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United Nations Multidimensional  
Integrated Stabilization Mission in the  
Central African Republic

## Human Rights Division

### Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation

September 2023

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*The Human Rights Division's (HRD) mandate includes assisting the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) to promote and protect human rights and prevent violations and abuses 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 were documented and verified during the month of September 2023. 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 the CAR's authorities and partners.*

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### Security and political context in September 2023

1. Despite efforts to address the security challenges in the CAR, the presence of armed groups in some parts of the country continue to impact on the security and humanitarian situation with implications for the respect for human rights. In some instances, attacks by armed groups and the response by security and defence forces have contributed to population displacement amid concerns over the protection of civilians.
2. In the western part of the country, and more specifically in the Equateur region, the *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R), anti-Balaka and *Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement* (CPC) elements remain active. In the **Nana-Mambéré** Prefecture, there were reports of an increase in armed robberies, extortion and attacks on civilians by both the 3R and the anti-Balaka affiliated to the CPC. On 8 September, anti-Balaka elements reportedly attacked and looted 20 civilians, including at least nine women, and ill-treated one man on the road between Vakap and Yongoro (60 km north from Bouar). In the **Ouham-Pendé** Prefecture, the reported presence of armed men affiliated to CPC near Paoua during the reporting period heightened the potential of clashes with the *Forces armées centrafricaines* (FACA) with increased likelihood of population displacement.
3. In the **Ouham-Fafa Prefecture**, Kaga region, the security situation was marked by attacks on protected personnel<sup>1</sup>, denial of humanitarian relief and armed robberies on the Kabo axis perpetrated by unidentified CPC elements. In addition, transhumance-related incidents were reported throughout the month with concerns over inter-communal clashes. In this regard, following the alleged killing of a 38-year-old man who was a member of a self-defence group, by two armed Fulani men on 2

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<sup>1</sup> This designates religious, medical, humanitarian and peacekeeping staff.

September, a Fulani herder was killed, and another arrested by the self defence group and handed to the FACA.

4. Also, in the Kaga region, in **Nana-Gribizi** Prefecture, violence associated with accusations of witchcraft was reported. About 75% of cases received by the Kaga Bandoro *Tribunal de Grande Instance* are related to accusations of witchcraft. According to reports, on 8 September, a man and woman were buried alive in the village of Kabouzou (38 km from Kaga Bandoro) following accusations of witchcraft. In order to address this pattern, HRD facilitated an awareness raising campaign to reduce the incidence of violence linked to allegations of witchcraft.
5. Regarding the central area of the country, in the Fertit region, and more specifically in the **Bamingui-Bangoran** Prefecture, unidentified armed men perpetrated various attacks in and around Ndélé. For example, on 7 September, 30 unidentified armed men attacked a FACA checkpoint in the village of Djamissinda (21 km north-west from Ndélé) during which they allegedly looted money, livestock, and food items, while setting five houses on fire. Additionally, on 18 September, reports indicate that seven unidentified armed men attacked a mining site located 45 km from Ndélé, killed a 30-year-old worker and looted the belongings of 38 workers who were at the site during the attack. On 20 September, four unidentified armed men ambushed passengers on a road on the Ndélé-Akroussoulbak axis (46km from Ndélé), captured 13 civilians, dragged them into the bush and robbed them of their belongings.
6. In the eastern area of the country, in Haut-Oubangui region, in **Mbomou** Prefecture, the presence of *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) elements continues to be a source of concern for the local population. On 4 September, UPC combatants allegedly pillaged a Fulani pastoral camp close to Bakouma, during which they reportedly stole six cattle and looted money before retreating from the camp. Similarly, on 16 September, UPC elements from Pombolo attacked a camp of Fulani herders and took 13 oxen before being expelled by FACA elements in Bema (110 km from Bangassou).
7. In the **Haut-Mbomou** Prefecture, clashes between the UPC and the *Azande Ani Kpi Gbe* continue to have implications for the protection of civilians and the respect for human rights. The HRD received allegations of summary execution and other types of killings, abduction, ill-treatment, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), and appropriation of property. Attacks and retaliatory attacks continue to increase communal tensions and undermine efforts to promote social cohesion.
8. In the Fertit region, in the **Haute-Kotto** and **Vakaga** Prefectures, the security situation in the northern triangle of Ouadda-Sam Ouandja- Ouanda Djallé remained precarious following the attack on Sam Ouandja on 4 July. In September, MINUSCA established a temporary operating base (TOB) in Ouadda triggering movements of armed elements most likely affiliated to the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC) and *Parti du Rassemblement de la Nation Centrafricaine* (PRNC). On 12 September, the FPRC issued a statement accusing MINUSCA of intimidation and threats on FPRC elements in Ouadda and Sam Ouandja. On 23 September, the MINUSCA Force also deployed a patrol to protect civilians in Sam Ouandja, as gunshots were heard the previous day.
9. On the social front, staff at Bangui town hall observed a 72-hour strike from 26-29 September to demand the payment of their wages, contributions to the national social security fund, and the integration of trainee employees into the civil service by municipal authorities.

## Positive Developments

10. During the reporting month, the authorities of the Central African Republic (CAR) undertook various positive initiatives to enhance the protection of human rights. On 12 September, the FACA and Gendarmerie appointed two human rights focal points who will strengthen the cooperation between their institutions and MINUSCA, among other actors, for the protection of human rights. In Bria, **Haute Kotto** Prefecture, following advocacy by MINUSCA Human Rights Division (HRD), the FACA commander replaced and reprimanded FACA elements who committed human rights violations associated with abuse of power. Meanwhile in **Bangui**, the new Constitution, which is expected to reinforce the protection and promotion of human rights, was published in the *Journal Officiel de la République*. Notably, the Constitution inter alia, modifies the duration of police and gendarmerie custody reducing it from 72 to 48 hours (article 18, para. 4).
11. The CAR Strategic Committee on CRSV presented its first report on the implementation of the 2021-2023 National Action Plan on CRSV. President Touadéra extended the National Action Plan until December 2026 and called upon the Parliament to strengthen the criminalization of sexual violence in times of armed conflict. Similarly, the Bangui Court of Appeal adjudicated 12 cases related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) where an improvement was noted regarding the rights of victims and legal representation of those accused. However, of the 43 cases on trial during the session, civil parties were present only in 10 cases. The absence of some of them was partly attributed to the cost involved in travelling to Bangui for those residing outside the capital.
12. During the month under review, the HRD continued to have access to detention centres and relevant authorities to conduct monitoring visits and advocacy. The HRD positively notes that in the *Maison d'arrêt et de correction* of Berberati, plans are underway to open an infirmary and deploy medical personnel. In addition, projects were initiated to facilitate the reintegration of detainees through activities such as gardening, crafts, carpentry, and livestock management.

## Human Rights Violations and Abuses, and Breaches of International Humanitarian Law

13. Despite some positive steps, human rights challenges remain. During the reporting period, the MINUSCA Human Rights Division (HRD), including the Office of the Senior Women Protection Advisor (OSWPA) and the Child Protection Unit (CPU), documented and verified 164 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), affecting 202 civilian victims (with at least 20 women, nine girls, 14 boys and 24 groups of collective victims). This includes 72 victims who suffered multiple violations. Of the 164 violations documented, 125 occurred in September 2023. The other violations occurred between February to August of this year.
14. The HRD also recorded 48 allegations of human rights violations and abuses affecting at least 68 victims (including 16 women, two boys and five

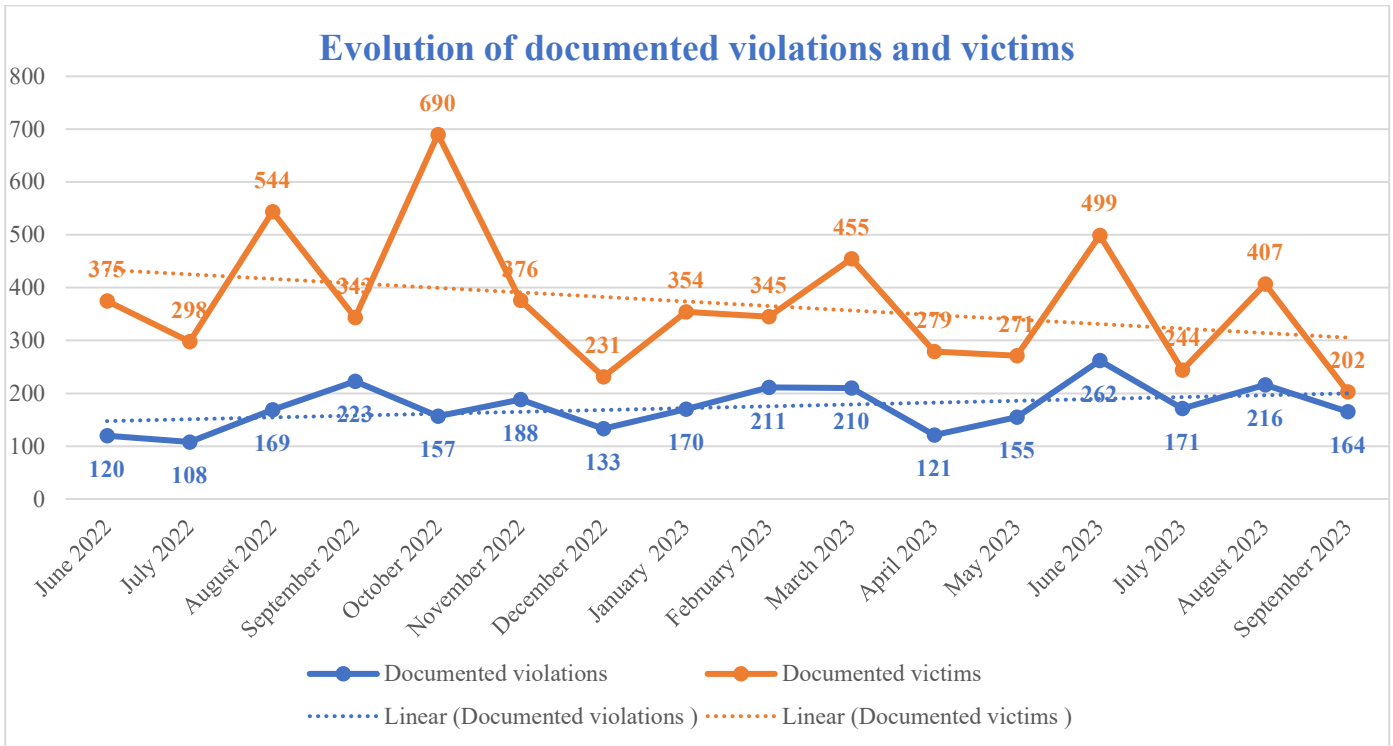
### Main Trends

In total, **164 human rights violations and abuses** as well as breaches of IHL **affecting 202 victims (including 20 women, nine girls, 14 boys and 24 groups of collective victims)** were documented in September 2023. This constitutes a slight **decrease** in the number of violations and a significant **decrease** in the number of victims compared to August 2023.

During the reporting period, State actors were responsible for 52% of all violations and breaches and 57% of the victims.

groups of collective victims), which were still being verified at the end of September and were therefore not included in this report.

15. An analysis of the documented cases indicates that in September, the number of violations decreased by 24% compared to August 2023 (216 violations) while the number of victims decreased by 50% in comparison to August (407 victims).
16. A typology of violations and abuses included arbitrary arrest and/or detention (19%), destruction and appropriation of property (19%), and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (referred to as ill-treatment (10%)). In addition, 11 cases of CRSV affecting 14 victims were documented alongside 10 violations of summary and extrajudicial killings affecting 20 victims.
17. Men were most likely to be victims of arbitrary arrest and/or detention (64 victims), destruction or appropriation of property (53 victims), and ill-treatment (30 victims). Women suffered mostly from rape (nine victims), destruction or appropriation of property (eight victims), ill-treatment (seven victims), and forced nudity (six victims). Girls were mostly victims of rape (five), abduction (two), summary and extrajudicial killings (two), and arbitrary arrest and detention (two), while boys were victims of abduction and deprivation of liberty (seven), recruitment and use of children (three), arbitrary detention (three), and extrajudicial killings (two).

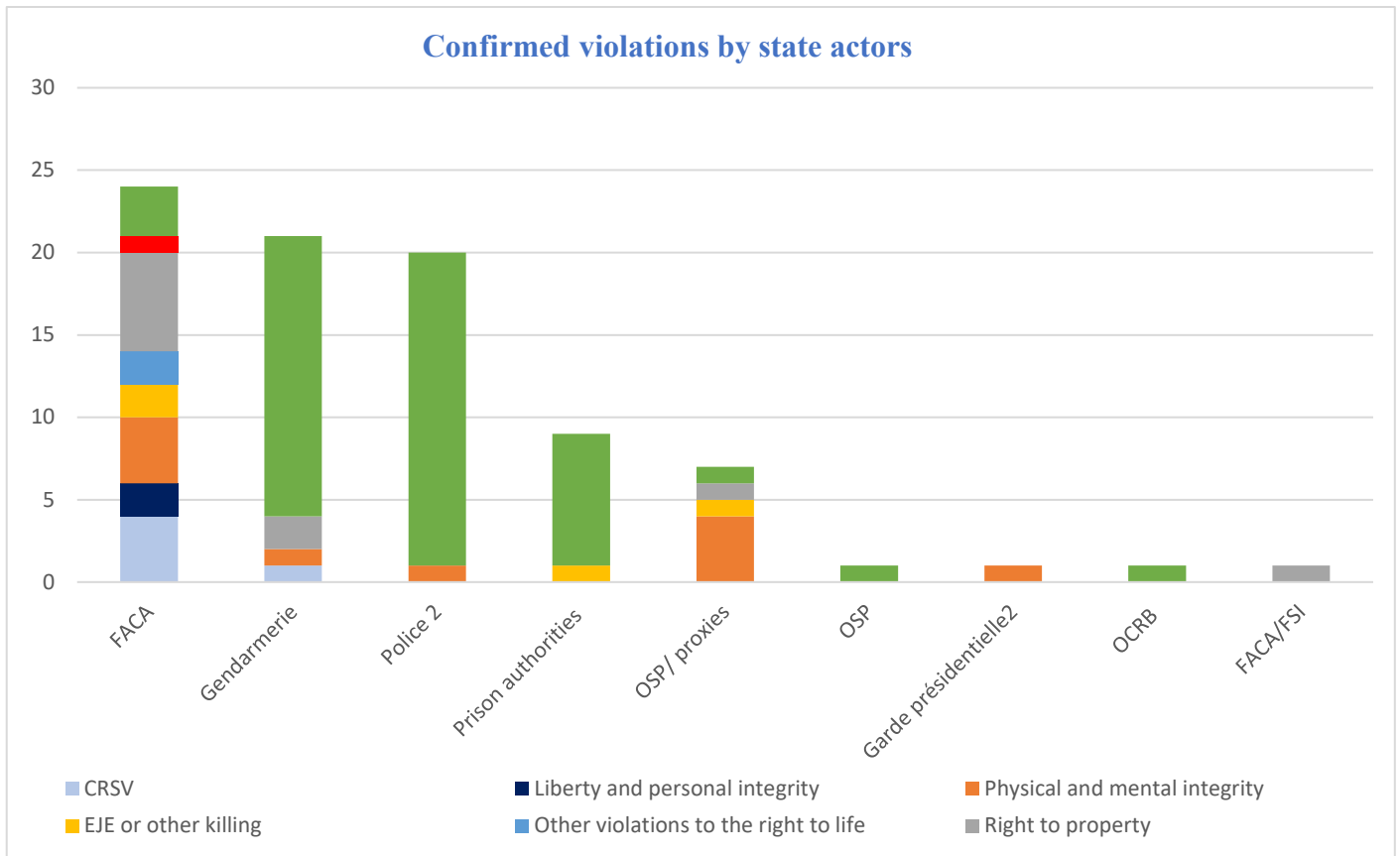


**Perpetrators: State actors, armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA, and others**

18. **For the period under review, State actors committed 85 violations and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 114 victims (including nine women, six girls and four boys), mostly due to arbitrary arrest and/or detention and placing persons in conditions of detention that did not comply with national and international minimum standards for detention.** As was the case in August, state actors were responsible for 85 violations. However, in comparison to August, the number of victims arising from the actions of state actors decreased by 39%. Violations were related to liberty and fair trial including access to justice; arbitrary arrest and/or detention; and conditions of

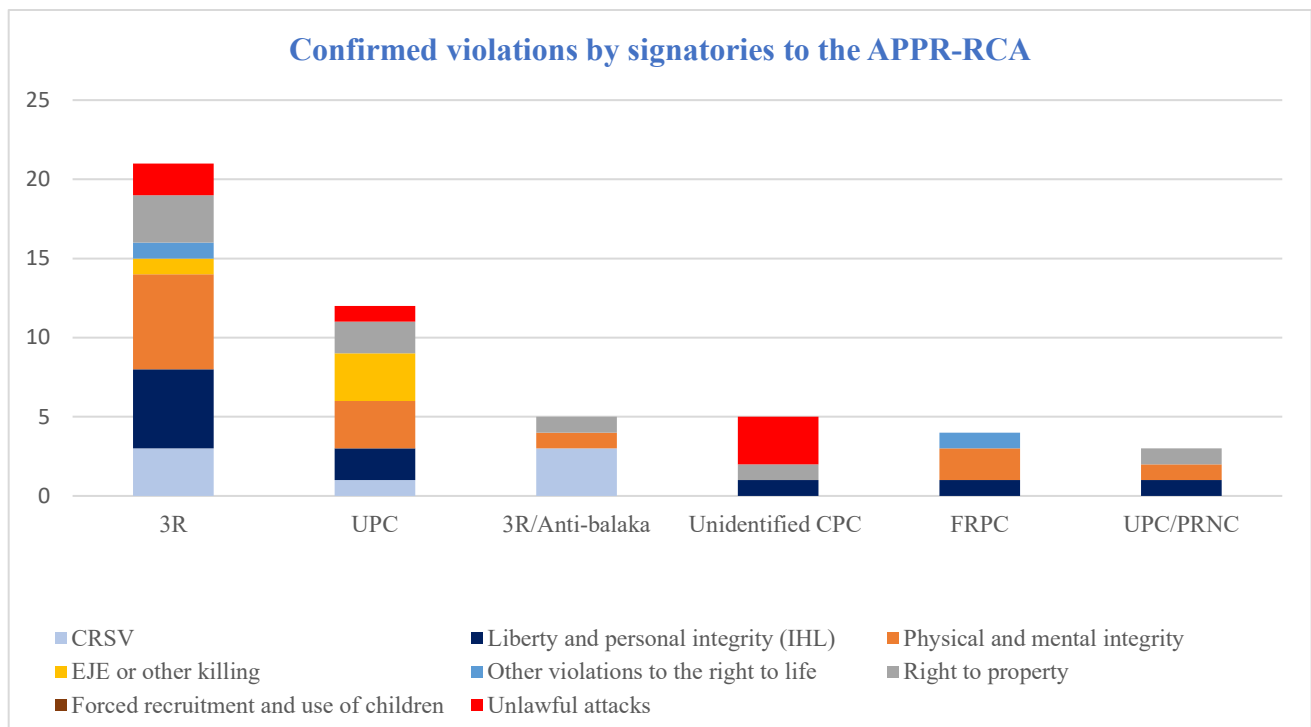
detention that do not meet the minimum standards accounted for 57% of all violations by state actors with 49 violations affecting 94 victims. Additionally, State actors were responsible for 11 violations of the right to physical and mental integrity, including three cases of torture affecting three victims. Most of the violations committed by State actors took place in the **Ouaka (23), Nana-Gribizi (15), and Haute-Kotto (11) Prefectures.**

19. **Among State actors, the FACA (25 violations and 22 victims) and the Gendarmerie (21 violations and 27 victims), followed by the Police (20 violations and 42 victims) accounted for most of the violations and victims.** These violations are mostly due to cases of arbitrary arrest and detention exceeding the legally prescribed limit. The HRD also documented one case of torture by FACA affecting one victim, and two cases of torture by proxies used by other security personnel (OSP) affecting two victims. On 18 September, two FACA elements arbitrarily arrested and tortured a 30-year-old fisherman in Gbari in the Ouham Prefecture. The FACA elements took the man to a FACA checkpoint where they beat him with rifle butts and other blunt objects for three hours and forced him to confess for allegedly stealing a rickshaw. He was eventually released after which he sought medical attention.
20. On 25 August, three FACA threatened to death and violated the right to property of a woman in Bossangoa, Ouham. On the night of 25 August, three FACA soldiers armed with AK-47 rifles entered the home of the victim, threatened her with AK-47 rifles, and forcibly took her phone, 36,000 XAF (approximately 59 USD) and other belongings before leaving the premises. Similarly, concerns continue to be raised over a pattern of extortion by FACA elements at check points in the **Ouham, Lobaye, Ombella M’Poko, and Mambéré-Kadeï Prefectures.** In addition, FACA and OSP and their proxies continued to be implicated in reports of arbitrary arrests, extortion, and ill treatment (**Ouaka Prefecture, Bambari region**). In August, a Fulani man was reportedly arrested, detained by FACA



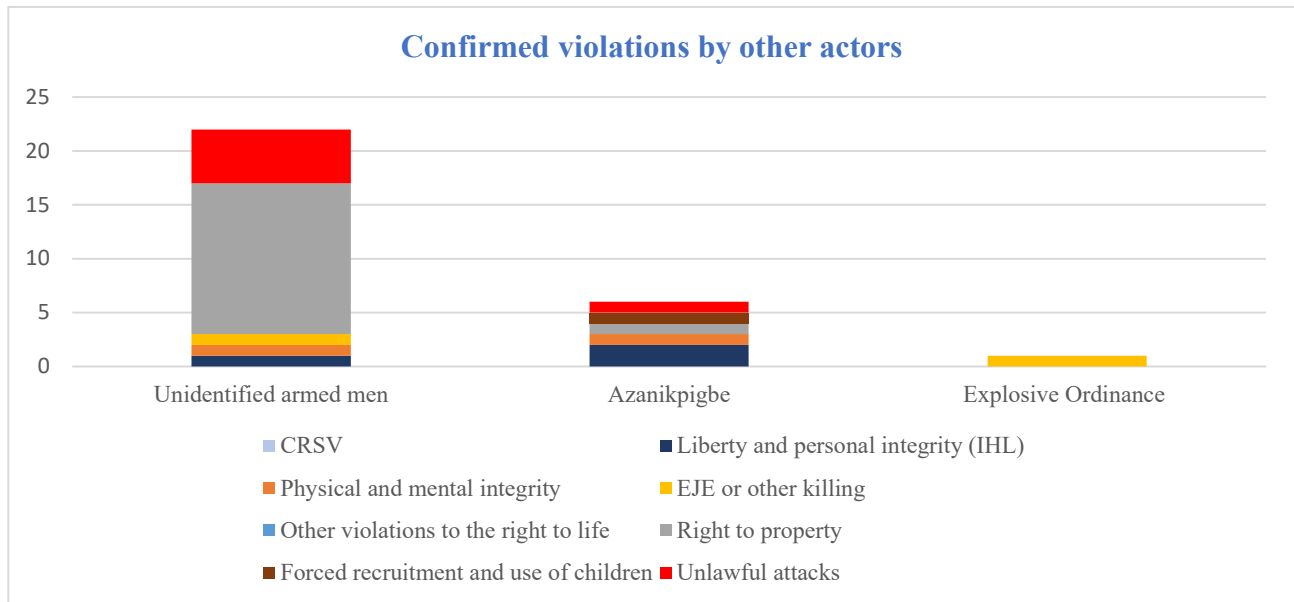
and OSP and later released after the payment of 200,000 XAF (approximately 327 USD) to the OSP. Reports indicate that his arrest was in retaliation against Fulani traders after armed individuals entered the town of Koukourou, located 160 km from Kaga Bandoro, on 10 August.

21. Similarly, from 11 to 24 July, the OSP and their proxies arbitrarily arrested, detained, tortured, and extorted a 33-year-old man in Bambari, **Ouaka**. On 11 July, OSP elements and their proxies arrested and detained him for approximately 10 days following a fight with an ex-UPC element, now used as a proxy by the OSP who attempted to seize his phone. Two OSP elements and five proxies detained him in a container and beat him with a wooden stick for two days. As a result of the ill treatment, he lost consciousness and was taken to the hospital for treatment. Nonetheless, he was again detained at the gendarmerie for two additional days before his release subject to the payment of 500,000 XAF (approximately 812 USD) to the OSP proxies. One of the OSP elements reportedly stated to the victim that he was arrested in retaliation for his behavior.
22. **Armed groups signatories to the *Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Réconciliation en République Centrafricaine (APPR-RCA)* were responsible for 50 human rights abuses and breaches of IHL affecting 63 victims (including 11 women, three girls, and six boys).** This reflects a 33% decrease in abuses compared to August, during which these actors were responsible for 75 abuses. Similarly, the number of victims also decreased by 63% compared to August (173 victims). The most common types of abuses committed by armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA and/or members of the CPC were ill-treatment (nine); destruction and appropriation of property (eight); rape (six); and unlawful attacks (6). The **Ouham-Pendé and Haute-Kotto Prefectures** were the most affected by the activities of the aforementioned armed groups.
23. **Among armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA, most of the abuses documented were attributed to the 3R and the UPC.** The 3R, acting alone, committed 21 abuses affecting 20 victims (including two women, one girl, and four boys). The main abuses included ill-treatment, abduction, and rape. During the month under review, the HRD received six allegations of rape by the 3R (three of which are confirmed and three of which are still under investigation). For example, on 2



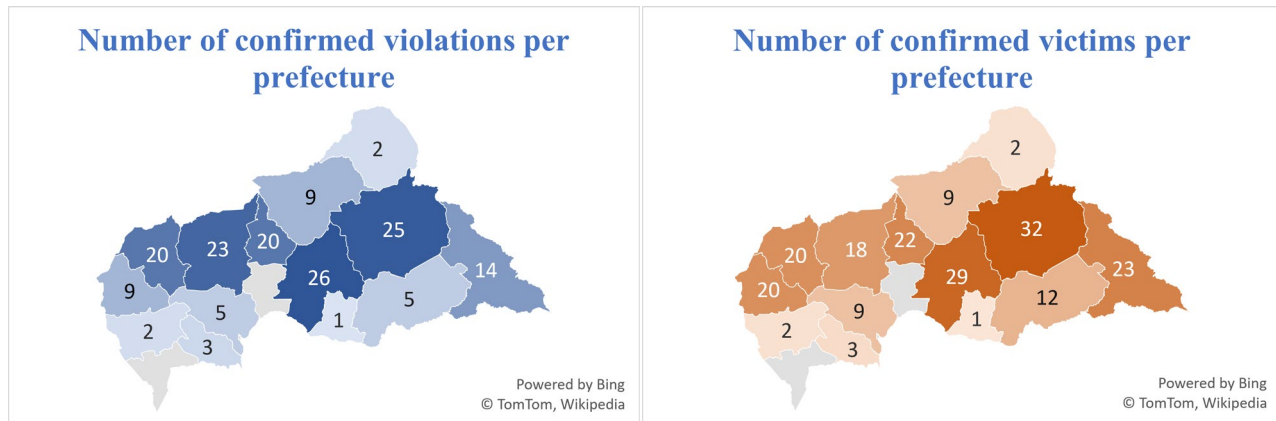
September, at around 7:00pm, heavily armed 3R elements stormed the village of Bilakare, **Ouham-Pendé** and abducted and beat six men. The 3R elements then forced the six men to collectively rape a woman who was previously abducted and forced to work for the 3R as a cook. The victim was later released and received medical treatment. Furthermore, in **Ouham-Pendé**, on 17 September, 3R elements held hostage 50 men<sup>2</sup> in the village of Mbere and requested the villagers and their families to pay 2,000,000 XAF (around 3,325 USD) as ransom for their release with threats to kill them. To secure their release, the villagers paid the sum of 1,300,000 XAF (around 2,160 USD) to the 3R elements. There are growing concerns over the frequency of such acts by the 3R in the Bocaranga and Ngaoundaye areas.

24. Additionally, the UPC, acting alone, was responsible for 12 human rights abuses, affecting 21 victims. The abuses infringed on the right to physical and mental integrity (three); right to life (three); the right to liberty and personal integrity (abduction and deprivation of liberty) (two) and the right to property (two). On the morning of 26 August, ten UPC elements entered the Yanga mining village in **Haute-Kotto** and forced the village chief to collect 4,000 XAF (approximately 6 USD) from each household. Unsatisfied with the total amount collected, they returned later in the day and burned several houses on their way back to Yanga village. Once in Yanga, UPC elements raped a woman in front of her three children (ages ranging from one to six years old) and shot her husband. The woman later fled the village with her children and was able to receive medical care.
25. **Other actors, including armed groups non-signatories to the APPR-RCA and self-defence groups, were responsible for 36 abuses affecting 38 victims.** Most abuses committed by these actors were related to destruction or appropriation of property (16) and unlawful attacks on civilians or protected persons (6). Unidentified armed men were responsible for the majority of abuses related to the destruction or appropriation of property (15) and unlawful attacks (5). Further, the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe (also called Azanikpigbe) self-defence group in **Haut-Mbomou** were responsible for six abuses, including recruitment and use of children (three victims), abduction (three victims), and ill-treatment (one victims). Meanwhile, unexploded improvised explosive devices continue to be a threat to the civilian population. On 4 July, an explosive ordnance detonated in Bandaffi village (2km from Zemio) in **Haut-Mbomou** resulting in the death of a boy.



<sup>2</sup> Documented as a group of collective victims.

## Geographical Analysis



26. More than 38% of the violations and abuses documented in September occurred in the West of the country, which was the most affected with 62 violations and abuses affecting 72 victims. The number of victims is largely due to destruction and appropriation of property (29); ill-treatment (23); and cases of arbitrary arrest and detention (19). Alongside high numbers of arbitrary arrest and detention, the conditions of detention in various facilities continues to be an issue. Of note was the Berberati Prison and Correctional Center where the HRD documented overcrowding, lack of basic hygiene materials, and insufficient food rations. In the said facility, the HRD documented the deaths of two detainees, a 70-year-old male detainee who was hospitalized for three months due to a hernia and a 45-year-old detainee who succumbed to severe malnutrition-induced anaemia.
27. In the Centre region, 56 violations and abuses affecting 61 victims were documented (34% of the total number of violations). Most violations and abuses were documented in the **Ouaka Prefecture** (26 violations and 29 victims). Most victims were subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention (34) and destruction or appropriation of property (15). Unidentified armed men were responsible for five abuses of the right to property affecting eight victims while state actors were responsible for five violations affecting seven victims. Of the state actors, FACA were responsible for most of the violations of the right to property (three). On 3 September, at around 7 pm in Bambari, **Ouaka Prefecture**, an armed FACA soldier shot an 18-year-old man in the neck as he was being chased by the population after he extorted several individuals of their property including telephones and money.
28. In Eastern region, 46 violations and abuses affecting 69 victims were documented (28% of the total number of violations). The most common types of violations and abuses affecting the most victims were arbitrary arrest and/or detention (22); extrajudicial and summary executions and other types of killings (12); ill-treatment (nine); and liberty and personal integrity (including deprivation of liberty and abductions) (10). The HRD also documented two attacks against protected personnel, namely humanitarian aid workers. The HRD documented robbery incidents against a humanitarian organization by UPC and Azande Ani Kpi Gbe elements, on two separate occasions, while on humanitarian missions in Obo, Haut-Mbomou Prefecture. Similarly, on 13 September, a 57-year-old aid worker was ill-treated and extorted by PRNC and UPC armed elements while two other aid workers were deprived of their property including motorcycles and fuel by the same perpetrators. The PRNC/UPC elements arrested the 57-year-old man, took him to their base on the Ouadda-Ouanda-Djallé axis, questioned him on allegations of spying for MINUSCA and OSP, and dispossessed him of 200,000 XAF (approximately 326 USD) before releasing him. Meanwhile, the two other aid workers were forced to pay 100,000 XAF (approximately 163 USD) to secure the release of their motorcycles and fuel.

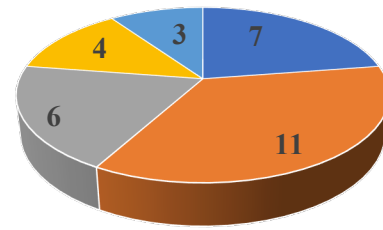


## Children in Armed Conflict

29. During the reporting period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) documented 31 grave child rights violations affecting 17 children (nine boys/eight girls). There was an 84% decrease in grave violations and an 86% decrease in victims directly affected compared to the previous reporting period during which 190 violations affecting 125 children were documented due to the high number of late verified cases of recruitment and use. The decrease in grave

violations could be explained by increased movement of armed groups, particularly in Haut-Mbomou, Ouham and Vakaga Prefectures, which is negatively affecting the CTFMR’s ability to monitor and report on grave child rights violations. Moreover, the increased use of explosive ordnance and ongoing military operations by Governmental forces and OSP creates additional access challenges. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the violations (20) occurred outside the reporting period but were only verified during the period under review.

**Type of grave child rights violations**



- Denial of humanitarian access
- Abduction
- Rape and other forms of sexual violence
- Killing
- Recruitment and use

30. Armed groups were responsible for 74% of the violations (23), governmental forces 19% (six) and unidentified armed individuals for 7% (two). Seven children (three boys/four girls) were victims of two violations: abduction and recruitment and use (three), abduction and rape (four).

31. Violations documented included: recruitment and use (three), killing (four), rape and other forms of sexual violence (six), abduction (11) and denial of humanitarian access (seven). Armed groups committed (23) violations: CPC factions (14): 3R (six), UPC (four), unidentified CPC (two), anti-Balaka (one) and FPRC (one); ‘Azande Ani Kpi Gbe’ militia (nine). FACA committed (six) violations and unidentified armed individuals (two), including (one) by explosive ordnance. Haut-Mbomou was the most affected Prefecture with (12) violations, followed by Nana-Gribizi (five), Lim-Pende and Ouaka with (four) each, Lobaye (two), and Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Ouham and Ouham-Fafa with (one) each.

32. The **Haut Mbomou** Prefecture was the most affected Prefecture with 12 violations, followed by Nana-Gribizi (five), Lim-Pende and Ouaka (four each), Lobaye (two), and Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Ouham and Ouham-Fafa (one each).

33. During the period under review, CPU briefed the Ministry of National Education on the implementation of MINUSCA’s project to support the Government in rehabilitating and

### Act to Protect Campaign

Through the “**Act to Protect**” campaign, **400 peacekeepers** (320 men and 80 women) were trained on the protection of children during armed conflict including on monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children. Similar trainings and awareness sessions were conducted for **913 community members and leaders as well as other stakeholders including NGOs, members of local peace committee, religious leaders, national defense, and security forces** (FACA and FSI), **judiciary** and **INGOS** (551 men and 362 women).

operationalizing vocational training centres. The CPU is supporting this project as part of a broader strategy to prevent children and youth from joining armed groups and criminal gangs by providing alternative, practical opportunities, especially considering the high drop-out rate from secondary school. A pilot centre is being operationalized in Bambari, Ouaka Prefecture.

## Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

34. In September, the HRD documented a total of 12 cases of CRSV, affecting 14 victims (nine women and five girls). State actors were responsible for five cases of CRSV affecting four girls while armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for seven cases of CRSV affecting nine women and a girl. During the reporting period, the main perpetrators of CRSV were the FACA (four violations affecting three victims, all girls), 3R (three violations affecting three victims), and the 3R acting jointly with anti-Balaka elements (three violations affecting six victims). The HRD is still investigating five allegations of CRSV affecting five women victims. Given that these cases are still being verified, they are not included in this report.
35. During the month under review, the HRD documented a high number of CRSV cases in the Ouham-Pendé and Nana-Mambéré Prefectures (seven cases out of a total of 12 cases and 10 victims out of the total of 14). The 3R, alone or jointly with anti-Balaka, operating on the main axis between both prefectures were cited as the main perpetrators. Their modus operandi included accosting women and/or girls on their way to the market, to fetch water or work on their farms and rape them or to stop them while travelling on the main axis forcing them to undress and remain naked for hours while conducting intrusive searches including touching their genitals and raping them. Notably, 3R elements committed CRSV on the main axis of the Prefecture, areas where neither State agents nor MINUSCA forces are present. This lack of access poses a double risk for the civilian population, as it impacts HRD’s ability to monitor and investigate CRSV cases but also directly impacts survivors who may be subjected to CRSV again as they travel long distances to receive medical support or testify in Paoua. In addition, for survivors in these instances, travelling long distances can jeopardize their anonymity and can lead to ostracism and/or stigmatization.
36. Furthermore, in the **Haut Mbomou** Prefecture, most victims of CRSV were internally displaced women and girls or refugees from DRC or South Sudan living in camps, making them particularly vulnerable.
37. During the period under review, the Women Protection Section provided video testimony of a Central African CRSV victim’s perspective on access to justice in CAR during a side event at the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78).

## Human Rights Promotion and Capacity-Building

38. During the month under review, the HRD organised 153 activities, in some instances jointly with partners, on human rights and international humanitarian law in 12 Prefectures,<sup>3</sup> benefitting 2,786 individuals (of whom 893 were women), including representatives of civil society organizations (CSO), non-governmental organisations (NGO), community and religious leaders, local human rights fora, State actors and FACA/FSI.
39. These activities included 15 awareness campaigns, which targeted 1,413 beneficiaries (including 582 women), including internally displaced persons (IDPs), CSOs, community leaders, students, and the

<sup>3</sup> The prefectures are as follows: Bamingui-Bangoran; Haute-Kotto; Haut-Mbomou; Mambéré-Kadéï; Mbomou; Nana-Grébizi; Nana-Mambéré; Ombella M’Poko; Ouaka; Ouham-Pendé; and Vakaga.

civilian population. In addition, 10 capacity-building workshops were organised benefitting 369 individuals (including 203 women) from CSOs, local human rights fora, community leaders, State actors and the local population. The HRD also conducted two trainings for 47 FACA and FSI. The activities organized by the HRD were aimed at strengthening knowledge on human rights law and international humanitarian law (IHL), as well as on specific topics such as CRSV and child protection as a means of enhancing the protective environment in the CAR.

40. In September, the HRD conducted 41 monitoring visits of detention centres in 9 Prefectures.<sup>4</sup> The HRD was granted access to the detention centres and was able to engage the relevant authorities on their findings. As mentioned above, the conditions of detention in most of the centres were not compliant with national and international standards with poor hygiene conditions, lack of food and overcrowding often noted. For instance, in the Ngaragba prison in Bangui, a 45-year-old man died due to acute malnutrition on 3 September while 28 additional detainees continue to suffer from malnutrition in the facility. In the *Maison d'arrêt* of Bambari, at least 36 detainees contracted a contagious disease similar to scabies. Meanwhile, concerns continued to be raised over the use of detainees by OSP to perform tasks out of the detention centres for long hours with little food and rest that could amount to forced labour. In the Haute-Kotto Prefecture, six documented detainees were taken from the Bria Police Station to the OSP base to perform different tasks.
41. The HRD held awareness raising sessions on human rights and international humanitarian law for FACA elements. On 7 September, in Mbrès, Nana Gribizi, the HRD, in collaboration with the Child Protection and Civil Affairs Sections, organized a session for 18 FACA (all men) including the Commander of the FACA detachment in Mbrès. Topics covered included the basic norms and principles of human rights, gender-based violence, including sexual violence, freedom of movement, and compliance with human rights norms during military actions. Participants were encouraged to respect human rights and to collaborate with the HRD for monitoring and investigations into allegations of human rights violations involving the FACA. The Commander of the FACA detachment expressed appreciation for the initiative and recommended additional sessions.

## Human Rights Due Diligence

42. In September, the HRD, in the context of implementing the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP), conducted 33 risk assessments for MINUSCA's support to the national defence and security forces (FACA, ISF and other law enforcement officers). The HRDDP Secretariat conducted human rights background checks for a total of 186 beneficiaries including 116 ISF (69 Police officers and 47 Gendarmes), 61 FACA, five prison officers, two staff from the Ministry of Justice, one member of parliament and one prefect. Beneficiaries subjected to these risk assessments were provided financial, logistical, operational, and technical support including air transportation and trainings. All the risk assessments were evaluated to be low.
43. These verifications allowed MINUSCA's UNMAS and UNPOL components to organize six training sessions for the internal defence and security forces (IDSF). These trainings covered explosive ordnance disposal (EOD); fight against document fraud; intelligence data processing and use of information during elections; protection of children; judicial policing; and fight against corruption and discipline for the ISF. These trainings have increased the awareness of officers stationed both in Birao and Bangui.

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<sup>4</sup> The prefectures are as follows: Bamingui-Bangoran; Haute-Kotto; Haut-Mbomou; Mbomou; Nana-Grébizi; Nana-Mambéré; Ombella M'Poko; Ouaka; and Ouham.

44. During the period under review, the HRDDP Secretariat supported the national vetting process by conducting screenings for a total of **1,841** ISF candidates (953 Police officers and 888 Gendarmes) to be newly recruited into the national Gendarmerie and Police. After verification of the names of these 1,841 candidates in various MINUSCA databases, at least 29 of these candidates were flagged to have allegedly been involved in human rights abuses and/or criminal offenses. It was then recommended that further verification be conducted by the national authority on cases that were flagged.