

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

August 2022

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 August 2022. Incidents that could not be verified are not included. Ordinary crimes are also excluded from this report.

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

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

- During the month of August, the HRD, including the Office of the Senior Women Protection Advisor (OSWPA) and the Child Protection Section (CPS), documented and verified 145 human rights violations and abuses and breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), affecting 550 civilian victims. Out of the 550 victims, 49 suffered multiple violations. Out of the total number of documented violations, 83 effectively took place in August 2022. The HRD also recorded 31 allegations of human rights violations and abuses affecting at least 40 victims, which were still being verified at the end of August and were therefore not included in this report.
 - In this month, the number of victims increased by 79% compared to July 2022, during which 307 victims were recorded. This significant increase is explained by the high number of victims of arbitrary arrest and detention violations, due to the exceeding of the legal custody time limit, which also explains the elevated figure of overall victims during the reporting period. In fact, the number of victims of this violation represents 52% of the total number of victims.
- The **Haute-Kotto** was the most affected prefecture in terms of human rights violations and abuses, as well as victims (47 violations affecting 315 victims). This can be partly attributed, but not only, to the recruitment and use of 98 children (69 boys and 29 girls) by anti-Balaka, *Front populaire pour la renaissance de la*

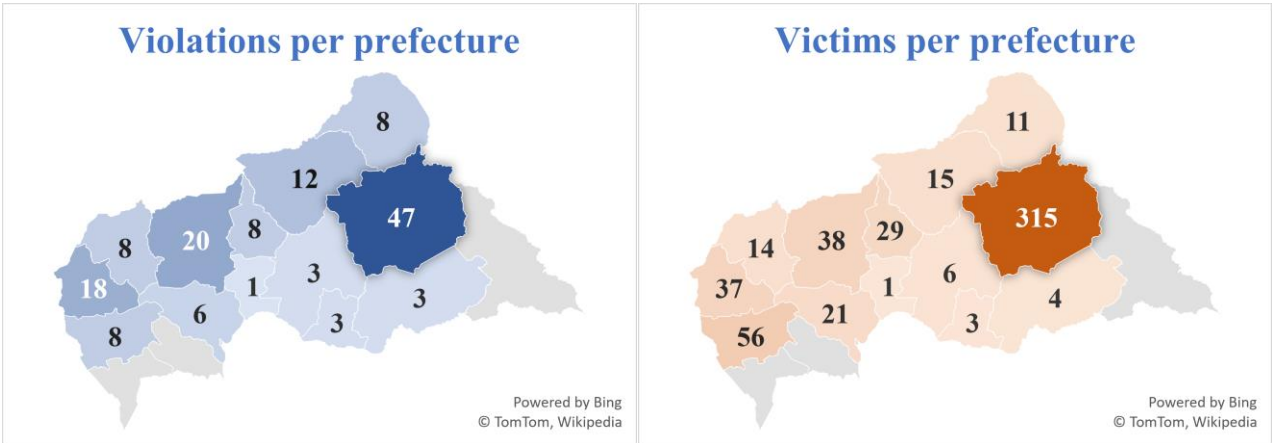
Main Trends

In total, **145 human rights violations and abuses** as well as breaches of IHL **affecting 550 victims** were documented in August 2022. This constitutes a **significant increase** in the number of documented victims compared to July 2022.

During the reporting period, State actors were responsible for slightly more than half of all human rights violations and victims. However, armed groups signatories to the APRP-RCA were responsible for most of the killings of civilians.

Centrafrique (FPRC) and *Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) but also to the arbitrary detention of 65 people in the Bria Gendarmerie and Police that exceeded the legal custody timeframe.

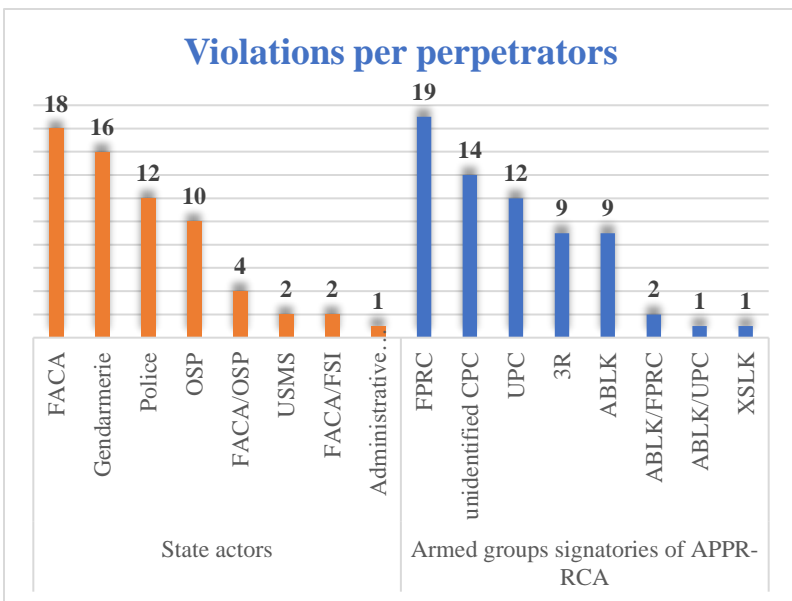
- This month, the most common types of violations and abuses were violations of the right to physical and mental integrity (representing 29% of violations), arbitrary arrest and detention (representing 21% of violations), and to the right to life (representing 17% of violations).
- Most victims were men (165), followed by boys (85), girls (40) and women (25). In addition, there were 220 civilian victims for which the gender was not indicated (219 unknown adults and one unknown minor) and 15 groups of collective victims.



- In the majority of cases, men were victims of arbitrary arrest and detention, violations to physical and mental integrity (ill-treatment, maiming and injuries and torture), violations of right to life and destruction of property. Women, on the other hand, suffered mostly from threats to physical and mental integrity, violations to physical and mental integrity (ill-treatment), violations of right to life, rape and arbitrary arrest and detention. It is worth noting that women and girls accounted for 100% of documented CRSV cases. Boys and girls were victims of forced recruitment for the most part, with girls also being victims of CRSV.

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

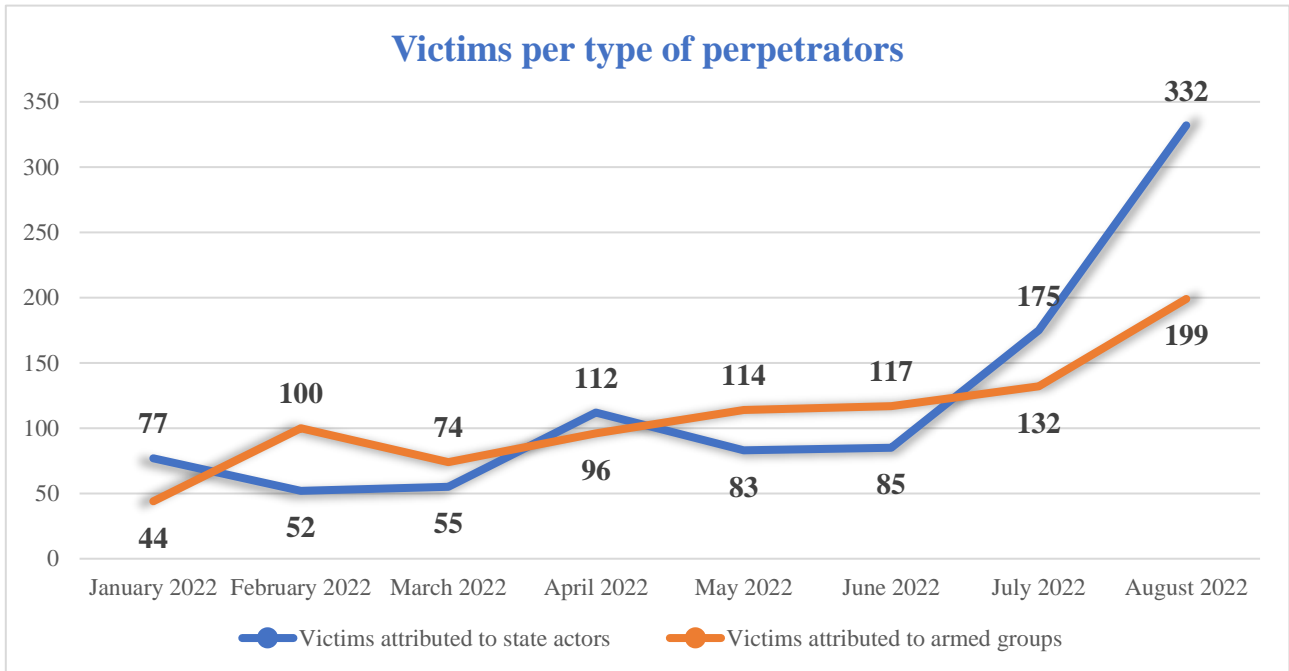
- For the period under review, State actors and armed groups committed roughly the same number of human rights violations and abuses. However, the state actors were responsible for more victims.



8. **State actors were responsible for 65 human rights violations affecting 332 victims.** Among State actors, the FACA was responsible for the majority of violations (18 violations affecting 24), while the Police was responsible for the majority of victims (12 violations affecting 173 victims) due to cases of arbitrary arrest and detention documented mostly during the HRD detention visits. The FACA, separately or jointly with other security personnel (OSP), committed 22 human rights violations (FACA: 18 violations and FACA/OSP: four violations) affecting 32 victims. FACA elements committed multiple violations per victim. This includes for example the torture

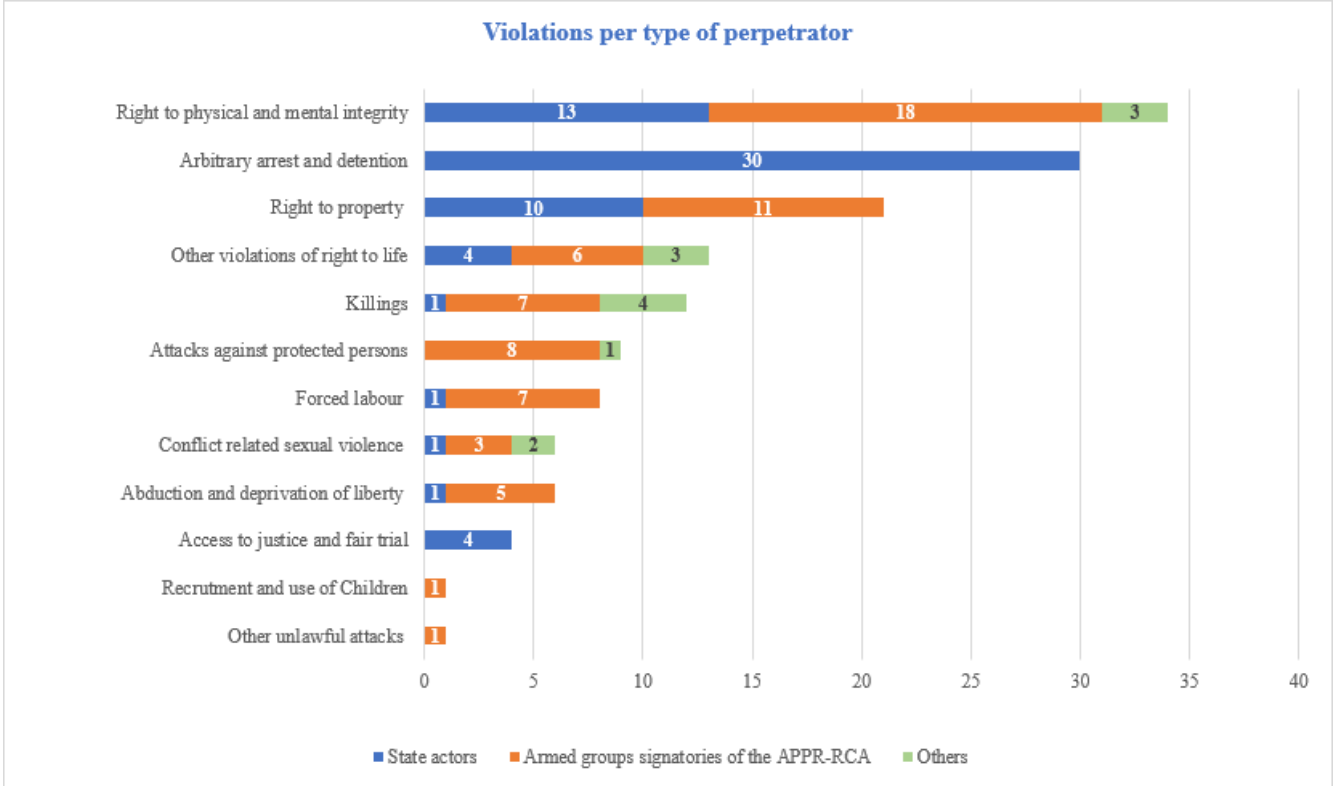
and extortion of money of a 31-year-old man in Morobada (**Nana-Grébizi** prefecture). FACA elements were also responsible for the rape of a two-year-old infant in Bimbo (**Ombella M’Poko** prefecture).

9. On the other hand, **Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for 67 human rights abuses, affecting 199 victims**. Among them, the FPRC committed the majority of these abuses alone (19), followed by unidentified *Coalition des patriotes pour le changement* (CPC) (14) and UPC (12). The most common types of abuses committed by armed groups were the abuses to the right of physical and mental integrity (18 violations) and the abuses to the right of property (11 violations). Armed groups were also responsible for seven out of the 12 killings that took place this month. A total of 98 children were recruited and used by anti-Balaka, FPRC and UPC. Among them, two girls, age 13 and 15, were raped during their association with the anti-Balaka in Haute-Kotto. A further nine violations affecting eight victims were committed by armed groups that were non signatories to the APPR and an additional four violations affecting 11 victims were committed in the context of mob justice.



10. The **Sector East** was the most affected (75 violations affecting 330 victims) due to the high number of arbitrary detentions and recruitment and use of children by armed groups in **Haute-Kotto** prefecture, which recorded 315 victims of violations overall. Armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were responsible for the majority of human rights abuses in eastern CAR, with FPRC responsible for most of them (43%). FPRC combatants engaged in ill-treatment, forced labour, abuse of the right to life by killing and death threat, recruitment and use of children, illegal taxation and rape. Regarding State actors, the HRD documented the arbitrary arrest and detention of 176 people by FACA, Gendarmerie and Police, as well as the torture, ill-treatment and threat to the physical and mental integrity of seven people by FACA, FSI and OSP.
11. In **Sector Centre**, the security situation has been relatively calm with fewer human rights violations and abuses recorded (23 violations and abuses affecting 54 victims). State actors committed most human rights violations, and the FACA and Gendarmerie were each responsible for 37.5% of violations. As in **Sector East**, the State actors mainly the Gendarmerie and FACA elements were responsible for arbitrary arrests and detention. The armed groups signatories of the APPR-RCA were less active in the same sector and were responsible for two

cases of violation to right to property, one killing and one ill-treatment, affecting five victims.



12. In the **Sector West**, 54 human rights violations and abuses affecting 166 victims were recorded. Unlike in the East, State actors, namely the FACA and police, were responsible for most human rights violations (48% each), the vast majority of the cases being arbitrary arrest and detention. Following the trend of previous months, among armed groups signatory to the APPR-RCA, *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (3R) committed most human rights abuses in western CAR, where they are most active. During the reporting period, 3R combatants committed multiple abuses against a same victim. For instance, they often ill-treated civilians, stole their material goods, and sexually assaulted or raped women. The 3R were also responsible for the killing of a 9-year-old girl.

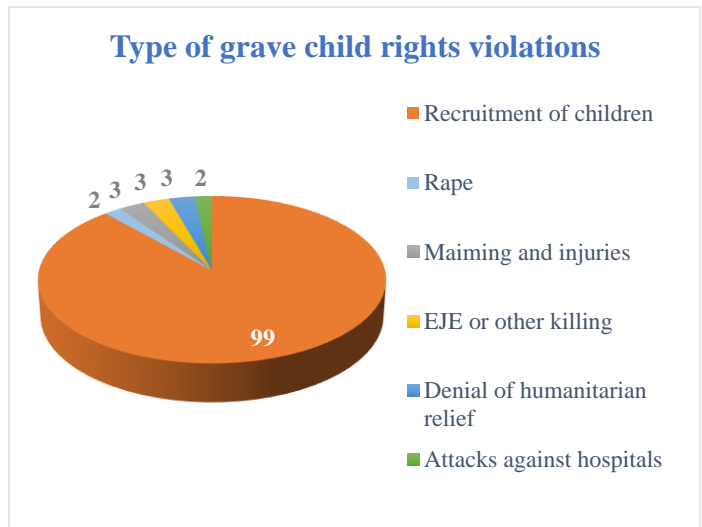
Security and political context in August 2022

13. The security situation during the period under review was marked by recurrent attacks by armed groups affiliated to the CPC on mining sites to collect resources to support their war efforts in the **Eastern** and **Western** sectors of CAR. In the **Eastern sector**, in the **Haute-Kotto** prefecture, to the HRD documented increased activity of the UPC, FPRC and anti-Balaka combatants on the Ouadda and Yalinga axes and in Aigbando. The presence of these armed groups affiliated to the CPC was observed in Aigbando and its surroundings after they fled from their base in Sam-Ouandja upon the arrival of MINUSCA Force in mid-August. The mining sites in the area attract armed groups, particularly the mining sites in the villages of Yanga and Damalango. The armed groups were responsible for several cases of rape, forced labour, ill-treatment, and violations to the right to property. For example, on 10 August, 12 armed UPC combatants stopped a 50-year-old miner on his motorcycle and not only stole his belongings but took him to Damalango village where they tied him up and beat him repeatedly with sticks. In addition, the armed FPRC/Rounga elements affiliated to Mahamat Salleh carried out several raids on the mining sites of Kalaga village, Ngouvora, Kentengou and Gboubourou where they extorted mining workers and subjected them to ill treatment.

14. In the **Western Sector**, the security situation is deteriorating, more specifically in the **Nana-Mambéré** prefecture, where the presence of the 3R and Anti-Balaka combatants of the CPC under the command of the General Marcel Ndalé are reportedly using transhumance corridors to perpetrate acts of violence against civilians. Since 29 July, the HRD documented operations conducted by armed groups around gold mining sites (Lama mining site), including the abandoned gold mining site of Gbata (20 km from Dogbéré), and on the Bouar-Bangui and Gbalamon axes. In addition, the HRD documented incursions by the 3R in the Wana mining site (Baboua) and also by FACA elements into the Gbenguere mine site (Baboua). The HRD also registered actions by gendarmes in Foro (Baboua) and by the OSP in Lamy-Pong (Abba). In the **Ouham prefecture**, on 28 August, at a mining site located in the Nana-Bakassa sub-prefecture, the FACA and OSP elements led a military operation against armed groups. During the operation, one civilian was allegedly killed and another injured under unknown circumstances. The FACA and OSP also set up a temporary base around 10 km northwest of Nana-Bakassa reportedly with the aim of carrying out operations in other mining sites in the area.
15. In the **Central Sector**, in the prefectures of **Nana-Grébizi**, the **Kémo** and the **Basse-Kotto**, the presence of armed combatants of UPC reported in the locality of Goddo (10 km from Kaga-Bandoro), Batangangou (a mining site in the Mingala sector) and Zangba (147 km south of Bambari) caused displacement of the local population posing a threat to the protection of civilians. In addition, the HRD has observed an increase in cases of mob justice linked to accusation of “*Pratiques de charlatanisme et sorcellerie*” (PCS) (or witchcraft) in the **Nana-Grébizi** prefecture. On 16 August, the HRD was informed that a priest claiming to be a prophet who could detect "witches" gathered an angry mob that subjected 14 members of the community (three elderly women, four girls, four men, and three boys) to cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment. Eight of these victims, including five women, two girls, and one man, were beaten and burned with candles by the priest and his followers. Two women, about 60 years old, sustained serious injuries and one of them died following her injury. In addition, an 8-year-old girl suffered an injury to her left eye and an 11-year-old girl was injured on her right hand from a candle burn.

Children in Armed Conflict

16. During the period under review, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 112 grave child rights violations affecting 105 children (74 boys and 31 girls) which is indicative of a 96% increase in grave violations and a 102% increase in victims affected compared to the previous reporting period, during which 57 violations directly affecting 52 children were recorded.
17. Armed groups were responsible for 95% of the violations, unidentified armed individuals committed 4% and state actors 1%. A total of 90% (101 violations) occurred outside the reporting period but were only verified during the period under review. The marked increase in grave violations during the reporting period can be attributed to the high number (98) of late-verified cases of recruitment and use documented in Haute-Kotto Prefecture. Two girls were victims of two violations: recruitment and use and rape (2).



Act to Protect Campaign

To continue strengthening the existing mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on grave child rights violations **224 (189 men and 35 women) peacekeepers were trained** on the protection of children during armed conflict with focus on monitoring and reporting of violations against children. **Similar training and awareness sessions were conducted for 756 (581 men and 175 women) community members and leaders, members of civil society, RECOPE, FACA, FSI and members of armed groups** with a view to enabling them to take greater ownership in the protection of children.

18. Violations documented included recruitment and use (99), killing (3), maiming (3), denial of humanitarian access (3), rape and other forms of sexual violence (2), and attacks against hospitals (2). Armed groups committed the highest number of violations (106): FPRC (50), anti-Balaka (47), UPC (6), 3R (2) and unidentified CPC (1); followed by unidentified armed individuals (4); and state actors (2): FACA (1) and FSI (1). Haute-Kotto was the most affected Prefecture with 100 violations, followed by Nana-Mambéré (5), Ouham-Fafa (4) and Ouham (3).

Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

19. During the period under review, the HRD documented a total of eight cases of CRSV by rape affecting eight victims (four women and four girls). It is worth noting that one woman victim suffered multiple violations, for instance ill-treatment followed by rape. The number of cases in August is lower than the number of cases documented in July (24 cases affecting 13 victims).
20. On 26 August, the Deputy Special Representative of Secretary General (DSRSG) participated in a briefing session to the Informal Expert Group (IEG) of the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security. The briefing provided an overview on the key points of the Women and Peace and Security agenda, including CRSV.
21. On 25 August, the MINUSCA-Paoua office officially handed over the QIPs Project "Support Project for the Socio-Economic Recovery of Women and Girls Affected by Armed Conflict in the Paoua Sub-Prefecture". With a budget of 20,884,000 CFA, 30 CRSV and SGBV victims have benefited from it. It has been implemented by the NGO *Arbre de Vie pour une Nation* and includes activities such as soap making, sewing and the manufacture of shea oil.

Human Rights Promotion and Capacity-Building

22. This month, the HRD organised 133 activities, in some instances with partners, on human rights and international humanitarian law in eleven prefectures, benefitting 1,858 individuals of which 514 were women.¹
23. These activities included 17 awareness campaigns, reaching 666 beneficiaries (344 women), including IDPs, civil society organisation, community leaders, local human rights fora and the civilian population. In addition, 10 capacity-building workshops were organized benefitting 238 individuals, including 25 women, from civil society organizations, local human rights fora, community leaders, FACA, FSI, detainees and the population. The HRD also conducted six capacity-building activities targeting 220 MINUSCA/UNPOL forces, including 51 women.
24. In August, during the 13 monitoring visits of detention centres conducted in five prefectures, the HRD documented a high number of unlawful detentions and advocated about the rights of detainees with detention officials. During its visits, the HRD observed that at least 180 people were detained arbitrarily (beyond the legal time limit or not in accordance with due process). In addition, the HRD noted that conditions of detention, in particular in police and gendarmerie stations, remained dire, with very limited access to health care, hygiene

¹ The prefectures are as follows: Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto, Mambéré-Kadéï, Mbomou, Nana-Grébizi, Nana-Mambéré, Ombella M'Poko, Ouaka, Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, and Vakaga.

or food, affecting the dignity of the detainees. The HRD’s advocacy with administrative and judicial authorities resulted in the release of three detainees held beyond the legal limit in Bangui.

Transitional Justice

As part of HRD support to the **Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR)**, the HRD noted some progress including the provision of a temporary headquarters for the CVJRR, the allocation of a credit line in the state budget, and the drafting of a 2022 action plan with strategic priorities as well as a logo.

25. From 1 to 5 August, the HRD provided support to Mr. Marc Yao Agbetse, the United Nations Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic, who conducted a mission from 27 July to 5 August in Bangui and Bria. The HRD coordinated the technical and logistical aspects of his meetings with national authorities, human rights institutions, civil society and community leaders. These meetings allowed him to formulate recommendations on the human rights situation in the Central African Republic and make them public during his visit's closing press conference.

- 26. On 18 August, the HRD continued its engagement with the focal points appointed by the Ministry of Justice to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Public Report on the Human Rights Situation after the 2020-2021 elections and the two public reports on Boyo and Bakouma of July 2022.
- 27. On 26 August, in Bria, two Human Rights projects were inaugurated including the Human Rights temporary protection house for victims and witnesses and the Office for the local Human Rights Forum of Bria. Both projects were funded by MINUSCA QIPs. While on mission, the HRD also inaugurated two other QIP-funded buildings namely the women and children wing of Bria Central Prison and the Prefectural Archives.

Support for the fight against impunity, HRDDP and accountability mechanisms

Through HRD’s constant advocacy with the relevant government authorities, more than 40 files of detainees arbitrarily held in their holding cells have been reviewed. These detainees were either released for lack of evidence or no plaintiff or their files were transferred to the prosecutor’s office for legal proceedings.

- 28. During the reporting period, the HRDDP, Vetting and Profiling (HVP) Unit conducted ten risk assessments for MINUSCA’s support to the National Defence and Security Forces (FACA & ISF) as well as a member of parliament (MP). In total, 81 individuals benefitted from the support including 76 ISFs (33 Police and 43 Gendarmes), four FACA as well as one MP who was screened by the HRDDP secretariat. All ten of the risk assessments were evaluated to have low risk and the support was immediately approved with a set of recommendations and mitigation measures for further implementation. The support included the supply of IT and office equipment for the national army in Bangui; the transportation of 18 ISF and FACA members for the purpose of redeployment and/or rotations, to their different units in Bouar, Obo, and Birao; the transportation of one MP on official mission to his constituency in Mboki; and finally, two trainings for the ISF in judicial and community policing.
- 29. As part of the recommendations and mitigating measures, MINUSCA’s UNPOL and HRD continued to monitor the activities of those to whom support was provided. These follow-up activities were carried out to ensure that the support was used for its intended purpose and confirm that the beneficiaries were not flagged as having been involved in any human rights violations or breaches of international humanitarian law. With the gradual resumption of support to the OCRB, in August, the HRDDP Unit followed up on the activities being conducted by UNPOL in collocation with the OCRB.