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United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Human Rights Division

Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation

July 2022

The Human Rights Division's (HRD) mandate includes assisting the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) to promote and protect human rights and prevent violations and abuses through its field offices and headquarters in Bangui. This report is based on information received by the HRD and only includes human rights violations and abuses that were documented and verified during the month of July 2022. Incidents that could not be verified are not included. Ordinary crimes are also excluded from this report.

This information is shared locally as well as nationally with the CAR's authorities and partners.

Security and political context in July 2022

1. The security situation deteriorated during the month of July in the **Western Sector** where *Forces armées Centrafricaines* (FACA) and “other security personnel” (OSP) led operations against *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R) combatants who, along with anti-Balaka combatants, have become more active. In **Nana-Mambéré** Prefecture, for example, on 8 July, 12 anti-Balaka armed combatants attacked at least 10 civilians and stole their belongings 20 km East of Baoro (Baoro-Bozoum axis). In **Ouham** Prefecture, 3R combatants allegedly attacked and robbed 11 artisanal miners in two separate incidents: one outside the town of Gbassou (20 km northeast of Boguila) and another close to a mining site 16 kilometres from Nana-Bakassa. In **Ouham-Pendé** Prefecture, the 3R conducted separate attacks on civilians on 23 and 26 July, and two separate night raids on 25 and 27 July in Mbotoga (50 km from Bocaranga) where they looted the village.
2. In the **Central Sector** in **Nana-Grébizi** and **Bamingui-Bangoran** prefectures, despite a relatively calm situation in the city and its immediate surroundings, the villagers' living conditions are becoming increasingly precarious due to the alleged presence of *Coalition des patriotes pour le changement* (CPC) combatants, in particular on the Golongosso axis (northeast of *Ndélé* toward the Chadian border) due to the residual presence of CPC/*Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC) combatants. In one such instance, at least six men were robbed, one of whom was injured by a bullet. In the **Ouaka** Prefecture, the HRD received information regarding the displacement of members of the Fulani community from Bambari to Bangui who felt at risk of arbitrary arrest, intimidation, extortion, and attacks on their right to life by the OSP and FACA because of their alleged connection to the *Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique* (UPC), or simply due to their status as traders. Following two separate arrests, including an enforced disappearance, of Fulani traders by State elements, members of the Fulani community in the Borno district of Bambari no longer feel safe.
3. Since June 2022, the HRD documented increased transhumance-related human rights violations and abuses in the **Central** and **Eastern Sectors**, specifically in the **Mambéré-Kadeï** Prefecture, with clashes occurring between herders and the local population. On the Dekoa-Bouca axis (**Kémo** Prefecture), Fulani herders have been kidnapped and had their cattle stolen at the hands of presumed CPC armed combatants, taking refuge in Batangafo. In the Dekoa-Mala axis, armed men stole 49 cattle heads from Fulani herders.

4. In the **Eastern Sector**, in the **Mbomou** Prefecture, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) persists particularly in Nzako and Bakouma. Despite the presence of MINUSCA forces, cases of rape of women and girls continue, and many of them have taken refuge in the bush, while others have fled to Bangassou or Bria.
5. On 15 July, Idriss Ibrahim Issa (a.k.a. "Ben Laden"), who was the subject of an arrest warrant issued by the Special Criminal Court (SCC) on 22 September 2020, was brought before the Investigating Judges of the SCC for his initial appearance. Following the hearing, he was charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes and placed in pre-trial detention. On 28 July, the International Criminal Court issued a public redacted version of the Warrant of Arrest against Mahamat Nouredine Adam, better known as Nouredine Adam, who is the leader of the FPRC, and served as Minister of Security, Emigration, Immigration and Public Order between 31 March and 22 August 2013. This warrant, which was previously sealed and dated back to January 2019, states that Adam is wanted on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.
6. In Bangui, in Ombella M'Poko Prefecture, tensions continued between those in favour of amending the 30 March 2016 Constitution and those opposed to it, with messages of hatred and incitement to violence posted on social media. To de-escalate tensions, the *Conseil National de la Médiation* initiated discussions with the civil society and political actors with the goal of limiting the spread of hate messages and incitement to violence. If not addressed adequately, this situation could lead to violence or clashes that could undermine public order and peace.

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

Main Trends

In total, **385 human rights violations and abuses** as well as breaches of IHL **affecting 307 victims** were documented in July 2022. This constitutes a **significant increase** in the number of documented victims compared to June 2022.

During the reporting period, State actors were responsible for slightly more human rights violations and victims. However, armed groups signatories to the APRP-RCA were responsible for most of the killings of civilians.

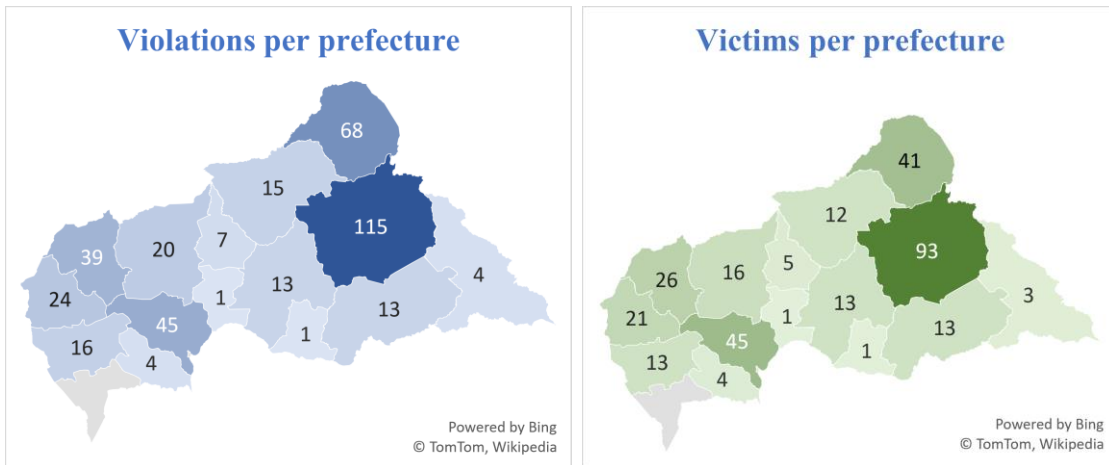
7. During the month of July, the HRD, including the Office of the Senior Women Protection Advisor (OSWPA) and the Child Protection Section (CPS), documented and verified 385 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), affecting 307 civilian victims. Out of the 307 victims, 78 suffered multiple violations during a same incident. Out of the total number of documented violations, 251 effectively took place in July 2022. The HRD also recorded 44 allegations of human rights violations and abuses affecting at least 31 victims, which were still being verified at the end of July and were therefore not included in this report.

8. This month the number of victims increased by 51% compared to June 2022, during which 202 victims were recorded. This significant

increase is partly explained by the methodology change whereby the HRD has started recording multiple human rights violations per victim since July 2022.¹ Additionally, during the period under review, the HRD documented 115 violations related to arbitrary arrest and detention, chiefly due to the exceeding of the legal custody time limit, which also explains the elevated figure of overall violations.

¹The methodology applied by the HRD to collect data has changed from the one used since January 2022 when the Division started recording several types of human rights violations during a single incident and against different victims. However, only the most serious violation per victim was documented. Since July 2022, the Division counts all the violations per victim. Additionally, since June 2022, the HRD systematically reports on cases of arbitrary detention by State authorities that exceed the legal custody time limit.

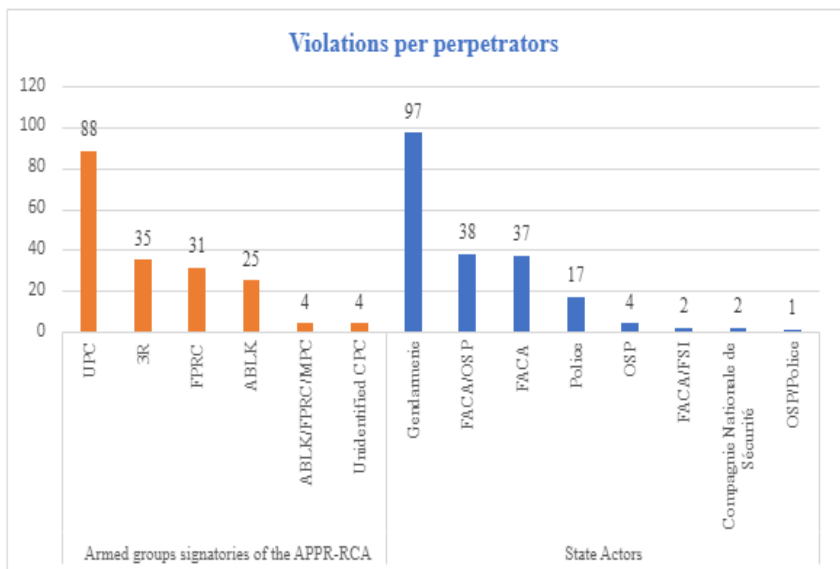
9. The Haute-Kotto Prefecture was the most affected in terms of human rights violations and abuses, as well as victims (115 violations affecting 93 victims). This can be partly attributed to the arbitrary detention of 37 people in the Bria Gendarmerie that exceeded the legal custody time, and the recruitment and use of 29 self-demobilized children by the FPRC.
10. This month, the most common types of violations and abuses were arbitrary arrest and detention (representing 30% of violations), violations of the right to physical and mental integrity (representing 21% of violations) and to the right to property (representing 18% violations).
11. Most victims were men (128), followed by women (34), boys (27) and girls (21). In addition, there were 90 civilian victims for which the gender was not indicated (14 unknow minors and 76 unknown adults) and seven groups of collective victims.



12. In the majority of cases, men were victims of arbitrary arrest and detention, destruction of property, and violations to physical and mental integrity, namely ill-treatment. Women, on the other hand, suffered mostly from threats to physical and mental integrity, chiefly maiming and injuries, arbitrary detention, and rape. It is worth noting that women and girls accounted for 100% of documented CRSV cases. Boys and girls were victims of forced recruitment for the most part, with girls being oftentimes victims of CRSV.

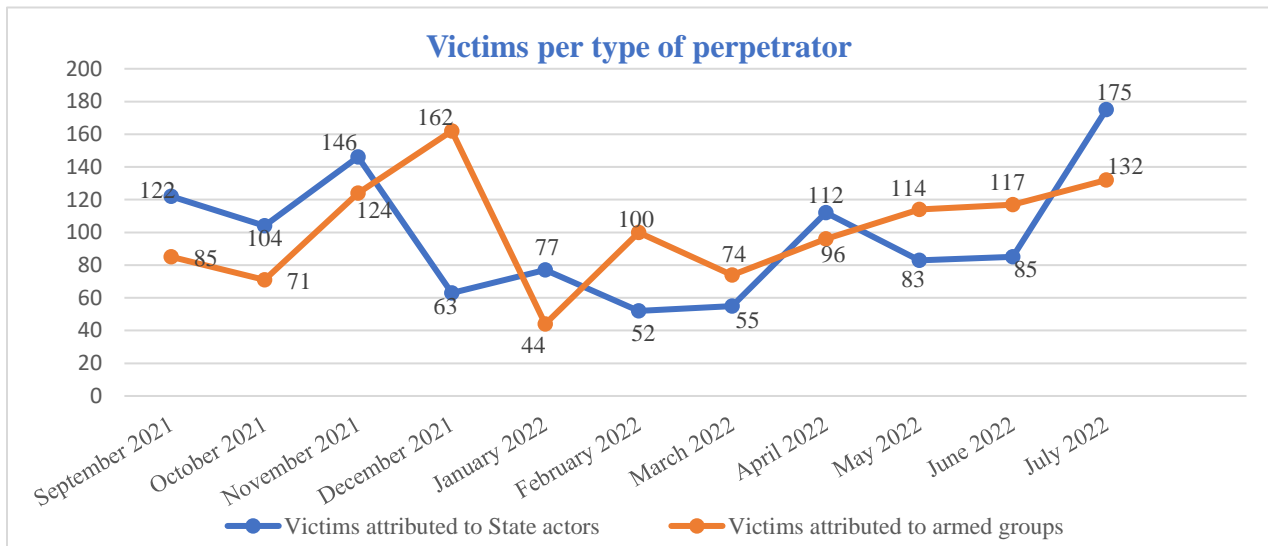
Perpetrators: State actors and armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA

13. For the period under review, State actors and armed groups committed roughly the same number of human rights violations and abuses. However, the armed groups signatories to the *Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Réconciliation en République Centrafricaine* (APPR-RCA) were responsible for more victims.
14. **Armed groups were responsible for 187 human rights abuses, affecting 132 victims.** Amongst armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA, the UPC committed the majority of these abuses (88), followed by the 3R and the FPRC.



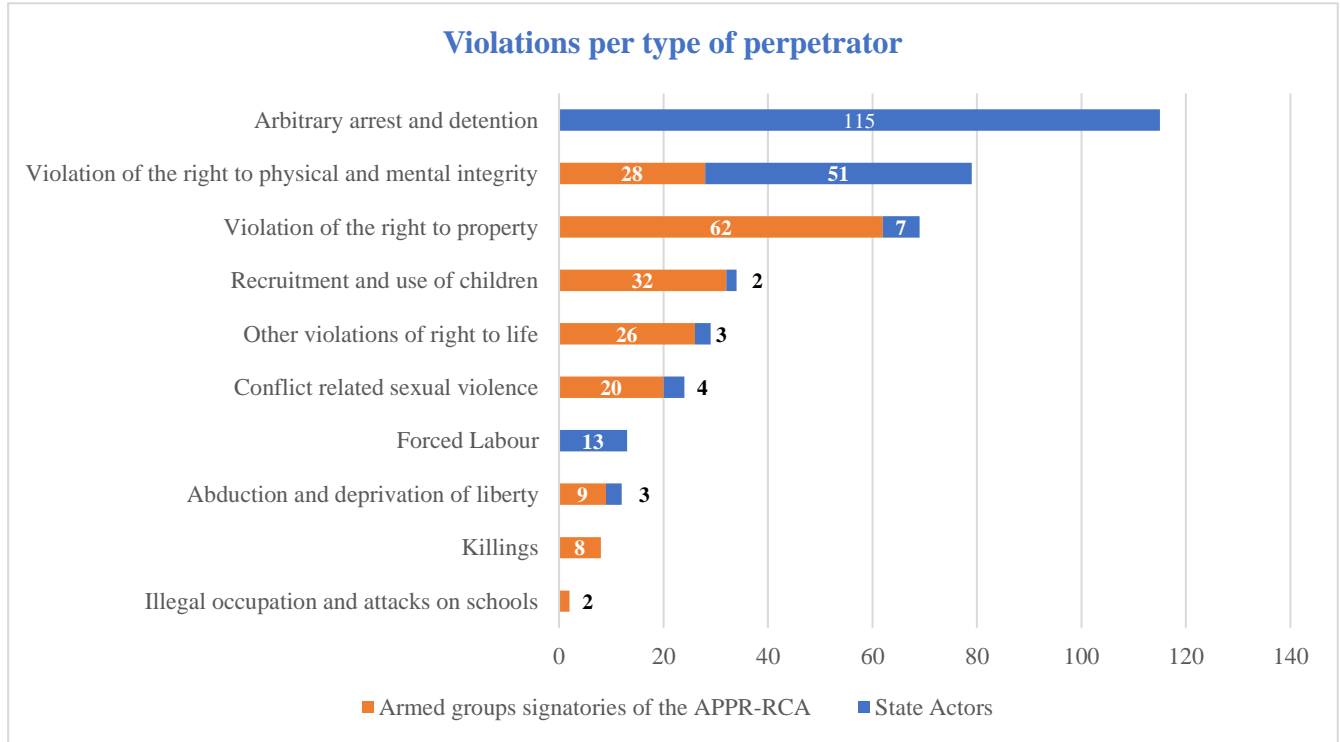
The most common types of abuses committed by armed groups were destruction and appropriation of property (62 violations) and the recruitment and use of children (32 violations). Armed groups were also responsible for the eight killings that took place this month, as well as for 20 out of 24 CRSV cases. Women and girls suffering from CRSV, were also victims of multiple violations, for instance, four girls, aged from 14 to 17, were raped and then forced into marriage to anti-Balaka leaders in Ouham Prefecture. Meanwhile, the other CRSV victims were ill-treated, extorted, or recruited, and then raped.

15. On the other hand, **State actors were responsible for 198 human rights violations affecting 175 victims.** Amongst State actors, the Gendarmerie was responsible for the majority of violations, due to cases of arbitrary arrest and detention. FACA, separately or jointly, with OSP, committed 75 human rights violations (FACA: 37 violations and FACA/OSP: 38 violations) affecting 57 victims. FACA elements committed multiple violations per victim. This includes for example the ill-treatment of a 23-year-old man in Bangui, who also suffered maiming and injuries after being shot at by a FACA element. FACA elements were also responsible for raping two girls aged 12 and 16 in Bangui, whereas a gendarme kidnapped and then raped a 19-year-old female trader. FACA elements were as well responsible for all eight cases of torture, affecting a total of 14 victims. In addition to the violations perpetrated with FACA, and as in the previous monthly reports, OSP continue to use proxies, which explains why only four human rights violations directly committed by OSP alone were documented, all of them related to ill-treatment and death threats.
16. The **Sector East** was the most affected (201 violations) due to ongoing clashes between the FACA supported by OSP against the UPC, namely in the Ouanda-Djallé locality (Vakaga Prefecture). Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for the majority of human rights violations and abuses in eastern CAR, with UPC responsible for most of them (37%). UPC combatants engaged in unlawful attacks, including the



illegal occupation of two schools and denial of humanitarian access, as well as destruction or appropriation of property. UPC was also responsible for killing most civilians during the reporting period (seven). Regarding State actors, the HRD documented the forced recruitment of two minors, as well as the arbitrary arrest and subsequent forced labour of 12 men by FACA and OSP elements.

17. During the last two weeks of July, the security situation deteriorated in the **Sector Centre** due to attacks carried out by anti-Balaka and FPRC, as well as the continued presence of UPC combatants. Armed groups committed most human rights violations and abuses, and the UPC alone was responsible for 38% human rights abuses. As in the Sector East UPC combatants were mostly responsible for ill-treatment followed by destruction and appropriation of property. Anti-Balaka combatants were responsible for most cases of CRSV, including four cases of rape and forced marriage, as well as various cases of destruction and appropriation of property (12).

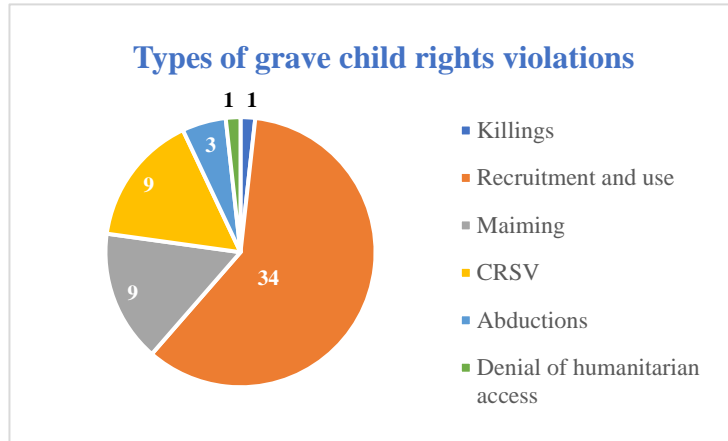


18. In the **Sector West**, the presence of the 3R and arbitrary arrest and detention by State actors continue to pose a threat to civilians. Unlike in the east and centre, State actors, namely the gendarmerie, were responsible for most human rights violations (56 %), the vast majority of the cases being arbitrary arrest and detention. Following the trend of previous months, amongst the armed group signatory of the APPR-RCA, the 3R committed most human rights abuses in western CAR, where they are most active. During the reporting period, 3R combatants committed multiple abuses against a same victim. For instance, they often ill-treated civilians, stole their material goods, and sexually assaulted or raped women. The 3R were also responsible for killing a 14-year-old boy.

Children in Armed Conflict

19. During the reporting period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 57 grave child rights violations affecting 52 children (28 boys and 24 girls) which is indicative of a 47% decrease in grave violations and a 48% decrease in victims affected compared to the previous reporting period. Of the human rights violations and abuses documented, four children were victims of two violations: two girls (recruitment and use, and rape), one girl (abduction and rape) and one boy (abduction, and recruitment and use). Additionally, there was one case of denial of humanitarian access.

20. Armed groups were responsible for 81% of the human rights violations and abuses while State actors, including their allies, were responsible for the remaining 19%. Forty violations occurred prior to July but were verified during the period under review. The decrease in this reporting period compared to the previous month could be explained by the high number of late-verified incidents of recruitment and use documented in June.



21. Violations and abuses documented included recruitment and use (34), killing (one), maiming (nine), rape and other forms of sexual violence (nine), abduction (three) and denial of humanitarian access (one). Armed groups committed the highest number of human rights abuses (46), mostly CPC factions (44), which includes FPRC (31), 3R (eight), anti-Balaka (four) and UPC (one); anti-Balaka (one)² and UPC

(one). State actors and allied forces perpetrated the remaining 11 violations: FACA (six) and FACA/OSP (five). Haute-Kotto was the most affected prefecture with 36 violations, followed by Nana-Mambéré (six), Ouham-Fafa (four), Bangui and Basse-Kotto (three each), Nana-Grébizi (two), and Mambéré-Kadéï, Ombella M’Poko and Ouham-Fafa (one each).

Act to Protect Campaign

To continue strengthening the prevention of grave child rights violations by parties to the conflict, trainings on the six grave child rights violations and the protection of children during armed conflict were conducted to 145 peacekeepers (102 men and 43 women). Similar trainings and awareness sessions were also organized targeting 712 community members and leaders, national defense and security forces (FSI and FACA) and members of the civil society (400 men and 312 women).

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

22. During the period under review, the HRD documented a total of 24 cases of CRSV affecting 13 victims (six women and seven girls). There were four cases of forced marriage, seven cases of sexual assault and 13 rapes. It is worth noting that one victim could have suffered multiple violations, for instance rape followed by forced marriage. The number of cases in July is higher than the number of cases documented in June (seven cases affecting 10 victims).

23. On 4 July, during the 84th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC), along with UNICEF, UNFPA and the Women Protection Advisor, presented the situation in the CAR. They discussed, *inter alia*, the prevalence of CRSV and gender-based violence in the country, shared the actions and initiative undertaken by United Nations actors to respond to these issues, and presented recommendations in this respect to the Government of the CAR.

24. On 25 July, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a report on Bakouma, describing sexual violence (documented by MINUSCA) perpetrated in a systematic and widespread manner,

² This case is in addition to the four other attributable to anti-Balaka. This case is related to the recent demobilization of children abducted and recruited by the anti-Balaka before the creation of the CPC, and therefore highlighted as a separate perpetrator.

by armed groups (FRPC and UPC), during their control of the town of Bakouma and its surroundings during the election period.

25. On 25 July, the Head of State presented to United Nations partners a budget of USD 945,000 for the implementation of the national action plan adopted in June 2022 to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence and CRSV. He requested their support in funding it. This plan focused primarily on documenting the prevalence of CRSV in the CAR, legislative and judicial initiatives in this area, and multi-sectoral assistance to survivors, as well as the coordination and institutional support required to accomplish these goals.

Human Rights Promotion and Capacity-Building

Prevention of Hate Speech and Incitement to Violence

The Transitional Justice Unit held in July meetings with the MINUSCA internal working group on hate speech and incitement to violence, for which the HRD serves as the secretariat. Attended by members from the Political Affairs Division and the Strategic Communications and Public Information unit, the working group's terms of reference are currently being elaborated.

26. This month, the HRD, organised 135 activities, in some instances with partners, on human rights and international humanitarian law in 11 prefectures, benefitting 1,926 individuals of which 338 were women.³

27. These activities included 13 awareness campaigns, reaching 776 beneficiaries (176 women), including IDPs, youths, religious leaders, and the population. In addition, eight capacity-building trainings benefitting 104 individuals, including 28 women, from civil society organizations, local human rights forums, community leaders and the population, were organized. The HRD also conducted six

capacity-building activities targeting 224 MINUSCA/UNPOL forces, including 43 women.

28. During monitoring visits of 19 detention centres in seven prefectures in the month of July, the HRD documented a high number of unlawful detentions, advocating thus the rights of detainees with detention officials. During its visits, the HRD observed that at least 115 people were detained arbitrarily (beyond the legal time limit or not in accordance with due process). In addition, the HRD noted that conditions of detention, in particular in police and gendarmerie stations, remained very dire, with very limited access to health care, hygiene or food, affecting the dignity of the detainees. The HRD's advocacy with administrative and judicial authorities resulted, respectively in Bimbo in the release of six detainees held beyond the legal limit, and in Bria in the transfer of three patients to a nearby hospital to receive treatment.
29. On 14 July, the HRD participated in an awareness-raising workshop targeting justice actors on the protection of women against violence in relation to witchcraft accusations. Organized jointly by UN Women, MINUSCA/UNPOL and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the workshop allowed 26 participants, including 14 women, notably magistrates, judicial police officers and prison staff, to discuss challenges related to human rights and justice in the handling of disputes related to witchcraft accusations.

³ The prefectures are as follows: Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto, Mambéré-Kadéï, Mbomou, Nana-Grébizi, Nana-Mambéré, Ombella M'Poko, Ouaka, Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, and Vakaga.

30. On 25 July, OHCHR released a report describing how a militia - composed of fighters that were formerly anti-Balaka and of dozens of young people recruited by OSP – together with the FACA carried out an attack on the village of Boyo in Ouaka Prefecture from 6 to 13 December 2021. It concluded that at least 20 civilians were killed, five women and girls raped, some 547 houses burned and looted, and more than 1,000 villagers forced to flee. The violations documented include killings, injuries, hostage-taking, appropriation or destruction of property, forced displacement and conflict-related sexual violence.

Transitional Justice

The Transitional Justice and Institutional Support Unit concluded 20 awareness-raising and outreach missions on the mandate of the **Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (TJRRC)** with two workshops organized in Bangui by the Commissioners for CAR institutional representatives and civil society organizations.