...] Improved security and accountability remain absolutely key to the establishment of a sustainable peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic, [...] The steps taken by the authorities to establish the Special Criminal Court and the adoption of a new Constitution are promising, but I remain concerned at the large number of arbitrary arrests and detentions by security forces, [...] More resources and political will are needed to ensure proper justice for past and current crimes and human rights violations."

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Press release 04 July 2016, See more at: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20229&LangID=E#sthash.ISRNglLt.dpuf>

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List of Acronyms

ANE	Autorité nationale des élections
CAR	Central African Republic
CNS	Compagnie nationale de sécurité
CoI	Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic
CPJP	Convention des Patriotes pour la justice et la paix
CTFMR	Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Repatriation
DSPJ	Direction des services de la police judiciaire
DST	Direction de la surveillance territoriale
FACA	Forces armées centrafricaines
FDPC	Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain
FPRC	Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique
HRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
HRD	Human Rights Division
HRDDP	United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy
HRO	Human Rights Officer
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESC	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ISF	Internal Security Forces
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MINUSCA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

MISCA	International Mission to Support the Central African Republic
MLCJ	Mouvement des Libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice
MPC	Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique
OCRB	Office central pour la répression du grand banditisme
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCUD	Parti centrafricain pour l'unité et le développement
POC	Protection of civilians
RPRC	Rassemblement populaire pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique
RJ	Révolution et Justice
3R	Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation
SCC	Special Criminal Court
SRI	Section de recherche et d'investigation
UFDR	Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement
UNPOL	United Nations Police
UPC	Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
XAF	Central African francs

Executive Summary

This report, issued by the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), describes the human rights situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017. The overview and analysis provided are based on human rights monitoring and investigations conducted by the Human Rights Division (HRD) of MINUSCA.

During the reporting period, the human rights situation in the country continued to be a cause for serious concern as a result of the recurrent human rights violations and abuses committed by armed groups and to a lesser extent by State authorities. Frequent clashes among opposing factions of the ex-Séléka armed group, particularly between the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique/Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique* (FPRC/MPC) anti-Balaka coalition and the *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) created instability in the central and eastern parts of the country and resulted in a continuing deterioration of the human rights and security situation in the last quarter of 2016 as well as in the first quarter of 2017. Investigations conducted by HRD indicate that these armed groups carried out direct attacks on the civilian population, some of which were targeted attacks carried out along ethnic and religious lines or to conquer territory. In this context, hundreds of civilians lost their lives, hundreds of houses were burnt and thousands of persons displaced.

Although most of the major clashes took place in the central and eastern parts of the country, there were also regular clashes in the western part of the country between the anti-Balaka and elements of *Retour, Réclamation and Réhabilitation* (3R) as well as between the ex-Séléka *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique/ Révolution et Justice* (MPC/RJ) coalition and the anti-Balaka for control of the cattle trade and natural resources. These clashes resulted in a large number of civilian deaths as well as the displacement of the population. In the south-eastern part of the country, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continued to be a threat to the local population, particularly in Haut Mbomou Prefecture where regular attacks on villages, pillaging, forced labour and recruitment of children continued to take place.

Within the context described above, the number of violations and abuses documented by HRD increased by **57.5** percent and the number of victims by **43.8** percent (3,555 victims including 1,949 men, 350 women, 222 boys, 161 girls, and 873 civilians whose age and sex could not be strictly verified) compared to the period covered by the previous report, 1 June 2015 to 31 March 2016.

The types of human rights violations and abuses committed were mainly arbitrary killings, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment), conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, destruction and confiscation of property, and serious violations and abuses against children, such as recruitment and use of child soldiers.

The protection of civilians remained a central issue as violence intensified throughout the country with limited presence of State authority outside of Bangui. Notwithstanding, the latter part of the present reporting period saw the beginning of the deployment of internal security forces, namely the police and the *gendarmerie*, judicial authorities as well as members of the local administration to Bambari, the capital of Ouaka Prefecture. However, despite these efforts, administration of justice continues to be largely dysfunctional.

This report outlines patterns and trends of the most serious human rights violations and abuses documented during the period under review. It also highlights efforts made by the Government to address human rights concerns such as reinforcing its legal and institutional framework, including through the ratification of important international human rights instruments, and establishing the Special Criminal Court, the National Human Rights Commission, and the National Committee on the Prevention of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity and all other forms of discrimination.

Finally, the report provides key recommendations, including the need for the Government, with the support of MINUSCA, to fight against impunity, adopt robust measures to protect civilians and humanitarian actors, implement an effective Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme, restore State authority and the rule of law, and rebuild legitimate security forces and law enforcement authorities, particularly in areas outside Bangui.

I. *Introduction*

1. This third periodic public human rights report¹ of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is jointly published with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)². It provides an overview of the human rights situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.
2. The report is based on information collected by human rights officers during field visits as well as during special investigation missions. Information was collected through interviews with victims and witnesses, community leaders, local administration officials, civil society representatives, law enforcement officials, as well as alleged perpetrators. HRD exercised due diligence to corroborate and cross-check information from as wide a range of sources as possible when investigating and analysing the incidents presented in this report. HRD also took all reasonable measures during its investigations to prevent risk of harm to victims and witnesses and to protect the confidentiality of its sources. The report highlights patterns and trends of the most serious human rights violations and abuses illustrated by emblematic cases and incidents.
3. Human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law documented by HRD during the reporting period include arbitrary killings, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, conflict related sexual violence, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, destruction and appropriation of property, and grave violations and abuses against children, such as recruitment and use of child soldiers.
4. The terms incident and case for the purpose of this report are used interchangeably and refer to any situation in which there has been a violation or abuse of international human rights law or a breach of international humanitarian law. Therefore, an incident or case may involve one or several violations and may affect one or several victims.

¹ The first and second periodic reports are available on
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CF/MINUSCA_9Dec2015.pdf
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CF/CAR1June2015To31Mar2016_en.pdf

² Security Council resolutions 2217 (2015) and 2301 (2016) request MINUSCA to monitor, help investigate, and report publicly and to the Security Council on violations of international humanitarian law and on violations and abuses of human rights committed throughout the CAR.

5. The applicable legal framework remains the same as described in the first and second periodic public reports.³ The intensity of armed violence, coupled with its protracted nature, and the level of organization of the various armed groups, demonstrate the existence of a continuing non-international armed conflict in CAR.⁴ Therefore, all parties to the armed conflict are accountable to the relevant rules of treaty and customary law applicable to non-international armed conflict, in particular Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions.⁵ CAR has also ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC in 2001 which set forth the definition of the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.⁶
6. On 11 October 2016, the State ratified or acceded to seven core International Human Rights instruments: the Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and its Optional Protocol; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

II. *Political and security context*

7. The election of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra and his inauguration on 30 March 2016 marked the return to constitutional order after two years of transitional Government. However, the appointment of the new Government in April 2016 led to discontent among some members of the Muslim community and armed groups, such as the Internal Mediator of the anti-Balaka, Paléon Zilabo, and the leader of the *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC), Ali Darassa, citing insufficient representation of the Muslim community and armed groups in the new Government and institutions.⁷
8. On 7 June 2016, Prime Minister Simplicie Sarandji presented the programme of the new Government during the second extraordinary session of the National Assembly held from 7 to 21 June 2016. The programme, which was approved on 10 June 2016, prioritised peace, security and social cohesion. The programme also emphasised the importance of the Disarmament,

³ CAR has ratified most of the core international human rights treaties including: The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR / acceded on 8 May 1981); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its first Optional Protocol (ICCPR / OP / 8 May 1981); the International Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified on 16 March 1971); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (acceded on 21 June 1991); the Convention of the Rights of the Child (ratified on 23 April 1992). See https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/bangui_report_final_english.pdf, pp. 10-11.

⁴ For the purpose of this report, armed groups are the signatories of the *'Accord sur les principes de désarmement, démobilisation, réintégration et rapatriement (DDRR) et d'intégration dans les corps en uniforme de l'état centrafricain ente le gouvernement de transition et les groups armes'* of 10 May 2015. The signatories are: Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC); Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique (RPRC); Union des forces républicaines fondamentales (UFRF); Séléka rénové; Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (MLCJ); Coordination des ex-combattants anti-Balaka; Unité du peuple centrafricain (UPC); Révolution et justice (RJ), and Union des forces républicaines.

⁵ With the non-international character of the conflict, CAR is a party to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 (ratified on 1 August 1966) and their Additional Protocols I and II of 1977 (ratified on 17 July 1984). These set forth the rules of humanitarian law for non-international armed conflict. See http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CF/CAR1June2015To31Mar2016_en.pdf

⁶ See Article 97 of the Transitional Constitution (law 13.001 18 July 2013).

⁷ Following this ratification, two investigations have been opened by the ICC of which one was for Congolese rebel leader and former Vice President, Jean-Pierre Bemba, who was convicted and sentenced to 18 years for rape as war crimes and crimes against humanity, murder and pillaging committed in CAR by his MLC rebel troops, and the second on the prevailing situation in CAR since August 2012.

⁸ This led to several peaceful demonstrations in April 2016, particularly in Bambari, Ouaka Prefecture, and PK5 neighbourhood of Bangui. In Kaga Bandoro, Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, the ex-Séléka/MPC faction published a communiqué expressing their discontent with the new Government.

Demobilisation, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR), and Security Sector Reform (SSR) processes, the need to set up the Special Criminal Court (SCC), as well as local peace and reconciliation committees and a Truth, Justice, Reparations and Reconciliation Commission and to reform the justice sector. Other priorities included the ratification of several international instruments such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the African Union Gender policy. In July 2016, President Touadera presented a progress report based on the priority areas of the new Government, and reiterated that a Strategic Committee on DDRR, SSR and National Reconciliation would be created, including a technical committee to monitor the implementation of the Government's programme.

9. A significant development in the fight against impunity occurred on 5 August 2016, when Jean-François Bozizé, former Minister of Defence and son of former President, François Bozizé, was apprehended by MINUSCA pursuant to an arrest warrant issued by the Bangui High Court (*Tribunal de Grande Instance de Bangui*) in May 2014. The former Minister was handed over to the *Section de Recherche et d'Investigation* (SRI). He is accused of having committed several violations of human rights and humanitarian law, such as torture and arbitrary killings, as well as other crimes like embezzlement, complicity in committing crimes and destabilizing institutions in 2013. On 9 August 2016, he appeared in court and was provisionally released on bail under judicial supervision by the presiding magistrate.
10. The Government continued to reach out to all stakeholders to pursue peace and reconciliation through dialogue.⁸ On 12 October 2016, President Touadéra convened the first meeting of the Consultative Follow-up Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation which was attended by 11 of the 14 recognised armed groups⁹.
11. The donors' conference held in Brussels on 21 November 2016 represented another historic opportunity for the Government to lead the country towards stability, recovery and development. The Government obtained pledges amounting to \$2.2 billion, 70 per cent of the funding needed for the five years of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.
12. On 9 November 2016, the National Assembly adopted a law on gender parity aimed at achieving a 35 per cent quota for women in decision-making structures. On 28 and 29 December 2016, during the ordinary session of the National Assembly, a legislation establishing a Constitutional Court and a High Court was passed.
13. Despite progress, the security situation deteriorated significantly from June 2016 onwards in Bangui. On 18 June 2016, in PK 12, Ombella-M'Poko Prefecture, the Internal Security Forces (ISF) stopped a vehicle suspected of transporting weapons. Although no weapons were found, 10 Fulani civilians¹⁰ were arrested and taken to *Camp de Roux* and other detention centres in

⁸ With the outbreak of violence in Kaga Bandoro, Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, between the ex-Séléka FPRC and anti-Balaka on 12 October 2016, President Touadera met with a wide range of actors, including armed group representatives to encourage peace and reconciliation. As he delivered messages of peace, he reiterated that those responsible for the violence would be held accountable. Following violent demonstrations in Bangui on 24 October 2016 fuelled by representatives of civil society, the President met with representatives of political parties, civil society, the private sector and religious platform. He called for political dialogue and for CAR citizens to recognize the inability of the military and security forces to fully discharge their responsibilities, stressing the need for a comprehensive security sector reform.

⁹ The *Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC), Maxime Mokom's anti-Balaka group and the *Retour, reclamation, rehabilitation* (3R) group boycotted the process.

¹⁰ On 23 June 2016, HRD visited the Camp de Roux detention facility to follow up on the detention of 10 Fulani civilians including a 16-year-old girl, who were arbitrarily detained by the *gendarmes* of SRI (ISF) since 18 June 2016. According to information received,

Bangui. In retaliation, on the same day, a self-defense armed group led by an individual known as 50/50¹¹ abducted six policemen in PK 5 in Bangui. On 20 June 2016, unidentified self-defense armed groups from PK5 attacked a police station in the third district in PK 5. MINUSCA forces on patrol responded and in the exchange of fire, two men were killed, and others injured.¹² A Muslim man was abducted at the ‘Sica – Benz –Vi’ crossing and killed by FACA elements around ‘Pont des Castors’ on the same day. On 21 and 22 June 2016, a protest ensued in PK 5 requesting the release of the policemen and gunshots were heard in Yakite and Bazanga areas in the fifth district and near Koudoukou School in ‘*quartier Camerounais*’. Allegedly, six civilians from the Muslim community were injured. On 24 June 2016, the six policemen were released. The 10 Fulani¹³ detained in *Camp de Roux* appeared in court and were convicted of being illegal residents.

14. The infighting among the ex-Séléka factions was another factor that contributed to the deterioration of the security situation. A group of dissidents within the ex-Séléka/UPC accused the leader, Ali Darassa, of discriminating against certain Muslim/Arab groups in favour of the Fulani community and, on 30 June 2016, five high-ranking leaders of the UPC, including Ahmed Faya, deserted the UPC. Clashes ensued on 4 July 2016, in Bambari, Ouaka Prefecture, which led to the killing of one civilian and injury of three others. MINUSCA intervened and facilitated mediation between representatives of the Fulani and Muslim/Arab communities resulting in Ahmed Faya and 29 of his supporters being relocated to Kaga Bandoro, Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, on 1 September 2016.
15. In August 2016, the various factions of ex-Séléka started moving towards Bria, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, where their General Assembly was scheduled to take place. On 12 August 2016, clashes erupted between approximately 35 heavily armed ex-Séléka elements including Abdoulaye Hissene, and the Internal Security Forces at different checkpoints along the Bangui-Sibut axis. On 13 August 2016, the same elements were stopped approximately 50 kilometres from Sibut by MINUSCA forces who requested them to turn in their weapons and ammunitions as per the Weapons-Free Zone status. MINUSCA’s backup air support flew overhead, causing the elements to disperse into the nearby bush while abandoning their weapons. MINUSCA Force apprehended 11 elements who were handed over to the national authorities. However, the leaders, such as Abdoulaye Hissene and Haroun Gaye, escaped and continued their movement towards the north-east.
16. Starting August 2016, tension and mistrust mounted in different areas of CAR, particularly between the ex-Séléka and the anti-Balaka. Clashes ensued between the two groups on 16 and 17 September 2016 in Ndomété, Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, resulting in the death of four persons and the displacement of approximately 3,200 civilians. The discovery of the dead body of an ex-Seleka/FPRC element on 12 October 2016 led to clashes between the ex-Seleka aided by Muslim

eight out of the 10 Fulani civilians were sent to Court for a preliminary hearing on 23 June as they were accused of illegally residing in CAR. Two brothers are in custody and accused of being associated with criminal gangs.

¹¹ This self-defense group is led by Issa, alias Kapi or Capi, and supported by another self-defence group known as ‘FORCE’ led first by Haroun Guaye and Abdoulaye Hissene and later by Animeri Matar Djamous.

¹² On 23 June, HRD visited the hospital where an official confirmed that they admitted 16 injured persons (13 men, one woman, one girl and one boy) on the 20 and 22 June 2016 following an incident that occurred in the 3rd district of Bangui in PK5 neighbourhood. According to the official, two men out of the 16 injured persons had succumbed to their injuries. Ten other injured persons were treated and have been discharged while the remaining four including a 4-year-old boy and 16-year-old girl are still undergoing treatment. HRD cannot ascertain whether all the injured victims were civilians.

¹³ There were seven men and a girl from Mali, Sudan, Chad, and CAR all speaking Arabic, while two other men had no identification papers and could barely speak Sango but spoke Arabic

youth and the anti-Balaka resulting in the death of some 37 civilians and injury to 60 others. On 4 October 2016, in Bangui, a FACA major was killed and his son injured by an unidentified armed man. In retaliation, 11 armed men were killed by FACA soldiers and 21 civilians injured (18 men, two women and one boy).

17. On 18 October 2016, an anti-MINUSCA sentiment was fueled by civil society activist Gervais Lakossa, who issued a petition calling for MINUSCA's departure. On 24 October 2016, a *ville morte* was observed in Bangui and there was a series of shootings and grenade explosions in multiple locations which led to four civilians being killed and nine injured (eight men and one woman). Five members of MINUSCA forces were also injured and a restriction of movement was imposed on MINUSCA staff in the capital. On 6 November 2016, Gervais Lakossa and another civil society activist were arrested and detained at the *Camp de Roux* in Bangui and subsequently released, on 14 November 2016, under judicial supervision.
18. Continued movement of armed groups was a security concern throughout CAR from September 2016 to March 2017. While some groups, including the ex-Séléka /MPC, attempted to expand their territory, other ex-Séléka factions continued to move toward Bria, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, to attend the ex-Séléka General Assembly. This movement resulted in the displacement of thousands of civilians and increased tension between religious communities, including violent confrontations, especially in the prefectures of Nana-Grébizi, Nana Mambéré, and Ouham.
19. From October 2016 to March 2017, ongoing tension between the FPRC coalition, the anti-Balaka and UPC factions resulted in attacks against civilians. inside Ngakobo IDP camp on 15 October 2016¹⁴; in Gobolo neighbourhood in Bria, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, on 21 November 2016¹⁵; in Bakala between 30 November 2016 and 12 December 2016; in different mining sites and villages in Ouaka (Yascine), and Haute-Kotto prefectures (Site Chinois) in March 2017; and in Bakouma, Mbomou Prefecture, from 20 to 22 March 2017.
20. During the same period, criminal activities by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) increased, affecting the security situation in the southeast of CAR, particularly in several villages in Haute Kotto, Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou prefectures.
21. On 30 October 2016 three armed group leaders, Abdoul Danda, Issa Kappi, alias 50/50, and Bashir Buhari were killed during a clash between the self-defence group 50/50 and another faction led by Mohammad Appo in Bangui.

III. *General trends and specific developments affecting the human rights situation.*

22. During the reporting period, HRD documented **2,049** incidents of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, affecting **3,555** victims, of which, 1,949 were men, 350 women, 222 boys, 161 girls, and another 150 children and 723 adults whose exact age and sex could not be verified. Armed groups were responsible for **1,430** incidents affecting **2,480** victims, which represents 69.8 percent of the total number of incidents and 69.7 percent of the total number of victims. State authorities accounted for **619** incidents of violations, mainly cases of arbitrary detention, affecting **1,075** victims, which represents 30.2 percent of the total number of incidents and 30.2 percent of the victims. HRD documented 79 incidents of attacks on

¹⁴ This resulted in 12 deaths and 13 injured persons amongst IDPs.

¹⁵ Attacks resulted in the displacement of more than 5,000 IDPs to a location adjacent to the MINUSCA camp and another 90 civilians and some INGO staff sought refuge at the MINUSCA Spanish compound.

villages where unknown numbers of civilians were pillaged of their property, as well as 15 incidents of attacks against schools, 12 incidents of attacks against hospitals and health personnel and 71 incidents of denial of humanitarian access.

23. The ex-Séléka and its different factions – UPC, FPRC, MPC, FPRC/MPC, armed Fulani affiliated with ex-Séléka, Rassemblement populaire pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique (RPRC) and the FPRC/MPC/Anti-Balaka/RPRC coalition – were responsible for 908 human rights abuses affecting 1,393 victims. The anti-Balaka were responsible for 260 human rights abuses affecting 479 victims and LRA for 132 human rights abuses affecting 386 victims. Other armed groups that committed human rights abuses against civilians included the RJ, *Retour, Réclamation, Réhabilitation* (3R) under Colonel Sidiki, and *Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain* (FDPC). During this period, the activities of organized self-defence armed groups¹⁶ impacted on the security and human rights of civilians, particularly in Bangui, where, in the 3rd District of Bangui (PK5), the self-defence group 50/50, under Kapi, the “Force” of Animeri Matar Djamous and another group led by Youssef Maringa, alias “Big Man”, operated with impunity in the area.
24. Cases of arbitrary detention, especially in the western part of CAR, continued to be frequent as suspects were held beyond the 72-hour (renewable once) legal limit without being presented before a judicial authority for preliminary hearings. This was in violation of Article 40 of CAR’s Code of Criminal Procedure and was partly explained by the lack of personnel and structural or logistical constraints. This led to poor detention conditions, overcrowded cells and children not being separated from adults in detention facilities. Those responsible for these violations were: (i) the *gendarmerie* and its specialised unit, with 408 violations and 732 victims; (ii) the police and its specialised unit, with 185 violations affecting 302 victims; (iii) the *Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA), with 18 violations affecting 29 victims; and (iv) other state agents, with eight violations affecting 12 victims.

A. Human Rights Abuses by armed groups

a. Abuses of the right to life

25. During the reporting period, HRD observed a significant increase in the number of civilian killings as a result of the frequent clashes between the armed groups, particularly the FPRC-led coalition and the UPC in the central and eastern parts of the country.¹⁷ HRD documented **215** cases of killings, affecting at least **482** civilians, of which 301 were men, 53 women, 14 boys, 14 girls, and another 31 children and 69 adults whose sex and age could not be determined. There was an increase by 48.8 per cent as compared to the previous reporting period. HRD documented 92 cases of death threats affecting 146 civilians, of which 82 were men, 25 women, one child and 38 adults whose sex and age could not be determined. The number of death threats increased by more than 100 percent compared to the previous reporting period due to the increase in attacks and tensions between the armed groups. Armed groups threatened civilians based on

¹⁶ For the purpose of this report, the term “organized self-defence group” refers to small groups comprising of civilians who have armed themselves and have an identified leader, and participate in hostilities.

¹⁷ A standoff between the UPC and anti-Balaka elements led to the emergence of a new coalition comprising of the FPRC, MPC and anti-Balaka commonly known as the ex-Séléka/ FPRC-led coalition. This coalition was formed to fight against Ali Darassa’s UPC, and was mainly active in Ouaka Prefecture.

their ethnic affiliation or because they were perceived to be supporting and/or affiliated to the opposing groups, particularly in Ouaka, Nana-Grébizi, Haute-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures.

ii. Abuses of the right to life by ex-Seleka and its different factions

26. During the reporting period, the ex-Séléka and their different factions were responsible for 198 incidents affecting 449 victims, of which 253 were men, 54 women, 14 boys, eight girls, 14 children and another 106 adults whose age and sex could not be determined. Of these 198 incidents, 141 were killings affecting 369 victims. Specifically, UPC elements were responsible for 83 incidents including 24 death threats and 237 victims, of which 105 were men, 31 women, 11 boys, seven girls, 69 adults and 14 children whose age and sex could not be determined. The FPRC and its coalition accounted for 80 incidents including 22 death threats affecting 132 victims, of which 84 were men, 11 women, one boy, one girl and 35 adults whose age and sex could not be determined. The ex-Séléka FPRC/MPC coalition committed 30 abuses with 67 victims (54 men, 10 women, one boy and two adults whose age and sex could not be determined). The MPC committed one killing and one death threat affecting three men and two women. The Fulani affiliated with the ex-Séléka were responsible for three killings affecting seven men and one boy.
27. For example, on 14 May 2016, a group of armed ex-Séléka elements attacked Ndoumbou village¹⁸, Nana Mambéré Prefecture, killed six civilians (four men and two women) and wounded another three. The perpetrators burnt down 112 houses as well as the local Catholic Church and looted homes, a health post and a pharmacy. The population was displaced to villages along the Bouca axis.
28. In Kaga-Bandoro, Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, from 12 to 15 October 2016, HRD documented the killing of 37 civilians and the wounding of at least 66 others by mainly the ex-Séléka MPC and FPRC during an attack on the Evêché Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp, Travaux Publics neighbourhood, as well as in Mambéa and Manguépa areas.
29. From November 2016 to January 2017, ongoing tension between the FPRC-led coalition and UPC in Haute-Kotto and Ouaka prefectures led to targeted killings. For example, on 9 November 2016, local sources reported that FPRC elements killed a man and a woman in Kalaga Village¹⁹, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, following clashes between the UPC and the FPRC. The FPRC elements accused the couple of conniving with Fulani to kill other FPRC elements. From 21 to 23 November 2016, in Bria, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, tension between the FPRC and UPC led to the killing of at least 18 men, four women and two boys (seven attributed to the FPRC and 17 to the UPC) and the wounding of at least 16 civilians (10 men, two women, two boys and two girls).
30. In Bakala, Ouaka Prefecture, which was briefly captured and occupied by the FPRC led coalition²⁰ between 30 November 2016 and 2 December 2016, UPC elements recaptured the area from 11 to 12 December 2016 and blamed the local population for facilitating the FPRC takeover of the town. UPC elements summoned the local population to a public meeting at a local school, accused them of being anti-Balaka fighters and killed at least 88 civilians and persons *hors de combat* (45 men, 11 women, eight children, and 24 persons of unknown age and sex) in and around Bakala. On 21 March 2017, HRD interviewed victims and witnesses who reported that on

¹⁸ Located approximately 80 kilometres north-west of Bouca, Nana Mambéré Prefecture.

¹⁹ Located approximately 60 kilometres from Bria, Haute Kotto Prefecture.

²⁰ The anti-UPC force is a coalition of FPRC and MPC, with a loose participation of anti-Balaka.

13 March 2017, around 20 armed UPC elements attacked Atongo-Bakari village²¹, Haute Kotto Prefecture, where they killed nine civilians (two men, five women, one boy and one girl), wounded five others and torched almost all the houses in the village.

ii. Abuses of the right to life by anti-Balaka

31. The anti-Balaka were responsible for 66 incidents affecting 116 victims, of which 54 were men, 20 women, two girls and another 40 adults whose age and sex could not be determined. Of the 66 incidents, 37 were killings affecting 59 victims, of which 37 were men, 11 women, two girls and nine adults whose sex and age could not be determined and 29 threats to life affecting 57 victims, of which 17 were men, nine women, and 31 adults of unknown age and sex. Cases involving the anti-Balaka were recorded mainly in Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Nana-Mambéré and Ouaka prefectures. During this period, the anti-Balaka acted sometimes in conjunction with the FPRC coalition.²²
32. HRD interviewed a local authority in Bocaranga, Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, who reported that anti-Balaka elements entered the person's home on 11 November 2016 where they captured and shot dead a Fulani IDP man. The perpetrators also threatened the person's life who fled from Bocaranga for safety. In another incident, HRD interviewed victims and witnesses in Niem Yelewa, Nana-Mambéré Prefecture, who reported that on 24 October 2016, three armed anti-Balaka elements shot at five civilians, killing an eight-year-old girl and wounding a boy, a girl, and two men.
33. On 14 February 2017, MINUSCA and local sources reported that around 5 a.m. anti-Balaka elements attacked two checkpoints occupied by ex-Séléka in Kouki village, Ouham Prefecture. Five civilians were killed during the attack. The population fled for safety to the neighbouring villages. Some sources reported that the anti-Balaka elements attacked the ex-Séléka in retaliation for a previous attack on Bowaye village, Ouham Prefecture, by the ex-Séléka on 10 February 2017.

iii. Abuses of the right to life by other armed groups: RJ, RJ/MPC coalition, Fulani affiliated with 3R under Colonel Sidiki, FDPC, LRA, 50/50 and Forces of Animeri Matar Djamous

34. Other armed groups particularly the RJ and 3R were responsible for 41 incidents affecting 63 victims, of which 49 were men, five women, four girls, another one child and four adults whose age and sex could not be determined. Of the 41 incidents, 35 were killings affecting 54 victims. The RJ committed 13 incidents including two incidents of death threats, affecting 16 men, four women and one child. The 3R perpetrated 15 incidents including one incident of threat to life, affecting 15 men, one woman, two girls and two adults whose sex and age could not be determined. The LRA were responsible for nine killings affecting nine men and two adults whose sex and age could not be determined. The remaining four incidents affecting 11 victims were attributed to the MPC/RJ coalition (one killing of three men), FDPC of Miskine (one threat to life

²¹ Located approximately 140 kilometres from Bria, Haute Kotto Prefecture, on Ira-Banda axis.

²² From November 2016 the ex-Séléka groups wanted to reunify under a single chain of command and form an entity that could exert a strong political leverage in negotiations with the Government. The UPC refused to join this coalition which was interpreted as treason by the FPRC leadership. Subsequently, the FPRC was not ready to negotiate with the UPC under Ali Darassa and committed to fight the UPC until the armed group disappeared as a political entity or was absorbed into the coalition. With the emergence of an anti-UPC sentiment, the anti-Balaka, particularly elements under the command of Gaëtan Boadé, joined the coalition to attack the UPC along the Bria-Ippy-Bambari and the Mbrés-Bakala-Bambari axes from December 2016 to February 2017 and from 20 to 24 March 2017, coordinated attacks by the FPRC and anti-balaka groups expelled the UPC from Nzako and Bakouma, Mbomou Prefecture.

affecting one man), the Forces of Matar in Bangui (one killing affecting five men) and the 50/50 group (one killing affecting two girls).

35. On 5 April 2016, a group of RJ fighters from Manda village marched into Bodjomo²³, Ouham Prefecture, where they fired randomly and killed a man. The same elements arrived in Betadji²⁴, Ouham Prefecture, interrupted customary justice proceedings conducted by traditional leaders against a man accused of sorcery and killed him. On 18 May 2016, local partners reported that a group of armed RJ elements ambushed a humanitarian INGO vehicle and killed the driver about 5 kilometres from Kouki village, Ouham Prefecture.
36. On 7 June 2016, LRA elements attacked civilians in Kossa²⁵ village, Mbomou Prefecture, where they shot and killed a man, wounded another, abducted two women and looted the villagers. Similarly, on 14 September 2016, victims reported that LRA elements abducted at least four civilians including an adult male, two women, and a girl during an ambush on a truck near Yangousi Village²⁶, Mbomou Prefecture, on 13 September 2016. The perpetrators forced the hostages into the forest where they shot and killed the man and used the two women and the girl as porters.²⁷

b. Abuses of the rights to liberty and security of person and physical and mental integrity

37. In the period under review, HRD recorded **219** incidents of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (ill-treatment) and torture, affecting **455** victims, of which 245 were men, 69 women, 14 boys, 18 girls, 100 adults and another nine children of unknown age and sex perpetrated by members of armed groups. Compared to the previous reporting period, the number of incidents decreased by **34.2** percent and victims by **6.2** percent. Abuses were attributed to the anti-Balaka, ex- Séléka and affiliated groups, LRA, Fulani affiliated to the 3R group, RJ, MPC/RJ coalition and the 50/50 group of PK5.
38. Furthermore, there were 116 incidents of abduction affecting 518 victims, of which 136 were men, 53 women, 36 boys, 19 girls, 243 adults and 31 children whose age and sex was undetermined. The LRA alone perpetrated 75 percent of these incidents affecting 382 victims. HRD observed that the civilians abducted by the LRA were generally subjected to forced labour and forced recruitment. The female victims in some cases were subjected to sexual violence and forced marriages (see section on conflict-related sexual violence). HRD also recorded 239 cases of deprivation of liberty by armed groups affecting 382 victims, of which 287 were men, 40 women, five boys, eight girls, 40 adults and two children whose age and sex could not be determined. UPC elements were responsible for the highest number of incidents (80) and victims (120 victims). In some cases of deprivation of liberty, civilians were ill-treated by the members of the armed groups based on the victims' ethnicity or suspected affiliation to an enemy armed group or to coerce a confession of a crime. Some were held with the intent to subject them to forced labour. Advocacy by HRD with armed group leaders or representatives led to a total of 80 civilians being released and/or handed over to the State authorities.

²³ Located approximately 30 kilometres south of Markounda.

²⁴ Located approximately 15 kilometres north of Bodjomo, on the Markounda road.

²⁵ Located approximately 5 kilometres from Baroua, Mbomou Prefecture.

²⁶ Located approximately 24 kilometres south-east of Nzacko in Bakouma Sub-Prefecture, Mbomou Prefecture.

²⁷ HRD followed up on the case and has no further updates on the whereabouts of the two women. Following the trends and patterns of the LRA when they capture female victims, these women could also have eventually been used as sexual slaves or forced into marriage by the elements.

i. Abuses by ex- Séléka and its different factions

39. The ex-Séléka and its different factions were responsible for a total of 147 incidents cruel and inhuman treatment affecting 310 victims, of which 177 were men, 51 women, 17 girls, 11 boys, and three children and 51 adults whose age and sex could not be determined. The majority of the cases were perpetrated by the UPC and FPRC elements. The ex-Séléka and its different factions were also responsible for 22 incidents of abduction affecting 80 civilians, mostly men, and deprived 354 civilians of their liberty.
40. The UPC were responsible for 54 incidents of cruel and inhuman treatment affecting 120 victims, of which 60 were men, 14 women, eight boys, eight girls, 27 adults and three children whose age and sex could not be determined. Based on the recorded cases, these incidents occurred mainly in the stronghold of the perpetrators, notably in Ouaka, Haute-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures.
41. Incidents of cruel and inhuman treatment were also attributed to (i) the FPRC faction who were responsible for 80 incidents affecting 169 victims, of which 103 were men, 30 women, three boys, nine girls and 24 adults whose age and sex could not be determined. The majority of cases occurred in Nana Grébizi and Haute-Kotto prefectures. (ii) The MPC who were responsible for eight incidents affecting seven men and two women; (iii) the Fulani affiliated with the ex-Séléka who were responsible for two incidents affecting five men and four women; (iv) the RPRC, responsible for two incidents affecting one man and one woman; and (v) the FPRC/MPC coalition, responsible for one incident affecting one man. These incidents were mainly in Ouham and Nana-Grébizi prefectures.
42. Cases documented included the ill-treatment of a 19-year-old pregnant woman by FPRC elements, on 13 April 2016, in Bambari, Ouaka Prefecture, as the woman refused demands for sexual favours. The alleged perpetrators first insulted the woman, then beat her as well as her brother-in-law who had intervened. The woman was taken to the nearby FPRC base, where nine men tied her up (*arbatacha method*) and ordered a payment 150,000 XAF. An ex-Séléka senior commander intervened and freed her later that day.
43. During a field mission to Gbakanga village, Ouham prefecture, on 18 May 2016, HRD interviewed two men who reported having been deprived of their liberty by ex-Séléka elements on 5 May 2016 along with two other men. The victims stated that while at the ex-Séléka base in Yoruba area (Ben-zambe council), they were forced to carry food and to wash dishes or clothes. The perpetrators beat them when they resisted. The men were released on 7 May 2016.
44. In another case, HRD interviewed a 33-year-old man who reported having been subjected to torture by RPRC elements. He was tied up with a rope to a window suspended in the air and beaten with wooden sticks by RPRC elements on 3 August 2016 in Gambo²⁸, Mbomou Prefecture. HRD observed that the victim was injured and advocated for him to be referred to a hospital. Similarly, on 21 August 2016, FPRC elements arrested a 62-year-old man from Ngoundja²⁹, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, for witchcraft. The elements tied up and beat the man, cut off his left ear, slashed his right ear and stabbed his right hand with a knife. The man was rescued by the local *gendarmérie* and MINUSCA forces transported him to Bria Hospital for medical care.

²⁸ Located approximately 72 kilometres west of Bangassou.

²⁹ Located approximately 65 kilometres from Bria on Boungou axis, Haute-Kotto Prefecture.

ii. Abuses by anti-Balaka

45. The anti-Balaka were responsible for 51 incidents of cruel and inhuman treatment affecting 84 victims, of which 53 were men, 10 women, one boy, one girl and five children and 14 adults whose age and sex could not be determined. The anti-Balaka were responsible for nine incidents of abduction affecting 18 civilians mostly men, while the same deprived 11 men and two women of their liberty. Cases involving the anti-Balaka were recorded mainly in Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Nana-Mambéré and Ouaka prefectures and, in most instances, the attacks against civilians were conducted for looting purposes.
46. In one example, HRD interviewed six men, who reported that 20 anti-Balaka elements attacked them and a 16-year-old boy and beat them with knives, clubs and rocks in Boy-Rabe area in Bangui on 23 April 2016. The anti-Balaka elements also looted the men of their mobile phones, a tablet and 15,000 XAF. The men sustained injuries. In another incident, a 30-year-old World Food Programme (WFP) truck driver reported that, on 29 September 2016, eight armed anti-Balaka elements approached him asking for money while he was parking the WFP truck. As he did not have any, the elements threatened to kill him and hit him with their machetes. He suffered injuries to his head, shoulder, and left ear. He was rescued by some neighbours and was taken to the hospital in Bouar, Nana-Mambere Prefecture.

iii. Abuses by other armed groups: RJ, RJ/MPC coalition, Fulani affiliated with 3R under Colonel Sidiki, LRA and 50/50

47. Other armed groups committed a total of 21 incidents of cruel and inhuman treatment, affecting 61 victims, of which 16 men, seven women, two boys, one girl and 35 adults whose age and sex could not be determined. The RJ committed five incidents affecting four men, and three adults whose sex and age could not be determined. The LRA were responsible for seven incidents affecting 10 men, five women and two boys. The 3R committed five incidents affecting two men, one woman and nine adults whose sex and age could not be determined. The MPC/RJ coalition were responsible for one injury of a man, while the 50/50 group in PK 5 neighbourhood in Bangui were responsible for two incidents affecting one woman and 22 adults whose sex and age could not be determined. The LRA abducted 382 civilians while the FDPC abducted 31 civilians, generally subjecting the victims to forced labour, rape, attempted rape and forced marriages³⁰. For cases of deprivation of liberty, the LRA were responsible for one incident affecting one victim; the MPC/RJ, two incidents with two victims; and 50/50, one incident affecting 12 victims.
48. On 17 August 2016, for example, seven armed LRA elements shot and wounded a 30-year-old man at the Gali gold mine near Karmadar village³¹, Mbomou Prefecture. The LRA elements also pillaged the mine, taking food, gold, personal effects, and manufactured goods and headed north into the forest on the Dembia-Berbisaka route. Similarly, on 14 November 2016, in Obo, Haut-Mbomou Prefecture, LRA elements shot and wounded a 30-year-old man. UPDF forces transported him to MINUSCA, from where he was evacuated to Bangui for medical care.

³⁰ In some incidents, the victims were abducted during attacks by the armed groups, particularly the LRA. Following the modus operandi of the LRA, the victims were first used as porters. Later, the boys were sometimes subjected to forced recruitment and the women or girls were used as sex slaves. Eventually, the LRA elements took some of them as their wives.

³¹ Located approximately 45 kilometres north of Dembia, on the Dembia – Derbissaka axis in Rafai sub-Prefecture, 150 kilometres east of Bangassou.

49. A representative of Bozopy 3 village in Pougol³², Ouham-Pendé Prefecture was beaten and locked up for three days in the base of MPC/RJ coalition, as he denied knowledge of the whereabouts of some alleged thieves from his village who had killed a civilian during a robbery in Poulao village. The elements released the victim after his wife paid 20,000 XAF and promised to pay an additional 30,000 XAF.

B. Human rights violations by Government forces

a. *Violations of the right to life, physical and mental integrity*

50. Data collected by HRD indicated that State authorities were responsible for 56 cases of serious human rights violations affecting 88 victims, of which 63 were men, six women, four boys, three girls and 13 adults whose age and sex could not be determined. Violations were attributed mainly to the FACA and the *gendarmerie*. The FACA committed 18 human rights violations affecting 29 victims (24 men, three women, one boy and one girl), of which three killings (three men) and two threats to life (two men). They were also responsible for 13 incidents of cruel and inhuman treatment affecting 24 civilians (19 men, three women, one boy and one girl). The *gendarmerie* was responsible for 25 incidents affecting 40 victims (30 men, one woman and nine adults of unknown sex or age). These incidents were: a killing (one incident affecting one man), a threat to life (one incident affecting two men) and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments (23 incidents affecting 27 men, one woman and nine adults whose age and sex could not be determined).

51. The remaining 13 incidents and 19 victims were attributed to: OCRB³³, who were responsible for two killings affecting four men; the DSPJ, who were responsible for one rape on a boy; the police unit, who were responsible for two cases of ill treatment affecting two men; and other State actors, such as an official from the Ministry of Water and Forestry, who were responsible for six ill-treatments affecting six men and one woman, one rape of a girl as well as one expropriation of property affecting one man, one woman and two boys.

52. On 13 August 2016, a 25-year-old man had an altercation with a FACA bodyguard who shot him in the abdomen. The man succumbed to his injuries at the Paoua hospital. In another incident, on 29 September 2016, a police officer shot and wounded a 27-year-old woman in Nola³⁴, Sangha-Mbaere Prefecture, as punishment for insulting a *gendarme*. The victim received medical care at a hospital in Nola while the supervisor of the alleged perpetrator transferred him to Bangui to avoid judicial accountability.

b. *Violations of the right to liberty and security of persons*

53. During the reporting period, most of the violations committed by the ISF were related to the right to liberty and security of persons, mainly cases of arbitrary detention and poor conditions of detention. The high prevalence of cases of arbitrary detention was due to the continued non-observance of the 72-hour renewable-once legal limit for holding suspects before bringing them before the Public Prosecutor's Office or releasing them. Based on verified and documented cases, law enforcement officers were responsible for 511 cases affecting 925 victims, mostly men (681

³² Located approximately 37 kilometres West of Paoua.

³³ At the time of drafting this report, there were still no investigations on the allegations against the former Director of OCRB despite several requests made by MINUSCA to the Ministry of Justice and the Prosecutor General to initiate such investigations.

³⁴ Nola is located 125 kilometres from Berberati in Sangha Mbaere Prefecture.

men, 35 women, 30 boys, 172 adults and seven children whose age and sex was undetermined). Most of the recorded cases occurred in Bangui where there is a presence of State authorities.³⁵

54. The main perpetrators were the *gendarmerie* and its specialised units (SRI and *Compagnie nationale de sécurité* (CNS)) with 345 cases of arbitrary detention affecting 642 victims, and the police and its specialised units (*Office central de répression du banditisme* (OCRB) and *Direction des services de la police judiciaire* (DSPJ)), with 166 cases affecting 283 victims. The *gendarmerie* were responsible for 208 cases affecting 451 victims (280 men, 22 women, 10 boys, 134 adults and five children whose age and sex was undetermined). The SRI was responsible for 130 cases affecting 166 victims (159 men, three women, two boys, 1 adult and one child), while the CNS were responsible for seven cases affecting 16 men and nine adults whose age and sex could not be determined. The police were responsible for 66 cases affecting 133 victims (99 men, three women, seven boys and 24 unknown adults). Its specialised unit, the DSPJ, was responsible for 43 cases affecting 66 victims (52 men, five women, six boys, two adults and one child whose age and sex was undetermined), while the OCRB accounted for 57 cases affecting 84 victims (75 men, two women, five boys and two adults whose age and sex was undetermined).
55. The recurrence of arbitrary detention was due to the lack of capacity, as well as structural and logistical constraints faced by the police, *gendarmerie* and judicial institutions. As compared to the previous reporting period (178 cases), the cases and victims tripled in number due to the challenges faced by the State authorities to conduct prompt investigations and fair trials.
56. For example, while visiting the OCRB detention centre in Bangui on 6 February 2017, seven detainees had surpassed the legal detention time limit. HRD also observed that one of the detainees was injured and had not been referred to the hospital for treatment. HRD met with the Police Commissioner and successfully advocated for the injured detainee to be referred to the hospital. During another visit, on 29 December 2016, HRD observed that four men had spent between eight and 19 days in detention, without being brought before the Public Prosecutor. Following HRD advocacy, the Deputy Director of the OCRB completed the investigations and referred the cases to the Prosecutor's Office on 30 December 2016.
57. HRD advocated with the relevant authorities for compliance with the legal timeframe, while encouraging investigations and prosecutions into past and present cases of arbitrary detention. Through constant advocacy, HRD was able to obtain the release of more than 58 arbitrarily detained persons, including 15 children.
58. In other circumstances, inmates were kept together without any distinction made between age and sex. During the period under review, HRD documented 22 cases where 26 boys and one girl were not separated from adults in detention facilities ran by the *gendarmerie*, the CNS, SRI, OCRB and DSPJ.
59. HRD observed that that there was a general lack of logistics to support the proper registration of persons in detention and other logistics to facilitate investigations such as paper, type writers or

³⁵ In Bangui, different courts operate, including civil and criminal courts, a Court of Appeal and a Supreme Court. There are also three prisons: Ngaragba, Camp de Roux and a prison for women. In addition, both *gendarmerie* and police units, including their specialised units, have holding cells.

continuous electrical outage. All these violated the Criminal Procedure Code and the required minimum standard for the treatment of prisoners.³⁶

60. Harsh detention conditions remained a major challenge in State facilities, particularly overcrowding and lack of basic health services. There was generally insufficient provision of food and water, poorly ventilated rooms without toilets or electricity, and inmates slept on the floor with no mattresses, beddings or covers. There were no health care services and sometimes sick inmates were not referred to the hospital for treatment in a timely manner. Most of the detainees had no access to legal representation and, in some circumstances, detainees were restrained unjustifiably and ill-treated. There were about 52 recorded cases where the conditions were particularly deplorable affecting 57 men, four women and one boy, mostly at the *gendarmerie* holding cells.

C. Conflict-related sexual violence³⁷

61. During the reporting period, HRD documented 129 cases of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 161 victims, of which 82 were women, 78 girls and one boy. The cases of conflict-related sexual violence continued to be of serious concern with cases of rape, gang rape, attempted rape, indecent assault, forced marriages and sexual slavery. Most of the victims were women and girls who were attacked while carrying out their daily livelihood activities or during attacks on villages by mostly anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka factions, LRA and the MPC/RJ coalition. For the ex-Séléka and its affiliates, most of the cases were recorded in Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto and Nana-Grébizi prefectures where judicial institutions do not exist. The cases committed by the anti-Balaka were recorded mainly in Nana-Mambéré, Ombella-M'Poko, Ouham-Pendé and Mambéré-Kadéï prefectures.

62. In Bamingui-Bangoran and Nana-Grébizi prefectures, where the armed groups are the de facto authorities, victims were reluctant to file complaints against perpetrators for fear of reprisal. Victims were also reluctant to report cases even where law enforcement personnel and judicial authorities existed due to lack of trust in the ability or willingness of the authorities to take appropriate action. The absence of a functioning administration of justice system, fear of stigma, acceptance due to ignorance of referral or judicial paths and geographical isolation all contributed to low reporting of cases.

63. The ex-Séléka and its different factions accounted for the highest number of cases and victims. HRD recorded 58 cases affecting 80 victims, of which 45 were women and 35 girls. Of the 58 cases, 47 were rapes affecting 65 victims (34 women and 31 girls), while the rest were indecent assaults/harassment (five cases affecting seven woman and one girl), attempted rapes (three cases affecting three women and one girl) and forced marriages (three cases affecting two girls and one woman).

³⁶ See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/TreatmentOfPrisoners.aspx> and Article 232 and 235 of the Criminal Procedure Code. These rules were revised and adopted in January 2015 and are also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules.

³⁷ In reference to the commitments of the Joint Communiqué signed between the CAR Government and the United Nations on 12 December 2012 following the visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (See <http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/joint-communicue/with-the-government-of-the-central-african-republic/>), at the time of the publication of this report, one of the major progress made was the promulgation of the National Commission for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms on 23 April 2017 and the installation of its 12 Members (eight men and four women) on 23 October 2017.

64. The anti-Balaka committed 19 incidents of sexual violence, including 14 rapes, three forced marriages, one attempted rape and one case of sexual slavery affecting 19 victims, of which 11 were women, one boy, and seven girls.
65. The LRA were responsible for 19 incidents affecting 21 girls and four women. During different attacks by the LRA, civilians were abducted and, while in captivity, nine girls were forced into marriage, 12 girls and three women were raped and one woman suffered an attempted rape. HRD confirmed that most cases of forced marriages during the reporting period were perpetrated by the LRA with victims of abduction. While in captivity, the women and girls were subjected to forced labour and sexual slavery which was followed by forced marriages for some of the girls. The MPC/RJ coalition committed 16 incidents of rape affecting five girls and 11 women all in Ouham-Pendé Prefecture. The remaining 17 incidents were attributed to: 3R (four incidents of rape affecting three women and one girl); RJ (two incidents of rape affecting one woman and one girl); 50/50 of PK5 (two incidents of rape affecting five girls); UFDR (one incident affecting one woman); and unidentified armed men (eight incidents affecting six women and three girls).
66. On 28 April 2016, in Grevai³⁸, Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, an ex-Séléka FPRC commander reportedly raped two 16-year-old twins and threatened to kill them unless their grandmother paid 35,000 XAF. The grandmother surrendered 17,000 XAF to the perpetrator. In another incident, on 16 July 2016 in Bodjomo³⁹, Ouham Prefecture, an ex-Séléka element dragged a 16-year-old girl away from a public well where she was fetching water with three other girls and raped her.
67. It has been reported that about a hundred uniformed armed UPC elements attacked a village in Haute-Kotto Prefecture. Some of the elements gang-raped a 26-year-old woman in the context of this attack. In an interview with HRD, the woman reported that another estimated 20 women were raped during the attack and claimed that about ten of them were admitted to the hospital. Similarly, HRD interviewed a 20-year-old woman who reported that three UPC elements raped her during another attack.

D. Grave violations against children

68. During the reporting period, children continued to be victims of grave child rights violations committed by the parties to the conflict throughout much of the country. The Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 295 incidents of grave violations of children's rights (recruitment and use of child soldiers, killing and maiming, rape, abduction, attacks against schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access) affecting 268 children (86 girls and 182 boys). Perpetrators included the ex-Séléka and its factions (FPRC, RPRC, MPC, UPC and coalition), anti-Balaka, LRA, RJ, FDPC, 3R, armed Fulani men, FACA, ISF and unidentified armed men.
69. Forty-four children (17 girls and 27 boys) were killed and 47 (19 girls and 28 boys) injured in 41 separate incidents during the period under review. The children were killed or injured by targeted gunshots, stray bullets, knife wounds and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). The perpetrators were: the anti-Balaka (four killings and six injuries); UPC (12 killings and seven injuries); MPC (one killing and six injuries); 3R (two killings and four injuries); RPRC (one injury); FPRC (five killings and one injury); FPRC led-coalition (three killings and two injuries); unidentified ex-

³⁸ Located approximately 30 kilometres west of Kaga-Bandoro

³⁹ Located between Nana-Bakassa and Markounda in Ouham Prefecture.

Séléka factions (four killings and eight injuries); armed Fulani men (two killings and one injury); unidentified armed men (five killings and 10 injuries); and the Internal Security Forces (one killing of a 1-year-old child in PK5, Bangui). Five children died and one was injured in two separate incidents involving UXOs. During armed confrontations between rival armed groups in Bangui's 3rd District in June 2016, a 17-year-old boy was injured and subsequently died, and three young children were injured by stray bullets.

70. Thirty incidents of abduction affecting 72 children (18 girls and 54 boys) were verified and confirmed during the reporting period. A high number of abductions were attributed to the LRA (56 children). The anti-Balaka abducted 10 children, followed by FPRC (2), unidentified ex-Séléka factions (2), RJ (1) and 3R (1). The CTFMR advocated with the anti-Balaka during the reporting period and obtained the release of four Fulani children abducted in 2013 at the outbreak of the crisis. Twenty-eight incidents of rape by all parties to the conflict against 34 girls were documented in the PK5 neighbourhood of Bangui, Ouaka, Nana-Grébizi, Nana-Mambéré prefectures and other localities under the control of armed groups. Thirty-three incidents of recruitment and use of children by armed groups were documented affecting 54 children (13 girls and 41 boys). The majority of the incidents (21) were committed by the LRA, followed by the FRPC (4), UPC (4), anti-Balaka (3) and MPC (1). Children recruited by the LRA were first abducted before being used as combatants, porters, cooks and in four instances as sex slaves.
71. During the reporting period, the functioning of education and health services was impeded by attacks and lootings, and threats against personnel, including some killings. A total of 15 incidents of attacks against schools were documented during the reporting period. Schools were also occupied and used as military bases. Incidents of attacks and occupation of schools were predominantly attributed to MPC (13), UPC (seven attacks and three occupations), undetermined ex-Séléka factions (seven occupations), FPRC (two occupations), FDPC (one occupation), while anti-Balaka, RJ, and unidentified armed individuals each carried out one attack. Advocacy by the CTFMR and particularly MINUSCA led to the liberation of nine schools. As of 31 March 2017, 11 schools were occupied by armed groups. In one incident, for example, FPRC/MPC coalition invaded a school and killed three educational personnel during the crisis in Kaga-Bandoro, Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, from 12 to 15 October 2016. A fourth teacher was targeted and killed two days later in the same town.
72. Twelve incidents of attacks against hospitals and health personnel were documented and attributed to ex-Séléka (5), undetermined ex-Séléka factions (2), unidentified armed individuals (2) and anti-Balaka (3). On 18 May 2016, a convoy of two ambulances belonging to an international NGO was ambushed by unidentified armed men in Amou village, 25 km from Sibut, Kémo Prefecture. The driver was killed and the passengers received death threats before being released. Humanitarian access was gravely affected due to armed group activities during the reporting period, including the killing of humanitarian personnel. The CTFMR documented 71 incidents of denial of humanitarian access attributed to anti-Balaka (24), undetermined ex-Séléka factions (12), unidentified armed individuals (9), FPRC (8), MPC (8), FPRC/MPC coalition (2), MPC/RJ coalition (2), and LRA (1).
73. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1539 (2004), the CTFMR continued to engage in dialogue with armed groups with a view to enabling them set up preventive measures to end grave child rights violations including recruitment and use of children and, particularly, to ensure the release of all children already associated with the groups. During the period under review, through its policy of engaging, CTFMR obtained the release of 2,539 children (865 girls and 1,674 boys). It is worth noting that of total number of children released, 68 percent came from

the Anti-Balaka, 19 percent from Revolution and Justice (RJ) and 13 percent from ex-Séléka factions (FPRC, RPRC and *Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix* (CPCJ)).

74. Children released were handed over to UNICEF and partners for provision of care and reintegration programmes, including return to school, vocational training and income-generating activities. Considering the gap in the funding of reintegration programmes, the CTFMR continues to advocate with donors and the international community for funding for such programs that would provide adequate reintegration for formerly associated children in view of avoiding re-recruitment or re-association with armed groups.

E. Human rights violations and abuses committed against persons accused of practicing witchcraft

75. The practice of witchcraft is severely punished by CAR legislation. Articles 140 and 150 of the Criminal Procedure Code criminalise such practices and establish penalties ranging from fines to life imprisonment in cases where such acts result in death. However, the Code does not provide a clear and objective definition of witchcraft but just stipulates the punishment to be meted out to someone found guilty of this crime. The lack of objective means of proving the crime has led to many abuses committed against person accused of witchcraft.
76. HRD recorded 70 incidents of human rights violations and abuses against persons suspected of practicing witchcraft, affecting 113 victims, mostly elderly persons, including 60 women, 47 men, two girls, one boy and another three children whose age or sex was not identified. Attacks on individuals associated with witchcraft led to the killing of 11 men and nine women, and threats to life against nine victims, mostly women. Those who lost their lives were either beaten to death, decapitated, buried alive or died of their injuries. In some cases, the armed groups deprived the victims of their liberty (four cases affecting four men and three women) and pillaged their property (two women and one man). In other 17 cases, the victims (19 women, 13 men one boy and one girl) were detained in *gendarmerie* or police facilities for more than the legal holding period. In such cases, the commanders claimed that the victims were detained for their protection.
77. The majority of the cases were perpetrated by armed groups, including the anti-Balaka (25 cases), the ex-Séléka and its different factions, mainly the UPC and FPRC (19 cases), and the RJ (three cases). State authorities were responsible for the remaining 23 cases, of which 14 were committed by the *gendarmerie*, seven by the police and its specialised units, one by the Director of Water and Forestry and one by a Mayor. The witchcraft cases were recorded in Bangui and Ouham, Nana Mambéré, Nana-Grébizi, Ouaka, Mambéré-Kadei, Haute-Kotto and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures where armed groups and officials have control or influence.
78. A 40-year-old man reported that anti-Balaka elements ill-treated him and threatened his life as he was accused of making a woman sick through witchcraft in Ngaoundaye, Ouham Pendé Prefecture, on 1 January 2017. The elements fired three shots at him to intimidate him, lit a fire and suspended him over the fire on a cross bar supported by two pitchforks. The Mayor of Ngaoundaye informed the *gendarmerie* who later rescued the victim. The victim received medical treatment and moved to another village out of fear. An X-ray indicated that the man had a broken collarbone and his right arm was paralysed.
79. Investigations conducted by HRD indicated that perpetrators of crimes against persons accused of practicing witchcraft are never held accountable and there is no recourse to justice for the

victims. Consequently, the victims continued to be exposed to further attacks from their perpetrators due to the high rate of impunity. Victims were reluctant to file complaints and feared stigmatisation and the risk of being banished from their communities.

IV. *Fight against impunity and restoration of State authority*

80. Activities and territorial control of armed groups coupled with lack of State authority had a negative impact on the fight against impunity. On 3 July 2016, for example, six heavily armed ex-Séléka FPRC combatants went to the police station in Bria, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, requesting the release of two FPRC elements arrested by MINUSCA Forces on 29 June 2016 for arms trafficking. The elements beat up and threatened to kill the police officers if the two detainees were not released. MINUSCA Forces rescued the officers, but on 5 July 2016, four FPRC colonels succeeded to release the two men facing no resistance from the police officers on duty. In another instance, on 19 July 2016, the Brigade Commander at the *gendarmerie* in Bossangoa, Ouham Prefecture, reported the escape of 14 detainees; similarly, on 3 November 2016, 36 detainees escaped from the Bria prisons, Haute-Kotto Prefecture. On 28 October 2016, presumed UPC elements attacked eight *gendarmes* who were on their way to investigate alleged crimes committed by armed groups in Grimari. Six were killed and one wounded.
81. CAR authorities nevertheless continued to work towards providing the necessary resources and legislative mechanisms to guarantee the rule of law. MINUSCA and UNDP continued to provide technical support and build the capacity of national authorities to investigate and prosecute serious crimes, as well as make the SCC operational.
82. In this regard, the MINUSCA Special Representative of the Secretary General and the Government jointly established a Selection Committee for the selection of international members of the SCC, including the Special Prosecutor (SP) and other international magistrates. In November 2016, a decree to establish a Selection Committee for the appointment of judicial police officers was finalised and, at the time of reporting, was pending approval by the authorities. On 14 February 2017, the SP was nominated by presidential decree and two Investigating Judges were nominated on 12 April 2017. The Selection Committee conducted interviews for the position of Assistant Prosecutor (*Substituts du Procureur Special*) on 28 and 31 March 2017. CAR authorities designated a building for the SCC and one for judicial police officers. MINUSCA developed a security plan for the personnel's premises. Funding for the operation of the Court has been secured for 14 months through MINUSCA programmatic funds, a Multi-partners Trust Fund and UNDP funds.
83. In Haute-Kotto and Nana Mambéré prefectures as well as in Bangui, CAR judicial authorities, with the support of MINUSCA, launched mobile courts aimed at bringing judicial institutions closer to the population and restoring confidence in the judicial system. More than 1,560 civil cases were adjudicated and, in Bangui, 52 files involving 95 indictees were adjudicated. Most of the files were related to criminal cases.

V. *Measures taken by the Government to address human rights concerns*

84. The Government has made notable progress in reinforcing its legal and institutional framework, including, as stated above, by having ratified or acceded to seven core International Human Rights instruments in October 2016. This falls in line with recommendations from the Universal

Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council and from the Independent Expert on the human rights situation in the Central African Republic.⁴⁰ Further to progress made towards the establishment and operationalisation of the SCC, on 24 March 2016, the Government instituted 11 May as a day to commemorate victims of human rights violations, through a presidential decree to encourage reparations for victims.

85. The Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, visited CAR and officially launched the National Committee on the Prevention of Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and other atrocities including discrimination in CAR on 17 May 2016. From 18 to 20 May 2016, MINUSCA HRD organised a workshop on the international, regional and national instruments for the protection of human rights for the 39 representatives of the Committee. The creation of this Committee is part of the momentum initiated by the Government to gradually establish a comprehensive and inclusive process of transitional justice that combines judicial, quasi-judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.
86. On 9 June 2016, President Touadera appointed Lieutenant Colonel Bienvenu Zokoue as the new commander of the OCRB. He took over from Robert Yékoua-Ketté, who was accused of committing or of complicity in the commission of arbitrary killings, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments, and arbitrary arrest and detention between 2015 and 2016. On 7 November 2011, following advocacy by HRD, the judicial authorities opened a case against the former OCRB Director but no further action was taken to bring him to justice.
87. Starting 12 January 2017, the High Judicial Council started to rotate judicial personnel in order to motivate personnel and bring new staff in some jurisdictions. Nineteen new magistrates were appointed throughout the country and 10 took up their posts in early March 2017. MINUSCA and the national security forces in Bambari designed a comprehensive plan to ensure the security of judicial personnel. Sixty corrections personnel were trained and at the end of March 2017 and reconstruction of three detention facilities was completed in Kaga Bandoro, Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, Mbaïki and Bangassou.
88. On 23 March 2017, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the law on the Creation of the National Human Rights Commission, which was promulgated by the President on 20 April 2017 (Law no. 17.015)⁴¹.

VI. Measures taken by MINUSCA (including through HRD) to address the human rights concerns

89. As part of its efforts in support of the fight against impunity, during the period under review, MINUSCA provided technical assistance to the different law enforcement and judicial authorities regarding investigations into alleged perpetrators of serious human rights violations.
90. The United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was reviewed and became effective on 1 December 2016. The SOP is being implemented by all MINUSCA sections, UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes and other stakeholders, such as the European Union. HRD noted that there was better compliance with the

⁴⁰ For more information, see <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/CFIndex.aspx>.

⁴¹ At the time of publication of this report, on 23 October 2017, 12 members (eight men and four women) of the National Human Rights Commission were installed by the government

policy by UN entities and better cooperation with the HRDDP Secretariat and HRDDP Task Force. From April 2016 to March 2017, the HRDDP Secretariat received 94 requests from MINUSCA/UNCT components intending to support national security forces.

91. In order to reduce and prevent violations and abuses of International Human Rights Law and breaches of International Humanitarian Law and International Refugee Law, the HRDDP Secretariat recommended a number of mitigating measures, including a mandatory pre-deployment training for the 96 law enforcement officers deployed to Bambari and the setting up of a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the implementation of mitigation measures. It was also recommended that for every joint operations between the UN and national security forces deployed in Bambari there should be joint planning with the participation of all civilian components of MINUSCA with protection mandates.
92. MINUSCA resumed support to the specialised police unit, OCRB, after a review by the HRDDP Secretariat on the behaviour of the unit and its commanders since the removal of the former Director and appointment of the new Director.
93. HRD continued the analysis and identification of major threats affecting the local population, engaging with key stakeholders and parties to the conflict to mitigate conflict consequences on civilians, and regularly participated in mission-led coordination mechanisms at Bangui and field level in order to improve early warning and preventive action.
94. HRD continued to sensitise armed groups on their responsibility to protect civilians in their areas of operation, their obligations under International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, and consequences for acts of violence committed against civilian populations.
95. HRD played a key role in sharing timely, actionable information to guide protection of civilians (POC) efforts in a coordinated manner. In Bria, Haute-Kotto Prefecture, with limited access to information due to the security situation, HRD concentrated on raising POC alerts, which assisted MINUSCA's leadership in taking decisions on how to best address POC concerns, particularly with respect to the Fulani civilians who were trapped in various neighbourhoods of the town. HRD sensitised the population on community alert mechanisms, explained the work of Civilian Liaison Assistants (CLA) and provided MINUSCA's emergency line where civilians could alert MINUSCA about threats or serious incidents. HRD engaged with both the FPRC and UPC armed groups reminding them of their obligations to comply with international humanitarian standards during the conflict.
96. HRD participated in at least 61 Joint Assessment Missions with other UN protection actors. Furthermore, HRD, through its Monitoring and Mobile Investigation Unit, carried out 21 human rights investigation missions throughout the country covering nine prefectures.⁴²
97. MINUSCA HRD has undertaken regular capacity building activities for State authorities and civil society organizations. During this reporting period, 7,007 representatives, (5,179 men and 1,828 women) received different trainings on human rights principles; rules governing the use of weapons by law enforcement officers; social cohesion and dialogue; sexual and gender based violence, conflict related sexual violence and the MARA mechanism; the rights of detainees; women's rights; and children's rights. Trainings were provided to representatives of FACA,

⁴² These nine prefectures are: Ouaka, Vakaga, Haute-Kotto, Ouham-Pendé, Mbomou, Ombella-M'Poko, Bamingui-Bangoran, Nana-Grébizi and Kémo.

police, *gendarmerie*, administrative authorities, parliamentary candidates, religious groups, ex-combatants, local NGOs and associations, including youths and women, and the media.

98. HRD also conducted 13 workshops for 548 representatives from the National Committee for the Prevention of Genocide (342 men and 206 women); government authorities; law enforcement officers, human rights NGOs, the media, and civil society organizations. These workshops focused on the establishment of the National Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation in CAR, the review of the Law on the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms in CAR, the implementation of the recommendations deriving from the United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms and the National Committee for the Prevention of Genocide. Human rights awareness raising campaigns were organized through periodic promotional activities. Over 7,000 persons benefitted from these awareness-raising campaigns, of which 493 were anti-Balaka ex-combatants and 1,748 were women. HRD further carried out three seminars for 125 government officials (88 men and 37 women) on the fight against impunity and transitional justice mechanisms.
99. To prevent and end grave human rights violations against children, MINUSCA Child Protection Section carried out trainings, capacity-building and sensitisation on child rights and protection for 1,655 external partners, including Government officials, the FACA, police and *gendarmerie*, members of armed groups and civil society.
100. The CTFMR continued to engage in dialogue with the ex-Séléka leadership for developing Action Plans to prevent grave human rights violations against children, including their release from armed groups. The dialogue stalled during the last quarter of 2016 due to armed confrontation between the coalition and UPC but later resumed. Dialogue continued throughout the year with the anti-Balaka at the local level and children continued to be disassociated. A total of 2,540 children (816 girls and 1,724 boys) were separated from armed groups and entered reintegration programmes during the reporting period. On 13 February 2017, the commemoration of “Red Hand Day” throughout the country enabled MINUSCA and partners to call on CAR authorities to finalise the ratification of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and develop a legislation to criminalise the recruitment and use of child soldiers.
101. The new Government has made efforts to work in collaboration with MINUSCA and HRD in order to improve the human rights situation and the protection of civilians. However, limited progress was made in the effective restoration of State authority outside Bangui, particularly the security forces, the judiciary and administrative staff in general.

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

102. The report demonstrates the direct impact of the political and security situation on the human rights situation in CAR. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. The report calls for more action on the part of all actors not only to protect civilians but also to prevent the reoccurrence of violence and its consequent human rights violations and abuses. Despite efforts on the part of the Government, CAR needs the urgent support of the international community to address the human rights situation.
103. The new Government has made efforts to work in collaboration with MINUSCA and HRD in order to improve the human rights situation and the protection of civilians. However, limited

progress was made in the effective restoration of State authority outside Bangui, particularly the security forces, the judiciary and administrative staff in general.

104. With the continuous hostilities in the central and eastern parts of CAR leading to an increase in human rights abuses, it is imperative for the Government to prioritise accountability for human rights violations and abuses, and create a conducive environment for effective and independent investigations, prosecution and adjudication of crimes in CAR.
105. In order to ensure the progressive improvement of the human rights situation in the CAR, MINUSCA/OHCHR reiterate the recommendations formulated in their second report, and urge:

The Government of the Central African Republic to:

- Prioritise the fight against impunity for past and present serious human rights violations and abuses by ensuring prompt, independent and impartial investigations for all violations and abuses and to hold those responsible accountable;
- Continue strengthening its efforts to restore State authority and the rule of law, in particular through effective deployment of police, *gendarmes* and judicial authorities;
- Respect its commitment and obligation to provide the necessary conditions to ensure the full operationalisation of the Special Criminal Court;
- Ensure the safety and protection of magistrates handling human rights related cases, as well as that of victims and witnesses of human rights violations, without which victims and witnesses will likely remain silent;
- Develop a global strategy to address the legacy of past human rights violations and abuses through appropriate gender-sensitive mechanisms of transitional justice in accordance with international legal standards and obligations, while placing victims at the centre and paying special attention to abuses committed against people in situations of vulnerability, in particular women and children in these categories;
- Guarantee the application of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), particularly the need to separate detainees on the basis of sex and age as well as their legal status; pre-trial detention or convicted prisoners;
- Demonstrate political will and take action to establish, with the assistance of MINUSCA, a vetting mechanism for defence and security sector personnel, aimed at excluding the perpetrators of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law from the defence and security forces;
- Create conditions to assist victims of conflict related sexual violence, forced marriages and teenage mothers, including provisions of medical, psychological and legal support;
- Ensure that victims/survivors have access to an effective remedy, including gender-sensitive, transformative and victim-centred reparations;

- Strengthen child protection initiatives and encourage the release of children still associated with armed groups; initiate strategies and support programmes for child victims of armed groups and children released from armed groups, and update the National Plan for the Protection of Children.
- Prevent, prosecute and punish all perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses against persons accused of witchcraft and charlatanism, including through a review the criminal code to ensure the decriminalisation of acts of witchcraft and sensitisation campaigns on witchcraft allegations;

All armed groups to:

- Respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law; cease all hostilities and participate in the national dialogue on DDRR;
- Facilitate the return of legitimate authorities in the administration and security sector throughout the territory;

The international community to:

- Continue to provide financial and technical support to the Government in the areas of justice and security, especially in support of the Special Criminal Court, Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Repatriation (DDRR), Security Sector Reform (SSR) strategies, and prompt humanitarian response;
- Assist competent authorities to set up victims and witnesses protection programmes, including medical, psycho-social and legal support.

***** **END** *****

IX. Annex II: Disaggregated data on the number of incidents and victims for the reporting period by perpetrators

