

MINUSCA documented 234 new incidents of violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law affecting 381 victims including 195 men, 55 women, 18 boys, 28 girls, 12 unknown children and 73 unknown adults. These figures represent a 12.4 percent decrease in the total number of incidents and a 4.4 percent increase in the total number of victims compared to the previous month, which documented 266 incidents and 365 victims. HRD also noted a decrease in criminality and human rights violations since the adoption of local peace agreements with MINUSCA's support

MONTHLY REPORT- MARCH 2018

MINUSCA HUMAN RIGHTS DIVISION

Human Rights Division

Monthly Report

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I. Executive Summary

During the month of March, the security and human rights situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) remained fragile due to major attacks on civilians by armed groups in certain areas of the country, including several incidents of abductions and other forms of arbitrary deprivation of liberty followed by cruel and inhuman treatment committed by these groups and armed men affiliated with them. The State actors, namely the Police and the Gendarmerie and their specialized agencies were also responsible for a high number of cases of arbitrary detention.

As was the case in the previous months, the hotspots for the month of March were the prefectures of Mbomou, Haut-Mbomou, Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Ouaka, Nana-Grébizi and Haute-Kotto. During this reporting period, the prefectures of Ouaka and Basse-Kotto, was marked by significant attacks on civilians following clashes between rival armed groups – the *Unite pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) and the anti-Balaka in the villages Goffo (Basse Kotto prefecture) on 3 March resulting in the death of four civilians and Tagbara and Séko (Ouaka prefecture) on 21 March resulting in the death of 13 civilians, including a priest, and five minors. The above-mentioned armed groups were the perpetrators of the largest number of human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law during the reporting period.

MINUSCA Human Rights Division (HRD) recorded 234 new incidents of violations/abuses of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 381 victims, including 195 men, 55 women, 58 children (18 boys, 28 girls and 12 minors of unknown age and sex) and 73 unidentified victims. These figures represent a 12 percent decrease in the number of incidents and 4.4 percent increase in the number of victims as compared to the previous reporting period during which HRD documented 266 incidents of violations/abuses affecting 365 victims. Armed groups were responsible for 159 incidents which affected 282 victims while State actors, mainly members of the Internal Security Forces (ISF) were responsible for 75 incidents affecting 99 victims, mostly cases of arbitrary detention caused by the failure to respect the legal period for holding suspects and mainly in Bangui.

The most recurrent violations recorded during the month of March were killings, death threats, conflict-related sexual violence, cruel and inhuman treatment, arbitrary detention, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, illegal taxation, abductions, restrictions of the right to freedom of movement, appropriation, destruction/looting of property, recruitment and use of children in armed groups and denial of humanitarian access. MINUSCA's integrated plans in support of local peace agreements, inclusive dialogue, fight against impunity with optimized use of Urgent Temporary Measures (UTM), contributed to a significant decrease in the number of reported human rights abuses in Bria and Batangafo.

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 with civil society representatives, local authorities and members of the Internal Security Forces (ISF). HRD also proceeded with the vetting process of 3,254 police and gendarmes.

A positive development in the truth-seeking process was recorded on 13 March when President Touadera issued a decree formally appointing 25 members to the Steering Committee of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission of CAR. The 25 members [*CAR Presidency, Government and Parliament as well as political parties, Civil Society organizations and International Community, including MINUSCA and African Union (AU)*] are tasked with implementing the overall mandate to support the initiation of a truth-seeking process in the country.

While calling on leaders of armed groups to comply strictly with obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, MINUSCA HRD continued to urge CAR authorities to fight against impunity and hold perpetrators accountable. Through HRD advocacy efforts, 18 detainee's files were

transferred to the judicial authorities, while a boy who was detained along with adults at the *Unité Mixte d'Intervention Rapide et de Répression des Violences Sexuelles* was transferred to a Brigade for minors.

II. Major developments affecting the human rights situation

1. During the month of March, the security and human rights situation continued to be cause for concern, mainly in the central (Ouaka, Basse-Kotto prefectures) and south-eastern parts of the country (Haute-Kotto, Mbomou, and Haut-Mbomou prefectures) and the north-west (Ouham-Pendé, Ouham prefectures). The resurgence of violence in areas under the control of armed groups and the rivalry between these groups remain the main causes of the insecurity that continues to negatively impact upon the protection of the civilian population and the humanitarian and human rights situation in the country.
2. Nonetheless, this period was also positively marked by the arrest of some armed group leaders such as Jean Francis Ndjandji, alias Ramazani, one of the leaders of the anti-Balaka elements in Bria by UNPOL within the framework of the Urgent Temporary Measures (UTM). In addition, integrated plans by MINUSCA to combine local peace agreements and mediation efforts have had positive impact in Bria (Haute-Kotto) and Batangafo (Ouham prefecture) where there was a significant decrease in the number of human rights abuses committed by the armed groups present in these towns in March compared to the month of February (35 incidents affecting 48 victims in February compared to 20 incidents affecting 29 victims in March).
3. The insecurity reigning in Haut-Mbomou prefecture, particularly in the town of Bangassou, was once again the cause of several human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law by the armed groups operating there. On 3 March, armed Fulani reportedly/allegedly affiliated with the *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) attacked the anti-Balaka in Rafai sub-prefecture, during which two civilians lost their lives. On 9 March, anti-Balaka elements in Bangassou under the command of Pino Pino looted the equipment of some humanitarian INGOs. On 12 March, armed men believed to be elements of the anti-Balaka seized two vehicles belonging to an international NGO (INGO). Members of the same anti-Balaka group also prevented the opening of a humanitarian corridor to provide assistance to IDPs (mainly Muslims) at the Cathedral camp by regularly attacking the IDP site. As of a result of the prevailing insecurity, the humanitarian organizations decided to suspend their activities and relocate their employees to Bangui.
4. Clashes and reprisal attacks by rival armed groups – the *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) and anti-Balaka resulted in several deaths of civilians during the reporting period. On 3 March, at around 7.00 p.m., UPC elements attacked Goffo village, located 12 km southeast of Alindao (Basse-Kotto), following the theft of cattle by the anti-Balaka. This resulted in the death of four civilians including two men, a woman and a child and the injury of two women. These armed clashes between the UPC and the anti-Balaka intensified between 19 and 21 March on the Bambari-Ippy axis, in the villages of Tagbara and Séko (Ouaka) resulting in the death of 12 civilians including five children and one priest and six wounded civilians, including three children (unknown sex and age) and the displacement of about 500 civilians. The Tagbara market and about 150 houses were set on fire during the clashes between the two armed groups.
5. Preliminary investigations carried out by MINUSCA indicates that following the attack by the anti-Balaka on the village of Tagbara (occupied by the UPC) on 21 March during which they killed at least three UPC elements, later that day, the UPC carried out a reprisal attack on the village of Séko (8 km from Tagbara) where most of the local population had sought refuge. According to credible sources, the assailants targeted the Catholic Church where they killed the local priest and 11 other civilians including five children. They also wounded several other civilians, seven of whom later succumbed to their injuries at the Séko Medical Centre. MINUSCA transported 12 other wounded civilians to the Regional University Hospital in Bambari.

6. As has been the case over the past two months, clashes and rivalry over the control of territories between armed groups *Révolution et Justice* (RJ) and the MPC were the main cause of the insecurity that characterized the Ouham prefecture during the reporting period. In the Markounda sub-prefecture, armed clashes between these two groups on 13 March in the Tera I & II villages, and then 22 March in the Silambi and Moyo villages resulted in a massive displacement of the civilian population towards the south of Markounda.
7. At the same time, in the neighbouring prefecture of Ouham-Pendé, the ongoing Operation Mbaranga being conducted jointly by MINUSCA and the *Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA) continued to keep the armed groups away from Paoua and its surrounding villages. However, elements of the armed group led by General Bahar, MNLC, carried out attacks on villages located north east of Paoua, resulting in the death of eight civilians and the wounding of five others. On 14 March, four RJ elements kidnapped two Fulani women and a 16-year-old boy, and later released the women. The kidnappers demanded the payment of a ransom of 2,000,000 XAF from the boy's parents. The perpetrators claimed to have carried out the abduction in retaliation for the violence perpetrated by the MNLC.

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

8. As demonstrated in the annex of this report, HRD in March documented **234** new incidents¹ of violations and abuses of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting **381** victims **including 195 men, 55 women, 58 children (18 boys, 28 girls and 12 minors of unknown age and sex) and 73 unidentified victims (58 unknown adults and 15 groups of collective victims)**. These figures represent a **12** percent decrease in the total number of incidents and a **4.4** percent increase in the total number of victims compared to the previous month, which documented **266** incidents and **365** victims.
9. The most recurrent human rights violations and abuses committed during the reporting period were: (a) violations of the right to life with **28 incidents (17 killings and 11 death threats)** affecting **80** victims; (b) physical and mental integrity with **38 incidents** causing **60** victims; (c) conflict related sexual violence with **33 incidents** (22 rape/gang rape cases, five attempted rape, one sexual harassment and five forced marriages) affecting **48** victims (28 women, 19 girls and one man); (d) **72 cases** of arbitrary detention affecting **72 victims** (71 men and one minor). The reporting period also saw some flagrant breaches to international humanitarian law (IHL). HRD recorded: (e) recruitment and use of children by the armed groups, **eight incidents** affecting **eight boys**; (f) **24 incidents** of deprivation of liberty affecting **26** victims; (g) **eight** incidents of abductions affecting **14** victims; (h) destruction or pillaging/extortion of property, **12 incidents** affecting **29** victims and (i) **four incidents** of unlawful attacks affecting nine victims.
10. During the reporting period the situation of civilians and humanitarian workers continued to be marred by the conflict. Armed groups were responsible for **61** incidents (26.1%) of breaches of international humanitarian law which affected **91** victims including 35 men, four women, 11 boys, eight girls, 18 unknown adults and an additional 15 groups of collective victims. There was a decrease by 14.1 percent in the number of incidents and 12.5 percent decrease in the number of victims compared to the month of February (71 incidents and 104 victims) due to the more robust patrols by MINUSCA in different areas where there were alerts of potential threats of attack and even attacks in order to protect civilians. Cases which directly impacted on international humanitarian law included **24 incidents** of arbitrary deprivation of liberty affecting **26** victims (23 men, two women and one boy); **eight incidents** of abductions with **14** victims (two men, two women, two boys and eight girls); **12 incidents** of attacks, extortion, destruction, appropriation or pillaging of property affecting **five** men,

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 and verified 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 March 2018. Statistics regarding the number of violations reported may increase or decrease over a given period of time due to numerous factors outside the control and/or knowledge of the HRD and must therefore be used with caution.

18 unknown adults and **six** groups of collective victims; **four incidents** of attacks against humanitarian organizations and Peacekeepers including their equipment where **five** Peacekeepers got injured and **four** groups of collective victims got affected during attacks on humanitarian workers; **five incidents** (**five** groups of collective victims) where armed groups denied civilians access to humanitarian relief as they attacked and looted INGOs vehicles en route to deliver humanitarian services and **eight incidents** where armed groups recruited **eight** boys into their armed groups.

11. In general, the incidents were perpetrated by the different armed groups particularly the anti-Balaka, UPC, FPRC/Arab, MPC, FPRC/MPC, FPRC/AH, LRA and MLNC and in mainly the conflict-affected areas. Continuous attacks on humanitarian workers and peacekeepers impact negatively on the delivery of humanitarian services to civilians in need, particularly the IDPs. In Bangassou (Mbomou) for example, on 9 March, 20 armed anti-Balaka elements irrupted into an INGO premise where they pillaged computer equipment's and several other materials in Mboulou district. These objects were then transported on a Toyota pick-up vehicle which was stolen from MINUSCA (Matriculated UN – 25300) on 30 January 2018 by the same anti-Balaka elements in Bangui-ville district.

A. Human Rights Abuses by the armed groups

12. The armed groups² accounted for **159 incidents** (68%) and **282 victims** (74%) – 123 men, 54 women, 16 boys, 28 girls, 12 minors of unknown age and sex, 34 unknown adults and 15 groups of collective victims - during this reporting period. The total number of incidents remained the same as of the previous month (159 cases in February) meanwhile the total number of victims, increased by 20 percent as compared to the previous month, which recorded 235 victims.

i. Abuses by the ex-Séléka splinter groups: UPC armed Fulani, FPRC, MPC, FPRC AH faction, FPRC/MPC Coalition and FPRC/Arab

13. Amongst the ex-Séléka splinter, the UPC (22 incidents), armed Fulani (22 incidents), FPRC (17 incidents), MPC (9 incidents), FPRC AH faction (9 incidents), FPRC/MPC Coalition (8 incidents), and FPRC/Arab (1 incident) as per previous months, were the main perpetrators of the human rights abuses documented in March³. These different groups committed a total **88** abuses affecting **185** victims, representing **37.6** percent of the total number of incidents and **48.6** percent of the total number of victims documented during the month. There was a decrease of 5.4 percent in the number of incidents as compared to the previous month (93 abuses by in February) and an increase by 31.2 percent in the number of victims (141 victims in February).
14. These armed groups perpetrated **(i) 10** incidents of killings [UPC (4), armed Fulani (4) and MPC (2)], and affecting **26** men, **eight** women, **nine** unknown minors and **seven** unknown adults, with another **six** incidents of death threats affecting **six** men, **one** boy and **four** unknown adults; **(ii) 19** incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity [UPC (7), FPRC/MPC Coalition (3), FPRC (3), armed Fulani (2), MPC (2), and FPRC AH faction (2)] affecting **25** men, **seven** women, **one** girl and **two** unknown minors; **(iii) 17** conflict related sexual violence incidents including **10** rape incidents, **five** attempted rape, and **two** incidents of forced marriage [armed Fulani (13), FPRC/AH faction (2), FPRC (1), and UPC (1)], affecting **one** man, **25** women and **five** girls; **(iv) 21** incidents of deprivation of liberty [FPRC (11), FPRC/MPC Coalition (5), MPC (2), and FPRC AH faction (3)] affecting **19** men, **two** women and **one** boy as well as **one** incident where **one** man, was abducted by the FPRC AH faction; **(v) five** incidents of appropriation and pillaging of property [MPC (3) and

² These armed groups include the anti-Balaka, the FPRC, FPRC/MPC Coalition, FPRC/AH, FPRC/Arab, MPC, UPC, armed Fulani, 3R, RJ, MNL, LRA, SIRIRI and other armed groups

³ Other armed groups who committed human rights abuses included the MNL (15 abuses with 16 victims); 3R (five abuses affecting six victims); LRA (two abuses with three victims); RJ (two abuses with two victims); SIRIRI (one abuse affecting one victim) and other armed groups (seven abuses with nine victims). These armed groups represented **13.7** percent (32 incidents) of the total number of incidents and **9.7** percent (37 victims) of the total number of victims.

UPC (2)] and affecting **23** unknown persons and mainly groups of collective victims; **(vi) seven** incidents where the UPC (6) and FPRC/Arab (1) faction recruited **seven** boys into their armed groups; and **(vii) two** incidents where the UPC deprived **five** men of their freedom of movement. Of the 88 abuses, 74 of them, namely 84.1 percent, occurred in – Haut-Mbomou, Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Ouaka, Nana-Grébizi and Haute-Kotto prefectures.

ii. Abuses by the anti- Balaka

15. The anti-Balaka accounted for **39** abuses affecting **60** victims which represent **16.7** percent of the total number of incidents and **15.8** percent of the total number of victims recorded during the month. These figures represent an 18.2 percent increase in the number of incidents compared to the previous month (33 abuses in February) and a 66.7 percent increase in the number of victims (36 victims in February). The most documented abuses by the anti-Balaka were violations of the right to physical and mental integrity with **11** incidents where **15** men, **three** women, and **one** boy were either subjected to cruel and inhuman treatments resulting in injuries or received threats to their physical and mental integrity. The anti-Balaka recorded five incidents of the right to life which included **one** incident where **five** unknown adults got killed and **four** incidents where **four** men received death threats.
16. Other abuses committed by the anti-Balaka included: **(i) four** incidents of rape and two forced marriages affecting **one** woman and **five** girls; **(ii) six** incidents of unlawful attacks, extortion and pillaging of five men and two groups of unknown persons (collective victims); **(iii) three** incidents of the right to liberty where they deprived **one** man of his liberty and abducted **one** woman and **six** girls; and **(iv) four** incidents where humanitarian organizations and peacekeepers including their equipment were attacked affecting five peacekeepers and four other unknown number of NGO personnel (collective victims). Of the 39 abuses committed by the anti-Balaka, 20 of them or 51.3 percent occurred in the main hotspots identified during the month in review: Haut-Mbomou, Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Ouaka, Nana-Grébizi and Haute-Kotto prefectures.

B. Human Rights Violations attributable to state agents

17. State agents⁴ were responsible for **75** violations (32 %) of international human rights law affecting **99** victims (26 %) with 72 men, one woman, two boys and 24 unknown adults. This represents a 30 percent decrease in the total number of incidents and 23.8 percent decrease in the total number of victims compared to the previous month, which recorded 107 violations with 130 victims.
18. HRD continues to note that the vast majority of the violations by State agents consist of violations of the right to liberty with mainly cases of arbitrary detention⁵ - 72 cases [Police (9), OCB (33), DSPJ (1), Gendarmerie (20) and SRI (9)], affecting 72 victims (71 men and one boy). This is due to the failure of State internal security forces to respect the 72 hour (renewable once) legal limit for holding suspects before presenting them before a judicial authority. In all cases of arbitrary detention, HRD met with the relevant authorities and advocated for the respect of the legal procedures.
19. Through the intervention of the HRD, out of 72 victims arbitrarily detained, 18 detainees and all men, had their files completed and transferred to the Public Prosecutor's office, while a boy who was detained along with adults at the *Unité Mixte d'Intervention Rapide et de Répression des Violences Sexuelles* was transferred to a

⁴ State authorities include the Gendarmerie and its different specialized units (*Section des Recherches et d'Investigation*' (SRI), *Direction de la Surveillance Territoriale* (DST), *Compagnie Nationale de Sécurité* (CNS)), the Police with its different specialised units (*Direction des Services de la Police Judiciaire* (DSPJ), the '*Office Central pour la Répression du Grand Banditisme*' (OCRB)), administrative authorities as well as the military - '*Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA)

⁵ Other violations by state authorities included one case of poor detention conditions in the Bossembele prison facility by Prison officials; one death threat on a man by a FACA officer, and one threat to the physical and mental integrity of a woman by the OCB.

Brigade for minors. HRD also observed that during the reporting period, for the first time in more than five months, the gendarmerie committed lesser violations of arbitrary detention than the specialized unit of the Police – the OCRB. This comes to suggest that due to the continuous reporting and advocacy by the HRD, the gendarmerie unit, has become more and more conscious of the implications of such violations and is putting in more effort to timely completion of investigations and transferring detainee’s files to the Public Prosecutor’s office.

C. Observations on trends and patterns

20. HRD has noted that over the past three months the armed groups *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) and the anti-Balaka have been the main perpetrators of human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law due to their rivalry over the control of territory, mainly in the central and eastern parts of CAR. In most cases, clashes between these groups have been accompanied by reprisal attacks against the civilian population accused of supporting or being affiliated with the rival groups. This pattern was clearly demonstrated in the attack on Séko village by the UPC elements on 21 March following an attack earlier that day by the anti-Balaka on Tagbara which resulted in the killing of four UPC elements and the torching of several houses and shops in Tagbara village. The UPC elements attacked the Catholic Church in Séko, a protected object and killed and wounded several civilians including children on the pretext that they were pursuing the anti-Balaka. A similar Modus Operandi was used by the UPC during their attack on the Ippy Medical Centre on 17 December following clashes between the anti-Balaka.
21. The hotspots identified for this reporting period have not changed from previous months with the exception of Basse-Kotto prefectures where major attacks were carried out on the civilian population by both the UPC and anti-Balaka. These two armed groups are the main perpetrators of human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law in four of the seven hotspots identified for the month of March.
22. MINUSCA support to local peace initiatives as part of its integrated approach to addressing and POC concerns and human rights violations in Bria and Batangafo resulted in a decrease in reported human rights violations in March 20 incidents affecting 29 victims compared to 35 incidents affecting 48 victims in February.
23. Despite a relative decrease in the number of incidents of human rights violation/abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law, the intensity of the fighting between rival armed groups resulted in a significant increase in the number of both individual and collective victims.
24. The reporting period recorded a significant number of violations of the right to liberty and security of persons, specifically cases of arbitrary detention by State actors and arbitrary deprivation of liberty by armed groups followed by torture, cruel and inhuman treatment, resulting in the death of the victims in some cases.
25. Another characteristic of the reporting period is the high number of incidents of attacks on protected persons and objects, in particular by the anti-Balaka elements in Bangassou (Mbomou). On at least two occasions during the month of March, the anti-Balaka elements under the command of Pino Pino seized office equipment and vehicles belonging members of the humanitarian community. They also attacked UN Peacekeepers on several occasions, including a delegation led by the MINUSCA Force Commander. They continued their attacks on IDPs and on the Cathedral IDP camp and also prevented the opening of a humanitarian corridor for the IDPs based there.
26. As has been the case in previous months, the perpetrators of the grave human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law mentioned in this report, continue to benefit from generalized impunity partly due to the absence of robust State institutions in the areas where they operate.

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

27. One of the highlights of the advocacy activities during the reporting period was the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. HRD held and/or participated in six awareness-raising sessions on, *among others*, the Dangers and the Impact of Racial Discrimination on Social Cohesion, on the Implementation of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples and other relevant international instruments, which were attended by 350 participants (159 men, 21 women, 52 boys and 98 girls) drawn from NGOs, local authorities and civil society leaders and students from Bangui, Kaga-Bandoro, Paoua and Bouar.
28. Internally, HRD conducted a human rights training for 48 participants including 44 men and 4 women from MINUSCA's military and police components in Bangui. The presentation revolved around the basic concepts and principles of human rights, legal sources, and different types and forms of human rights violations.
29. On 22 March in Bangui, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians in conjunction with the MINUSCA HRD and Gender Divisions, organized a session on Inter-Generational dialogue with focus on Women's 'Rights and the law of Parity. The aim of the session was to discuss, *inter alia*, gender and equal opportunities, political rights of CAR women, institutional ownership of gender, combatting discrimination against women, actions taken by Go CAR to combat discrimination, progress made as well as political commitment from the leadership for 300 girls. HRD also organized two days of awareness-raising sessions for 38 men and four women representatives of CAR FSI (Police and gendarmerie), local authorities, civil society leaders and CAR on the protection of civilians, writing alerts and reports and abuses and violations of human rights, on the role of the FSI in protecting human rights; on the mandate and activities of the Human Rights Division; on definition and concepts of human rights, human rights protection, with emphasis on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
30. HRD trained 250 members of the CAR internal security forces (228 men and 22 women) including senior officers on basic concepts and sources of HR law, human rights principles related to arrest and detention, investigations, proportional use of force, on the obligation of senior officers under national and international laws to investigate violations committed by their elements. The training sessions were held in Berbérati, Bossangoa and Bangui.

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

A. Truth-seeking process

31. A positive development in the truth-seeking process was recorded on 13 March when President Touadera issued a decree formally appointing the members of the Steering Committee of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission of CAR. The steering Committee composed of 25 members (CAR Presidency, Government and Parliament as well as political parties, Civil Society organizations and International Community, including MINUSCA and African Union (AU) is tasked with implementing the overall mandate to support the initiation of a truth-seeking process in the country. In addition to proposing a budget estimate for its own functioning, the Steering Committee shall initiate inclusive national consultations to assess Central Africans expectations in connection with the future *Commission Vérité, Justice, Réparation et Réconciliation*

and submit a final report on the same. The Steering Committee shall perform under the overall supervision of the Prime Minister taking into account the outcome of February 2015 national consultations and recommendations of the Bangui Forum as set forth in the preamble of the aforementioned 11 September Presidential Decree.

B. Women peace and Security

32. On 22 March in Bangui, HRD organized a panel discussion with 80 participants (55 women and 25 men) CAR ministries representatives, civil society women leaders, women organizations leaders and the members from CAR local peace committee. HRD focused its intervention on UN Council Resolution 1325 with emphasis on the role of women in transitional justice process, the fight against GBV and CRSV in CAR society.
33. Progress was also recorded on the applicability of the parity law as derived from article 9 of the Rule of Procedure (Law 17.011 of 14 March 2017. On 9 March 2018, the Bureau of National Assembly was renewed with 3 out of 11 members being women following the Constitutional Court Advisory Opinion. The court's opinion referred to the Constitutional principle of gender equality and the Law dated 16 November 2016 and its own jurisprudence on the same (Decision No 004/CCT/17 of 1st February 2017), to confirm the binding nature of 35% quota in favour of female MPs.

C. Public incitement to violence

34. Another significant development in connection with paragraph 22 of United Nations Resolution 2399, on the monitoring of public incitement to violence, was the landmark decision of the High Council of Communication dated 3 March 2018. The Council barred Didacien Blaise Kossimatchi, spokesperson of the *Comité de Soutien* of President Faustin Archange Touadera, from public media for a period of 12 months on the ground of recidivism in incitement to hatred, violence and sedition.

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

A. Implementation of HRDDP

35. During the period of reporting HRD received 12 requests for the HRDDP process from UNPOL, UMAS and SSR including UNOCA to support national security and defence forces through training, mentoring, advising, programmatic support, technical cooperation, and joint operations, logistical and financial support. HRD is also supporting the deployment of internal security forces through the HRDDP process.
36. HRD has completed **10** requests while two are currently being reviewed internally before sharing with the HRDDP Task Force.
37. HRD recommended the exclusion of two individual police and gendarme who allegedly committed human rights violations. UNPOL communicated the recommendations to the hierarchy of national authorities and these individuals were excluded from UN support.
38. As a recommendation on mitigating measures on the HRDDP Risk Assessment Report for the deployment (rotation) of internal security forces to Bambari, HRD provided pre-deployment training to **36** national police officers and **59** gendarmes on the 17 March. The training included modules on international humanitarian law, human rights law, protection of civilians and a module of the UNITED NATIONS Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Agencies as derived from GA Resolution 34/169.

39. In a similar context, as a mitigating measure recommended by the HRDDP for the deployment of **21** national police officers to the Commissariat of the 3rd District in Bangui, HRD conducted similar pre-deployment training on the 21 March.
40. Note that both pre-deployment trainings as recommended by the Risk Assessment Report were organized by UNPOL with the participation of other substantive sections such as POC unit.

B. Support to the fight against impunity

41. HRD worked 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).
42. As part of the MINUSCA Working Group on Major Judicial Proceedings (WGMJP), HRD assisted in the analysis of the reconstitution of a list of 294 alleged perpetrators in CAR in order to have a prioritized short list of those who are active perpetrators to facilitate the implementation of arrest plan in direct support of the Mission political strategy.
43. During the reporting period HRD created 10 new profiles on the OHCHR human rights case database. As of 28 March, HRD had created profiles of **65** alleged perpetrators (includes elements of armed groups and some security forces). These profiles have been linked to cases on allegations of IHL or IHRL violations committed by them. HRD has shared information officially on some of these individuals to UNPOL, JCS and JMAC.
44. HRD provided inputs on mechanisms and guidelines to two Standard Operating Procedures, the first on Arrest and Detention by UN uniformed Personnel and the second an SOP on UTM. HRD inputs were in line with good practice and inspiration from DPKO and OHCHR policies in place.

C. Support to the vetting Process

45. HRD is currently finalizing the list of vetting of **3254** police and gendarme registered in CAR. A report is being prepared on the results of the vetting to be transmitted to national authorities. In addition, a working session is envisaged with UNPOL, MINUSCA substantive sections and UNDP including other implementing partners under the HRDDP General and Preliminary Risk Assessment.

VII. Recommendations

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

To GoCAR:

- Cooperate fully with MINUSCA, Humanitarian actors and international partners to find comprehensive, adequate, and concerted responses to persistent protection of civilian concerns in PK5 Bangui, the North-east and the South-east;
- Initiate concrete and significant, steps, including the restauration of state authorities and the penal chain, towards investigating and prosecuting documented atrocity crimes.

To the armed groups:

- All armed groups should ensure the full cessation of indiscriminate attacks on civilians and take positive measures, as may be required, to ensure full respect for international human rights, and humanitarian law,

including the establishment of neutralized zones including hospital and safety zones and localities, as well as demilitarized zones particularly in Ippy, Bossangoa periphery and around Paoua;

- Armed groups signatories should explore Memorandum of understanding for the immediate implementation of their obligations under IHL where applicable to protect civilians;
- Bangassou armed group, community and IDP leaders to initiate a more articulated dialogue around the Prefect to explore confidence building measures that would lead to comprehensive agreements including durable solution for return of IDPs and refugees.

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** *****