

July - September 2022

HUMAN RIGHTS QUARTERLY BRIEF ON CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

HIGHLIGHTS

- In Q3, the HRD documented 486 human rights violations and abuses, affecting 1,185 civilians; a 54% increase compared to Q2.
- Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for most human rights violations (50%), while State actors were responsible for affecting most victims (57%).
- The most recurrent violations were related to physical and mental integrity (25%), right to property (22%), and arbitrary arrest and detention (20%).
- At least 46 civilians were killed, including eight women and eight children.
- The Haute-Kotto was the most affected prefecture in terms of human rights violations and abuses, as well as victims.

CONTEXT

During the period under review, the security situation across the Central African Republic remained tense. There were notable hotspots of conflict across axes and localities tied to mining sites in the **Western, Central and Eastern sectors**, where armed groups, such as the *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC), *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC), and *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R), have attacked and robbed artisanal miners as well as other civilians in the region. There were also acts of violence committed along transhumance corridors and villages in the

Western Sector, where armed groups (notably the 3R and anti-Balaka) targeted migratory communities, including Fulani herders, and civilian merchants throughout Q3. The Human Rights Division (HRD) also documented a rise in instances of violence perpetrated by some State elements, notably the *Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA), including through the use of anti-Balaka proxies, as well as by UPC and FPRC combatants in the **Eastern Sector** including the **Haute-Kotto prefecture**. These security incidents and the harm caused to civilians triggered widespread fear among local populations

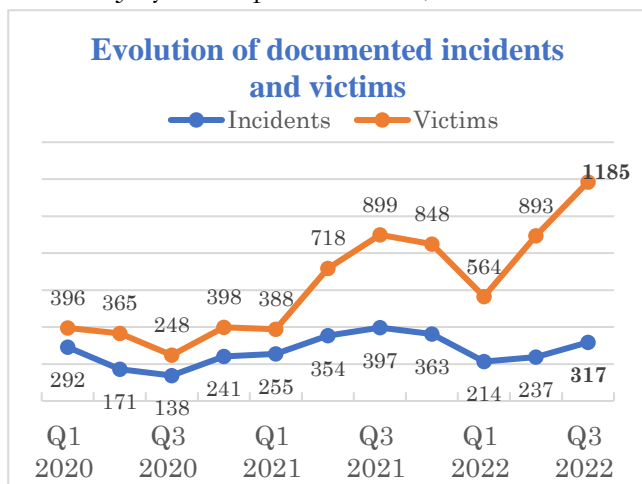
across the CAR in Q3, leading to displacement of civilians in the prefectures of **Ouaka, Nana Grébizi** and **Nana-Mambéré**.

In the political realm, tensions related to the constitutional reform were present throughout Q3,

but reached a peak on 23 September, when the Constitutional Court declared as unconstitutional the presidential decrees establishing the Drafting Committee for a new constitution.

GENERAL TRENDS

During the third quarter of 2022, the HRD continued to document an overall increase in the number of human rights violations and abuses. Between July and September 2022, the HRD verified



317 incidents, representing **486** human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international

humanitarian law (IHL) that affected **1,185** civilian victims¹. This represents a **34%** increase in the number of human rights incidents, and a **32%** increase in the number of victims as compared with the second quarter of 2022. Unlike the previous quarter, armed groups signatories of the *Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Réconciliation en République Centrafricaine* (APPR-RCA) were responsible for most of the human rights violations and abuses. However, state actors were responsible for affecting most victims.

Indiscriminate attacks against civilians at the hands of armed groups and state actors continued to take place, as well as the use of proxies by State actors, and the targeting of Fulani and Muslim communities, posing a threat to the protection of civilians and their enjoyment of human rights.

VIOLATIONS

During the period under review, most human rights cases were related to the violations of the right to physical and mental integrity (121), arbitrary arrest and detention (96) and violations to the right to property (105). The HRD documented 57 human rights violations to the **right to life**, including death threats

(21), extrajudicial killings (29), attempted killings (six) and enforced disappearance (one). Armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were responsible for the majority of killings (83%) and the violations to the right to life other than killing (55%). Clashes between armed groups and State actors, as

¹ Collection data methodology adopted by HRD, has changed 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 type of 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.

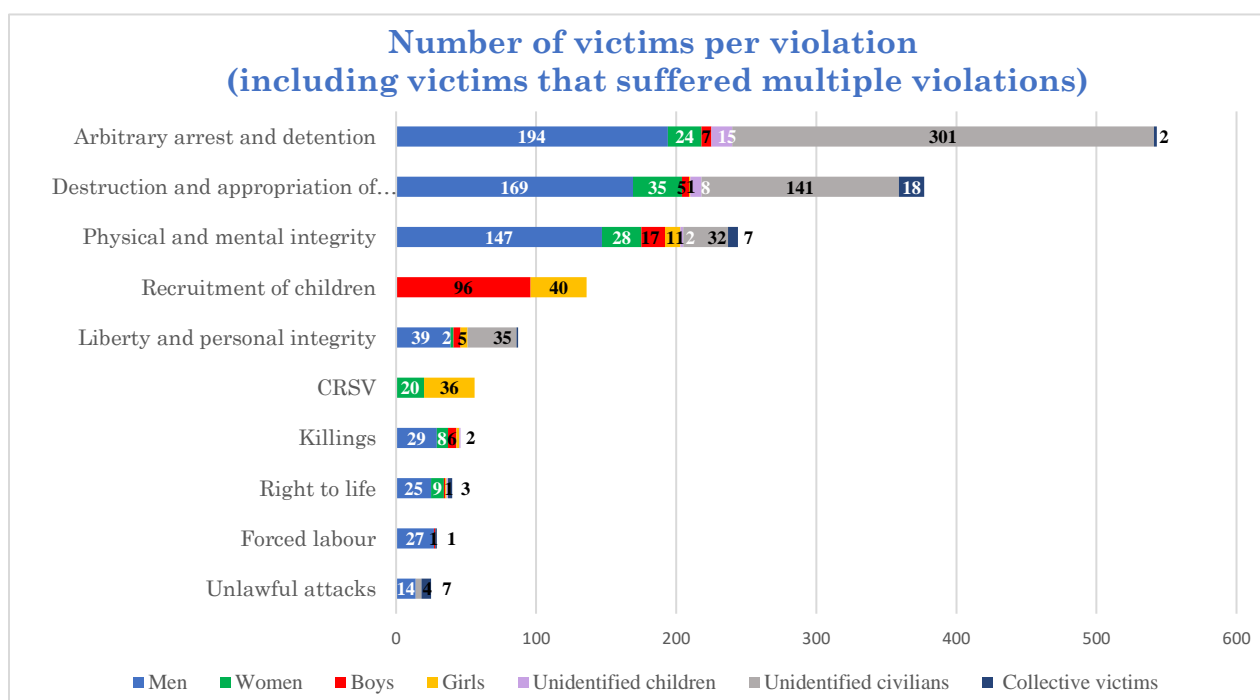
well as targeted and indiscriminate attacks resulted in the **killing** of 46 civilians, including 29 men, eight women, six boys, two girls and one unidentified child.

Violations to the **right to physical and mental integrity** made up 25% of the documented cases of human rights violations and abuses. State actors were responsible for 51% of such violations, while armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were responsible for 43%. Ill-treatment (79 violations) was the most common type of violation in this category, followed by maiming and injuries (30 violations). As illustrated in the chart below, 244 victims were affected by this type of violation. Out of these, 109 suffered other violations during the same incident.

Cases of **arbitrary arrest and detention** made up for 20% of the total number of human rights violations. Most of them were due to the exceeding of the custody time limit and pre-trial detention. During the reporting period, 543 individuals were affected by violations to the right to liberty and fair trial. State actors were responsible for 100% of violations to the right to liberty and fair trial.

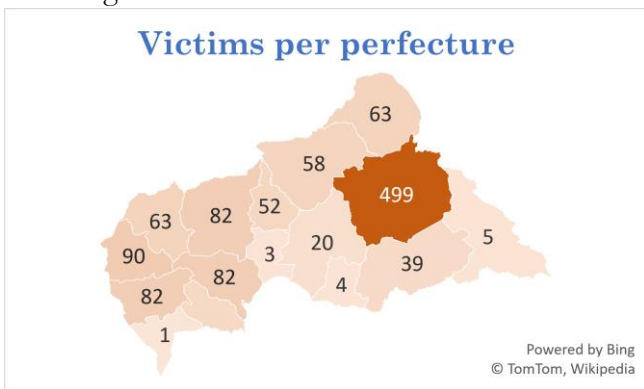
There were at least 42 cases of **conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)** affecting 20 women and 36 girls, including rape (37 violations, sexual slavery (three violations), forced marriage (one) and sexual assault (one). Armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were responsible for 69% of CRSV cases, while State actors were responsible for 26%. It is worth noting that CRSV cases, including those suffered by men and boys, tend to be underreported.

Violations to the **right to property**, represented 21% of the human rights violations and abuses documented during the reporting period. Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for 66% of these violations. The destruction or appropriation of property were committed alongside other violations such as ill-treatment, deprivation of liberty, and arbitrary arrest and detention. Violence against civilians followed by theft, extortion, and pillaging has become a *modus operandi* of armed groups, particularly by UPC and 3R combatants. Sixty-six out of the 75 cases documented were committed by armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA in addition to some sort of violence. Overall, 377 victims suffered from violations to the right to property.



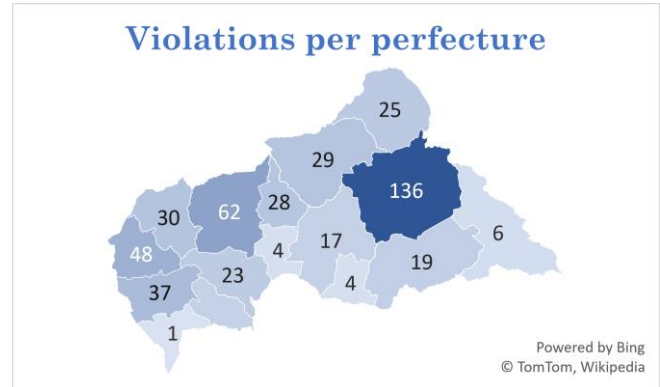
GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The **Western Sector** was the sector where most human rights violations and abuses were recorded in the third quarter of 2022 (218 violations affecting 442 victims) due to incidents of violence committed by 3R combatants. However, the **Eastern Sector** registered the highest number of victims (186 violations affecting 606 victims). The Central Sector documented 82 human rights violations and abuses, affecting 137 civilians.



The **Haute-Kotto** was the most affected prefecture in terms of human rights violations and abuses (136) as well as victims (499). Out of the total number of victims between July and September 2022, 42% took place in this prefecture. This can be attributed to the deteriorating security and human rights situation in the **Eastern Sector** since the first half of 2022, due to armed clashes between FACA/ other security personnel (OSP) and their anti-Balaka proxies,

against UPC and FPRC combatants. Instances of violence have been committed by armed elements against civilians of the Fulani and Muslim



communities suspected of collaborating with armed groups. The HRD has also documented a significant number of cases of appropriation of civilian's goods with the use of violence by UPC and FPRC armed groups

PERPETRATORS

State actors and **armed groups** committed a similar number of human rights violations and abuses during the third quarter of 2022. State actors perpetrated 45% of the total number of violations (220), while the armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were responsible for 50% of the abuses (242). However, State actors registered the highest number of victims (676). The HRD also documented a relatively small number of

violations (24, affecting 32 victims) committed by other armed combatants that do not belong to signatories to the APPR-RCA, as well as mob justice cases related to accusations of witchcraft.

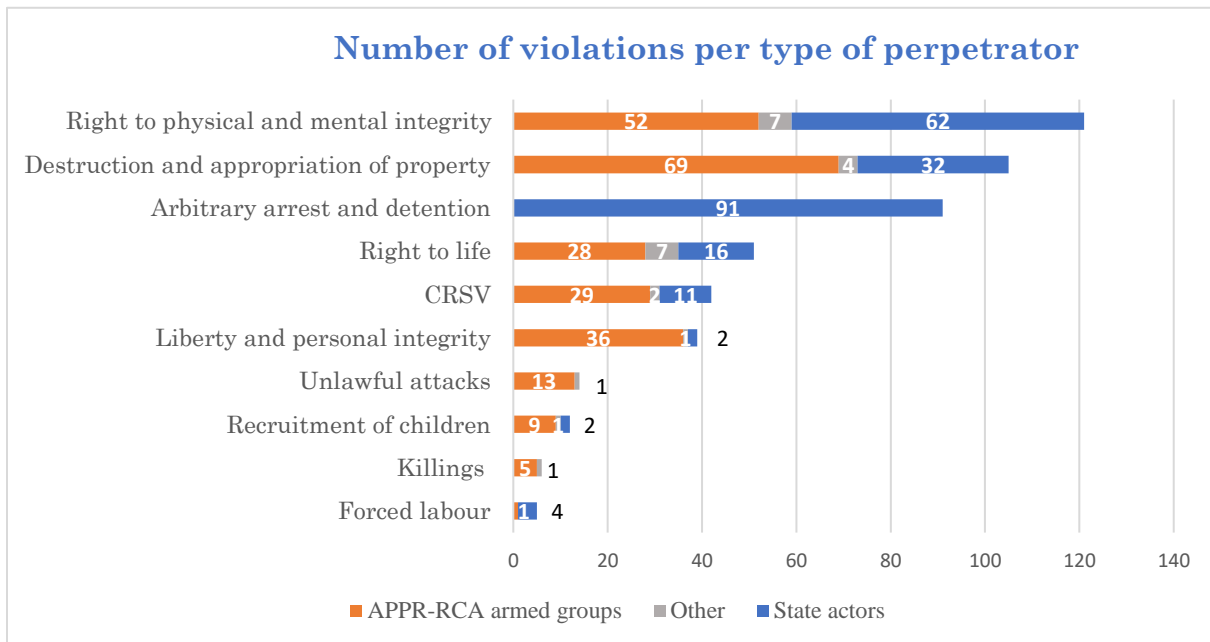
The most common types of violations committed by armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were destruction and appropriation of property (69), ill-

treatment (37) and rape (25). Among armed groups, the **3R** (59 abuses and 105 victims) and the **UPC** (69 abuses and 99 victims) were the chief perpetrators in terms of human rights abuses and victims. Armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were also responsible for the killing of most civilians (34 victims).

Some of the **emblematic cases** committed by the armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA include: i.) the recruitment of 58 children (35 boys and 23 girls) between the ages of 12 and 17 by FPRC in the Haute-Kotto prefecture who were used as combatants, cooks, errand runners, and man barriers²; ii.) four cases of sexual slavery of girls aged from 14 to 17 by CPC/anti-Balaka leaders in the Ouham prefecture, who were raped and forced to marry their perpetrator³; iii.) the forced labor, ill-treatment, and appropriation of property of nine men by FPRC elements affiliated to Mahamat Sallet in Haute-Kotto⁴; and iv.) the murder of three men by anti-

Balaka combatants in the Gbalamon mining site in Nana-Mambéré.

The most recurrent violations committed by State actors were arbitrary arrest and detention (91), ill-treatment (40) and destruction and appropriation of property (32). Among State actors, **FACA** alone committed most human rights violations (96 violations and 113 victims). On the other hand, the Gendarmerie (47 violations and 257 victims) and Police (35 violations and 244 victims) affected most victims due to cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, including those that exceeded the legal custody time limit. **OSP** alone committed 14 human rights violations, affecting 22 victims. However, jointly with FACA and FSI, they were responsible for 30 human rights violations affecting a total of 48 victims. As in the first half of 2022, the use of proxies by State actors, chiefly by FACA and OSP, continues to increase, which may be reducing the number of violent incidents directly committed by State actors.



²The Child Protection Unit (CPU), pertaining to the Human Rights Division (HRD) late-verified the self-of 58 children demobilization on 16 August 2022.

³The CPU, pertaining to the HRD, late-verified the sexual exploitation of 4 girls on 6 July.

⁴According to information received by the HRD the incident took place on 8 August 2022.

Some of the **emblematic cases** committed by state actors include: i.) the killing of a 39-year-old Muslim man by OSP in Bria, preceded by his arbitrary arrest and detention, and appropriation of property⁵; ii.) the arbitrary arrest of 100 members of the Fulani community by the Bria Police for lacking official

identity documents, followed by the extortion of funds of approximately 10,000 XFA each (15 USD)⁶; and iii.) the rape of a two-year-old girl by a FACA element in Bimbo. The perpetrator was arrested and taken to UMIRR, and the victims received medical care⁷.

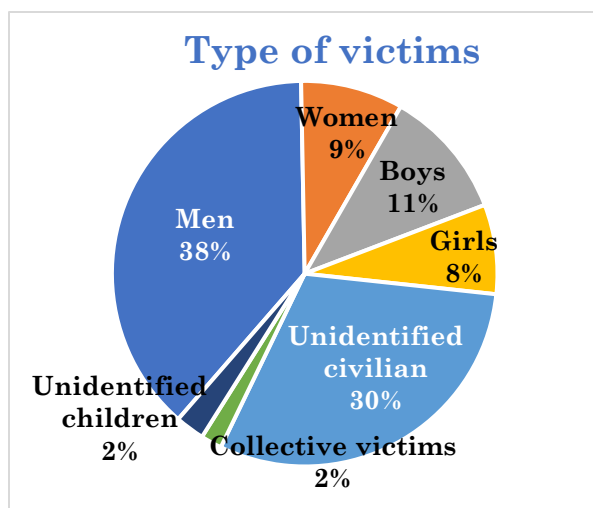
VICTIMS

According to the HRD’s findings, **1,185** civilians suffered human rights violations and abuses at the hands of armed groups and state actors. Out of these victims, **398** suffered multiple violations.

Men continued to account for most victims (454), followed by **women** (102), **boys** (129) and **girls** (89). In addition, there were 382 unidentified civilian victims —21 children and 361 adults for which the gender was not indicated — and 29 groups of collective victims.

In most cases, men were victims of arbitrary detention (134), ill-treatment (95), and destruction and appropriation of property (48). Women were primarily subjected to CRSV (19 victims), ill-treatment (19 victims) and arbitrary detention (15). Children suffered primarily from forced recruitment

and use (96 boys and 40 girls) by armed groups and state forces, while seven boys suffered maiming and injuries, and 36 girls were subject to CRSV, including rape (29) and sexual slavery (7).



⁵According to information received by the HRD, the incident took place on 15 September 2022.

⁶According to information received by the HRD, the incident took place on 11 August 2022.

⁷According to information received by the HRD, the incident took place on 27 July 2022.