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United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Human Rights Division

Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation

September 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 September 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.

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

1. During the month of September, the HRD, including the Office of the Senior Women Protection Advisor (OSWPA) and the Child Protection Section (CPS), documented and verified 215 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), affecting 337 civilian victims, 107 of which suffered multiple violations. Out of the total number of documented violations, 87 took place in September 2022. The HRD also recorded 38 allegations of human rights violations and abuses affecting at least 74 victims, which were still being verified at the end of September and were therefore not included in this report.

Main Trends

In total, **215 human rights violations and abuses** as well as breaches of IHL **affecting 337 victims** were documented in September 2022. This constitutes a **decrease** in the number of documented victims compared to August 2022.

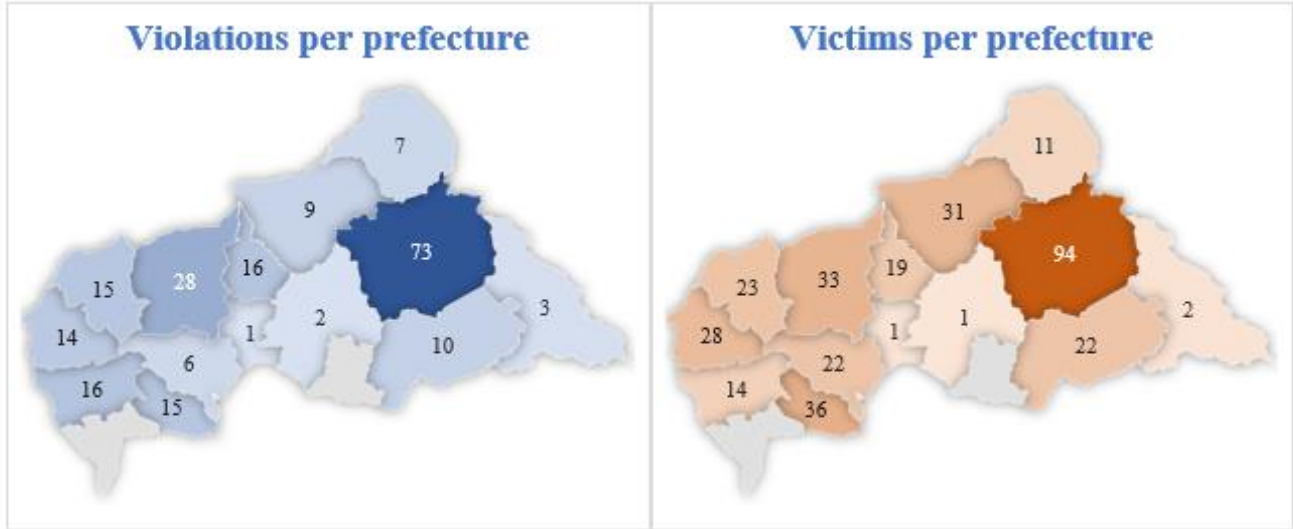
During the reporting period, armed groups signatories to the APRP-RCA were responsible for more than half of all human rights violations while State actors were responsible for most of the victims.

2. In this month, the number of victims decreased by 39% compared to August 2022, during which 550 victims were recorded. This decrease can be partially explained by the lower number of arbitrary arrests and detentions violations documented in September (129) as compared to August (286).

3. The **Haute-Kotto** was the most affected prefecture in terms of violations, abuses, and victims (73 violations affecting 94 victims). This can be attributed, in part, to many arbitrary detentions documented there,

as well as significant number of cases of expropriation of civilian's goods with the use of violence by both *Forces armées centrafricaines* (FACA) and the *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) armed group.

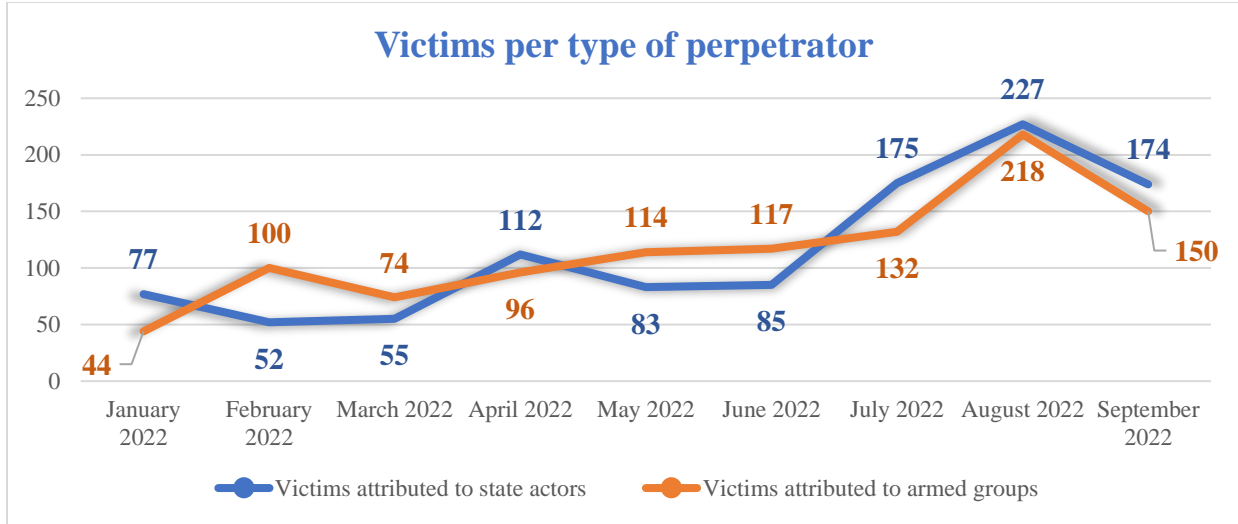
4. This month, the most common types of violations and abuses were destruction or expropriation of property (24%), cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (referred to as ill-treatment, 17%), arbitrary arrest and/or illegal detention (15%) and rape (11%).
5. Out of the total 337 victims, most were men (168), followed by women (44), girls (27), and boys (17). In addition, there were 72 victims for which the gender was not indicated (66 adults and six children) and nine groups of collective victims.



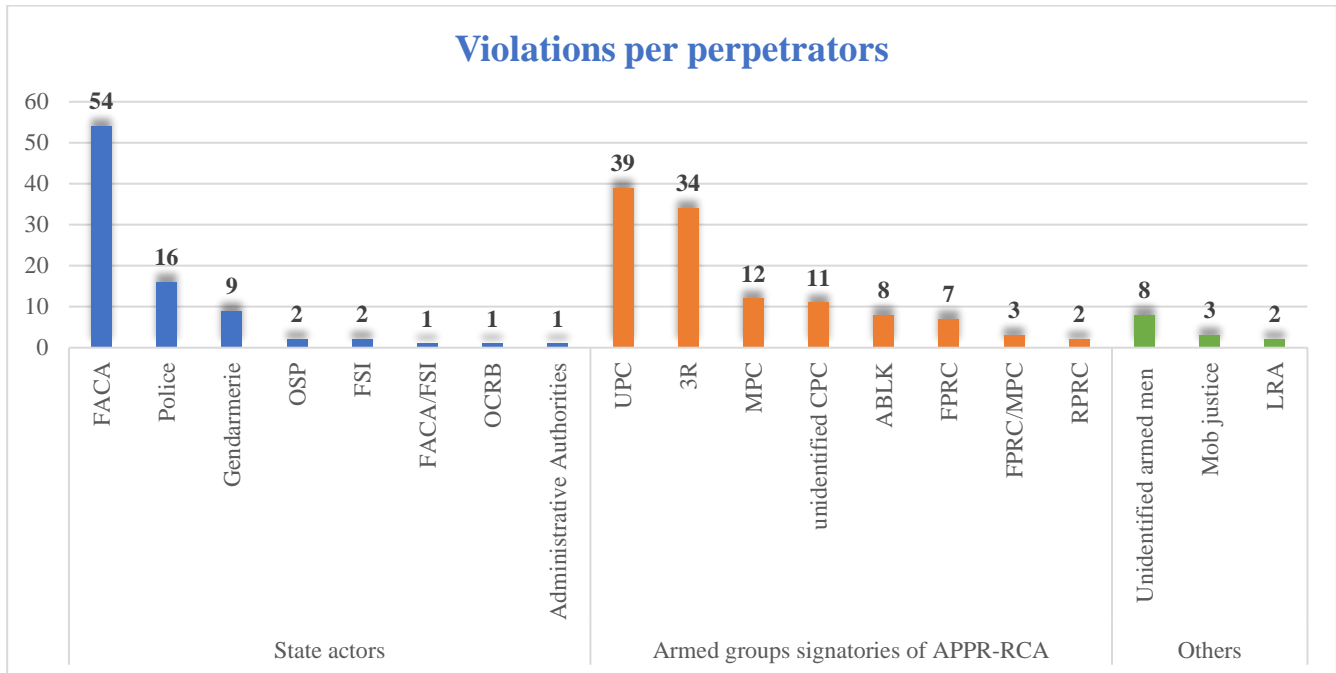
6. Men were most likely to be victims of arbitrary arrest and/or detention (69), ill-treatment (31), or expropriated property (18). Women similarly suffered from arbitrary arrest and/or detention (10), expropriated property (10), or rape (nine). It is worth noting that women and girls accounted for 100% of the documented cases of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) (33 in total). Boys were victims of forced recruitment for the most part (five), with girls also being victims of CRSV.

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

7. For the period under review, armed groups committed 54% of the total number of human rights violations and abuses, compared to 40% for State actors, while State actors were responsible for 52% of the victims compared to armed groups’ signatories of the APPR-RCA (45%). The remaining cases are related to mob justice, unidentified armed men, or an armed group non-signatory of the APPR-RCA, such as the Lord’s Resistance Army.
8. **Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for 116 human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 150 victims.** Among them, the UPC, with 39 abuses, and the *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R), with 34 abuses, were the most active armed groups by far in September, a marked increase compared to August. The 3R’s abuses affected 72 victims, the most victims of any armed group and nearly half the victims of all armed groups. They committed ill-treatment (four abuses affecting 21 victims) and widespread expropriation and/or destruction of property of their victims (13 abuses affecting 58 of their 72 victims). The HRD documented more acts of CRSV by the UPC, on the other hand, than any other actor during September (12 victims of rape and one of forced marriage). All the UPC’s CRSV abuses took place in **Haute-Kotto** or **Mbomou** prefectures.



5. The most common types of abuses committed by armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were destruction or expropriation of property (33), torture and ill-treatment (19), abduction and deprivation of liberty (18), and rape and sexual slavery (17). It should be noted that many of the armed groups committed multiple human rights abuses in single incidents: they committed two or more abuses in 31 instances out of 37 incidents, including 10 instances that had three or more abuses. Nearly all these cases involved the destruction or expropriation of property (33 out of 37). For instance, 13 out of the 17 incidents for which abuses were documented and attributable to the 3Rs involved the destruction or expropriation of the victims’ property in addition to some other violent abuse, such as killings, death threats, ill-treatment, or maiming.

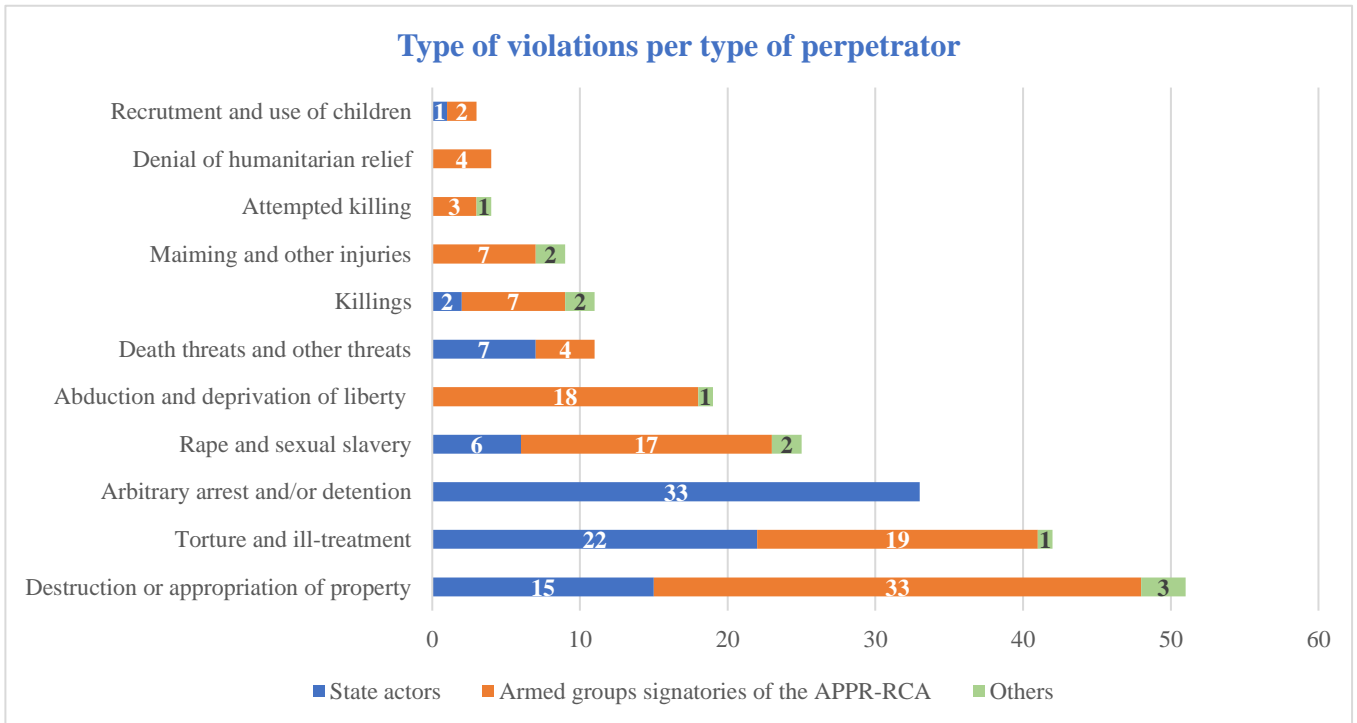


9. **State actors were responsible for 86 human rights violations affecting 174 victims**, with 63% of these violations committed by one actor, the FACA. In the month of September, FACA committed 54 violations affecting 55 victims. Other State actors committed violations that affected many victims as well, notably the Police (16 violations affecting 54 victims) and the Gendarmerie (nine violations affecting 57 victims). All but one violation committed by these two actors involved the rights of detained individuals (arbitrary arrest or ill-treatment while in detention, for example).

10. The FACA’s violations were most likely to be committed alongside other violations. Out of the 18 cases with multiple violations documented amongst State agents, 16 were committed by FACA. Thirteen of these cases involved the destruction or expropriation of property in addition to some sort of violence: torture, death threats, ill-treatment, or arbitrary arrest and/or detention.

Sectoral Analysis

11. The **Sector West** was the most affected in September with 94 violations and abuses affecting 156 victims in large part because of the 3R, who committed abuses in the prefectures of **Lobaye, Mambéré-Kadéï, Nana-Mambéré, Ouham, and Ouham-Pendé**. In one representative incident in **Nana-Mambéré**, for example, seven individuals armed with Kalashnikovs, identified by the victims as being combatants of the 3R, kidnapped and robbed 25 people who were going to Pama village in **Lobaye** prefecture on 29 August. Fifteen of the victims reported being ill-treated. State actors also committed violations in Sector West: the HRD documented 12 cases of arbitrary detention in government detention facilities in **Bangui**, while the FACA violated the rights of 12 victims in **Ouham** prefecture, including five cases of arbitrary arrest, two cases of torture, and three cases of destruction or appropriation of property.
12. The **Sector East** was the second most affected sector, with 93 violations and abuses affecting 129 victims due to the high number of violations and victims in **Haute-Kotto** prefecture, which alone accounted for 73 of the violations and abuses and 94 of the victims. The large number of victims is due largely to two monitoring visits to the gendarmerie and police stations in Bria where 42 individuals (13 men, four women, two unknown minors, and 23 unknown adults) were detained beyond the legal time limit for detention. In addition to those two cases of arbitrary detention, State actors committed two or more violations in eight out of eight incidents of human rights violations in **Haute-Kotto**. In each of these incidents, for example, the FACA or *other security personnel* (OSP) committed several violations at once, and each case except one involved the expropriation of property and some violent act (death threats, torture, ill-treatment, or arbitrary arrest). Additionally, in five of these cases the FACA committed these violations with the aid of anti-Balaka militia members used as proxies. In one such case, for example, a group of FACA and anti-Balaka elements arbitrarily detained, tortured, and expropriated the property of a Peulh family (one man, four unknown adults, and three unknown



minors). For their part, the UPC also committed a number of abuses in **Haute-Kotto**: 32 abuses affecting 21 victims.

13. The **Sector Centre** was affected by 28 violations and abuses affecting 52 victims. Many of these cases were arbitrary detentions in four detention centres in Ndélé, **Bamingui-Bangoran** prefecture (24 victims, including two women). In **Nana-Grébizi** prefecture, the *Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique* (MPC) committed 12 human rights abuses, including five cases of abduction, affecting 12 victims (eight men and four boys).

Security and political context in September 2022

14. In **Sector West**, the security situation was precarious in September due to the 3R's frequent village incursions and clashes with State actors. On 3 September, for example, 3R combatants killed a civilian and extorted 15 merchants on the Baoro-Carnot axis in **Nana-Mambéré** prefecture, between the villages of Bokassa (90 km South of Bouar) and RCA (95 km South of Bouar). Days later, on 07 September, 3R combatants killed three civilians (two men and one woman) and set 24 homes on fire in Zamari (150 km from Paoua) near a FACA base in **Ouham-Pendé** prefecture. Similarly, in **Ouham** prefecture, on 06 September, four 3R combatants robbed four traders (two men and two women) in the village of Boulu (on the Kouki-Bodjomo axis). The victims were travelling from Bodjomo when the assailants attacked them, took them to the bush and robbed them at gun point. They took personal belongings including an amount of 1,258,000 XAF (around 1,946 USD) as well as three mobile phones. Finally, 3R combatants were also observed in the locality of Sabewa (150 km North of Bouar) from the Cameroon side. According to members of civil society, a displacement of the civilian population of the villages surrounding Sabewa fleeing the presence and movement of these armed men assimilated to 3R was observed.
15. The security situation deteriorated in the **Sector East** due to an increase in violence from FACA and the *Coalition des patriotes pour le changement* (CPC). In the **Haute-Kotto** prefecture, for example, the HRD documented seven cases in which FACA elements, accompanied by armed men assimilated to anti-Balaka, ill-treated, threatened, and/or extorted the local Fulani population, who are often accused of collaborating with armed groups. Additionally, at least six cases of ill-treatment and expropriation of property by the CPC were also documented by the HRD in the region. In **Vakaga** prefecture, the areas surrounding the Mandjan artisanal gold mining site (198 km West of Birao) remain insecure due to the presence and control of the locality by combatants of the *Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC) armed group led by Colonel Madou Markany. The HRD documented two cases of death threats and the expropriation of artisanal miner goods by FPRC combatants in September.
16. In **Mbomou** prefecture, the sub-prefecture of Bakouma remained a hotspot: CPC and UPC movements were reported in the vicinity of Nzako (177 km North of Bangassou), resulting in documented cases of rape, deprivation of liberty, ill-treatment, and the expropriation of property of the local population. In Fadama (98 km West of Bangassou), the population has taken refuge in the nearby bush, fearing a potential attack in Bakouma (128 km North of Bangassou). At the same time, the population was targeted by *Forces de sécurité intérieure* (FSI) and FACA for the payment of illegal taxes.
17. In the **Sector Centre**, in **Basse-Kotto** prefecture, particularly the sub-prefecture of Zangba, there are reports that UPC fighters under the command of the so-called "General" Garga are reportedly reinforcing their positions in the area and continuing to obtain arms and ammunition from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Another concerning development for the population in the region was the closure on 25 September of the TOB in Ngakobo (**Ouaka** prefecture) and the final withdrawal of the Mauritanian Battalion (MaurBatt) Force deployed there. The decision to close the TOB in this locality was not well received by the population and local authorities, who stated that they no longer felt safe with the increase in UPC combatants in the region and the risk of attacks by armed groups against the civilian population.

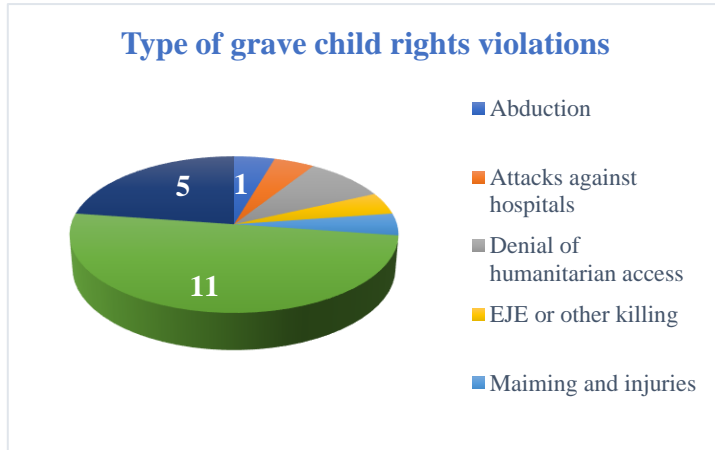
Civic Space

18. Over the course of September, there were notable restrictions of civic space in CAR, stemming largely from the controversy surrounding constitutional reform. On 23 September, the Constitutional Court declared that the Presidential Decrees establishing the Drafting Committee for a New Constitution to be unconstitutional. Following this decision, on 24 September, Central African radio station Radio *Ndeke Luka* received threats from the Minister of Communication and Government Spokesperson, Mr Serge Ghislain Djourie. Reportedly, the Minister, during a meeting in his office with the radio representatives, ordered *Ndeke Luka* “to stop covering matters relating to the constitutional revision project”. The Minister also made intimidating threats to *Ndeke Luka*’s representatives, adding that if the radio station did not respect the order, the Minister would close the radio and expel one of their foreign representatives present in the meeting from the Central African Republic. The HRD notes that such threats and interference in the operation of a media organization constitutes a violation of the right to freedom of expression, a key component of civic space.
19. On September 27, a press release was broadcast on *Centrafrique radio* asking Mr Crépin Mboli Goumba, the Coordinator of the *Bloc Républicain pour la Défense de la Constitution* (BRDC), to report to the Principal Police Commissioner. This same communiqué was broadcast for the second time on the same radio. In response, the BRDC’s lawyer informed the Principal Police Commissioner that the BRDC Coordinator would not report to the police station as requested because he had not been personally served an appropriate convocation compliant with the provisions of the penal code. It should be noted that if a person is summoned three times and does not respond the police may use force to arrest him. Due to fears that after a third summons the police may attempt to arrest the BRDC Coordinator, opposition activists mobilized to support the coordinator, causing concerns that violence might erupt between supporters of the coordinator and the police should they intervene to arrest him. Such increased tension may disrupt otherwise peaceful efforts at political participation by ordinary citizens.
20. During rallies supported by *Plateforme de la Galaxie Nationale Centrafricaine* on 8 and 9 September, attendees made death threats against the Constitutional Court president and vice-president, calling for their resignation. On 22 September, the *Plateforme* was suspended by the Minister of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Local Development for non-compliance with statutory provisions relating to the organization’s objectives as well as causing incitement to hatred, division, and public disorder.
21. Finally, on 29 September, the *Conseil National de la Jeunesse Centrafricaine* (CNJ), published a decision that removed CNJ President Pamela Audrey Denom from her position as President of the CNJ allegedly for the following reasons: politicking by mobilizing CNJ members in favor of the BRDC; for denunciation, disinformation, spreading false information; for high treason by not respecting a decision of its General Assembly; for attacking national institutions; for lack of mutual respect; for committing physical, verbal, and psychological violence by damaging a CNJ bus; and for breaching confidentiality. The ouster of the President followed several threats and attacks directed against her due, it is believed, to her opposition to constitutional reform. Her removal and the threats made against her are indicative of a broader erosion of civic space in CAR that must be countered by strong protections for freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

Children in Armed Conflict

22. During the reporting period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 26 grave child rights violations¹ affecting 16 children (five boys and 11 girls), which is indicative of a 77% decrease in

¹ The information in this section has been verified by the MINUSCA Child Protection Unit (CPU) on behalf of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) – co-Chaired by MINUSCA and UNICEF. The CPU acts as the Secretariat to the CTFMR. The Security Council has created mechanisms and tools to implement the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) mandate, including through Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), which established the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to collect timely, accurate, reliable and objective information on the six grave rights violations committed against children by parties to the conflict for the attention of the Secretary-General and the Security Council



grave violations and 85% decrease in victims affected, compared to the previous reporting period during which 112 violations directly affecting 105 children were recorded.

23. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the violations were committed by armed groups, pro-governmental forces (15%) and unidentified armed individuals (4%). Forty-six percent (12 violations) occurred outside the reporting period but were only verified during the period under review. The decrease in grave violations documented could be explained by the high number of self-demobilized children identified and verified during the month of August in

Haute-Kotto prefecture. One girl was a victim of three violations – abduction, recruitment and use, and rape; and five children (two boys and three girls) were victims of two violations – abduction and recruitment and use, abduction and rape and one girl was a victim of two separate incidents of gang-rape.

24. Violations documented included recruitment and use (5), killing (1), maiming (1), rape and other forms of sexual violence (11), attacks against hospitals (1), abduction (5) and denial of humanitarian access (2). Armed groups committed the highest number of violations (20): the CPC (16) – anti-Balaka (5), MPC (4), UPC (4) and 3R (3); and LRA (3) and UPC/faction (1); followed by pro-governmental forces (4) and unidentified armed individuals (2). Nana-Mambéré was the most affected prefecture with six violations, followed by Haute-Kotto (5), Haut-Mbomou, Nana-Grébizi and Ouham with four each, Ouham-Pendé (2) and Bangui (1).

Act to Protect Campaign

To continue enhancing the prevention of conflict-related violations against children as well as strengthen the monitoring, verification, and documentation of grave violations, **542 (477 men and 65 women)** peacekeepers were trained. As part of the “**Act to Protect Children Affected by Conflict**” campaign, training and awareness sessions were conducted for **331 (284 men and 47 women)** community members and leaders, NGOs, defense and security forces (FACA, police and gendarmerie), corrections officers and members of civil society.

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

25. During the month of September, the HRD documented a total of 24 cases of CRSV (23 cases of rape and one case of forced marriage) affecting 33 victims (10 women and 23 girls). The case of forced marriage occurred when UPC combatants under the command of General “Machai” forced a 22-year-old woman to marry a UPC combatant, attempted to murder her 22-year-old brother, and threatened her 75-year-old father with violence in Sam-Ouandja, **Haute-Kotto** prefecture. The number of cases in September is higher than the number documented in August (eight cases affecting eight victims).

Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. The six grave child rights violations are: recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction, attacks against schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access. The CTFMR also monitors military use of schools and hospitals by parties to the conflict. Verified information on grave violations enables the CTFMR to enter into a dialogue to enable parties to the conflict to prevent and stop committing grave child rights violations, and release all associated children.

Human Rights Promotion and Capacity-Building

26. This month, the HRD organised 172 activities, in some instances with partners, on human rights and international humanitarian law in 11 prefectures, benefitting 4,264 individuals of whom 1,735 were women.²
27. These activities included 26 awareness campaigns, reaching 2,864 beneficiaries (1,447 women), including internally displaced persons (IDPs), civil society organisations, community leaders, local human rights fora, and the civilian population. In addition, six capacity-building workshops were organised benefitting 133 individuals (39 women) from civil society organizations, local human rights fora, community leaders, and the local population. The HRD also conducted four trainings for State actors, involving 63 individuals (one woman) from FACA, FSI, and the Gendarmerie.
28. In September, the HRD conducted 34 monitoring visits of detention centres in 10 prefectures.³ During these visits, the HRD documented 114 cases of unlawful detention, including cases in which the detainees were being held past the legal 72 hours limit for custody. The HRD also documented inhumane detention conditions, including overcrowded and unsanitary cells, poor hygiene conditions, and limited access to healthcare. Following the HRD's advocacy with officials in the Berberati prison, a detainee was removed from the disciplinary cell, where he had been locked up for six days for having fought with a prison clerk.
29. On 09 September, the HRD organised an awareness-raising workshop in Grevai, **Nana-Grébizi** prefecture, on the prevention of mob justice linked to accusations of witchcraft—*pratiques de charlatanisme et sorcellerie* (PCS)—for community leaders and members. The HRD was unable to conduct the awareness-raising workshop in Kotamalé because FACA elements blocked access to the village claiming that they were not informed about the HRD team's arrival. Despite the presentation of the mission's objectives, the team was asked to leave.
30. On 13 September, the HRD held an awareness session for media professionals on hate speech and incitement to violence in its weekly meeting with media professionals at the local branch of Radio "*Lego ti la Ouaka*". On 27 September at the meeting room of Radio *Lego ti la Ouaka* in Bambari, the HRD educated seven journalists, including two women, on transitional justice in CAR. In its presentation, the HRD focused on the definition, the framework of transitional justice in CAR, its components, and its strategy.
31. During the month of September, in the framework of the implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP), the HRD conducted 29 risk assessments for MINUSCA's support to the National Defence and Security Forces. In total, the HRDDP Secretariat screened and verified 266 FSI (148 Police and 118 Gendarmes), 40 FACA, as well as one Member of Parliament (MP). Among the 306 persons verified by the HRDDP Secretariat, nine were excluded for having been implicated in the commission of human rights violations. All 29 of the risk assessments were evaluated to have low risk and the support was approved with a set of recommendations and mitigation measures for further implementation.
32. The support verified and approved included the supply of information technology and office equipment for the national army in Bangui; the transportation of 18 FSI and FACA members for the purpose of redeployment and/or rotations to their different units; the transportation of one MP on an official mission to his constituency; and two trainings for the FSI on judicial and community policing.

² 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.

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