

## 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

February 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 February 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 February 2023, the HRD, including the Office of the Senior Women Protection Advisor (OSWPA) and the Child Protection Section (CPS), documented and verified 209 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), affecting 351 civilian victims (with at least 43 women, 12 girls, and eight boys), 105 (including 22 women, six girls, five boys and three groups of collective victims) of whom suffered multiple violations. Out of the total number of documented violations, 147 occurred in February 2023. The HRD also recorded 48 allegations of human rights violations and abuses affecting at least 90 victims (including 13 women, two boys and twelve other children), which were still being verified at the end of February and were therefore not included in this report.

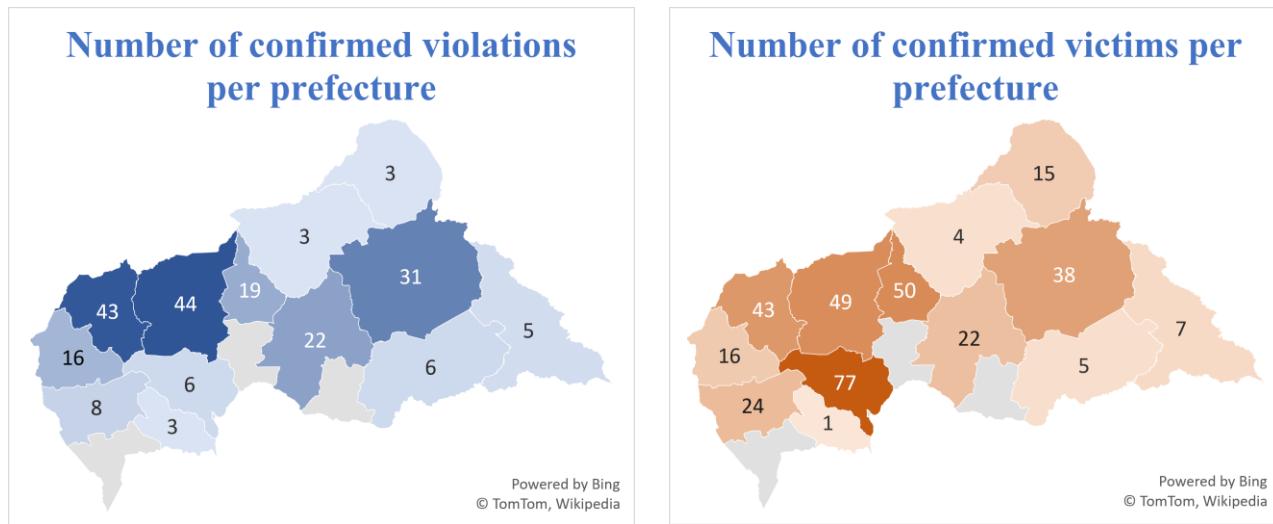
### Main Trends

In total, **209 human rights violations and abuses** as well as breaches of IHL **affecting 351 victims (including 43 women, twelve girls and eight boys)** were documented in February 2022. This constitutes a slight **decrease** in the number of victims compared to January 2022.

During the reporting period, State actors were responsible for 52% of all human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law and 71% of the victims.

2. The **Ouham prefecture** was the most affected in terms of human rights violations and abuses (44 violations and 49 victims), while the **Omella M'Poko prefecture**, including the capital city, registered the most victims (278, followed by women (43), girls (12), and boys (eight)). In addition, there were 10 groups of collective victims.
3. Out of the total 351 victims, most were men (278), followed by women (43), girls (12), and boys (eight). In addition, there were 10 groups of collective victims.
4. The **Ouham prefecture** was the most affected in terms of human rights violations and abuses (44 violations and 49 victims), while the **Omella M'Poko prefecture**, including the capital city, registered the most victims (278, followed by women (43), girls (12), and boys (eight)). In addition, there were 10 groups of collective victims.

(six violations and 77 victims), largely attributable to four cases of arbitrary arrest and/or detention by the Police and Gendarmerie in which detainees were held past the legal limits for custody.



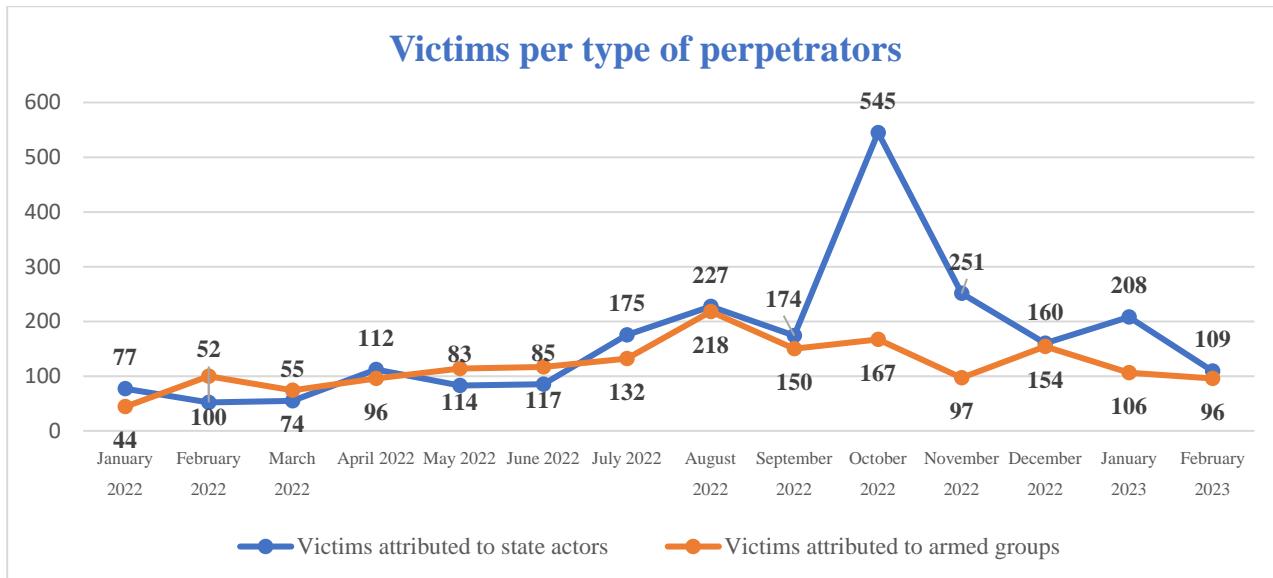
5. In February 2023, the most common types of violations and abuses included destruction and appropriation of property (21%), arbitrary arrest and/or detention (17%) and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment (referred to as ill-treatment) (17%). In addition, ten summary and extrajudicial killings were documented affecting 12 people. Men were most likely to be victims of extrajudicial execution or other killing (12 victims), ill-treatment (24), torture (16) and arbitrary arrest and/or detention (131). Women suffered from rape (nine), ill-treatment and arbitrary arrest and/or detention (nine victims each). Boys were mainly victims of abduction, deprivation of liberty and arbitrary detention (two each).

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

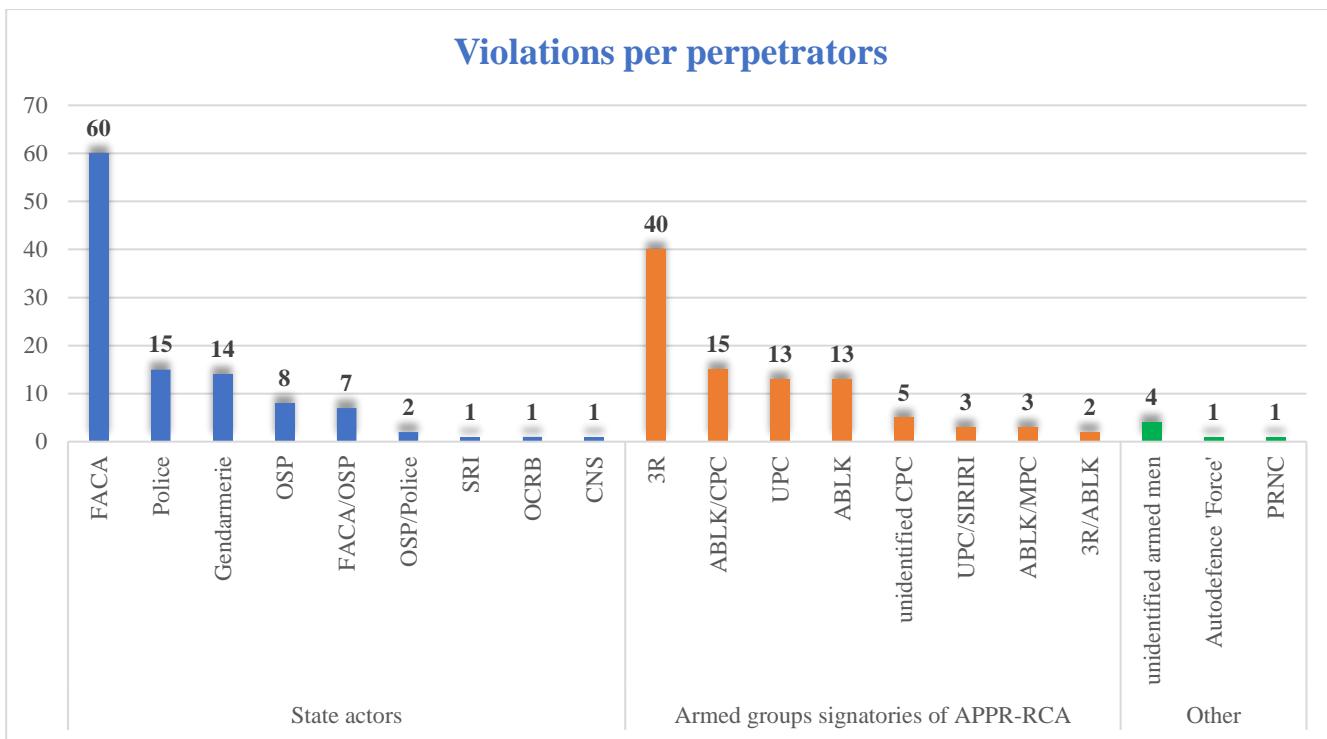
6. For the period under review, State actors committed 52% of the violations, abuses, and breaches of international humanitarian law, compared to 45% for armed groups signatories to the *Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Réconciliation en République Centrafricaine* (APPR-RCA). State actors also were responsible for 71% of the victims and armed groups for 28%. The remaining six abuses were committed by other actors, including unidentified armed men, and armed groups non signatory to the APPR, as well as a self-defence group.
7. **State actors were responsible for 109 violations affecting 250 victims (including 19 women, four girls, and four boys).** The most common type of violation committed by State actors were those associated with detention, including arbitrary arrest and/or detention (29 violations), ill-treatment (27) and death threats (11).
8. More than the half of the violations perpetrated by State actors were committed by *Forces armées centrafricaines* (FACA) alone, representing 29% of the total number of violations. In February, FACA elements committed 60 violations affecting 67 victims (including eight women, four girls and one boy), and therefore responsible for 19% of the total number of victims. However, jointly with Other Security Personnel (OSP), they were responsible for seven additional violations, affecting 18 victims. In addition, the violations perpetrated by FACA were most likely to be committed alongside other violations: out of the 25 cases with multiple violations documented amongst State actors, 19 were committed by FACA elements (two of which were committed in concert with OSP elements). Of these 19 cases, 13 involved torture, ill-treatment, maiming, and injuries, combined with some other violation, such as killings, arbitrary arrest and/or detention and destruction or appropriation of property. Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) was accompanied by

abduction and death threats. Nine of the 19 cases involved violations associated with detention (arbitrary arrest and/or detention).

9. Besides the FACA, the Police committed 15 violations affecting 45 victims (four women and one boy), while the *Section de Recherches et d'Investigation (SRI)* of the Gendarmerie committed one violation related to arbitrary arrest and detention affecting 58 victims (all men).
10. **Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for 94 human rights abuses and breaches of IHL affecting 96 victims (including 24 women, seven girls, and four boys).** The most common types of abuses committed by armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were ill-treatment (24 abuses), conflict-related sexual violence (18), deprivation of liberty (12), and death threats (12). Among armed groups, the 3R committed 15 cases of ill-treatment (including 4 women) and twelve cases of rape (including seven women and two girls). Armed groups also committed most unlawful attacks (two out of three). Both of them related to attacks against humanitarian workers and denial of humanitarian assistance. Armed groups were likely to commit multiple abuses at once (32 of the 94 abuses documented). In such cases, it mostly involved the destruction or appropriation of property (24 out of 32 multiple abuses), death threats and ill-treatment.



11. Among armed groups, the vast majority of the abuses documented were attributable to *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R), who committed alone 40 abuses affecting 27 victims (including 11 women and two girls). The main human rights violations committed by the 3R were destruction and appropriation of property, ill-treatment and rape. The HRD documented at least six cases of gang rape by 3R combatants in the village of Bozoum in the Ouham-Pendé prefecture. In addition, most cases of CRSV by 3R combatants were committed alongside other violations such as destruction and appropriation of property and maiming.
12. Various factions of Anti-Balaka committed 13 abuses, affecting 16 victims (five women, three girls and two boys). However, Anti-Balaka, jointly with 3R, *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique* (MPC), or other combatants of the *Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement* (CPC) committed an additional 20 abuses, affecting 26 victims (including seven women, two boys and two girls). The most common types of violations committed by the Anti-Balaka, alone or jointly with other armed groups, were deprivation of liberty and destruction and appropriation of property. Combatants of the *Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) continue to be very active in the Haute-Kotto and Ouaka prefectures, where they were responsible for 13 abuses affecting 17 victims.



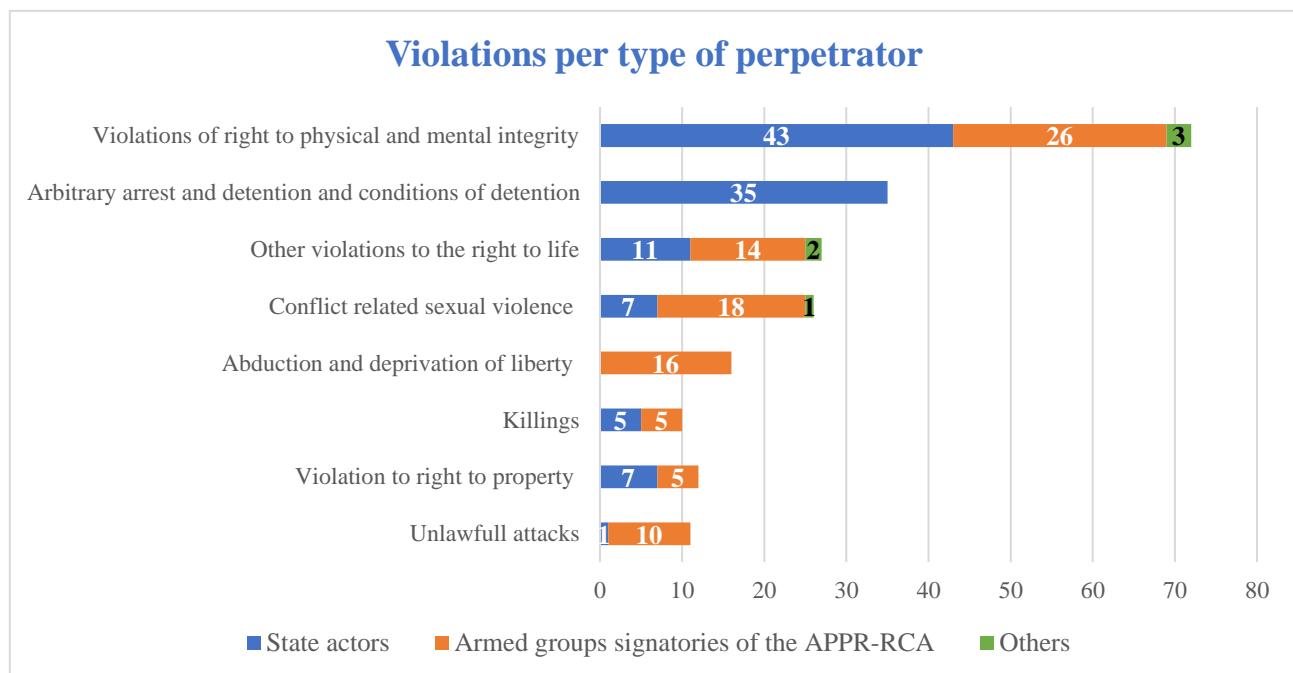
## Sectoral Analysis

13. More than 57% of the violations and abuses documented in February occurred in the **Sector West**, which was the most affected with 120 violations and abuses affecting 210 victims. Most of them were perpetrated by armed groups (more than 58%), with 3R combatants being the main perpetrators. State actors were responsible for 41% of the violations, while other actors were responsible for the remaining violations. The high number of victims is largely due to violations documented in places of detention. As stated above, the HRD documented the arbitrary detention of 58 detainees for having been held past the legal time limit for custody at the detention centre of the *Section de Recherches et d'Investigation* (SRI) of the Gendarmerie. The HRD was also able to confirm 31 abuses perpetrated by 3R combatants in Bozoum, **Ouham-Pendé** prefecture, that occurred between January 2022 and February 2023. In addition, in the **Mambéré-Kadéï** prefecture, the HRD documented the inhumane conditions of detention of 19 detainees in the Carnot Police station who were living in complete darkness due to the lack of light in their cells. Sector West was also the most affected in terms of CRSV, 13 women and girls suffered from rape and sexual slavery. Most CRSV cases were committed by armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA and the 3R group was the main perpetrator. In **Ouham prefecture**, the HRD documented one case of sexual slavery by Anti-Balaka and another one committed by FACA, both against minors. During the month under review, four civilians were killed by Anti-Balaka and 3R combatants (all of them men) in Sector West.

14. In the **Sector Centre**, 44 violations and abuses affecting 76 victims were documented. State actors were responsible for 71% of the human rights violations, with FACA being the main perpetrators. For their part, armed groups were responsible for 20% of human right abuses. Five civilians, including three men from the Fulani community were killed in February: four by FACA elements and one by UPC combatants. For instance, on 25 February, in the Mbres village, **Nana-Grébizi** prefecture FACA elements committed a summary execution of a 20-year-old Fulani man of Chadian origin in a camp of Chadian cattle herders and stole the cattle of 12 other Fulani men. The HRD documented two cases of denial of humanitarian relief following the attack of two humanitarian NGOs by Anti-Balaka and UPC/SIRIRI in the **Ouham** and **Haute-Mbomou**

prefectures. In February, the FACA detachment in the Batangafo-Bouca axis continued to occupy a school in the village of Landy, **Ouham** prefecture.

15. The **Sector East** was also affected in February, with 45 documented violations and abuses affecting 65 victims. The month was marked by the torture and ill-treatment of 12 civilians and the extrajudicial killing of another three by FACA and OSP elements in the locality of Sikikédé, **Vakaga** prefecture between 1 and 3 February. Prior to their release, the 12 victims (all men) were beaten with hammers and suffered from electric shocks to their heads and stomachs to force them to give information about the nature of the support they had allegedly provided to UPC, *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC), Misseriya Arab and Salamate armed groups in the area. In addition, three lifeless bodies (all men) were found at the entrance of the Sikikédé village, 800 meters from the temporary base established by the FACA and OSP with signs of torture. The victims' hands were tied with ropes and electric cables.



## Security and political context in February 2023

16. In **Sector West**, the human rights situation remained a concern during the period under analysis in the **Nana-Mambéré** prefecture due to the presence of 3R combatants in the villages of Banguerem and Sanda, as well as an incursion in the Tana Zako mining site in the village of Bagari (108 km W of Bouar) during which they allegedly killed a miner. In addition, explosive ordnances were identified in the villages of Dikofio and Bokayan. As a result, civilians suffered injuries and could no longer carry out their daily activities. In the **Ouham** and the **Ouham-Pendé** prefectures, the security situation was marked by the activities of 3R and the presence of Chadian rebels, which has become a source of insecurity and undermines the protection of civilians. In addition, FACA continued to target the civilian population, particularly Muslim communities in Batangafo. FACA elements were also still occupying a school in Lady (30 km Batangafo-Bouca axis) depriving the right to education of students in the locality. On the judicial and penitentiary front, this month was marked by food insecurity in Bangui prisons. On 18 February, prisoners at Ngaragba Central Prison boycotted the meal served to them, as it did not contain any protein, and threatened to mutiny. The shortage in food stocks intended to feed inmates in Ngaragba Central Prison, its annex at Camp de Roux, and Bimbo Women's Prison was due to the non-disbursement of the weekly allocation of funds for the purchase of food

by the Government Treasury. This is a worrisome development, and it should be recalled that the right to food is a fundamental right per the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules). Meanwhile, from 6 to 13 February, the first criminal session of the Bangui Court of Appeal of the year started. The HRD monitored the criminal sessions and did not observe any major irregularities. In the **Mambéré-Kadéï prefecture**, an increase in inter-communal tensions was reported following the attempted killing of an 8-year-old Christian boy by a Fulani man in Berberati.

17. In **Sector Centre**, the HRD was concerned regarding the situation in the **Ouaka** and **Basse-Kotto** prefectures due to the activities of Anti-Balaka and the UPC. On 3 February, a clash occurred between two suspected UPC armed elements and 14 local hunters (former Anti-Balaka) approximately 3 km southeast of Maloum (45 km northeast of Bambari). Although no civilians were reportedly killed in this incident, the clash exposed civilians leading MINUSCA Force to adapt its posture to ensure the protection of civilians in the area. The HRD also received information that on 4 February, the FACA jointly with OSP conducted operations in Boyo and Tagbara, considered to be the stronghold of the UPC. Since December 2022, these two towns have continued to be prime targets for the FACA/OSP in their fight against the UPC group, with impacts on the Muslim civilian population suspected of being affiliated to the UPC. In addition, on 22 February, in Otoka, in the **Nana-Grébizi** prefecture, a group of four FACA soldiers stormed a camp of 13 Chadians from the Fulani community who were herding cattle from Chad to Bangui. The FACA had received information that this group of Fulani had weapons of war. The FACA reportedly opened fire and shot a 20-year-old man. This serious incident affected the still fragile cohesion between the Fulani community and the other inhabitants of the locality.
18. In the **Sector East** the situation was worrisome in the **Vakaga** prefecture, particularly in the Gordil - Sikikédé axis (180 km W of Birao) due to the acts or reprisal by FACA and OSP against civilians for allegedly having collaborated with armed groups. In this regard, the HRD documented a case of torture followed by the extrajudicial execution of three civilians, as well as a case of torture of 12 civilians by FACA and OSP. On 3 February, an undetermined number of UPC combatants made an incursion in a mining site in Bakouma, commonly called "4X4", **Mbomou** prefecture and forced all mining artisans to pay a sum of 25,000 XAF (approximately 40 USD). On 14 February, hundreds of combatants of the CPC, UPC and the *Parti du Rassemblement de la Nation Centrafricaine* (PRNC), jointly attacked the FACA position in Sikikédé (145km of Birao). Reportedly, several FACA soldiers were killed and wounded, while around 20 elements were abducted, and some soldiers fled towards Gordil and Ndifica (145km of Birao). One hundred internally displaced persons (IDPs) fled to Gordil the same day. On 17 February, the HRD was informed of gunshots and armed confrontation between CPC elements and the FACA along with OSP at the entrance of Gordil. A massive presence of UPC, PRNC and other CPC combatants was also reported around the northern triangle of Ouadda, Sam Ouandja and Ouanda-Djallé, **Haute-Kotto** prefecture allegedly in an attempt to jointly attack FACA/OSP positions, further posing risks to the protection of civilians in the area. On 23 February, a group of OSP surrounded the village of Nzacko creating panic and conducted searches of all households in search of CPC elements. In **Haut Mbomou**, on 2 February approximately 65 UPC combatants of Mahamat Petit arrived in Mboki (75 km from Obo). Gunshots were reportedly heard in the town and some residents fled the locality. In addition, the HRD received information of a movement of the SIRIRI Coalition from Mboki to PK 18 on the Obo-Bambouti axis, that reportedly prevented the free movement of the local population.

## Civic Space

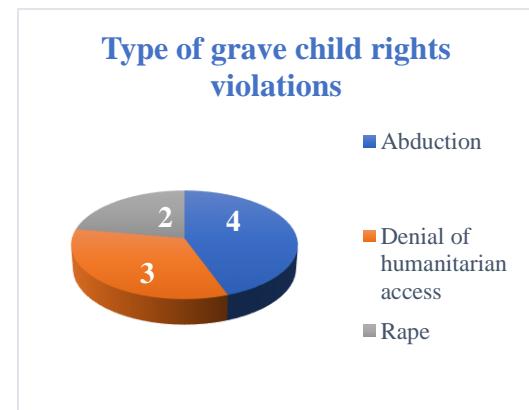
19. Due to the increased price of certain basic goods, social and economic conditions in Bangui deteriorated during the reporting period. Several trade unions, including in the education and healthcare sectors, carried out strikes to demand, among others, that the Government increase their salaries. These strike orders were only lifted following the Government's initiative to set up a framework for dialogue with these unions. From 8 to 10 February, the healthcare personnel in **Bangui** observed a strike called by the *Syndicat Autonome du Personnel de Santé* requesting the Government to adopt a special status for health personnel, pay COVID-19 bonuses for 2021 and 2022, organize a general meeting with the Ministry of Health, and integrate healthcare personnel

into the civil service. Reportedly, the President of the National Assembly intervened with the healthcare personnel to ask for their indulgence, given the already critical situation in the hospitals. The agents resumed service on 13 February. The teachers' union from the primary 1 and 2 levels in Bangui also went on strike initially meant to last eight days starting from 21 February. Eventually, strikers shortened the duration of the strike in favor of dialogue on 23 February. Meanwhile, following continuous rumours of infiltration by CPC elements in Bangui, defence and security forces continued to step up security and identity check operations. In PK5 neighbourhood and Boubou in **Bangui**, approximately 30 people were arrested for lack of identity documents on 13 and 14 February and taken to the *Direction de Surveillance du Territoire* (DST). Other people were arrested and taken to the *Compagnie Nationale de Sécurité* (CNS). Among the people transferred to the DST, 12 were released on 16 February. On 17 February, 15 Congolese nationals (all men) were repatriated by river on the instructions of the Director General of the Central African Police. The other detainees were released between 17 and 20 February. On 24 February, authorities again conducted a joint security operation in the third arrondissement of Bangui and reportedly arrested at least another 30 people for failure to present identity documents. It is unclear how many people in total were arrested as the HRD was not allowed inside the CNS premises. On 21 February, around 4:00 a.m., a joint cordon and search operation (FSI/FACA) was also conducted in the Gobolo neighbourhood of Bria, **Haute-Kotto** prefecture. The operation reportedly resulted in the arrest of 44 youths and adults who were later released on payment of approximately 5,000 XAF (about 9 USD) each. It remains unclear on which grounds they were forced to pay.

20. On 18 February, the Coalition of Muslim Organizations for Justice, Equality and Equity (COMJEEQ) held a press conference in PK5 in **Bangui** to denounce the difficulties encountered by Muslims in obtaining a national identity card. Muslim citizens are reportedly required to present their original birth certificates, unlike non-Muslim citizens, and pay elevated issuance costs established by some companies. This difference in treatment illustrates ongoing discrimination against Muslim communities. The COMJEEQ also mentioned the burial of non-Muslims in the Muslim cemetery of Boeing neighbourhood and the occupation of the latter by non-Muslims who continue to bury their families.

## Children in Armed Conflict

21. During the reporting period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified nine grave child rights violations affecting six children (two boys and four girls), some of whom were victims of multiple violations. This represents a decrease of 57% in the total number of grave violations and a 50% decrease in victims affected from the previous reporting period (21 violations affecting 12 children). Eighty-nine (89%) of the violations were committed by armed groups, and 1% by governmental forces. The decrease in grave violations could be due to challenges in monitoring and reporting resulting from difficulty in accessing areas where pro-governmental military operations are ongoing and increased use of explosive ordnance by parties to the conflict. Three violations occurred outside the reporting period but were only verified during the period under review.
22. Violations documented included: rape (2), abduction (4) and denial of humanitarian access (3). CPC factions committed (7) violations (anti-Balaka (5), 3R (1) and anti-Balaka/MPC (1)); SIRIRI (1) while the last one is attributable to FACA (1). Ouham-Fafa was the most affected Prefecture with (7) violations, followed by Haut-Mbomou and Ouham-Pendé Prefectures (1 each). The CTFMR also verified the illegal occupation of a primary school in Ouham Prefecture by FACA. Advocacy is ongoing for the school to be vacated.



23. During the reporting period, CPU met with FACA leadership in Nana-Grébizi Prefecture. CPU advocated for FACA to share alerts on grave violations and that all FACA elements be trained on the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) mandate. CPU will work with FACA leadership to organize a training for FACA elements. Also, following advocacy by CPU, the FPRC/Atlanta faction presented a list of 110 self-demobilized children for verification and screening. CPU and UNICEF will conduct the verification of the children in early March 2023. In addition, CPU supported the Ministry of Gender, Protection of Women, Family and Children with activities to mark the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers (12 February), notably the development of radio broadcasts and banners with the support of MINUSCA Strategic Communication and Public Information (SCPI). The theme chosen by the Government and partners for this year was “Together let us fight against the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups.”

### Act to Protect Campaign

Through the “**Act to Protect**” campaign, **364 peacekeepers** (293 men and 71 women) were trained on the protection of children during armed conflict including on monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children. Similar trainings and sensitizations were conducted for **1,428 community members and leaders, NGOs, national defense and security forces** (FACA, police and gendarmerie), **local authorities, members of political parties and civil society** (863 men and 565 women).

## Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

24. In February, the HRD documented a total of 15 cases of CRSV, affecting 17 victims (nine women and eight girls). These violations included rape (12 violations), sexual slavery (two violations), and forced marriage (one violation). Armed groups signatories to the APPR-RCA were responsible for 67% of CRSV cases (10 violations, affecting 12 victims), while state actors were responsible for 27% (4 violations, affecting four victims). The last case is a 17-year-old girl who was forced into marriage in 2017 by a member of a self-defence group called “Force” in Bangui. Of note, the girl was also victim of sexual slavery twice: first by Anti-Balaka from 2020 to 2022, after having been abducted in **Ouham** prefecture, and later by a FACA element in January 2023 who then issued death threats against the victim and her family.

25. Out of the 12 cases of rape, 42% were committed against girls: three by FACA elements and two by 3R combatants. Most rapes were accompanied by other violations, including maiming, death threats and destruction or appropriation of property.

26. It is worth noting that CRSV tends to be underreported due to the fear of retaliation, as well as stigmatization, which may impact the HRD’s access to victims. Following the trends in previous months, the HRD did not document any cases of CRSV against boys and men.

27. From 4 to 12 February, the UN Team of Experts on the Rule of Law/Sexual Violence (ToE) of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG/SVC) conducted a technical mission to CAR. During their visit, the ToE initiated discussions with GoCAR and relevant stakeholders to assess the existing capacity, available resources and needs, in implementing the commitments of the 2019 Joint Communiqué between the CAR and the UN, including the implementation of the National Action Plan to combat CRSV. As part of the activities, the ToE gathered information to prepare and adopt the Terms of Reference for the Roundtable on Accountability for CRSV which will potentially take place in the second half of 2023. The ToE engaged with various MINUSCA sections including Justice and Corrections (JCS) and HRD to discuss recent development regarding the fight against impunity and provide support to accountability for CRSV.

## Human Rights Promotion and Capacity-Building

28. This month, the HRD organised 200 activities, in some instances with partners, on human rights and international humanitarian law in 12 prefectures,<sup>1</sup> benefitting 3,812 individuals (of whom 1,256 were women), including representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), State actors, and members of the media.

29. These activities included 44 awareness campaigns, which reached 2,083 beneficiaries (including 781 women), including internally displaced persons, civil society organisations, community leaders, local human rights fora and the civilian population. In addition, 20 capacity-building workshops were organised benefitting 790 individuals (including 324 women) from civil society organizations, local human rights fora, community leaders, and the local population. The HRD also conducted three **trainings** for civil society organizations, community leaders, local human rights forum, and State actors, involving 92 individuals (including 16 women), as well as five trainings for 177 FACA and FSI, including the Gendarmerie and the Police. The activities organized by the HRD aim at strengthening knowledge on Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law, 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.

30. In February, the HRD conducted 36 monitoring visits of detention centres in 14 prefectures.<sup>2</sup> During these visits, the HRD documented 138 victims of unlawful detention, including cases in which the detainees were being held past the legal limits for custody, as documented above. During its monitoring visits, the HRD interviews detainees and advocates concerning respect for their human rights. In the Berberati prison (Mambéré-Kadéï), the HRD pleaded for two sick men to be taken to the hospital. The HRD also met with a detainee who was recaptured after escaping from the Bangassou Police station (Mbomou) to ensure that his human rights were respected. Following advocacy efforts by the HRD, the Kaga-Bandoro Police (Nana-Grébizi) separated minors from adults in detention. The HRD also continues to advocate for humane conditions of detention throughout CAR.

31. At the national level, the HRD, conducted an advocacy workshop with parliamentarians on the mechanisms of human rights and how to fully participate and engage in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) from 2 to 3 February. The workshop aimed at strengthening the knowledge of Central African parliamentarians on international human rights and international humanitarian law instruments and related national laws in order to more efficiently fulfil their role of monitoring government action. This activity ended with the commitment by members of parliaments to dynamize a network of members of parliament for Human rights that will serve as the focal point to mainstream Human rights activities in the National Assembly.

## Transitional Justice

The **Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR)**, along with other stakeholders, held its first Roundtable on truth, justice, reconciliation, and reparations to discuss the CVJRR's 2023 three-year plan and its strategic priorities. The Roundtable recommended to the CVJRR to create a more detailed roadmap that explains the different steps and activities to be undertaken, requested to focus and prioritize investigations, interviews, publicization of their activities (statements), and emphasized the need to reach out to vulnerable persons and identify victims.

<sup>1</sup> The prefectures are as follows: Bamingui-Bangoran; Bangui; Haute-Kotto; Haut-Mbomou; Mambéré-Kadéï; Mbomou; Nana-Grébizi; Nana-Mambéré; Ombella M'Poko; Ouaka; Ouham-Pendé; and Vakaga.

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

32. From 14 to 15 February, the HRD supported an activity of five NGOs (CNAV, RVP, ROJALNU, OCAJUST and GTSCJT<sup>3</sup>) working in a consortium in Bangui to strengthen transitional justice mechanisms through the CVJRR. This consortium was created with the support of the HRD as a means of coordinating the work of civil society to increase their impact in the transitional justice process. The workshop equipped civil society organization on the transitional justice procedures to fully participate in the CVJRR process and in the implementation of its mandate. The 50 participants (including 17 women) were trained on basic concepts of transitional justice, as well as the importance of the civil society in supporting the work of the CVJRR, particularly in accessing, monitoring, and supporting victims' needs for redress and reparations. The role of civil society is key in fostering a strong grassroot network to monitor, prevent, and promote human rights. In this regard, the HRD continues to cultivate a strong working relationship with civil society organizations to ensure a well-rounded approach to the transitional justice process in CAR.
33. From 7 to 18 February, the Independent Expert on human rights situation in Central African Republic (IE) conducted a visit to the CAR. The objective of the IE's visit was to assess the implementation of UN Mechanism recommendations by CAR Authorities, the human rights situation in CAR in general, and that of children. The IE's visit also aimed at making appropriate recommendations to support the Government in the improvement of the human rights situation, security sector reform, DDRR process and local elections. During his visit, the IE assessed and made recommendations on the transitional justice process, the operationalization of the CVJRR and the government's plan on conflict-related sexual violence. The IE met Government officials, human rights institutions, civil society organizations, members of the international community, MINUSCA leadership and substantive components. Furthermore, the IE undertook a field mission to Berberati, Mambéré-Kadéï prefecture, where serious human rights violations have been recently reported. The IE discussed concerns regarding the human rights situation with the authorities and civil society representatives including the behaviour of some FACA elements and its impact on the local population. The IE also addressed the lack of schooling for children, specific needs of people with disabilities, and the issue of the reintegration of youth and children accused of witchcraft. In this regard, the HRD provided logistical support to the IE's mission in CAR by liaising with relevant authorities and the Berberati Field Office.
34. From 9 to 10 February, the HRD delivered a session on the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) benefitting forty-five (45) officers of the *Office Central de la Repression du Banditisme* (OCRB) including four women in Bangui. The session addressed human rights concepts, HRDDP principles, the structure of HRDDP in MINUSCA, members of the HRDDP Task Force and their role in the effective implementation of the Policy.

## Human Rights Due Diligence

35. In February, in the context of its implementation of HRDDP, the HRD conducted 26 risk assessments for MINUSCA's support to the National Defence and Security Forces and six Members of Parliament. The HRDDP Secretariat conducted human rights background checks for a total of 414 beneficiaries including 357 ISF (176 police officers and 181 gendarmes), 27 FACA, 25 officers from the taxation unit, Water and Forestry Ministry and agents from the national anti-fraud unit as well as five Members of Parliament. Beneficiaries of support that underwent the risk assessments were provided financial, logistical, operational, and technical support including air transportation and trainings. Among the 414 persons screened, six were excluded by the Secretariat for having been implicated in the commission of human rights violations. All the risk assessments were evaluated to have low or medium risk.
36. These verifications enabled UNPOL and UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to organize 11 training sessions for the ISF and FACA on: road safety and accident reporting; international law and the protection of civilians

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<sup>3</sup> Coordination nationale des Associations des Victimes, Réseau des Volontaires pour la Paix ; Réseau des Organisations des Jeunes Africains Leaders des Nations Unies pour l'atteinte des Objectifs du Développement Durable; Observatoire Centrafricain de Justice transitionnelle ; and Groupe de Travail de la société civile pour la justice transitionnelle.

during elections; judicial policing; preventing fraud and money laundering; technical and scientific policing; the fight against corruption and respect for the code of conduct; maintaining and restoring of public law and order; proper public reception at Police and Gendarmerie stations; and weapons and ammunition Management. In addition, UNPOL, the Force, UNMAS and MINUSCA Political Affairs Division also contributed by providing support in transporting FACA, FSI and Members of Parliament to 10 localities in the country. The Mission equally approved the donation of material for a FACA Unit in Bria and to the OCRB.