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**MINUSCA**

**UNITED NATIONS**  
United Nations Multidimensional  
Integrated Stabilization Mission in  
the Central African Republic

**Human Rights Division**

# Quarterly report on Conflict Related Human Rights Violations, Trends and Patterns in CAR



**Pour que le développement, l'emploi puissent atterrir dans les régions les plus éloignées, il faut qu'il y ait la paix, il faut que les armes soient enterrées, il faut que le dialogue et la réconciliation l'emportent.**

**Oscar Fernandez-Taranco,**  
Sous-secrétaire général de l'appui à la  
consolidation de la paix

**To ensure development in CAR, employment, peace, dialogue and reconciliation must prevail.**

**Oscar Fernandez-Taranco,**  
Assistant UN Secretary-General for  
Peacebuilding Support

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<b>CAR</b>	Central African Republic
<b>CTFMR</b>	Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting
<b>DDR</b>	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
<b>FACA</b>	Forces armées centrafricaines
<b>FDPC</b>	Front Démocratique pour la Paix en Centrafrique
<b>FPRC</b>	Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique
<b>GoCAR</b>	Government of the Central African Republic
<b>HRC</b>	United Nations Human Rights Council
<b>HRD</b>	Human Rights Division
<b>HRDDP</b>	United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>ISF</b>	Internal Security Forces
<b>LRA</b>	Lord's Resistance Army
<b>MINUSCA</b>	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
<b>MNLC</b>	Mouvement National pour la Libération de la Centrafrique
<b>MPC</b>	Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique
<b>OCRB</b>	Office central pour la répression du grand banditisme
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>RPRC</b>	Rassemblement populaire pour renouveau de la Centrafrique
<b>RJ</b>	Révolution et Justice
<b>3R</b>	Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation
<b>UNPOL</b>	United Nations Police
<b>UPC</b>	Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, published by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA), describes conflict-related human rights trends and patterns in the Central African Republic (CAR) between 1 January and 31 March 2019. The overview and analysis provided are based on human rights monitoring and investigations conducted by the Human Rights Division (HRD) of MINUSCA. The report presents the results of MINUSCA investigations into abuses of International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and breaches of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) committed by the government security forces and armed groups, namely the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC), the anti-Balaka and associated militias, the “*Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique*” (MPC), the *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC), the *Mouvement National pour la Libération de la Centrafrique* (MNL), *Révolution et Justice* (RJ), *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R), SIRIRI armed group, armed Fulani, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), the Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain (FDPC) and other unidentified armed groups, including the PK5 armed gangs in Bangui.

HRD conducted its investigation in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2448 of 13 December 2018, which mandates MINUSCA to “monitor, help investigate and timely report to the Security Council and publicly on violations of international humanitarian law and on violations and abuses of human rights committed throughout the CAR”.

The reporting period has been characterized by a slight decrease in the number of incidents and victims of human rights violations and breaches of humanitarian law. This relative reduction in the number of abuses and victims during the reporting period is the direct result of a significant decrease in the number of clashes between rival armed groups as well as attacks against civilians in February and March. However, it is worth noting that continuous violence and grave cases of human rights violations and breaches of IHL were recorded during the month of January. Furthermore, some armed groups which signatories of the Agreement, namely the UPC, the FPRC, the 3R, and the anti-Balaka were responsible for serious human rights abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law.

The hotspots for the period under review include the prefectures of Ouaka, Ouham, Mbomou and Mambéré Kadéi.

HRD, including Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Child Protection Sections recorded 313 incidents of violations/abuses of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 662 victims, including 289 men, 159 women, 34 boys, 43 girls, 26 unknown minors, 91 unidentified adults and 20 groups of collective victims. As compared to the previous reporting period (October-December 2018) which recorded 401 incidents with 775 victims, there was a 21.78 per cent decrease in the number of incidents and a 14.58 per cent decrease in the number of victims.

The human rights violations and abuses committed during this period were arbitrary killings, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment), injuries/maiming, conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, destruction and appropriation of property, and serious violations and abuses against children, such as recruitment and use of children as soldiers.

Armed groups accounted for 302 incidents (96.4% of the total number of incidents) and 642 victims (97% of the total number of victims), while State agents accounted for 11 incidents (3.6% of the total number of cases) and 20 victims (3% of the total number of victims).

The report provides key recommendations for the Government, the armed groups and the international community, including the need for the Government and the armed groups to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in order to achieve durable peace in CAR. In addition, the report encourages the International Community to provide the necessary technical and financial support to the signatories in order to achieve an effective implementation of the Peace Agreement.

## METHODOLOGY

1. The quarterly report covering the period from January to March 2019 is based on information collected by Human Rights Officers (HROs) during regular monitoring activities and field visits as well as during special investigation and fact-finding missions. Information was collected through interviews with victims and witnesses, community leaders, local administration officials, civil society representatives, law enforcement officials, as well as some representatives of alleged perpetrators. HRD has also used imagery and reports obtained from other mission components (Police and Military components and Civil Affairs Section) and evidence collected from site visits. Security and accessibility constraints exacerbated by poor road conditions were the main challenges which prevented HRD from reaching all areas and villages affected by clashes and violence.
2. HRD used two or more distinct and independent sources to verify allegations. It triangulated information with additional sources and reports from other components of MINUSCA, United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations. Where HRD was not present, HRD took a position to have more than one source and where not satisfied with the quality of the information, the incident is referred to as an allegation, unverified or uncorroborated information. Internal protection of civilians' fora and other bilateral engagements proved efficient to share analysis, decrease controversies and gain better understanding on the scope, rationale, impact and implications of documented human rights violations and breaches to IHL in line with the complex CAR political, security and social contexts.
3. During the investigations, HRD took appropriate measures to protect sources from any possible repercussions for providing information, including by taking into account the *do no harm* principle, meeting in safe locations, and assessing the environment for potential risks against any source. HRD also faced and addressed two instances of individual protection in favour of its informants during the reporting period.
4. MINUSCA HRD is guided by the applicable norms of IHL. HRD defines civilians as persons who are not members of the armed forces or of organized armed groups and are not involved directly or indirectly in any act of belligerence. In some cases, HRD could neither conclusively establish or verify the civilian status of some victims nor confirm their status of combatant.

## I. APPLICABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

5. The legal framework applicable in the Central African Republic, described in previous MINUSCA public reports, remains valid.<sup>1</sup> MINUSCA considers that the nature and intensity of the armed violence, the level of territorial control, its protracted nature, and the level of organization of the different ex-Séléka groups, the anti-Balaka factions and other armed groups, attest to the existence of a non-international armed conflict in the country. However, HRD gathered more evidence on the ex-Séléka groups' effective control through issuance of directives on decision making and appointment of commanders unlike the anti-Balaka where no clarity transpired from the chain of command during the reporting period except in few locations such as Bria. HRD analysis of modus operandi and tactics in reported violence from some locations fall under the purview of criminal gangs and banditry.
6. In terms of level of organization, MINUSCA has observed that the different ex-Séléka splinters (FPRC, UPC, and MPC) each have military structures, command hierarchies and internal disciplinary systems. They have established headquarters and other bases, possess the capacity to carry out

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<sup>1</sup> Violations and Abuses of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law Committed in Bangui, Central African Republic, between 26 September and 20 October 2015 (available at [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/bangui\\_report\\_final\\_english.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/bangui_report_final_english.pdf)) and Violations and Abuses of Human Rights and Violations of International Humanitarian Law by the FPRC Coalition and UPC in Haute-Kotto and Ouaka between 21 November 2016 and 21 February 2017 (available at [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/fprc\\_upc\\_bria\\_bakala\\_report\\_16oct2017\\_copy.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/fprc_upc_bria_bakala_report_16oct2017_copy.pdf)).

The Central African Republic has ratified five international human rights instruments and the two optional protocols related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. See [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=5&Lang=EN](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=5&Lang=EN). It is also a State party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

military operations with defined strategies, and have asserted control over certain territories and effective control over their elements. They have logistical capacities and the ability to recruit and to access weapons and military equipment. While generally less organized, structured, equipped and disciplined than the above-mentioned ex-Séléka groups, anti-Balaka groups exert significant control in some large towns and have carried out well coordinated attacks and ambushes against civilians and MINUSCA mainly in Haute-Kotto, Basse-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures.

7. All parties to a non-international armed conflict are bound by the relevant rules of treaty and customary law applicable to non-international armed conflicts, including Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949<sup>2</sup> which establishes the minimum standards that parties, including State and non-State actors, shall respect in a non-international armed conflict.

8. The International Court of Justice has affirmed that international human rights law applies not only in times of peace, but also during war, when international humanitarian law and international human rights law afford protection in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner.<sup>3</sup> International human rights law applies primarily to State actors. However, it is increasingly understood that certain non-State actors have obligations to respect human rights when their conduct affects the human rights of the individuals under their control.<sup>4</sup>

9. Pursuant to article 8(c) and (e) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), in a non-international armed conflict, serious violations of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions may constitute war crimes, for which perpetrators may be held individually responsible.<sup>5</sup> This comprises the following acts committed against persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including *hors de combat* fighters:<sup>6</sup> murder, torture or inhumane treatment, or wilfully depriving a protected person of the rights to fair and regular trial. In addition, article 8(e) of the Rome Statute lists a range of other war crimes, including: intentional attacks against civilians not taking part in hostilities; against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping missions; or against protected buildings (hospitals, schools, religious institutions); as well as acts of sexual violence and pillaging.<sup>7</sup>

10. Pursuant to article 7 of the Rome Statute, certain acts committed in the context of widespread or systematic attacks directed against a civilian population amount to crimes against humanity, and notably include: murder, extermination; deportation or forcible transfer; imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty; torture; rape, sexual slavery or other grave sexual violence; persecution against an identifiable group on specific grounds; enforced disappearances. The Central African Republic is a signatory to the Rome statute and ratified the Protocol for the prevention and the punishment of the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and all forms of

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2 The Central African Republic is a party to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their Additional Protocols I and II of 1977. The conflict in the Central African Republic has featured the involvement of nomadic Fulani cattle herders as perpetrators as well as victims. In some cases, HRD was able to confirm that members of the Fulani community had acted together with, or with the support of, ex-Séléka armed groups, including in carrying out attacks on civilians, or sharing uniforms and weapons.

3 See for example *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Reports 1996, p. 226; *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Reports 2004, p. 136; *Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)*, Judgment, ICJ Reports 2005, p. 168. For a detailed discussion about the applicability of human rights law in times of armed conflict see *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict*, OHCHR Publication HR/PUB/11/01 (2011).

4 See United Nations Secretary-General, *Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka*, 31 March 2011, para. 188. Also see *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry to investigate all Alleged Violations of International Human Rights Law in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya* (UN document A/HRC/17/44), 1 June 2011, para. 72; *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic* (UN document A/HRC/19/69, para. 106) and United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, *Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report*, 8 May 2014, para. 18.

5 MINUSCA has publicly warned armed groups that their actions might constitute serious crimes for which they might be held accountable. See for example the MINUSCA press release of 5 March 2017 stressing that “[a]ny attack targeting the civilian population, UN and humanitarian personnel is a war crime that can be prosecuted in accordance with Central African law and international law” at [www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56293](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56293) (French original at <http://minusca.unmissions.org/le-fprc-sera-responsable-de-tout-acte-contre-les-casques-bleus-et-les-acteurs-humanitaires>).

6 Jean-Marie Henckaerts and Louise Doswald-Beck for the International Committee of the Red Cross, *Customary International Humanitarian Law: Volume I: Rules* (Cambridge University Press 2005), rule 47: “A person *hors de combat* is: (a) anyone who is in the power of an adverse party; (b) anyone who is defenceless because of unconsciousness, shipwreck, wounds or sickness; or (c) anyone who clearly expresses an intention to surrender.” According to Rule 47 and Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, it is prohibited to attack persons who are recognized as *hors de combat*.

7 Abridged, non-exhaustive list.

discriminations<sup>8</sup>, which implies responsibility to protect through preventive measures and adequate responses to international crimes. The country has established a Special Criminal Court<sup>9</sup> to investigate, prosecute and try serious violations of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law, in particular the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed in the Central African Republic since 1 January 2003. The Government has also referred the situation in its territory since 1 July 2002 to the International Criminal Court.

## II. POLITICAL AND SECURITY CONTEXT

11. During the reporting period the number of security incidents and civilian victims documented decreased steadily since January 2019. The security and human rights situation in CAR was less fragile than the previous quarter which was characterized by major clashes between rival armed groups, attacks against civilians as well as against humanitarian actors and MINUSCA forces.

12. On 6 February, the signing of APPR-RCA between the GoCAR and 14 major armed groups in the country following two weeks of peace talks in Khartoum, Sudan, was hailed as an important turning point in the recent history of CAR and was considered as the main instrument to improve the security, political and human rights situation in the country.

13. On 25 February CAR President Touadéra appointed his former Chief of Staff, Mr. Firmin Ngrebada as the new Prime Minister in order to facilitate a reorganization of the GoCAR, in accordance with the discussions held during the Khartoum peace talks. The first government was composed of 36 Ministers, 21 of whom were from the previous government with only 8 representatives from the armed groups. Consequently, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction on the part of the armed groups who claimed that the government was not inclusive and threatened to withdraw from the Agreement. Given the prevailing context of uncertainty, between 18 to 20 March, the signatories of the APPR-RCA met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by invitation of the Commission of the African Union, with the support of the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States (EC-CAS) to find solutions to the impending crisis.

14. On 22 March, the President of CAR signed a decree announcing 39 new ministerial positions in the cabinet, which included thirteen new Ministers from the armed groups FPRC, UPC, MPC, Anti-Balaka/Mokom, Anti-Balaka/Ngaïssona, RPRC, FDPC, 3R, and MLCJ. In addition, the leader of the armed group RJ/Sayo was appointed as a High Commissioner to the Presidency of the Republic.

15. In spite of a relative improvement in the security situation in the country following the Political Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, the actions of some armed groups such as 3R in the north-western part of the country, the UPC and the FPRC in the center as well as the anti-Balaka in the South-east, have been jeopardizing the achievements of the Agreement and constitute a cause for concern due to the continued violations of right to personal liberty, attacks against the rights to life and physical integrity, the presence and erection of illegal barriers, the collection of illegal taxes and the restrictions on the right to freedom of movement of civilians.

16. **In the Centre of the country**, the security and human rights situation in Bambari, Ouaka prefecture, remained a major cause for concern at the beginning of the year due to increasing tension and sporadic clashes between the UPC and the anti-Balaka, which included targeted attacks on civilians and resulted in exchange of fire between the UPC and MINUSCA's forces, when the mission enforced measures to implement its mandate on Protection of Civilians (PoC).

17. As a response to the deteriorating security situation, on 10 January 2019, MINUSCA forces launched "Operation BEKPA II" to make Bambari an area free of armed groups and weapons. During the operation, the peacekeepers cleared all illegal barricades in the UPC strongholds in town as well as on other UPC bases, including the UPC headquarters in Bokolobo<sup>10</sup>. On 17 and 19

<sup>8</sup> Adopted on 29 November 2006 by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and domesticated through the establishment of a National Committee on the Prevention of Genocide;

<sup>9</sup> See "Loi organique no 15.003 du 03 juin 2015, portant création, organisation et fonctionnement de la Cour Pénale Spéciale »

<sup>10</sup> Approximately 57 kilometers south west of Bambari.

January, MINUSCA carried out stabilization operations and established multiple Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs) in the Muslim neighbourhoods of Adji, Bournou, Maidou, and Elevage. On 23 January, further exchange of fire took place between MINUSCA Force and the UPC when the mission deployed patrols, including a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) in Elevage and Adji/Mixed Brigade neighbourhoods to establish blocking positions. These incidents resulted in the killing of three civilians (one man, a 16-year-old girl and a 4-year-old boy). The UPC allegedly manipulated the Muslim population in town to demonstrate against MINUSCA in order to force the Mission to cease military and stabilization operations in Bambari.

18. On 24 January in Bornou district in Ippy, Ouaka prefecture, a UPC element armed with an AK-47 opened fire indiscriminately on a group of people (Muslims and Christians) attending a funeral ceremony, resulting in 10 civilians killed and 17 injured. On 25 January, the UPC element involved in the killing, was reportedly captured and killed by the UPC ComZone of Ippy in front of the local population as an apparent deterrent to other UPC elements.

19. **In eastern CAR**, on 31 December 2018, heavily armed FPRC elements attacked Bakouma, forcibly displacing almost the entire population of the town and nearby villages. The attack against and occupation of Bakouma resulted in the death of at least 45 persons (25 men, 16 women, two girls and two boys), the majority of whom are presumed to have been civilians<sup>11</sup>. Almost the entire population of Bakouma and neighbouring villages, 12.000 to 15.000 persons, was forcibly displaced, exposing the IDPs to deadly dangers from illness, hunger and lack of shelter. HRD documented 12 victims<sup>12</sup> of conflict-related sexual violence who were raped by FPRC fighters between 31 December 2018 and 4 January 2019<sup>13</sup>. Looting and destruction of personal and institutional property by the FPRC and its supporters was an integral part of the attack, though the assailants refrained from razing entire neighbourhoods and instead focused on selected high-value and high-profile institutions, including humanitarian infrastructure.

20. **In the western part of CAR**, in Mambéré-Kadéi prefecture, the killing of three Fulani farmers by anti-Balaka elements from Carnot<sup>14</sup> on 1 January led to subsequent retaliatory actions from armed Fulani, who attacked Zaoro-sango village<sup>15</sup> on 20 January 2019 killing nine civilians, including a priest, and injuring two others. The same day, anti-Balaka elements in Carnot attacked the Muslim community in town, causing injuries to a civilian man, pillaging and vandalizing about 10 houses and burning down and several Muslim shops. On 22 January the anti-Balaka in Carnot conducted further looting of Muslim shops and set the Mosque on fire. In addition, these incidents prompted the displacement of approximately 204 persons.

21. On 23 January, a significant step in the fight against impunity was achieved when the French judicial authorities transferred former anti-Balaka leader Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona to the ICC in The Hague, Netherlands, by following an ICC arrest warrant against him for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in CAR between 5 December 2013 and December 2014.

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11 Additionally, MINUSCA documented the death of seven anti-Balaka and three FPRC fighters. The actual number of non-civilian fatalities may be higher.

12 Three women, seven girls and two boys.

13 MINUSCA considers two cases verified while the other 10 are allegations that are plausible but unconfirmed.

14 Approximately 77 kilometers north of Berberati

15 Approximately 41 kilometers north west of Carnot and approximately 99 kilometers north east of Berberati.



### III. HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES RELATED TO THE CONFLICT AND TRENDS CONSTITUTING THREATS TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

22. During the reporting period, HRD documented **313** incidents<sup>16</sup> of violations and abuses of international human rights law and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting **662** victims including 289 men, 159 women, 103 children (34 boys, 43 girls and 26 unknown minors) and 111 unidentified victims including 20 groups of collective victims. These figures represent a 21.78 per cent decrease in the number of incidents and a 14.58 per cent decrease in the total number of victims compared to the previous quarter covering the period from October to December 2018, which recorded 401 incidents with 775 victims.

23. There were no major clashes between rival armed groups in February, nor major attacks against civilians during the month of March. Consequently, the number of civilian casualties related to the conflict dropped from 46 victims in February to 18 in March.

24. Based on information gathered, HRD recorded the killing of **163** civilians (88 men, 20 women, 10 boys, five girls and 40 unknown adults). There were also **47** civilians injured during the quarter under review. The UPC accounted for the highest number of civilian casualties with 42 fatalities (25.7%) and 24 injured persons (51%), mainly in Ouaka prefecture. The FPRC was responsible for the killing of at least 41 persons, mainly in Mbomou prefecture, while 3R accounted for at least 34 civilians killed in Mambéré Kadei and Ouham- Pendé prefectures.

25. Apart from killings, other recurrent violations of human rights and IHL during the reporting period were: (a) attacks against physical and mental integrity with 73 incidents affecting 134 victims; (b) Conflict Related Sexual Violence with 71 incidents affecting 109 victims; (c) 19 incidents of abduction affecting 73 victims; (d) 35 incidents of arbitrary deprivation of liberty affecting 79 victims; (e) destruction or pillaging/extortion of property and illegal taxation, 13 incidents affecting 49 victims; (f) 4 incidents involving the recruitment of 13 children into the armed groups and (g) 18 incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of humanitarian personnel/UN Peacekeepers including their equipment and attacks on religious facilities, educational premises and medical centre, affecting 18 victims.

26. Armed groups<sup>17</sup> accounted for **302** incidents (96.4% of the total number of incidents) and **642** victims (97% of the total number of victims) –273 men, 159 women, 99 children, 91 unidentified victims and 20 collective victims.

27. State agents<sup>18</sup> accounted for **11** incidents (3.6% of the total number of incidents) and **20** victims (3% of the total number of victims) including 16 men and four girls. Seven violations by the State agents were directly linked to the conflict and attributed to the *Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA) with the highest number of cases (11 men and four girls); the Gendarmerie was responsible for three incidents affecting three men, while the Police accounted for one violation involving two men.

<sup>16</sup> Figures mentioned in the report do not reflect the complete overview of the human rights violations in CAR. The figures relate to cases recorded and/or verified by the HRD, though it may be possible that these figures include human rights violations committed during previous months but brought to the attention of the HRD during the reporting period. 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.

<sup>17</sup> These armed groups include the anti-Balaka, the UPC, FPRC, MPC, FPRC/AH, FPRC/MPC Coalition, armed Fulani, MNLC, LRA, RJ, 3R, PK5 armed groups (FORCE/APO), SIRIRI and other unidentified armed groups

<sup>18</sup> State agents in general 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)

#### **A. Abuses by the anti-Balaka**

28. During the period under review, the anti-Balaka were responsible for **47** incidents affecting **121** victims, which accounted for **15 per cent** of the total number of incidents and **18.2 per cent** of the total number of victims. As compared to the previous reporting period, which recorded 131 incidents and 204 victims by the armed group, there was a 64.1 percent decrease in the number of incidents and 40 percent decrease in the number of victims.

29. During the reporting period, the number of civilians killed in attacks involving the anti-Balaka was at least 14 persons, including five men, two boys, two unknown children and five unknown adults. These killings were recorded mostly in the prefectures of Mbomou, Mambéré -Kadei, Nana-Mambéré and Ouham.

30. Other human rights abuses perpetrated by the anti-Balaka include 13 incidents of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, affecting 12 men, two women and one boy as well as five incidents involving threats to the physical and mental integrity of nine men, one boy, one woman and two men. Seven women and three girls were raped in five incidents; two cases of confiscation of property affecting 10 men and 24 unidentified victims were registered, as well as four incidents of abduction affecting five women, one girl, three unknown children, and nine men. Two incidents of arbitrary deprivation of liberty affecting one man and five women, one incident of attacks on humanitarian workers affecting an unknown number of civilians and one incident of recruitment of one boy into the armed group, were also documented.

#### **B. Abuses by UPC, FPRC, MPC, FPRC/MPC coalition, FPRC/AH and armed Fulani**

31. Human rights abuses by the ex-Séléka splinter groups during the period under review were attributed to the UPC (64 incidents), FPRC (63 incidents), FPRC/MPC Coalition (13 incidents), MPC (19 incidents), armed Fulani (33 incidents) and FPRC-AH faction (10 incidents). These different groups committed a total of **202** abuses affecting **379** victims, with the FPRC accounting for the highest number of victims (152 victims), followed by the UPC (128 victims), armed Fulani Coalition (45 victims), FPRC/MPC coalition (23 victims), the MPC (20 victims) and FPRC/AH (11 victims). The number of documented cases perpetrated by the different ex-Séléka splinter groups during this period represents a **13.4** percent increase in the total number of incidents recorded during the previous reporting period (178 cases during the last quarter of 2018) and a **9.5** percent decrease in the previous number of victims (419 victims). The different ex-Séléka splinter groups accounted for **64.5 percent** of the total number of incidents and **57.2 percent** of the total number of victims registered during the period under review.

32. During the reporting period, the ex-Séléka splinter groups accounted for the killing of 99 civilians. These casualties were recorded mostly in the Ouaka and Mbomou prefectures during attacks mainly perpetrated by the UPC (37 killings and 24 injured) and the FPRC (37 civilians killed).

33. The violations perpetrated by these armed groups during this period include : 36 incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity affecting 30 men, 15 women and 23 unknown civilians; 50 Conflict Related Sexual Violence incidents affecting 53 women, 22 girls, two boys and one man; 33 incidents of deprivation of liberty affecting 59 men, eight women and five boys; 10 abductions affecting 14 men, three women, one boy and one unknown child; seven incidents of appropriation/confiscation of property affecting four men, one woman and two groups of collective victims; five incidents of unlawful attacks and pillaging of humanitarian workers and their equipment as well as attacks on educational and health facilities affecting four groups of unknown number of civilians; five incidents of attacks, destruction or pillaging of property affecting one woman and four groups of an unknown number of victims; one incident where the UPC used 10 boys as human shields and to collect weaponry from deceased combatants; seven incidents of denial of humanitarian relief committed by FPRC and affecting seven groups of collective victims; and one incident of recruitment of children into armed group by UPC affecting two boys.

34. The UPC opposition to the visit of CAR President Touadéra to Bambari, Ouaka prefecture (scheduled for 10-11 January), triggered a security crisis between 9 and 10 January during which a MINUSCA patrol was attacked by combatants of the armed group carrying heavy weaponry and two members of the ISF resulted dead. During these incidents, at least four civilians were reportedly killed by stray bullets in the Adji neighbourhood, three others were reported missing, and another civilian was found dead at the UPC's "Mixed Brigade". These incidents contributed to further

escalation of tensions, attacks against MINUSCA personnel and assets and destabilization of the security situation in the region during the following weeks.

**C. Abuses by other armed groups: MNLC, Fulani affiliated with 3R under the effective control of Sidiki, RJ, LRA, FDPC other unidentified armed groups, including the PK5 armed gangs in Bangui**

35. The other active armed groups during this reporting period were the MNLC, the LRA, 3R of Sidiki, RJ, FDPC, the PK5 criminal gangs in Bangui and other unidentified armed groups. These armed groups and the PK5 armed gangs in Bangui were responsible for **53** incidents affecting **142** victims, which account for **16.9 percent** of the total number of incidents and **21.4 percent** of the total number of victims.

36. Based on the documented cases perpetrated by these armed groups, there was a **29.3** percent decrease in the total number of incidents and a **8.3** percent decrease in the total number of victims compared to the previous reporting period, which recorded 75 incidents and 131 victims.

37. These different armed groups killed 42 civilians and injured another 17. The main perpetrators of these killings and injuries were the 3R with 34 killings, unidentified armed groups accounting for seven civilians killed, and the LRA with at least one person killed and 17 injured.

38. The majority of the killings by these groups occurred in Mambéré Kadéï and Ouham-Pendé and are attributable to 3R, which indicates a persistent trend by this armed group to commit attacks against the civilian population in western areas of CAR in which it operates.

39. The other abuses committed by the above-mentioned armed groups during the reporting period were 14 incidents of violations of the right to physical and mental integrity, affecting 15 men, 16 women, one girl and two unknown adults; 10 incidents of Conflict related Sexual violence affecting nine women and one girl. There were also four incidents of abduction affecting seven men, nine women and 17 unidentified minors, one incident of arbitrary deprivation of liberty affecting one man, and one case of denial of humanitarian relief affecting a group of collective victims.

**D. Human rights violations by State Agents**

40. Data collected by HRD indicate that State Agents were responsible for **20** cases of human rights violations related to the conflict. These violations affected **16** men and **four** girls. The main perpetrators were the FACA (11 men and four girls), the gendarmerie (3 men) and the Police (two men). State agents accounted for **3.5 per cent** of the total number of incidents and **3 per cent** of the total number of victims.

41. The most serious violations by the State Agents documented during this period include the reported rape in December 2018 of four girls aged 13, 14 and two of 16 years old, by a FACA military working at the CAR Presidency of the Republic in Bangui and the killing of one civilian man by a member of the gendarmerie in Boda<sup>19</sup>, Lobaye prefecture, on 21 February 2019, when the victim attempted to avoid a checkpoint in which the ISF was charging illegal taxes on the population and a gendarme reacted disproportionately by shooting on him.

42. Furthermore, on 21 March 2019 in Obo, Haut Mbomou Prefecture, six FACA elements posted at a check point at the entrance of the town on Mboki axis, imposed illegal taxation on taxi moto drivers using the road. At least six persons were obliged to pay 2000 FCFA each.

43. Another serious incident attributed to the FACA was the cruel and inhuman treatment of a 23-year-old man detained in Nola<sup>20</sup>, Sangha-Mbaéré Prefecture after he attempted to escape from Prison on 5 February. Two members of FACA on guard duty the day of the incident allegedly caught the victim and subjected him to cruel and inhuman treatment, which included setting fire on his private parts. The victim was evacuated to the Nola Hospital the following day for medical treatment.

44. HRD observed that most of the violations committed during the reporting period by State Agents were directly related to the right to life and the right to physical and mental integrity and were mainly directed against adult men.

<sup>19</sup> Approximately 200 Km from Bangui on the Berberati axis.

<sup>20</sup> Approximately 130 Km from Berberati

#### **IV. CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

45. During this quarter, humanitarian partners and civil society actors reported an increasing number of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases in the Prefecture of Nana Gribizi. Information of over 100 cases was received by UNHCR in January, and 116 cases were registered in the month of March. Incidents of SGBV took place near the IDP sites and on the axes in rural areas. While the majority of violations seem to have been committed by armed men, whose affiliation to armed groups is unclear, members of the PoC Working Group, including the Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) Section, agreed that a mapping of the cases is necessary, to be able to analyse patterns and links to a possible increase of presence of armed elements during the transhumance period. Among these cases, there are at least 71 cases of CRSV affecting 109 victims (72 women, 34 girls, two boys and one man).

46. Monitoring CRSV continues to be challenging due to the inaccessibility of certain zones, ongoing conflicts in some areas, attacks by armed groups against humanitarian actors, and the continuous displacement of victims. In addition, despite the peace agreement of 6 February, insecurity due to armed conflicts still exists in large areas where the Mission is present. Furthermore, the absence of local authorities, the lack of infrastructure and ongoing military operations are some of the main obstacles to swift investigation and prosecution of cases and immediate access by victims of sexual violence to available services.

47. HRD continued to conduct awareness-raising sensitization sessions on CRSV to encourage the victims to come forward and local authorities, community leaders, women and youth and the community to report on cases of CRSV, avoid impunity and avoid stigmatization of victims. Seven sessions were held for the benefit of 456 people (341 women, 215 men). HRD trained 211 combatants of armed groups on respect for international human rights law and the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence, during three sessions in Kaga-Bandoro and Bossangoa.

#### **V. GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN**

48. During the reporting period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 78 incidents of grave violations against children affecting 103 children (34 boys, 43 girls and 26 unknown minors). This represents a 16 per cent decrease in the overall number of incidents and a 27.18 per cent increase in the number of victims compared to the previous quarter (91 incidents of grave violations affecting children 75 children). There was a significant increase in incidents relating to rape and other forms of sexual violence (35 per cent); the number of recruited children (14 per cent); and incidents of denial of humanitarian access (13 per cent). However, there were notable decreases in the number of incidents of attacks against schools (more than two-fold) and hospitals (16 per cent); victims of abduction (33 per cent); and victims of killings and maiming (31 per cent). The decrease could be attributed to the relative calm that prevailed in the country during the Go-CAR peace discussions between the 14-armed group leaders and the Government in Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan.

49. Ex-Seleka perpetrated 31 incidents affecting 40 children (15 girls/25 boys) accounting for more than 39% of incidents and 54% of victims (FPRC (18), UPC (6), MPC (4), unidentified ex-Seleka (2) and FPRC/MPC (1)), followed by AB (14), 3R (5), FACA (5), FDPC (4), LRA (1), SIRIRI (1) and unidentified armed men (17). Ouaka was the most affected prefecture with the highest number of victims (26) followed by Nana Mambéré (14).

#### **VI. PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS (SUBMITTED BY POC SECTION)**

50. During the reporting period, the overall POC situation improved slightly since the signing of the Khartoum Peace Agreement. MINUSCA continues to support the establishment of mechanisms generated from the Peace Agreement such as the Comité Technique de Suivi (CTS), the *Unités Spéciales Mixtes de Sécurité* (USMS), and the *Comités de Mise en Oeuvre Prefectoraux* (CMOP) to strengthen the Agreement and contribute to a better protection of the civilian population.

51. Armed group leaders continue to assert their commitment to peace and a reduction of violence. While the number of reported cases of physical violence against civilians has slightly decreased from the previous reporting period, armed groups' criminal and illegal activities continued

to threaten the protection of civilians in violation of the Khartoum peace agreement. Both signatory and non-signatory armed elements continued to carry out arbitrary killings, torture, cruel and inhuman treatment as well as sexual violence, with impunity causing casualties and displacement of population. Nevertheless, the signature of the peace agreement provides MINUSCA with an additional tool to implement its protection of civilians' mandate, in line with its focus on prevention.

52. Human rights abuses and breaches of IHL by armed elements continued to be the principal issue in the protection of civilians. In most areas, cattle-related conflict was most prevalent which is the norm during the transhumance season. In January, before the signing of the Khartoum agreement, operation "Bekpa" was under way in the Ouaka prefecture as MINUSCA Forces chased UPC elements from Bambari and its other strongholds on the Bambari-Alindao axis. Since then, UPC elements have slightly decreased their abuses against the civilian population, although concerns remain in the areas of Kouango and Mobaye in Basse-Kotto, where MINUSCA has difficulty accessing.

53. In Mambéré-Kadei and Nana-Mambéré, 3R or affiliated elements were the source of most conflicts and grave human rights violations against civilians. In Zaoro-Sango village (near Carnot), 3R elements allegedly attacked a village and killed several people causing reprisal attacks by anti-Balaka. The incident led to over 200 IDPs fleeing to Carnot. In March, the town of Koude, including nearby village Alim, was attacked by 3R resulting in several deaths and huge population displacement (see below: POC hotspot prioritization map for all areas of concern).

54. As in the aforementioned cases, the intervention of MINUSCA Force in Alindao and Lihoto reduced armed group activities and facilitated the gradual return of the displaced to their villages. Similarly, MINUSCA military operations have reduced threats posed by armed groups to civilians in several areas, including in Nana-Mambéré, where operation "Poupou" aimed to prevent the FDPC from continuing to hinder freedom of movement along MSR-1 from their base in Zoukombo.

55. The trend observed is that although armed groups persist in their criminal activities, violence and tensions amongst the various ethnic groups and armed elements have decreased since the signing of the peace agreement. This trend is likely due to the various government positions received by key armed group actors and their participation in newly formed government institutions (USMS, CTS, etc.). However, the continued activities by armed groups, such as illegal taxation and the control of natural resources, will continue to pose a challenge for the protection of civilians and their human rights.

## VII. OBSERVATIONS

56. The overall security and human rights situation in the CAR has shown a slight improvement since the month of January (118 incidents with 291 victims), which was characterized by major clashes among armed groups and targeted attacks on the civilian population, with a sustained decrease in both the number of incidents and victims documented in February (99 cases with 193 victims) and March (96 incidents with 178 victims). The number of civilian casualties related to the conflict dropped from 118 in January to 46 in February and 17 in March.

57. In spite of the relative decrease in the number of human rights violations/abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law documented, HRD notes with concern that certain armed groups signatories to the Political Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic continued to be responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law as well as violations of the provisions of the Agreement.

58. The activities of the FPRC, UPC, the anti-Balaka and 3R in the country continue to represent a threat for security stabilization and accounted for the highest number of human rights abuses and breaches of IHL as well as the highest number of civilian victims. Among them, they were responsible for 197 incidents or 62.9 per cent of the total number of incidents and 483 victims or 72.97 per cent of the total number of victims recorded in the reporting period.

59. The conduct of some State agents remains cause for concern due to allegations of killings and torture during the reporting period. In addition, frequent reports about State agents using their position of authority to collect money from civilians transiting through legal checkpoints around the country, have raised the attention of HRD due to the violations involved in such actions, which include attacks or threats against the physical integrity and life of the civilians that refuse to pay.

## VIII.RECOMMENDATIONS

60. In order to ensure the progressive improvement of the human rights situation in the CAR, HRD reiterates the following recommendations, and urges:

*The Government of the Central African Republic to:*

Prioritise the implementation of human rights and IHL provisions of the APPR-RCA by providing technical and financial support to the concerned institutions and bodies;

Prioritise the fight against impunity for past and present serious human rights violations and abuses by ensuring prompt, independent and impartial investigations for all violations and abuses.

Continue strengthening its efforts to restore State authority and the rule of law, in particular through effective deployment of police, *gendarmes* and judicial authorities;

Create conditions to assist victims of conflict-related sexual violence, forced marriages and teenage mothers, including provisions of medical, psychological and legal support;

Strengthen child protection initiatives and encourage the release of children still associated with armed groups; initiate strategies and support programmes for children victims of armed groups and children released from armed groups, and update the National Plan for the Protection of Children; and

Prevent, prosecute and punish all perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses against persons accused of witchcraft and charlatanism, including through a review of the criminal code to ensure the decriminalisation of acts of witchcraft and sensitisation campaigns on witchcraft allegations.

*All armed groups to:*

As signatories to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR, demonstrate their commitment to respect human rights and IHL provisions of the Agreement.

Respect their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the prohibition of committing the six grave child rights violations.

Cease indiscriminate attacks on civilians, including humanitarian actors and take positive measures, as may be required, to ensure full respect for international human rights, and international humanitarian law; and

Facilitate the return of legitimate authorities in the administration and security sector throughout the territory.

*The international community to:*

Engage the Government and the armed groups to strictly adhere to the provisions and the spirit of the Agreement in order to put an end to the long-lasting cycle of violence in CAR.

Fulfil their financial obligations in order to ensure a timely and effective implementation of the Agreement.

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.

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