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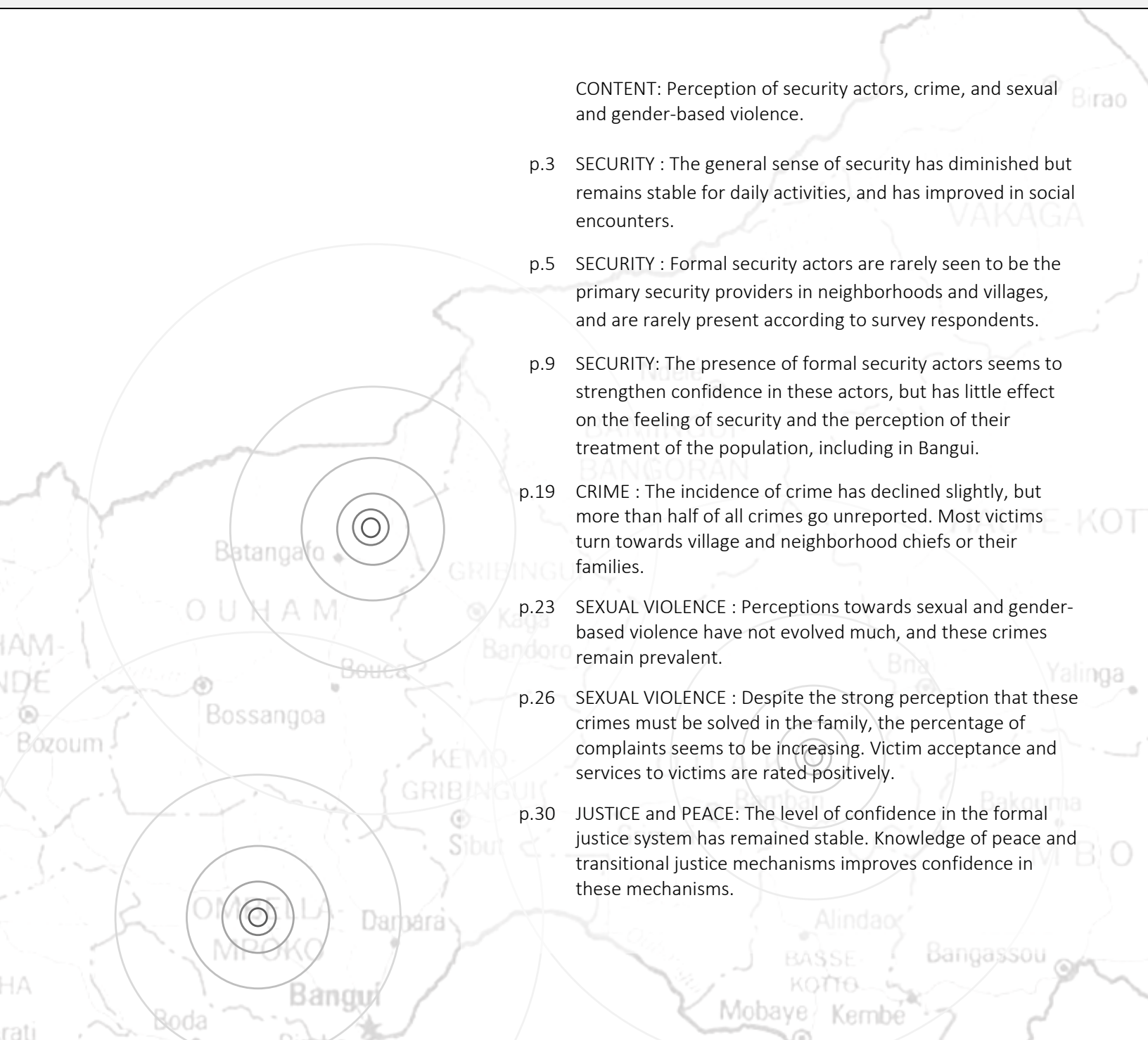
PEACE  
JUSTICE &  
SECURITY  
POLLS

CENTRAL  
AFRICAN  
REPUBLIC

REPORT 5 – November 2020  
(Data from February 2020)

CONTENT: Perception of security actors, crime, and sexual and gender-based violence.

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- p.19 CRIME : The incidence of crime has declined slightly, but more than half of all crimes go unreported. Most victims turn towards village and neighborhood chiefs or their families.
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Vinck P, Balthazard M, Magbe AS, Pham PN. *Peace, Justice and Security Polls, Report 5. (2020). Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, United Nations Development Program*

## About the poll

This poll is the fifth in a series of surveys conducted in the Central African Republic (CAR) to provide data and analyses on peace, security, justice, reconstruction and social cohesion. The purpose of these surveys is to provide reliable, valid and regularly updated data to inform all actors involved in reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts and to serve as a reference for planning and evaluation of these efforts. The project is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI), in collaboration with MINUSCA and, with the assistance of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in conflict, of the Peacebuilding Fund and of the United States. HHI is responsible for the collection and independent analysis of data, and report writing, in collaboration with the Central African NGO Echelle – Appui au Développement. Questionnaire design and validation of results are implemented in consultation with national authorities and international partners.

Perception surveys are conducted with the objective of collecting data representative of the adult population in CAR at the prefecture level. Adults are randomly selected from prefectures throughout CAR, oversampled in Bangui. The random sample is drawn using a stratified multi-level approach and based on the estimated population size. The sample is 50% female, interviewed by women.

For this fifth survey, a total of 5,206 interviews were conducted across 12 prefectures and the capital city of Bangui. Experienced investigators conducted the interviews. All investigators participated in a week of training organized by HHI, in partnership with the NGO Echelle. The analysis uses a weighting factor to reflect differences in population size and probability of selection between strata. Interviews in the prefectures of Nana-Gribizi and Bamingui-Bangoran could not be completed due to insecurity. The data collected in these areas are included in the analysis but have not been disaggregated at the prefecture level because of the limited number of interviews.

Prefecture	Sample
Bangui	1,763
Ombella M'Poko	1,099
Bamingui-Bangoran	90
Basse-Kotto	--
Haute-Kotto	--
Haut-Mbomou	--
Kemo	252
Lobaye	217
Mambéré-Kadéi	253
Mbomou	234
Nana-Mambéré	252
Nana-Gribizi	144
Ouaka	252
Ouham	216
Ouham-Péndé	216
Sangha-Mbaéré	216
Vakaga	--
<b>TOTAL CAR</b>	<b>5,206</b>

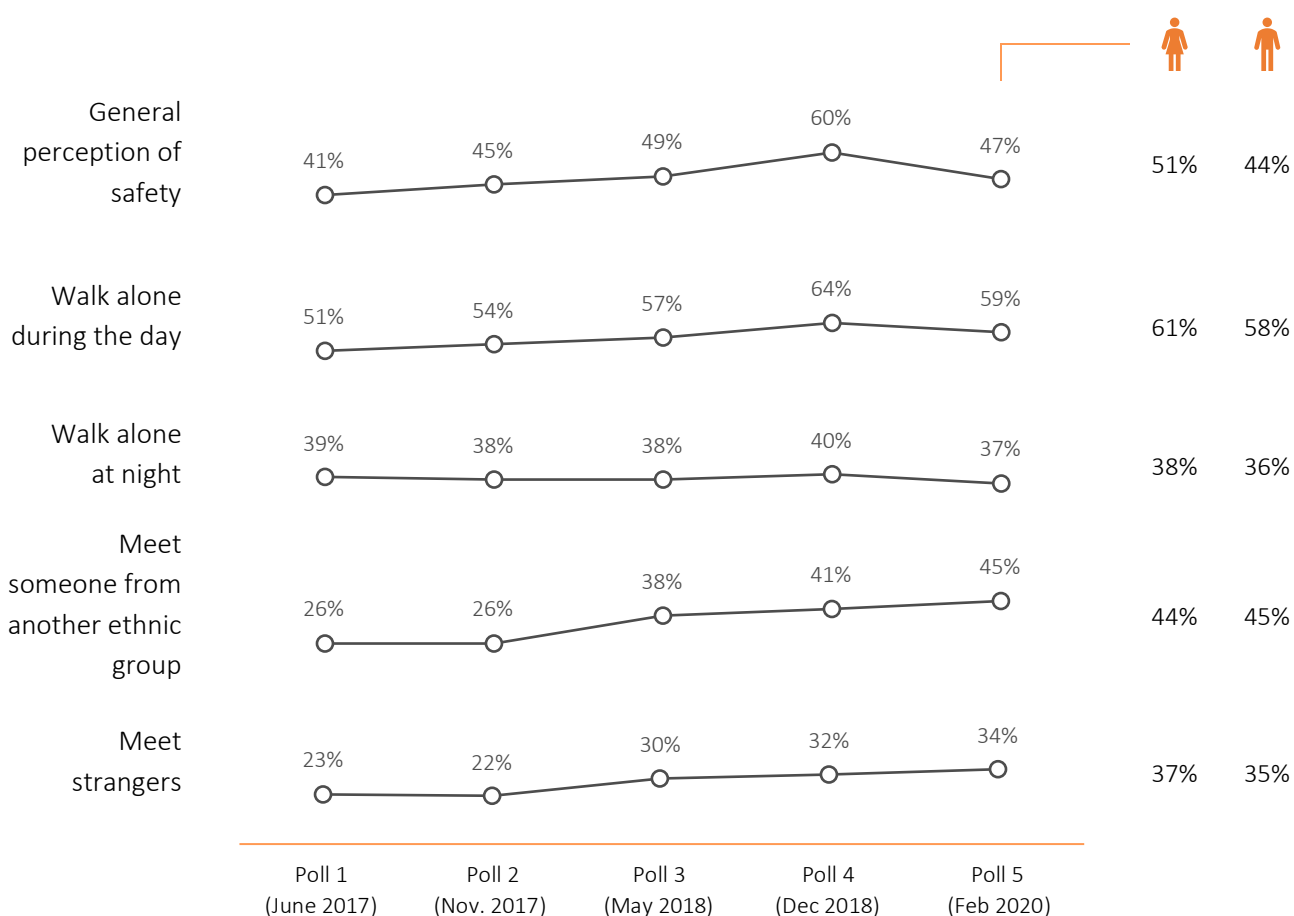
*Margin of error at the prefecture level is  $\pm 5$  percentage points, 95% confidence level*

To view the online report and interactive maps, visit [www.peacebuildingdata.org/CAR](http://www.peacebuildingdata.org/CAR)

## SECURITY : The general perception fo safety has diminished but remains stable for daily activities and has improved in social encounters.

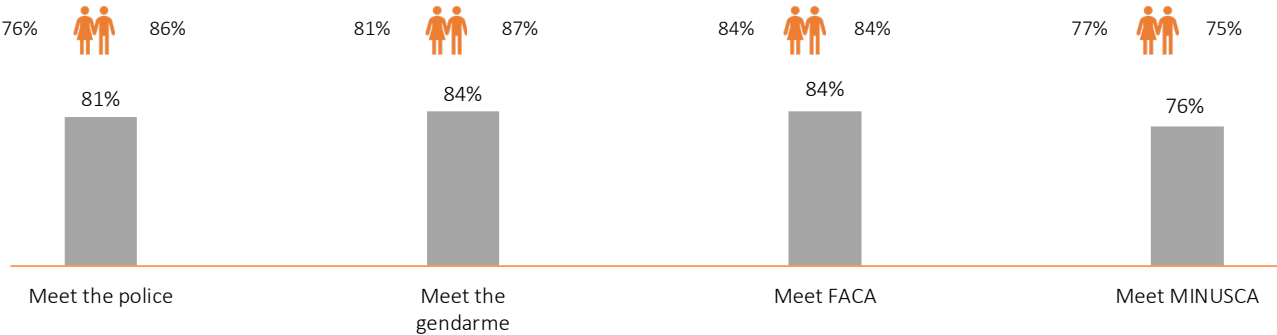
In February 2020, 47% of persons reported feeling safe overall, a decrease compared to December 2018. A slightly higher proportion of women compared to men feel safe (51% women vs. 44% men). A little over half of all respondents feel safe when walking alone in their neighborhood/village during the daytime (59%). Fewer people feel safe when walking alone at night (37%). The perceived feeling of safety in such everyday situations has remained stable over the last polls, including the specific indicator of « walking alone in one’s neighborhood/village in the daytime », used to assess the reduction of all forms of violence in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The results are similar for men and women across all daily activities. Perceptions of safety in social contexts such as meeting with persons of a different ethnic group or a stranger continue to improve. Nonetheless, less than half of all respondents report feeling safe when meeting with someone of a different ethnic group (45%) or a stranger (34%).

Figure 1: Perception of safety in different daily situations over time (% safe)



With regards to security actors, approximately 80% of those interviewed say that they feel safe when meeting formal security actors (81% police ; 84% gendarmes and FACA ; 76% MINUSCA). These results are similar for women and men, except when it comes to the police, vis-à-vis whom women feel less safe (76% women v. 86% men).

Figure 2: Sense of security during meetings with formal security actors (% safe - poll 5)

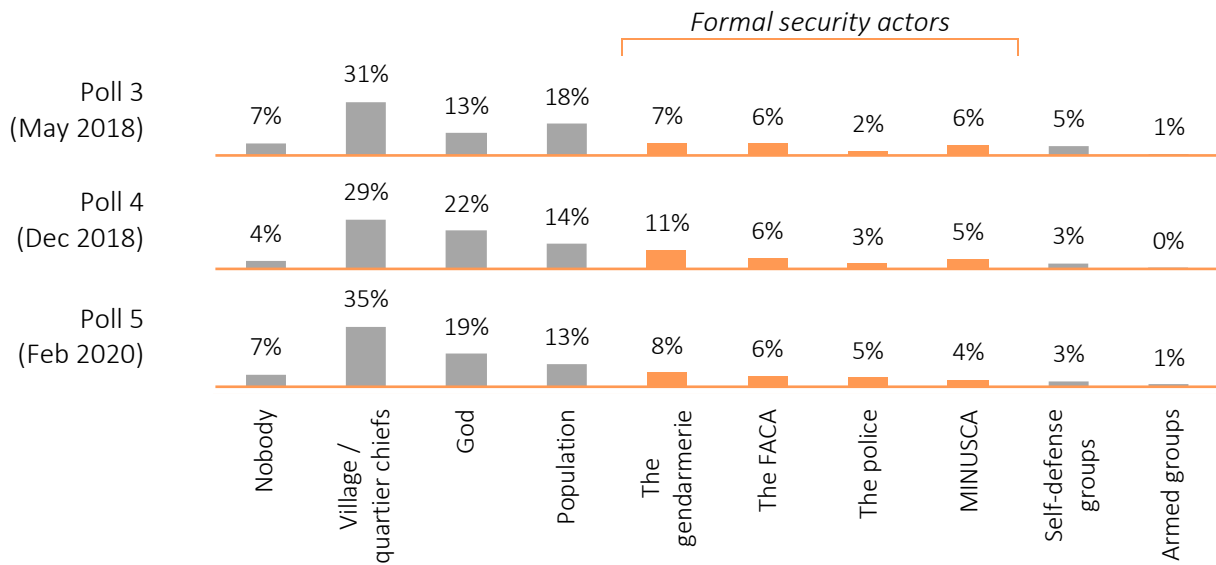


**SECURITY** : Formal security actors are rarely seen to be the primary security providers in neighborhoods and villages and are rarely present according to survey respondents.

**Primary security providers**

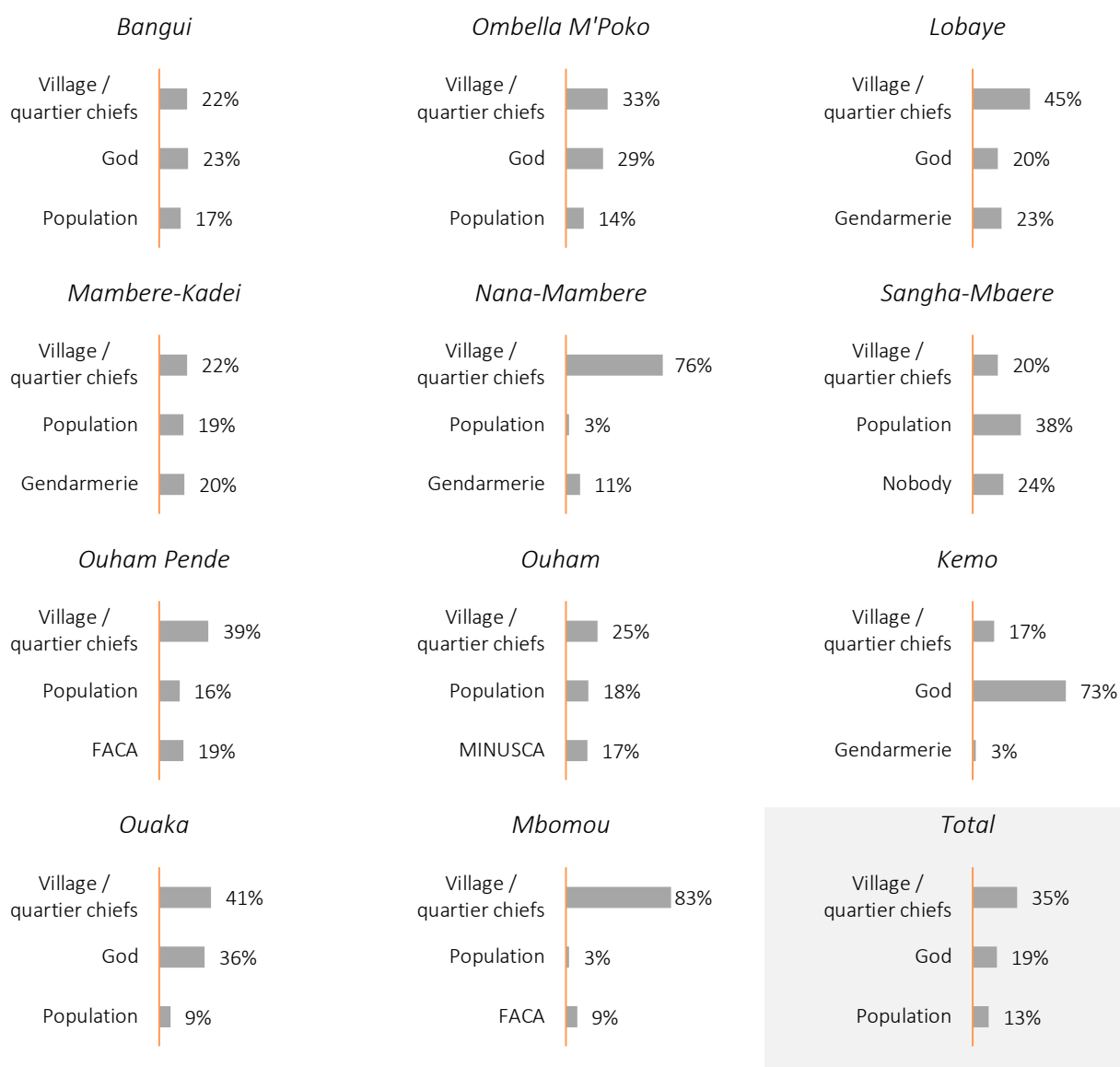
In February 2020, respondents were asked, who, in their opinion, was primarily responsible to ensure security in their neighborhood or village (open question with no response options provided). Approximately one third of participants consider that the neighborhood or village chief is the primary actor for providing security to the neighborhood or village, with this trend applying equally across both genders (38% women vs. 32% men). Approximately a quarter of all respondents identify all formal security actors combined (police, gendarmerie, FACA and MINUSCA) as the primary provider of security : 5% mentioned the police, 8% the gendarmerie, 6% FACA and 4% MINUSCA. These results represent little change since the last polls.

*Figure 3: Main actors ensuring security (% of respondents – Poll 5)*



There is not much difference across prefectures, except in Kemo where 73% of respondents identify God as the principal security actor and in Sangha Mbaere where 36% of persons say that no one provides security. In Bangui, approximately equal percentages of people identify God (23%) and neighborhood chiefs (22%) as the primary security actor. In some prefectures, formal security actors are nonetheless identified among the top three principal actors providing security. One in five people in Lobaye (23%) and in Mambere Kadei (20%) as well as one in ten persons in Nana Mambere (11%) mentioned the gendarmerie. One fifth of all persons interviewed in Ouham Pende (19%) and one tenth in Mbomou mentioned the FACA, and 17% of participants from Ouham report that MINUSCA ensures security in their village.

Figure 4: Three main actors ensuring security, by prefecture  
(% of respondents – Poll 5)

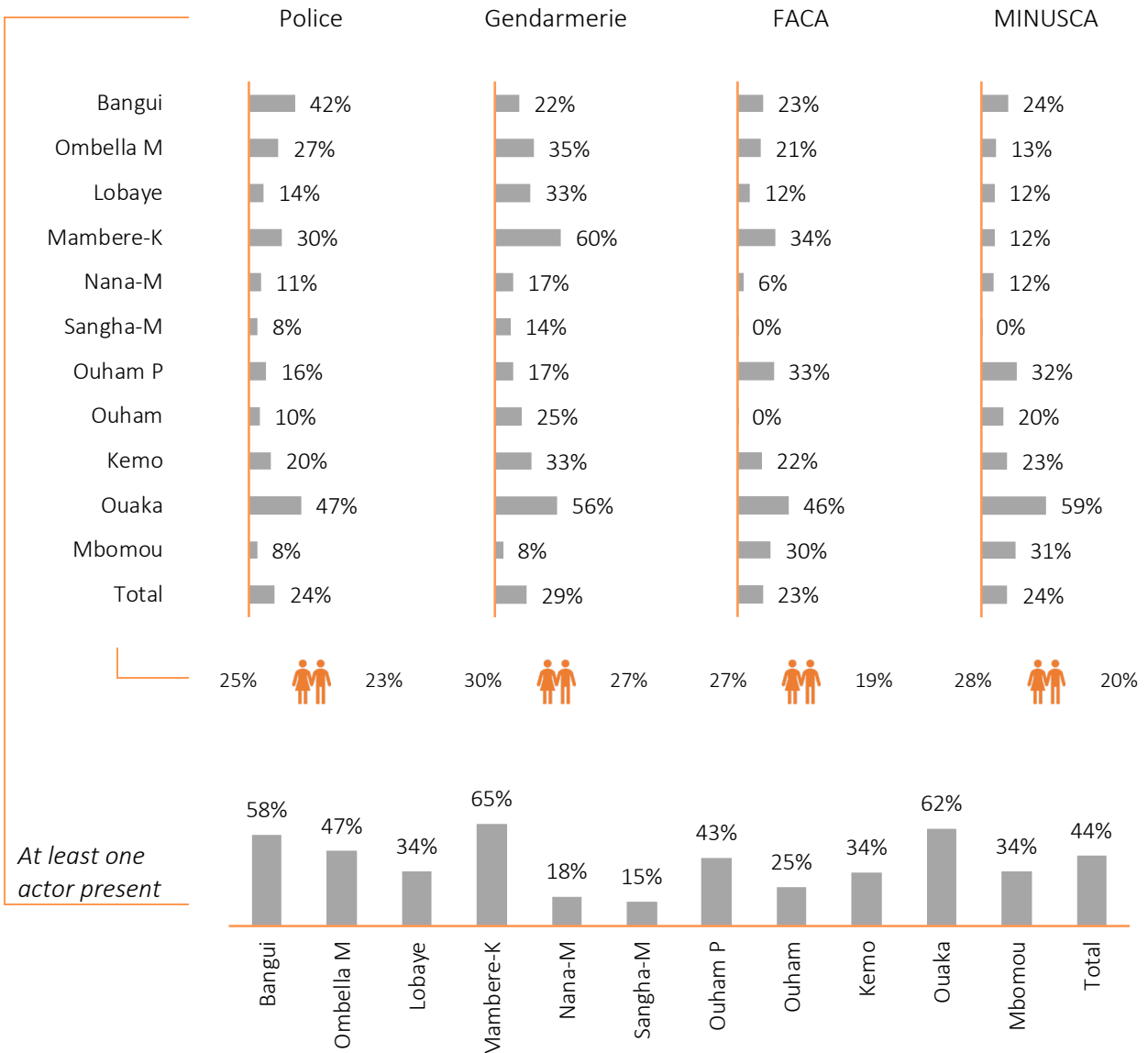


### Presence of formal security actors

The low percentages of people identifying formal security actors as the primary security provider of their neighborhood/ village partly reflects these actors' low level of effective presence on the ground. During this survey, approximately a quarter of persons interviewed noted that the police (24%), the gendarmerie (29%), the FACA (23%) or MINUSCA (24%) are present in their community. Overall, 44% of respondents report the presence of at least one formal security actor in their neighborhood or village. Gendarmes, more so than the police are often mentioned in the prefectures, whereas the police is more frequently cited in Bangui. There are varying trends across prefectures. For example, 60% of respondents in Mambere-Kadei mentioned the presence of gendarmes, compared to only 8% in Mbomou. The FACA are rarely perceived to be present in Nana Mambere (6%) and in Sangha Mbaere and Ouham (0%). Approximately half of all persons interviewed in Ouaka note the

presence of either the police (47%), the gendarmerie (56%), the FACA (46%) or MINUSCA (59%). Similar percentages of women and men note the presence of interior security forces (ISF) (police : 25% women v. 23% men ; gendarmerie : 30% women v. 27% men). However, more women than men mention the presence of the FACA (27% women v. 19% men) and MINUSCA (28% women v. 20% men)<sup>1</sup>

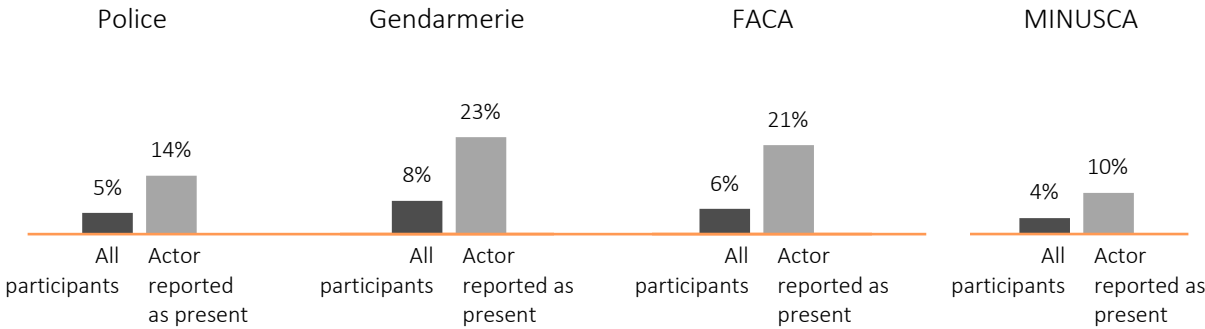
Figure 5: Reported presence of formal security actors, by prefecture and gender (% of respondents - Poll 5)



<sup>1</sup> In April 2020, there was a total of 3, 592 interior security forces (ISF) in the country, of which 2,468 were in Bangui and 1,124 ISF in the regions, including 183 ISF in Mambere Kadei and 86 ISF in Ouaka (UNPOL summary of ISF presence in CAR as of 30 April 2020). It is possible that the number of ISFs in these prefectures has contributed to the higher response rate of their presence among interviewees. Moreover, MINUSCA engagement with some local authorities of Ouaka in November 2020 could have influenced local perceptions regarding MINUSCA presence in this prefecture. (United nations, Security Council, S/2020/124, 14 February 2020, p.6).

When formal security actors are perceived to be present in their neighborhood or villages, a higher percentage of persons identify them as security providers for the community. Among persons who report that the police is present in their community, 14% identify them as the primary security actor (vs. 5% for all respondents). Among those who report the presence of the gendarmes, 23% also report that they ensure security (v. 8% for all respondents). Similarly, 21% of those who report FACA’s presence mentioned that they ensure security in their community (v. 6% for all respondents). With respect to MINUSCA, the difference is smaller, with only 10% among those reporting its presence affirming that the UN mission ensures security compared to 4% among all respondents. These results suggest that the presence of formal security actors, whether perceived or actual, contribute to them being identified as primary security providers in the neighborhood/ village.

*Figure 6: Formal security actors as the main security actor by reported presence (% of respondents - Poll 5)*



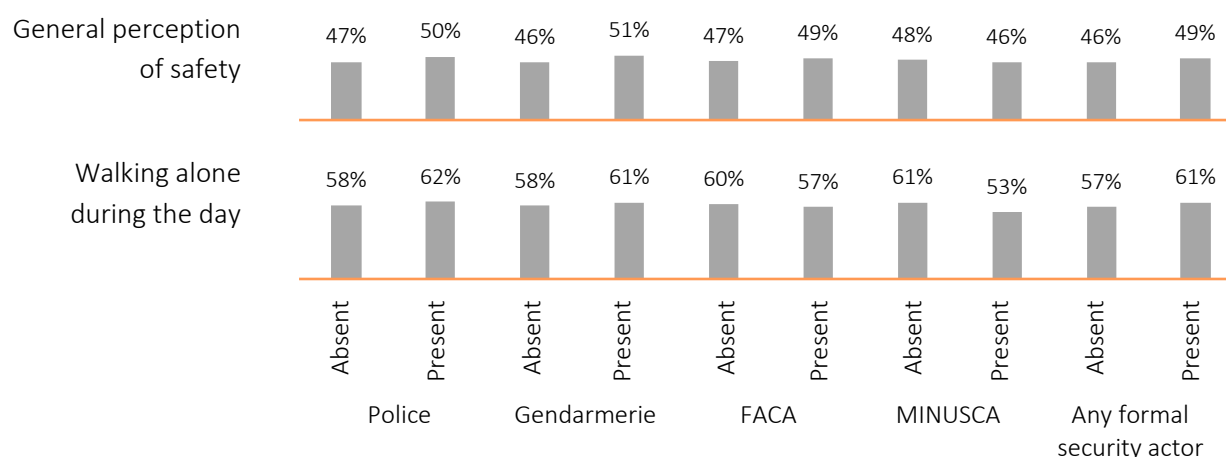


**SECURITY:** The presence of formal security actors seems to strengthen trust in these actors, but has little effect on the perception of safety and respondents' views of how security actors behave towards the population, including in Bangui.

### Presence of formal security actors and perception of safety

The presence of formal security actors has the potential to create a sense of security among the population, a possibility reinforced by the fact that a majority of those interviewed feel safe when meeting with formal security actors. However, the cross-analysis of the data from the February 2020 survey concerning the presence of formal security actors and the perception of safety suggests that this presence has little or no effect on people's perception of safety, whether the general feeling of safety or the perception of safety when walking alone during the day. For example, 50% of people who report the police's presence generally feel safe, compared to 47% who do not report this presence. Even if we consider the presence of at least one actor, the difference remains minimal, since 46% of people reporting no presence of formal security actors generally feel safe, compared to 49% among participants who report the presence of at least one formal actor.

*Figure 7: Perception of safety by presence of security actors (% safe)*

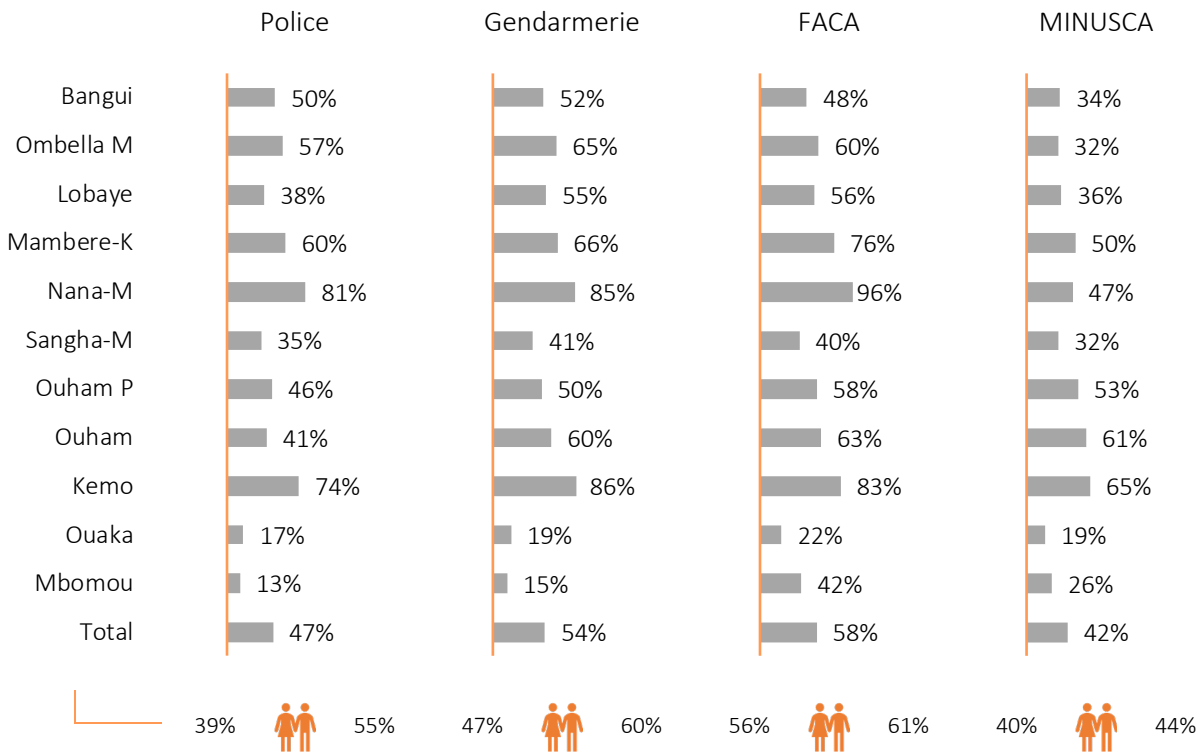


### Trust in the security forces to ensure security in the CAR

The February 2020 survey shows that participants have mixed views of security actors, including when it comes to trusting these actors to ensure security in the CAR. Overall, only 47% of respondents say they trust the police; 54% say the same thing towards the gendarmes, 58% towards the FACA and 42% towards MINUSCA. The level of trust in security actors varies depending on the prefectures. A majority of respondents (74% and above) from Nana-Mambere and Kemo say they trust security actors, whilst only around one in five people say the same in Ouaka. In Bangui, around half of respondents indicate having trust in the police (50%), the gendarmerie (52%) or the FACA (48%) to ensure security in the CAR whereas only 34% of respondents say the same thing towards MINUSCA. In general, respondents have less trust in MINUSCA than in other security actors to ensure security in the the CAR.

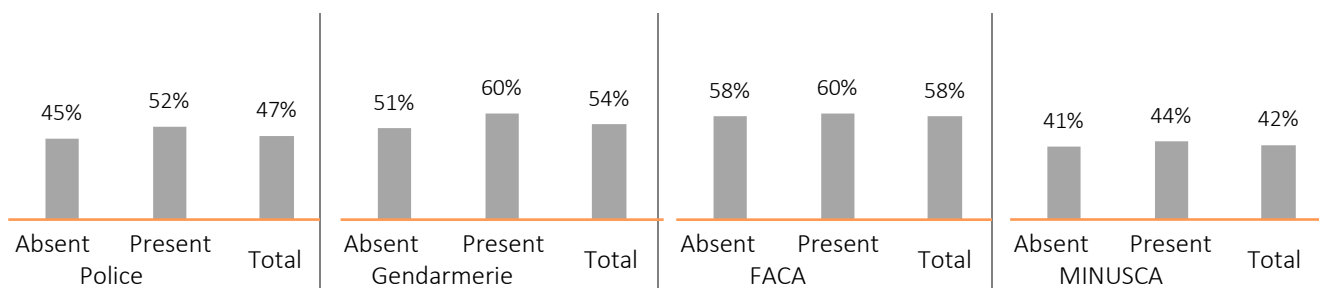
Fewer women than men say they trust the police (39% women vs. 55% men) and the gendarmerie (47% women vs. 60% men) to ensure security in the country. In contrast, similar percentages of women and men say they are confident in the FACA (56% women vs. 61% men) and MINUSCA (40% women and 44% men) to provide security.

*Figure 8: Trust in actors to ensure security, by prefecture and gender. (% trust - Poll 5)*



Participants' trust in formal security actors is mixed, but the percentage of people reporting trust in security actors is slightly higher when with respect to the police and the gendarmerie.

*Figure 9: Trust in actors to ensure security based on their presence (% trust - Poll 5)*

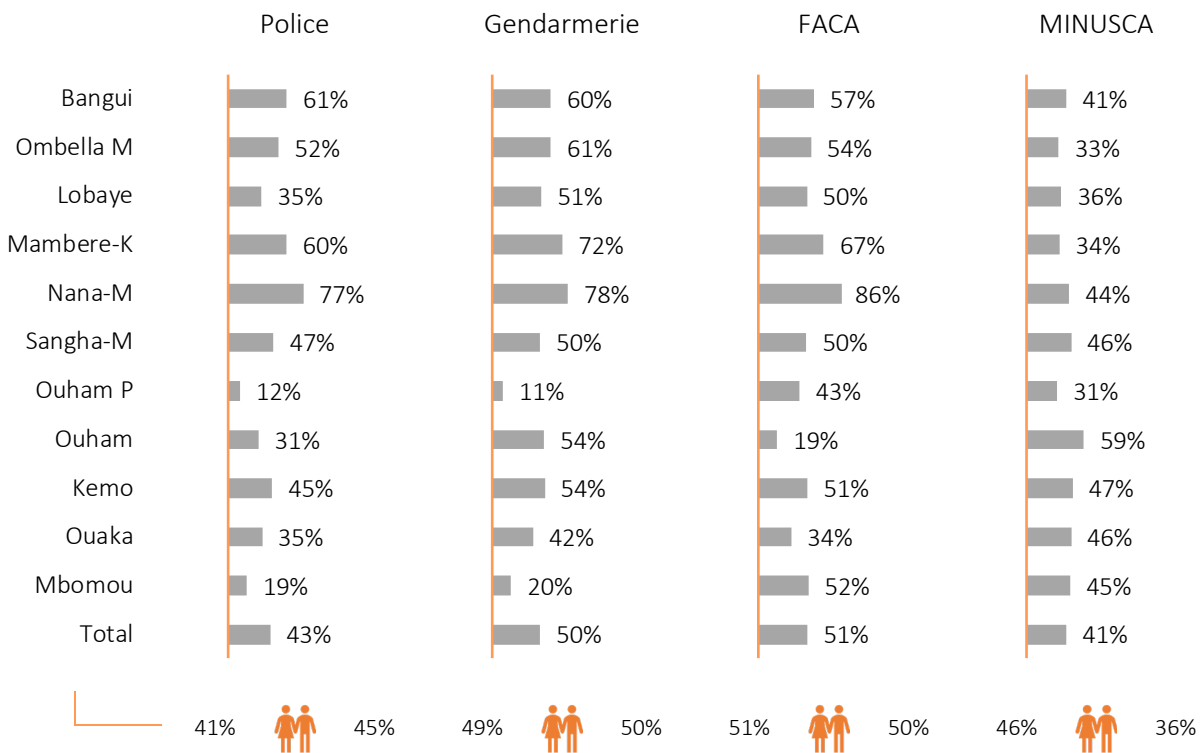


To better understand the respondents' perception of formal security actors, respondents were asked about their perception of the work and the treatment of the population by formal security actors.

## Perception of the work of security actors

When asked about their perception of the work of security actors to protect the population, around four in ten persons responded positively (% good and very good) considering the work of the police and MINUSCA (43% police; 41% MINUSCA), and about one in two people say the same thing about the work of the gendarmerie and the FACA (50% gendarmerie and 51% FACA). The perception of the work of security actors for the protection of the population varies across prefectures. In most prefectures, more respondents rate the work of the gendarmerie and the FACA positively compared to the police. With the exception of Ouham, respondents are also less positive about the work of MINUSCA, compared to that of the gendarmes or the FACA. Respondents from Nana Mambere are particularly positive about the work of the police (77%) and gendarmes (78%) for the protection of the population, followed by respondents from Mambere Kadei (60% police officers; 72% gendarmes) and from Bangui (61% police officers; 60% gendarmes).

Figure 10: Perception of the work of security actors to protect the population, by prefecture (% good and very good - Poll 5)

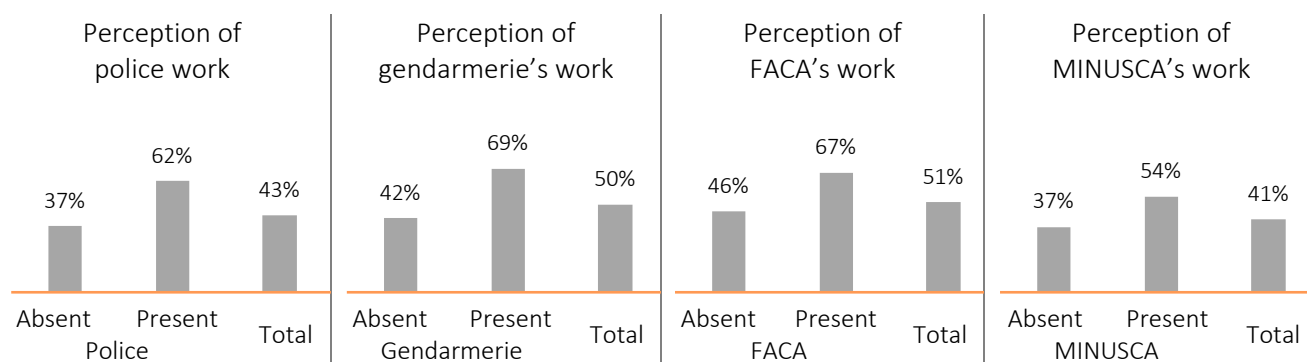


Only one in ten people in Ouham Pende (12% police officers; 11% gendarmes) and two in ten people in Mbomou (19% police officers; 20% gendarmes) say the same thing about the work of the police and the gendarmerie. A vast majority of Nana Mambere respondents are positive about the FACA's work to protect the population (86%), but only a small percentage of Ouham respondents (19%) say the same. Finally, respondents from Ouham (59%) and those from neighboring Ouham Pende (31%) are the most and least positive about MINUSCA, respectively. The results are similar for women and men with respect to the police (41% women vs. 45% men), the gendarmerie (49% women vs. 50% men) and the FACA (51% women and 50% men). More women than men (46% vs. 36%),

judge the work of MINUSCA to protect the population positively. This difference may be partly due to the fact that more women than men (42% vs. 12%) say they have been helped by MINUSCA in the past 12 months.

The results suggest that the proximity and presence of security actors, perceived or real, positively influences the perception of the population towards the work of these actors, in particular that of Interior Security Forces (ISFs). The percentages of respondents rating positively (good and very good) the work of security forces to protect the population increases when respondents perceive that formal security actors are present in their community. Respondents who say that the ISFs are present, more frequently (around 20% more) judge their work to protect the population positively (police - 63% vs. 43%; gendarmerie - 70% vs. 50%). Among those who mention that the FACA is present, 15% more people say that the work of the FACA is good or very good (66% vs. 51%), while among those who say that MINUSCA is present, the increase is 11% (52% vs. 41%).

*Figure 11: Perception of security actors' work to protect the population relative to their presence (% good – very good – Poll 5)*



### Perception of security actors' treatment of the population

Between 42% and 53% of participants report that the police, the gendarmerie, the FACA and MINUSCA treat the population with respect. A slightly higher percentage (between 51% and 58%) consider that security actors give equal treatment to women and men. In both cases, the percentage of respondents reporting that MINUSCA's treatment of the population is positive is slightly higher for MINUSCA compared to other security actors.

Generally, there are few differences between prefectures as concerns perceptions of security actors' behavior towards the population. Overall, a small proportion of respondents (30-50%) consider that the police, the gendarmerie and the FACA behave respectfully towards the population. A higher number of respondents, especially when it comes to the police and the gendarmerie, observe that security actors treat women and men equally. Nonetheless, the percentage remains low with only 40%-50% providing positive responses. However, there are some exceptions : over 70% of persons interviewed in Kemo consider that security actors behave respectfully towards the population and more than 80% find that they treat men and women equally. In the prefectures of Mambere Kadei and Nana Mambere, more than 70% of respondents report that the police, the gendarmes and MINUSCA treat women and men equally. Survey participants tend to be more positive towards MINUSCA than other security actors when assessing the extent to which the population is treated with respect and whether men and women are treated equally.

Figure 12: Perception of respondents on whether security actors treat the population respectfully, by prefecture (% positive – Poll 5)

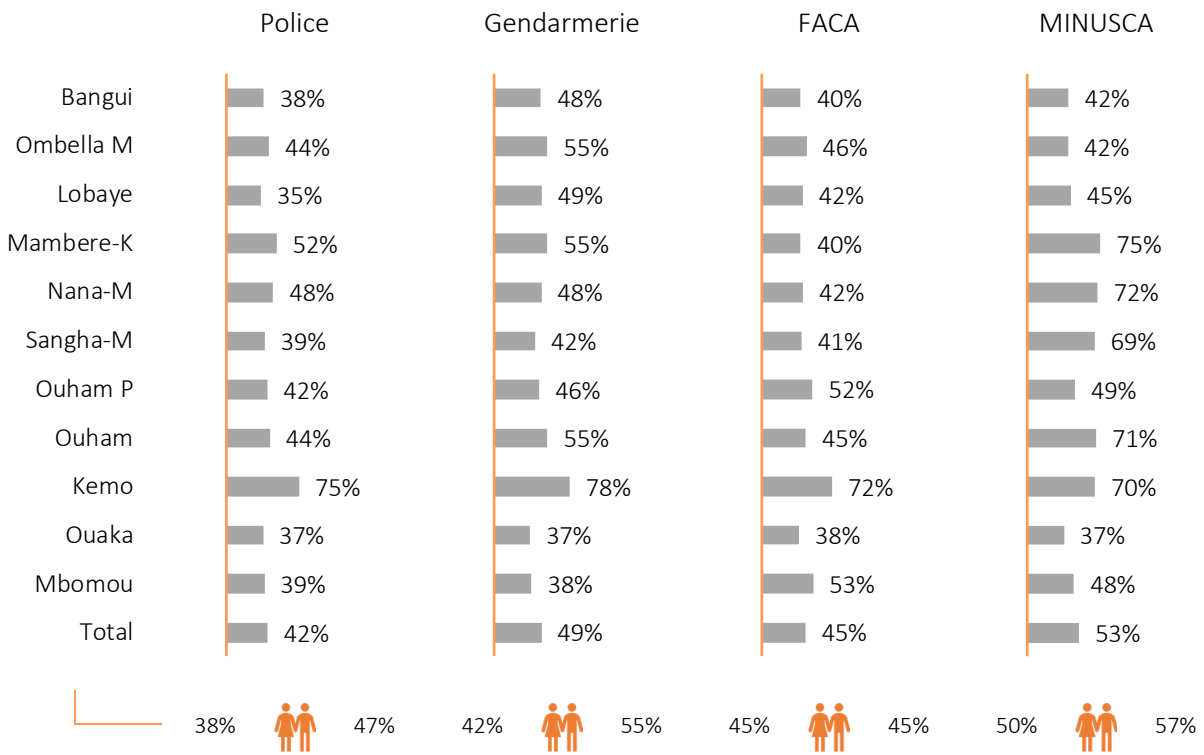
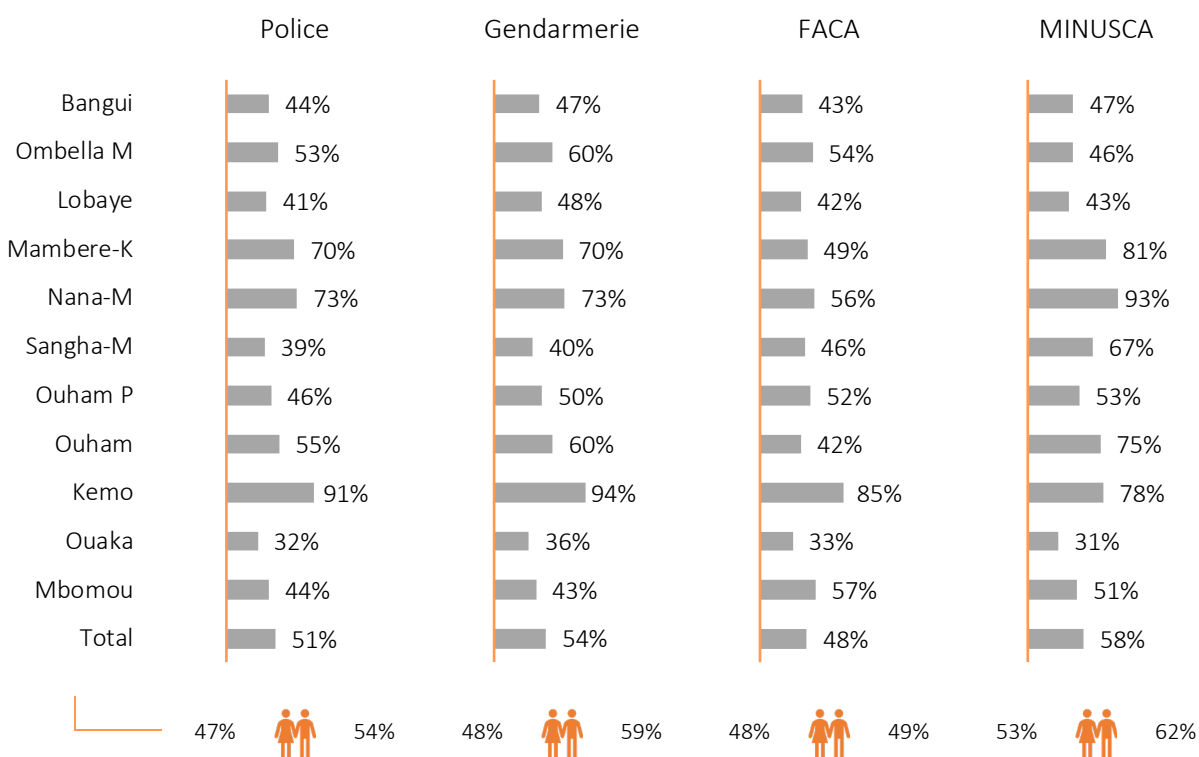


Figure 13: Perception of respondents on whether security actors treat women and men equally (% positive – Poll 5)



Generally, women are less positive than men, both when it comes to their opinion of whether security actors treat the population respectfully or if women and men are treated equally. The presence of security actors seems to have little effect on whether respondents perceive their behavior towards the population to be respectful and whether men and women are treated equally.

Figure 14 : Perception of respondents on whether security actors treat the population respectfully, relative to their presence (% positive – Poll 5)

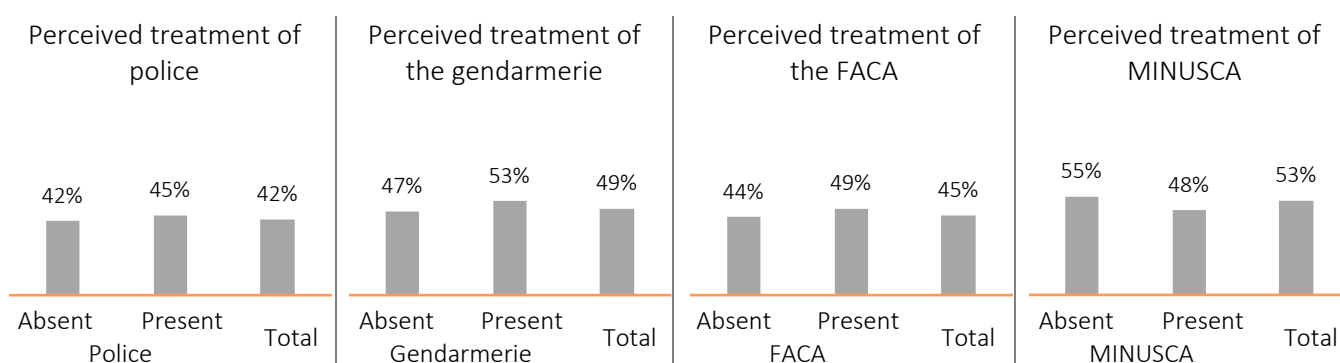
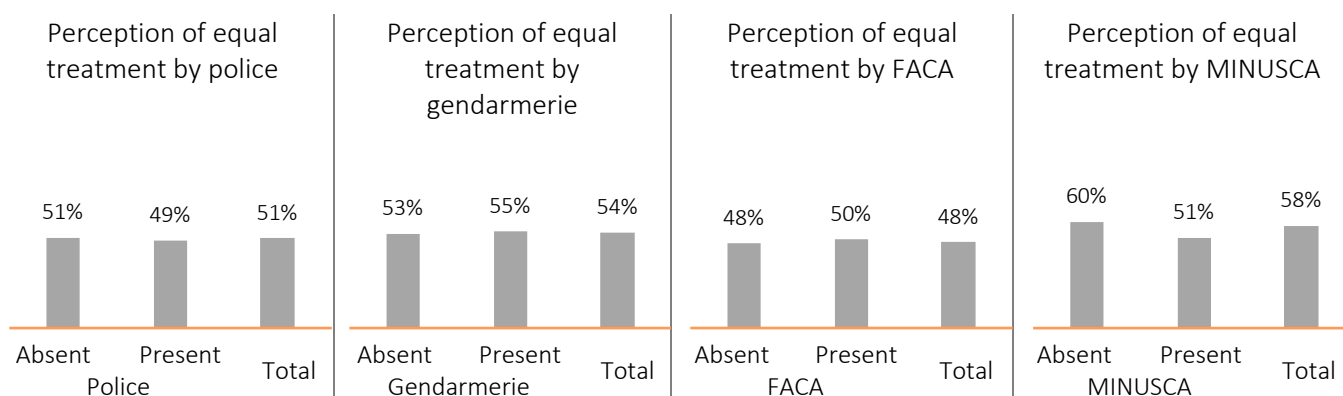


Figure 15: Perception of respondents on whether security forces treat women and men equally (% positive – Poll 5)

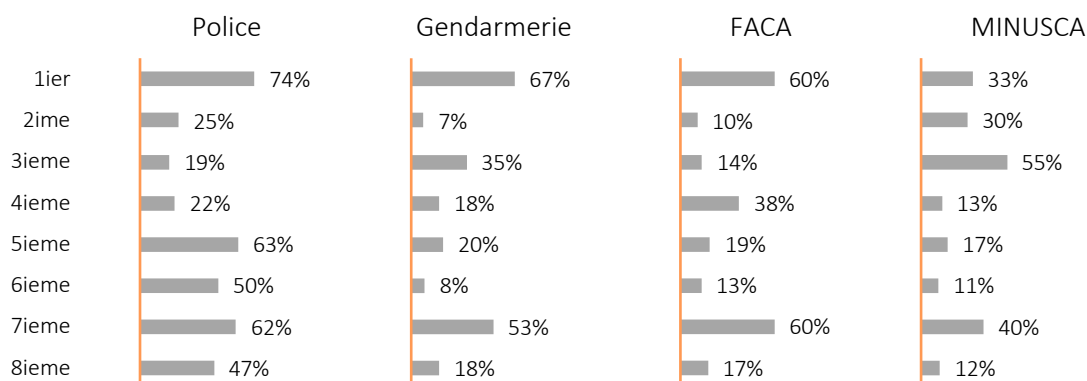


A global analysis of the results reveals that the presence of security actors, whether perceived or actual, positively influences how the population views their quality of work but has no apparent effect on how people view their behavior towards the population. Generally, people tend to hold a less favorable opinion of the behavior of security forces than their quality of work. Finally, although women and men judge the work of security forces similarly, women are less positive regarding the behavior of security forces towards the population.

### Perception of security actors in Bangui

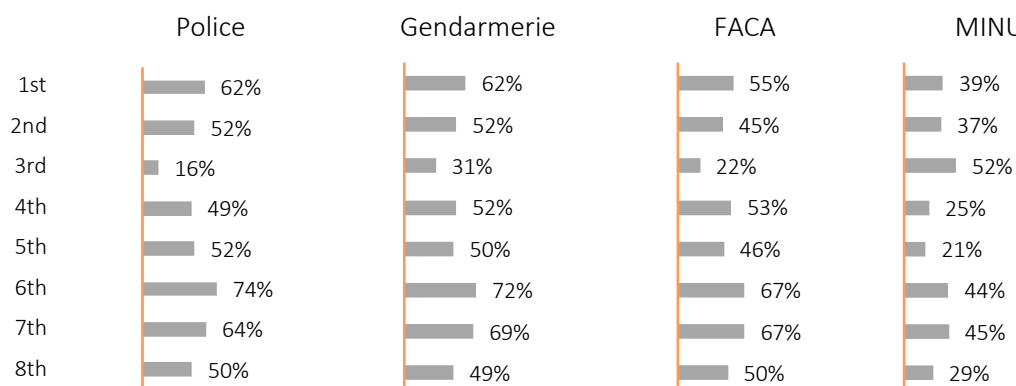
In Bangui, two thirds or more of persons interviewed in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissements said that the police is present whereas only one in five respondents said the same in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> arrondissements. Participants report the presence of the gendarmes more frequently in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissements but less than one tenth of those interviewed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> arrondissements reported gendarmerie presence. MINUSCA's presence was most frequently observed in the third arrondissement.

Figure 16: Perceived presence of formal security actors, by arrondissement of Bangui (% respondents – Poll 5)



In several arrondissements of Bangui (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>), approximately half of all those interviewed say that they trust security actors to ensure the CAR's security. The percentages are slightly higher in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissements where six to seven out of ten persons affirmed their trust. In the third arrondissement, only one third or less of survey participants say that they trust ISFs and the FACA. The percentage increases to 52% for MINUSCA, reflecting the positive impact of its actions in this arrondissement. Trust does not appear tied to force presence, whether perceived or actual. For instance, only 25% of participants report that the police is present in the 2<sup>nd</sup> arrondissement but more than 50% trust them to ensure security

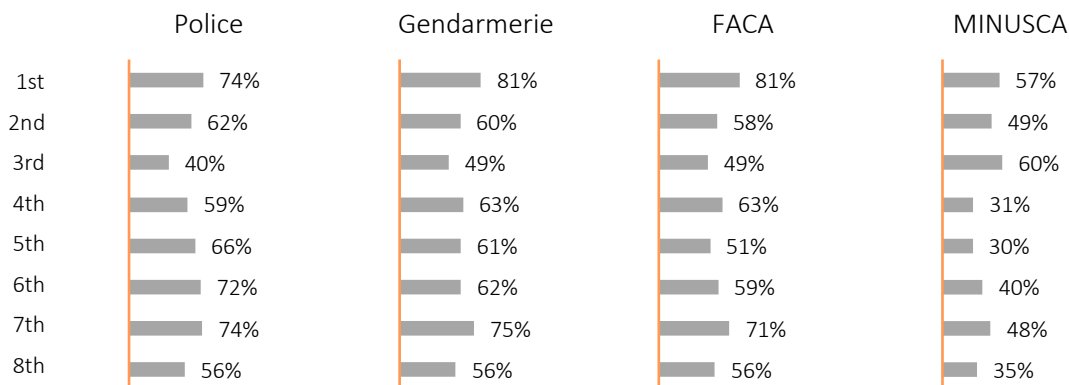
Figure 17: Trust in security actors to ensure security in the CAR by arrondissement of Bangui (% trust – Poll 5)



When it comes to assessing the work of security actors, 71% of those interviewed in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissements report a favourable opinion of ISFs and the FACA's efforts to protect the population. Although at slightly smaller percentages, a majority of participants from the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> arrondissements consider the work of these security actors to be good or very good. In the 5<sup>th</sup>, six out of ten persons have a positive opinion on the work of ISFs, but only half of them say the same of FACA's work. In the 6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, interviewees have a more favourable opinion of the police compared to the gendarmerie and the FACA. Generally, only three to four tenths of participants give a positive rating to MINUSCA's work to protect the population. In all arrondissements, except the third, participants are less positive towards MINUSCA compared to other security actors. In the third arrondissement, 40% evaluate the work of the police as positive, 49% with respect to gendarmes and the FACA, and 60% for MINUSCA.

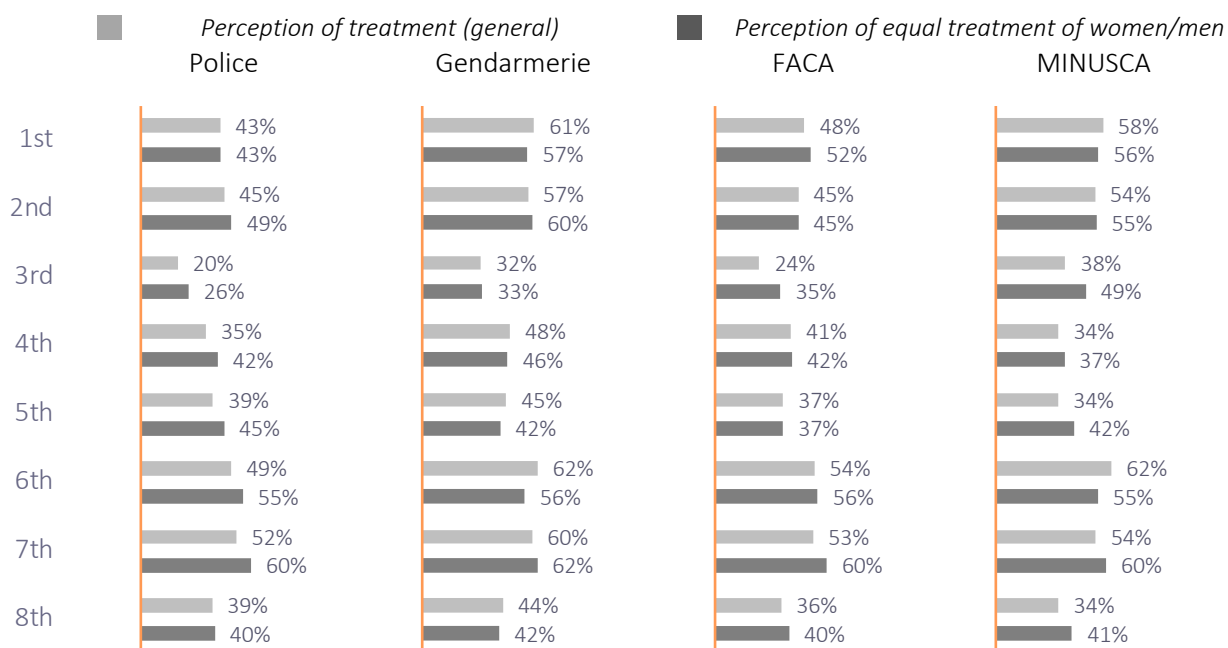


Figure 18: Perception of security actors' efforts to protect the population, by arrondissement ( % positive – Poll 5)



The 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissement hosts the highest proportion of persons with a positive view of security forces' behavior towards the population. Approximately 50% of respondents from the 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissement consider that security forces treat the population with respect and 60% believe that they treat men and women equally. The lowest percentages of positive responses concerning the behavior of security forces can be found in the 3<sup>rd</sup> arrondissement with only one in five persons reporting a favorable opinion of the police's behavior and one third reporting a positive view of the gendarmerie and of the FACA. Residents of the 3<sup>rd</sup> arrondissement were however slightly more positive towards MINUSCA, with 38% of them saying that MINUSCA treats the population with respect and 49% reporting that they treat men and women equally.

Figure 19 : Perception of security actors' behavior towards the population, by arrondissement (% positive – Poll 5)



In general, more people hold a positive opinion of the gendarmerie's behavior towards the population, compared to the police. Moreover, although fewer interviewees report a positive opinion towards MINUSCA on the specific task of protecting the population, the perception of MINUSCA is comparable to that of other security actors regarding the treatment of the population.

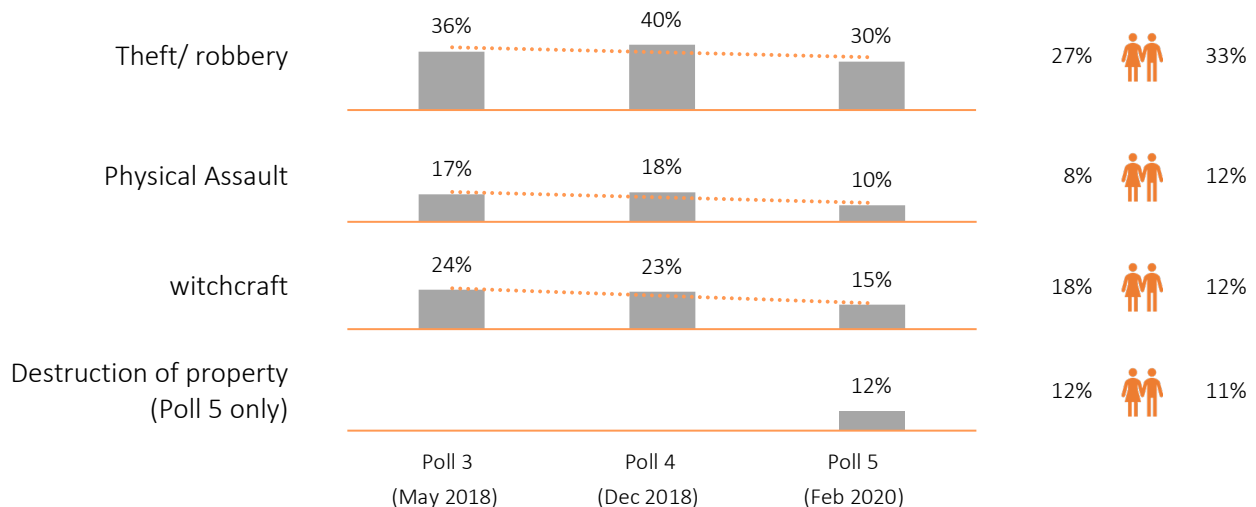
Overall, these results suggest that more respondents hold a positive opinion of security actors with regards to their ability to protect the population compared to the proportion of survey participants who believe that these same security actors treat the population with respect, or otherwise treat men and women equally.

## CRIME : The incidence of crime has declined slightly, but more than half of all crimes go unreported. Most victims turn towards village and neighborhood chiefs or their families

### Crime Rate

In February 2020, compared to the survey conducted in December 2018, the incidence of crime over the last 12 months has declined slightly with respect to theft (40% to 30%),<sup>2</sup> physical assaults (18% to 10%) and witchcraft (23% to 15%).<sup>3</sup> In February 2020, we added a question asking respondents about the destruction of their homes or property. Approximately one in ten people has had their home or property destroyed in the last 12 months. Women report being robbed slightly less often than men, but more women say that they have been subject to witchcraft. There are no differences between men and women regarding the destruction of one's home or property. Crimes involving sexual violence are addressed in the following section.

Figure 20: Incidence of crime in the last 12 months over time and by gender (% respondents)



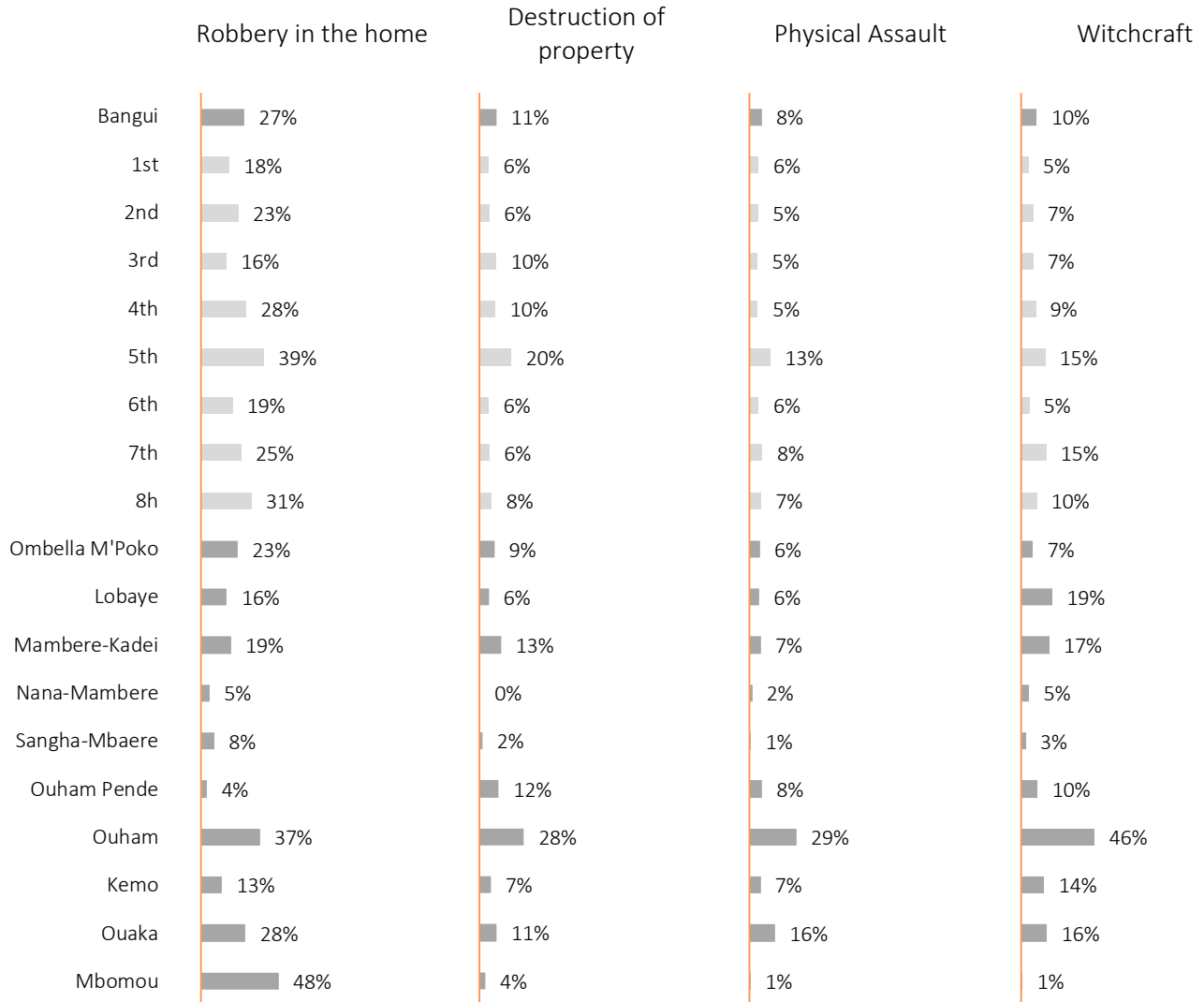
Generally, the incidence rate of the various crimes is higher in the prefectures of Ouham and Ouaka; approximately one third of survey participants living in Ouham and one in five persons in Ouaka report having been the victim of some crime or the other. The lowest crime rates are to be found in Nana-Mambere and Sangha Mbaere prefectures. Approximately half of all those interviewed in Mbomou report having experienced a robbery in their homes but less than 5% report any other crime. In the arrondissements of Bangui, the incidence of crime in the last 12 months is highest in the 5<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, regardless of the crime. The incidence of crime is

<sup>2</sup> Two questions were asked on theft : theft in one's home and outside the home. Results from these two questions were combined to allow for comparison with the previous polls.

<sup>3</sup> As per the Central African Republic penal code, quackery and witchcraft are considered crimes and offences against individuals. See Law Number 10.001 dated 6 January 2010, bearing the Central African Penal Code. Official Journal of the Central African Republic, Special edition, Chapter 11, p. 22.

otherwise similar across the other arrondissements, regardless of the crime. Generally, robberies in the home were reported more often by interviewees than the other crimes.

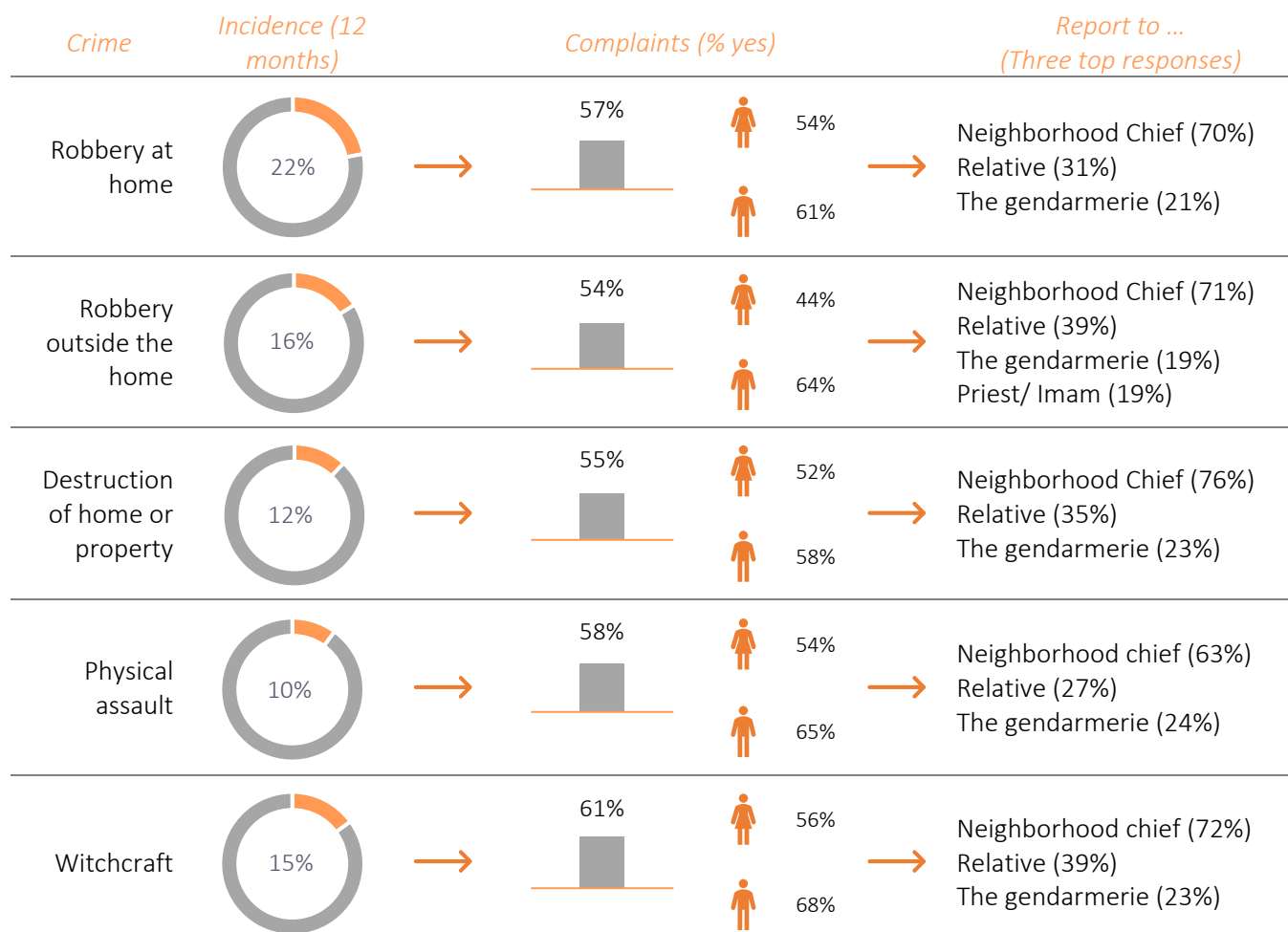
*Figure 21: Incidence of select crimes in the last 12 months, by prefecture and arrondissement (Bangui) (% respondents – Poll 5)*



### Complaints by victims of crimes

To better understand the behavior of survey participants after they've been the victim of a crime, participants were asked whether they filed a complaint, the institution where the crime was reported or why they did not report it, if that was the case. In February 2020, 22% of all persons surveyed experienced a home robbery, 16% a robbery outside the home, 10% a physical assault, 15% witchcraft and 12% say that their home or property was destroyed. Among those who were victims of a crime, more than half say that they filed a complaint (54% to 61%), with a higher proportion of men reporting the crime compared to women.

Figure 22 : Incidence of selected crimes, complaints and reporting, per type of crime (% respondents – Poll 5)



To further investigate to which actors crimes were reported and the reasons why respondents at times did not report crimes, the following crimes were aggregated: (1) robbery in, (2) and outside of the home, (3) destruction of one’s home or property, (4) physical assault, and (5) witchcraft. When the five crimes are aggregated, 44% of all respondents say that they have suffered at least one crime over the last 12 months. Among the crime victims, 64% say that they reported at least one of the crimes they experienced. Conversely, 53% of the victims say that they have not reported at least one of these crimes.<sup>4</sup>

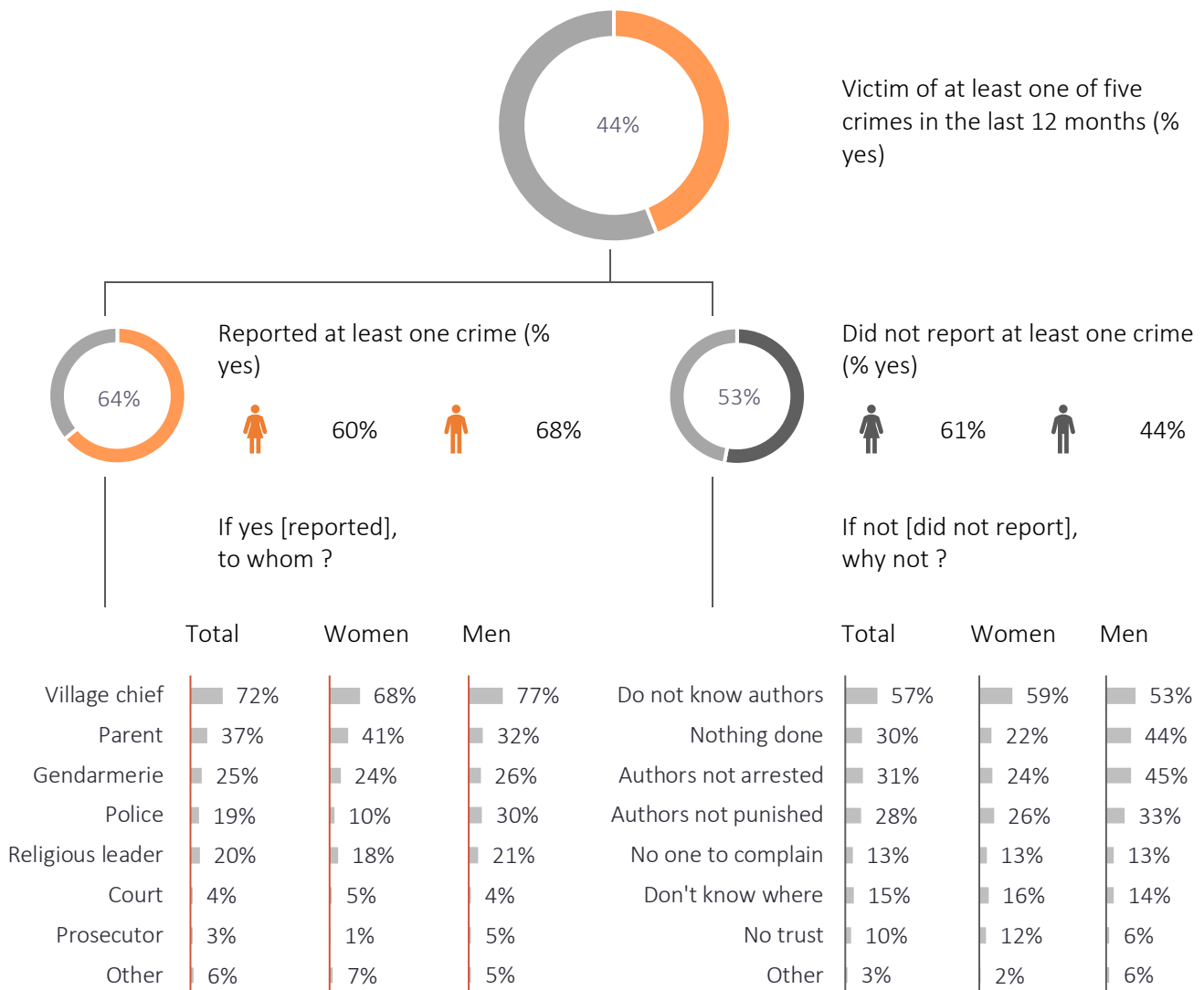
Among the victims who reported their crime, a majority filed their complaint to the neighborhood chief (72%), a parent (37%), the gendarmes (25%), the police (20%), religious chiefs (20%), the judicial system (tribunal – 4% and prosecutor – 3%) or other (6%). Women reported crimes less frequently than men did (60% women v. 68% men). When the police are present in the community, 49% of victims say that they reported to the police. When the gendarmerie is present in the community, 43% reported their crime to the gendarmerie. These results suggest that the presence of these security actors in the community influences to whom victims file a complaint in the

<sup>4</sup> The aggregation of multiple crimes means that the same person could have reported one crime but not another where he/she has suffered multiple crimes. Hence, the total of victims that did report a crime and those that did not is greater than 100% because the same person can be both amongst those who reported a crime and those that did not.

aftermath of a crime. Women, more so than men, report the crime to a relative (41% women vs. 32% men), but fewer women file a complaint to the neighborhood chief (68% women v. 77% men) and to the police (10% women v. 30% men).

For the 53% of victims who did not report the crimes they suffered in the last 12 months, the reasons for not doing so include : not knowing who committed the crime (57%), the belief that nothing will be done (30%) or that the perpetrators will not be arrested (31%) or punished (28%), there not being anyone to report to (13%), not knowing where to go to file a complaint (15%), lacking trust (10%) or other (3%). These results demonstrate that if victims are unable to present enough evidence, they are unlikely to file a complaint. More women than men say that they did not report at least one of the crimes suffered (61% women vs. 44% men). For women, the fact that the perpetrators may not be arrested or that nothing gets done following a complaint being filed, does not seem to be as important in deterring them from filing a complaint when compared to men.

Figure 23 : Exposure to crimes (aggregated) and reporting of crime.

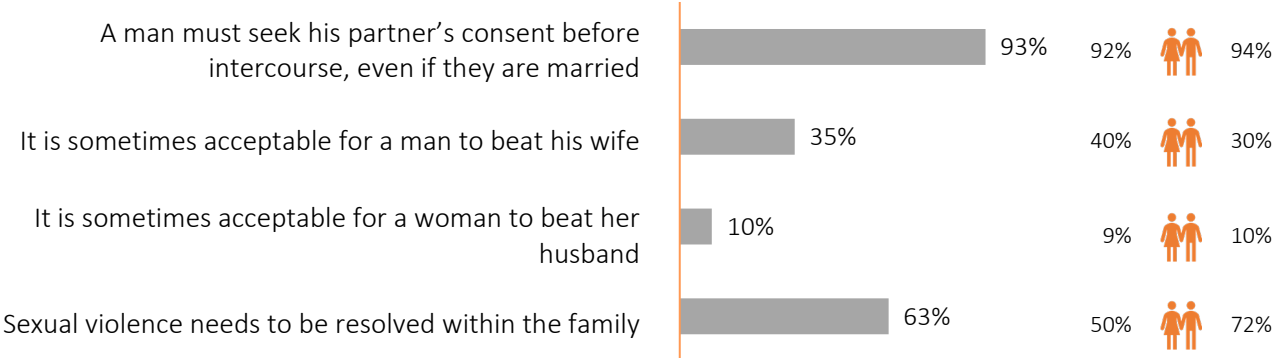


# SEXUAL VIOLENCE : Perceptions towards sexual and gender-based violence have not evolved much and these crimes remain prevalent

## Perceptions towards sexual and gender-based violence

To better understand the attitude of interviewees on the issue of sexual violence, we asked them several questions relating to their perception and acceptance of this type of violence. Since the May 2018 poll, there has been little change in perceptions of gender-based violence. In 2020, the majority of those interviewed agree that a man should have his partner’s consent before engaging in a sexual encounter, even if they are married (96% in 2018 vs. 93% in 2020). However, one third of the respondents say that it is sometimes acceptable for a man to beat his wife (33% in 2018 vs. 35% in 2020), and approximately one in ten consider that it is acceptable for a woman to beat her husband (7% in 2018 vs. 10 % in 2020). Moreover, most survey participants say that sexual violence crimes need to be resolved within the family (58% in 2018 vs. 63% in 2020). Women, more so than men, agree that it is sometimes acceptable for a man to beat his wife, but fewer women than men agree that sexual violence needs to be resolved within the family.

Figure 24: Perceptions of gender-based violence, by gender (% agree – Poll 5)



Although perceptions towards gender-based violence have remained unchanged since the May 2018 poll, there is a slight improvement with respect to the acceptance of sexual violence victims over time. In February 2020, compared to 2018, a higher percentage of respondents say that they would accept the return of a victim of sexual violence in their community (77% in 2018 vs. 83% in 2020), in their home (79% in 2018 vs. 85% in 2020), and in their home, even if the victim had a child (72% in 2018 vs. 80% in 2020), or if the victim was ill or injured as a result of sexual violence (73% in 2018 vs. 81% in 2020). In all these situations, women are more reluctant than men to accept the return of a victim of sexual violence. The difference between women and men is greater than 10% and should be explored in depth.

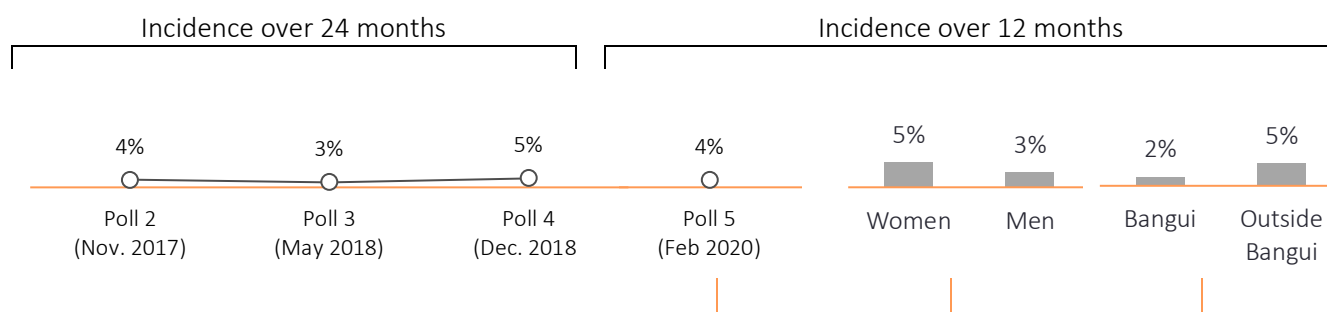
Figure 25: Acceptance of victims of gender-based violence, by gender (% agree – Poll 5)



### Incidence of sexual violence

Since 2017, the incidence of sexual violence experienced over two years has remained somewhat stable.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated at 4% in November 2017 (4% women vs. 3% men) and 5% in December 2018 (7% women and 2% men). In February 2020, the incidence rate was adjusted to cover a 12-month period. During this last poll, 4% of respondents (5% women and 3% men) report having been victims of sexual violence over the last 12 months. This result suggests that there could have been an increase in the incidence of sexual violence because the percentage of sexual violence remained stable despite the shorter reference period. However, given the stigma associated with assaults of a sexual nature, it is possible that cases are underreported. These polls are not specific to the issue of sexual violence and although interviewers engage with these questions in a sensitive manner, it is possible that participants do not feel comfortable sharing their experience. This hypothesis needs to be confirmed through subsequent polls. Results are similar for women and men and there is little variation between Bangui<sup>6</sup> and areas outside of Bangui.

Figure 26: Incidence of sexual violence over time by gender and Bangui/outside of Bangui (% of respondents)



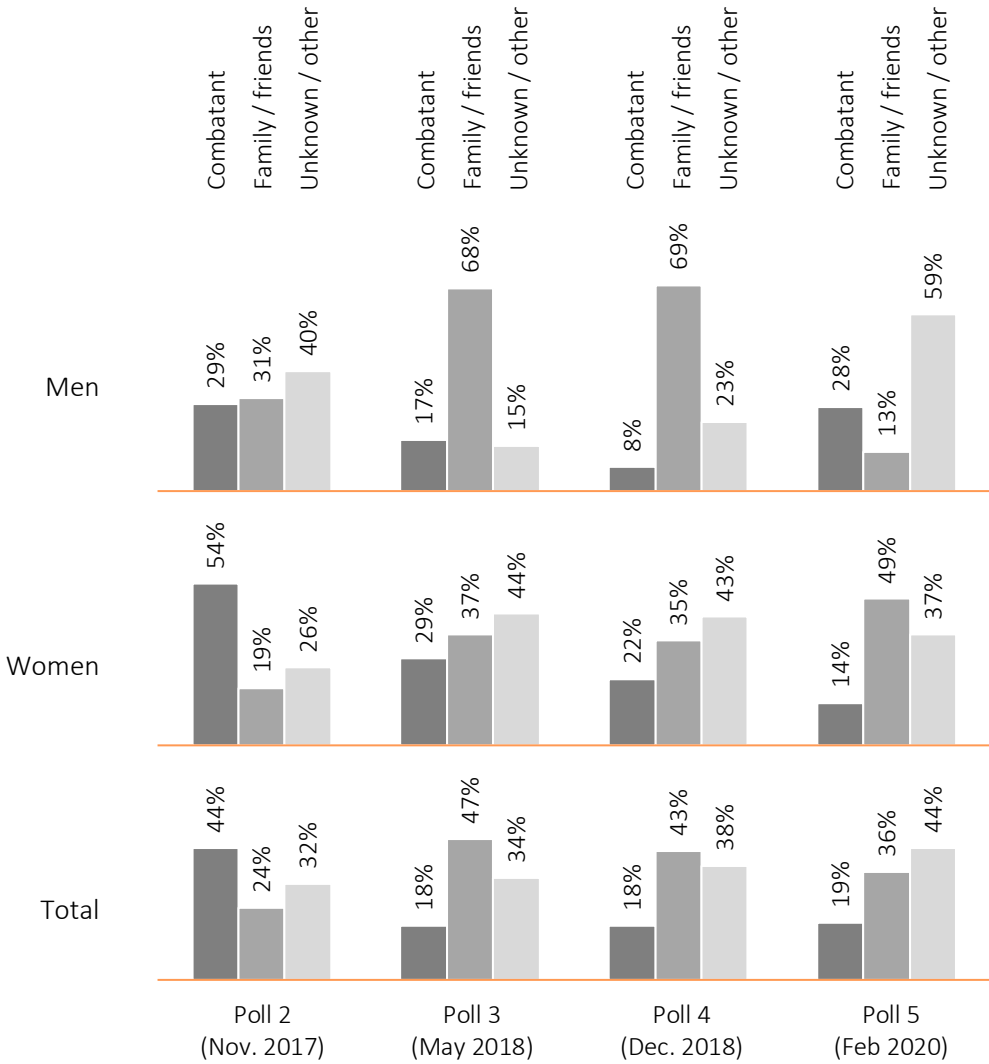
<sup>5</sup> The incidence of sexual violence was initially calculated over two years because of the low percentages of respondents reporting as victims of such violence. The duration was then adjusted to 12 months to align to other crimes surveyed.

<sup>6</sup> In this section, Bangui includes the eight arrondissements of Bangui and the zones of Bimbo and Begoua.



In 2017, combatants were most frequently cited as the perpetrators of sexual violence, especially for women. The percentage of victims reporting combatants/ soldiers as perpetrators has declined over time. In February 2020, family or friends, as well as strangers are most often identified as having been responsible for sexual violence. In a context where conflicts related to sexual violence are considered a matter to be resolved within families – such as is the case in the CAR –it may be difficult for women to report incidents of sexual violence and could also explain why the number of cases of sexual violence filed before the formal justice system is so low.

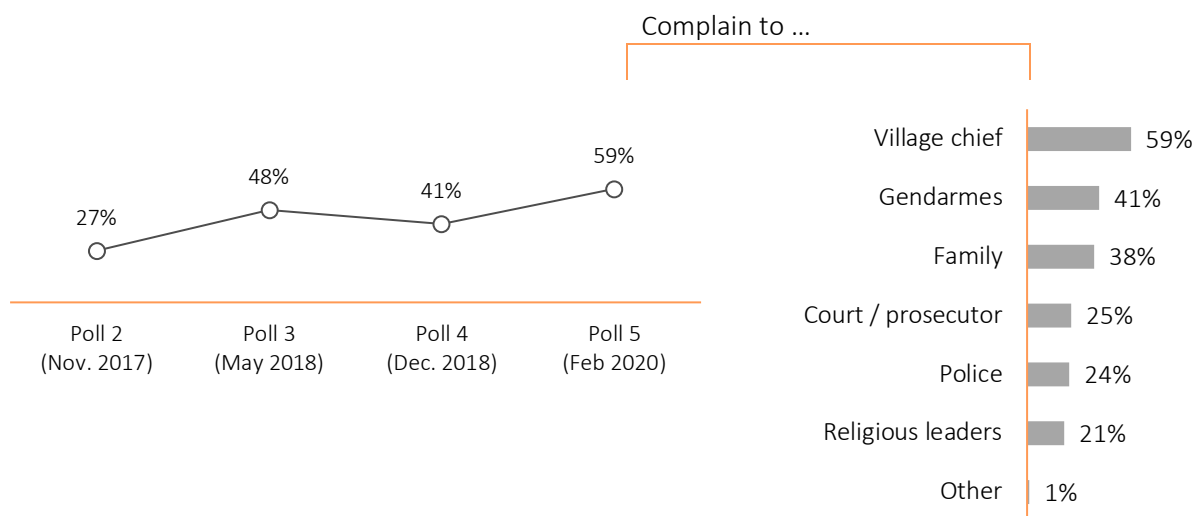
Figure 27: Perpetrators of sexual violence over time, by gender (% respondents among victims – multiple response)



**SEXUAL VIOLENCE** : Despite the strong perception that these crimes must be solved within the family, the percentage of complaints seems to be increasing. Victim acceptance and services to victims are rated positively.

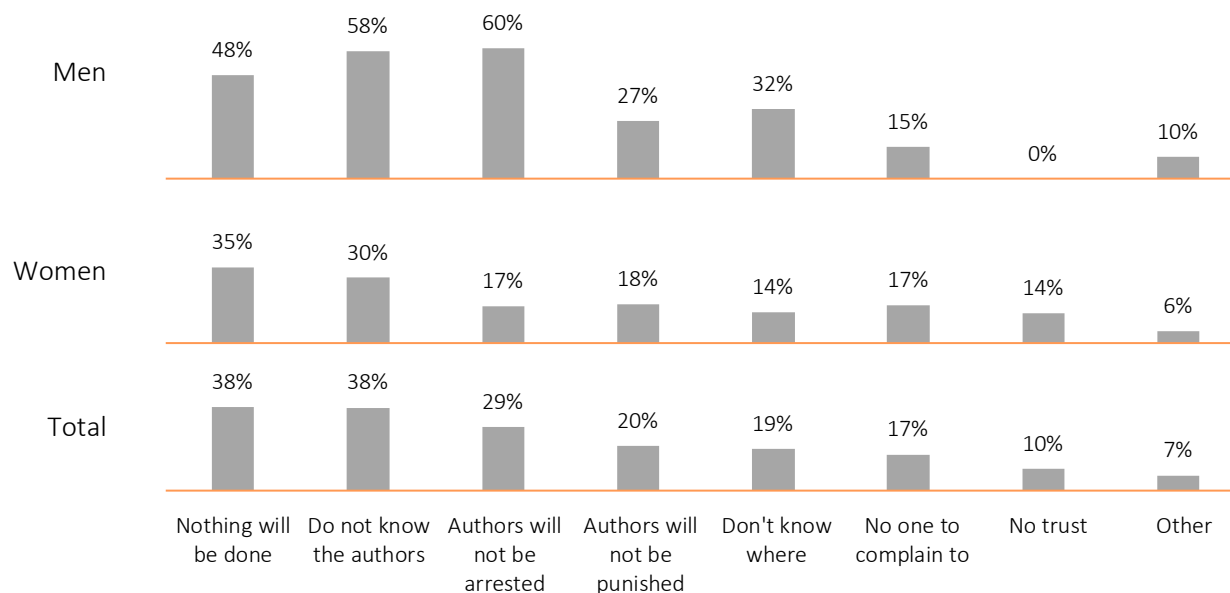
As indicated above, there is a strong perception among the population that crimes of sexual violence should be resolved within the family (63% agree). However, in February 2020, 59% of victims said they had filed a complaint following a sexual assault, which is an increase of 18% compared to the percentage of those who said they had filed a complaint in the December 2018 survey (41%). This increase is observed particularly for women and for respondents outside Bangui.

*Figure 28: Complaints after sexual violence, over time*



As in previous surveys and for all crimes, respondents first file a complaint with the chief of the neighborhood or the village (59%). However, four in ten people also say they filed a complaint with the gendarmes (41%), one in four with the actors of justice (court or prosecutor - 25%), and roughly the same percentage with the police (24%). In general, the percentage of respondents complaining to the ISFs or to the courts is higher than in previous surveys. For example, in December 2018, only 8% of respondents said they had made a complaint to the gendarmes, 10% to the police and 14% to the court / prosecutor. This increase in complaints to the ISFs and the courts may be due to the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns on sexual violence as well as to new services such as the Joint Unit for Rapid Intervention and Eradication of Sexual Violence against Women and Children (Unité Mixte d’Intervention Rapide et de Répressions des violences sexuelles faites aux femmes et aux enfants - UMIRR) in Bangui and legal clinics in Bangui and the regions.

Figure 29: Main reasons why respondents do not file a complaint for sexual violence, by gender (% among victims - several responses)

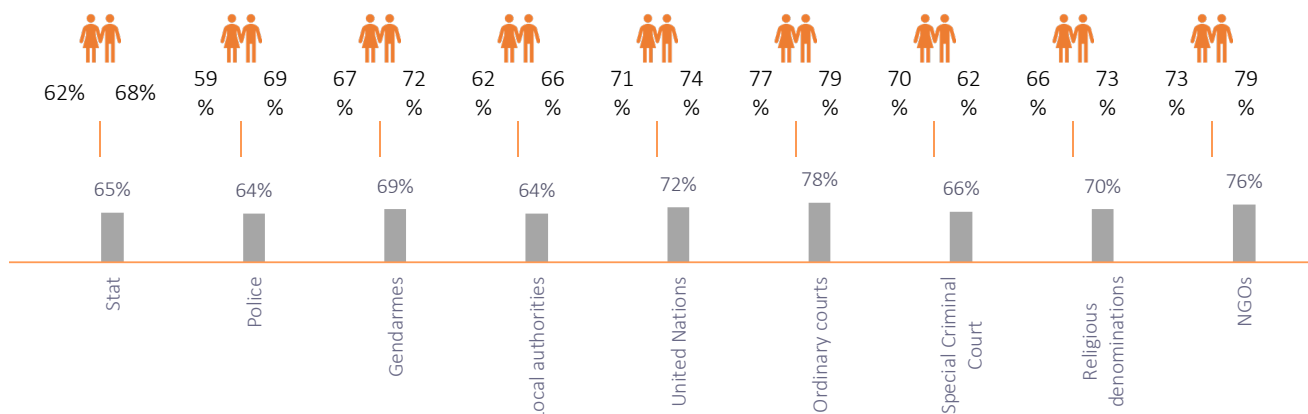


Forty one percent of victims of sexual violence say they have not lodged a complaint after having experienced this crime during the past 12 months. The main reason for not filing a complaint for other crimes is not knowing the perpetrators; for victims of sexual violence however, two reasons are cited in more or less equal measures: not knowing the perpetrators and that nothing will be done. The third most common reason is the fact that the perpetrators will not be arrested or punished. Fewer women than men explain their decision to not file a complaint as not knowing the perpetrators, that nothing will be done, that the perpetrators will not be arrested or punished, and not knowing where to go to file a complaint. On the other hand, more women than men say that they did not file a complaint because they do not trust the actors to whom whom they could lodge a complaint.

### Perception of services for sexual violence

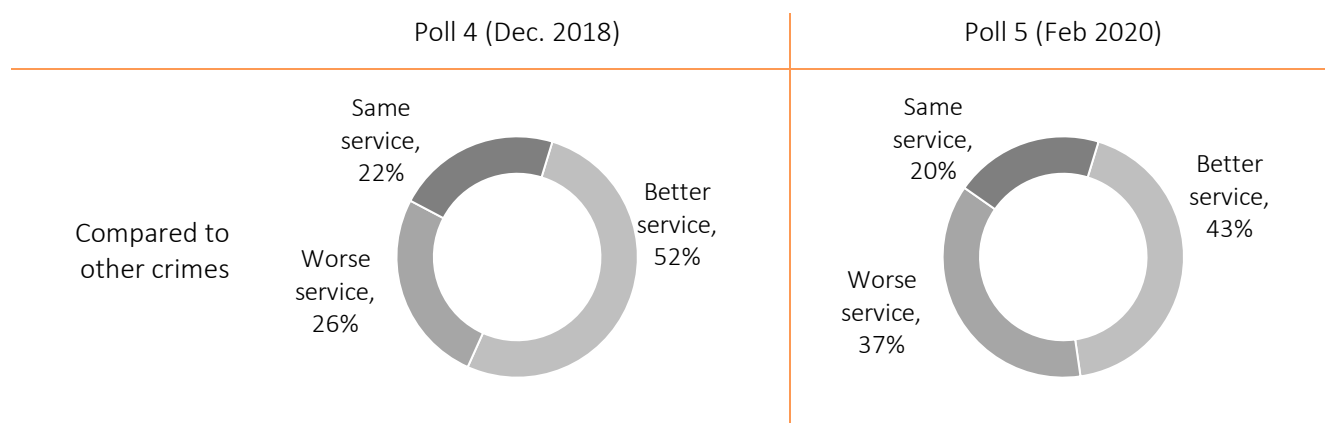
Overall, a majority of respondents positively judge the efforts of different actors to fight against sexual violence. About two-thirds of respondents consider the efforts of the State, law enforcement, local authorities, and the Special Criminal Court (SCC) to be positive. Slightly more respondents (around seven in ten) are positive about the efforts of religious denominations, the United Nations, national and international organizations and ordinary courts. The results are similar for women and men. However, compared to men, women judge the efforts of the police to fight sexual violence less positively (59% women vs. 69%) and those of the SCC (70% women vs. 62% men) more positively.

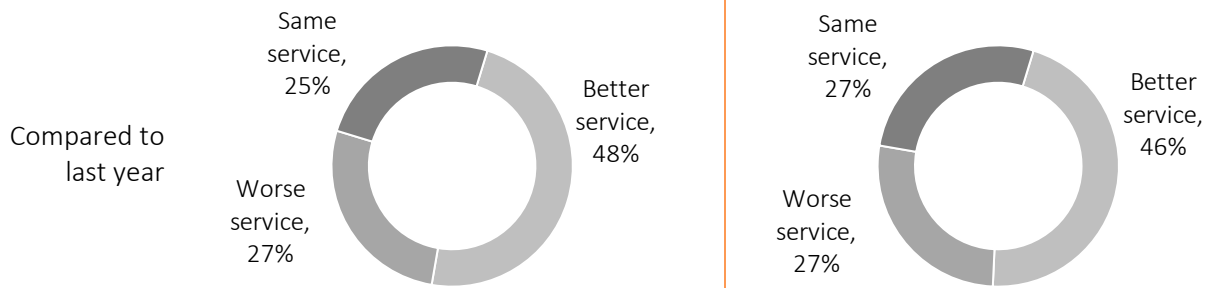
Figure 30: Perception of the efforts of different actors to fight against sexual violence, by gender (% positive - poll 5)



In February 2020, when asked about services for victims of sexual violence, just under half of respondents indicated that victims of sexual violence are better served than victims of other crimes (43%) and that they are better served compared to the previous year (46%). Compared to 2018, these results indicate a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents saying that victims of sexual violence are better served than victims of other crimes (52% in 2018 vs. 43% in 2020).

Figure 31: Perception of services for victims of sexual violence, compared to other crimes and to the previous year (% respondents)

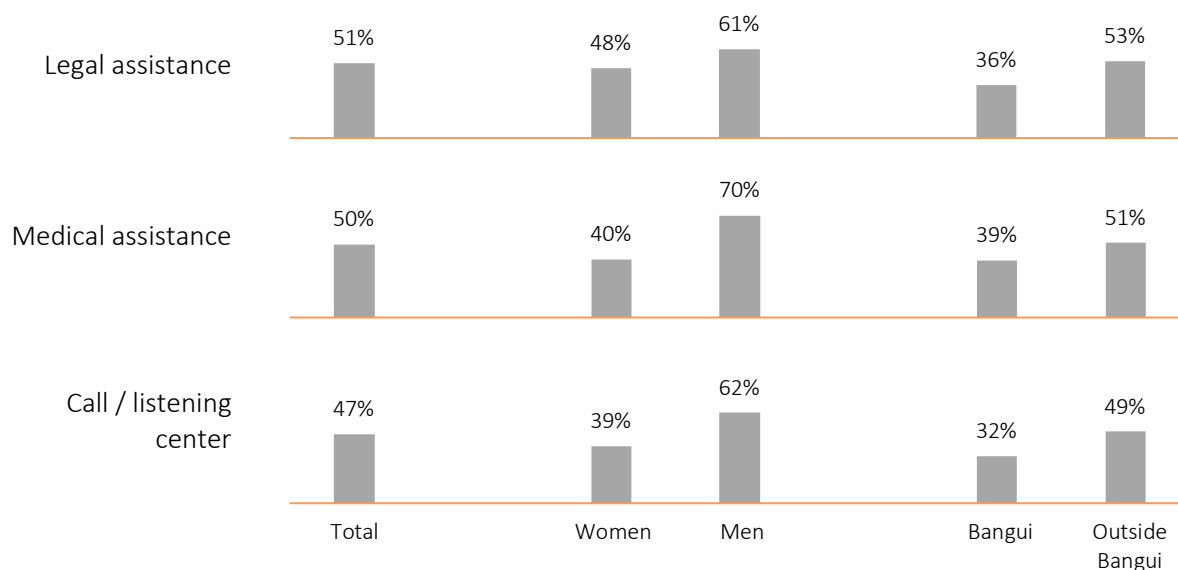




## Use of services

In February 2020, around half of victims of sexual violence said they had received legal or medical assistance or had attended a legal clinic or a listening center. Fewer women than men indicate having used one of these services. The most marked difference is for medical assistance with only 40% of women saying they have received such assistance compared to 70% of men. The percentage of victims who visited a service is also higher outside Bangui compared to the capital. Outside Bangui, 53% of victims mention having received legal assistance or legal guidance (vs. 36% Bangui), 51% medical assistance (vs. 39% Bangui) and 49% having attended a listening center (vs. 32% Bangui). These results may reflect the services for victims of sexual violence recently set up in the country, including legal clinics and counseling centers. But the results also suggest a need for awareness, information and accessibility for these services. The number of individuals concerned in the sample is nevertheless very small, which limits this analysis of the use of services.

Figure 32: Use of services by victims of sexual violence, by gender (% of victims)

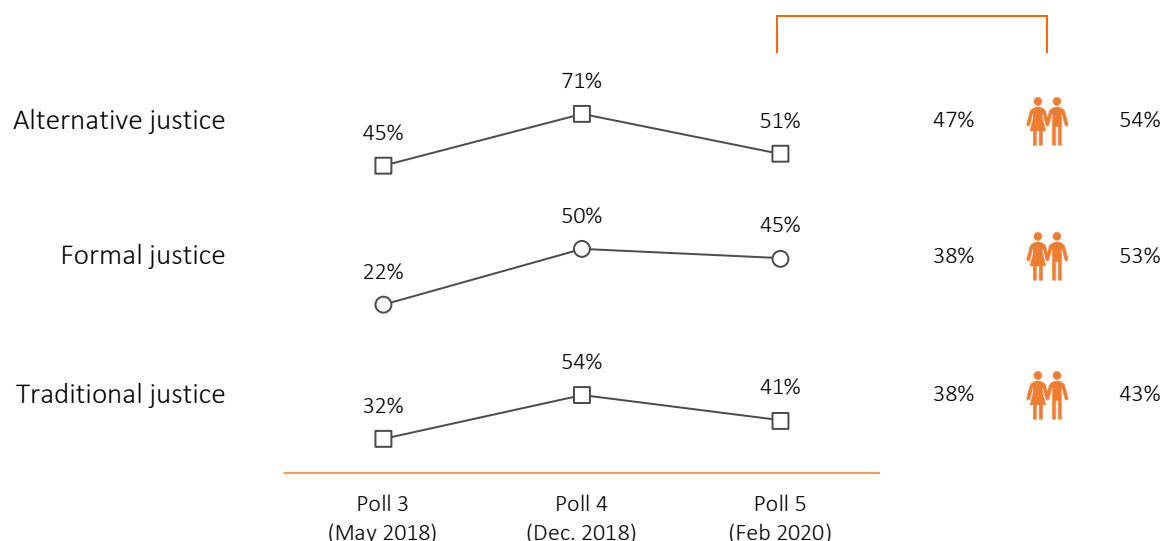


## JUSTICE and PEACE: The level of confidence in formal justice has remained stable. Knowledge of peace and transitional justice mechanisms improves confidence in these mechanisms.

### Trust in justice

Building trust in justice and its institutions is an important element of sustaining peace. In February 2020, 45% of participants indicated having trust in the formal justice system, while 41% said they trusted traditional justice and 51% said they trusted alternative modes of justice, for example through mediation. As in the past, participants more frequently mentioned trusting alternative justice mechanisms, such as mediation efforts. However, the percentage of people having trust in this mode of justice (51%) has declined sharply compared to the previous survey (71%), whilst trust in formal justice remains relatively stable (45% v. 50%). There is also a drop in the level of trust in traditional justice (41% v. 54%). Despite this recent decline, the improvement in trust in the judiciary since 2017 is significant.

Figure 33: Trust in justice, over time and by gender. (% confident)

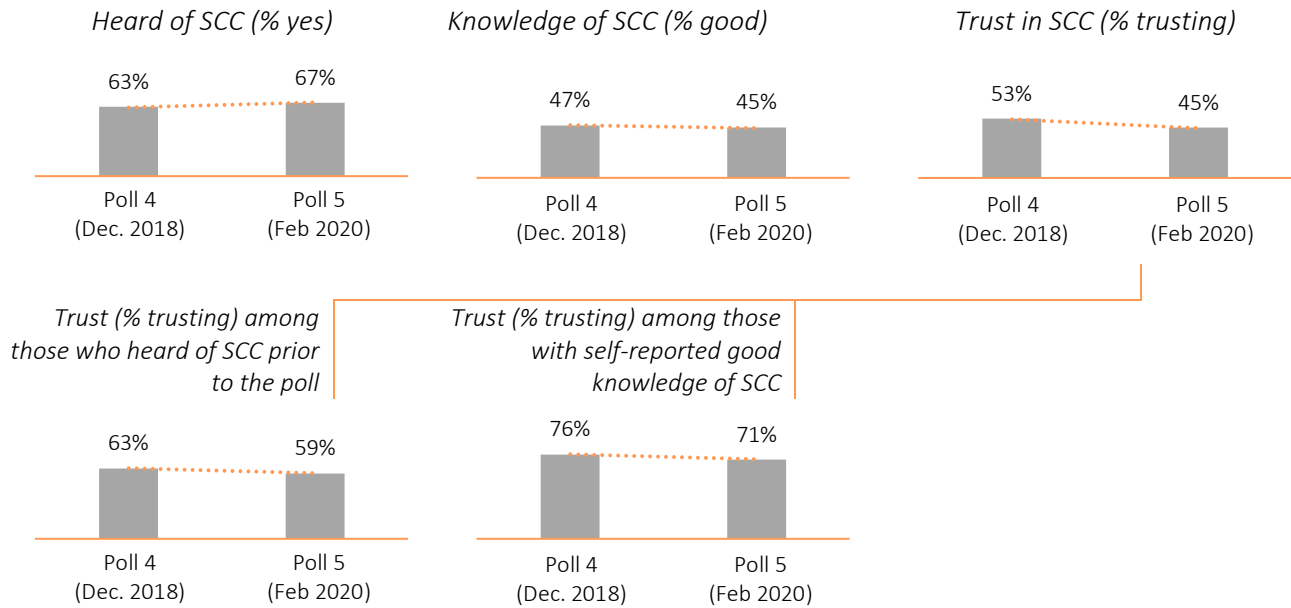


Women have less trust than men in all types of justice. It is possible that the broadcasting of trials, including for serious crimes, during the criminal sessions of 2019 and 2020 influenced respondents' perceptions of formal justice, i.e. in ordinary courts. The level of trust in all types of justice remains mixed, however, with around half of respondents reporting their trust in one or in the other.

In addition to formal justice, the February 2020 survey explored the knowledge and perception of the Special Criminal Court (SCC). The SCC is a hybrid court of of the CAR's national formal justice system but with a specific mandate to investigate and prosecute the most serious crimes committed in the country from 2003 to date. Since December 2018, the percentage of participants who have heard or said they know (good and very good knowledge) about the SCC, has remained stable, but the percentage of respondents indicating they have trust in this court has decreased slightly, from 53% in 2018 to 45 % in 2020. However, having heard of the court and

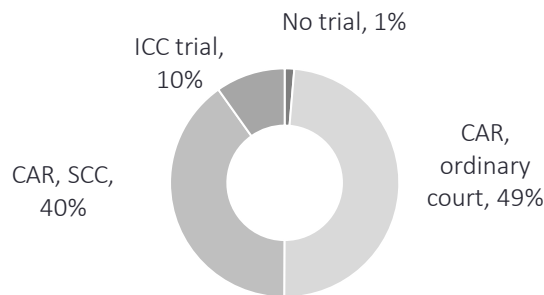
having a good knowledge of the court are associated with greater trust. Of those who say they have heard of the SCC, 63% in 2018 and 59% in 2020 say they trust the SCC. Of those who say they have a good or very good knowledge of the SCC, 76% in 2018 and 71% in 2020 say they trust the court. These results suggest that whilst there has been little change in these indicators since December 2018, better knowledge of the SCC nonetheless remains associated with greater trust in the Court.

Figure 34 : Knowledge and trust in the Special Criminal Court (SCC)



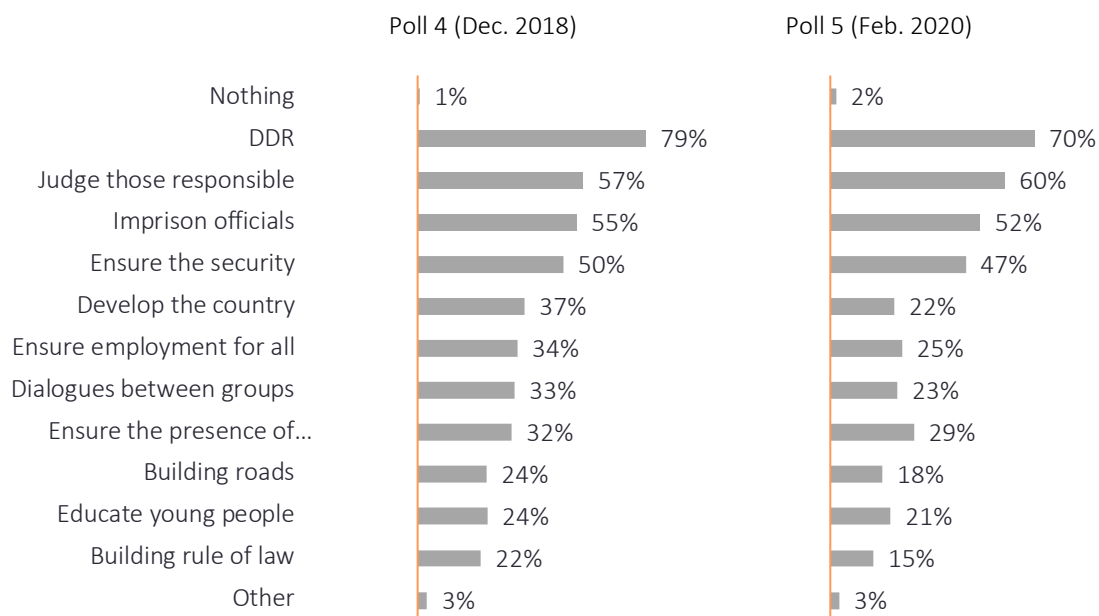
Respondents also indicate a desire for justice at the national rather than international level regarding crimes and abuses committed during conflicts. When asked about their choice between four options, most respondents chose a trial in the CAR (89%), with 40% favoring a trial by the SCC and 49% indicating a trial by an ordinary court. Only 10% support a trial by the International Criminal Court.

Figure 35 : Preference for trials of crimes committed in the CAR during conflicts



This choice of national justice is linked to support for a retributive form of justice. In December 2018 and February 2020, when respondents were asked what actions should be put in place to achieve lasting peace in the CAR, the main action proposed is disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) (79% in 2018 vs. 70% in 2020), but this action is followed closely by judging (57% in 2018 vs. 60% in 2020) and imprisoning those responsible for crimes committed during conflicts (55% in 2018 vs. 52% in 2020). Finally, when asked what is most important to them between two options, respondents indicate that they prefer that the perpetrators be tried (83%) rather than having the option of receiving compensation for the violence suffered since 2003 (16%).

*Figure 36: Actions for lasting peace in the CAR, over time (% respondents)*

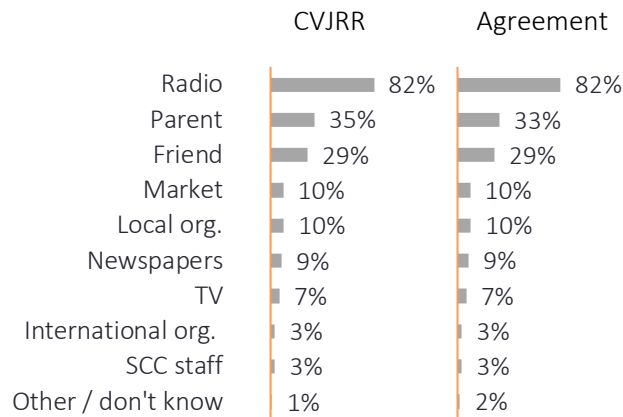
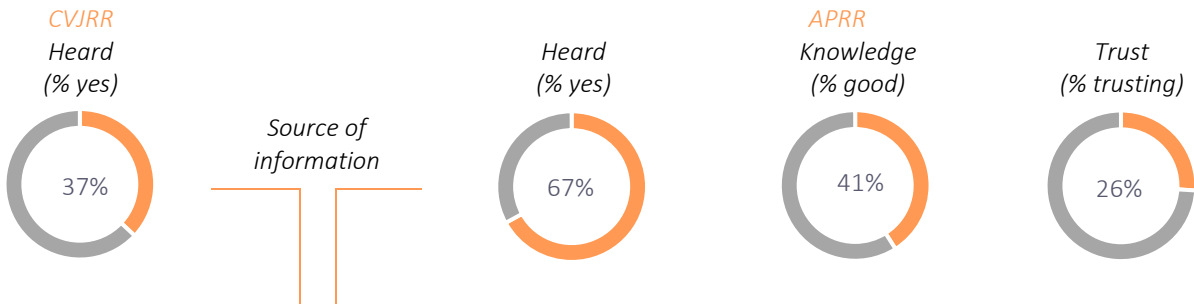


While support for retributive justice is observed, there are, however, other mechanisms for peace and transitional justice in the CAR, including in particular the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (Accord Politique pour la Paix et la Réconciliation - APPR) signed in February 2019 by the Central African government and 14 armed groups, and, to come, a Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (Commission Vérité, Justice, Réparation et Réconciliation - CVJRR). The CVJRR is not yet operational but the law was enacted in April 2020.

In February 2020, 67% said they had heard of the APPR, while 41% said they had a good and very good knowledge of this Agreement. Among all respondents, 26% report having trust in the Agreement. The percentage of respondents who say they trust the APPR increases to 35% among those who say they have heard of it, and to 50% among those who say they know it. This finding suggests that awareness and knowledge of the Accord can improve people's confidence in the Accord. In February, only 37% of respondents said they had heard of the CVJRR, which could be explained by the fact that it was not yet operational at the time of the polls. The main sources of information for the APPR and the CVJRR are the radio, a relative or a friend. These sources of information reach a large part of the population and inform about the existence of these mechanisms. However, activities allowing exchanges and interactions should be considered so that the population improves its knowledge and understanding of these mechanisms.



Figure 37: Political Agreement for Peace (APPR) and Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR) (Poll 5 - % respondents)



Based on the results related to the SCC, a better knowledge and understanding of the APPR and the CVJRR could help improve the trust of the Central Africans in these mechanisms. These mechanisms will be explored in more detail in following surveys.

*The Peace, Justice and Security Polls Project is an initiative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in collaboration with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) and MINUSCA.*



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