

## **Human Rights Division**

### **Monthly Report**

**October 2018**

#### **I. Key developments**

During the month of October, the security and human rights situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) continued to be fragile due to frequent attacks and violent acts against civilians committed by armed groups and armed elements affiliated with them, resulting in several incidents of killings, cruel and inhuman treatment, injuries and maiming, conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, abductions as well as cases of attacks on protected objects and humanitarian workers.

The hotspots for the month of October were the prefectures of Haute-Kotto, Ouaka, and Nana-Grébizi. Due to the steady increase in the activities of the SIRIRI armed group, Mambéré-Kadéï prefecture remains of concern with recorded cases of killings, cruel and inhuman treatment, abductions, exploitation and illegal taxations, as well as pillaging of civilians by this armed group.

Mounting tension between rival armed groups such as the UPC and the anti-Balaka in Ouaka and Haut-Mbomou prefectures, contributed to the continuous deterioration of the security situation in these prefectures leading to civilian displacements and an increased need for humanitarian assistance.

MINUSCA Human Rights Division (HRD) recorded 160 new incidents of violations/abuses of international human rights as well as breaches to international humanitarian law affecting 265 victims, including 165 men, 35 women, 52 children and 13 unidentified victims. These figures represent a 4.2 percent decrease in the number of incidents and a 7.9 percent decrease in the number of victims compared to the previous reporting period during which HRD documented 167 incidents of violations/abuses affecting 288 victims. Targeted attacks and fighting among rival armed groups continued to negatively impact on the protection of civilians, resulting in 47 civilians killed and 15 other either injured or maimed in October.

Armed groups were responsible for 154 incidents which affected 256 victims while State actors, including members of the Armed Forces (FACA) and the police, were responsible for six incidents affecting nine victims with cases of violations of the right to life, physical and mental integrity, arbitrary arrest and detention and expropriation of property.

The most recurrent violations recorded during the month of October were killings, death threats, cruel and inhuman treatment, conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, abductions, appropriation, destruction/pillaging of property, attacks on humanitarian workers including their equipment, and occupation of a school.

During the month, HRD continued to engage with the Central African authorities, notably the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights to advocate for judicial investigations on allegations of human rights violations and to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable. HRD also completed nine Risk Assessments as part of its support to the HRDDP process.

#### **II. Recommendations**

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

**To MINUSCA**

- Continue to support the deployment of State authorities and assist them in their efforts to conduct investigations into allegations of grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;
- Continue to monitor the activities of FACA unit who received support from MINUSCA and report on all violations they commit in line with the HRDDP policies.

**To GoCAR:**

- Continue to collaborate with MINUSCA in the arrest of elements of armed groups who are alleged to have committed violations of IHL and abuses of human rights and ensure expedite judicial investigations;
- Continue to encourage the Central African authorities to continue efforts to encourage peaceful coexistence amongst communities and the end to hatred and negative propaganda.

**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.

**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.

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

1. During the month of October, the security and human rights situation continued to be unpredictable, particularly in Ouaka, Haute-Kotto, Mbomou, Ouham-Pendé and Nana-Grébizi prefectures. Rivalry among the different armed groups coupled with targeted attacks against the civilian population and humanitarian actors, continued to adversely impact on the protection of civilians, thus increasing the volatile nature of the security situation and adversely affecting the human rights and humanitarian situation of civilians.
2. As demonstrated in the annex of this report, HRD in October documented **160** new incidents<sup>1</sup> of violations and abuses of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting **265** victims including 165 men, 35 women, 52 children (29 boys and 23 girls) and 13 unidentified victims. There was a **4.2** percent decrease in the number of incidents as well as a **7.9** percent decrease in the number of victims compared to the previous period (September 2018) which recorded 167 incidents affecting 288 victims. The continuous decrease in the number of victims particularly in the Ouham and Haute-Kotto prefectures is due to ongoing mediation and dialogue processes which have encouraged peaceful coexistence and the call for disarmament of the armed groups. On 4 October for example, MINUSCA engaged with the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC) and *Rassemblement pour le Renouveau de la Centrafrique* (RPRC) leaders who committed to peace, the dismantling of illegal checkpoints and desisting from illegal taxation of the local populations in order to restore peace and security in the region.
3. HRD recorded the killing of 47 civilians (34 men, six women, two boys, and two girls) and the injury or maiming of 15 others (13 men and two girls). Of the 47 civilians killed, the anti-Balaka accounted for the highest number (19 civilians thus 40.4%), with the injury of seven men (46.7%) in mainly Ouaka and Mbomou prefectures. The victims were killed or maimed when the anti-Balaka attacked and pillaged their property (cattle) due to their ethnic affiliation or accused them of witchcraft and charlatanism. The remaining 28 civilians killed during the month were victims of

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<sup>1</sup> 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/or 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 October 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.

targeted and reprisal attacks perpetrated by the UPC (five men and two girls), MNLC (five men), MPC (four men), FPRC (two men) the PK5 criminal gangs (five men, one woman and one boy) and SIRIRI (one man) for the armed groups, and FACA (one man) and Police (one man) for the State agents. Most of these killings (23 thus 49%) and injuries (four thus 27%) were recorded in Bambari and Bangassou.

Apart from the anti-Balaka, the ex-Séléka splinter groups (UPC, MPC and FPRC) were also responsible for a high number of casualties, with 13 killings (27.7%) and three injuries (20%) in mainly Ouaka and Haute-Kotto prefectures. Other elements responsible for civilian casualties included the MNLC with five civilians killed (10.6%) and two others injured (13.3%), criminal gangs in PK5 Bangui (Force and Apo) seven civilians killed (15%) and SIRIRI one civilian (2.1%). State agents (police and FACA) equally recorded two cases of killings (4.3%) in Bangui and Ouham-Pendé.

4. Apart from killings and injuries, other recurrent human rights violations and abuses committed during the reporting period were: (a) death threats with eight incidents against 15 men; (b) physical and mental integrity with 33 incidents causing 53 victims; and (c) conflict related sexual violence with 22 rape incidents affecting 23 rape victims (13 women and 10 girls). During this period, the FACA accounted for two cases of arbitrary detention affecting three men as well as three cases of expropriation of property.
5. The reporting period also saw some flagrant breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL). HRD recorded: (d) 14 incidents of abductions affecting 36 victims; (e) 13 incidents of arbitrary deprivation of liberty affecting 31 victims; (f) destruction or pillaging/extortion of property and illegal taxation, six incidents affecting four men, one woman, one unknown adult and two groups of unknown victims; (g) nine incidents of recruitment and use of children (19 boys and five girls) into the armed groups (h) six incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of humanitarian personnel including their equipment and a medical centre, affecting six groups of unidentified victims and (i) the illegal occupation of one school by the 3R in Ngoutere village<sup>2</sup> in Ouham-Pendé prefecture.
6. Armed groups<sup>3</sup> accounted for 154 incidents (96.2% of the total number of incidents) and 256 victims (96.6% of the total number of victims) – 156 men, 35 women, 29 boys, 23 girls and 13 unidentified victims of which nine involved attacks affecting an unknown number of persons including humanitarian workers (collective victims) and their equipment. There was a 6.1 decrease in the total number of incidents as compared to the previous month (164 cases in September), and a 10.5 percent decrease in the total number of victims compared to the previous month, which recorded 286 victims by the armed groups. As earlier mentioned, the decrease in the number of victims is due to ongoing mediation and dialogue efforts to promote peace coexistence particularly in areas such as Haute-Kotto prefecture, which had experienced a spiral of violence in the previous two months. In Kouki<sup>4</sup> for example, on 03 October, ‘General’ Marcel Ndalé and ‘General’ Abbas Sidik signed an agreement in which they committed to peace and the return of refugees to Ouham-Pendé prefecture.
7. During the month, HRD has noted with concern the significant increase in the activities of the UPC in Ouaka prefecture, particularly in the town of Bambari. The elements of this armed group openly resisted the arrival of FACA elements in Bambari<sup>5</sup> and threatened civilians who did not openly support their position. On 06 October for example, some hours following a meeting between MINUSCA, the FACA and Muslim Community at the headquarters of the Islamic Community<sup>6</sup>, UPC elements irrupted at the headquarters and threatened with death its President, the President of the Muslim Youth Association and other members, accusing them of not adhering to the UPC orders which urged youths and traders to demonstrate against the presence of the FACA in Bambari and mount barriers to impede the

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<sup>2</sup> Located approximately 40 kilometers on the Bocaranga – Bozoum axis

<sup>3</sup> These armed groups include the anti-Balaka, the UPC, FPRC, MPC, FPRC/AH, FPRC/MPC Coalition, armed Fulani, MNLC, LRA, RJ, 3R, PK5 armed groups (FORCE/APO), and SIRIRI

<sup>4</sup> Located approximately 20 kilometers north of Nana Bakassa, Ouham prefecture

<sup>5</sup> FACA soldiers were deployed to Bambari on 01 October who would conduct patrols along with MINUSCA to ensure security in the area.

<sup>6</sup> MINUSCA facilitated a meeting at the Islamic Committee Office with the FACA representatives and Internal Security Forces which aimed at improving relations between FACA and the community following tensions in the area with the deployment of FACA. The FACA commander stressed on their mission mandate which is to guarantee the security of civilians, their freedom of movement and promote social cohesion. Participants from the Muslim community appreciated the initiative at the end of the meeting.

progress of patrols in Adjï, Bornou and Elevage neighbourhood in Bambari. Consequently, on 9 October, the President of the Islamic community and some members of the board resigned<sup>7</sup>.

8. On 31 October, MINUSCA Force on patrol in Maidou and Mbrepou neighbourhood came under fire from a group of unidentified armed men alleged to be affiliated to the UPC. MINUSCA riposted and the exchange of gunshots lasted for four hours during which a peacekeeper was injured. MINUSCA reinforced and dispatched its Forces to different checkpoints located along the Ippy – Alindao axis and the Cathedral guard post. At around 9:48 p.m., MINUSCA found a barricade on the road in Adjï neighbour<sup>8</sup> suspected to have been erected by UPC elements. There was another exchange of gunshots between MINUSCA Forces and alleged UPC elements as the patrol made its way through Elevage, Maidou and Wangaye neighbourhoods. HRD is yet to confirm if there were any civilian casualties during these incidents.
9. During the reporting period, HRD noted strong resistance from the ex-Séléka factions to the deployment or presence of State actors, particularly the FACA, in areas under their control. In Ndele (Bamingui-Bangoran) for example, on 2 October, the FPRC General Coordinator – Jafar Adoum expressed that the deployment of FACA in the northeast and central region of CAR will remain difficult as it resurfaces old memories, of abuses committed by FACA elements against Muslim civilians. He stated that the new FACA army should be a representation of different ethnic and religious affiliations in CAR, without which they would not be accepted in these areas. It is worth noting that the FPRC leaders – Abdoulaye Hissene and Hamza Guismala on 30 September rejected the deployment of FACA and ISF to Bambari, Bria and Kaga-Bandoro. As an alternative proposal, they suggested that they would only accept such deployment if the FACA accepted to conduct joint patrols with FPRC. On 22 October in Kaga-Bandoro, the political coordinator of MPC – Mahamat Al Katim issued a communique withdrawing from the Khartoum Declaration of 28 August in opposition to the deployment of FACA. However, he committed to the African Initiative for lasting peace and national reconciliation in CAR. Armed groups have also been objecting to recruitment by FACA in their strongholds.
10. During the month, tension continued to rise between the anti-Balaka and UPC particularly in Ouaka and Haut-Mbomou prefecture. On 10 October in Mboki<sup>9</sup>, UPC elements injured two civilian men whom they accused of being affiliated with the anti-Balaka. The elements also seized 13 other civilian men and deprived them of their liberty at their base in Mboki on similar accusations. Twelve of the men were subsequently released on 12 October. Again, on 11 October, anti-Balaka clashed with the UPC in Ippy. HRD has not recorded any civilian casualties following this clash, but will continue to monitor for any eventual civilian casualties. Due to the tensions in Bambari and its environs, a coalition of UPC/FPRC elements reinforced in Pougakola<sup>10</sup> and Ndjoukou<sup>11</sup> villages and some 7 kilometres from Grimari, where they fired random gunshots in the air which panicked civilians in these villages causing them to flee for safety in the nearby bushes.
11. Another major cause of tension during the month of October was the impeachment of the former President of the of the National Assembly – Abdoul Karim Meckassoua on 26 October. On 23 October in Bangui, the *Parti Centrafricain pour L'Unité et le Développement* (PCUD) and the *Groupeement Syndical des Travailleurs de Centrafrique* (GSTC) issued communiques opposing the impeachment of the President of the National Assembly and about one thousand civilians carried out a peaceful demonstration in front of MINUSCA's HQ in Bangui in opposition to the impeachment. On 26 October, around 6.00 p.m., Members of Parliament voted to impeach the President of the National Assembly. Some minutes later, armed elements in PK5 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District of Bangui fired several gunshots in protest of the impeachment of Meckassoua, a Muslim and also parliamentary representative of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District. Gunshots were also

<sup>7</sup> On 02 October, during a meeting between MINUSCA, members of the UN Panel of Experts and UPC political coordinator – Ahmat Ali and the UPC Liaison Officer – 'General' Adam, the UPC representatives expressed their disappointment with the Government for not informing them on the deployment of the FACA to Bambari. The representatives stressed that they will follow any further instructions from their leader – Ali Darassa

<sup>8</sup> On 11 October, a MINUSCA Task Force raided a UPC base where they arrested seven UPC elements, and confiscated weapons and ammunitions including four AK – 47s, a rifle and 632 rounds of ammunitions. At night around 8.00 p.m., UPC retaliated and fired gunshots in Adjï neighbourhood, causing panic amongst the civilians. The Prefect and relatives of the President of the Islamic Committee reported that some of the elements threatened to attack their homes. The UPC elements also opened fire on MINUSCA patrol and around 10.05 p.m., a Quick Reaction Force was dispatched to reinforce MINUSCA Forces. It is alleged that civilians were pillaged in Mprebou, Clamenji and Sica neighbourhoods. On 13 October, UPC elements forced local traders to close their shops in the Muslim dominated areas in Adjï and Bornou neighbourhoods as part of the protest against the FACA in the area. Due to insecurity, HRD is yet to determine if there were any civilian casualties during this attack and previous attacks. On 14 October the seven UPC combatants arrested by MINUSCA were transferred to the SRI in Bangui for further investigations.

<sup>9</sup> Located approximately 75 kilometers west of Obo

<sup>10</sup> Located approximately 62 kilometers south of Bambari

<sup>11</sup> Located approximately 100 kilometers north west of Kouango

fired in the 4<sup>th</sup> District, in the vicinity of the National Assembly. Members of ex-Séléka factions FPRC/MPC also fired gunshots in Bambari, Bria and Ndele later that evening.

12. In Ndele, FPRC leader Abdoulaye Hissene, issued a communique in which he condemned the impeachment and requested GoCAR to withdraw all State agents within 48 hours in areas controlled by the ex-Séléka. However, FPRC's political coordinator Djafar Adoum later distanced himself from the communique and urged government officials in these regions to continue their duties with no fear of reprisal. Again, on 28 October in Kaga-Bandoro and Birao, other ex-Séléka factions such as the FPRC including the FPRC Vice President 'General' Nourredine Adam, MPC and MNLC distanced themselves from Abdoulaye Hissene's communique and reaffirmed their commitment to the peace process under the African Initiative. During a meeting in PK-5 on 28 October, Karim Meckassoua called for peace and the respect for the Constitution and laws of CAR.
13. On 29 October, in accordance with the internal regulations, the national Assembly members met to nominate the new President of the National Assembly. During elections to replace the impeached former President of the National Assembly, a Member of Parliament, Alfred Yekatom alias "Rambo", a former anti-Balaka leader, fired a shot in the air following a heated discussion with a fellow Member of Parliament. Internal Security Forces subsequently arrested him. Two other parliamentarians affiliated with the anti-Balaka (Florent Kema and Aristide Symphorien Nampessa) were found to be in possession of firearms when security forces searched all members of the National Assembly and their vehicles after the shooting. Both were questioned by security forces for several hours, then released. Following interrogation, Yekatom was transferred to the Camp de Roux detention facility in Bangui and investigations are ongoing. Finally, Laurent Ngon-Baba an MP from Baboua (Nana-Mambéré) and former Minister under President François Bozizé (2003-2012) was elected as the new President of the National Assembly with 112 votes in favour, one abstention and three votes against.
14. As was the case in previous months, targeted attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers and their equipment by the various armed groups resulted in several breaches of international humanitarian law. During the month under review, HRD recorded 49 violations of international humanitarian law (30.6% of the overall number of incidents), all attributed to the armed groups and affecting 106 victims (40% of the overall number of victims) with 57 men, five women, 26 boys, eight girls, one unknown individual and an additional nine attacks during which an unknown number of persons (groups of collective victims) were affected. On 04 October, in area 10 kilometres north west of Nana-Bakassa on the Boguila axis (Ouham), four unknown armed men dressed in military fatigues intercepted a Ministry of Health team who were on a vaccination campaign where they pillaged personal belongings including the 350,000 XAF before fleeing the scene.

#### A. Abuses by the ex-Séléka splinter groups: FPRC, UPC, MPC, FPRC/MPC coalition, and armed Fulani

15. The UPC (20 incidents), FPRC (12 incidents), MPC (six incidents), armed Fulani (four incidents) and FPRC/MPC Coalition (three incidents), were the perpetrators of the 45 human rights abuses documented in October which affected 86 victims. The UPC were responsible for 42 victims, FPRC, 20 victims and MPC, 14 victims. These figures represent a 47.7 percent decrease in the total number of incidents and a 43.4 percent decrease in the total number of victims compared to the previous month which recorded 86 incidents and 152 victims. The reduction of violence and tension in Haute-Kotto prefecture due to ongoing negotiations and dialogues encouraging peace, accounts for the decline in the number of incidents and victims as compared to the previous period.
16. Nonetheless, in October, the different ex-Séléka splinter groups accounted for 28.1 percent of the total number of incidents and 32.5 percent of the total number of victims. These armed groups perpetrated:
  - (i) eight incidents of killings [UPC (4), FPRC (2), MPC (2)] and one death threat [FPPC (1)], and affecting 12 men, and two girls;
  - (ii) fourteen incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity [UPC (6), FPRC (4), MPC (3), and armed Fulani (1)], and affecting 22 men, four women, one boy and three girls;
  - (iii) six rape incidents [armed Fulani (3), UPC (2), and FPRC/MPC Coalition (1)], affecting five women and two girls;
  - (iv) eight incidents of deprivation of liberty [UPC (6), FPRC (2) and FPRC/MPC (2)] affecting 26 men and one woman;

- (v) two incidents of attacks, destruction or pillaging of property by the FPRC (1) and UPC (1) affecting one woman and two groups of unknown individuals (collective victims) mostly cases where houses of victims were pillage, vandalized and/or torched during attacks;
- (vi) two abductions [UPC (1) and FPRC (1)] affecting two men;
- (vii) one incident of unlawful attacks and pillaging humanitarian workers and their equipment by FPRC affecting one groups of unknown individuals (collective victims);
- (viii) one incident where the MPC recruited one boy and one girl into their armed group.

17. Of the 45 abuses, 36 of them, namely 80 percent, occurred in – Haute-Kotto (7), Ouaka (11), Nana-Grébizi (10), Mbomou (3), and Haut-Mbomou (5) prefectures which have been identified as the main hotspots in the month of October.

## B. Abuses by the anti-Balaka

18. The anti-Balaka were responsible for 69 abuses affecting 106 victims. This represents **43.1** percent of the total number of incidents and **40** percent of the total number of victims recorded during the month. These figures also represent a 64.3 percent increase in the number of incidents compared to the previous month (42 abuses in September) and a 58.2 percent increase in the number of victims (106 victims in September). During the reporting period, due the rising tension between the anti-Balaka and the different ex-Séléka splinter groups particularly the UPC, the anti-Balaka continued to target civilians based on their ethnic or religious affiliations. These attacks were mainly observed in Ouaka (Bambari) and Mbomou (Bangassou) prefectures. In other incidents, the anti-Balaka targeted civilians because they were accused of witchcraft and charlatanism and in other cases in order to confiscate their property for economic gains.
19. Documented abuses by the anti-Balaka were violations of the right to life with 14 incidents involving the killing of 10 men, five women, one boy and three unknown adults; and seven incidents involving death threats against 14 men. There were also 22 incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity, affecting 22 men and four women who were either subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment or injured. The anti-Balaka also perpetrated 10 cases of rape against seven women and four girls. Other breaches of international humanitarian law committed by the anti-Balaka included: **(i)** five incidents of recruitment and use of 18 children ( 14 boys and four girls) into their armed group **(ii)** four incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of humanitarian workers and their equipment, affecting four groups of unknown victims (collective victims); **(iii)** three incidents of arbitrary deprivation of liberty affecting three men; **(iv)** three incidents of abduction affecting two men, one woman, four boys, and three girls; and **(v)** one incident of destruction and pillaging of property. Of the 69 abuses committed by the anti-Balaka, 48 of them or 69.56 percent occurred in the main hotspots identified during the month in review, particularly Mbomou (23), Ouaka (11), Haute-Kotto (9), and Nana-Grébizi (3) prefectures.

## C. Abuses by the other armed groups notably the MNLC, 3R of Sidiki, SIRIRI, RJ, LRA and PK5 armed groups (Bangui)

20. The other armed groups, notably the MNLC (16), PK5 of Bangui criminal gangs (8), LRA (7), 3R of Sidiki (4) RJ (3), and SIRIRI (2) accounted for **40** abuses affecting **64** victims. This represents **25** percent of the total number of incidents and **24.1** percent of the total number of victims recorded during the month. These figures also represent an 11.1 percent increase in the number of incidents compared to the previous month (36 abuses in September) though and 3 percent decrease in the number of victims (66 victims in September). The MNLC (21 victims) and LRA (19 victims) elements recorded a high number of victims due to their activities in Mambéré-Kadéï and Haut-Mbomou prefectures where they harass, extorted and abducted civilians to gain economic strength.
21. Documented abuses by these armed groups included nine incidents of killing affecting seven men and three death threat incidents affecting 11 men, one woman and one boy; seven incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity, affecting 10 men. The victims were either subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment and injured. There were also five incidents involving the rape of two women and three girls; nine abductions affecting 19 men, two women, three boys, and one unknown child; five incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of civilian property affecting three men, one unknown adult and one group of unknown persons; the occupation of one school by the 3R where an unknown

number of children are impacted (collective victims); and three incidents where the LRA and PK5 armed groups (Bangui) recruited four boys into their armed groups.

#### D. Human Rights Violations attributable to State agents

22. State agents<sup>12</sup> were responsible for **six** violations (3.8% of the total number of incidents for October) of international human rights law committed against **nine** victims (3.4% of the total number of victims for October) committed by the CAR Armed Forces – FACA (five incidents and eight victims), and the Police (one incident with one victim). There was a 100 percent increase in the total number of incidents and 200 percent increase in the number of victims as compared to the previous month (three violations and three victims in September). Violations by State actors included killings - two incidents<sup>13</sup> with two men killed; one case of cruel and degrading treatment by the FACA on one man; two cases of arbitrary arrest and detention of three men by FACA; and one case where FACA soldiers expropriated the property of three men. HRD is concerned over the growing number of violations recorded against the FACA soldiers and will continue to closely monitor their actions and record any further violations by this unit.

#### IV. Children in armed conflict

23. During the period under review, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) documented and verified 15 (**26**) incidents of grave child rights violations directly affecting **13** children (nine boys and four girls). This reflects a 42.3 percent decrease compared to 26 incidents verified during the previous reporting period. The decrease is attributed to the significant drop in the number of verified incidents on attacks against humanitarian workers and their premises/equipment by armed men (two incidents as opposed to 13 incidents recorded in September and thus 84.6% decrease in the number of recorded incidents for October).
24. The recruitment and use of children was the most recurrent violation involving the recruitment of 19 boys and five girls by the anti-Balaka, PK5 criminal gangs in Bangui and MPC and LRA. Other violations which affected children during the month were rapes, the denial of humanitarian access, killings, an attack against medical personnel and the occupation of a school. The PK5 criminal gangs led by “Force” and “Danda” were responsible for the highest number of verified incidents (4) followed by the different ex-Séléka splinter groups (3), the anti-Balaka (3), unidentified armed men (2), the MNLC (1), LRA (1) and 3R (1). On 23 October in an area in Ngoutere village<sup>14</sup> (Ouham-Pendé), humanitarians 3R elements occupied a primary school which they used as their base following their attack of Ngoutere village on 18 October.
25. The geographical locations where incidents of grave child rights violations occurred included Bangui with six incidents, Nana-Grébizi (4), Ouham (3), Haut-Mbomou (1) and Nana-Mambéré (1). The many incidents in Bangui were due to the recruitment and use of children by PK5 criminal gangs “Force” and “Danda” which were verified by CTFMR. Due to CTFMR’s advocacy, the anti-Balaka released 15 children (11 boys and four girls) in Nana-Grébizi prefecture. All these children are in currently in reintegration programmes supported by UNICEF and implementing partners.

#### V. Conflict Related Sexual Violence

26. In October, HRD documented 22 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 23 victims (13 women, and 10 girls). There was a 15.8 percent increase in the number of incidents and a 21.1 percent increase in the number of victims compared with 19 cases affecting 19 victims for the previous period. The violations committed were rape/gang rapes perpetrated by the anti-Balaka (10), LRA (4), armed Fulani (3), UPC (2), FPRC/MPC Coalition (1), and MNLC (1). Most of the incidents were recorded in Ouaka and Mbomou prefectures. In one incident which occurred on 8 October

<sup>12</sup> 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), *Forces de sécurité intérieure* (FSI)), 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)), the *Unité Mixte d’Intervention Rapide et de Répression des Violences Sexuelles* (UMIRR), administrative authorities as well as the military - ‘*Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA)

<sup>13</sup> The two incidents of killings by the Police and FACA occurred on 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 but got recorded by the HRD in October 2018

<sup>14</sup> Located approximately 78 kilometers south west of Paoua, on the Bocaranga-Bozoum axis

2018 around 8.00 a.m. in a forest area between Chimbolo village and Bambari (Ouaka) two armed UPC elements raped a 25-year-old Muslim woman while she was heading to Bambari. The victim received psychosocial support from an INGO and medical care on 10 October.

## **VI. Observations on trends and patterns**

27. As observed during the previous months, ongoing mistrust among rival armed groups continued in October particularly between the anti-Balaka and UPC, thus fuelling tension and provoking insecurity and more threats to the protection of civilians, particularly in areas under their control. HRD notes that despite the recent decline in the number of cases of abuses and improved security situation in the Haute-Kotto prefecture, the armed groups seem to transfer their activities from one region to another, thus making the nature of the security situation unpredictable. The signing of a declaration of agreement by representatives of anti-Balaka Mokom, FPRC, UPC and MPC committed these armed groups to the restoration of peace, respect human rights, and the freedom of movement of persons and goods in Bria, Kaga-Bandoro and Bambari. However, continuous retaliatory and targeted attacks by the different rival armed groups remain persistent in these regions.
28. HRD notes that the town of Bambari, which had seen some peaceful moments following the expulsion of UPC leader – Ali Darassa – in February 2017, has once more become a cause for concern due to recent clashes between the UPC and anti-Balaka groups. As the major ex-Séléka splinter factions – FPRC, MPC, UPC and RPRC– continue to work closely together against the anti-Balaka, sometimes within the context of a FPRC/MPC/UPC or FPRC/RPRC Coalition, HRD has noted that the UPC is once more growing strong in Ouaka prefecture and trying to reassert its position in Bambari which is considered as the UPC stronghold due to the support of the FPRC.
29. HRD remains concerned over the increased recorded violations committed by State actors, particularly the FACA soldiers. Cases recorded during the month of October attest to the fact that the FACA soldiers need to be constantly guided on human rights concepts and principles particularly in the use of firearms, arrest and detentions and the proper posture/discipline required for military officers. HRD also notes that division along ethnic and religious lines is still deeply rooted within the community and negatively impacts on the proper conduct of some military officers. In Paoua, (Ouham-Pendé) on 18 October, FACA soldiers arbitrarily arrested and detained two men of Muslim faith claiming that they are affiliated with the ex-Séléka, although these men are well known traders in the area. The continuous lack of discipline observed by the FACA unit and the tendency of taking the law into their hands could continue to instill mistrust in the government and dependence on armed groups, particularly in regions under their control.
30. HRD has noted with concern the constant increase in the activities of the SIRIRI armed group in Mambéré-Kadéï prefecture and significant in number of human rights abuses that elements of the MNLC have committed during the month. The activities of both groups pose a risk of continuous human rights abuses in the western part of the country thus destabilizing areas which have previously been very calm. HRD will continue to monitor their activities and provide early warning to the Mission Leadership.
31. Again, incidents of attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers and their equipment, schools and hospitals continue to prevent the opening of a humanitarian corridor for civilians, particularly the IDPs, as well as guaranteeing their protection. During the reporting period, HRD once more recorded a high number of attacks on INGOs and their personnel or equipment (7) perpetrated by either the anti-Balaka, the FPRC and 3R of Sidiki in Bossangoa and Bouca (Ouham), Paoua (Ouham-Pendé) and Kaga-Bandoro (Nana-Grébizi).

## **VII. Incitement to violence and hate speech**

32. As part of its mandate to support the government in its peacebuilding process, on 17 October, HRD attended a workshop organized by the religious platform and KAICIID Dialogue Centre with the support of the office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide. Thirty-six journalists (26 men, 10 women) participated in the seminar whose objective was to prevent religious and ethnic hatred and incitement to violence in Central Africa. HRD made a presentation focused on the fight against hate speech and MINUSCA's contribution towards putting an end to all forms of incitement to hatred and violence. This training falls in line with the President



of the *Haut Conseil de la Communication* (HCC) request for training journalists on combatting hate speech and incitement to violence.

## **VIII. Support efforts by the national stakeholders to address transitional justice as part of the peace and reconciliation process**

33. During the reporting Period GoCAR Steering Committee on the Truth-Seeking Commission (SCTSC) held a meeting to assess its progress. Chaired by the Prime Minister, the meeting reviewed the road map on national consultations to accommodate the drafting process and agree on a realistic timeline towards the completion of SCTSC's mandated task. A meeting with the Technical Secretariat followed this consultation, with the attendance of African Union, Humanitarian Dialogue and MINUSCA. Issues raised during this meeting included its deliberation modalities, working methods and communication among its members. Dialogue is underway for a common understanding of the Steering Committee's attributions, methodology and procedural rules.

## **IX. Support to fight against impunity, HRDDP and accountability mechanisms**

### **A. Implementation of HRDDP**

34. During the reporting period, HRDDP Secretariat received 11 requests and HRDDP Task Force approved nine from UNPOL, UNMAS, the Force and SSRU for the HRDDP process to support national security and defense forces through trainings. HRDDP secretariat also screened 224 of which 134 were from the internal security forces (police and gendarmes) and 90 from the defense forces (FACA) who were to benefit from UN support. A risk assessment on donations of uniforms to the CAR ISF is still pending until the reception of mitigating measures from UNPOL.

### **B. Support to the fight against impunity**

35. Significant developments transpired in the fight against impunity by CAR authorities. HRD continued to work jointly with UNPOL in the development and implementation of plans to arrest the country's most dangerous criminals under the Urgent Temporary Measures (UTM).
36. As part of the MINUSCA Working Group on Major Judicial Proceedings (WGMJP), HRDDP Secretariat participated in four working sessions to conduct analysis of violations committed by alleged perpetrators to facilitate the implementation of MINUSCA arrest plan in direct support of the Mission political strategy.
37. Following the recommendation of the HRDDP Secretariat, in October, the Director General of the Police replaced the deputy commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District at police station in Bangui, who was accused of human rights violations in Bria in 2016. This decision was made in accordance with the mitigating measures proposed by MINUSCA for its continued support, through UNPOL, to concerned police station.
38. On behalf of the SRSG, the CoS petitioned the Inspector General of Police on 5 October 2018 to report on the violation of a 36-year-old man by a corporal from the FACA unit detached in OBO. The CoS requested to GoCAR to investigate these allegations and to take action in accordance with the Central African laws. Until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018, no action has been taken by the GoCAR.
39. On 22 October, the Special Criminal Court launched its judicial activities including the beginning of investigations by the Court. During the inauguration ceremony the HRD Mapping report was highlighted as one of the reference documents the prosecutors will use during its work. The Court now has both international and national judges.

### **C. Support to the vetting Process**

40. HRD received an additional 17 requests from the ISF for vetting which brings the number from 3254 to 3271. HRD also vetted one candidate to the position of Judge from a request submitted by the Special Criminal Court.

41. During the reporting period, HRD continued the vetting of 655 elements of the FACA BIT2
42. The HRD submitted to the office of the SRSG on 9 October a report on the vetting of 197 candidates for the recruitment of 150 correction officers, which will be submitted to GoCAR via the SRSG's office. HRD received on 10 October a report on the implementation of mitigation measures for the period of 15 August to 10 October 2018 from Obo field office. HRD provided some requested documents to ICC through OHCHR in Geneva.

## **X. Other Human Rights Developments**

43. MINUSCA continued to engage with line ministries and other UN Agencies to provide technical and logistical support for the administration of justice. On 24 October, HRD, through MINUSCA QIPs, handed over to local authorities and beneficiaries several QIPs funded equipment. These pieces of equipment were in support of the criminal justice system to facilitate their work in the fight against impunity with the main beneficiaries being the Court of First Instance (President of the tribunal and Public Prosecutor) and the Gendarmerie brigades of Bossangoa, Bouca and Nana Bakassa. These equipments included stationary four motorcycles (one each for Bouca and Nana Bakassa respectively and one each for the Office of the President of the Tribunal and the Office of the Prosecutor), desktops and multifunction printers, executive tables, chairs, generator etc. The project also rehabilitated the Bossangoa's Gendarmerie cell.

\*\*\*\*\* **END** \*\*\*\*\*