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United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Human Rights Division

Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation

February 2022

The Human Rights Division's (HRD) mandate includes assisting the government of the Central-African Republic (CAR) to promote and protect human rights through its field offices and headquarters in Bangui. This report is based on information received by the HRD and only includes human rights violations and abuses that occurred, were documented, and verified during the month of February 2022. Incidents that could not be verified are not included. Ordinary crimes are also excluded from this report.

This information is shared locally as well as nationally with CAR's authorities and partners.

Security context in February 2022

1. The security situation in the Centre and East of the country remained very concerning in February 2022 and the HRD received several reports of violations committed by armed groups and violations committed by combatants or former combatants operating alongside or for State actors. In the Haute-Kotto Prefecture, Central African Armed Forces (FACA), other security personnel (OSP) and former combatants continued their operations against armed groups, which caused panic among local populations and led to human rights violations. In the Ouaka Prefecture, the HRD received reports that anti-Balaka combatants that had previously received support from OSP and FACA had attacked the village of Komaye (12 km to Boyo) on 31 January and committed a number of human rights abuses. In the Nana-Grébizi Prefecture, the HRD received information that local self-defence groups in and around Ouandago had been created upon instruction of the OSP since July 2021 and have been receiving their support. These groups have been allegedly committing human rights abuses since November 2021, particularly against the Muslim population. That there are combatants or former combatants working alongside State actors is further confirmed by the fact that, on 15 February, around 20 anti-Balaka combatants demonstrated in Bambari demanding to be paid for having fought alongside FACA and OSP. The HRD is concerned that – beside the human rights violations and abuses committed during said joint operations – this practice will lead to further attacks against the civilian population as combatants seek payment or compensation through looting or pillaging.
2. In the Mbomou Prefecture, the HRD continued receiving reports of human rights abuses committed by FPRC combatants under the command of Mahamat Salleh in and around Nzacko. The movements and actions of the combatants regularly lead to displacements of population.
3. In the Western sector, the security situation remained tense due to the heavy presence of armed groups and transhumance related population movement. In the Mambéré-Kadéï Prefecture, after the arrival of around 100 Fulani herders from Chad in Sapoua on 16 February and subsequent disagreements with the local populations, the HRD received allegations that, on 18 February, 3R combatants and Fulani herders attacked the villages of Dowe and Gbangara, where ten civilians were allegedly killed, and others wounded. The HRD however could not verify this information before the end of February. Similarly, 3R combatants allegedly got involved in a dispute between

farmers and herders in Bowara (Ouham-Pendé), which created panic among the local population. Beside the human rights abuses committed by these groups, such incidents could also lead to the targeting of Fulani civilians by State actors under the pretext of fighting armed groups. For instance, in Boyaram, a FACA soldier arrested a Fulani man known to the local community, accused him of belonging to the 3R and killed him.

Human Rights Violations and Abuses and Breaches of International Humanitarian Law

Main Trends

52 verified incidents, representing 59 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of IHL affecting **152 victims**, took place in February 2022. This represent a modest increase compared to January 2022.

Armed groups were responsible for **most of the victims documented**, including victims of violations of the right to life and of the right to physical and mental integrity. **OSP**, alone or jointly with state forces, were responsible for **almost half of the incidents and over half of the victims attributed to State actors**.

victims compared to January 2022, during which 42 verified incidents that affected 131 victims were documented.

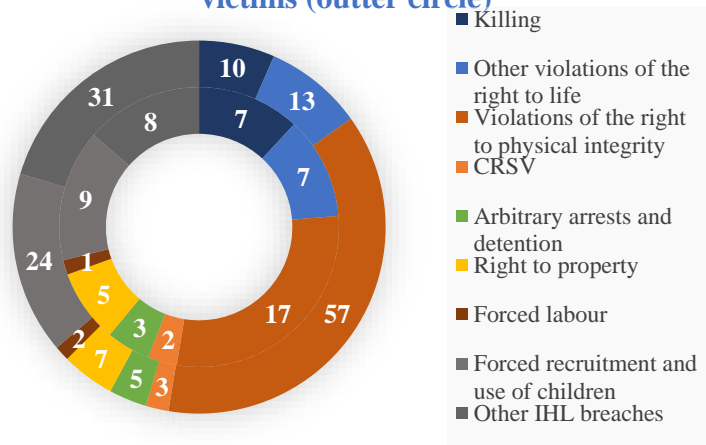
6. The majority of victims were men (58). However, the HRD documented a high number of unidentified civilian victims (54), in addition to four women and 30 children (23 boys, six girls, one unidentified child), and six groups of collective victims.

7. Compared to January, the HRD observed in February a decrease in the number of civilians killed and the proportion of violations of the right to life among all types of violations and abuses: it documented and verified six incidents during which seven violations of the right to life by killing occurred, for a total of ten victims, whereas at least 37 civilians were killed in January. This sharp decrease of 72.97 percent can be explained by the fact that indiscriminate attacks took place in January while none occurred in February. Armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA

4. During the month of February, the HRD, including the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Section (CRSVS) and the Child Protection Section (CPS), documented and verified 62 incidents,¹ representing 74 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) and affecting 183 victims. In addition, it also recorded 43 alleged incidents, representing 52 violations and abuses and 78 victims, which were still being verified at the end of February.

5. Out of the 62 incidents documented by the HRD during the month of February, 52 incidents, representing 59 abuses and violations and affecting 152 victims, effectively took place in February 2022. This marks a 23.80 percent increase in the number of confirmed incidents and a 16.03 percent increase in the number of

Number of violations (inner circle) and victims (outer circle)



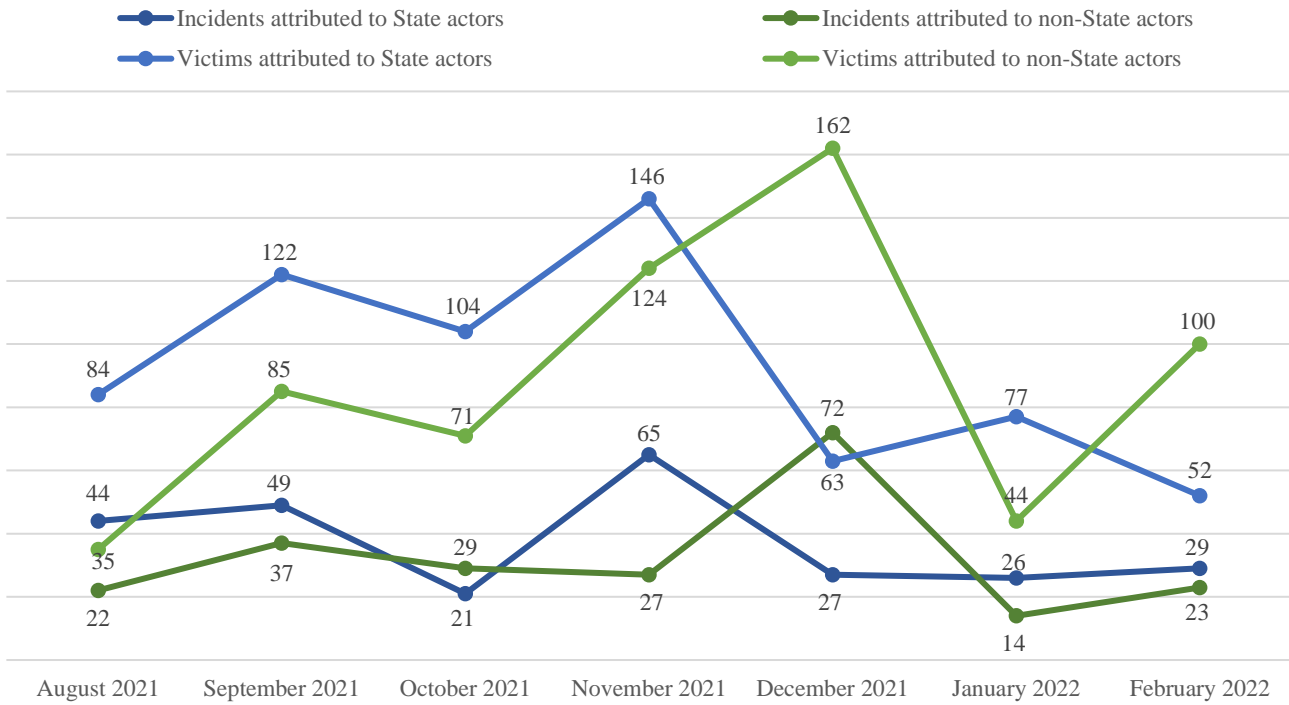
¹ Several types of human rights violations and abuses may be recorded during a single incident, against different victims. The following data is based on the most serious type of violation per incident and the most serious type of violation per victim.

were responsible for most of the civilians killed (seven), as well as for the majority of victims of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity (42 victims, i.e. 73.68 percent).

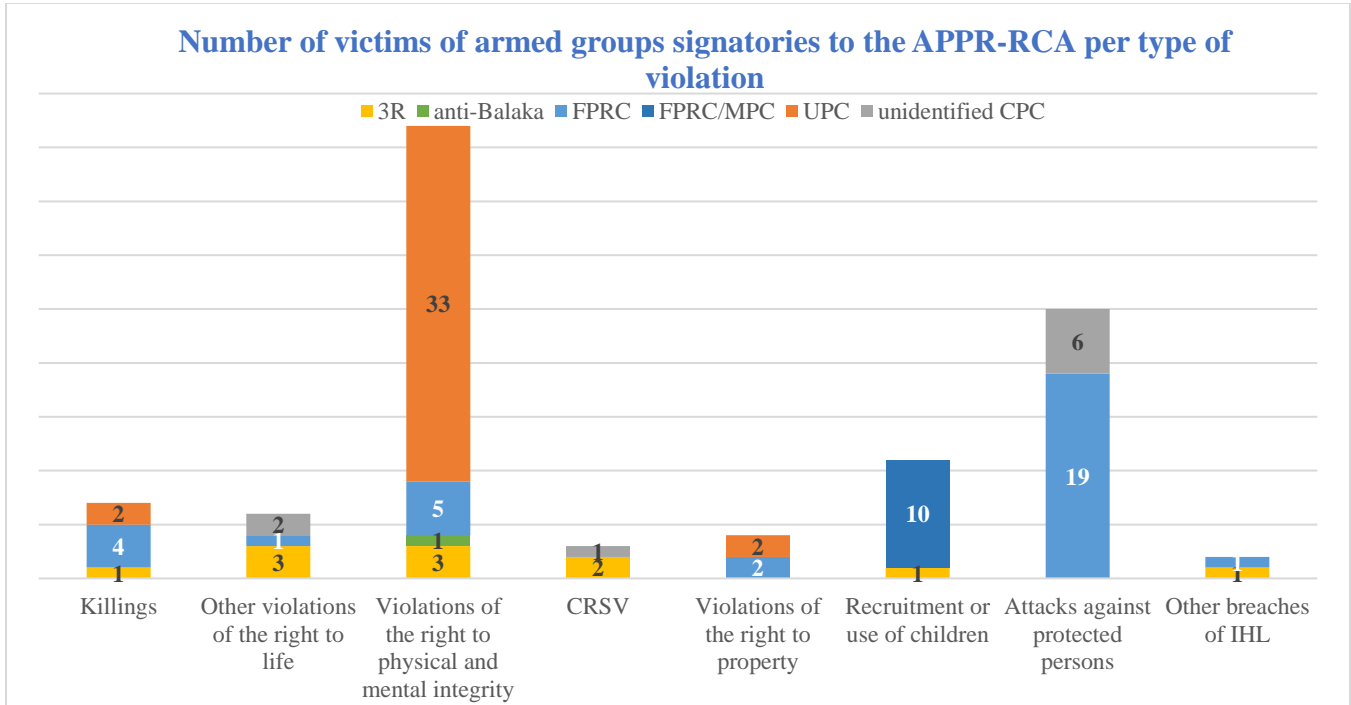
8. While the numbers of incidents and violations are split between State actors (29 incidents representing 32 violations) and armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA (23 incidents representing 27 violations), the latter are responsible for 65.78 percent of the victims affected (100 victims, against 52 for State actors).

9. Compared to January, during which 26 incidents representing 34 violations affecting 77 victims were attributed to State actors, the numbers of incidents and violations attributable to State actors remain stable although the number of affected victims decreased by 32.46 percent. On the contrary, there is a noticeable increase with regards to incidents and violations attributed to armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA: 13 such incidents, representing 19 violations and affecting 43 victims had been documented and verified in January, marking a 132.55 percent rise in the number of victims attributed to them in February.

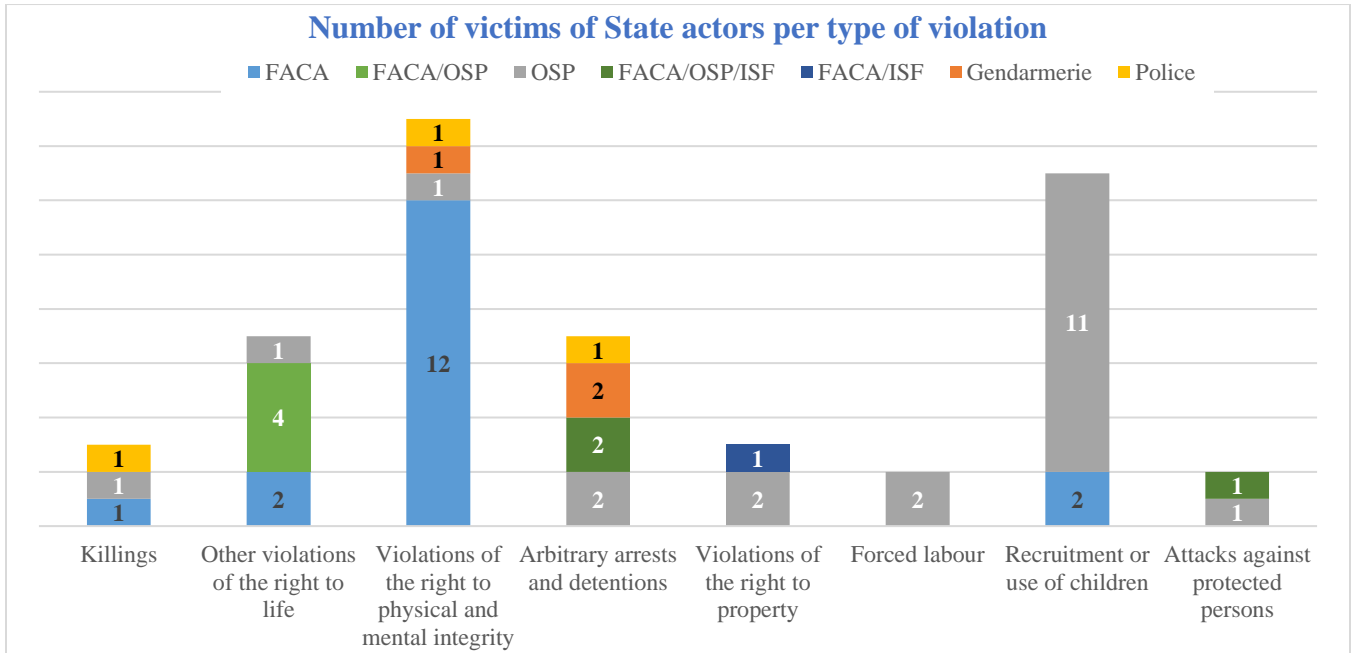
Incidents and victims per type of perpetrator



10. Among the armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA, the UPC and the FPRC were the perpetrators causing the most victims, with respectively 37 and 32 each. The most common type of violation were violations of the right to physical and mental integrity: the HRD documented eight cases affecting 42 victims (including five children and 30 unidentified civilians), 33 of which are attributed to the UPC.

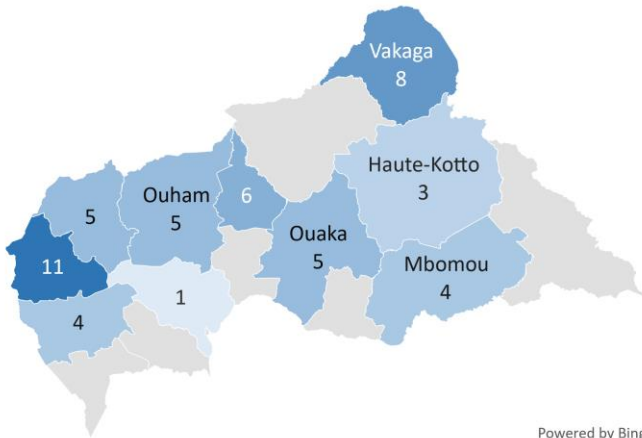


11. Among State actors, the OSP committed violations affecting the most victims, with 21 victims attributed to them alone, four jointly with FACA and three jointly with FACA and ISF. Eleven of these victims were children forcibly recruited or used by the OSP. Among State actors, violations of the right to physical and mental integrity are the most common type of violation, with nine cases affecting 15 victims.

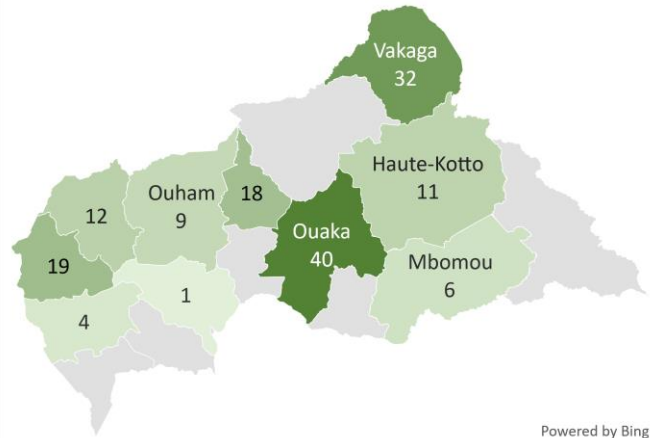


12. The Ouaka Prefecture replaced the Haute-Kotto Prefecture as the region most affected by human rights violations and abuses; the Haute-Kotto Prefecture had seen the highest number of incidents and victims of all regions since November 2021. In February, the HRD recorded five incidents, representing eight violations affecting 39 civilians and a group of collective victims, in the Ouaka Prefecture. Thirty-one victims relate to a single incident of threats to the physical and mental integrity during a UPC attack against a transport vehicle. Similarly, the high number of victims in the Vakaga is mostly due to one FPRC attack on an NGO vehicle, which affected 18 victims. These two incidents aside, Sector West is the most affected region, with 26 incidents representing 28 violations and affecting 45 victims.

Number of incidents per Prefecture



Number of victims per Prefecture

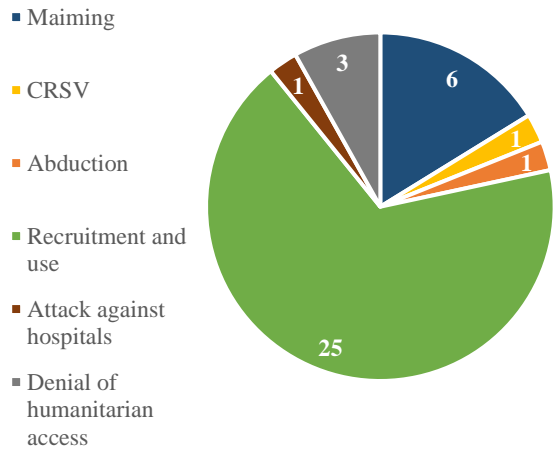


Children in Armed Conflict²

13. During the reporting period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 37 grave child rights violations directly affecting 32 children (25 boys, seven girls) – a noticeable decrease compared to January 2022 during which 89 violations (-58.42 percent) affecting 68 children (-52.94 percent) were recorded. Six of these violations occurred outside the reporting period but were only verified during the period under review.

14. Most of the violations documented were of children being recruited and/or used by armed groups or national forces. Unlike for the rest of human rights violations and abuses, State actors were responsible for a majority of the violations documented in February (18 violations, i.e. 48.64 percent), with the rest being attributed to armed groups (14

Types of grave child rights violations documented



² The Child Protection (CPS) and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSVS) Sections apply a different methodology. They include incidents that are attributed to unidentified armed individuals, as well as some incidents that may have occurred before the month under consideration but were documented during the reporting period. The CPS also includes incidents that affected the civilian population as a whole (not only children), such as denial of humanitarian access.

violations) and unidentified perpetrators including explosive devices (5 violations). Almost half of the documented grave child rights violations took place in the Nana-Grébizi Prefecture.

ACT to Protect! Campaign

In the framework of the global *ACT to protect!* Campaign, MINUSCA conducted trainings and awareness-raising activities which reached, in February **2,267 representatives of local communities, local authorities, SDF and ISF and armed groups** (1,614 men and 653 women). In addition, 238 newly deployed peacekeepers, including 30 women, were also trained on the six grave child rights violations.

15. The HRD continued its efforts to engage with both the national security and defences forces and armed groups to address child protection concerns. It also met, along with other substantive components of the Mission, with the Minister of State on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Minister Advisor to the President on the APPR-RCA to discuss the issue and encourage the government to release all LRA abductees in its custody. In this regard, it shared with the authorities the 2013 *SOP on Handling of Persons suspected of involvement in the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army by the African Union (AU) Regional Task Force*, as CAR is a member of the AU Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA in Central Africa.

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

16. During the period under review, the HRD documented a total of 15 cases of CRSV, affecting 22 victims (13 women, nine girls). Five of these cases, affecting ten victims, were verified. Only two cases, affecting three victims, effectively took place in February 2022.

17. One of the verified cases documented, affecting four victims, was related to successive attacks by anti-Balaka combatants which took place in the Ouham Prefecture in January 2022. During these incidents, which were reported in the previous HRD monthly report, women and children were abducted by armed groups; in February 2022, the HRD was able to verify that, among these, one woman and four girls were raped during their captivity.

18. In addition, the HRD conducted in February 2022 a mission to Boali (Ombella M'Poko), during which 21 CRSV victims were interviewed.³ The incidents were committed during the occupation of the area by CPC combatants between mid-December 2020 and February 2021. The HRD also liaised with humanitarian partners to ensure victims would be referred to the appropriate medical and psychosocial services.

19. The HRD also supported the Mission's other components to implement their mandate on CRSV, including by providing the DDR officers across the country with training and materials, allowing them to raise awareness and improve the understanding of sexual violence among community violence reduction (CVR) programs' beneficiaries and, more broadly, local communities.

³ The findings of this mission were still being analysed and the report drafted at the time of publication of this monthly report. Thus, the statistics in this report do not include the incidents documented during the mission to Boyali.

Human Rights Promotion and Capacity Building

20. The HRD continued to support CAR’s Truth Commission (*Commission Vérité, justice, réconciliation et réparations*, CVJRR), which finalized its work plan and intervention strategy. The internal rules of the CVJRR have been finalized but are waiting to be approved by the Constitutional Court, while a communication strategy is being prepared. In addition, a workshop on transitional justice was organized from 3 to 10 February, with the technical and financial support of the HRD, for the Network of Organizations of African Youth Leaders for the Realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (*Réseau des organisations des jeunes africains leaders des Nations Unies pour l’atteinte des objectifs de développement durable*, ROJALNU). The 60 participants, including 23 women, discussed the role of young people in supporting and disseminating the work of the CVJRR.

Visit of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights situation in CAR

From 11 to 18 February 2022, the HRD supported the visit of the Independent Expert on the human rights situation in CAR. He met with various stakeholders, including Government officials, civil society representatives, human rights organizations and members of the diplomatic community. His visit ended with a press conference during which he insisted on the support to transitional justice institutions, including the CVJRR and the Special Criminal Court (SCC). He also expressed his concern over the ongoing violations and abuses of human rights by all parties to the conflict.

21. CAR’s NHRI, the *Commission nationale des droits de l’homme et des libertés fondamentales* (CNDHLF), continued its campaign to raise awareness about its mandate and visited Sibut (Kemo) from 8 to 12 February.

22. The HRD also trained uniformed personnel based in the field offices of Bria (Haute-Kotto) and Bambari (Ouaka) working on temporary emergency measures and field coordinators on the human rights due diligence policy (HRDDP) and their respective roles in implementing it. Participants were prepared to monitor the conduct of security forces receiving UN support and to report all information and recommendations relevant to the implementation of the HRDDP by the Mission.

23. The HRD also conducted 19 visits to detention centres and prisons to monitor and document the conditions of detention in the Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto, Kemo, Mambéré-Kadéï, Mbomou, Nana-Grébizi, Ombella M’Poko and Ouaka Prefectures.