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United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Human Rights Division

Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation

April 2022

The Human Rights Division's (HRD) mandate includes assisting the government of the Central-African Republic (CAR) to promote and protect human rights 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 occurred, were documented, and verified during the month of April 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 CAR's authorities and partners.

Security and political context in April 2022

1. In the Western Sector, the security situation remains precarious. In April, the HRD received information regarding several 3R attacks in villages of the Mambéré-Kadéï Prefecture. State actors also led operations in this prefecture, mainly against the 3R, and committed human rights violations. The *Forces armées centrafricaines* (FACA) and other security personnel (OSP) were involved in cases of summary execution, ill-treatment, illegal taxation and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), affecting 22 civilians in Mambéré-Kadéï,
2. In addition, during the period under review, the HRD continued to document transhumance-related human rights incidents between Fulani herders and the local population, as well as clashes between armed groups and State actors following attacks on either herders or the local population. The commune of Mbali (Mambéré-Kadéï prefecture) was attacked by armed Fulani herders, supported by the 3R armed group, that allegedly resulted in a dozen deaths. In response, OSP launched an operation against the 3R positions in Mbali on 18 April. The HRD also recorded human rights violations such as killings, ill-treatment and destruction and expropriation of property of the civilian population perpetrated by OSP. Those attacks involving transhumant Fulani herders and fighters of the 3R and Anti-Balaka armed groups (members of the *Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement*- CPC) have negatively affected the protection of civilians and their fundamental rights.
3. In the Mbomou Prefecture, the presence of armed groups, in particular the FPRC and UPC, still constituted a major risk to the protection of civilians. The HRD continued to document cases of CRSV committed by FPRC and UPC combatants in the area.
4. Since March, the security situation has deteriorated in the Eastern and Central Sectors with State actors perpetrating human rights violations in the areas under their control and armed groups, mainly the UPC, committing regular attacks against civilians. During the month of April, the HRD was informed of the UPC increasing its activities in Sam-Ouandja (Haute-Kotto prefecture) and reports of attacks against civilians increased on Ouadda, Yalinga and Aigbando axes as well as on the Bambari-Alindao axis in Basse-Kotto and Ouaka prefectures. On 7 April, approximately 200 FACA and OSP arrived in Bria (Haute-Kotto prefecture). These State actors then travelled to Ouadda and Sam-Ouandja in the North of the prefecture and beyond into

the Vakaga prefecture. The HRD received information regarding several incidents of extrajudicial execution by State actors in the Vakaga prefecture where they killed 13 civilians in Mandjan mining site on 10 April. It also investigated and collected information on the attack on 3 April by anti-Balaka, FPRC and UPC combatants in Boungou II (Haute-Kotto prefecture), where they destroyed or expropriated private property including school materials, wounded two civilians, and ill-treated 15 others during their attack.

5. The HRD was informed that anti-Balaka leader “General” Edmond and his driver were released on 8 April from unlawful detention in an OSP camp since early March. During the investigations, “General” Edmond was named as one of the principal perpetrators in the joint anti-Balaka, FACA and OSP attack on Boyo in the Ouaka Prefecture in December 2021.
6. The first trial of the Special Criminal Court (SCC) examining the case of the May 2019 attacks in Koundjili and Lemouna, Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, allegedly committed by members of the 3R armed group, was expected to start on 19 April. However, due to the absence of the lawyers from the SCC’s Special Unit of Lawyers defending the three accused individuals and those representing the victims, the proceedings were postponed until 25 April. On 25 April, the trial resumed.

Human Rights Violations and Abuses and Breaches of International Humanitarian Law

Main Trends

62 verified incidents representing 80 human rights violations and abuses as well as breaches of IHL affecting **219 victims**, took place in April 2022. This constitutes a sharp increase in incidents, violations and victims compared to March 2022.

State actors were responsible for the highest number of victims while **the armed groups signatories of the APPR** were responsible for most of the incidents and violations of human rights. However, the **OSP, alone or jointly with FACA, were responsible for two thirds of civilians killed.**

rights violation that affected 129 victims had been documented.

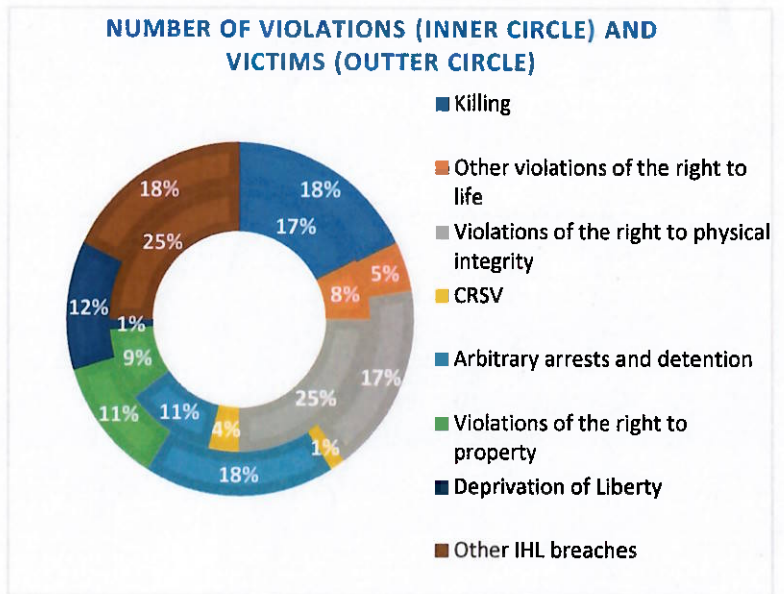
9. The majority of victims were men (115), children (12 boys, 11 girls and seven unidentified children) women (15). In addition, there were 42 unidentified civilian victims and 17 groups of collective victims.

7. During the month of April, the HRD, including the Women Protection Section (WPS) and the Child Protection Section (CPS), documented and verified 93 incidents¹ representing 114 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) affecting 296 victims. In addition, the HRD also recorded 20 alleged incidents, representing 27 violations and abuses affecting 55 victims, which were still being verified at the end of April.

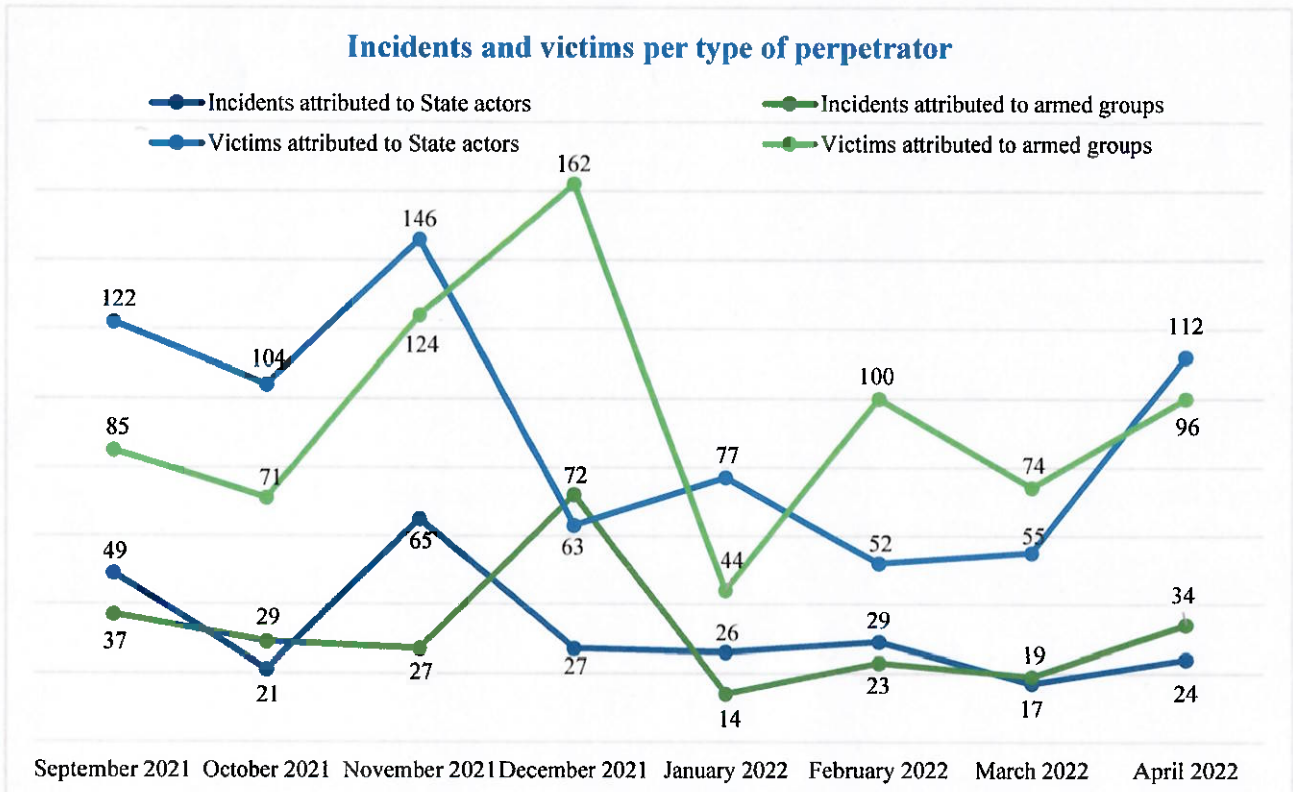
8. Out of these 93 incidents documented by the HRD during the month of April, 62 incidents, representing 80 violations and affecting 219 victims, effectively took place in April 2022. This marks an increase of 72 per cent and 70 per cent in the number of incidents and victims, respectively, compared to March 2022 during which 36 incidents representing 43 human

¹ Several types of human rights violations and abuses may be recorded during a single incident, against different victims. The following data is based on the most serious type of violation per incident and the most serious type of violation per victim.

10. This month, the HRD documented and verified four incidents during which five violations of the right to life by killing occurred against a total of 42 victims, whereas 26 victims had been recorded in March and ten in February. This can be explained by the fact that there were indiscriminate attacks perpetrated by both armed groups and State forces during the reporting period. State actors were responsible for a large majority of the civilians killed (29); however, armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were responsible for the majority of victims of attacks against protected persons (28) and deprivation of liberty (26).

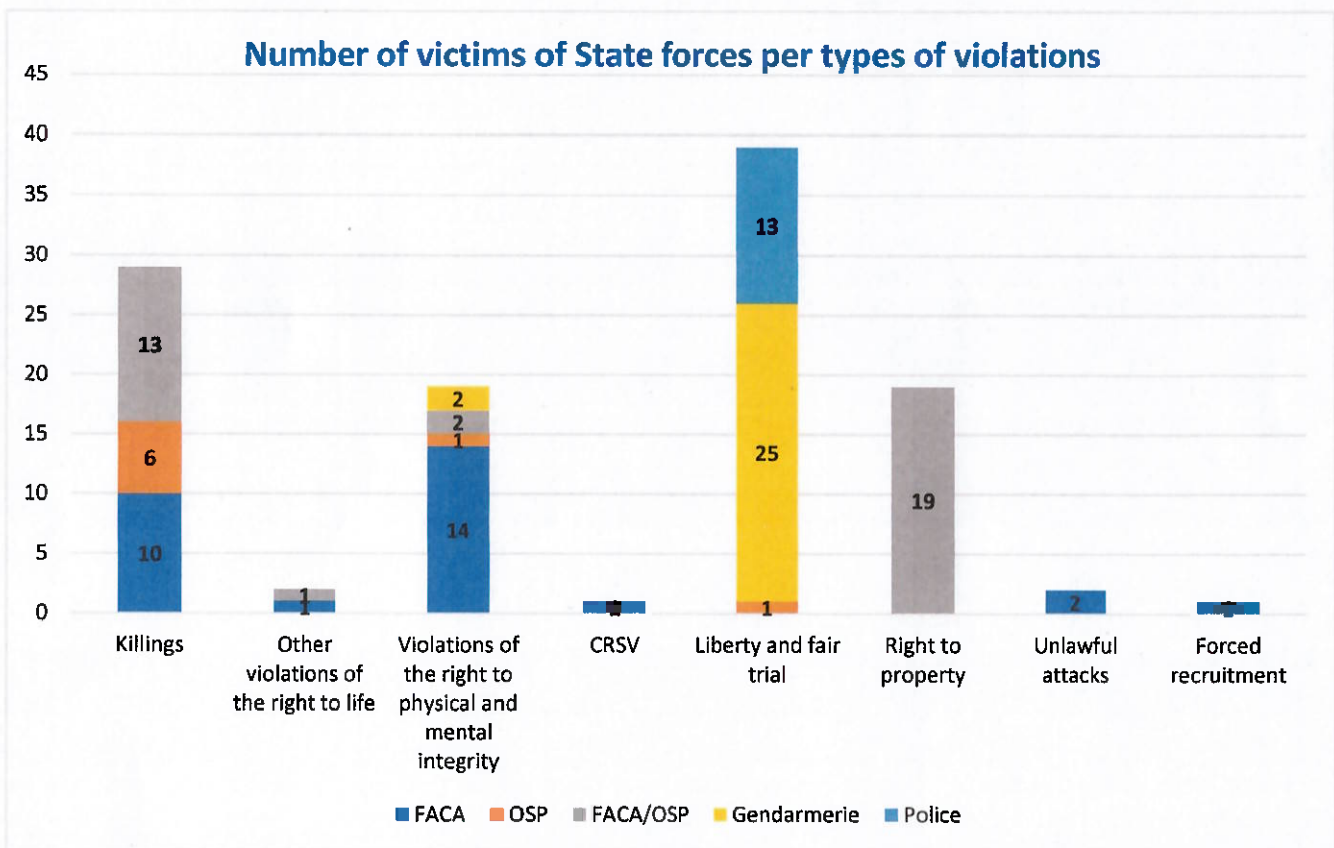


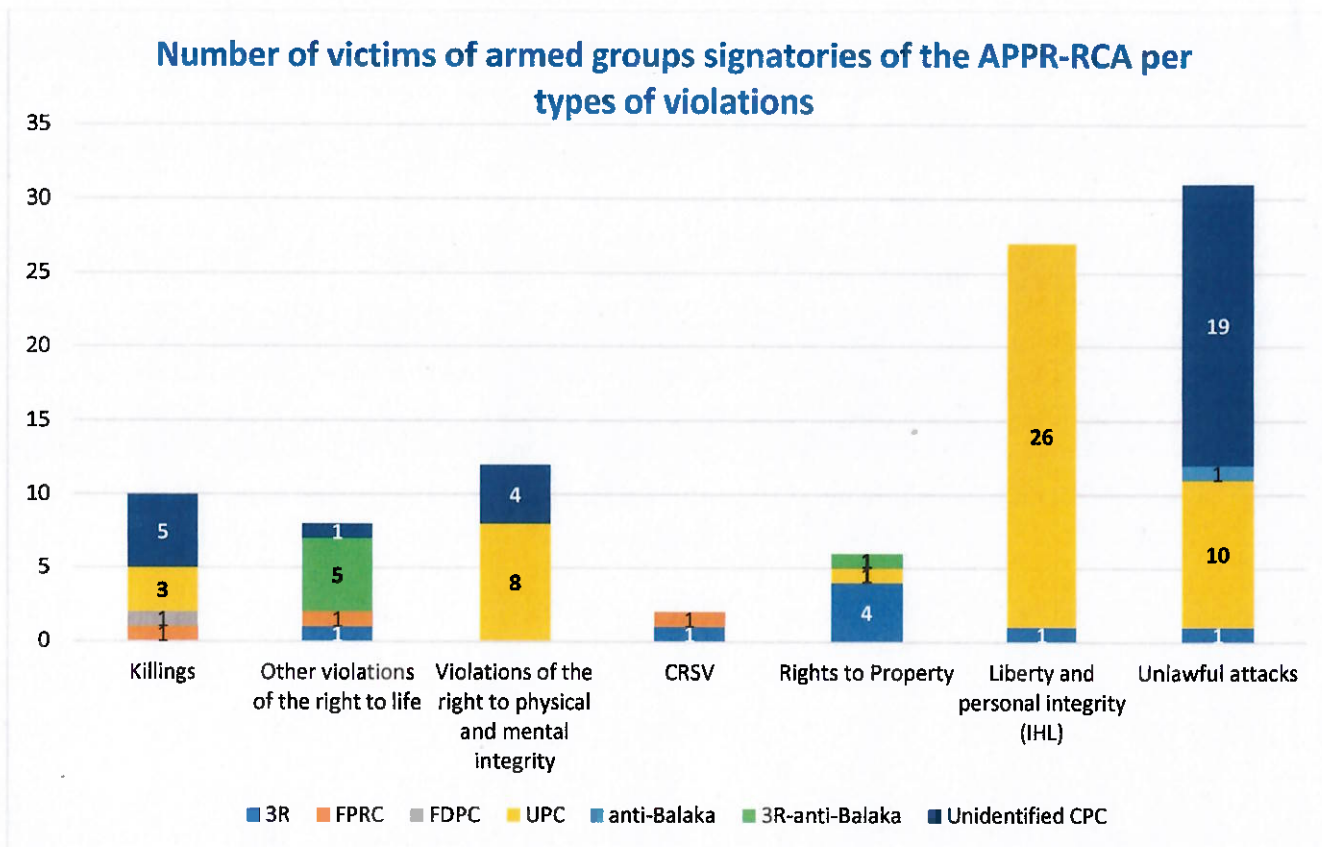
11. Armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were responsible for 34 incidents, representing 41 violations and affecting 96 victims, while 24 incidents, representing 35 violations and affecting 112 victims, were attributed to State actors. In addition, four incidents, representing four violations and affecting 11 victims, were attributed to other non-State actors. This month’s increase in victims of the State forces can be explained by the high number of indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population.



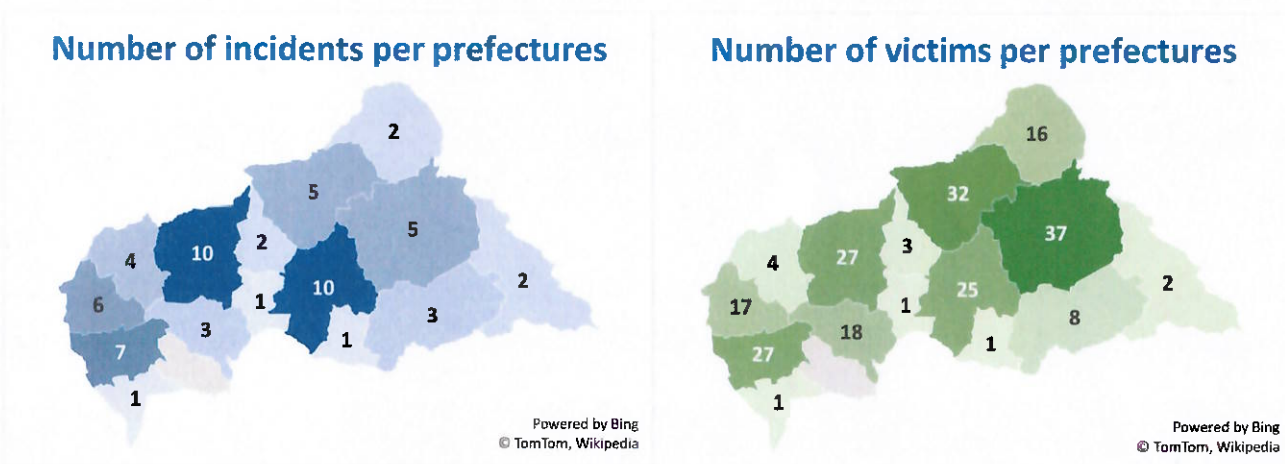
12. Among State actors, the FACA were responsible for most of the incidents and violations of human rights (14 incidents representing 17 violations affecting 29 victims) while the FACA along with the OSP were responsible for the highest number of victims (three incidents, five violations affecting 35 victims). The OSP were responsible for only two incidents representing four violations affecting eight victims. This decrease can be explained by the trend HRD is documenting whereby OSP are increasingly using proxies in their operations and therefore are not directly perpetrating human rights violations.

13. Among armed groups parties to the International Conference on the Great Lake Region’s (ICGLR(Joint Road map, UPC, the UPC were responsible for most of the incidents and victims (48 victims), followed by unidentified CPC members (29 victims). This month, the most common types of violations were attacks on protected persons (28 victims) and deprivation of liberty affecting 26 victims in one incident perpetrated by the UPC.





14. In April 2022, the HRD also documented incidents attributed to other non-State actors. The Misserya Arabs were responsible for one incident, representing one violation of the right to property and affecting two victims; and unidentified armed men were responsible for three incidents representing three violations affecting nine victims.
15. The Haute-Kotto prefecture was the region most affected by human rights violations and abuses, recording five incidents, representing 12 violations, and affecting 37 victims. High numbers of victims were also recorded in the Bamingui-Bangoran, the Mambéré-Kadeï, and the Ouham prefectures; however, Ouaka and Ouham were



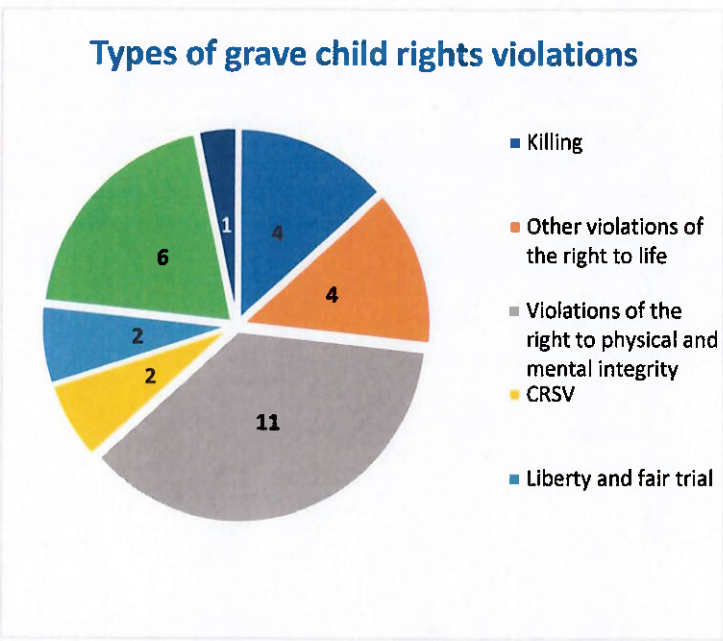
the prefectures with the highest numbers of incidents. The Haute-Kotto prefecture registered a high number of victims because UPC elements deprived 26 civilians of their liberty, including two priests.

Children in Armed Conflict²

16. During the period under review, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 42 grave child rights violations affecting 32 children (15 boys and 17 girls), which indicates a 40% decrease in grave violations and a 43% decrease in victims directly affected compared to the previous reporting period during which 70 violations affecting 56 children were recorded. Twenty-six (26) violations occurred outside of the reporting period but were verified during the period under review. One girl was a victim of three violations (abduction, recruitment and use, and rape) and one boy was a victim of two violations (abduction and recruitment and use).

17. The majority of grave child rights violations are attributed to armed groups. The CPC committed the highest number of violations (23): 3R (ten), anti-Balaka/3R (five), UPC (four), unidentified CPC (three) and FPRC (one); followed by unidentified armed individuals (14) including explosive ordinance (one); and FACA (five).

18. In terms of child rights, the Ombella M’Poko was the most affected prefecture with (11) violations, followed by Ouham-Pendé (six); Mambéré-Kadeï (five); Nana Mambéré (four); Kémo, Lim-Pendé, Ouham, Ouham-Fafa and Ouaka with two each; and Bangui, Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Haut-Mbomou, Mbomou and Sangha Mbaéré with one each.



Pro-governmental forces using three schools as military bases in Haute-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures liberated the schools.

19. To continue strengthening efforts to prevent grave child rights violations and the monitoring, reporting and documentation of these violations 339 peacekeepers (293 men and 46 women) were trained on the protection of children during armed conflict including on monitoring and reporting of violations against children. Within the framework of the “Act to Protect Children affected by Armed Conflict” campaign, similar trainings and awareness sessions were conducted for 1,425 (964 men and 461 women) community members and leaders,

National Action Plan against Trafficking of Children

On 15 April, the President of the Central African Republic signed a **National Action Plan against Trafficking of Children** with a particular focus on preventing the use of children by National Defence Forces (FACA). The Action Plan provides for: the establishment of a WhatsApp Group allowing FACA and judicial actors to share information and address the military use of children; capacity building for FACA; awareness-raising among local communities on the dangers of military use of children and the presence of children around military bases; and reintegration activities. This Action Plan will strengthen ongoing efforts to prevent the use of children by national armed forces.

² The Child Protection (CPS) and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSVS) Sections apply a different methodology. They include incidents that are attributed to unidentified armed individuals, as well as some incidents that may have occurred before the month under consideration but were documented during the reporting period. The CPS also includes incidents that affected the civilian population as a whole (not only children), such as denial of humanitarian access.

local authorities, national defense, and security forces (FACA, FSI and USMS), local peace committees, RECOPE and CAN.

20. As a follow up to the National Action Plan (see boxed text), the Minister of Defence and Reconstruction of the Army issued a Circular on 16 April to prohibit the presence of children around military bases. The Circular which is applicable to national defence and security forces and MINUSCA, prohibits the presence of children around military bases and provides for disciplinary measures for any soldier allowing children to be present around or in military bases. The Inspector General of the Ministry of Defence and Reconstruction of the Army is responsible to follow up on its implementation.

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

21. During the period under review, the HRD documented a total of three cases of CRSV affecting three victims (one woman and two girls). This is a significant decrease from the last period during which two investigation missions were organized. This explains the drop in cases and victims documented this month.
22. On April 15, the Women Protection Adviser (WPA) in Paoua led an awareness session for 19 members of the FACA, including one woman. The WPA reminded the FACA elements of the issues of individual and command responsibilities. She asked for their active contribution in the exercise of their function to fight against SGBV and to help survivors as much as possible by referring them to the closest support actors if necessary.

Human Rights Promotion and Capacity Building

23. From 26 to 29 April, in Bangui, MINUSCA in collaboration with MONUSCO, OHCHR-Yaoundé Regional Office and UNESCO organised a Regional Forum on Hate Speech and social media around the theme "Online Media and Fact Checking". The main goal of the forum was to elicit a regional commitment and coordinate early warning and response systems that would prevent and protect against hate speech and incitement to violence through ICT and Internet. This would support sustainable peace in countries belonging to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Nearly 50 participants, including 15 women, from media organisations, bloggers' association, communication regulators and civil society participated in the Forum.

HRD activities for the month of April 2022

During the month of April 2022, the HRD organized and participated in 96 activities on the protection and promotion of human rights and international humanitarian law in Kaga Bando, Bouar, Bangui, Birao, Bambari, Bangassou, Bria, Berberati, Bossangoa, and Ndélé. These activities benefitted **1,173 individuals, including 348 women**.

HRD organized among others 26 detention visits to police and gendarmerie and prison facilities; 17 trainings for state actors (including 5 trainings for FACA involving 68 men and 2 women; six training for FSI for 142 men and 1 woman; and one training for penitentiary officials for 23 men and 2 women); 11 awareness-raising campaigns for 388 individuals, including 159 women; and 13 trainings for 234 members of civil society including 61 women.

24. On 11 April, the HRD held a working session with the Bureau of the Laws Commission and advocated for the National Assembly to work diligently on the abolition of the death penalty; to bring forward the draft bill on human rights defenders; to give priority to the integration of a human rights-based approach in the draft bill on the organization and functioning of the national police as well as in the draft bill on the prevention and repression of corruption and related offences. The Law Commission, in return, requested the HRD to organize capacity-building activities on human rights for all Members of Parliament. Focal points have been designated for follow-up.

25. The HRD provided training and capacity-building workshops to State forces and members of the judiciary for a total of 156 participants, including 18 women. The various trainings and workshops pertained to international human rights, international humanitarian law, CRSV, children's rights, the UN human rights monitoring mechanisms and the techniques for monitoring and reporting human rights violations
26. In Bangui, on 6 and 7 April, the HRD conducted a training of trainers on human rights and international humanitarian law for 26 officers of the *Office central de répression du banditisme* (OCRB). The activity was opened by the HRD Director and was attended by the deputy director of the OCRB.
27. The HRD conducted visits to detention centres to monitor and document the number of illegal detentions and the conditions in which the detainees were held (see boxed text). In most cases, it observed a high number of illegal detentions, with legal deadlines being regularly violated, as well as very poor conditions of detention. For example, in the Ngaragba central prison in Bangui, the HRD noted that out of a total of 1,357 detainees, 249 of them are victims of arbitrary detention as they have spent between two to five years in pre-trial detention without being tried for the acts of which they have been accused.