

## NATIONS UNIES

Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en Centrafrique



## UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

### Human Rights Division

#### Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation

July 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 July 2023. Violations and abuses 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 July, the Human Rights Division (HRD), including the Office of the Senior Women Protection Advisor (OSWPA) and the Child Protection Section (CPS), documented, and verified 166 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), affecting 233 civilian victims (including 30 women, eight girls, seven boys and 31 collective groups of victims), 45 of which suffered multiple violations. Out of the total number of documented violations, 143 occurred in July 2023 affecting 206 victims. The HRD also recorded 100 allegations of human rights violations and abuses affecting at least 208 victims, which were still being verified at the end of July and were therefore not included in this report.

### Main Trends

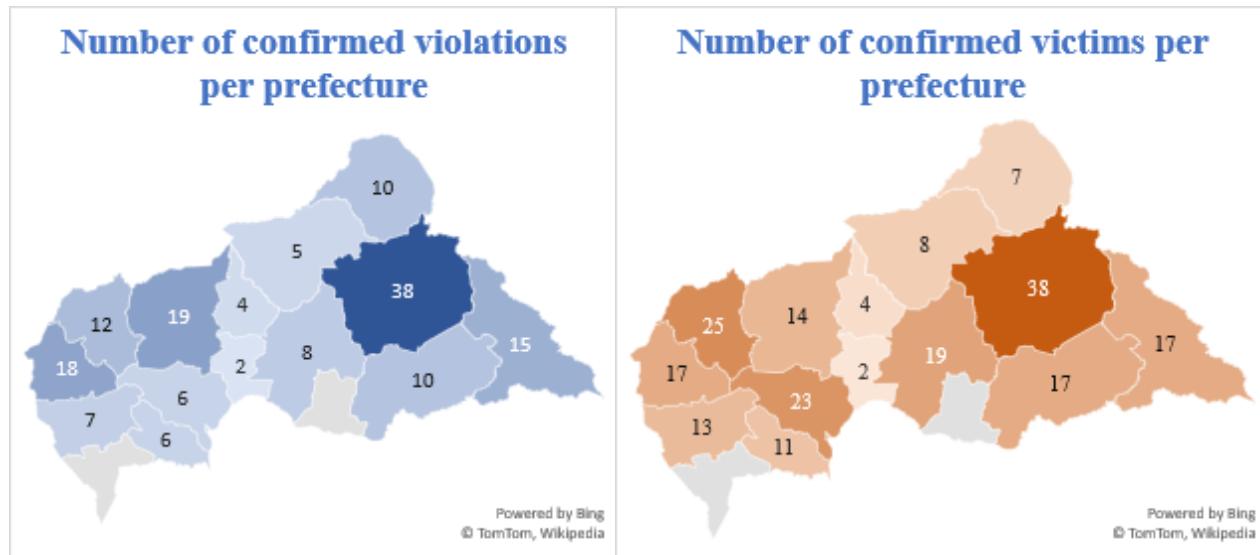
In total, 166 human rights violations and abuses as well as breaches of IHL affecting 233 victims (30 women, eight girls, seven boys and 31 groups of collective victims) were documented in July 2023. This constitutes a decrease in both the number of violations and the number of victims compared to June 2023.

During the reporting period, State actors were responsible for 48% of all violations and breaches and 61% of the victims.

(eight), and boys (seven). In addition, there were 31 groups of collective victims.

4. The Haute-Kotto prefecture, was the most affected both in terms of human rights violations and abuses and victims, (38 violations affecting 38 victims) followed by the Ouham prefecture (19 violations affecting 14 victims) and the Nana-Mambéré (18 violations affecting 17 victims). In terms of victims, the Ouham-Pendé prefecture, was the second most affected (12 violations affecting 25 victims), followed by the Ombella

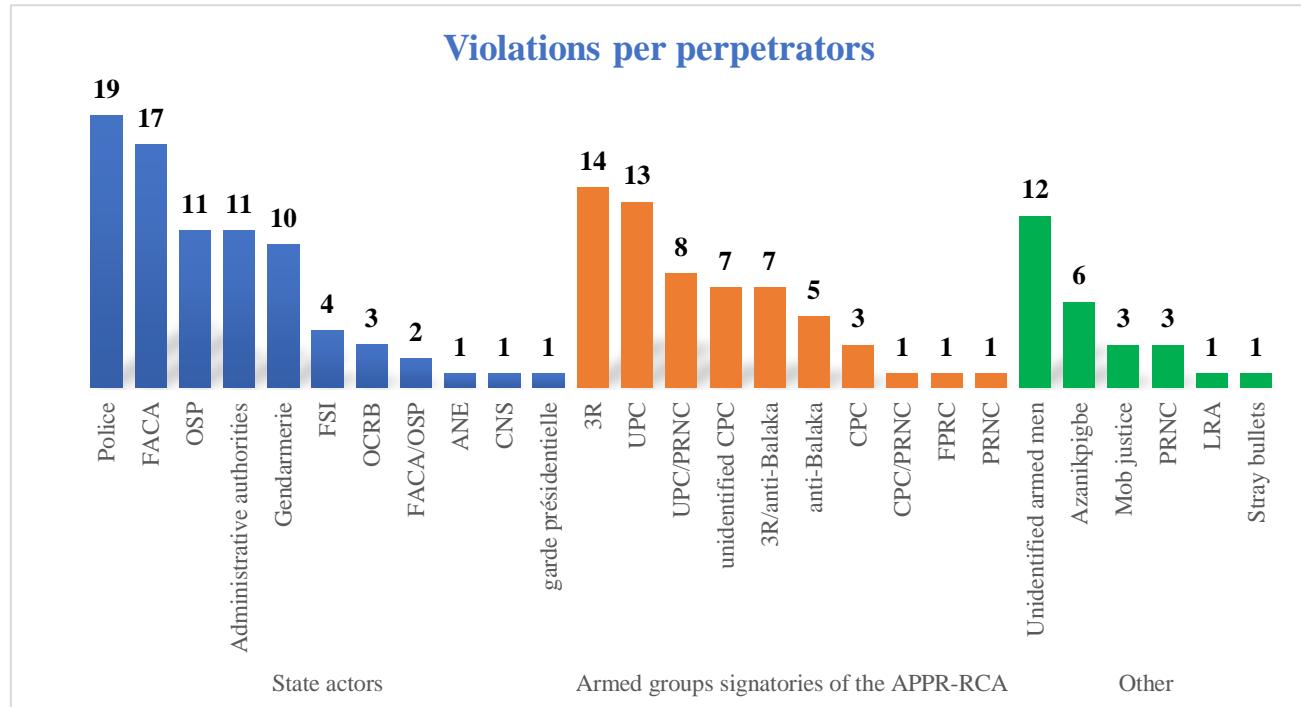
**M'Poko** (including **Bangui**) prefecture (six violations affecting 23 victims) mostly due to arbitrary detention cases.



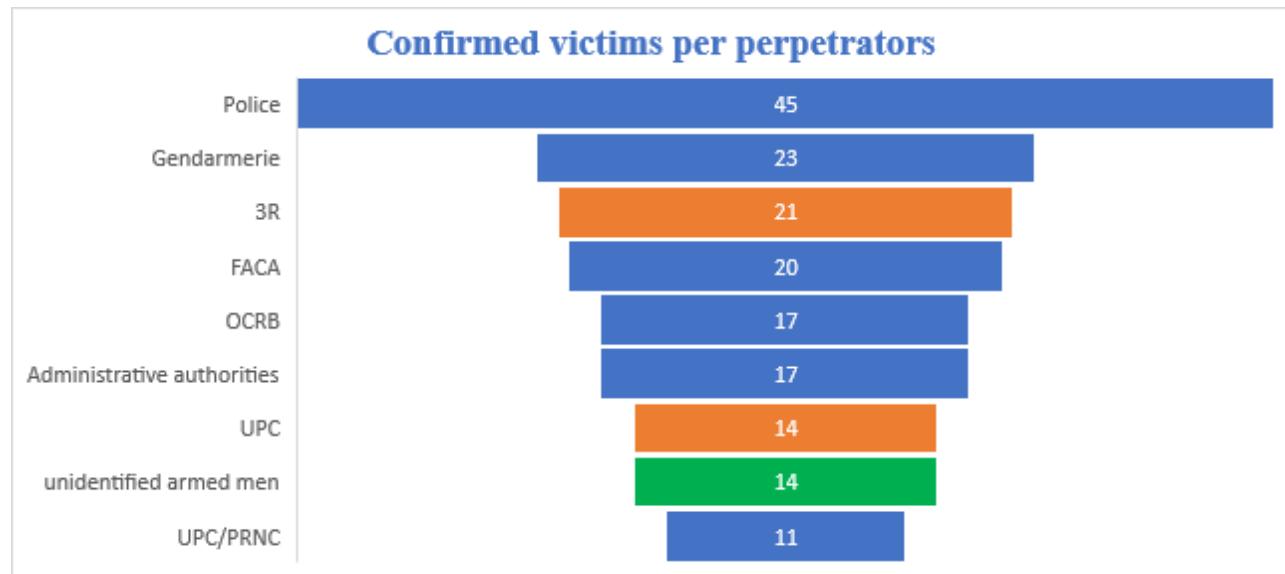
5. In July 2023, the most common types of violations and abuses documented were the destruction or appropriation of property (17%), arbitrary arrest and/or detention (14%), cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (referred to as ill-treatment) (10%), and extrajudicial executions and other killings (8%).
6. **Men** were most likely to be victims of arbitrary arrest and/or detention (68), ill-treatment (24), destruction or appropriation of property (23), and attempted execution and/or extrajudicial execution and other killings (12). **Women** suffered mostly from conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) (11), arbitrary arrest and detention (eight), maiming and injuries (five) and destruction or appropriation of property (four). **Boys** were mainly victims of arbitrary arrest and/or detention (three) and extrajudicial executions and other killings (two), and **girls** of CRSV (rape and sexual slavery) (three) and abduction (three).

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

7. **State actors were responsible for 80 violations and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 143 victims** mostly due to arbitrary arrest and/or detention where the conditions of detention that did not respect the minimum standards of detention. This is a decrease of 38% in violations of human rights compared to June 2023 (State actors were responsible for 128 violations). The number of victims of State actors decreased by 53% compared to month of June (302 victims of State actors in June). Most of the violations committed by State actors were in the Haute-Kotto (10) and the Vakaga (eight).
8. **Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA** were responsible for 60 abuses of human rights, and breaches of international humanitarian law, affecting 65 victims which represents a 16% decrease in abuses compared to the previous month, during which they were responsible for 72 abuses. The number of victims also decreased by 53% compared to June 2023 in which 139 victims were documented. The **Haute-Kotto** (22 violations affecting 24 victims) and the **Nana-Mambéré** (12 violations affecting 12 victims) were the most affected prefectures, in terms of number violations and victims. The most common types of violations were destruction or appropriation of property (17), extrajudicial execution or other killings (eight), maiming and injuries (seven) and rape (five).
9. The HRD documented **additional documented abuses by self-defence groups and other armed groups non-signatories of the APPR-RCA** with 26 abuses of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law affecting 25 victims. The prefectures of **Haut-Mbomou** and the **Haute-Kotto** were the most affected in terms of abuses and victims committed by armed groups non signatories of the APPR-RCA. They mostly committed destruction or appropriation of property (seven), ill-treatment (three), extrajudicial execution or other killings (three) and rape (three).



10. Amongst the main perpetrators, the Police was responsible for 19 violations of human rights affecting 45 victims which represents 19% of the total number of victims. They were mainly responsible for violations of human rights linked to the conditions of detention including cases of arbitrary arrests and detention and one case of ill-treatment affecting one victim.
11. The second main perpetrators were the *Forces Armées Centrafricaines* (FACA) with 17 violations of human rights affecting 20 victims. The main violations perpetrated by the FACA included cases of death threats (four violations affecting nine victims), cases of ill-treatment (three violations affecting nine victims) and cases of maiming and injuries (two violations affecting three victims). The cases of death threats are mostly associated with abuses of power and the impunity enjoyed by FACA officers. One of the cases happened in Obo, **Haut-Mbomou** prefecture, where a FACA officer threatened to kill five civilians. On 20 July, in a drinking establishment, following an altercation with four young men, a FACA officer went to his place to fetch his



gun and threatened to kill the four men. He was disarmed by other FACA officers but managed to beat the

young men in the process. The next morning, the perpetrator went back to the drinking establishment and ill-treated the owner forcing him to close his shop. The FACA officer was arrested.

12. The armed group *Révolution, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R) was the third main perpetrator followed by the *Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC). The 3R were mostly responsible for cases of maiming and injuries (five cases affecting eight victims) and rape (four cases affecting seven victims). The 3R are one of the main perpetrators of rape for the year 2023. In one instance, the 3R raped four women on their way to their fields. On 29 June, seven 3R elements stopped the four women (respectively 24, 25, 29 and 32 years old) and threatened them with their guns. While three elements were keeping watch, the four others each raped one woman. The victims received medical care. The UPC is mostly responsible for cases of destruction and appropriation of property (four cases affecting five victims) and summary executions and other killings (two cases affecting two victims).

## Sectoral Analysis

13. Most of the violations and victims documented were in the **Sector West** with 74 violations and abuses affecting 121 victims. The high number of victims is largely due to the high number of arbitrary arrests and/or detentions (45) recorded in **Bangui** and in the **Ouham-Pendé** prefectures, the cases of destruction or appropriation of property (22), and violations and abuses of the right to physical and mental integrity (including ill-treatment and maiming and injury) (21), cases of CRSV (nine including eight women and one girl), death threats (eight), extrajudicial executions and other killings (seven). The 3R, alone or jointly with the Anti-Balaka, committed the most human rights abuses (21) affecting most of the victims (27). The most common abuses committed by 3R are rape (four abuses affecting seven victims) and maiming and injuries (five violations affecting eight victims).
14. The HRD documented 19 violations and abuses of human rights affecting 33 victims in the Sector **Centre**. Twenty-two out of the 33 documented victims are victim of violations linked to detention, including arbitrary arrest and detention. The police were the main perpetrator with five violations affecting 15 victims. The **Ouaka** was the prefecture which registered the highest number both in terms of violations (eight) and victims (19). On July 12, in the Ouaka prefecture, the police arrested and detained around 50 civilians<sup>1</sup>, including seven women and a 16-year-old girl, for lack of identity papers. The victims, most of whom were Muslims, were arrested in their homes. The victims were asked to pay 15,000 XAF (around 25 USD) each to be released. The victims who could not pay were kept in detention.
15. The **Sector East** recorded 73 violations and abuses affecting 79 victims. The **Haute-Kotto** was the most affected prefecture, both in terms of violations (38 violations) and victims (38 victims), followed by the **Haut-Mbomou** prefecture (15 violations and 17 victims). In the **Sector East**, 13 of the documented violations were related to detention, including arbitrary arrest, detention and inhumane conditions of detention, affecting 22 victims (including three boys, one of whom was not separated from adults in a custody cell), 14 violations of the right to physical and mental integrity (ill-treatment and maiming and injuries) affecting 20 victims, and violations and abuses of the right to life (15 violations affecting 20 victims) including extrajudicial, summary executions and other killings (nine violations affecting nine victims).

## Security and political context in July 2023

16. The month of July was marked by movements of armed groups in the Western Sector. Clashes were recorded between State actors and *Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement* (CPC) armed groups, and, in the Eastern Sector, between CPC armed groups and self-defence groups, notably the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe. There were also conflicts around mining sites, as in Gobolo, Nana-Mambéré prefecture, where, on 3 July, the 3R attacked and looted a vehicle belonging to a gold mining company, resulting in the death of two civilians. It should be noted that, as in previous months, July remained marked by the persistent abuse of power by FACA

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<sup>1</sup> Documented as a group of collective victims.

elements and their impunity throughout the Central African Republic. In the Ouham-Pendé and Haute-Kotto prefectures, the HRD documented cases of illegal taxation at FACA checkpoints.

17. In the **Western sector**, the situation remained precarious during the period under review. In **Nana-Mambéré** and **Mambéré-Kadeï** prefectures, movements, and activities of 3R and anti-balaka elements in areas where there is no state presence leave the civilian population vulnerable to human rights abuses perpetrated by the armed groups and self-defence groups. On 31 July, 3R elements attacked civilians on the Baboua-Bera road (115 km from Bouar), Nana-Mambéré prefecture, one of which, a woman, reportedly succumbed to her injuries the same day. In the **Ombella-M'Poko** prefecture, particularly in Bangui and the Bossembélé sub-prefecture, the HRD documented armed robberies since the month of May 2023. In addition, the HRD documented the summary execution of two men who voted during the constitutional referendum by armed elements assimilated to the 3R. In the **Ouham** prefecture, July was marked by clashes between State forces and elements from the CPC. On 18 and 20 July, CPC fighters attacked FACA positions in the village of Silimbi (120 km from Markounda) and the Kadanga mining site (35 km from Kouki). Similarly, on 15 July, CPC elements reportedly attacked the village of Zéré, pillaging the village and mistreating the inhabitants who could not give them anything.
18. In the **Central sector**, the security situation was tense. In the **Bamingui-Bangoran** prefecture, particularly on the Golongo axis, the security situation deteriorated due to the refusal of some armed groups affiliated to the CPC to join the Demobilization, Disarmament and Rehabilitation (DDR) process and perpetrating human rights abuses. For example, on 2 and 16 July, elements of the CPC looted houses and stores in Gbangbari (PK5 Ndélé). In addition, unidentified armed men attacked the village of Diki (119 km northwest of Ndélé), killing 13 civilians including the village chief and an advisor to the mayor's office, wounding two others and looting the inhabitants. The security situation was also marked by ongoing movements by armed groups, notably the UPC, in Bakala, Boyo, Goya and Atongo Bakari in the **Ouaka** and **Basse-Kotto** prefectures. These various movements posed a threat to the protection of civilians.
19. In the **Eastern sector**, the security situation has seriously deteriorated, notably with the coordinated attack on Sam Ouandja, in the **Haute-Kotto** prefecture, on 4 July by UPC and the *Parti pour le Rassemblement de la Nation Centrafricaine* (PRNC) targeting the gendarmerie brigade, economic operators and an international NGO base. The HRD documented the death of three civilians during the attack, including a 15-year-old boy. In addition, a MINUSCA patrol was ambushed by *Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC) elements outside Sam Ouandja, resulting in the death of a peacekeeper. In the **Haut-Mbomou** prefecture, the security situation was marked by clashes between the UPC and the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe self-defence group causing the movement of populations. In addition, the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe closed down the Obo market from 23 to 26 July in retaliation for the physical assault of some young people by a FACA soldier, between 20 and 21 July at a drinking establishment. They also attacked and robbed an international NGO on the night of 20 July. **Mbomou** prefecture also experienced a worsening security situation, including when, on 5 and 6 July, UPC elements attacked the town of Dembia (70 km east of Rafai), causing death and injury among the civilian population.

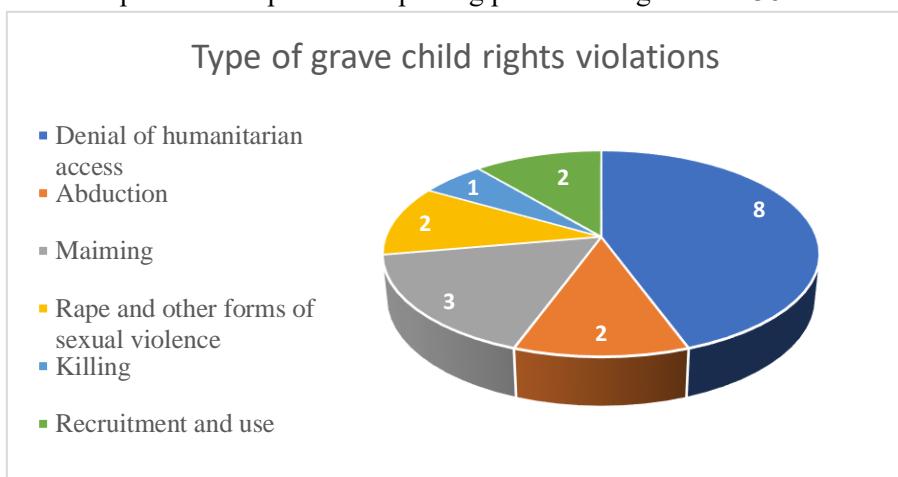
## Civic Space

20. The month of July was marked by debates on constitutional reform and the constitutional referendum held on 31 July. The *Bloc Républicain pour la Défense de la Constitution* (BRDC) organized a peaceful demonstration in Bangui on 14 July, while hundreds of participants organized a nationwide "concert de casserole" on 28 and 29 July to peacefully protest the draft Constitution. It is also worth mentioning that the *Association de la Jeunesse musulmane contre l'Exclusion en Centrafrique* has called on the Muslim community to vote "no" in the referendum, as it considered the notion of "Centrafricanité" in the draft new Constitution to be discriminatory and racist. The National Campaign Director is said to have entered discussions with the Muslim community and to have amended some of the provisions of the new Constitution. On 26 July, the HRD documented the attack on the convoy of a Member of Parliament by armed fighters affiliated to the CPC (Anti-Balaka faction), during campaign activities in connection with the referendum.

- The HRD did not document any major incidents in the run-up to the referendum. However, the HRD did document that in some localities several polling stations did not have sufficient ballot papers or envelopes to guarantee the confidentiality and integrity of the vote. This would have discouraged some people from voting. There were also some incidents attributable to armed groups, including threats and intimidations, as well as the destruction of ballot boxes and other electoral material, particularly in the Ouham and the Mbomou.
- The HRD continued documenting discrimination against the Muslim and Fulani community, most notably in the Mambéré-Kadéï prefecture. An official authority confirmed to the HRD that he had received instructions from his superiors to request additional family documents from people with Muslim-sounding names when issuing identity cards.

## Children in Armed Conflict

- The Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 18 grave child rights violations affecting eight children (three boys and five girls). There was an 87% decrease in grave violations and a 94% decrease in victims directly affected compared to the previous reporting period during which 138 violations affecting 134 children were documented. The decrease in grave violations could be explained by increased movement of armed groups, particularly in the Vakaga, **Haut-Mbomou** and **Ouham** Prefectures, which negatively affected the CTFMR's ability to monitor and report on grave child rights violations. In addition, the increased use of explosive ordnance and ongoing military operations by Governmental forces and OSP created additional access challenges. One violation occurred outside the reporting period but was only verified during the period under review. Armed groups committed nine violations, governmental forces and OSP five, and unidentified armed individuals four. One girl was a victim of three violations – abduction, recruitment and use and rape.



- Violations documented included: recruitment and use (two), killing (one), maiming (three), rape and other forms of sexual violence (two), abduction (two) and denial of humanitarian access (eight). Armed groups committed nine violations: CPC factions (seven): unidentified CPC (three), CPC/PRNC (two), 3R (one) and 3R/Anti-Balaka (one); Azande Ani Kpi Gbe self-defence group (one) and LRA/Achaye (one). State agents and OSP committed five violations: FACA (three), FACA/OSP (one) and OSP (one). In addition, unidentified armed individuals were responsible for four violations. Ouham was the most affected prefecture with seven violations, followed by Haute-Kotto (three), Haut-Mbomou and Ouaka (two each), Bangui, Nana-Grébizi, Nana-Mambéré and Vakaga (one each).

## Act to Protect Campaign

As part of the “Act to Protect Children affected by Armed Conflict” campaign, 354 peacekeepers (291 men and 63 women) were trained on the protection of children during armed conflict, with a focus on monitoring and reporting of the six grave violations. Similar trainings and sensitizations were delivered to 748 (366 men and 382 women) community members and leaders, youth leaders, religious leaders, INGOs, NGOs, FACA, ISF and local authorities.

25. During the reporting period, CPS met with FACA leadership in Kaga Bandoro and Kémo to continue advocating for FACA elements to end and prevent grave child rights violations and to raise awareness about the implementation of the Ministry of Defence circular prohibiting the presence of children in and around military bases.

## Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

26. During the month of July, the HRD documented a total of 10 cases of CRSV (nine rapes and one case of sexual slavery) affecting 14 victims (11 women, three girls). The armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for the most cases of CRSV (six cases affecting nine victims) and the self-defence group Azande Ani Kpi Gbe were responsible for three cases of rape affecting four victims including a 17-year-old girl.
27. The most affected prefecture in terms of CRSV cases was the **Ouham-Pendé** prefecture (four cases) followed by **Haut-Mbomou** prefecture where the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe were responsible for three cases of CRSV. One of the most emblematic cases was the rape of four women by 3R combatants in the Ouham-Pendé prefecture, on their way to work in the fields. The four victims received medical treatment. Among the cases of CRSV committed by the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe self-defence group, there was the case of a woman who was raped by four combatants who broke into her house at night. They then robbed her of a large sum of money before fleeing.
28. The main perpetrator was the armed group 3R, which committed four violations affecting seven victims (all women). They are followed by the Azande Ani Kpi Gbe self-defence group, who committed three violations affecting five women and one girl. Other perpetrators were CPC combatants and a FACA element who raped a nine-year-old girl in Bangui.
29. The HRD documented a decrease of 74% in CRSV cases compared to the month of June which can be explained by the high number of victims of CRSV documented in June during an investigation mission. In addition, HRD continues to investigate nine allegations of CRSV involving 20 victims (all female, including four girls).

## Human Rights Promotion and Capacity-Building

30. During the month of July, the HRD organised **166** activities, sometimes jointly with partners, on human rights and international humanitarian law in **12** prefectures<sup>2</sup>, benefitting **3,107** individuals (including **338** women, **17** boys and **five persons with disabilities**), including community-members, community and religious leaders, local human rights fora, representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), and state actors.

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

31. These activities included **21 awareness campaigns**, which reached **489** beneficiaries (including **158** women), including internally displaced persons (IDPs), representatives of CSOs, community leaders, local human rights fora, local non-governmental organizations, detainees, the civilian population and State actors (FACA and gendarmes). These campaigns focused on raising awareness on prisoners' rights, election monitoring, religious freedom, the general principles of human rights, the prevention of sexual violence, human rights monitoring, the prevention of mob justice and the protection of children. In addition, **11 capacity-building workshops** were organised benefitting **193** individuals (including **29** women) from CSOs and local human rights fora. These workshops partly focused on human rights and international humanitarian law and their observance in peacekeeping operations.

32. On 12 July, the HRD in collaboration with UNPOL organized an online training session for administrative authorities (prefects and mayors) and MINUSCA civilian and police personnel, including the 12 field offices, on the prevention of hate speech and incitement to violence in light of the upcoming local elections. The HRD trained participants on the prevention and response to the spread of hate speech and incitement to violence. This activity aimed at ensuring social cohesion and limiting the restriction of civic space. It also empowered the administrative authorities to take action to ensure social cohesion.

33. On 24 July, in Bangui, the HRD continued its support to the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Good Governance, by organizing a workshop on the finalization of the National Human Rights Policy, attended by 100 national participants, including 30 women. During the workshop's opening ceremony, the HRD advocated for the final observations and recommendations made by the various stakeholders during the High-Level Dialogue of 22 and 23 June, to be incorporated in the final document which was then presented to the Minister of Justice for submission to the Council of Ministers.

34. Within the framework of its support to CSOs, the HRD provided technical and financial support to drafting and finalizing the CSO shadow report to the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The HRD's support aimed at strengthening national ownership and empowering the CSO members to advocate for the promotion and implementation of human rights in the country, highlighting their contribution to the implementation of the United Nations Secretary General's call for action in the Central African Republic and the recommendations of the third UPR cycle, through an integrated and participatory approach.

35. In July, the HRD conducted **40 monitoring visits of detention centres in 11 prefectures**.<sup>3</sup> During these visits, the HRD documented **107** victims of unlawful detention, including cases in which the detainees were being held past the 72 hours legal limits for custody. The HRD also documented inhuman conditions of detention, including unsanitary cells, absence of separation between minors and adults and/or between genders, and limited access to healthcare. The HRD remains concerned about the very poor conditions of detention, particularly in terms of access to adequate health care, in the prisons of Sector West. Three deaths in custody were documented (one case in the Ouham-Pendé prefecture and two cases in the Lobaye prefecture). These deaths were due to the lack of access to medical care as only critical cases are transferred to medical facilities. For instance, in Paoua detention centre, the HRD documented the death of a 53-year-

## Transitional Justice

On 11 July 2023, HRD supported UN-Women and UNDP agencies in organizing a workshop to assess the challenges and prospects for women's participation in the transitional justice process, attended by 70 participants, including 45 women from women's human rights organisations. The HRD explained its support to State institutions and non-state organisations to promote the transitional justice process in the Central African Republic and highlighted the important role women human rights defenders are playing in the work of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR).

<sup>3</sup> The prefectures are as follows: Bamingui-Bangoran; Bangui; Haute-Kotto; Haute-Mbomou; Mambéré-Kadéï; Mbomou; Nana-Grébizi; Nana-Mambéré; Ouaka; Ouham-Pendé; and Vakaga.

old man detained since 12 April 2023. On 3 July, his health deteriorated, and he needed urgent medical care. The family of the victim requested his transfer to a medical centre, but the local FACA officer refused his transfer unless the family would be willing to pay. In the same evening, the President of the district court acting as the Public Prosecutor instructed the FACA officer to transfer the detainee to the hospital. The FACA officer asked again the family for a sum of money (unknown) that the family was unable to pay. The victim passed away during the night. Reportedly, this was not the first time FACA officers requested payments from detainees' family members.

## Human Rights Due Diligence Policy

36. During the reporting period, the HRD, in the context of implementing the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP), conducted **16** risk assessments related to MINUSCA's support to the internal defense and security forces (FACA, internal security forces (ISF) and other law enforcement officers). The HRDDP Secretariat conducted human rights background checks for a total of **188** beneficiaries including **174** ISF (**90** police officers and **84** gendarmes), **10** FACA, three agents from Water and Forestry Ministry and one agent from the Customs Unit. Beneficiaries for whom the risk assessments were conducted were provided with logistical, financial, operational, and technical support including air transportation and trainings.
37. The risk identified in these assessments were mostly deemed **low** and **medium**. Of the 188 individuals screened, two were excluded by the HRDDP Secretariat for allegations of human rights violations. Based on these assessments, MINUSCA support was approved with a set of recommendations and mitigation measures. These verifications allowed MINUSCA's Mine Action and UNPOL to organize three training sessions for the ISF and agents from the Mining and the Water and Forestry ministries. These trainings focused on weapons and ammunition management (WAM), the development of security policy / strategy document and awareness-raising on the new custody registry. These trainings have enhanced the awareness of officers stationed both in Berberati and Bangui.
38. Meanwhile, MINUSCA transported non-UN security forces either on redeployment or on mission to Bangui, Batangafo, Ndélé, Bangassou, Obo and Alindao.