

Human Rights Division

Monthly Report

September 2018

I. Key developments

During the month of September, the security and human rights situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) continued to be cause for concern due to frequent attacks and violent acts against civilians by armed groups and armed men 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 September 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 FPRC including its different coalition members and the anti-Balaka in Haute-Kotto prefecture, contributed to the continuous deterioration of the security situation in Bria leading to civilian displacements and an increased need for humanitarian assistance.

MINUSCA Human Rights Division (HRD) recorded 167 new incidents of violations/abuses of international human rights as well as breaches to international humanitarian law affecting 288 victims, including 103 men, 50 women, 32 children and 103 unidentified victims. These figures represent a 7.7 percent increase in the number of incidents and a 16.5 percent decrease in the number of victims compared to the previous reporting period during which HRD documented 155 incidents of violations/abuses affecting 345 victims. Targeted attacks and fighting among rival armed groups continued to negatively impact on the protection of civilians, resulting in 53 civilians killed and 12 injured in September.

Armed groups were responsible for 164 incidents which affected 285 victims while State actors, including members of the Armed Forces (FACA) and OCRB, were responsible for three incidents affecting three victims with cases of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity including torture.

The most recurrent violations recorded during the month of September 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, denial of humanitarian access, and occupation of a school.

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) and Defense Forces (IDF).

As a result of its investigations, HRD has been able to confirm cases of human rights violations perpetrated by the OCRB unit and Director of Bimbo prison in Bangui. 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. Moreover, these cases have been brought to the attention of the Head of State by the SRSG. The judicial authorities have initiated investigations on some of these cases.

HRD provided technical assistance to the Steering Committee of the future Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission. With the cooperation between the HRD and UNPOL to establish the criminal profiling of dangerous criminals in CAR under the Urgent Temporary Measures, a notorious anti-Balaka leader "33-40" was arrested in Bangui on 15 September, by the National Gendarmerie and detained at the *Section de Recherche et d'Investigation*. HRD also completed six 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, particularly in Bria, Haute-Kotto prefecture.

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 judicial investigations;
- Expedite investigations into the case of torture and/or ill treatment and human rights violations attributable to both OCRB, the Director of Bimbo Prison and FACA soldiers.

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; and
- 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.

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

1. During the month of September, the security and human rights situation continued to be cause for concern, particularly in Haute-Kotto and Nana-Grébizi prefectures. Rivalry among the different armed groups coupled with targeted attacks continued to adversely impact on the protection of civilians as well as on the humanitarian and human rights situation in the country.
2. As demonstrated in the annex of this report, HRD in September documented 167 new incidents¹ of violations and abuses of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 288 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 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

including 103 men, 50 women, 32 children (12 boys, 17 girls and three unknown minors) and 103 unidentified victims. Although there was a **7.7** percent increase in the number of incidents, the number of victims decreased by **16.5** percent compared to the previous period (August 2018) which recorded 155 incidents affecting 345 victims. The decrease in the number of victims is partly due to the fact that HRD has been informed of attacks by the FPRC and its coalition members on villages located on the Bria-Irabanda axis; however, due to security constraints and the inaccessibility of these villages which are located in dense forest areas, HRD has not yet been able to verify the allegations. A case in point is that of unconfirmed reports which suggest that the ex-Séléka coalition elements attacked Matabissi village, PK 30 on the Boungou II axis, Haute-Kotto prefecture, killing about 53 civilians in Tamangora village and four other civilians (three men and one woman) in Yakada village, PK 7 at Dambaro. HRD is yet to verify these allegations.

3. During the reporting period, continued fighting amongst rival armed groups as well as attacks against the civilian population, and humanitarian actors, continued to impact negatively on the protection of civilians thus increasing the volatile nature of the security situation particularly in Bria (Haute-Kotto), Kaga-Bandoro (Nana-Grébizi), Bambari (Ouaka) and increasingly Berberati (Mambéré-Kadéï).
4. HRD recorded the killing of 66 civilians (33 men, 16 women, four boys, three girls, one unknown child, eight unknown adults and one group comprised of an unknown number of persons and injury or maiming of 12 others (nine men and three women). Of the 66 civilians killed, 53 of them (24 men, 14 women, 5 boys, three girls and seven unknown individuals) were victims of attacks carried out by mainly the FPRC (10 civilians), RPRC (12 civilians) and the FPRC/UPC/MPC Coalition (12 civilians), with the injury and maiming of all 12 civilians. The remaining 13 civilians who were killed during the month were victims of targeted and reprisal attacks based on their ethnic or religious affiliations. Most of these killings (26 thus 49.1%) and injuries (six thus 50%) were recorded in Bria. The ex-Séléka splinter groups (FPRC, RPRC, UPC, UPC/FPRC/MPC coalition, FRPC/RPRC coalition and armed Fulani) were responsible for the highest number of casualties, with 45 killings (85%) and six injuries (50%), followed by the anti-Balaka who accounted for four killings (7.6%) and four injuries (33.3%). Other elements responsible for civilian casualties included the MNLC with three civilians killed (5.7%) and two others injured (16.7%) and unidentified armed group with one civilian killed (1.7%). The anti-Balaka have been more active in the past nine months due to their quest for new territory and expansion. Clashes and targeted reprisal attacks between them and the different ex-Séléka splinter groups remain a challenge to the peace and security of CAR.
5. Apart from killings and injuries, other recurrent human rights violations and abuses committed during the reporting period were: (a) death threats with 15 incidents affecting 13 victims; (b) physical and mental integrity with 16 incidents causing 17 victims including one victim of torture; and (c) conflict related sexual violence with 18 rape incidents and one forced marriage affecting 16 rape victims (six women, 10 girls and two unknown children) and one woman forcefully married by the anti-Balaka.
6. The reporting period also saw some flagrant breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL). HRD recorded: (d) seven incidents of abductions affecting 19 victims; (e) nine incidents of arbitrary deprivation of liberty affecting 26 victims; (f) destruction or pillaging/extortion of property including illegal taxation, 52 incidents affecting nine men, one woman, five unknown adults and 69 groups of unknown victims; (g) 13 incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of humanitarian personnel including their equipment, affecting 12 male INGO staff members, 11 other humanitarian workers whose exact details were not provided and another eight groups of unidentified victims and (h) the illegal occupation of one school by the UPC in Mbrés following Ali Darassa's visit to Kaga-Bandoro between 12 to 13 September.
7. Armed groups² accounted for 164 incidents (98.2% of the total number of incidents) and 286 victims (99.3% of the total number of victims) – 100 men, 50 women, 12 boys, 17 girls, three unknown minors and 103 unidentified victims of which 69 involved attacks where an unknown number of persons (collective victims) were affected and more than 64 houses were pillaged and subsequently vandalized or torched. Though the total number of incidents increased slightly by 7.9 percent as compared to the previous month (152 cases in August), there was a 15.6 percent decrease in

the month of September 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.

² These armed groups include the anti-Balaka, the UPC, FPRC, RPRC, MPC, FPRC/RPRC Coalition, FPRC/UPC/MPC Coalition, FPRC/AH, FPRC/MPC Coalition, armed Fulani, MNLC, LRA, FORCE, SIRIRI and other armed groups

the total number of victims compared to the previous month, which recorded 339 victims. As earlier mentioned, the decrease in the number of victims is due to challenges faced by HRD in the timely verification of allegations due to the inaccessibility of the different villages in remote areas in Haute-Kotto prefecture. HRD will continue to conduct verification field missions to these areas where allegations of human rights abuses committed by mainly the FPRC and its different coalition members in Bria and surrounding areas of the prefecture.

8. During the month, tension between the anti-Balaka and the different ex-Séléka remained high, particularly in Haute-Kotto prefecture. On 06 to 07 September for example, armed FPRC elements abducted and killed seven IDP women and two IDP men near the PK3 IDP camp in Bria, in retaliation for an alleged ambush by the anti-Balaka on the FPRC on 05 and 06 September on the Ippy axis. This incident provoked IDPs to demonstrate in front of MINUSCA camp on 07 September, where they deposited seven (five women and two men) out of the nine dead bodies in front of MINUSCA's main gate and threw two hand grenades into MINUSCA's base, which exploded with no casualties. The leadership of FPRC denied being responsible for the killings. It is worth mentioning that this incident occurred five days after the signing of a declaration of agreement in which armed groups' representatives (including anti-Balaka Mokom, FPRC, UPC and MPC) committed to the restoration of peace, the respect for human rights, the free movement of persons and goods, and the African Initiative (AI) on 29 August in Khartoum.
 9. During the reporting period, HRD observed a continuous influx of civilians from different villages towards the PK3 IDP and MINUSCA's base in Bria. These IDPs reported attacks on their villages by armed FPRC elements with the support of their coalition members. Due to these incidents, Bria continued to be the major hotspot in September and HRD continues to monitor and conduct further investigations into the incidents to ascertain the exact number of civilian casualties.
 10. 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 to international humanitarian law. During the month under review, HRD recorded 82 violations of international humanitarian law (49.1% of the overall number of incidents), all attributed to the armed groups and affecting 161 victims (55.9% of the overall number of victims) with 39 men, 20 women, six boys, two girls, 16 unknown individuals and an additional 78 attacks during which an unknown number of persons (groups of collective victims) were affected. On 07 September, around 2.00 p.m. in Zara village³ three armed Fulani elements attacked an INGO vehicle and made away with the staff members' personal belongings (five international staff and two national staff) including cellular phones, cameras, bags and approximately 300,000 XAF.
 11. In another incident, unidentified armed men who spoke French with an Arabic accent, attacked another INGO residence in Zangba on 19 September around 09:00 p.m. According to the INGO personnel, the elements split into two groups: one group went to the women's rooms and the other group to the men's room. They intimidated the personnel and also threatened to kill the INGO chief. They seized mobile phones and requested the sum of 1,600,000 XAF. As the staff members did not have the requested sum, the armed elements stabbed the INGO chief and stripped the staff members in search of money. The elements finally pillaged the pharmacy of the INGO and fled to an unknown destination.
- A. Abuses by the ex-Séléka splinter groups: FPRC, UPC, FPRC-AH faction, FPRC/MPC coalition, MPC, and FPRC/MPC/UPC coalition**
12. The FPRC (45 incidents), UPC (11 incidents), FPRC/UPC/MPC Coalition (eight incidents), FPRC/RPRC Coalition (five incidents), MPC (five incidents), RPRC (four incidents), armed Fulani (four incidents), FPRC-AH faction (two incidents), and FPRC/MPC Coalition (two incidents), were the perpetrators of the human rights abuses documented in September amongst the ex-Séléka splinter groups. These different groups committed a total of 86 abuses affecting 152 victims, with the FPRC (60 victims), FPRC/RPRC Coalition (31 victims) and RPRC (17 victims) responsible for the highest number of incidents and victims. Based on the documented cases perpetrated by the different ex-Séléka splinter groups, there was a 45.8 percent increase in the total number of incidents and a 17.3 percent decrease in the total number of victims as compared to the previous month which recorded 59 incidents and 185 victims.

³ Located approximately 22 kilometers north west of Paoua

13. In September, the different ex-Séléka splinter groups accounted for 51.5 percent of the total number of incidents and 52.8 percent of the total number of victims. These armed groups perpetrated:

- (i) 20 incidents of killings [FPRC/MPC/UPC Coalition (8), FPRC (3), UPC (3), FPRC/RPRC Coalition (3), RPRC (2), armed Fulani (1)] and one death threat [UPC (1)], and affecting 20 men, 14 women, two boys, four girls, one unknown minor and eight unknown adults;
- (ii) seven incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity [FPRC (3), UPC (2) FPRC/MPC Coalition (1), and RPRC (1)], and affecting six men and two women;
- (iii) seven rape incidents [UPC (3), armed Fulani (2), MPC (1), and FPRC (1)], affecting two women, six girls and one unknown child;
- (iv) 43 incidents of attacks, destruction or pillaging of property by the FPRC (37), FPRC/RPRC (2), MPC (1), UPC (1), RPRC (1) and FPRC-AH (1) affecting three men, two women and 63 groups of unknown individuals (collective victims) mostly cases where houses of victims were pillaged, vandalized and/or torched during attacks;
- (v) three incidents of deprivation of liberty [MPC (1), FPRC/MPC (1) and FPRC-AH (1)] affecting four men and two boys;
- (vi) three abductions [MPC (2), and FPRC (1)] affecting two men, one woman, one boy and one girl;
- (vii) one incident of unlawful attacks and pillaging humanitarian workers and their equipment by armed Fulani affecting seven male staff and also the occupation of one school by UPC elements in Mbrés which prevented an unknown number of children from educational services.

14. Of the 86 abuses, 73 of them, namely 84.9 percent, occurred in – Haute-Kotto (56), Ouaka (9), and Nana-Grébizi (8) prefectures which have been identified as the main hotspots in the month of September.

B. Abuses by the anti-Balaka

15. The anti-Balaka were responsible for 42 abuses affecting 67 victims. This represents 25.1 percent of the total number of incidents and 23.3 percent of the total number of victims recorded during the month. These figures also represent a 2.3 percent decrease in the number of incidents compared to the previous month (43 abuses in August) and a 11.7 percent increase in the number of victims (60 victims in August). During the reporting period, due to the rising tension between the anti-Balaka and the different ex-Séléka splinter groups particularly the FPRC and UPC, the anti-Balaka continued to target civilians based on their ethnic or religious affiliations. These attacks were mainly observed in Haute-Kotto (Bria) and Nana Grébizi (Kaga – Bandoro) 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. Documented abuses by the anti-Balaka were violations of the right to life with two incidents involving the killing of three men and two boys; and three incidents involving death threats against eight men, four women, one boy, one girl and one group of unknown individuals. There were also eight incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity, affecting 10 men and two women who were either subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment, maimed or injured. The anti-Balaka also perpetrated nine cases of rape against four women, four girls and one unknown child and one forced marriage against one woman.

16. Other breaches of international humanitarian law committed by the anti-Balaka included: (i) four incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of humanitarian workers and their equipment, affecting two men and two groups of unknown victims; (ii) four incidents of arbitrary deprivation of liberty affecting one man, 14 women and one girl; and (iii) three incidents of attacks, destruction or pillaging of property including illegal taxation affecting five groups of unknown individuals. Of the 43 abuses committed by the anti-Balaka, 17 of them or 40.5 percent occurred in the main hotspots identified during the month in review, particularly Haute-Kotto, Nana-Grébizi and Ouaka prefectures.

C. Abuses by the other armed groups notably the MNLC, 3R of Sidiki, SIRIRI, RJ and other unidentified armed groups

17. The other armed groups, notably the MNLC (6), SIRIRI (9), RJ (3), 3R of Sidiki (1) and other unidentified armed groups (17) accounted for 36 abuses affecting 66 victims. This represents 21.6 percent of the total number of incidents and 22.9 percent of the total number of victims recorded during the month. These figures also represent a 28 percent

decrease in the number of incidents compared to the previous month (50 abuses in August) and a 30 percent decrease in the number of victims (94 victims in August). The 3R (23 victims) and SIRIRI (29 victims) elements recorded a high number of victims due to their activities in Nana-Mambéré and Mambéré-Kadéï prefectures where they harass and extort civilians to gain economic strength.

18. Documented abuses by these armed groups were mainly five incidents of killing affecting seven men and three death threat incidents affecting two men and one woman; six incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity, affecting five men and one boy. The victims were either subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment, maimed or injured. There were also two incidents involving the rape of two girls; eight incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of humanitarian workers and their equipment affecting three men, 11 unknown adults and five groups of unknown individuals (collective victims); another six incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of civilian property affecting eight men, two unknown adults and three groups of unknown persons and four incidents of abductions affecting seven men, three women, and three boys; and two incidents of arbitrary deprivation of liberty of two men.

D. Human Rights Violations attributable to State agents

19. State agents⁴ were responsible for **three** violations (1.8% of the total number of incidents for August) of international human rights law committed against **three** men (1% of the total number of victims for August) committed by the CAR Armed Forces – FACA, the specialized police unit - OCRB and an agent from the Ministry of Water and Forestry. In one of the cases, the OCRB unit detained and tortured a male detainee accused of killing a priest during the attack on Fatima Church in Bangui on 01 May 2018. In an interview with this detainee, he reported being tortured by the Director of the OCRB unit as well as some of his officers while at the OCRB holding cell from 10 August to 11 September. The detainee reported never being brought before a judicial authority, denied legal representation and family visits. On 11 September, the detainee was placed under committal order and charged with criminal conspiracy, unlawful possession of weapons of war, and murder. He was subsequently transferred to the Ngaragba prison.

IV. Children in armed conflict

20. During the period under review, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) documented and verified **26** incidents of grave child rights violations directly affecting **12** children (five boys and seven girls). This reflects a 30 percent increase compared to 20 incidents verified during the previous reporting period. This increase could be attributed to the rise in attacks against humanitarian premises and its personnel by armed men.
21. Denial of humanitarian access manifested by attacks against humanitarian workers including their equipment was noted to be the most recurrent violation (13), followed by rape (6), abduction (5), killing (1) and occupation of a school (1). Out of the 13 incidents of denial humanitarian access, nine were committed by unidentified armed individuals and four by the anti-Balaka. No link could be established between the unidentified armed individuals and any issued orders by the leadership of armed groups but the fact that the incidents occurred in areas where armed groups are active indicates that the perpetrators could be members of any of the structured armed groups acting in need of survival. During attacks, perpetrators stole money, computers, phones, food and at times medical supplies which could be easily disposed of in the markets. The attacks impacted negatively on the delivery of humanitarian assistance and on 10 September, one INGO in Bouca⁵ (Ouham) suspended its activities and relocated its staff and equipment to Bossangoa, while on 18 September in Kaga-Bandoro, another INGO suspended its activities at the prefectoral hospital.
22. The geographical locations where incidents of grave child rights violations occurred included Nana-Grébizi with 11 incidents, Ouham (5), Haute-Kotto (4), Ouham-Pendé (2), Ouaka (2), Bangui (1) and Basse-Kotto. The many incidents in Nana-Grébizi could be explained by the presence in the prefecture of several ex-Séléka factions and the anti-Balaka.

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), 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)

⁵ Located approximately 87 kilometers east of Bossangoa

V. Conflict Related Sexual Violence

23. In September, HRD documented 19 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 19 victims (seven women, 10 girls and two unknown children), compared with 15 cases affecting 16 victims for the previous period. The violations committed were rape (18), and forced marriage (1) perpetrated by the anti-Balaka (10), UPC (3), armed Fulani (2), MPC (1), FPRC (1), and unidentified armed groups (2). In one incident which occurred on 04 September around 02:00 p.m. in Ippy⁶ (Ouaka), a UPC element raped a 15-year-old girl near an illegal check point called “Bougouyo”, located less than 100 meters from the Catholic Church IDP site. Reportedly, six girls from the Catholic Church IDP site were intercepted by the UPC elements at the Bougouyo check point in the presence of ten other elements. All but the 15-year-old girl managed to escape. The perpetrator threatened to shoot her if she tried to flee and then raped her. An INGO referred the girl to the hospital on 5 September.

VI. Observations on trends and patterns

24. As observed during the previous months, ongoing tension among rival armed groups, was again observed during the month of September, particularly between the anti-Balaka and FPRC and its different coalitions, thus provoking insecurity and more threats to the protection of civilians, particularly in areas under their control. HRD notes that in spite of the signing of a declaration of agreement in which armed groups’ representatives (including anti-Balaka Mokom, FPRC, UPC and MPC) committed to the restoration of peace, the respect for human rights, the free movement of persons and goods, and the African Initiative (AI) on 29 August in Khartoum, Bria, Kaga-Bandoro and Bambari have continued to record more retaliatory and targeted attacks by the different rival armed groups.
25. HRD continues to observe a tendency on the part of the major ex-Séléka splinter factions – FPRC, MPC, UPC and RPRC – working closely together against the anti-Balaka, sometimes within the context of a FPRC/MPC/UPC coalition or FPRC/RPRC Coalition mostly in Haute-Kotto prefecture. Continuous allegations within the month attest to the fact that different coalition groups attacked and killed several civilians. On 17 September for example in Bria, a coalition of FPRC/RPRC (Sara and Goula) attacked Tamangora village⁷, PK15 on the Ouadda axis (north), where they shot and killed a 15-year-old boy and torched the house of a 65-year-old woman resulting her death after being got caught in the flames. Again, witnesses confirmed that these same elements attacked Yakada village (PK7 of Dambatro - 7km from Bria) where they killed three men (18, 30 and 50 years old) and torched 25 houses. This strategy of uniting to “defeat” the anti-Balaka might continue to be seen in the months to come and may pose a greater risk to the protection of civilians. MINUSCA will continue to monitor this pattern and encourage more mediation and dialogue amongst these armed groups.
26. One of the major concerns during the month was the urgent need to address recorded violations committed by State actors. Following OCRB’s arbitrary detention and torture of a man accused of killing a priest during the attack on Fatima Church on 01 May 2018 in Bangui, HRD notes with concern that despite the commitments made by the CAR authorities and constant mentoring by MINUSCA HRD, agents of the *Office centrafricain de répression du banditisme* (OCRB) continue to commit human rights violations, including cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and torture. Also of grave concern is the situation at the Bimbo Prison for women where the Prison Director has subjected female detainees to sexual violence and exploitation. Further, HRD has conducted investigations into the suspicious death of a detainee at the OCRB holding cell and as well into allegations of sexual violence and exploitation at the Bimbo Prison as well as two cases of abuse of power by unit commanders of the Armed Force (FACA). HRD encourages the Central African authorities to continue efforts to bring to justice those involved and to put an end to such violations at the OCRB and Bimbo Prison.
27. The hotspots identified for this reporting period – Haute-Kotto, Nana-Grébizi, and Ouaka remain the same regions as in previous months. HRD continues to note the growing strength of the SIRIRI armed group in Mambéré-Kadéï prefecture which recorded a significant number of human rights abuses attributed to the SIRIRI armed group. This

⁶ Located approximately 103 kilometers north of Bambari

group seems to be reinforcing its positions particularly in Noufou and Dilapoko⁸ and seems to be expanding to other vicinity in the prefecture. The gradual expansion of this armed group poses a risk of continuous human rights abuses in the southwestern part of the country thus destabilizing areas which have previously been very calm and where there turn of refugees and IDPs has been recorded.

28. 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 continued to record a high number of attacks on INGOs and their personnel or equipment (13) perpetrated by either the anti-Balaka or unidentified armed men in Bossangoa and Batangafo (Ouham), Paoua (Ouham-Pendé), Bouca (Ouham), Mobaye (Basse-Kotto) and Kaga-Bandoro (Nana-Grébizi).

VII. Incitement to violence and hate speech

29. As part of its mandate to support the government in its peacebuilding process through, among other things, the fight against incitement to hatred and violence in CAR, on 10 September, HRD met with the President of the *Haut Conseil de la Communication* (HCC) to discuss the National Plan for the Prevention of Incitement to Hatred and Violence while prioritizing activities which would be carried out under this plan. The President of HCC requested the continuous support of MINUSCA in order to track perpetrators responsible for disseminating hateful content against Muslims following a communiqué from the *Ligue de Défense de l'Eglise* on 09 July 2018. The meeting recommended a coordinated assistance from MINUSCA as well as more training opportunities on online message management for HCC members as well as journalists.

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

30. On 04 September, following a request for support from GoCAR Prime Minister, Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR) and further to recommendations from MINUSCA's Leadership, HRD convened and chaired the UN working group meeting on Transitional Justice, comprising MINUSCA, UNICEF, UNDP, UN-Women and UNHCR. Discussions focused on the type of assistance (technical and financial) that could be provided to the National technical CVJRR for preliminary consultations. The meeting mapped available technical, financial and logistical support and agreed on practical modalities required to provide assistance in a transparent and coordinated manner. The meeting also suggested the creation of a basket fund in support of Transitional Justice and the formal establishment of a UN and International Partners Forum on Transitional Justice. It was also agreed that it is fundamental to map out the actions of individual agencies and entities to avoid duplications. Participants suggested that a consolidated and coordinated UN Assistance including other partners such as the EU and AU, would help in achieving sustained and effective technical and financial support.
31. On 11 September, at the request of the National Human Rights Commission, HRD commenced review of the first draft of the procedural manual for the National Commission for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as well as the Statutes for its personnel.
32. HRD represented the United Nations in the deliberations of the Steering Committee for the establishment of the truth seeking commission. The Steering Committee has committed to complete the nationwide consultative process and submit its final report and draft legislation to the Government by 30 November 2018. The Steering Committee selected Facilitators from political parties, religious communities, victims' associations, Human Rights and Transitional Justice NGOs, women's' associations, and line ministries. The Steering Committee agreed to include MINUSCA, UNWOMEN, UNDP, UNICEF and other specialized INGOs as observers throughout the consultation process and while drafting the laws establishing the future truth commission.

⁸ Located approximately 120 kilometers north west of Berberati

33. HRD continued to advocate for the recommendations of the Mapping Report to be used in the development of the prosecutorial strategy of Special Criminal Court and consequently held a series of working sessions with the consultants working on the prosecutorial strategy of the court.

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

A. Implementation of HRDDP

34. During the reporting period, HRDDP Secretariat received seven requests and approved six from UNPOL, the Force and SSRU for the HRDDP process to support national security and defense forces through technical cooperation and logistical support (transportation). HRDDP secretariat also screened 208 internal security forces (police and gendarmes) and defense forces (FACA) who were to benefit from UN support.
35. To ensure compliance with the UN SG's Human rights diligence policy, the UN advocacy has resulted in the Minister of Defence removing the commanders of FACA units deployed in Bangassou and Obo for indiscipline and judicial proceedings respectively. As a result of the same advocacy, the Obo Commander will face judicial proceedings in connection with the death of a soldier whom he had detained in a container some hours earlier. HRD will continue to use the HRDDP as a leverage to influence change in behaviour within the national defence and security forces.

B. Support to the fight against impunity

36. 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).
37. As part of the MINUSCA Working Group on Major Judicial Proceedings (WGMJP), HRDDP Secretariat participated in 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.
38. The HRDDP Secretariat recommended that the Deputy Commander of the 3rd district police station in Bangui be replaced in view of his history of human rights violations in Bria in 2016. UNPOL subsequently corresponded with the Director General of the Central African Police to request the replacement of the officer.
39. The arrest of the anti-Balaka leader "33-40" in Bangui on 15 September, by the National Gendarmerie is a significant milestone. The anti-Balaka leader is known to have committed serious human rights abuses in Bossangoa (Ouham prefecture). His arrest is the result of the joint work of the HRD and UNPOL who established the criminal profiling of this anti-Balaka leader and made efforts to obtain his arrest by MINUSCA (under the Urgent Temporary Measures), causing him to flee to Bangui, where he was apprehended by the gendarmerie. In addition, on 18 September, an individual was arrested by the gendarmerie in Obo for the alleged killing of a Human Rights activist in Mboki on 22 August 2018 and investigation is on-going.
40. From 17 September to 12 October 2018, criminal sessions are being held at the Court of Appeal in Berberati (Mambéré-Kadéï) for cases transferred from the Court of Appeal in Bouar (Nana-Mambéré). A total of 30 cases are to be heard. The defendants are accused of various crimes including murder, trafficking of body parts, rape, criminal conspiracy, witchcraft the charlatanism and possession of locally fabricated weapons. It is worth mentioning that on 05 and 06 September, the court sat to select the 15 members of the jury comprised of six men and nine women, as well as the appointment of pro bono lawyers for the court session.
41. Again, on 11 September in Bambari, another local anti-Balaka ComZone – Marcellin Madekanga was arrested by the national gendarmerie. He is accused of pillaging and/or robbing civilians of motorcycles and bicycles in the Kidjigra neighbourhood. In another development, on 13 and 16 September, in Bria, UNPOL and MINUSCA Force conducted a search operation in the PK3 IDP camp where they dismantled Bokassa's new Headquarters, seized some firearms and knives and arrested elements alleged to be members of Bokassa's anti-balaka armed group. On 25 September,

MINUSCA's UNPOL launched operation "Quartier Colline" to enhance security in areas where elements and/or criminals have established bases where they hide weapons and commit crimes with total impunity⁹. More, on 18 September, in Obo, Haut-Mbomou prefecture, the National Gendarmerie arrested a man who is accused of being responsible for the killing of a Human Rights activist in Mboki on 22 August 2018.

C. Support to the vetting Process

42. HRD received from the Office of the SRSG a request from the Director General of the *Ecole Nationale de l'Administration et de la Magistrature* (ENAM) for the vetting of 197 candidates under consideration for the recruitment of 150 prison officers for the year 2018-2019.
43. During the reporting period, HRD started vetting 655 elements of the FACA BIT2.

X. Other Human Rights Developments

44. MINUSCA continued to engage with line ministries and other UN Agencies to provide technical and logistic support to the Steering Committee for the adoption of the enabling legislation for the future Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission. A working session was held with UN Women, UNICEF and UNDP to mobilize response for a request made by the Prime Minister to support the work of the Steering Committee.
45. In order to raise awareness and build the capacity of national stakeholders, while promoting a human rights culture among the law enforcement, HRD facilitated two sessions at the National Police Academy on 05 September, in Bangui. HRD sensitized 50 participants (38 men and 12 women) on the protecting and promoting human rights and how these can be incorporated in their daily work. Emphasis was placed on the respect for human dignity and fundamental human rights by Police Officers in providing effective policy through compliance with international human rights standards. Similarly, in collaboration with UNPOL, on 24 September in Bambari, HRD trained 27 gendarmes (all men) and 21 police (20 men and one woman) on international human rights law. Again, on 25 September in Paoua, HRD sensitized 14 FACA soldiers (all men) on the same and the HRD mandate.
46. On 17 September, HRD also held a working session with the National Police to explore avenues of collaboration in the development of a training curriculum on human rights for police officers as part of long term mitigation measures or efforts to curb violations committed by the internal security forces. It was agreed that HRD will develop training modules in consultation with relevant national partners and the curriculum will serve as a national document for protecting human rights in law enforcement.
47. In order to commemorate the International Day of Peace (21 September) with the theme: "The Right to Peace – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70", in collaboration with UNDP in Berberati, Civil Affairs Section in Zemio, and SCPI Bossangoa, HRD conducted activities in Berberati (24 September), Bossangoa (21 September), Zemio (21 September) Bouar (21 September) for 375 civilians (130 men and 245 women).
48. HRD in collaboration with the American Bar Association trained 25 representatives from civil society (17 men and 8 women) on human rights norms and principles. HRD also internally sensitized on 22 September 21 new arrivals from the Moroccan Battalion in Obo in conflict related sexual violence and gender based violence, as well 23 new arrivals (22 men and one woman) from the Cameroonian Battalion in Paoua on International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

***** END *****

⁹ This operation faced some resistance from anti-Balaka elements who opened fire on MINUSCA's UNPOL and a Quick Reaction Force was sent in where the assailants fled and the UNPOL team was escorted to safety. In the later part of the day (24 September), anti-Balaka elements again opened fire on a MINUSCA patrol around the PK3 IDP camp leading to the slight injury of a peacekeeper. MINUSCA returned fire and the assailants fled. MINUSCA consequently increased patrols in the town.