



*Quarterly Brief on the Human Rights Situation in the Central African Republic
October to December 2021*

Summary

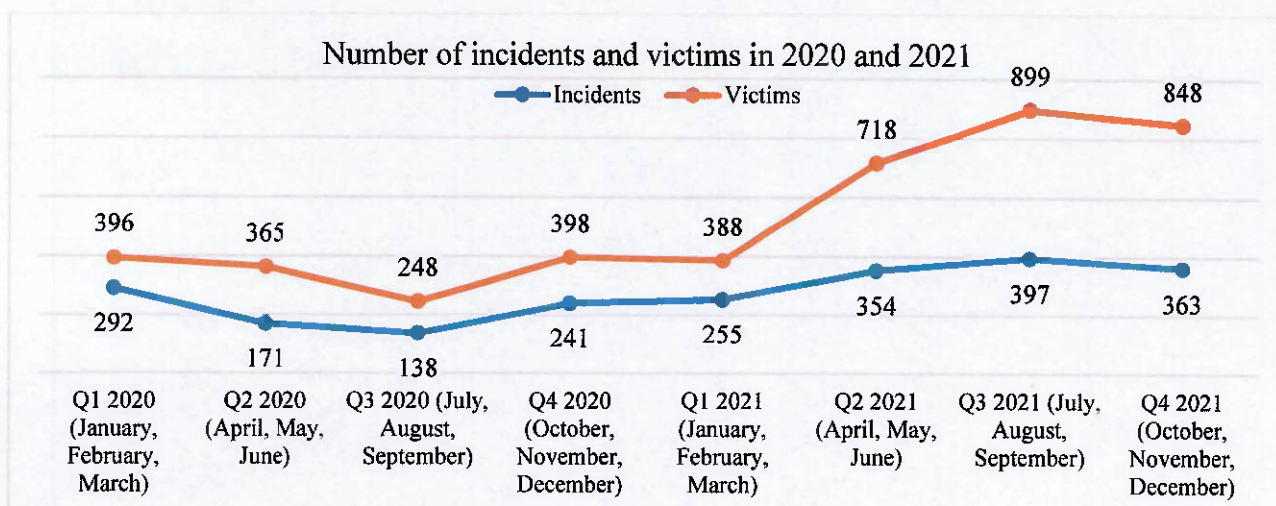
The human rights situation in CAR during the period under consideration was characterized by a stable number of incidents and victims when compared to the previous quarter, but an increase in the severity of violations, as a higher proportion of victims were murdered or arbitrarily detained. The human rights situation in CAR during the period under consideration was also characterized by a stable number of incidents and victims when compared to the previous quarter, but an increase in violations to right to life, right to freedom, murders and arbitrary detentions were documented. Other human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) violations documented included cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment and conflict-related sexual violence. Continued concerns over the protection of civilians remained a major concern owing to clashes between armed groups, clashes between State forces and armed groups, as well as abuses/violence perpetrated by armed groups and State forces and their allies /other security personnel (OSP) against the civilian population.

General Trends

During the fourth quarter of 2021, the Human Rights Division (HRD), including the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) Section and the Child Protection Section (CPS), documented 363 incidents of human rights violations and breaches of IHL, resulting in 848 victims. These findings are roughly in line with the previous quarter, during which 399 incidents affecting 899 victims had been documented. However, they do confirm an increase observed since the second quarter of 2021.

During this quarter, the proportion of incidents and victims attributed to armed groups and State actors remained stable. Armed groups signatories to the APPR-CAR were responsible for a majority of the incidents and victims, with 220 incidents affecting 485 victims documented (representing respectively 60.60 percent of the total number of incidents and 57.19 percent of the total number of victims). State forces and their allies were allegedly responsible for 38.83 percent of the total number of incidents and 39.38 percent of the total number of victims (141 incidents, 334 victims). It is noteworthy that in some cases armed groups' combatants who committed human rights abuses received support from State actors, which nuances the distinction.

Various clashes that occurred between State actors and armed groups continued to take place in the West, negatively affecting the civilian population. However, this quarter saw a noticeable rise in human rights abuses and violations in the east of the country, where some armed groups increased their activity and State actors conducted a series of operations. Sector East accounts for nearly half of the incidents and victims documented in the period under review.



Violations

Murders and extrajudicial executions represent 11.47 percent of the total number of incidents, affecting 21.95 percent of the total number of victims (42 incidents, 186 victims). Armed groups signatories to the APPR-CAR were responsible for an overwhelming majority of these incidents, with 22 incidents affecting 127 victims; while State actors were responsible for 19 incidents affecting 31 victims.

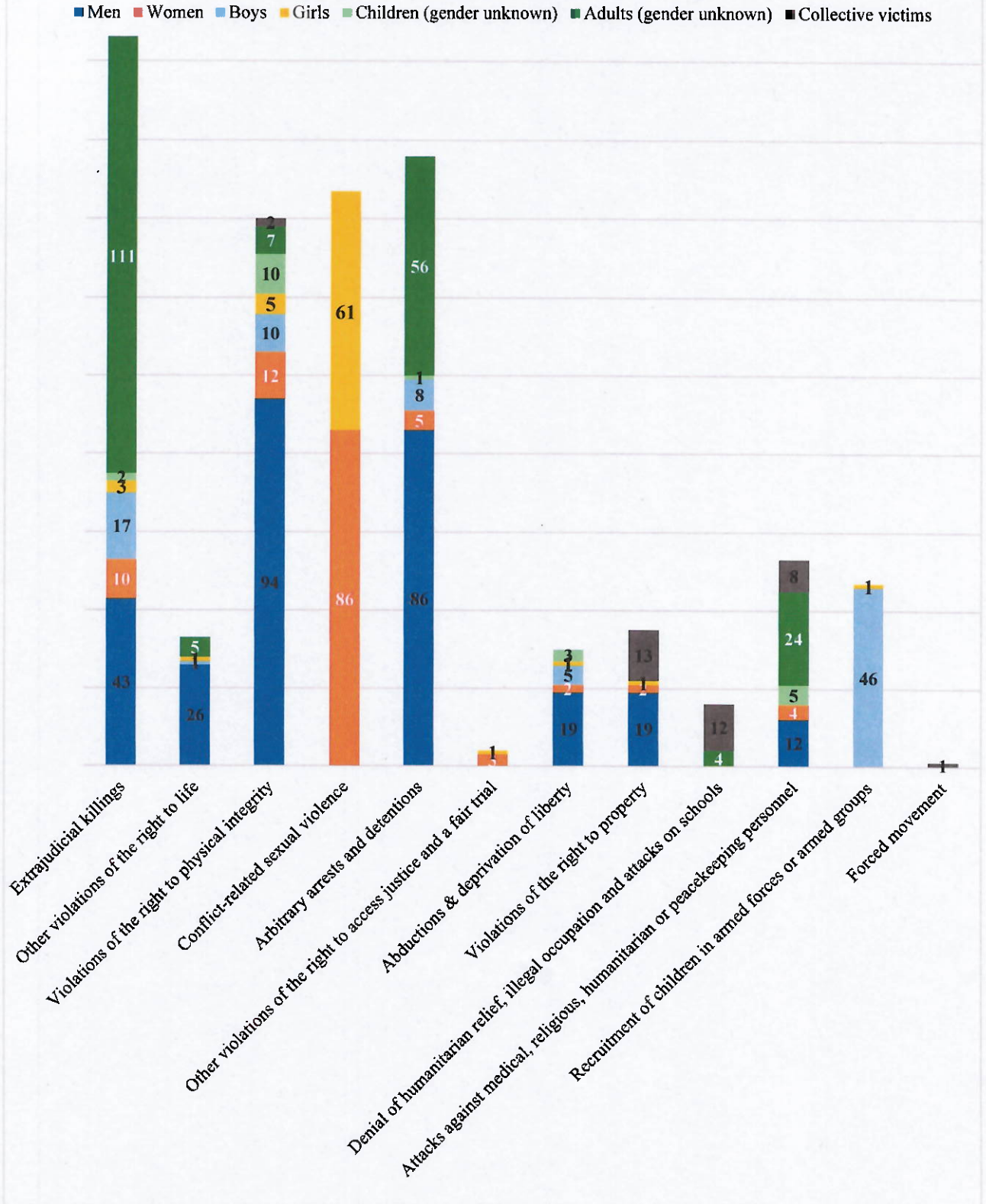
The main perpetrators of murders and extrajudicial executions are anti-Balaka (four incidents, 54 victims), the 3R (seven incidents, 50 victims), and unidentified armed individuals (one incident, 28 victims). Other incidents were attributed to the FPRC (four incidents, 14 victims), the OSP alone (seven incidents, 13 victims), the OSP jointly with FACA (six incidents, 10 victims), the FACA alone (six incidents, eight victims), the UPC (five incidents, seven victims), and unidentified CPC combatants (two incidents, two victims).

Violations of the right to physical integrity including torture, threats to physical and mental integrity, maiming and injuries, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment represent 20.66 percent of the total number of incidents and affected 16.52 percent of the total number of victims (75 incidents, 140 victims). These incidents were relatively evenly split between armed groups signatories to the APPR-CAR and State actors with the former being responsible for 42.66 percent of the incidents and 50.71 percent of the victims (32 incidents, 71 victims) and the latter 57.33 percent of the incidents and 49.28 percent of the victims (43 incidents, 69 victims).

CRSV for 34.15 percent of the total number of incidents and affected 17.33 percent of the total number of victims (124 incidents, 147 victims). Of these cases, the vast majority were rapes (109 incidents, 126 victims), followed by sexual slavery (seven incidents, ten victims), forced marriage (two incidents, six victims), sexual assault and harassment (three incidents, two victims – one of whom was attacked on two separate occasions), and attempted rape (three incidents, three victims). Armed groups signatories to the APPR-CAR constitute the majority of perpetrators of CRSV (110 incidents, 125 victims). State actors were responsible for the remaining 14 incidents and 22 victims.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions account for 5.50 percent of the total number of incidents but 18.39 percent of the total number of victims (20 incidents, 156 victims). In the previous quarter, they represented 8.81 percent of the number of incidents and 8.45 percent of the number of victims, which demonstrates a sharp increase in the number of cases of mass arbitrary arrests and detention. These incidents were mostly attributed to OSP, either alone (six incidents, 60 victims) or jointly with other State actors such as FACA (four incidents, 63 victims) and FACA and ISF (one incident, 21 victims).

Number of victims per type of violation

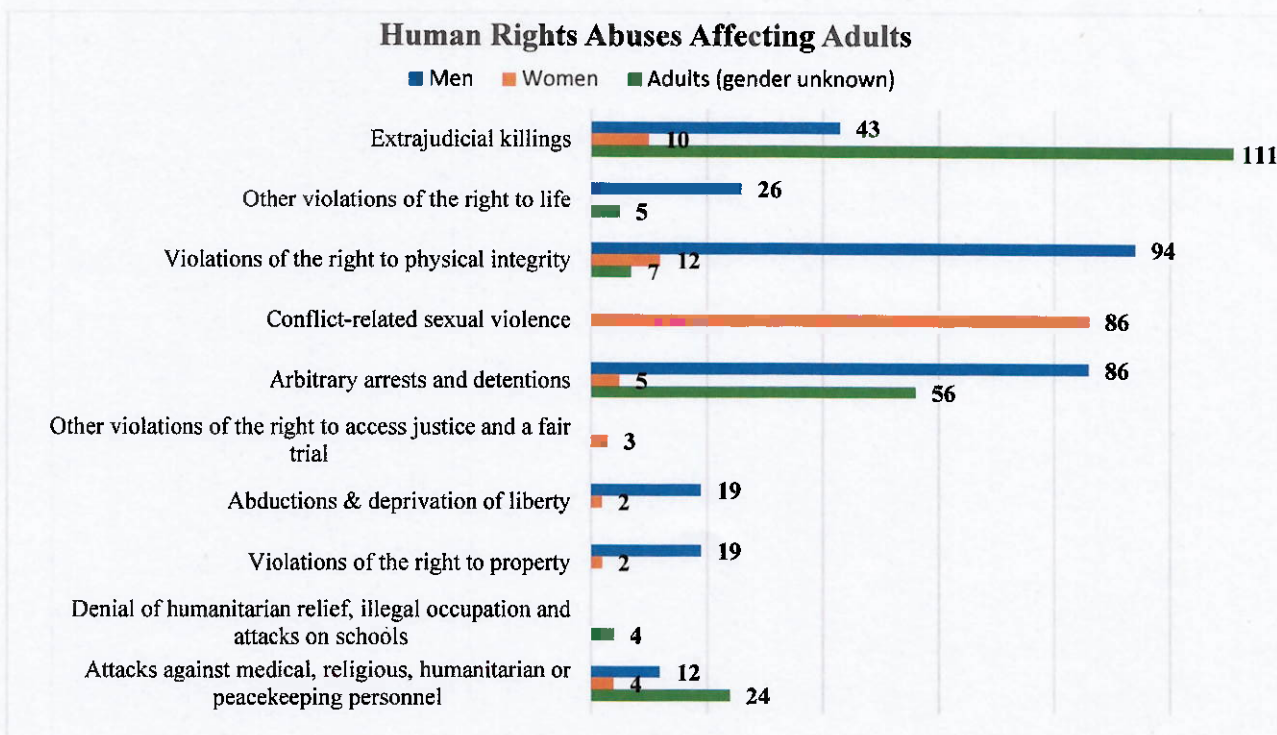
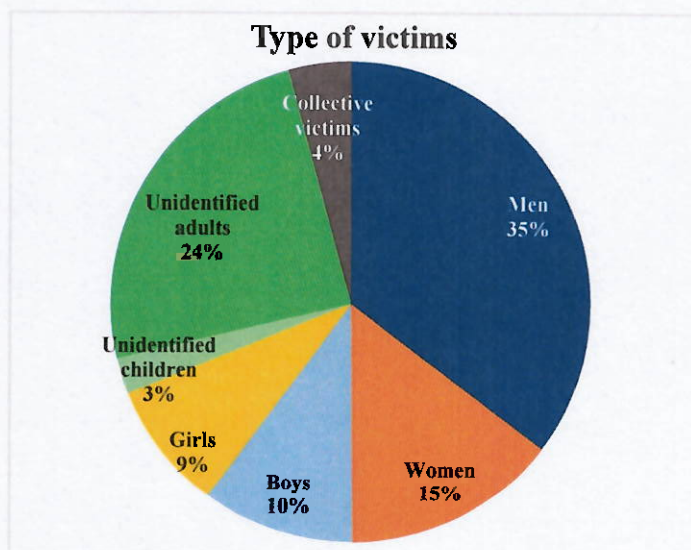


Victims

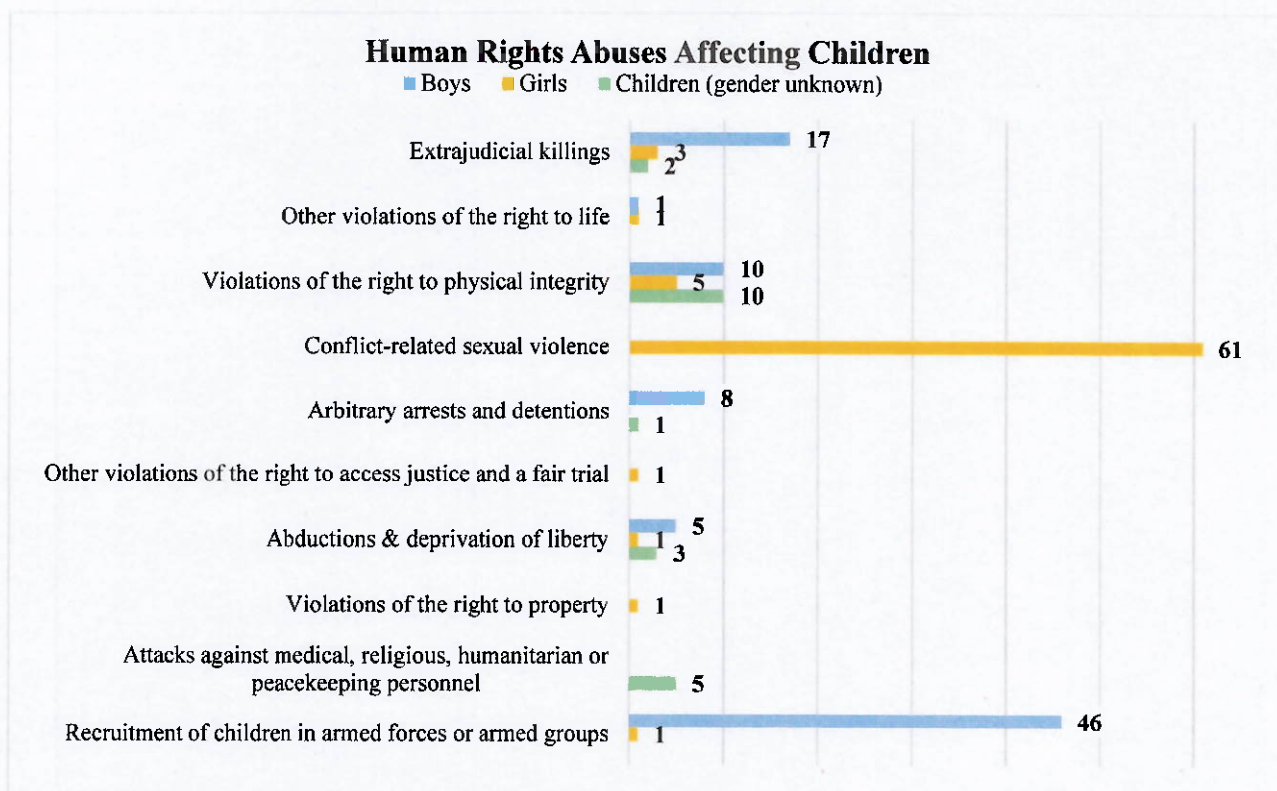
The HRD documented 363 incidents affecting 848 victims, of which 299 were men, 124 women, 87 boys, 74 girls, 21 unidentified children, 207 unidentified adults and 36 collective victims. In comparison, during the fourth quarter 2020, the HRD documented 241 incidents, affecting 398 victims, which represents an increase of 50.62 percent in the number of incidents and of 113.06 percent of the number of victims. It is however necessary to note that the peak of the global pandemic as well as the electoral context in CAR at the end of 2020 made monitoring especially challenging in 2020.

Much like the previous quarter, men constituted the majority of the victims (35.25 percent). In most cases, men are victims of cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment (84 victims), arbitrary arrests and detention (86 victims) and murder (43 victims).

Women on the other hand represented only 14.62 percent of the total number of victims (124) but accounted for 58.50 percent of the total number of victims of CRSV (86 of the 147 victims). Women also fell victims to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment (11) and murder (ten).



Boys represented 10.25 percent of the victims (87 victims) and were mostly victims of recruitment in armed forces or armed groups (46 victims). Girls on the other hand represented 8.72 percent of the victims (74 victims), most of them of CRSV (61 victims).



The 36 groups of collective victims, which represent 4.24 percent of the total number of victims, were mostly the subject of denial of humanitarian relief and illegal occupation and attacks on schools (12 victims), attacks against protected persons (eight victims) and destruction or pillaging of property (seven victims).

Perpetrators

The armed groups that are signatories to the APPR-CAR are presumed to be the perpetrators of 60.60 percent of the total number of incidents and 57.19 percent of the total number of victims (220 incidents, 485 victims). This proportion stayed relatively stable compared to the previous quarter, where they were responsible for 52.89 percent of the incidents and 55.50 percent of the victims documented.

Among the armed groups that signed up to the APPR-CAR, the main perpetrators are the FPRC, that committed 19.55 percent of the total number of incidents and 13.79 percent of the total number of victims (71 incidents, 117 victims). They are followed by the 3R that are responsible for 12.12 percent of the incidents and 12.97 percent of the victims (44 incidents, 110 victims), and anti-Balaka who are responsible for 7.71 percent of the incidents and 12.14 percent of the victims (28 incidents, 103 victims).

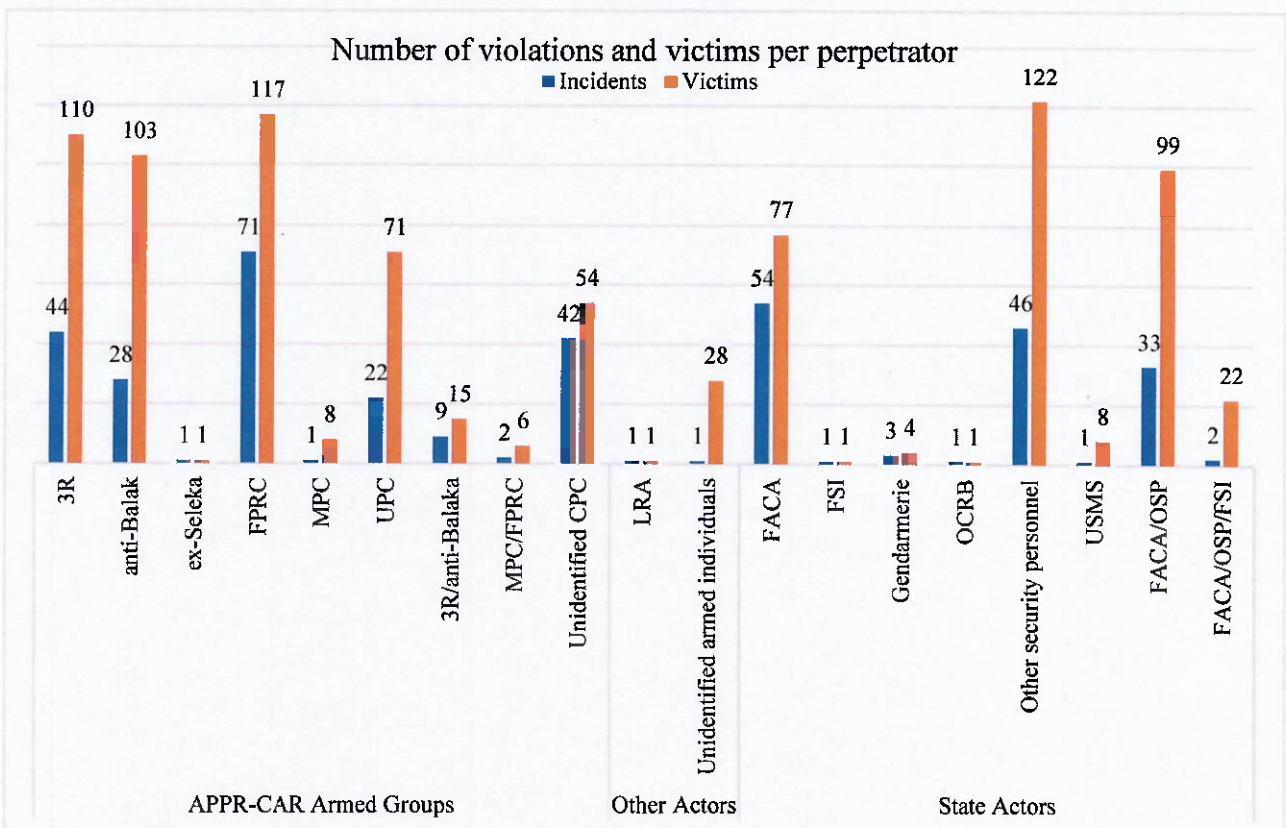
The main human rights abuses and IHL breaches perpetrated by the signatory armed groups are CRSV (110 incidents, 125 victims), murders (22 incidents, 127 victims), violations of the right to physical integrity (31 incidents, 71 victims), and attacks against protected persons (13 incidents, 50 victims).

Concerning the remaining armed groups, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was responsible for one incident of abduction, affecting one victim. Furthermore, one incident, affecting 28 victims, was attributed to unidentified armed individuals.

State forces and their allies were allegedly responsible for 38.83 percent of the total number of incidents and 39.38 percent of the total number of victims (141 incidents, 334 victims). Despite a decrease in the number of incidents and victims, the proportion attributed to State actors remained stable compared to the previous quarter, during which they were responsible for 46.85 percent of the incidents and 44.28 percent of the victims.

Other security personnel were the main perpetrators, having committed 12.67 percent of the total number of incidents and 14.38 percent of the total number of victims (46 incidents, 122 victims); followed by other security personnel jointly with FACA who were responsible for 9.09 percent of the incidents and 11.67 percent of the victims (33 incidents, 99 victims); and FACA alone were responsible for 14.87 percent of the incidents and 9.08 percent of the victims (54 incidents, 77 victims). It is however worth noting that a limited number of incidents were attributed to armed group elements reported to have received support from State actors, including OSP.

The main human rights violations perpetrated by the States actors are arbitrary arrests and detentions (20 incidents, 156 victims), violations of the right to physical integrity (43 incidents, 68 victims), and murders (19 incidents, 31 victims).



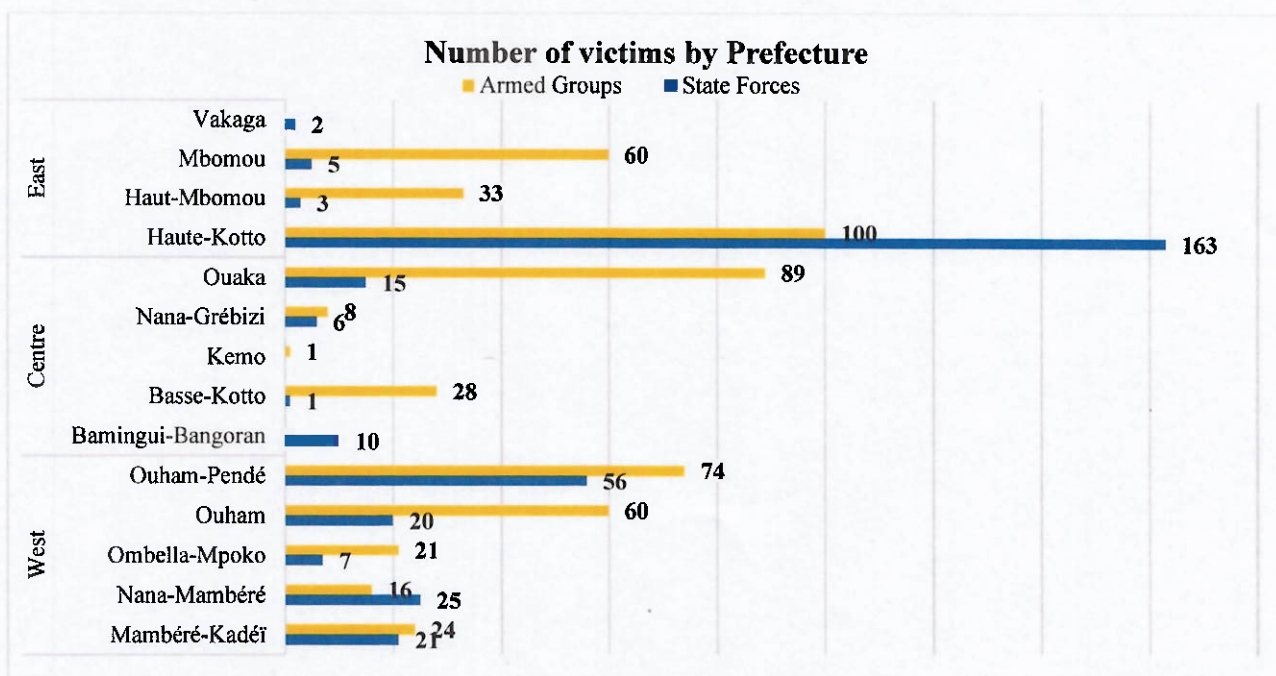
Geographic Trends

By sectors

Unlike previous quarters, the Eastern sector¹ was the most affected with 46.28 percent of the incidents and 43.16 percent of the victims (168 incidents, 366 victims). This represents a sharp increase: in the previous quarter, this sector accounted only for 24.94 percent of the incidents and 31.59 percent of the victims. In this sector, 71.42 percent of the incidents were attributed to non-State actors while they were responsible for 52.73 percent of the victims (120 incidents, 193 victims). The remaining 48 incidents, affecting 173 victims, were attributed to State actors. Most of these incidents were arbitrary arrests and detentions (eight incidents, 119 victims), CRSV (95 incidents, 101 victims), and violations of the right to physical and mental integrity (30 incidents, 63 victims).

The Western sector² was the second most affected region, with 40.77 percent of the incidents and 38.20 percent of the victims (148 incidents, 324 victims), which is a decrease compared to the last quarter during which it represented 54.65 percent of the number of incidents and 48.72 percent of the number of victims. In this sector too, armed groups were responsible for 60.18 percent of the victims although the number of incidents was evenly split with State actors (78 incidents, 195 victims by armed groups; 70 incidents, 129 victims by State actors). Most of these incidents were murders (21 incidents, 75 victims), violations of the right to physical and mental integrity (37 incidents, 64 victims), and attacks against protected persons (13 incidents, 50 victims).

The Central sector³ represented the remaining 12.94 percent of incidents and 18.63 percent of victims (47 incidents, 158 victims). There too, the incidents were evenly split between State actors and armed groups; however, 79.74 percent of the victims were attributed to armed groups (24 incidents, 126 victims compared to 23 incidents and 32 victims attributed to State actors). Most of these incidents were murders (12 incidents, 91 victims), illegal deprivation of liberty (two incidents, 14 victims), and violations of the right to physical and mental integrity (eight incidents, 13 victims).



By prefecture

¹ The Eastern sector includes Vakaga, Haute-Kotto, Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou prefectures.

² The Western sector includes the Ombella Mpoko, the Mambéré-Kadéï, the Nana Mambere, the Lobaye, the Ouham-Pendé and the Ouham prefectures.

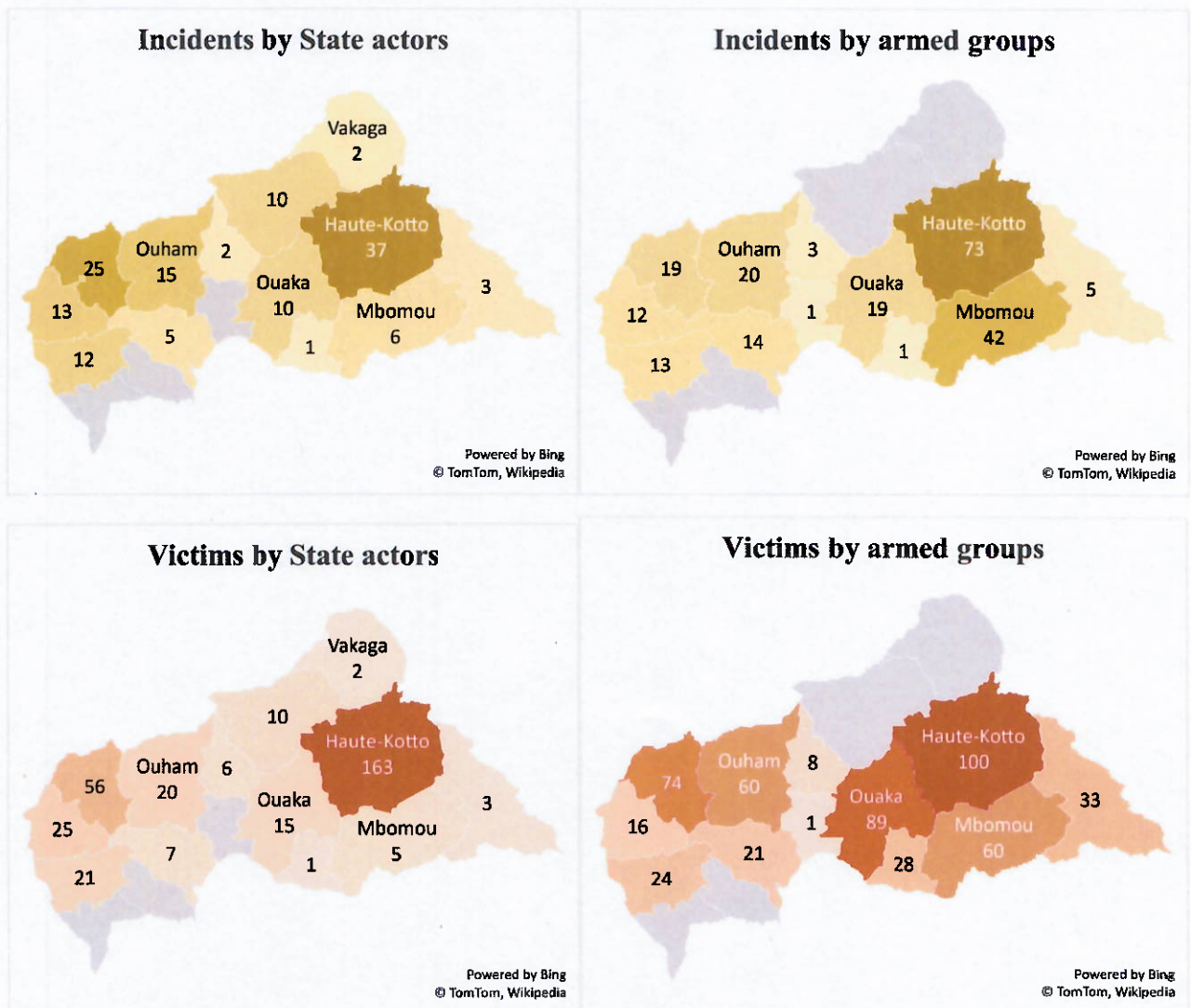
³ The Center Sector includes the Nana-Grébizi, the Ouaka, the Bamingui-Bangoran and the Basse-Kotto prefectures.

As in the previous quarter, the most affected prefecture is the Haute-Kotto with 30.30 percent of the total number of incidents and 31.01 percent of the total number of victims (110 incidents, 263 victims). Arbitrary arrests and detention account for seven of these incidents, affecting 118 victims. Due to this high number of arbitrary arrests and detentions, State actors, including OSP were the main perpetrators in this prefecture.

The Ouham-Pendé prefecture follows with 12.12 percent of the incidents and 15.33 percent of the victims (44 incidents, 130 victims), 50 of whom were killed and 36 had their right to physical and mental integrity violated. 19 of these incidents, affecting 74 victims, were attributed to armed groups; the remaining 25 incidents, affecting 56 victims to State forces.

The Ouaka Prefecture accounted for 7.98 percent of the incidents and 12.26 percent of the victims (29 incidents, 104 victims), committed mostly by armed groups (19 incidents, 89 victims) – although some of these elements or combatants allegedly received training and support from OSP. Most of these incidents were murders (nine incidents, 61 victims).

The Mbomou prefecture represented 13.22 percent of the incidents and 7.66 percent of the victims (48 incidents, 65 victims). 92.30 percent of these victims were attributed to armed groups and 50.76 percent were victims of CRSV.



Recommendations

Considering the international human rights and international humanitarian law situation described and analyzed in this report, the HRD makes the following recommendations:

To all parties to the conflict

- To cease hostilities in accordance with the UN Secretary General's call on 23 March 2020 for an immediate global ceasefire and the ceasefire called by President Touadéra on 15 October 2021 to give new impetus to peace and reconciliation.

To the Central African Republic Government:

- To conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into human rights violations by State forces and OSP in order to determine responsibilities and take appropriate disciplinary measures or even criminal sanctions;
- To continue to raise awareness for the respect of human rights and humanitarian obligations among its forces;
- To ensure that the competent services, namely the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces and the Central Inspectorates of the ISF, carry out their multi-faceted missions of investigation, control and inspection in the field. In addition, it is important that systematic investigations be carried out for any case deemed suspicious, including attacks against civilians and humanitarians; and
- To fight and sanction incitement to hatred and violence, particularly on social networks, which undermines, among other things, the country's social cohesion.

To the armed groups:

- To immediately cease violence that threatens the protection of civilians;
- To immediately cease attacks against humanitarians and comply with IHL and their commitments to the APPR-RCA; and
- To cease all recruitments and use of minors within the armed groups.

To the International Community:

- To remind all parties involved in hostilities of their obligation to comply with international humanitarian law in all circumstances, including the obligation to facilitate humanitarian access;

- To monitor human rights violations with a view to fighting impunity and condemn serious human rights violations against civilians;
- To continue to support the transitional justice process in CAR, including support for the full operationalization of the Commission vérité, justice, réparations et réconciliation (CVJRR); and
- To continue its support to the restoration of State authority, including the redeployment of administrators and basic services in regions and localities requiring their presence.