

During the month of July, MINUSCA recorded 171 new incidents of violations and abuses of international human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 292 victims including 97 men, 33 women, 38 boys, 15 girls and 95 unknown adults and 14 collective victims. These figures represent a 29.2 percent decrease in the total number of incidents and a 15.4 percent decrease in the total number of victims compared to the previous month, which documented 221 incidents and 337 victims. The total number of victims comprise 131 casualties including 94 killed (38 men, six women, three boys and 47 unknown) and 37 injured (five men, two women, two boys, one girl and 27 unknown). HRD has also noted that continuous fighting among rival armed groups, mainly in Nana Grébizi, Mbomou, Ouaka and Haute-Kotto prefectures resulted in a deterioration of the security and human rights situation of civilians, resulting in increased displacement of the civilian population. On a brighter note, on 25 July, President Touadéra signed a decree extending the mandate of the Steering Committee of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR) for a three-month period. On 27 July in Bangui, the Executive Board of the Steering Committee held deliberations on the Concept Note on the national consultations and budget proposals.

MONTHLY REPORT- JULY 2018

MINUSCA HUMAN RIGHTS DIVISION

Human Rights Division

Monthly Report

July 2018

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I. Executive Summary

During the month of July, the security and human rights situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) continued to be cause for concern, particularly in Mbrès (Nana Grébizi), Bambari and surrounding areas (Ouaka) and Pombolo (Mbomou) where frequent attacks and violence against civilians by armed groups and armed men affiliated with them resulted in several incidents of killings, cruel and inhuman treatment, injuries and maiming, conflict related sexual violence, arbitrary deprivation of liberty related to the armed conflict as well as cases of attacks on protected objects, humanitarian workers and MINUSCA peacekeepers.

The hotspots for the month of July were the prefectures of Nana-Grébizi, Mbomou, Haute-Kotto Mambéré Kadéi, Ouham and Haut Mbomou. Fighting between rival armed groups such as the UPC and anti-Balaka in Mbomou and Ouaka prefectures, the FPRC/MPC and anti-Balaka in Nana-Grébizi prefecture as well as attacks on the civilian population by the SIRIRI armed group in Noufou, Mambéré Kadéi prefecture, contributed to the continuous deterioration of the security situation in these areas leading to displacement of the civilians and increased need for humanitarian assistance.

MINUSCA Human Rights Division (HRD) recorded 171 new incidents of violations/abuses of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 292 victims, including 97 men, 33 women, 38 boys, 15 girls, 95 unidentified victims and 14 collective victims. These figures represent a 29.2 percent decrease in the number of incidents and a 15.4 percent decrease in the number of victims compared to the previous reporting period during which HRD documented 221 incidents of violations/abuses affecting 337 victims. Armed groups were the perpetrators all 171 incidents.

The total number of victims comprise 131 casualties including 94 killed (38 men, six women, three boys and 47 unknown) and 37 injured (five men, two women, two boys, one girl and 27 unknown).

The most recurrent violations recorded during the month of July were killings, death threats, cruel and inhuman treatment, conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary deprivation of liberty related to the armed conflict, abductions, appropriation, destruction/pillaging of property, recruitment and use of children in armed groups, attacks on peacekeepers and humanitarian workers including their equipment and denial of humanitarian access.

The reporting period recorded developments in the area of Transitional Justice. On 15 July, President Touadéra signed a decree extending the mandate of the Steering Committee of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR) for three months. On 27 July, the Executive Board of the Steering held deliberations on the Concept Note on the national consultations and budget proposals.

HRD continued its advocacy activities aimed at strengthening national capacities and providing a protective environment, mainly through the holding of and/or participation in seminars/awareness-raising or sensitization sessions on human rights, international humanitarian law, Transitional Justice and Traditional Justice mechanisms with civil society representatives, local authorities, community leaders and members of the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and Defense Forces (IDF). HRD also completed five Risk Assessments as part of its HRDDP process.

II. Major developments affecting the human rights situation

1. During the month of July, the security and human rights situation continued to be precarious, particularly in the prefectures of Mbomou, Haut-Mbomou, Nana Grébizi, Mambéré Kadéi, Ouaka and Haute-Kotto, Rivalry among different armed groups for the control of territory and targeted attacks against certain sections of the civilian population continued to adversely impact on the protection of civilians.
2. Attacks by anti-Balaka factions were recorded in different parts of the country. On 17 July, a group of anti-Balaka attacked the village of Pombolo, (123 km W of Bangassou, Mbomou prefecture) causing the death of two civilians, injury to 27 others and the wounding of three MINUSCA peacekeepers. This attack followed a similar attack by the anti-Balaka on Pombolo on 18 and 20 October 2017 during which 41 men, four women, one boy and one girl were

killed and about 55 people were injured. On 13 July, anti-Balaka elements irrupted into a village located 11 km from the locality of Seko, sub-prefecture of Ippy (Ouaka) firing several shots and causing panic among the local population. According to a reliable source, there were no casualties among the civilian population.

3. Frequent clashes between rival armed groups were among the main causes of the number of incidents and victims recorded during the reporting period. In Mbrès, (Nana Grébizi), fighting between anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka/MPC which began in June continued during the month of July, resulting in massive displacement of the local population. On 10 July, ex-Seleka FPRC/MPC elements from Mbrès clashed with a group of anti-Balaka in the village of Lakouténé (7 km from Mbrès) on the Mbrès-Bakala axis resulting in the displacement of at least 400 persons from the villages located on the Mbrès-Ndomété axis as well as the village of Zaire towards Kaga-Bandoro.
4. The presence of armed groups in Bambari (Ouaka) and the surrounding areas is a major cause of insecurity for the civilian population. The residents of Lapago, Gama, Ubanda, Kidjigra 1 and 2 neighborhoods have constantly been subjected to ill-treatment by anti-Balaka elements. Similar treatment was inflicted on the civilian population of the Adji, Bornou and Elevage neighborhoods. Freedom of movement of the population remains restricted from PK 0 to CTRO. On this axis, the local residents are trapped by armed men who rob them and do not hesitate to kill them. For example, on 5 July, a 27-year-old Christian taxi moto driver, resident of the Oubanda 2 District was shot dead in front of the Bambari central market by an unidentified group. The body of the victim was recovered by the gendarmerie and given to the parents for burial. The upsurge in crime is due to the prevailing impunity caused by the absence of a functional judiciary. In addition, two illegal detention centers held by anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka UPC armed groups respectively in Adji and Kidjigra neighborhoods in Bambari were reported to the HRD.
5. The mounting tension and violence that characterized the security and human rights situation in the town of Bambari in the month of May extended to other areas of Ouaka prefecture during the month of July. The reported presence of Ali Darassa, *leader of Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) and 1,000 elements in the sub-prefecture of Ippy is cause for concern and could lead to eventual clashes with the anti-Balaka. HRD has learned from reliable sources that these men are based in the village of Woya, 22 km from Ippy, on the Ippy-Ndassima axis. They are accused of subjecting the local population to forced labour in the gold mines located in the area. According to the same sources, on 11 July, the UPC elements killed the chief of Woya village, who owned a mining site, after accusing him of being affiliated to the anti-Balaka.
6. In Mambéré Kadéï prefecture, the activities of the armed group SIRIRI resulted in at least 11 incidents of killing of civilians, abduction of others and the consequent displacement of the local population.
7. In Bria, Haute-Kotto, MINUSCA, humanitarian workers and local authorities raised serious concerns about the severely deteriorated security situation at the PK3 IDP camp where the anti-Balaka are present. The camp cleanup operation supported by UNPOL had resulted in the establishment of a stable security situation. However, several credible sources evoked the presence of anti-Balaka elements on the site armed with AK-47s rifles over the past few weeks.
8. The frequent raids by presumed LRA elements on villages located on the Obo-Mboki axis (Haut Mbomou) constitute a major challenge to the protection of civilians. During raids, these elements generally pillage the belongings of the villagers and then abduct some villagers to be used as porters of the looted stuff. In some cases, children are abducted to be recruited into their group.

III. Human rights violations related to the conflict and trends constituting threats to the protection of civilians

9. As demonstrated in the annex of this report, HRD in July documented **171** new incidents¹ of violations and abuses of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting **292** victims

¹ Figures mentioned in the report do not reflect the complete overview of the human rights violations in CAR. The figures relate to cases documented by the HRD, though it may be possible that these figures include human rights violations committed during previous months but brought to the attention of the HRD during the month of July 2018. Statistics regarding the number of violations reported may increase or decrease over a given period due to numerous factors outside the control and/or knowledge of the HRD and must therefore be used with caution.

including 97 men, 33 women, 53 children (38 boys and 15 girls), 95 unidentified victims and 14 collective victims. There was a **29.2** percent decrease in the number of incidents and a **15.4** percent decrease in the number of victims compared to the previous month which recorded 221 incidents affecting 337 victims. Despite the decrease in the number of incidents and victims, the human rights situation continued to be precarious as a result of the continued fighting among rival armed groups as well as attacks against the civilian population by the different armed groups, particularly in Pombolo (Mbomou), Mbrès (Nana Grébizi), Bria (Haute-Kotto) and Noufou (Mambéré Kadéi).

10. The most recurrent² human rights violations and abuses committed during the reporting period were: (a) violations of the right to life with **39 incidents (31 incidents of killings and eight incidents of death threats)** affecting **103** victims, 94 of whom were victims of killings; (b) physical and mental integrity with **25 incidents** causing **32** victims; (c) conflict related sexual violence with **31 rape incidents affecting eight women, 13 girls and 10 unknown, two attempted rape incidents affecting two women, two forced marriage incidents** affecting one woman and one girl; . The reporting period also saw some breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL). HRD recorded: (f) **eight incidents** of abductions affecting **18** victims; (g) **three incidents** of deprivation of liberty related to the conflict affecting **four** victims-; (h) the recruitment and use of children by the armed groups, **24 incidents** affecting **21 boys and three girls**; (i) destruction or pillaging/extortion of property, **eight incidents** affecting **five men and four** groups of unknown victims; and (j) **11 incidents** of unlawful attacks and destruction and illegal occupation of civilian houses, attack of medical facility, **two** churches, humanitarian organizations affecting **three** peacekeepers and another **10** groups of collective victims.
11. As was observed in previous reporting periods, during the month of July, the continuous rivalry and clashes among armed groups resulted in several breaches of international humanitarian law, mainly targeted attacks against protected persons and objects (civilians and humanitarian workers and their equipment, UN peacekeepers). There were 54 documented violations of international humanitarian law (31.6% of the overall incidents), all attributed to the armed groups and affecting **68** victims including 24 men, two women, 25 boys, three girls, and an additional 14 attacks during which an unknown number of persons (groups of collective victims) were affected.

A. Human Rights Abuses by the armed groups

12. Armed groups accounted for **171 incidents**, which represent 100% of the total number of incidents and **292 victims** that symbolize 100% of the total number of victims – 97 men, 33 women, 38 boys, 15 girls, 95 unknown adults and minors, and 14 involved attacks on an unknown number of persons (collective victims). During the reporting period, the total number of incidents and victims increased by 11.1 percent and 12 percent respectively compared to the previous month (152 incidents and 257 victims in June).

i. Abuses by UPC, FPRC/MPC coalition, FPRC, MPC, PK5 armed groups and armed Fulani)

13. The MPC (24 incidents), UPC (20 incidents), FPRC (11 incidents), FPRC/MPC Coalition (8 incidents), armed Fulani (four incidents), and PK5 armed groups (four incidents) were the main perpetrators of the human rights abuses documented in July³. These different groups committed a total of **67** abuses affecting **128** victims, with the MPC (76 victims) and UPC (24 victims) responsible for the highest number of incidents and victims. HRD recorded a 13.4 percent increase in the total number of incidents and a 28.9 percent increase in the total number of victims compared to the previous month which recorded 58 incidents and 91 victims.
14. In July, these groups accounted for **39.2 percent** of the total number of incidents and **43.8 percent** of the total number of victims. They perpetrated (i) **20** incidents of killings and death threats [MPC (6), UPC (6), FPRC (2), FPRC/MPC (1) and armed Fulani (1)], affecting **62** victims (**11 men, three women, three boys, and 45** unknown individuals); (ii) **18** incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity [MPC (6), UPC (6), FPRC (2), PK5 armed groups

³ Other armed groups who committed human rights abuses included the MNL (nine abuses with 15 victims); LRA (nine abuses with 11 victims); RJ (four abuses affecting four victims); SIRIRI (eight abuses affecting 25 victims) and other armed groups (three abuses with 14 victims). These armed groups represented 13.3 percent (33 incidents) of the total number of incidents and 18.5 percent of the total number of victims (69 victims).

(2), FPRC/MPC Coalition (1) and ex-Séléka and armed Fulani (1)] affecting **32** victims (**12** men, **three** women, **five** boys, **one** girl and **11** unknown individuals); **(iii)** **15** conflict related sexual violence incidents (all rape incidents) [UPC (4), FPRC (4), FPRC/MPC Coalition (4), ex-Séléka and armed Fulani (2) and MPC (1)], affecting **six** women, **four** girls, and **four** unknown adult ; **(iv)** **three** incidents of arbitrary deprivation of liberty related to conflict [UPC (3)], affecting **four** men; **(v)** **Nine** incidents of unlawful attacks on a health centre, humanitarian personnel and/or their equipment as well as the illegal occupation of two religious facilities and civilian houses by the MPC (7), FPRC/MPC (1), and UPC (1) affecting **nine** groups of unknown individuals (collective victims); **(vi)** **four** incidents where the FPRC (2) and PK5 criminal gangs (2) recruited **four** boys into their armed groups; and **(vii)** **two** incidents of pillaging of property by the FPRC and FPRC/MPC coalition on **two** groups of unknown individuals (collective victims). Of the 67 abuses, 62 of them, namely 92.5 percent, occurred in – Nana-Grébizi (38), Haute-Kotto (13), and Ouaka (11) prefectures which have been identified as most of the hotspots in the month of July.

ii. Abuses by the anti-Balaka

15. The anti-Balaka accounted for **62** abuses affecting **94** victims. This represents **36.3** percent of the total number of incidents and **32.2** percent of the total number of victims recorded during the month of July. These figures represent a **30.7** percent increase in the number of incidents compared to the previous month (43 abuses in June) as well as a **35.1** percent increase in the number of victims (61 victims in June). The most documented abuses by the anti-Balaka were violations of the right to life with **seven** incidents involving the killing of **five** men, **three** women and **two** unknown individuals and **six** incidents involving death threats against **four** men and **five** women. There were also 14 incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity, namely subjecting **nine** men, **three** women, and **27** unknown individuals to cruel and inhuman treatment, maiming and injuries, and to threats to physical and mental integrity.
16. Other abuses committed by the anti-Balaka included: **(i)** **four** incidents of unlawful attacks on humanitarian and MINUSCA peacekeepers and/or their equipment as well as extortion and pillaging of **five** men and a group of unknown number of victims. **(ii)** **one** incident involving the abduction of **one** man; **(iii)** **eight** incidents involving the rape of **two** girls and six unknown individuals; **(iv)** **20** incidents where anti-Balaka recruited **17** boys and **three** girls. Of the 62 abuses committed by the anti-Balaka, 50 of them or 80.7 percent occurred in the main hotspots identified during the month in review, particularly Haute-Kotto (19), Nana-Grébizi (18) and Ouham (13) prefectures.

B. Human Rights violations attributable to State agents

17. HRD did not document any human rights violation related to the conflict perpetrated by State agents.

C. Observations on trends and patterns

18. As has been the case in previous months, clashes between rival groups (UPC and anti-Balaka, MPC and anti-Balaka, 3R and MNLC) over the control of territory have continued to impact negatively on the protection of civilians and on the security and human rights situation in several parts of CAR. Hundreds of civilians continue to be targeted and/or are collateral damage of the incessant rivalry and human rights abuses that the armed groups commit with full impunity.
19. Another continuing trend observed during the reporting period concerns the frequent attacks that armed groups, mainly the anti-Balaka and the UPC have carried out against the humanitarian community or UN peacekeepers. HRD recorded attacks on at least one INGO and its personnel or equipment perpetrated by either the UPC, anti-Balaka or SIRIRI in Berberati, Batangafo (Ouham), Bangassou, Bria, and Kaga-Bandoro. HRD also recorded two more attacks by anti-Balaka elements on MINUSCA peacekeepers including on their vehicles, in Pombolo (Mbomou) on 17 July during which three peacekeepers were wounded and again between Akondo and Pombolo villages, in Mbomou prefecture during which two peacekeepers were wounded. Also, armed UPC elements attacked MINUSCA Forces who were stationed at the entrance of the Catholic Church IDP site in Alindao, Basse-Kotto prefecture, on the morning of 6 July. On the same day, an INGO suspended its services in Bria due to continuous attacks and pillaging of their base by armed men, the most recent being that of the night of 4-5 July.

20. As was observed in previous months, the plight of victims accused of witchcraft and charlatanism remains a major concern.

IV. Advocacy and strengthening of national capacities to provide protective environment

21. On 05 July, in collaboration with the National Committee for the Prevention of Genocide, HRD started a two-day awareness-raising workshop on “Genocide Crimes and Early Warning Mechanisms” in Bouar, Nana Mambéré prefecture. This workshop brought together 50 participants (35 men and 15 women) from politico-administrative authorities, representatives from the internal security forces, civil society organizations, community leaders, as well as General” Ndale of the anti-Balaka faction and his entire team. The sessions aimed at identifying early warning mechanisms which will help reduce hatred, prevent conflict and the risk of genocide. This activity is financed by HRD and will be extended to the other sub-prefectures of Nana Mambéré.
22. On 03 July, HRD organized a two-day training workshop on "International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law" for 34 FACA and ISF (Gendarmerie and Police) male officers in Bangassou, Ouham prefecture. The objective of the workshop was to reinforce participants’ knowledge of IHL and IHRL. HRD made presentations on basic human rights standards, principles, characteristics and the analysis of human rights protection mechanisms. The sessions were very interactive.
23. On 05 July, HRD launched a two-day training workshop on the basic concepts of IHRL and IHL organized with the support and participation of DDDR / CVR, for 49 (all men) former anti-Balaka elements in Obo, Haut-Mbomou prefecture. HRD made presentations on the fundamental principles and characteristics of human rights and mechanisms for the protection of human rights through a participatory and interactive approach. Presentations were followed by open discussions, including question and answer sessions. Two trainers from DDDR / CVR intervened on non-violence; the risks of using firearms and war weapons; and the role of DDDR / CVR as part of the peace and social cohesion initiative.
24. HRD conducted an awareness-raising session on the Basic Concepts of Human Rights for 50 participants (35 men and 15 women), comprised of students and teachers, at the *Centre Pédagogique Régional* (CPR), in Ndele, on 20 July. The purpose of the session was to sensitize the students and teachers on the basic notions and principles of human rights.

V. Support efforts by the national stakeholders to address transitional justice and public incitement to violence as part of the peace and reconciliation process

A. Truth-seeking process

25. On 25 July, President Touadéra signed a decree extending the mandate of the Steering Committee of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR) for three months. On 27 July in Bangui, the Executive Board of the Steering Committee held deliberations over the Concept Note on the national consultations and budget proposals. Finally, on 31 July, MINUSCA, UNCT members (UNICEF, UN-WOMEN AND UNHCR) and HRD held a working session to consolidate comments and advice to be shared with GoCAR, map available support and explore cooperation modalities.
26. During the reporting period, HRD, in conjunction with the *Centre de Recherche et Etude en Anthropologie – CERA* of the University of Bangui held a series of training workshops on the topic “Traditional Justice Mechanisms in relation to Transitional Justice” in most of the 12 HRD Field Offices. Joint workshops were also organized with the « *Comité National pour la Prévention des Crimes de Génocide* » (National Committee for the Prevention of crimes of Genocide) on "Prevention of Incitement to Hate and Violence" in several of HRD Field Offices. At least 298 people including community, religious and youth leaders, local authorities and civil society actors participated in the different workshops.

B. Women, Peace and Security

27. On 16 July, HRD organized at the *Maison de la Femme* in Bangassou, an awareness-raising session for 39 members (26 women and 13 men) of *l'Organisation des Femmes Centrafricaines* (OFCA), several other women's associations and the IDP focal point in Bangassou on the fight against impunity regarding Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV). The activity was carried out in the execution of a women's associations programme through a donation of fifty thousand (US\$ 50,000) by the former DSRSG, Ms. Diane Corner, in 2017 in support to the Central African Women's organizations. The aim of the session was to encourage women in the fight against impunity linked to sexual violence and the delivery of several equipment and materials consisting of bicycles, chairs, campaign kits and office supplies.

C. Public incitement to violence, discrimination and hostility

28. As part of the implementation of its mandate to monitor public acts of incitement to violence, in accordance with paragraph 20 of Resolution 2399, on 09 July while monitoring media sources, MINUSCA came upon a communiqué issued by the *Ligue de Défense de L'Eglise*, (Defense League of the Church) an unknown organization with no known affiliation to any of the major Christian denominations. The communiqué issued by the Defense League of the Church strongly condemns the GoCAR and the Head of the Catholic Church in CAR, Cardinal Nzapalainga for "being passive while priests and pastors are being systematically killed in full view of the general public". The authors of the communiqué then call on Christians to join them and support the movement "so that Muslims also feel endangered in CAR, especially in Bangui". It went on to say that the assassinated priests and pastors must be avenged and that within two or three days, they would "force Muslims also to exercise their faith in doubt and constant fear as Christian do".
29. The communiqué was published on 9 July on the blog: sango-ti-kodro.over-blog.com and posted via *Linkedin*, Facebook and Tweeter. The post received 1,366 tweets and 869 followers, 245 of whom approved the content. HRD carried out a factual analysis of the communiqué in accordance with the six criteria under the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18⁴ and the Rabat Plan of Action. The analysis concluded that in view of its content, its form, the intention of the author (s) and the extent of the message, that the communique constitutes a "propaganda for war" with an appeal to religious hatred thus constituting an incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence against the Muslim community. The factual analysis also concludes that the communiqué falls in line with the restrictions on the freedom of expression prescribed by Article 20 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
30. On 12 July, HRD held a working session with the President of the High Council of Communication (HCC) in his office in Bangui. During this meeting, discussions were centered on the communique on incitement to hatred and violence disseminated on 9 July by the Defense League of the Church (*La Ligue de Défense de L'Eglise*). HRD appreciated the HCC's prompt action in addressing the communique from the League, as well as its press release condemning it. HRD reiterated that the HRD and UNPOL Investigating Unit are ready to extend their support and expertise towards all necessary measures that the HCC plans to undertake to identify and hold accountable the persons behind this hate message. The HCC President assured HRD that he would meet with the Minister of Justice on the matter and added that his institution would ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice under the Central African justice system.
31. HRD participated as an observer in a workshop on early warning mechanisms against incitation to hate, violence and crime of genocide, organized by experts from the National Committee for the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide On 12 July. The workshop was attended by 52 participants (30 men and 20 women). The facilitator defined and developed the concepts of hate and violence, placing emphasis on their negative consequences on peace and the enjoyment of human rights. He also pointed out that during the pre-crisis period in CAR, relations between Central Africans were characterized by communal solidarity, hospitality and patriotism, and concluded by emphasizing that incitement to hatred and violence is a phenomenon that has been encouraged for political reasons. During group discussions,

⁴ [United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18](#) of March 21, 2011 on "combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief" and the [Rabat Plan of Action](#) on the "prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence" - 05 October 2012

participants agreed that incitement to hatred and violence was harmful and destructive to communities, and expressed their desire to put an end to hate and violence and ensure lasting peace in CAR.

VI. Support to the fight against impunity, HRDDP and accountability mechanisms

A. Implementation of HRDDP

32. During the reporting period, HRD received **five** requests for the HRDDP from UNPOL, the Force and SSR to support national security and defense forces (Police, Gendarmes, FACA, Water and Forest Guards) through training, technical cooperation, and transport and financial support. HRD screened 20 Internal Security Forces (Police and Gendarmes) and Defense Forces (FACA), who were to benefit from UN support.
33. HRDDP shared the 5 Risk Assessment Reports with the chairs of the HRDDP Task Force for their decision. All 5 reports were endorsed by the chairs the DSRSG-P and DSRSG-HC/RC.
34. The HRDDP Task Force received reports on the implementation of mitigating measures from Paoua Field Office. The OBO Field Office reported a case of the death of a FACA staff sergeant kept in a container on the orders of his unit commander. The death occurred during the night of 18 to 19 July. The FACA Chief of Staff has decided to send a team to investigate.

B. Support to the fight against impunity

35. HRD has continued to work jointly with UNPOL in the development and implementation of plans to arrest the country's most dangerous criminals in an effort to support the fight against impunity (under Urgent Temporary Measures).
36. As part of the MINUSCA Working Group on Major Judicial Proceedings (WGMJP), HRD participated in working sessions to conduct analysis of violations committed by alleged perpetrators which will facilitate the implementation of MINUSCA's arrest plan in direct support of the Mission political strategy.
37. On 19 July in Bangui, HRD co-chaired the opening ceremony of the workshop on informal justice systems initiated within the framework of the MINUSCA-UNDP-UN Women Joint Project. Representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and *Avocats Sans Frontières* also attended alongside practitioners, Human Rights NGOs and international partners. Both Government representatives and the UN underlined the importance of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, especially in view of the many challenges faced in achieving the restoration of the judiciary across CAR. Their efforts in adjudicating many disputes in the absence of competent judicial authorities were acknowledged. However, many concerns were raised including the imperative to comply with human rights standards on fair trial and due process as well as complementarity with formal justice.
38. On 16 July, the Court of Appeal in Bangui started its second criminal session. During this session, 26 cases are scheduled for hearing. The trial of the accused Hamat Markani, a former Seleka, charged with criminal conspiracy, aggravated robbery, arson and looting as part of an organized gang attracted a great deal of public interest. In its ruling, the court found the accused guilty of all charges brought against him and sentenced him to life imprisonment with hard labour. The Court also ordered the defendant to pay damages to civil parties totaling one hundred and five million and one francs.

C. Support to the vetting Process

39. HRDDP Secretariat coordinated the verification of 197 names in the HRD database and the criminal analysis done by UNPOL for the recruitment of 150 prison officers. A related report will be submitted to the leadership of the Mission for transmission to GoCAR, once the responsible Minister signs the decree to begin investigations into the moral character of the candidates.

VII. Recommendations

40. In light of the foregoing, HRD reiterates and recommends the following:

To GoCAR:

- Continue to collaborate with MINUSCA in the arrest of notorious elements of armed groups and ensure judicial investigations;
- Provide required resources including initial budget to operationalize fully the Human Rights Commission.

To the armed groups:

- All armed groups should cease indiscriminate attacks on civilians and take positive measures, as may be required, to ensure full respect for international human rights, and humanitarian law;
- Continuous awareness raising, training and dialogue with signatories for an increased respect for and implementation of IHL in line with provisions of the agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities.

To the International Community:

- Continue to engage in dialogue with all parties to the conflict on their obligation to respect international human rights and humanitarian laws, as well as UN Security Council Resolutions;
- Continue to encourage the Government of CAR to put an end to impunity by investigating past and recently documented human rights and humanitarian law violations and abuses with the aim of bringing perpetrators to justice;
- Initiate concerted and multi-layered engagements with signatories of the different peace accords, communities including through the ongoing mediation efforts for the adoption of transitional security arrangements needed for the protection of civilians.

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