

Human Rights and Justice Section

Sexual abuse on children by international armed  
forces

Following information received by local and international actors on the M'Poko site, the HRJS, together with UNICEF child protection specialists, interviewed several children who allegedly suffered sexual abuse by members of the international forces present at the M'Poko airport site in Bangui.

Summary of the interviews:

Interview 1: the child interviewed is an 11 year-old boy called [REDACTED]. He was interviewed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May at 3pm by the HRJS ([REDACTED]) and UNICEF ([REDACTED]). The child who lives with his mother in the zone 1 of the M'Poko IDP camp, told the interviewers that at the time of the first food distribution in his zone (January 2014), at around 1pm, he had gone looking for empty wrappings to play with at the site called "le jardin" (the garden) at the exit of the M'Poko camp, when he was called by a "white man" from the SANGARIS". The child came closer to him and asked him, in French, to give him some biscuits ("donne moi les biscuits"). The military allegedly answered him that to get biscuits he should first "lick his *bangala*" (local term for penis). He asked the boy to wait before his and his pair finish their guarding turn and once replaced asked the boy to follow him to his base (on the other side of the airport). At that time, the entrance to the base was close to the entrance of the "salon d'honneur" of the airport (now closed with barbed wire). The child told the interviewers that when they arrived at the entrance of the base, the guard told the military that he could not enter with a child but that after discussing for a while the guard let them enter. Once in the premises, the pair went his way, leaving the child alone with the military. They passed "a bit" next to a big tree and reached a shelter built with bags filled with sand". Hidden in this shelter, the man "put a condom and asked [the child] to suck his penis". Once the child finished the fellatio, the military gave him a food ratio and some money (the child did not remember how much). After this the child went back to his home and since has tried to avoid SANGARIS people out of fear. When asked if he could identify the man, the child said that with a picture he could. He mentioned that the man had a "black spot" (like a mole) close to the nail of his left little finger. According to the child, the man is not in Bangui anymore, he was part of the contingent which went back to France.

Interview 2: On the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, at 3pm, the HRJS ([REDACTED]) interviewed [REDACTED] 9 years old, [REDACTED] lives at the M'Poko IDP camp in the section 1 of the zone 1 with his two parents who were left without income generating activities after the events. According

to the child, before the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2013 – “before the formal installation of the IDP M’Poko camp” –, when the check-point was at the level of “the garden” (between the car park of the airport and the zone currently occupied by the IDP camp), at around 9pm, a white military man from the SANGARIS who was working on the check point called him (the child was able to repeat in French the exact words of the man “Petit, viens”), gave him an individual combat ration in a box and opened his phone to show him a porn video showing a woman performing a fellatio to a man. According to the child, the military then opened his trousers showing him his erected penis and asked him to suck his “bangala” (penis). The military was alone, his team-mates being busy walking towards the next checkpoint (at the intersection between the road leading to the Total tanks and the VIP room of the airport - Salon d’Honneur -). During the act, the child said that they were discovered by another child who alerted the local “delinquents” of the zone, called the “kintander” (usually used by the militaries to shop for them and find them prostitutes). As a mob was forming, the military told the child to get away but he ended up being beaten by four of these kintander. A woman he knew because she was often sleeping on the car park of the airport, [REDACTED] (nickname), a local sex worker (who is no longer working in the area), intervened to tell the military that it was not acceptable to use children this way and told the kintanders to go away and leave the child in peace. The child then left the scene. According to him, the SANGARIS had promised him to pay him for the fellatio and did not do it that day because of the crowd but gave him two more combat ration boxes the day of his departure to France. The child told the HRJS that the man had told him that his name was Virgile and that he had a red spot below the left eye (he could not say if it was a scar, a mole or simply a spot).

The same child also told the HRJS that “two days before the events with the Tchadians when the people flee towards the airport” (we suppose it was around the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2014), another French military from the SANGARIS, a black man (the child spoke of “noiraud”), posted at the pedestrians’ checkpoint, at the entrance of the airport, called him for the same purpose (“Petit viens sucer mon bangala”, according to the own words of the child). The child refused and the military asked him to go find him a woman in exchange for two combat ration boxes (“Vas chercher la femme, je te donne deux boites”). The man was with his team-mate and asked him if he wanted a woman to. The other man, a white military man, said he was not interested. The child went to find a prostitute – a woman he did not know the name but had seen regularly at the airport – and brought her to the military who rewarded the child with the promised two food boxes before telling him to go away (“Petit, bouge-toi de la”). The child then left and said he did not know what happened with the woman. The military man did not tell his name to the child nor had any particular physical sign that the child could remember.

Interview 3: On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2014, at 3pm, the HRJS [REDACTED], accompanied by a child protection officer from UNICEF ([REDACTED]), interviewed [REDACTED], 9 years old. The boy was accompanied by his mother, [REDACTED] who was interviewed separately. The child appeared to be very moved and stressed when having to remember and explain the event. Part of this distress can be explained by the fact that the child had been severely beaten by his mother when he told her what had happened – information confirmed by the mother who felt remorse about her reaction -.

[REDACTED] arrived on the M’Poko IDPs camp with his mother [REDACTED] brothers and sisters early December. His family lives in the sector [REDACTED] of the camp. After the events mentioned in this report, the child flee the camp to go live with his father in the neighbourhood [REDACTED]

██████████ of Bangui. This is where the protection team met with him. The child was interviewed in the MINUSCA offices. According to the child, the event took place a day little time before the "Tchadian event at PK12" (29<sup>th</sup> of March 2014), between 3 and 6pm. ██████████ was with a friend of his of the same age (known as ██████████). They left the camp to go look for food at the entrance check-point of the airport. They "crossed the road and passed in front of the telecommunication antenna, next to the ASECNA office which is inside the airport, and arrived next to the second shack – on the right when you arrive at the airport -". Inside were two white militaries from the SANGARIS forces. "One was short and smoking a lot, the other was thin and not smoking. They asked us what we wanted. We answered that we were hungry. The short man told us to first suck his *bangala* (penis). I was afraid but because I was hungry I accepted and I entered first into the shack. My friend followed me. The short man who was upstairs on the big weapon came down and put his *bangala* out of his pants. The *bangala* of the thin one was for my friend. Their *bangala* were straight in front of us, at the level of our mouths. They were standing as if they were going to urinate. They told us to suck and we did it. None were wearing condoms. After some time the short man urinated in my mouth and the other did it on the floor. At the end they gave us 3 packs of "rasquette" (military food ration) and some cash."

Interviewed separately, the mother of ██████████ told the same story her child had just told the protection team. She confirmed that ██████████ was very shocked by what happened and that he left the M'Poko camp alone (without informing her or his brothers and sisters) to go live with his father. ██████████ does not want to go back to live with the rest of his family at M'Poko because he is afraid of the mocking of his friends and neighbours there.

Because the child was clearly distressed during the interview, the protection team decided not to extend the interview and therefore could not gather additional information on the perpetrators (distinctive signs, eventual heard names, etc).

Interview 4: On the 17<sup>th</sup> of June at 3pm, the HRJS ██████████, accompanied by a child protection officer from UNICEF ██████████, interviewed ██████████, between 8 and 9 years old at the Fondation ██████████ (a centre for street children in Bangui – ██████████).

██████████ used to live on the IDP camp of M'Poko in Bangui where he came with his aunt ██████████ after the events of the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2014. Before the events, ██████████ was living with his parents (his father ██████████ who left when ██████████ mother died and never came back; and his mother ██████████ in the neighbourhood ██████████). ██████████ has an older sister ██████████ who he believes lives in ██████████.

When living at the airport, one day, he had a fight with his cousin and his aunt beat him severely and refused to give him food. Because he was hungry, he went to see the French military forces (SANGARIS) at the airport entrance's check point to ask for food. When he asked, a white military told him to enter the bullet-proof shelter and suck his penis in order to get food. Because ██████████ had friends who had done it already ██████████ mentioned the names of ██████████ (██████████), he knew what he had to do. Once done, the military gave ██████████ a military food portion and some food.

█████ told the team that he had done it several times (he could not say how many times exactly) to the same man when he was hungry, until one day an older kid saw him and told him what he was doing was bad. These events took place sometime between December and May 2014.

█████ said the military man had forbidden him to tell anything about him to anybody, and that if he would do so he would beat him (according to the child, the man said: "si tu parles de moi je vais te chicoter" and dragged him by the ears). The only elements the child revealed about the man is that he has a friend called "Jaston" and that he left the country already (and offered him clothes the day he left).

Interview 5: On the 18th of June, at 4pm, the HRIS (█████), accompanied by a child protection officer from UNICEF (█████), interviewed Benjamin ██████, 13 years old, street kid living and sleeping at the M'Poko IDP camp in Bangui. ██████ lives alone, does not know where his parents are. He only mentioned a sister in ██████.

█████ spends his time between M'Poko, PK12 –SANGARIS positions, and 36 villas – the MISCA basis – with other street kids, to get food from the international forces. If he claims not to have obtained food against sexual favours, he told the team about several of his friends who are doing this regularly and identified several perpetrators:

- "Batman": according to ██████, his friend ██████ regularly performs fellatio for a black SANGARIS who calls himself "Batman". ██████ actually saw his friend perform fellatio to Batman on two occasions –both time at the Alpha 2 check point, south-east of the car park of the airport, in the bullet-proof sand bags made shelter, at around 8 or 9pm -, the last time being between 6 and 10 days before this interview. According to ██████'s description, Batman is dark skinned, short, thin, with a thin nose, good looking, likes chatting with the children, often gives them food, and has a friend (his pair) that the children call "Yo Yo" (because in Sango "Yo yo" means "quick quick" and he was always alerting Batman when other militaries were approaching) who served as an accomplice. Yo Yo is also a black man, short (even a bit taller than Batman). Both are currently staying at UCATEX. When asked what he saw exactly, Benjamin said he saw his friend "arouse Batman with his hands with back and forth movements and then take his penis in his mouth". ██████ said Batman gave YAF 10.000 to ██████ after the act.

"Nico": ██████ saw his friend ██████ (who is approximately 15 years old) on one occasion perform a fellatio to a man known as "Nico", at the time of the "Tchadian event" (at the end of March 2014), at the pedestrians' check point at the entrance of the airport. According to ██████'s description, Nico is a SANGARIS, he is "brown", speaks with a creole accent and is very popular with children because he uses the "verlan" (backward-slang). He used to work at PK12 and at the airport and has been replaced by the Georgian contingent of EUFOR. He is still in CAR, at the UCATEX base.

- "Jean": ██████ saw his friend ██████ (who is 12 or 13 years old) perform two fellatios to a SANGARIS called "Jean" in the shelter of the control tower. Jean asked ██████ to "suck him" on one occasion but the child refused telling him that he would report him to ██████. ██████ The soldier allegedly answered "you can tell ██████ that I tell children to come under the shelter only for them to be protected from the rain". According to ██████'s

description, Jean is young, white, with blue eyes, a piercing on the tongue, with arched legs, an aquiline nose and the tattoo of a snake which covers his whole right arm (the head of the snake is on the top of his hand). Jean is currently at the UCATEX base but has told the children he will leave soon.

- "Jounjou" and "David": ██████ saw his friend ██████ perform a fellatio to David, the friend/binome of Jounjou on one occasion, at the pedestrians' checkpoint at the entrance of the airport at around midnight, some days ago, at the same time when the SANGARIS were showing the zone to the Georgians from the EUFOR. He has not seen ██████ perform a fellatio to Jounjou but his friend told him he did it to him too. According to ██████'s description, both men are snipers (work on top of the airport) and stay at the UCATEX base. Jounjou is quite old, with white hair and balding at the back of the head, a bit fat and tall. David has a beard, is mixed-race (white-black), young, with black hair, the tattoo of a caiman on the right side of his chest and a chain with a pendant shaped as a triangle (with the point down).

Interview 6: On the 24th of June, at 2pm, the HRJS ██████, accompanied by a child protection officer from UNICEF (██████) interviewed ██████, 11 years old. ██████ is a street child who sleeps in abandoned tents of the M'Poko IDP camp, generally in Zone 5 of the camp. ██████ expresses himself in fairly good French. He arrived on the site on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March. Before this date, he lived with his grandmother and his younger sister ██████ (2 years old) in the ██████ neighbourhood, Bangui. ██████ His parents got killed by the Seleka in December and his grandmother took care of him and his sister until March, but because she did not have enough to feed him he decided to leave the house and come to M'Poko. He survives asking food to the military components present around the airport (SANGARIS, EUFOR, MISCA). ██████ claims that he never had to perform sexual favours to militaries to receive food but he told the team he saw two of his friends perform such favours.

His first friend is called ██████ (better known as ██████) and is about 9 or 10 years old. He saw him mid-march 2014 entering the MISCA military camp next to the airport at around 10pm. Out of curiosity, he went to the southern side of the camp, in the bush, where children use to climb to enter the camp to steal food or other items. On that side of the wall, children removed stones of the wall to climb easily and there are holes where they can observe what goes on inside the camp. Through one of those holes, ██████ saw Martial with two Equatorial-Guinean soldiers. When one was sexually abusing the child, the other was controlling that no one was coming and then they were exchanging their roles. ██████ saw Martial performing a fellatio to the soldiers and being sodomized ("Ils baisaient les fesses et ils baisaient la bouche et ils lui faisaient pipi dans la bouche").

His second friend is called ██████ and is 10 years old approximately. ██████ says he spotted him both with MISCA soldiers (Tchadian) and SANGARIS soldiers. Mid-March, he saw his friend enter the MISCA base next to the airport and he hid himself behind a wall to observe through a hole what was happening. He saw his friend with three Tchadian soldiers. Two were raping his friend ██████ said he heard his friend ██████ say to the soldiers, when they were sodomising him, "please stop, it hurts" and one of the soldiers answer "I don't care, if you continue I will not give you the money") and one was watching. ██████ said that the next day his friend was limping and looked really hurt. Still during the month of March, ██████ saw ██████ perform a fellatio to a

SANGARIS soldier at the pedestrian checkpoint at around 1am in exchange for a food ration and some money. According to [REDACTED] this soldier is named "Max", is white, young, slim, with big bulging blue eyes, dark hair, no beard and a tattoo (mainly blue color) representing flowers on the right side of his neck.

**NB:** UNICEF will provide medical, psycho-social support and family tracing and reunification services to all children interviewed. The contact in UNICEF is [REDACTED] Child Protection Officer [REDACTED]

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