

## Central African Republic

**The information below is based on the Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/72/865–S/2018/465), issued on 16 May 2018<sup>1</sup>**

36. The number of children recruited and used more than quadrupled compared to 2016, with 196 boys and 103 girls affected, some as young as 8 years of age. Cases were attributed to UPC (89), FPRC (62), MPC (53), anti-balaka elements (32), joint operations by FPRC/MPC<sup>2</sup> (23), ex-Séléka renouée (16), Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC) (14), Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (9) and Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R) (1). Children were used as combatants, porters, informants, cooks and for sexual purposes.

38. The number of verified cases of children affected by rape and other forms of sexual violence, some as young as 8 years of age, more than doubled (137 girls, 1 boy) compared to 2016. Among them were 48 girls who were victims of sexual violence during their association with armed groups. The main perpetrators were MPC (30), FPRC/MPC (18), anti-balaka elements (16) and FPRC (14). Additional allegations of sexual violence against boys were reported but remained unverified.

39. A total of 43 incidents of abduction were verified, affecting 35 girls and 66 boys, including infants. Most victims were abducted for recruitment purposes and four were subjected to sexual violence. Anti-balaka elements accounted for the highest number of abducted children (37), followed by LRA (20).

45. The sexual exploitation and abuse of children by peacekeepers remained a serious protection concern (for more information, see the annexes to A/72/751 and A/72/751/Corr.1).

**The information below is based on the Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-related Sexual Violence (S/2018/250), issued on 23 March 2018<sup>3</sup>**

26. As insecurity spread to previously stable regions of eastern Central African Republic during 2017, conflict-related sexual violence also increased in severity and scale. Armed clashes propelled mass population movements, including across the border to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with numerous cases of sexual violence occurring during flight. Internally displaced persons number more than 688,000 nationwide, with armed elements posing a threat to civilians in the camps due to the absence of Government personnel to manage and secure the sites. Sexual violence employed as a tool of intimidation, retaliation and punishment, in order to terrorize entire families and communities, have been reported with shocking regularity. Patterns of sexual violence of an ethnic and sectarian nature impede the mobility needed for women to undertake vital economic and livelihood activities, such as gaining access to fields and markets. The rape of men and boys has also been a feature of attacks by armed groups on civilian villages, such as in Nana-Grébizi or in Basse-Kotto where 13 men were raped. Children conceived through rape are rarely accepted by society, and unsafe abortion remains a leading cause

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<sup>1</sup> Full text available [here](#)

<sup>2</sup> Where joint operations of FPRC/MPC are indicated, cases could not be attributed to one specific group.

<sup>3</sup> Full text available [here](#)

of maternal mortality.

27. During the reporting period, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) documented 308 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, affecting 155 women, 138 girls (including 48 recruited by armed groups), 13 men and 2 boys. Those incidents included 253 rapes, of which 181 were gang rapes, five attempted rapes, 28 forced marriages, 2 cases of sexual slavery and 20 cases of other sexual assault. The perpetrators included elements of ex-Séléka (179 cases), anti-balaka (55), the Lord's Resistance Army (14) and Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (12). A member of the armed forces of the Central African Republic was also implicated in one incident. The 179 cases attributed to ex-Séléka elements included: 36 cases perpetrated by the coalition of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC); 29 by the coalition of MPC and Révolution et justice (RJ); 39 by Union pour la paix en Centrafrique; 17 by MPC; 14 by the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain; nine by FPRC; one by the Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique; one by RJ; and 33 by unspecified elements.

**The information below is based on the Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council 2339 (2017), (S/2017/1023), issued on 6 December 2017<sup>4</sup>**

131. The Panel has obtained several testimonies confirming that conflict-related sexual violence continues to be a widespread phenomenon in the Central African Republic and that it is used by armed groups as a tool for punishment or reprisal.

132. For example, victims from Alindao and Mobaye indicated to the Panel that self-defence groups and UPC fighters carried out acts of sexual violence, particularly rape against females and males, as a method of torture. They have targeted individuals belonging to specific religious or ethnic communities associated with the armed groups they are fighting against.<sup>5</sup> Annex 4.13 includes testimonies of victims who cited self-defence group members Angimba Martin, Bonanga Bernard and Zack Agath, as well as UPC elements under the command of Atai Mamat, as perpetrators of such acts.

**Annex 4.13:** Testimonies of victims of sexual crimes.

*Summaries of testimonies of victims of sexual violence interviewed by the Panel, Bangui, 25 September 2017*

The Panel had the opportunity to interview different victims from the areas of Alindao and Mobaye (Basse-Kotto)<sup>6</sup>. In mid-May 2017, UPC and self-defence groups clashed as they were trying to seize control of different locations in the Basse-Kotto prefecture. Civilians are frequently caught in the middle of the fighting and perceived as sympathizers if not supporters of one side or another. The perception is usually based on ethnic and/or

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<sup>4</sup> Full text available [here](#)

<sup>5</sup> Similar findings have been reported for example by Human Rights Watch, in "They Said We Are Their Slaves": Sexual Violence by Armed Groups in the Central African Republic (5 October 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Meeting with victims, Bangui, 25 September 2017.

religious grounds.

One victim indicated that between 18 and 21 May 2017, when UPC took control of Mobaye, some UPC elements went to his house and demanded money. He indicated that he had nothing as other self-defence groups had recently robbed him of all his belongings. UPC told him he had probably given his money to support the self-defence group. Since he had no money, he was taken to their base where he was raped several times over a period of four days.

Another victim indicated that on 15 May 2017, UPC attacked the village of Tombo (15km south of Alindao). He and his family were not able to flee the village. UPC elements demanded money and food, but since he was unable to provide neither, they took his wife and gang-raped her. They later fled towards the Democratic Republic of the Congo where his wife decided to stay.<sup>7</sup>

The Panel was also informed that on 21 May 2017, one individual who went to work in the field outside the city of Mobaye was captured by members of a self-defence group. He was accused of being a spy and then taken to their base in the forest where he was tied to a tree and raped by different individuals during a period of three days. Although he did not remember the names of his aggressors, he told the Panel that he was held by elements of unit called "Bravo".<sup>8</sup>

One resident of Zamba 1 (53 km east of Mobaye) indicated that on 1 June 2017, elements of a self-defence group attacked his village. He was taken, along with two women and another man, to a base outside the city. All were detained for almost a week and were beaten and raped several times. He identified his aggressors as Angimba Martin, Bonanga Bernard and Zack Agath. He said that Martin and Bernard were also inhabitants of Zamba and that he was raped because in the past he had refused to join them.<sup>9</sup>

Another victim told the Panel that on 28 May 2017, a UPC unit under the command of Atai Mamat entered the village of Ngbougou. The UPC considered all the males in town as anti-balaka and therefore said that they deserved to be punished. All men were beaten, robbed and some, including him were raped. He said that he was gang-raped by Atai Mamat and two other persons.<sup>10</sup>

**The information below is based on the Report on the human rights situation in Central African Republic (from 1 April 2016 - 31 March 2017), issued on 4 July 2017<sup>11</sup>**

61. During the reporting period, HRD documented 129 cases of conflict-related sexual violence affecting 161 victims, of which 82 were women, 78 girls and one boy. The cases of conflict-related sexual violence continued to be of serious concern with cases of rape, gang rape, attempted rape, indecent assault, forced marriages and sexual slavery. Most of the victims were women and girls who were attacked while carrying out their daily livelihood

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<sup>7</sup> Meeting with victims, Bangui, 25 September 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Meeting with victims, Bangui, 25 September 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Meeting with victims, Bangui, 25 September 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Meeting with victims, Bangui, 25 September 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Full text available [here](#)

activities or during attacks on villages by mostly anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka factions, LRA and the MPC/RJ coalition. For the ex-Séléka and its affiliates, most of the cases were recorded in Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto and Nana-Grébizi prefectures where judicial institutions do not exist. The cases committed by the anti-Balaka were recorded mainly in Nana-Mambéré, Ombella-M'Poko, Ouham-Pendé and Mambéré-Kadéï prefectures.

64. The anti-Balaka committed 19 incidents of sexual violence, including 14 rapes, three forced marriages, one attempted rape and one case of sexual slavery affecting 19 victims, of which 11 were women, one boy, and seven girls.

**The information below is based on the Report of the Mapping Project documenting serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Central African Republic between January 2003 and December 2015 issued on May 2017<sup>12</sup>**

#### CHAPTER V - CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

As defined by the United Nations Secretary-General, conflict-related sexual violence refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men or children that is directly or indirectly linked (temporally, geographically or causally) to a conflict. This link with conflict may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator (often affiliated with a State or non-State armed group), the profile of the victim (who is frequently a member of a persecuted political, ethnic or religious minority), the climate of impunity, which is generally associated with the collapse of the State, cross-border consequences (such as displacement or trafficking in persons), and/or violations of the terms of a ceasefire agreement.<sup>13</sup>

As evidenced in this report, nearly all parties to the successive armed conflicts in the Central African Republic between 2003 and 2015 committed these various forms of sexual violence. The perpetrators were members of the security forces, rebel and armed groups, foreign government forces and civilians. However, despite the widespread nature of the phenomenon, sexual crimes have been systematically underreported and under-investigated, if investigated at all.

The victims were mainly women and girls but men and boys were also subjected to sexual violence, albeit to a lesser extent. The age of the victims ranged from as young as five years to 60 years and over. A high percentage of the rapes were gang rapes, committed by up to 20 perpetrators against a single victim, and often in public and/or in front of their family members. In many instances, the victims were targeted because they were perceived or known to have social, ethnic, religious or other relations with people from the groups opposed or perceived as opposed to the perpetrator(s).

Armed groups also used women and girls captured from their known or perceived

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<sup>12</sup> Full text available [here](#)

<sup>13</sup> As defined in the Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361), 20 April 2016.

opponents as sex slaves. The perpetrators at times further compounded the abuse suffered by their victims and their families by demanding ransoms for their release. Some of the sexually enslaved women and girls bore children from rape. The stigma attached to - and the exclusion of - children born of rape, is perpetuated by the lack of adequate measures to support their integration into their families and communities. Thousands of women and girls in the Central African Republic were survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and many suffered double jeopardy: being raped, enslaved and/or forced to be married, and then ostracized or rejected by their community, sometimes even by their own families. The trauma experienced was often aggravated by the fact that the perpetrators also looted their properties. The victims were thus deprived of the means to cater for their own recovery and livelihood or that of other people under their care. Throughout the period examined by this report, elements among foreign troops and peacekeepers deployed to the country to protect civilians were themselves involved in rape and other forms of sexual violence against women, girls and boys. Abuses by foreign troops also included the formation of prostitution rings as well as sexual exploitation in exchange for meagre amounts of money or items in kind. Despite gradual improvements, the United Nations zero tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse has not achieved its intended goal of deterring peacekeepers from perpetrating sexual violence. While reporting of allegations has improved within and by MINUSCA following the adoption of a policy of public openness on sexual exploitation and abuse in June 2015, the governments of troop contributing countries have yet to consistently and effectively take measures to prevent their forces from carrying out acts of sexual exploitation and abuse, to bring perpetrators to justice, and grant reparations to victims.

[...]

## A. Context

Customs and tradition relegate females to an inferior position and lead to or create conditions in which the rights of women and girls are violated. As such, women and girls are often excluded from decisions that affect their lives and livelihood. Sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination is thus widespread and marked by a general lack of will by the authorities and armed groups to address the issue. In 2015 alone, service providers in the Central African Republic recorded 29,801 cases of women who had survived gender-based violence, including rape, sexual assault and sexual slavery. Of them, 27,977 were women and girls, and 1,824 were men and boys. Forty-four per cent of rape cases involved gang rapes, often committed in front of family members.<sup>14</sup>

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## 1. Sexual and gender-based violence by the Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC) and other forces loyal to President Patassé

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<sup>14</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence ( S/2016/361/Rev.1), 22 June 2016, para. 26. During that year, MINUSCA verified 79 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, including 36 involving the rape of minors, committed by former Séléka, anti-Balaka and LRA; armed youth and self-defence groups; as well as gendarmes and police officers. This figure is low ostensibly due to the United Nations standard which requires having sufficient detail and corroboration by a second source for a case to be considered verified.

Coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Jean-Pierre Bemba's MLC entered the Central African Republic around October 2002, at the request of President Ange-Félix Patassé, to counter General François Bozizé's rebels who were overwhelming the FACA forces. Almost immediately after their arrival, MLC went on the rampage raping women and girls. Many of the victims were targeted because they were Muslims, who were suspected of supporting General Bozizé. Rape was thus used as a weapon of war. The sexual violence included rape in public, in front of family members and communities, gang rapes and rape of young girls, some as young as 10 years old. Rapes were often committed in conjunction with other crimes, such as pillaging, and the violence of the act was often exacerbated by beatings and threats with weapons.

During an attack on Mongoumba (Lobaye) on 5 March 2003, MLC fighters gang-raped several women. One victim who testified before the ICC was raped by a total of 12 soldiers, who penetrated her vagina, anus and mouth with their penises. MLC soldiers also raped and gang raped boys and men.<sup>15</sup>

There is no doubt that President Patassé and other high-ranking officials were aware of the crimes committed by the foreign elements he had called upon to defend his regime.<sup>16</sup> In addition, several sources indicate that FACA troops who were fighting alongside MLC were also involved in the commission of sexual violence, although they do not provide specific information.<sup>17</sup> One year and a half after Bozizé took power, Patassé was charged, together with Jean-Pierre Bemba, Martin Koumtamadjji alias Abdoulaye Miskine, Victor Ndoubabe, Paul Barril and Lionel GaneBefio, with numerous crimes, including rape.<sup>18</sup> However, on 16 December 2004, the Indictment Chamber of the Court of Appeal in Bangui, decided that, due to the seriousness of the crimes, the accused should rather be judged by the ICC.<sup>19</sup> While Jean-Pierre Bemba was sentenced by the ICC to 18 years of imprisonment for command responsibility regarding war crimes and crimes against humanity of murder and rape, no jurisdiction, not even the ICC, has brought to justice other MLC commanders or elements, FACA soldiers or Central African authorities in connection with sexual and other forms of violence perpetrated in late 2002 and early 2003.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. Sexual and gender-based violence by the national security forces under the President Bozizé

<sup>15</sup> FIDH, *Forgotten, Stigmatised: the Double Suffering of Victims of International Crimes*, October 2006

<sup>16</sup> In a speech delivered on 29 November, Ange-Félix Patassé stated that "he knew about the numerous crimes committed and that he would establish a commission to "assess all that". Le Citoyen, *Bossebébé: Silence! Les Nyamamulengues de Jean-Pierre Bemba démocratisent...*, 29 January 2003.

<sup>17</sup> See FIDH, *Rule of Law, respect of human rights, fight against impunity: the essential acts that still have to be taken*, July 2004; AI, *Government tramples on the basic rights of detainees*, 30 November 2006; *Le Citoyen* article, dated 8 November 2002, contains information on crimes allegedly committed by MLC and Miskine's armed group in the Central African Republic, including rapes, killings, and pillaging. According to a report published by the Human Rights Quarterly review, members of FACA, including the Presidential Guard, committed crimes such as rape, manslaughter and the burning of houses. See Marlies Glasius, *What Is Global Justice and Who Decides? Civil Society and Victim Responses to the International Criminal Court's First Investigations*, in Human Rights Quarterly Vol.31, May 2009.

<sup>18</sup> See Cour d'appel de Bangui, *Arrêt d'infirmité partielle de non-lieu, de disjonction et de renvoi devant la cour criminelle de la chambre d'accusation*, 16 décembre 2004 ; Cour d'appel de Bangui, *ordonnance de non-lieu et de renvoi partiel du 16 septembre 2004 (procédure contre Patassé, Bemba, Miskine, Barril et autres)*,

16 septembre 2004. The charges were summarized by ICRC CAR: *Practice Relating to Rule 161. International Cooperation in Criminal Proceedings* as well as by the FIDH in *La FIDH et la situation en RCA devant la CPI - L'Affaire Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo*, juillet 2008.

<sup>19</sup> FIDH, *Forgotten, Stigmatised: the Double Suffering of Victims of International Crimes*, October 2006, p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> On 29 August 2006, Patassé was tried in absentia in Bangui and sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment with force labour for fraud, but not for other violations. See *Le Monde*, *L'ex-président centrafricain Patassé condamné à 20 ans de travaux forcés par contumace*, 29 August 2006.

Several cases of gang rape by soldiers were reported in the first weeks and months that followed the coup d'état of General Bozizé.<sup>21</sup> One such case, the gang rape in Bangui, in October 2003, of a woman by five Presidential Guards, attracted much media attention as the victim spoke out publically. Although they were sentenced to five years of imprisonment, the five perpetrators never fully served their sentences.<sup>22</sup> Rapes as well as attempted rapes by security forces continued to be reported especially in Bangui, in the following years.<sup>23</sup>

Incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence that were perpetrated by Government forces in and around Bangui were indicative of what was believed to be happening in areas of the country that were closed to independent scrutiny. Between 2005 and 2013, the FACA and the Presidential Guard were waging a war against several armed groups in the northwest and northeast of the country and committed numerous human rights abuses in that context. However, the insecurity prevailing in these areas made it virtually impossible for victims to report about sexual violence and for human rights and humanitarian organizations to gather information from victims and witnesses.

Over the years, only a few cases outside Bangui were documented. For instance, in March 2003, six FACA soldiers gang-raped a 15-year-old girl in Ndélé's Artisan neighbourhood.<sup>24</sup> FACA soldiers also raped women as a punishment for alleged support to rebels. For instance, in December 2006, in Birao, several FACA soldiers raped a 54-year-old Gula woman whom they accused of having cooked for UFDR rebels. The UFDR, a predominantly ethnic Gula armed group, had previously occupied Birao and were driven out by the FACA.<sup>25</sup> Around October 2006, in the northwest of the country, where the FACA were fighting APRD rebel forces, FACA soldiers raped an undetermined number of women, notably in and around the village of Ouandago, near the city of Kaga-Bandoro (Nana-Gribizi).<sup>26</sup> Similar patterns occurring in different parts of the country indicate that such incidents were most probably not isolated ones.

In fact, both governmental forces and rebel groups used rape to terrorize the population. In August 2007, reportedly over 200 survivors of rape came forward in the area around Kaga-Bandoro alone.<sup>27</sup> In 2007, in his report on children and armed conflict, the Secretary-General highlighted that owing to the heavy presence of rebel groups in the areas of the Batangafo-Kabo- Ouandago "triangle", a 75 per cent increase in sexual and gender-based violence had been reported compared to 2006. UNICEF reported during the same period that 15 per cent of women and girls in the northern region of the country had been raped. United Nations partners also reported that between Batangafo and Bokamgaye, many

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<sup>21</sup> *Fédération internationale de l'action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la Torture (FICAT), Rapport alternatif au second rapport périodique de la République Centrafricaine, Comité des droits de l'Homme, 87ème session, June 2006* ; United States of America Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> United States of America Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2003 and 2004; AFP, *Cinq ans ferme pour cinq soldats centrafricains coupables de viol*, 10 January 2004 ; IRIN, *Cinq anciens gardes présidentiels condamnés à cinq années de prison pour un viol collectif*, 12 January 2004.

<sup>23</sup> *Report by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights defenders (A/HRC/7/28)*, 31 January 2008; United States of America Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2005; IRIN, *The legacy of rape*, 9 January 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Mapping Project interview, Ndélé, Bamingui-Bangoran, October 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Mapping Project interview, Birao, Vakaga, September 2016; OHCHR Human Rights Case Database.

<sup>26</sup> United States of America Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> United States of America Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2008.

young girls were forcibly taken as wives for rebels, while others were sexually abused in exchange for movement across the numerous checkpoints set up by these groups.<sup>28</sup>

From February through November 2009, an international NGO reported that 128 cases of gender-based violence had been brought to its attention in the Nana-Gribizi and Ouham-Pendé prefectures. The reports included rape of women, girls, men and boys, as well as gang rapes. In 27 cases, the victim knew the perpetrator, and in 18 cases, the perpetrator was armed. Of the 128 cases, two victims identified a member of APRD as the perpetrator, another identified a member of FACA as an assailant, and one referred to an unspecified armed entity.<sup>29</sup>

From January through August 2011, an international NGO reported that 34 cases of gender-based violence had been brought to its attention in the Ouham-Pendé area. Fifty per cent of the victims were against minors, including boys. The NGO reported that many of the victims had not reported the abuses to the authorities for fear of reprisals by the perpetrators.<sup>30</sup>

## 5. Sexual and gender-based violence by the Séléka/ex-Séléka

When the Séléka armed group coalition launched a war in December 2012 to overthrow President Bozizé, its fighters committed extensive acts of sexual and gender-based violence as they captured major towns and villages along the way to Bangui. In the towns under their control, Séléka fighters forcibly broke into houses, hospitals and schools, and systematically raped women and girls they would find. Many of the rapes were gang rapes, involving up to 10 Séléka fighters, such as in Nana-Gribizi,<sup>31</sup> Basse-Kotto (in the villages of Satéma and Zamba)<sup>32</sup> and Ouaka (in the towns of Bambari and Grimari), where they gang raped at least 28 women and girls.<sup>33</sup> In Mobaye (Basse-Kotto), at the end of January 2013, and again on or about 7 February 2013, Séléka fighters systematically gang raped many women and girls, including pregnant women. Two young girls aged 11 and 12 years old were raped by 10 Séléka fighters in front of their house.<sup>34</sup>

After capturing Bangui, on 23 March 2013, Séléka fighters more systematically attacked civilians they knew or perceived to be supporters of former President Bozizé or belonging to his Gbaya ethnic group.<sup>35</sup> Despite repeated condemnation of the violence by human rights and humanitarian organizations inside and outside the Central African Republic, the Séléka leadership did little to nothing to stop the scourge and bring the perpetrators to justice. On the contrary, Michel Djotodia and other Séléka leaders denied that the group's

<sup>28</sup> *Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/757)*, 21 December 2007, para. 32.

<sup>29</sup> United States of America Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2010.

<sup>30</sup> United States of America Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> ICC, *Situation in the Central African Republic II*, 24 September 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Mapping Project interview, Bambari, Ouaka, October 2016; Joint BINUCA and MONUSCO human rights investigations, *Confidential and internal interview notes in the DRC*, May-June 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Mapping Project interview, Bambari, Ouaka, October 2016; FIDH, *They must all leave or die*, June 2014

<sup>34</sup> Mapping Project interview, Bambari, Ouaka, October 2016; Situation of human rights in the Central African Republic: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/24/59), 12 September 2013; Joint BINUCA and MONUSCO human rights investigations, *Confidential and internal interview notes in the DRC*, May-June 2013; ICC, *Situation in the Central African Republic II*, 24 September 2014; FIDH, *They must all leave or die*, June 2014; JournaldeBangui.com, *Centrafrique Séléka contrôle la ville de Mobaye*, 8 February 2013.

<sup>35</sup> ICC, *Situation in the Central African Republic II*, 24 September 2014.



fighters had committed any abuses.<sup>36</sup>

In Bangui, Séléka fighters particularly targeted the neighbourhoods considered to be supportive of former President Bozizé, such as Boy-Rabe, in the 4th arrondissement. In many instances, the perpetrators ordered residents to open their houses under the pretext of searching for combatants and/or weapons and proceeded to rape the female occupants, usually subjecting males to, or threatening them with violence.<sup>37</sup> In some instances, Séléka fighters reportedly kidnapped women and took them to one of their bases to rape them.<sup>38</sup>

The Séléka also perpetrated widespread rape and other forms of sexual violence in the northern prefectures, targeting people with an ethnic affiliation to François Bozizé's Gbaya ethnic group, such as in Ouham.<sup>39</sup> Between March and May 2013, Séléka fighters in Bangui and other parts of the country reportedly forced many women to marry them.<sup>40</sup>

The Séléka committed numerous rapes, including gang rapes, in what appeared to be a pattern of sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>41</sup> Reports show that at least 140 rapes were committed by Séléka members between January and June of 2013 while UNICEF partners reported some 300 cases of rape and sexual assault in November and December 2013 alone (with no disaggregation by perpetrators however).<sup>42</sup> These numbers most likely represent only a fraction of actual cases, since it is believed that fear of reprisal and/or stigmatization prevented many victims from reporting rapes. Information gathered by the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic demonstrates that most of the sexual violence was committed in March, April, August and December 2013, which coincided with a surge of conflict during these months.<sup>43</sup>

After the attack in Bangui, on 5 December 2013, by anti-Balaka militia men and former FACA soldiers, the ex-Séléka reacted and eventually forced the assailants to retreat. During the following days, they undertook systematic house searches, killing and raping/gang raping a large number of civilians, such as a young girl in the Église Ali.<sup>44</sup> They also raped and gang raped an undetermined number of women, often in front of the victims' family members, in the Boy-Rabe neighbourhood, in PK9 and in Fondo.<sup>45</sup>

During the weeks following the December 2013 attack, sexual violence was widespread.

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<sup>36</sup> IRIN, Terror grips Central African Republic, 17 October 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/261), 3 May 2013, para 25; Situation of human rights in the Central African Republic: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/24/59), 12 September 2013; The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic (S/2014/928), 22 December 2014; HRW, I Can Still Smell the Dead, 18 September 2013; AI, Human rights crisis spiraling out of control, 29 October 2013; FIDH, CAR: A country in the hands of Séléka war criminals, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic (S/2014/928), 22 December 2014

<sup>39</sup> ICC, Situation in the Central African Republic II, 24 September 2014.

<sup>40</sup> BINUCA, Internal human rights report, 7 May 2013.

<sup>41</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/261), 3 May 2013, HRW, I Can Still Smell the Dead, 18 September 2013; AI, Human rights crisis spiraling out of control, 29 October 2013; FIDH, CAR: A country in the hands of Séléka war criminals, 23 September 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Situation of human rights in the Central African Republic: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/24/59), 12 September 2013, paras. 40 and 65; IRIN, Little help for CAR rape survivors, 16 July 2014.

<sup>43</sup> The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic (S/2014/928), 22 December 2014, paras. 464-473.

<sup>44</sup> OHCHR Human Rights Case Database.

<sup>45</sup> OHCHR Human Rights Case Database; The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic (S/2014/928), 22 December 2014, paras. 469, 471 and 472; FIDH, They must all leave or die, 24 June 2014.

An overall increase in reports of rape was noted by the local partners of UNICEF, with some 781 cases of rape and sexual assault reported in January and February 2014. UNFPA confirmed 1,186 cases of sexual violence from December to January 2014. A high percentage of reported rapes were gang rapes. For example, one organization providing support to women recovering from violence in Bangui indicated that a majority of some 400 women and girls whom they had assisted between January and July 2014 were raped by multiple offenders.<sup>46</sup>

In general terms, Séléka/ex-Séléka fighters took advantage of the situation of violence and chaos to rape women. For instance, during fighting that erupted in Bangui between 26 September and 20 October 2015, ex-Séléka elements or individuals sympathetic to this group raped at least two young Christian women and at least four girls.<sup>47</sup>

The Séléka/ex-Séléka included many child soldiers within their ranks and continuously recruited more, including those who had previously been demobilized by the United Nations.<sup>1012</sup> Many of the girls recruited have reported that they were raped, often gang raped, or sexually exploited by the Séléka/ex-Séléka fighters.<sup>48</sup>

Although Séléka elements usually targeted women for rape and other forms of sexual violence, cases of rape of young men and boys were also reported. A young man reported that he had been detained, drugged and taken to PK9, in northern Bangui, where he was repeatedly raped by a Séléka fighter.<sup>49</sup> In another incident, on 9 June 2015, an ex-Séléka fighter in Kabo (Ouham- Pendé prefecture) raped a nine-year-old boy who had been in the bush with other children grazing cattle.<sup>50</sup>

## 7. Sexual and gender-based violence by foreign armed groups

As documented in this report, a number of foreign armed groups have taken advantage of the country's porous borders to set up bases in the Central African Republic. Two such armed groups are the FPR from Chad, and the LRA from Uganda. Elements from both groups committed acts of sexual violence in the CAR.

### *The Lord's Resistance Army*

Very often, LRA fighters targeted children whom they abducted and subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence. For example, the United Nations Secretary-General reported that in 2010, the LRA had abducted 138 children from the Mbomou, Haut-Mbomou and Haute-Kotto prefectures. Several of the children either escaped or were released by the LRA, but many others remained in captivity. Of 282 children who escaped from LRA captivity in 2010, 96 stated they had been sexually exploited.<sup>51</sup>

## 9. Sexual and gender-based violence by international forces

<sup>46</sup> UNRIC, CAR: Number of sexual violence cases astronomical, 20 January 2014; IRIN, Little help for CAR rape survivors, 16 July 2014.

<sup>47</sup> MINUSCA Bangui report, 9 December 2015, p.14.

<sup>48</sup> Mapping Project interview, Bambari, Ouaka, October 2016; UNICEF, RCA: 357 enfants soldats libérés, 15 May 2005.

<sup>49</sup> The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic (S/2014/928), 22 December 2014.

<sup>50</sup> OHCHR Human Rights Case Database.

<sup>51</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict (A/65/820–S/2011/250), 23 April 2011.

Elements among the foreign troops and peacekeepers deployed to the Central African Republic to protect civilians were themselves involved in rape and cases of sexual exploitation and abuses against women, girls and boys. The widespread poverty in which many people in the country have been plunged as a result of the successive crises, coupled with power imbalance of the perpetrators and deeply entrenched discriminatory gender stereotypes, have created a situation of vulnerability to exploitation and abuse for the majority of the population, particularly women, girls and boys. The military power of some of the perpetrators has also increased the vulnerability of the victims and the risks of exploitation.

***Sexual violence by United Nations forces and other non-United Nations international forces under a Security Council mandate***

In 2015, the international media reported incidents of sexual violence against children by non- United Nations international forces deployed in the Central African Republic under a Security Council mandate and the failure of the United Nations system to adequately handle the situation.<sup>52</sup> The events related to allegations that were documented by the United Nations in the country in 2013 and 2014.

From December 2013 to June 2014, the United Nations documented allegations of sexual violence, including against children, involving soldiers of the MISCA<sup>53</sup>, the French forces<sup>54</sup>, and the European Union Forces (EUFOR RCA)<sup>55</sup> deployed under authorization of Security Council Resolutions 2127 and 2134, but who were not under United Nations command.

At the end of 2014, allegations that sexual violence against boys, girls and women was committed by soldiers of the French Sangaris forces and MISCA forces at the Bangui M'Poko IDP camp were further documented by the United Nations and other organizations.<sup>56</sup>

[...]

**The information below is based on the Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2017/249), issued on 15 April 2017<sup>57</sup>**

19. In early 2016, a new Government was democratically elected in the Central African Republic, yet the security situation remained volatile across large swaths of the country.

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<sup>52</sup> The Guardian, Sex abuse poses 'significant risk' to UN peacekeeping, says leaked report, 24 March 2015; Le Monde, Quatorze soldats français soupçonnés d'abus sexuels sur des enfants en Centrafrique, 29 April 2015; The Guardian, UN aid worker suspended for leaking report on child abuse by French troops, 29 April 2015; HRW, Dispatches: Will Shocking Stories Force the UN to Act? 13 August 2015; AI, CAR: UN troops implicated in rape of girl and indiscriminate killings must be investigated, 11 August 2015.

<sup>53</sup> MISCA was established on 5 December 2013 and comprised soldiers from Gabon, Chad, the Republic of the Congo and Cameroon.

<sup>54</sup> The Sangaris Operation was launched on 5 December 2013.

<sup>55</sup> The EUFOR RCA was established on 10 February 2014.

<sup>56</sup> OHCHR Human Rights Case Database (several cases), Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict, 5 June 2015; United States of America Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2015. Report of the Independent Review on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by International Peacekeeping Forces in the Central African Republic, 17 December 2015, page 36. According to this report, the information obtained indicated that "the allegations were not isolated incidents". It cites several examples, such as the fact that "some of the children described witnessing the rape of other children (who were not interviewed by the MINUSCA Human Rights Officer); others indicated that it was known that they could approach certain Sangaris soldiers for food, and would be compelled to submit to sexual abuse in exchange. Information reported by the children indicated that in some cases soldiers were cooperating and coordinating in the abuse, including by bringing children onto the base and past guards, where they were not authorized to be".

<sup>57</sup> Full text available [here](#)

Several prefectures were shaken by clashes in the second half of the year, leading to the displacement of thousands of civilians and a pattern of conflict-related sexual violence of an ethnic and sectarian nature. During the reporting period, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) recorded 179 cases of conflict-related sexual violence committed primarily by ex-Séléka, anti-balaka and Révolution et Justice elements and by the Lord's Resistance Army. These incidents included 151 rapes, of which 54 were gang rapes, as well as six forced marriages and four cases of sexual slavery. The victims included 92 women, 86 girls and one boy, although the actual number is suspected to be far higher than the figures reported.

**The information below is based on the Report on the human rights situation in the Central African Republic (from 1 June 2015 – 31 March 2016), issued on 14 December 2016<sup>58</sup>**

43. Children continued to be victims of rape and other forms sexual violence allegedly committed by armed groups or unidentified armed individuals during the period under review. During the reporting period, HRD collected information concerning a total of 46 children (31 girls and 15 boys). While 31 girls were verified to have been raped by members of ex- Séléka factions, Anti-Balaka, LRA and unidentified armed persons, 15 boys were forcibly deprived of liberty in Boali on 24 September 2015 by an Anti-Balaka element, who later ordered a woman to circumcise them all. All boys were circumcised.

**The information below is based on the Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2016/824), issued on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016<sup>59</sup>**

32. During the reporting period, MINUSCA registered 44 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence throughout the country, 25 of which were investigated and verified. The victims comprised 22 women, 21 girls and 1 boy. Twenty-seven of the cases involved rape, while 17 involved attempted rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage and/or sexual assault. Of the 27 cases of rape, 16 were perpetrated by multiple actors and 5 occurred in the context of sexual slavery. Of the 44 registered cases, 20 were allegedly perpetrated by ex-Séléka or affiliated groups, 14 by anti-balaka, 9 by LRA elements and 1 by unidentified perpetrators. The actual number of incidents of conflict-related sexual violence is suspected to be much higher than the number reported.

**The information below is based on the Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361), issued on 20 April 2016<sup>60</sup>**

9. [...] The only country covered herein for which detailed data are provided on sexual violence against men and boys is the Central African Republic, where a conscious effort has been made to describe gender-based violence services in gender-neutral terms and to train both male and female staff with a view to minimizing the perception that they support women exclusively. A total of 62 countries still provide no legal protection for male rape

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<sup>58</sup> Full text available [here](#)

<sup>59</sup> Full text available [here](#)

<sup>60</sup> Full text available [here](#)

victims. Free medical treatment is also crucial for a survivor-centred response. However, in many settings, survivors are charged fees by the police to open a case file, as in Somalia, or asked to pay for medical certificates, as in the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, health providers often require survivors to report to the police before receiving care. In Myanmar, this has meant that only 4 per cent of gender-based violence survivors choose to access health services. The practice of mandatory reporting to the police also presents a barrier to access to care in contexts such as the Sudan and South Sudan, despite formal instructions to the contrary, as well as in the Syrian Arab Republic and some countries receiving Syrian refugees.

26. [...]The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) verified 79 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, 36 involving the rape of minors, committed by former Séléka, anti-balaka and Lord's Resistance Army elements; armed youth and self-defence groups; and gendarmes and the police. Service providers recorded 29,801 cases of gender-based violence more broadly, including rape, sexual assault and sexual slavery. Of the survivors, 27,977 were women and girls and 1,824 were men and boys. A total of 44 per cent of cases involved gang rapes, often committed in front of family members. Rape has been used to punish women suspected of trading with people on the other side of the sectarian divide. The pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, launched in 2015, revealed that a number of children associated with armed groups had been subjected to sexual violence. There was also a disturbing pattern of sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeepers, with the MINUSCA Conduct and Discipline Team addressing 23 cases.

27. The absence of a functioning justice system, combined with the fear of retaliation and the pressure placed on survivors and their families by the perpetrators, continue to deter reporting. Evidence has emerged of forced marriage as a negative coping mechanism to "protect the victims' honour". Those who report to service providers often come forward very late, sometimes a year or more after the incident. Survivors experience rejection by their families and communities, in particular when they are pregnant. Children born as a result of rape are rarely accepted by society, and a high number of rape victims resort to unsafe abortion, which is the leading cause of maternal mortality. Many public structures charge fees for medical services and certificates, which renders them inaccessible to the indigent. Sexual violence against men and boys has been shrouded in cultural taboos. Accordingly, a neutral term for gender-based violence crisis centres has been adopted, namely listening centres, and male staff have been employed. In 2015, 1,128 boys and 969 men accessed gender-based violence services.

28. Reports emerged of married women being abducted from their homes and forced to marry former Séléka fighters, and allegations arose of women and girls being used as sex slaves by anti-balaka elements. Conflict-related sexual violence is both a cause and a consequence of displacement, and most incidents are reported during flight. For example, women sought refuge in host families and sites for internally displaced persons following a series of rapes in connection with armed attacks in villages along the Mbrès and Ouandago axis. More than 447,000 people have been internally displaced, and sex has been demanded from women fleeing war zones as a form of "payment of passage". Sexual

assaults are so frequent when internally displaced persons leave displacement sites that United Nations agencies have begun distributing warning kits to women, which contain flashlights and whistles to alert local protection committees in the case of emergency. The law establishing a special criminal court with jurisdiction over grave human rights violations was promulgated in June 2015. Efforts are under way, including by the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, to ensure that conflict-related sexual violence remains central to the court's undertakings. Following the signing in January 2015 of a presidential decree establishing a rapid response unit within the police and the gendarmerie to combat sexual violence, the Team, in coordination with MINUSCA, was deployed to provide technical advice to the Government to make it operational. The Team also supported the training of military prosecutors through the regional training centre of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Although the justice system is largely non-functional, on 18 September an anti-balaka fighter was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for rape. Parties to the conflict participated in the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, held in May, at which women's organizations called for action to end impunity for sexual violence.

**The information below is based on the Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in the Central African Republic (S/2016/133), issued on 12 February 2016<sup>61</sup>**

28. The country task force verified that a total of 521 children (513 girls, 8 boys) were victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence: 3 cases in 2011, 22 in 2012, 20 in 2013, 406 in 2014 and 70 in 2015, with the substantial increase in the number of documented cases in 2014 not only being attributed to the surge in violence and armed confrontations countrywide as of December 2013 but also to the presence of larger number of humanitarian actors in certain areas, who could verify cases. Sexual violence was perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, with sexual violence against children by ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka forming part of a larger pattern of violations against civilians in areas under their control, particularly in 2014.

30. Approximately 50 per cent of the 406 cases of sexual violence documented in 2014 were perpetrated by ex-Séléka (205 cases), 46 per cent by anti-Balaka (187 cases) and the remaining 4 per cent were attributed to members of the national police or unidentified individuals. Reports indicate that, in areas under ex-Séléka control, armed elements went door to door looking for girls. On 16 November 2014, a 13-year-old girl and her older sister were gang-raped by 12 unidentified individuals who attacked their village on the road from Bria to Ndélé; both victims later died. On 14 November 2014 in Bangui, two sisters were gang-raped at gunpoint by two anti-Balaka members. The suspected perpetrators were later arrested by MINUSCA and handed over to the Gendarmerie. As of December 2015, an investigation was yet to be conducted. 31. Parties to the conflict continued to commit rape and other forms of sexual violence in 2015. For example, on 24 June 2015, armed UPC elements in Mbrès raped two girls who were returning from the market. A particularly stark example of sexual violence committed by an armed group took place in August 2015. In that incident, two young female street vendors were abducted by three armed anti-

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<sup>61</sup> Full text available [here](#)

Balaka members in Bangui and taken to the village of Vodambola, where they were continuously raped for five days. Upon their release, the victims sought and received medical support.

#### G. Grave violations against children by international forces

48. During the reporting period, a number of international forces were deployed to the Central African Republic at different times and with different mandates. The United Nations documented grave violations against children committed by some of those forces.

Numerous cases of violations such as rape and sexual violence committed by both United Nations and non-United Nations forces have been documented, some on a repetitive basis. The cases were referred to the appropriate authorities for action. The situation is the subject of ongoing, urgent discussion within the United Nations, with a focus on closing institutional gaps, ensuring prevention and protection and, more importantly, ensuring that all victims receive necessary assistance. The conditions in the country, notably ongoing conflict, the breakdown of law and order, and pervasive impunity, have contributed to the conditions that enabled such horrendous acts to be committed across the country by international and other forces.

49. In 2014, the United Nations interviewed several boys between the ages of 9 and 13, following allegations of repeated acts of sexual violence reportedly committed between December 2013 and May 2014 by elements of Operation Sangaris in and around the M'Poko camp for internally displaced persons. The French authorities opened a judicial investigation in July 2014, which was ongoing as of December 2015. 50. Rape and other forms of sexual violence were also committed by members of other international forces. In 2013, two incidents of sexual violence were committed by the Uganda People's Defence Forces, which is deployed in the Central African Republic under the command of the African Union Regional Task Force in Obo. In one of the incidents, which occurred on 29 August, a 17-year-old girl was raped by two Uganda People's Defence Forces soldiers; in the other incident, which occurred on 10 October, another girl was sexually abused by three soldiers of the same force. UNICEF has advocated with the Ugandan authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice; however, to date, no action has been taken.

51. In January 2016, new allegations were received of cases of grave violations against children that occurred during the reporting period, involving elements of the Georgian contingent of the European Union Force and Operation Sangaris. The allegations were under investigation at the time of writing.

52. In 2015, 10 allegations of sexual violence against children committed by MINUSCA peacekeepers were reported to have involved military personnel from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (4), Morocco (1), Gabon (1), Burundi (1) and an unknown nationality (1), as well as police personnel from the Congo (1) and an unknown nationality (1). Some of the minors were sexually assaulted, while others were asked for sex in return for money, food and non-food items. As of December 2015, relevant troop-contributing countries and the Office of the Internal Oversight Services, with the support of MINUSCA, had started investigations into these allegations. The victims have received medical and psychosocial support. New allegations of violations were received in January 2016 and are being investigated.

The information below is based on the Report Of An Independent Review On Sexual Exploitation And Abuse By International Peacekeeping Forces in the Central African Republic: “Taking action on sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers” (A/71/99), issued on 17 December 2015<sup>62</sup>

## Summary

### Introduction

When peacekeepers exploit the vulnerability of the people they have been sent to protect, it is a fundamental betrayal of trust. When the international community fails to care for the victims or to hold the perpetrators to account, that betrayal is compounded.

In the spring of 2014, allegations came to light that international troops serving in a peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic had sexually abused a number of young children in exchange for food or money (the “allegations”). The alleged perpetrators were largely from a French military force known as the Sangaris forces, which were operating as peacekeepers under authorization of the Security Council but not under United Nations command.

The manner in which United Nations agencies responded to the allegations was seriously flawed. The Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) failed to take any action to follow up on the allegations; he neither asked the Sangaris forces to institute measures to end the abuses nor directed that the children be removed to safe housing. He also failed to direct his staff to report the allegations at a higher level within the United Nations. Meanwhile, both the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations human rights staff in the Central African Republic failed to ensure that the children received adequate medical attention and humanitarian aid, and to take steps to protect other potential victims identified by the children who first raised the allegations.

Instead, information about the allegations was passed from desk to desk, inbox to inbox, across multiple United Nations offices, with no one willing to take responsibility to address the serious human rights violations. Indeed, even when the Government of France became aware of the allegations and requested the cooperation of United Nations staff in its investigation, these requests were met with resistance and became bogged down in formalities. Staff became overly concerned with whether the allegations had been improperly “leaked” to the French authorities, and focused on protocols rather than action. The welfare of the victims and the accountability of the perpetrators appeared to be an afterthought, if considered at all. Overall, the response of the United Nations was fragmented and bureaucratic, and failed to satisfy the core mandate of the United Nations to address human rights violations.

By examining these failures and recommending reforms to deter future incidents of sexual violence by peacekeepers, the present report provides an opportunity for the United Nations to chart a new course of action and to undertake meaningful organizational change. If the Secretary-General’s zero-tolerance policy is to become a reality, the United Nations as a whole — including troop-contributing countries — must recognize that sexual abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers is not a mere disciplinary matter, but a violation of the

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<sup>62</sup> Full text available [here](#)



victims' fundamental human rights and, in many cases, a violation of international humanitarian and criminal law. Regardless of whether the peacekeepers were acting under direct United Nations command, victims must be made the priority. In particular, the United Nations must recognize that sexual violence by peacekeepers triggers its human rights mandate to protect victims, investigate, report and follow up on human rights violations, and take measures to hold perpetrators accountable. In the absence of concrete action to address wrongdoing by the very persons sent to protect vulnerable populations, the credibility of the United Nations and the future of peacekeeping operations are in jeopardy.

### **An overview of the allegations**

Between May and June 2014, a Human Rights Officer working for MINUSCA, together with local UNICEF staff, interviewed six young boys. The children reported that they had been subjected to sexual abuse by international peacekeeping troops or that they had witnessed other children being abused. In most cases, the alleged perpetrators were from the French Sangaris forces. In exchange, the children received small amounts of food or cash from the soldiers. All of the incidents occurred between December 2013 and June 2014, near the M'Poko camp for internally displaced persons, in Bangui. In some cases, the children also reported detailed information about the perpetrators, including names and certain distinguishing features such as tattoos, piercings and facial features.

The information reported by the children indicates that the violations were likely not isolated incidents. For example, some of the children described witnessing the rape of other child victims (who were not interviewed by the Human Rights Officer); others indicated that it was known that they could approach certain Sangaris soldiers for food, but would be compelled to submit to sexual abuse in exchange. In several cases, soldiers reportedly acknowledged or coordinated with each other, for example, by bringing a child onto the base past guards, where civilians were not authorized to be, or by calling out to children and instructing them to approach (indicating that the perpetrators did not fear being caught). In sum, if the allegations are substantiated by further investigation, they could potentially indicate the existence of a pattern of sexual violence against children by some peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic.

**The information below is based on the Report on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic (from 15 September 2014 - 31 May 2015), issued on 11 December 2015<sup>63</sup>**

24. [...] Concerning sexual and gender-based violence, HRD documented 15 cases affecting 11 female victims, including nine girls.<sup>64</sup>

**The information below is based on the Annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/69/926-S/2015/409)<sup>65</sup>, issued on 5 June 2015<sup>66</sup>**

43. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children continue to be of great

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<sup>63</sup> Full text available [here](#)

<sup>64</sup> The number of cases confirmed by HRD regarding sexual and gender-based violence is lower than reports by other organizations due to the different verification standards used by HRD. (see methodology II)

<sup>65</sup> Reissued for technical reasons on 4 August 2015.

<sup>66</sup> Full text available [here](#)

concern. The rape of 405 girls and 1 boy, between the ages of 7 and 17, were documented throughout the country; 205 by ex-Séléka, 187 by anti-Balaka, 12 by unidentified persons and 2 by the national police. Sexual violence incidents remained largely underreported. Also of concern is the fact that the leadership of both anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka did not take action against identified alleged perpetrators of rape against children when cases were reported to them.

44. The United Nations interviewed several boys following allegations of repeated acts of sexual violence by elements of “Operation Sangaris” in and around the M’Poko camp for displaced persons in Bangui between December 2013 and May 2014. Their national authorities have opened an investigation that is ongoing. The victims have been provided with necessary assistance by the United Nations and local partners. It is of the utmost importance that the perpetrators be held responsible.

**The information below is based on the Report of the Secretary General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2015/203), issued on 23 March 2015<sup>67</sup>**

14. During the reporting period, 2,527 cases of conflict-related sexual violence were documented in the Central African Republic, including rape perpetrated to terrorize civilians, with many victims being assaulted in their homes, during door-to-door searches and while sheltering in fields or the bush. Women and girls have been systematically targeted. There have also been cases of conflict-related sexual violence against men and boys. Alleged perpetrators are associated with armed herders from Fulani Mbarara communities and members of ex-Séléka, anti-balaka, Révolution et justice and the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain armed groups. On 5 May, my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict briefed the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) on the situation in the country, noting that all parties have used sexual violence to subjugate and humiliate opponents.

**The information below is based on the Final Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic, issued on 22 December 2014<sup>68</sup>**

207. Some witnesses claimed that on 5 December 2013, when moving from their house to the IDP site of St-Jacques in the Kpetene area in Bangui, they were chased by Séléka elements, and their 35 year old nephew was killed. The perpetrators cut off his sexual organ and went away with it. Another witness testified that, under the instructions of a Séléka General, the Séléka soldiers shot dead a Christian man in front of his mother on 5 December 2013.

462. The Commission gathered evidence relating to sexual and gender-based violence against civilians from a diverse range of sources, including individual victims, witnesses, domestic groups and international non-governmental groups that had undertaken fact-finding missions.<sup>69</sup> In total, the Commission received testimony from one hundred and three

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<sup>67</sup> Full text available [here](#)

<sup>68</sup> Full text available [here](#)

<sup>69</sup> Secretary General’s Report on Conflict Related Sexual Violence, S/2014/181, January-December 2013, paras.14-17.

victims who were either raped or experienced other forms of sexual and gender-based violence. While most of the victims were women and girls,<sup>70</sup> the Commission received reports of males being raped as well.<sup>71</sup> Most of the acts reported were committed during or in the immediate aftermath of other acts of violence. The widespread nature of these forms of violence is undisputed.

472. A young man was detained, drugged and taken to a location in PK9 [Bangui] where he was raped by a Séléka fighter. He is severely traumatized as result of the rape. The victim also recalled that, at the time of his abduction, the Séléka were targeting the residences of senior officials in the Bozizé government. He further stated that in addition to his own rape he saw women being selected and taken as wives by the Séléka fighters, including by the bodyguard of the man in charge of the base.

497. The females often did household work and sometimes worked at roadblocks. It was reported that girls were sometimes used to kill prisoners in the camps. They were also used as sex slaves by the males of the group, and some were sexually abused by their fellow 'soldiers'. This led to the prevalence of teenage pregnancies and forced abortions, and also resulted in infections and sexually transmitted diseases. It is alleged that boys were sometimes sexually abused as a form of punishment.

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AI-Central African Republic, Human Rights Crisis spiralling out of control-291013,p.26. FIDH- République Centrafricaine, Un Pays Aux Mains des Criminels de Guerre de la Séléka - 230913,p.30. HRW-I can still smell the dead, p.62. OHCHR-Daily Sitrep and Case Notes: Bossangoa, 21 December 2013. Actions Communautaires pour le Bien-être Familial (A.C.B.F.) Rapport d'activités de violences commises sur les personnes (femmes) dans le 3<sup>e</sup> arrondissement de Bangui-semaine du 20-27 Octobre 2014 en dehors des événements qui ont secoué le PK.5. Reports or information received from local NGO's: LCDH, CJP, ARESDI, MERCY CORPS.

<sup>70</sup> Of the interviewed persons 17 were aged between 9-18 years, 49 between 19-30, 18 between 31-40, and 15 between 41-55 years.

<sup>71</sup> The Commission received reports of sexual violence against at least seven men in Bouar.