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United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

## Human Rights Division

### Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation

May 2023

*The Human Rights Division's (HRD) mandate includes assisting the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) to promote and protect human rights and prevent violations and abuses through its field offices and headquarters in Bangui. This report is based on information received by the HRD and only includes human rights violations and abuses that were documented and verified during the month of May 2023. Incidents that could not be verified are not included. Ordinary crimes are also excluded from this report.*

*This information is shared locally as well as nationally with the CAR's authorities and partners.*

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

1. During the month of May 2023, the MINUSCA Human Rights Division (HRD), including the Office of the Senior Women Protection Advisor (OSWPA) and the Child Protection Unit (CPU), documented and verified 150 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), affecting

260 civilian victims (with at least 17 women, four girls, 18 boys and 20 groups of collective victims). This includes 50 victims which suffered multiple violations. Out of the 150 violations documented this month, 121 occurred in May 2023. The HRD also recorded 66 allegations of human rights violations and abuses affecting at least 92 victims (including 24 women, six girls, four boys and nine groups of collective victims), which were still being verified at the end of May and were therefore not included in this report.

### Main Trends

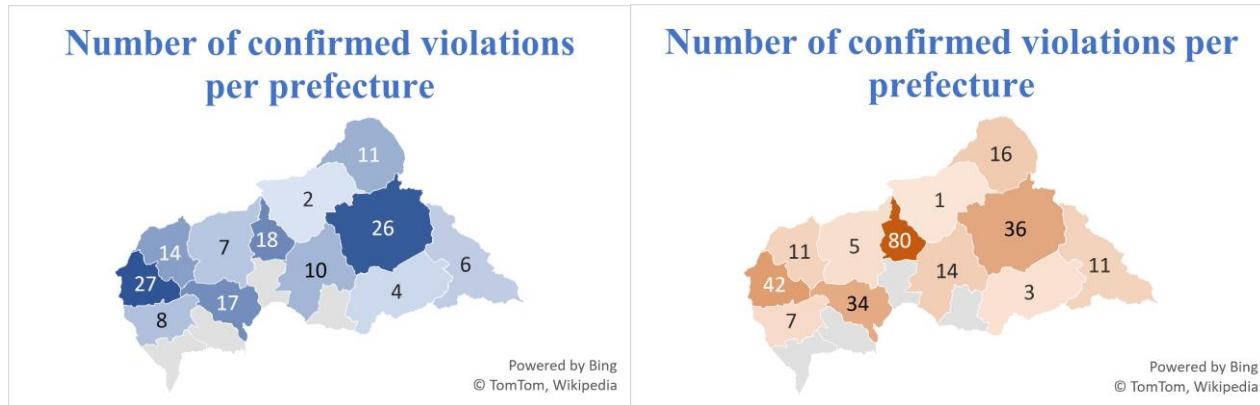
In total, **150 human rights violations and abuses** as well as breaches of IHL **affecting 260 victims (including 17 women, four girls, 18 boys and 20 groups of collective victims)** were documented in May 2023. This constitutes an **increase** in the number of violations and a slight **decrease** in the number of victims compared to April 2023.

During the reporting period, State actors were responsible for 67% of all violations and breaches and 82% of the victims.

localities, impeding the HRD's access to certain areas controlled by armed groups and impeded the HRD's monitoring and investigating activities.

3. Out of the total 260 victims, most were men (201), followed by boys (18), women (17) and girls (four). In addition, there were 20 groups of collective victims.

4. The **Nana-Mambéré prefecture** was the most affected in terms of human rights violations and abuses (27 violations and 42 victims), followed by the **Haute-Kotto prefecture** (26 violations and 36 victims); while the **Nana-Gribizi prefecture** registered the most victims (18 violations and 80 victims), largely attributable to three cases of arbitrary arrest and/or detention by the Gendarmerie in Kaga-Bandoro in which detainees were held past the legal limits for custody.

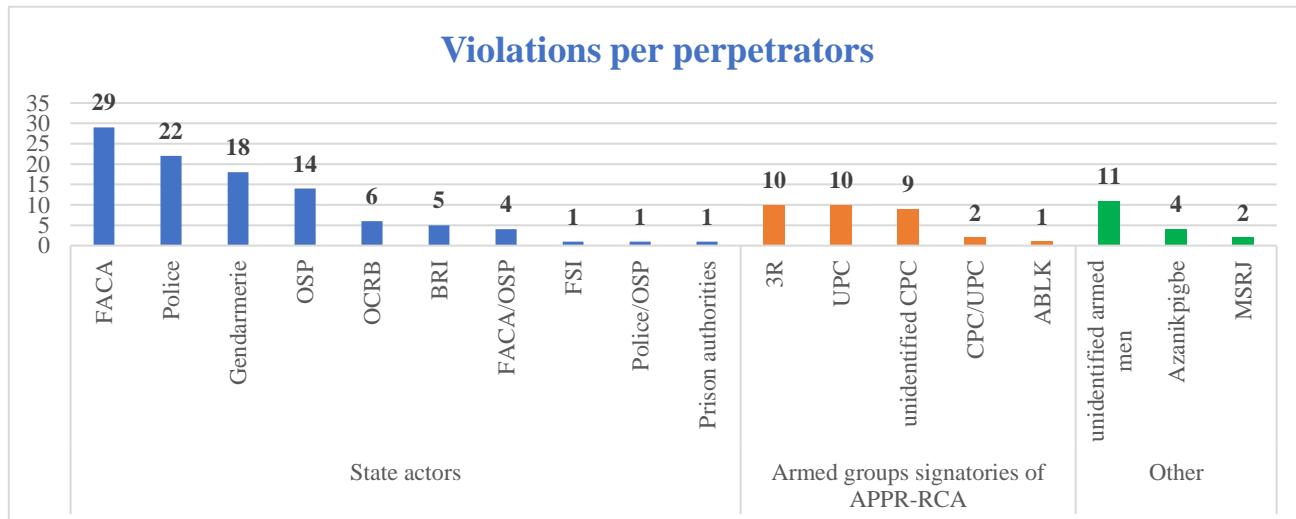


5. In May, the most common types of violations and abuses included arbitrary arrest and/or detention (25%), cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (referred to as ill-treatment) (15%), and destruction and appropriation of property (12%). In addition, five summary and extrajudicial killings along with one case of enforced disappearance were documented affecting seven people.

6. Men were most likely to be victims of extrajudicial execution or other killing (four victims), ill-treatment (18), and arbitrary arrest and/or detention (145). Women suffered from death threats (four), arbitrary arrest and/or detention (seven) and rape and/or attempted rape (four). Girls were mostly victims of abduction and deprivation of liberty (three) and rape (one), while boys were victims of forced labour (five), arbitrary arrest and/or detention (five) as well as ill-treatment (three).

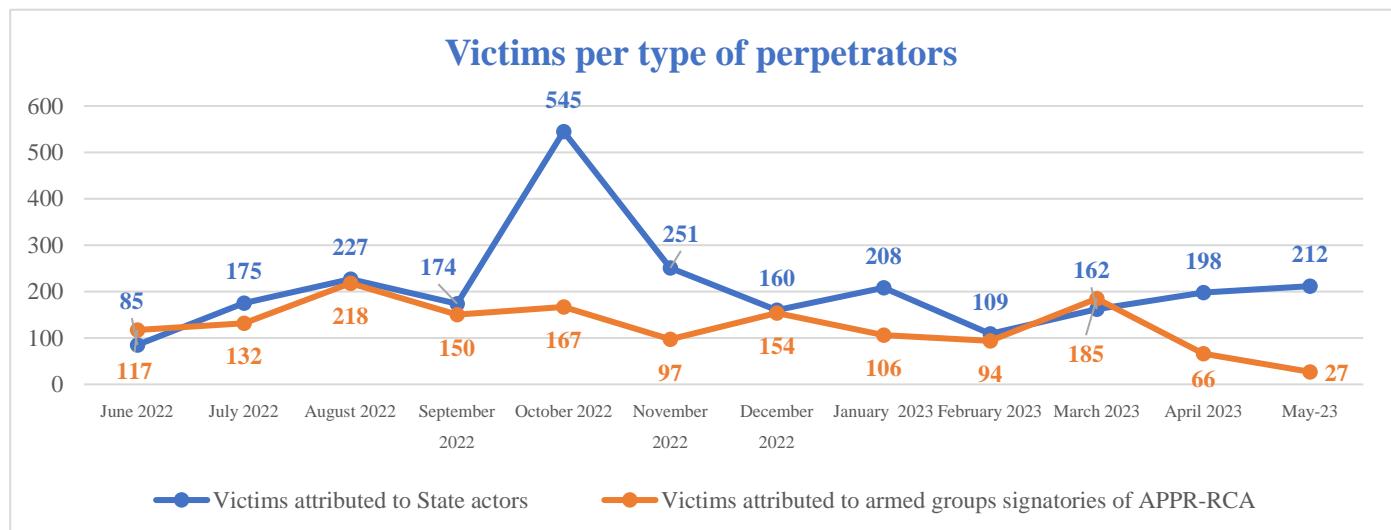
## Perpetrators: State actors, armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA, and others

7. For the period under review, the number of human rights violations and breaches of international law committed by **State actors** has increased by 29% compared to April 2023 (101 violations in May and 72 violations in April). A slight increase (7%) in the number of victims attributable to State actors is also noted (212 victims in May). Most of the violations committed by State actors took place in the **Nana-Mambéré**,



**Haute-Kotto and Ombella-M’Poko prefectures**, including Bangui. Cases of arbitrary arrest and detention as well as violations related to the conditions of detention were also widely committed.

8. In the meantime, the number of human rights abuses and breaches of international law committed by armed groups signatories to the *Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Réconciliation en République Centrafricaine* (APPR-RCA) as well as the number of victims have decreased in May compared to April. Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for 32 abuses, affecting 27 victims, a 13% decrease compared to April, during which they were responsible for 37 abuses. Most victims suffered multiple violations, which explains the higher number of abuses versus victims for armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA. Additionally, the number of victims decreased by 59% compared to April 2023 (66 victims). The **Haute-Kotto and Ouham-Pendé prefectures** were the most affected by armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA. Abuses of the right of liberty and personal integrity, along with abuses of the right to physical and



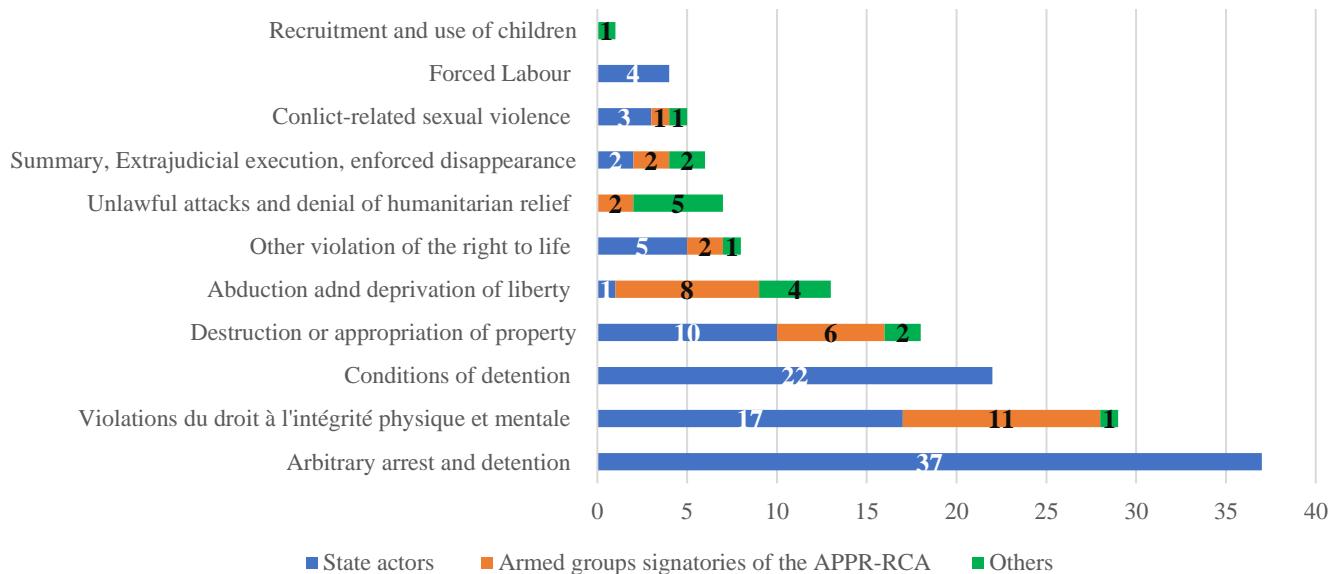
mental integrity were the most common types of abuses.

9. It should be noted that the documented discrepancy between the number of violations committed by state agents and armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA can be explained by the increase in attacks in several areas controlled by armed groups where the HRD cannot access, which impeded the HRD’s monitoring activities to confirm allegations. Therefore, it can be highlighted that armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were reportedly responsible for 31 allegations of abuses, affecting 56 victims this month, which are still investigated.
10. **State actors were responsible for 101 violations affecting 212 victims (including 12 women and 14 boys).** The most common type of violation committed by State actors were those associated with detention, including arbitrary arrest and/or detention (37 violations), ill-treatment (13) and appropriation of property (10) as well as death threats (five), and three conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) cases. Amongst State actors, the *Forces armées centrafricaines* (FACA) (29 violations and 26 victims) and the Police (22 violations and 58 victims) followed by the Gendarmerie (18 violations and 68 victims) accounted for most of the violations and victims, mostly due to cases of arbitrary arrest and detention exceeding the legal time for custody. It should also be noted that FACA were responsible of seven cases of ill-treatment affecting nine victims. In addition, the HRD documented in some instance that the conditions of detention were not compliant with the minimum standards and some cells are in a state of advanced deterioration without any access to wash facilities (19 violations affecting 32 victims including 12 groups of collective victims). Seven cases related to inhuman condition of detention were documented in the detention cell of the Gendarmerie affecting 16 victims. Moreover, with regards to the FACA, they were responsible for six appropriations of property affecting 12 victims, and three additional violations along with the other security personnel (OSP), affecting seven additional victims. Finally, FACA committed three cases of CRSV, one rape and two cases of attempted rape.

For instance, in Baoro, **Nana-Mambéré** prefecture, the HRD documented a case of a rape by a FACA officer affecting an 18-year-old woman. While this woman was waiting to buy some groceries next to FACA barrier, a FACA soldier called her into a shed under false pretexts, threaten her with his gun and raped her. A complaint was filed with the Gendarmerie and the FACA officer confessed raping the victim but was let free by the Gendarmerie. Moreover, in one case, OSP elements arrested and tortured three men in the PK5 neighbourhood of Bangui. OSP entered the victims' homes accompanied by FACA, where they arrested two men and asked for the whereabouts of the brother of one of them. As the victims did not respond, OSP took them to their base behind Camp Roux and tortured them. Reportedly, OSP elements forced the victims to lay down on their stomachs and sat on their backs while another OSP element hit the soles of their feet with a stick and whipped their backs with a cable. After falling unconscious the victims were taken to a small cell. The next day, OSP went back with OCRB elements to PK5 and arrested the son-in-law of one of the victims. This third victim reported the same questioning and torture before being thrown into the same cell. OSP released the three men the day after. OSP elements also arrested the father of one of the victims for questioning and was eventually released a few days later.

11. **Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for 32 human rights abuses and breaches of IHL affecting 27 victims (including five women, two girls, and one boy).** The most common types of abuses committed by armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA and members of the *Coalition des patriotes pour le changement* (CPC) were ill-treatment (eight abuses), abduction and deprivation of liberty (eight abuses) and destruction and appropriation of property (six abuses), as well as one case of CRSV. Armed groups were also responsible for the killing of three victims (two abuses). Among armed groups, most of the abuses documented were attributed to *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R) combatants, who committed 10 abuses affecting nine victims (including one woman and two girls). The main type of human rights abuses committed by the 3R were ill-treatment, abduction, and deprivation of liberty. The HRD documented a case in which 400 people (documented as one group of collective victims) were deprived of their liberty and mistreated by 3R combatants during an ambush in the **Ouham-Pendé** prefecture. The perpetrators set up an ambush to kill a customs officer that was expected to pass by one of the prefecture's main roads. It is in this context, that the victims were tied and held under the sun for hours before being eventually released. In addition, the HRD documented the abduction and ill-treatment of a 10-year-old girl by 3R combatants in the same prefecture. The 3R attacked a village, causing the entire population to flee into the bush. The girl was then kidnapped and taken to the bush where she was beaten with sticks on her left ribs, as a means of forcing her to reveal where her parents were. She was held for three days before being handed over to the Fulani

### Violations per type of perpetrators



community living in a camp close to the village. The *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) alone was responsible for 10 human rights abuses, affecting eight victims. Most human rights abuses committed by the UPC were related to liberty and personal integrity (three abuses), including abduction and denial of humanitarian relief, as well as abuses of the right of physical and mental integrity (three abuses). The HRD documented the denial of humanitarian relief and unlawful attack against an NGO by UPC combatants in the **Ouaka** prefecture.

12. **Additional documented abuses include self-defence groups and other armed groups non-signatories of the APPR-RCA.** In this regard, 17 abuses were committed by other actors, affecting a total of 21 victims. Most cases committed by other actors were related to unlawful attacks (five abuses) and abduction (four abuses). Unidentified armed men were responsible for 11 abuses, affecting 11 victims. These cases were related to unlawful attacks against civilians and other protected persons, abduction, and appropriation of property. During the period under review, the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe (also called Azanikpigbe) self-defence group in the Haut-Mbomou were responsible for the abduction of five people, while the *Mouvement Révolutionnaire Sudiste Tchadien* (MRST) was responsible for the summary killing of a 14-year-old shepherd boy in the **Ouham-Pendé** prefecture. The perpetrators attacked the boy while in the bush and slit his throat in order to steal his 70 sheep.

## Geographical Analysis

13. More than 48% of the violations and abuses documented in May occurred in **Sector West**, which was the most affected with 73 violations and abuses affecting 100 victims. The high number of victims is largely due to cases of arbitrary arrest and detention (63); cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatments (19); and deprivation of liberty (10). A total of ten victims of death threats were documented in the Sector West; all committed by State Actors. FACA elements were responsible for four cases and *L'Office Central de Répression du Banditisme* (OCRB) was responsible for one case. The **Nana-Mambéré** prefecture was mostly affected by violations of the right to liberty and fair trial (10 violations affecting 32 victims), including five cases of arbitrary detention affecting 23 victims. In addition, eight cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, affecting 30 victims, were committed in the **Ombella-M'Poko, including Bangui**. In the meantime, the **Ouham-Pendé** prefecture documented 14 violations and abuses committed against 14 victims. The prefecture was mostly affected by violations of ill-treatment (six violations and six victims including one group of collective victims), and abuse of the right to liberty and personal integrity (three abuses committed against three girls).
14. In **Sector Centre**, 30 violations and abuses affecting 94 victims were documented (20% of the total number of violations). Most violations were documented in the **Nana-Gribizi** prefecture (17 violations). In the Sector, most victims suffered from arbitrary arrest and detention (87) and from ill-treatment and torture (three each). On 1 May, FACA elements mistreated two Fulani in their base in Ouandago resulting in the killing of one of them. The Fulani were returning from the bush with two oxen when they were intercepted by FACA elements who had been informed that the Fulani were allegedly selling their oxen to armed groups. The soldiers took the victims to the FACA base for complicity in supplying armed groups. This arrest coincided with the Labor Day celebration at the FACA base. Two Fulani men were eventually released while the other two, aged 43 and 48, were questioned and severely beaten with wooden sticks to force them to confess collusion with the armed groups. The 48-year-old Fulani man died in the FACA base as a result of the beatings. The other man was reportedly transferred to the FACA base in Kaga-Bandoro. Additionally, a 35-year-old man was mistreated by OSP on 21 May at the Ndassima mining site, **Ouaka** prefecture. The OSP employed the man on the mining site until he reportedly stole irons bars from the site. The OSP took him to a container where they tied him up and beat him for about four hours, during which he lost consciousness. After two nights spent in the container, he was placed into custody at the Gendarmerie for theft. Gendarmerie officers brought him to the hospital for treatment. It is worth noting that the HRD documented during April 2023 the summary execution of two civilians by OSP elements on the same mining site of Ndassima.
15. In **Sector East**, 47 violations and abuses affecting 66 victims were documented (31% of the total number of violations). The most common types of violations and abuses were destruction and appropriation of property (seven), ill-treatment (six), unlawful attacks against civilians and denial of humanitarian relief (six) as well as

violations to the conditions of detention which do not meet the minimum standards (six). Twenty-four of these victims were subject to arbitrary arrest and detention or poor conditions of detention, including the failure to separate adults and minors. Five out of the six unlawful attacks and denial of humanitarian assistance, were documented in the **Vakaga** prefecture, notably in Tiringoulou and on Am-Dafock axis, which remain an area of concern. The HRD documented an unlawful attack on 24 May against three humanitarians aid workers and a violation of the right to life by unidentified armed combatants on the Am-Dafock-Birao axis. Three armed combatants attacked an NGO vehicle on its way back to Birao returning from a mission in Am-Dafock. They killed one of the humanitarian workers while the two others managed to escape to a village nearby.

## Security and political context in May 2023

16. In the **Eastern Sector**, this month, the situation was particularly tense and worrisome in the **Vakaga, Haute-Kotto and Haut-Mbomou** prefectures. In the **Haute-Kotto** prefecture, the situation remained tense due to movements of both armed groups and State forces. During the first week of May, UPC/CPC took over the Gbali and Ouadda sub-prefectures as the FACA and FSI are not present. The axes of Ouadda to Bria, Ouadda to Sam-Ouandja, and Ouadda to Ouadda-Djallé were particularly affected. Community leaders warned of CRSV cases, including early and forced marriage of girls, as well as rape by armed groups in Mouka and Oudda. The armed groups in Ouadda-Djallé fled after the arrival of the FACA and OSP from Ouadda on 7 May. However, after the withdrawal of the FACA and OSP, the towns of Nzacko and Yalinga were retaken by the armed groups, subjecting the population to illegal taxes, which prevented them to flee. The FACA and OSP then led operations on the Bongou 1 – Ouadda axis and on mining sites to disperse armed combatants present in the area. Such operation reportedly increased the insecurity on this axis hence interfering with the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The last week of May, UPC and PRNC combatants reportedly fled from Ouadda to Aigbando following the OSP attack in the area.
17. In the **Vakaga** prefecture humanitarian needs have increased, since the breakout of the Sudanese conflict in mid-April and the arrival of more than 12,000 persons fleeing hostilities in Sudan and seeking refuge in CAR, notably in the area of in Am-Dafock where national, and international humanitarian organizations conducted a mission in the beginning of May to assess the situation and to provide emergency assistance. The situation deteriorated in the **Vakaga** prefecture following the departure of FACA and OSP elements from Sikikédé (140 km of Birao) to Ndélé on 25 May which left the population vulnerable to armed groups. On 26 May, FPRC and PRNC combatants attacked the town of Sikikédé with the population withstanding the attack causing deaths amongst the civilian population (along with cases of rape, injuries, arson).
18. In the **Haut-Mbomou** prefecture, the security situation also deteriorated this month due to clashes between the FACA, the Azanikpigbe self-defence group based in Kadjema, and the UPC which controls the locality of Mboki. The FACA and the Azanikpigbe also clashed in Obo, , following FACA's refusal to allow a group of armed militiamen to leave Obo to assist Azanikpigbe combatants. The later were attacked by the UPC in Kadjema during the night of 22 to 23 May. In addition, the Azanikpigbe are targeting the Fulani community and are abducting civilians because of their implication in the local peace process or because of their desertion of the Azanikpigbe ranks. With the deterioration of the security situation, two NGOs have decided to suspend their activities in the area.
19. In the **Central Sector**, the security situation in **Kemo** and **Nana-Gribizi** prefectures remained volatile this month, notably in Ouandago (50 km of Kaga-Bandoro) where unidentified armed individuals, allegedly of the Fulani community, kidnapped civilians the first week of the May. The Christian community in the area then accused the Fulani community of supplying and collaborating with such armed groups, creating tension amongst the population. A local self-defence group attacked Fulani herders in Godo (10km of Kaga-Bandoro) in order to steal their cattle. As a result, on 19 May the *Forces de Sécurité Intérieure* (FSI) and FACA under the instructions of the Prosecutor, arrested 54 men for investigation. Following the HRD's advocacy, the Prosecutor released a teacher and all the minors from custody.
20. In the **Western Sector**, this month was marked by the attacks, incursions, and abuses committed by the MRST, a Chadian armed group in the CAR - Chadian border, notably in Bénermé (55km of Paoua) in the **Ouham-Pende** prefecture. The MRST reportedly killed 10 members of the community in Bénermé on 12 May. The community accused the MRST of kidnapping and torturing the members of the community. The HRD documented the attack on 12 May and the community's accusations against the MRST. The HRD is investigating the case.

**Pendé** prefecture. On 1 May around 300 FACA elements arrived in Paoua from Bangui following an increase in the number of recruited youths in the region by the aforementioned Chadian armed group. On 8 May, Chadian armed combatants reportedly attacked the village of Don (65km of Paoua), killing several people including the village chief. On 9 May, the village of Bedok 2 (75km of Paoua) was attacked reportedly by elements of the Chadian Army in reprisal to the assassination of a Chadian rebel leader affiliated to the MRST based in CAR. Twenty-eight villagers were reportedly killed during the attack. On 10 May, the presence of seven heavily armed Chadian army vehicles in the town of Paoua created panic among the population. On 15 May, the Chadian army and the FACA led a joint operation against the MRST in Bénermé managing to expulse them from the town and pushing them back to the border. Almost 17,000 Chadian refugees, including 13,494 children, find themselves without humanitarian assistance in several villages to the north of Paoua, adding to the food crisis already affecting these villages. Moreover, the presence of explosive devices on the roads of the prefecture continued to pose a risk to the protection of civilians and limiting the movement of the civilian population, humanitarian workers and MINUSCA. In addition, the presence of 3R, FPRC and *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique* (MPC) combatants contributed to the deteriorating of the security situation in the **Ouham-Pendé** prefecture. Notably, in the village of Kounde (Bouar-Bozoum axis) following a clash between FACA and armed combatants assimilated to the 3R on 19 May; and in Kabo (252 km from Bossangoa) following clashes between the FACA, the FPRC and the MPC, on 31 May.

## Civic Space

21. During the period under review, in **Bangui**, on 5 May, shopkeepers from the PK5 neighbourhood decided to observe a city-shutdown (*ville morte*) to protest the multiple arrests and detentions of its residents, all of whom are Muslim, by OSP. The arrest of an Imam and his cousin who were allegedly ill-treated and tortured by OSP elements was the last straw that sparked the protests. A government delegation led by the Minister of Security, including a Russian security advisor, visited the 3rd district to talk with the population and ease tensions. Moreover, the HRD documented an increase in the violations of the right to life, in particular in the 3rd arrondissement of the PK5 neighbourhood 5. On the night of 20 to 21 May, a Muslim shopkeeper was shot dead in his home by unidentified armed men. Two days after this incident, another Muslim resident was killed in similar circumstances. In addition, on 18 May, the HRD carried out a field mission to investigate allegations of extortion and appropriation of funds in the Boubouï cattle market (45km of Bangui) that occurred in March. In this regard, on 10 May a good neighbour agreement was signed between the Christian and Fulani communities in Boubouï. However, FACA prevented the HRD from accessing the market, raising concerns about the difficulty of conducting investigations in certain areas.
22. Moreover, in the **Mambéré-Kadeï** prefecture, reports indicated that the Muslim population were subject to discriminatory practices by the Police, as higher payments and additional documents to expedite their identity documents have been reported. Such practice may have deeper ramifications regarding the upcoming elections where identity documents are necessary to vote. In addition, reports indicated that FACA elements based in Lomi (Berbérati, 4th arrondissement) are reportedly keeping arrested individuals at their base instead of handing them over to the Internal security forces (ISF). The HRD followed up with the FACA commander who already relieved the ComZone from his duties when he heard of the allegations.
23. Finally, the overall **political situation** can be categorized as tense. On 30 May, President Touadéra announced the submission of a Bill for a new Constitution of the Central African Republic to a referendum<sup>1</sup>. President Touadéra's speech has sparked strong reactions from the opposition, civil society and the CAR diaspora. The HRD has documented hate messages published by political opponents on social medias as well as from supporters of the Constitutional reform. A peaceful protest in support of the Constitutional reform took place on 31 May both in the presence of the President and the Prime Minister without any reported incidents. There are increasing concerns regarding the possible deterioration of the security situation given the tense political

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<sup>1</sup> After consultation with the President of the Constitutional Court and the President of the National Assembly, in line with Article 90 of the Constitution of 30 March 2016 and Article 2 of the Law of 13 January 2023, on the procedures for referendums in the Central African Republic.

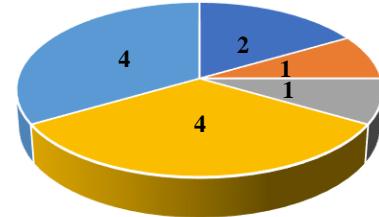
context and the propagation of hate speech and incitement to violence from both sides. The HRD is also monitoring the situation as it may lead to a further restriction of the civic space.

## Children in Armed Conflict

24. During the reporting period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 12 grave child rights violations affecting six children (three boys and three girls). There was a 43% decrease in grave violations and an 50% decrease in victims directly affected compared to the previous reporting period during which 21 violations affecting 12 children were documented. The decrease in grave violations could be explained by increased movement of armed groups, particularly in **Vakaga** and **Haut-Mbomou** Prefectures, which is negatively affecting the CTFMR's ability to monitor and report on grave child rights violations.
25. Armed groups were responsible for 59% of the violations (seven) and unidentified armed individuals committed 41% of violations (five). Six violations occurred outside the reporting period but were only verified during the reporting period. Two boys were victims of two violations – abduction and recruitment and use.
26. Violations documented included: recruitment and use (two), maiming (one), rape (one), abduction (four) and denial of humanitarian access (four). Armed groups committed (seven) violations including: Azande Ani Kpi Gbe self-defence group (three), the MRST (one) and CPC factions (three) - UPC (one), 3R (one) and unidentified armed combatant affiliated to CPC (one) - and unidentified armed individuals committed (five) violations.
27. The **Nana-Gribizi** prefecture was the most affected prefecture with four violations, followed by Haut-Mbomou (three), Ouham-Pendé and Vakaga with two each; and Ouaka with one violation. The Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified that FACA have been occupying a primary school in **Ouham-Pendé** prefecture since 17 March 2023. CPU will advocate with FACA leadership for the school to be vacated.
28. Following advocacy by CPU, on 12 May the Kaga Bandoro Prosecutor released a boy who was detained since 24 April at the gendarmerie brigade for alleged association with the MPC armed group. In addition, FACA vacated a school they had been occupying in **Basse-Kotto** Prefecture since August 2021 following an advocacy of CPU.

**Types of grave child rights violations**

- Recruitment and Use
- Maiming
- Rape
- Abduction
- Denial of humanitarian access



29. During the period under review, CPU on behalf of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) engaged with Seleka and UPC ComZones in **Basse-Kotto** prefecture to sensitize on the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) mandate, on the six grave child rights violations and the National Child Protection Code (2020). During the meetings, CPU recalled the leaders to refrain from the recruitment and use of children and advocated for the appointment of Child Protection Focal Points. In addition, CPU met with FACA leadership in **Nana-Grebizi** Prefecture to continue advocating for the appointment of focal points and discuss organization of training for FACA elements.

30. CPU supported the development of a draft strategy of the National Prevention Plan against the six child rights violations (per UNSC RES 2427) by organizing workshops in **Haute-Kotto**, **Mbomou**, **Nana-Grebizi** and **Ouaka** prefectures of the National Prevention Plan. Regional social affairs representatives, members of the child protection sub-cluster, human rights and humanitarian actors, and members of the civil society participated in the workshops.

### Act to Protect Campaign

Through the “**Act to Protect**” campaign, **164 peacekeepers** (98 men and 66 women) were trained on the protection of children during armed conflict including on monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children. Similar trainings and awareness sessions were conducted for **1,398 community members and leaders as well as other stakeholders including NGOs, members of local peace committee, religious leaders, national defense, and security forces** (FACA and FSI), **judiciary and INGOS** (886 men and 512 women).

## Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

31. In May, the HRD documented a total of five cases of CRSV, affecting five victims (one girl and four women). One girl and two women were victims of rape while two women suffered attempted rape (other sexual violence). Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for one CRSV case (unidentified armed combatants affiliated to CPC committed one rape) affecting one woman, while state actors were responsible for three violations affecting three women (all committed by FACA elements). Azanikpigbe self defense group was also responsible for one CRSV case (rape), affecting one girl.

32. In one case committed by Azanikpigbe self defense group, four combatants raped a 22-year-old woman in **Haut-Mbomou** prefecture. While the woman and her daughter were sleeping, four Azanikpigbe combatants broke into her house. They asked for the payment of 10,000 XAF (approximately 16 USD) which the victim didn't have. They then proceeded to blindfold her and took her to the bush where they gang raped her. A FACA officer also raped and threatened 18-year-old woman in the **Nana-Mambéré** prefecture. A complaint was filed with the Gendarmerie and the FACA officer confessed raping the victim but was let free by the Gendarmerie. The HRD is following up on the case with the Bouar Prosecutor as the perpetrator is still free despite his confession.

33. Finally, the HRD is still investigating eight allegations of CRSV effecting 19 victims (14 women and five girls). These cases being still at the verification stage at the end of May, these cases won't be analysed in this report. In this regard, the HRD was informed of the alleged rape of at least ten women on 26 May following the attack by *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance en Centrafrique* (FPRC) and *Parti pour le Rassemblement National Centrafricain* (PRNC) on Sikikédé, **Vakaga** prefecture. Although, due to the security situation, the HRD is still investigating the attack and documenting these allegations. As previously stated in this report, community leaders warned of CRSV cases, including early and forced marriage of girls, as well as rape by armed groups in Mouka and Ouadda. CRSV reportedly often takes place while the victims are on their way home from the fields or in the market. Armed groups have also reportedly broken into victims' houses to rape them.

34. The Woman Protection Section conducted a capacity-building session for 10 members of the Central African Association for the Fight against Violence in Paoua, **Ouham** prefecture, including three women. The members

of the association were trained on the early warning and monitoring of CRSV as well as referral pathways for victims and survivors.

## Human Rights Promotion and Capacity-Building

35. This month, the HRD organised 174 activities, in some instances jointly with partners, on human rights and international humanitarian law in 12 prefectures,<sup>2</sup> benefitting 2,493 individuals (of whom 809 were women), including representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO); community and religious leaders, Local Human Rights Fora, State actors and FACA/FSI.
36. These activities included 27 awareness campaigns, which reached 1,048 beneficiaries (including 429 women), including internally displaced persons, civil society organisations, community leaders, students, and the civilian population. In addition, 20 capacity-building workshops were organised benefitting 431 individuals (including 106 women) from CSOs, local human rights fora, community leaders, State actors and the local population. The HRD also conducted seven trainings for 111 FACA and FSI (including six women). The activities organized by the HRD have the aim of strengthening knowledge on human rights law and international humanitarian law (IHL), as well as on specific topics such as conflict-related sexual violence and child protection as a means of enhancing the protective environment in the CAR.
37. In May, the HRD conducted 56 monitoring visits of detention centres in 11 prefectures.<sup>3</sup> During these visits, the HRD documented 178 victims of unlawful detention (including seven women, seven boys and 12 groups of collective victims), including cases in which the detainees were being held past the legal limits for custody, as referred throughout the report. In several instance, the conditions of detention were not compliant with the minimum standards. In the Bria police station (**Haute-Kotto**), the HRD documented the forced labour of at least seven detainees, including five boys aged between 14 and 17, who were transferred to an OSP camp in the early morning of 5 May to complete various tasks. Additionally, one detainee stated that although he had been suffering from asthma attacks for three days, he hadn't received any medical care. In the Bambari Gendarmerie (**Ouaka**), the HRD was not allowed to visit the detention cells that first week of May due to the refusal of the territorial brigade commander who cited a lack of personnel to ensure the security of the HRD during the visit. In Bangui, the HRD documented on 15 May emblematic cases in *Camp de Roux* prison facility of illegal detention of two Chadian nationals detained since July 2017 without a detention order. In the **Mambéré-Kadeï** prefecture, the HRD documented on 15 May the excavation of a hole in the Babaza FACA base where individuals are being detained. The HRD has previously documented cases of torture and ill-treatment perpetrated by the FACA in the same location. Following the HRD's advocacy, the FACA contingent has been replaced by another.
38. At the national level, and in the framework of the implementation of the information and training campaign project for state and non-state actors on economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), the HRD continued to organize training sessions. On 30 and 31 May, the HRD organised its last capacity-building workshop on ESCR in the Central African context who was part of a series of capacity-building workshops aimed at reinforcing the capacities of the civil society organisations, national institutions, and key ministries for a total of 250 participants. In total, on 30 and 31 May, 30 governmental executives from different ministries were trained on ESCR and the State obligations to implement and protect them.
39. On 10 May, the HRD, CAS, UNDSS and Electoral Affairs, participated in a joint mission to Carnot to advocate for the reopening of a school adjacent to the OSP base, and for the relocation of the base outside of the populated civilian area. The school closed on 6 April after a detonation was heard inside their base, followed by the evacuation of a body the next day. The base was supposed to house OSP elements for a few weeks, however it has been occupied for approximately two years. Since the closure of the school and the eviction of

<sup>2</sup> The prefectures are as follows: Bamingui-Bangoran; Haute-Kotto; Haut-Mbomou; Mambéré-Kadéï; Mbomou; Nana-Grébizi; Nana-Mambéré; Ombella M’Poko; Ouaka; Ouham-Pendé; and Vakaga.

<sup>3</sup> The prefectures are as follows: Bamingui-Bangoran; Haute-Kotto; Haut-Mbomou; Mambéré-Kadéï; Mbomou; Nana-Grébizi; Nana-Mambéré; Ombella M’Poko; Ouaka; Ouham; and Ouham-Pendé.

a few households located near the school, the local authorities have offered to relocate the base to PK5 Carnot, a proposal that the OSP have so far not followed up on. The HRD, along with other MINUSCA sections expressed their concerns and continued to advocate for the relocation of the OSP base, as well as children's right to access to education.

## Human Rights Due Diligence

40. In May, the HRD, in the context of implementing the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP), conducted 45 risk assessments for MINUSCA's support to the national defence and security forces (FACA, ISF and other law enforcement officers) and for Members of Parliament. The HRDDP Secretariat conducted human rights background checks for a total of 727 beneficiaries including 508 ISF (327 Police officers and 253 Gendarmes), 119 FACA, six Taxation agents, six agents from Water and Forestry/Fishing and Hunting, five members from the anti-fraud Unit, nine Members of Parliament and two government administrative officials. Notably, one of the background checks benefited all the ISF deployed in Bria, who are part of the joint activities conducted between MINUSCA and the ISF particularly in the northern triangle (Sam Ouandja – Ouadda – Ouanda Djalle) to guarantee the security of this area. Beneficiaries subjected to these risk assessments were provided financial, logistical, operational, and technical support including air transportation and trainings. All the risk assessments were evaluated to have low and medium risk. Therefore, 17 out of the 727 individuals screened, were excluded from receiving support, for allegations of human rights violations.
41. These verifications enabled UNPOL and UNMAS components to organize 20 training sessions in Bangui, Bouar, Bambari, Sibut, Berberati, Bria and Birao for the ISF, FACA, Taxation agents and agents from the Mines, Water, Forestry/Fishing and Hunting on the topics of: sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), Maintaining and Restoring Public Order, Weapons and Ammunition Management, Community policing, Information technology, Judicial Policing, Professional Procedures and Techniques for Rapid Intervention, prevention of mob justice against persons accused of practicing witchcraft, International Law and the Protection of Children, Public Security, Money Laundering, and on the Fight against Hate Speech during the Electoral Period.
42. During the period under review, the HRDDP Secretariat supported the national vetting process by conducting two screenings for a total of 1079 (992 USF and 80 eligible ex-combatants) for both the new recruits into the ISF and the DDR process. The first group of 992 ISF were candidates for the year 2021 and none of them were flagged for human rights violations. Due to some irregularities observed by MINUSCA, the recruitment has been placed on hold. The second group of 80 ex-combatants were from the UPC armed group and demobilized from Bambari, **Ouaka** prefecture. Out of the 80 ex-combatants four of them were flagged for allegations of human rights violations or criminal offenses. Additional verifications were recommended for them.
43. The HRDDP Secretariat took note that OCRB and a FACA element to whom support is being provided, were directly involved in two serious cases of allegations of human rights violations during the month of May. With the intervention of the HRDDP Secretariat, jointly with the HRD, the FACA Commander reported that the FACA element involved in the allegation has been arrested and will be tried at the Military Tribunal in Bangui.
44. As part of the implementation of its recommendations and mitigating measures, the HRDDP Secretariat will continue its monitoring work with beneficiaries of support and train them on the need to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law in order to impact on behavioural change. Notably, the HRD Bria office notes that due to this constant interaction and trainings, they are observing a change in behaviour of the ISF.