

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	214
Land:	Cameroun
Kilde:	DRC Danish Refugee Council
Titel:	Protection Monitoring Report: Southwest Cameroon. January to December 2020
Udgivet:	2021
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	21. maj 2021

Protection Monitoring Report

Danish Refugee Council
Southwest Cameroon



January to December 2020

Funded by:
European Union
Humanitarian Aid and
Civil Protection



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



Table of Content

Acronyms	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Methodology	4
3. Key Findings	5
3.1 Violation of Rights	7
3.1.1 Types of incidents	7
3.1.2 Safety and security	10
3.1.3 Assault/beating and torture	11
3.1.4 Killings	11
3.1.5 Forced disappearance	12
3.1.6 Arbitrary arrest	13
3.1.7 Restriction of movement	13
3.1.8 Forced recruitment	15
3.1.9 Destruction of land/property	16
3.1.10 Threats against institutions	17
3.1.11 Restrictions on the rights to vote and protest	17
3.1.12 Access to civil documentation	18
3.2 Victims' Profile	19
3.3 Perpetrators	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
4. Key Recommendations	20
4.1 To the Government of Cameroon	20
4.2 To the diplomatic community	20
4.3 To the Ambazonian non-state armed groups	21



Acronyms

BIR	Brigade d'Intervention Rapide
CBPC	Community-Based Protection Committees
CCG	Civilian Criminal Groups
ES	Emergency Shelter
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
NFI	Non-Food Items
NSAG	Non-State Armed Groups
PPRD	Presidential Plan for Reconstruction and Development
PSS	Psychosocial Support
SSF	State Security Forces

1. Introduction

This report outlines summary findings and analysis from DRC's protection monitoring activities from the period covering January to December 2020. It contributes to an increased understanding of the wide-ranging protection impacts of the Cameroonian anglophone crisis on affected populations.

DRC is implementing programmes in the South-West region since January 2019 and is currently conducting activities in the areas of protection, child protection, Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES/NFI) and food security. Protection networks including Protection Focal Points and Community-Based Protection Committees (CBPC) have been set up with support from DRC. They enable DRC to maximize the impact of its protection response in the intervention areas. DRC provides protection response activities in all communities where Protection Monitoring is implemented to ensure that vulnerable individuals receive support. In addition to protection monitoring, DRC provides Individual Protection Assistance, supports vulnerable cases with referrals when needed, provides individual and group psychosocial support (PSS) services, and supports the capacity building of community-based protection structures.

2. Methodology

Data included in the report comes from two main sources: monthly key informant interviews to inform on the protection situation at a community level and individual protection incidents.

In all target communities DRC trained either Protection Focal Points or Community-Based Protection Committees (CBPC) on key protection topics. Each month, DRC conducted Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with those focal points, including at least three focal points per community of different age and gender groups, to get information on protection needs and risks in their community. In 2020, DRC conducted 521 Key Informant (KI) interviews (46% men and 54% women) in 33 communities with people from diverse background including farmers, teachers, community leaders, labourers, etc.

In addition, DRC registered specific protection incidents reported through these focal points in the community. In 2020, DRC registered 5,163 incidents. No sensitive or personal data from those incidents was included in this report.

	DIVISION	SUB DIVISION	VILLAGE
1	FAKO	Buea	Bomaka
2			Bokova
3			Liongo
4			Tole
5			Lysoka
6		Tiko	Mutengene
7			Muvange7
8			New Pongo
9			Small Ikange



10			Mudeka
11			Missellele
12		West Coast	Idenau
13			Debundsha
14			Bakingili
15			Sanje
16			Scipio
17			Soden
18			Recthflus
19		Muyuka	Ekona Yard
20			Pow camp
21			Mautu
22			Meanja
23			Muyuka
24			Owe
25			Yoke
26			Malende
27			Mile 40
28			Ikata
29			Malale
30			Bafia
31		Limbe	Batoke
32	MEME	Mbonge	Bombe
33			Banga Bakundu

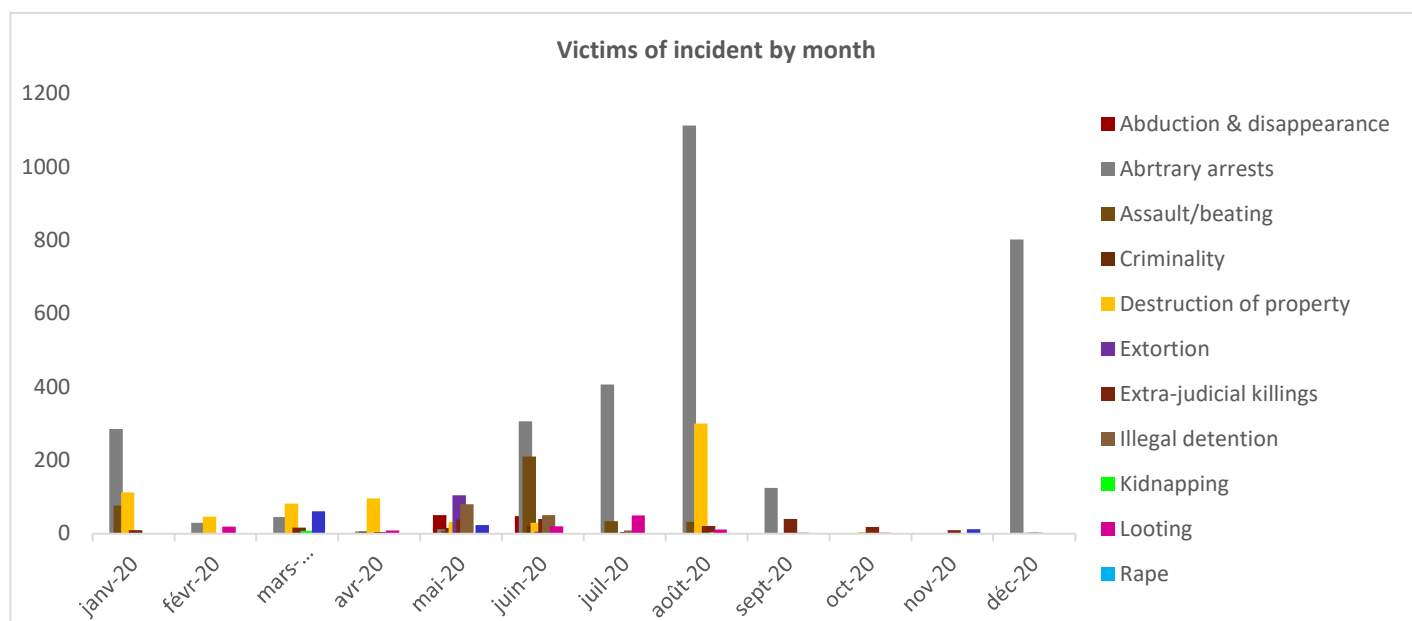
3. Key Findings

The protection environment in the SW/NW regions during the 12 months covered by the protection monitoring has deteriorated due to the protraction of violence against civilian populations, perpetrated by different parties to the conflict.

The highest number of documented protection incidents took place in the first half of the year. Protection violations were particularly reported around major events or national holidays during the year when lockdowns occurred frequently and both military and NSAG presence increased, especially in eastern and

northern regions of Fako division. In 2020, 24 lockdown days were enforced in the SW region on top of the weekly Monday ghost town days. Major events during the year that had an impact on the protection situation were the following: in February, parliamentary and municipal elections took place on 9 February 2020 (6 lockdown days occurred in January in to try to disrupt the elections), the national holiday called Youth Day on the 11th of February (4 lockdown days) and on the 22nd of February, the yearly international event of the Mount Cameroon Race of Hope took place. In May, the national holiday of Unity Day is celebrated on the 20th (3 lockdown days), commemorating the abolishment of the federal system in favor of a unitary country in 1972. In June, the announcement of the Presidential Plan for Reconstruction and Development (PPRD) provoked violence in the region and led to 3 lockdown days in June. The resumption of the 2020-2021 school year in October 2020 led to tensions and to the assassination of numerous students. In December, regional elections took place on the 6th (3 lockdown days). Less protection violations were reported at end of the year (November- December) which coincides with the festive period when a decrease in insecurity was reported.

DRC noticed a spike in arbitrary arrests reported to DRC in January before the elections (285 incidents reported) as well as around the PPRD launch in June (306 incidents), July (407 incidents) and August (1,112 incidents), and in December around the regional elections (802 incidents) compared to an average of 31 cases reported in the other months of the year.



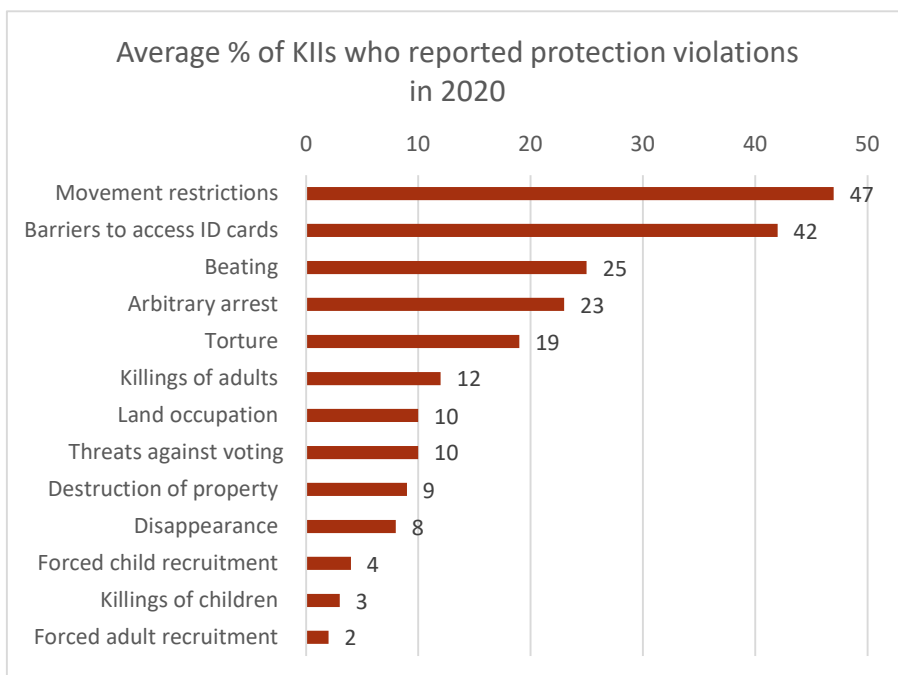
Data source: DRC Protection Incident Tracker 2020

3.1 Violation of Rights

3.1.1 Types of incidents

Data gathered through KIIs highlight the many different types of protection violations populations in the South-West region face. The following graphs give an overview of the average percentage of KIIs who reported certain protection violations, and an overview of the types of violations reported in each month of the year. More details per violation type are provided below.

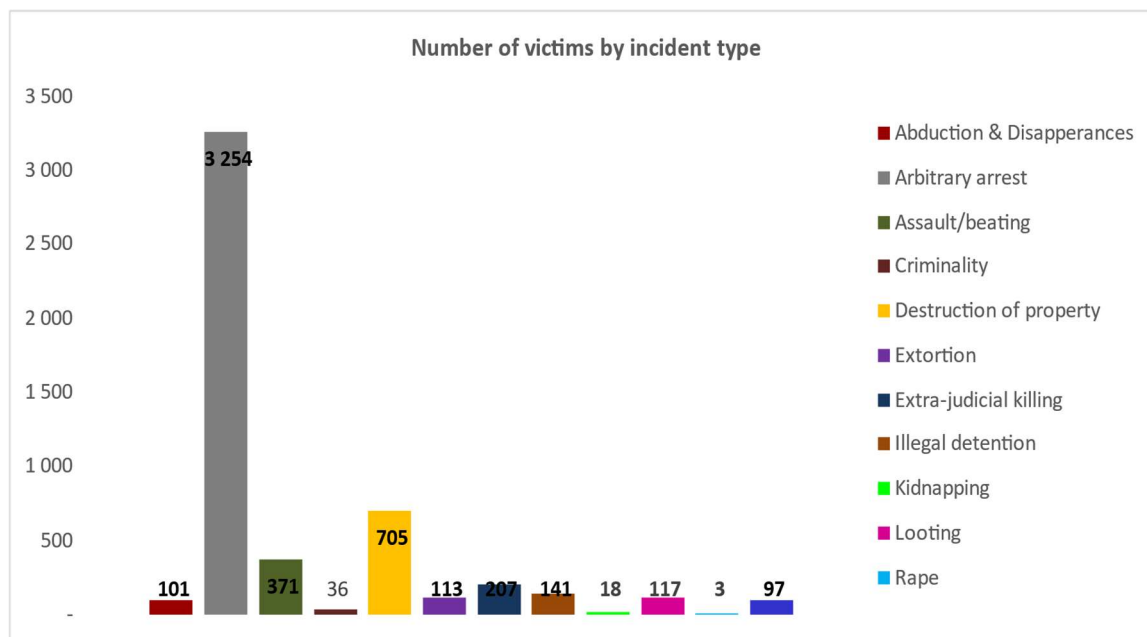
The most reported incidents by KIIs are movement restrictions (47%), barriers to access ID cards (42%), beatings (25%) and arbitrary arrest (23%).



Data source: DRC Key Informant Interview database 2020

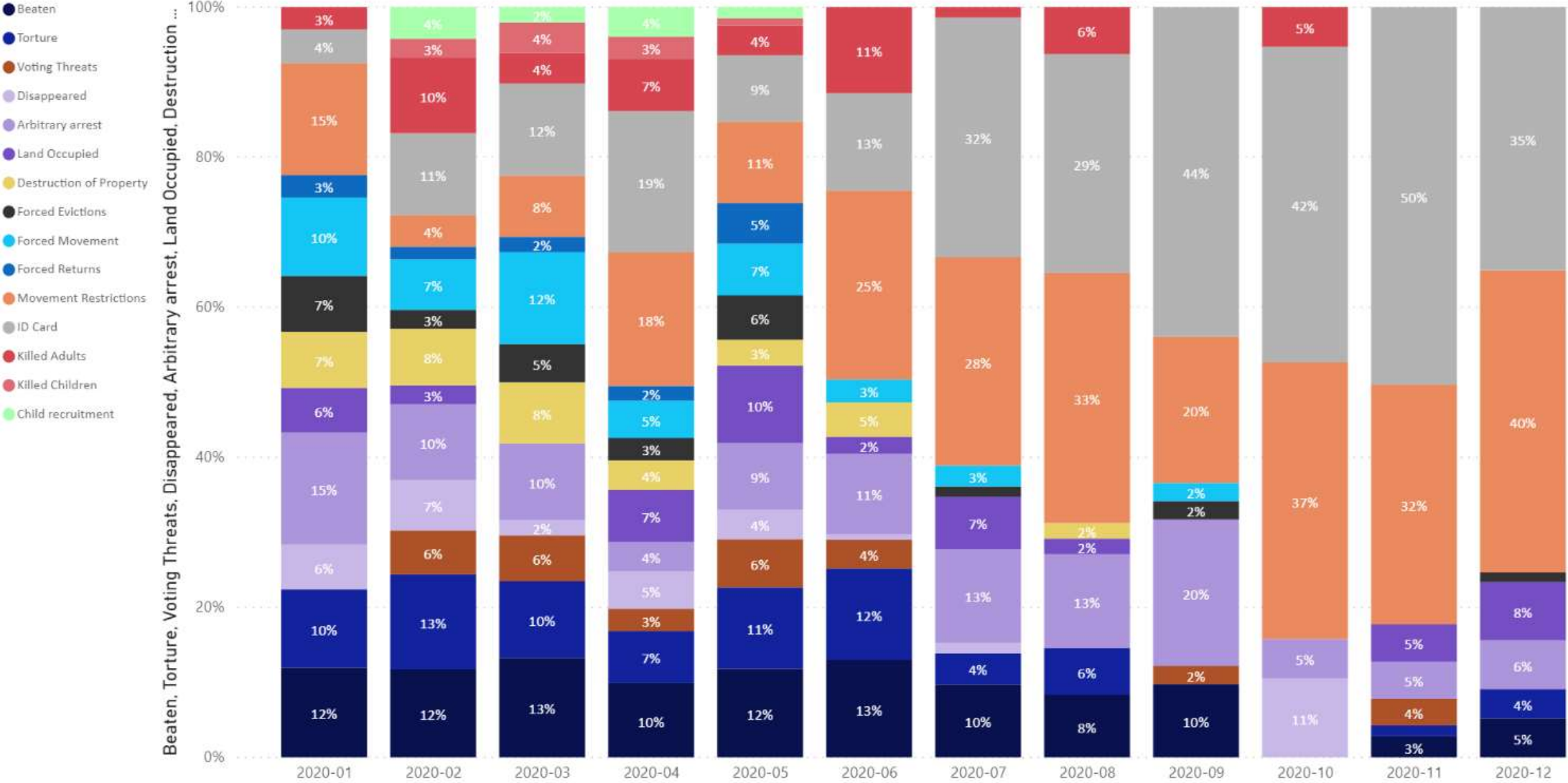
When looking at the specific protection incidents reported to DRC in 2020, over half of the incidents (63%) were cases of arbitrary arrests (3254 cases); to date, whereabouts of some victims remain unknown. In addition, destruction of property (705 cases), assault/beatings (371 cases), and extra-judicial killings (207) were also frequently reported.

Anecdotal evidence from the field through direct conversations with beneficiaries or through Focus Group Discussions highlights that sexual and Gender-Based Violence also frequently occurs within communities. It is highly likely that it is underreported due to cultural stigma and the notion that reporting will not help or might lead to repercussions from perpetrators.



Data source : DRC Protection Incident Tracker 2020

Information received from KI about violation of rights

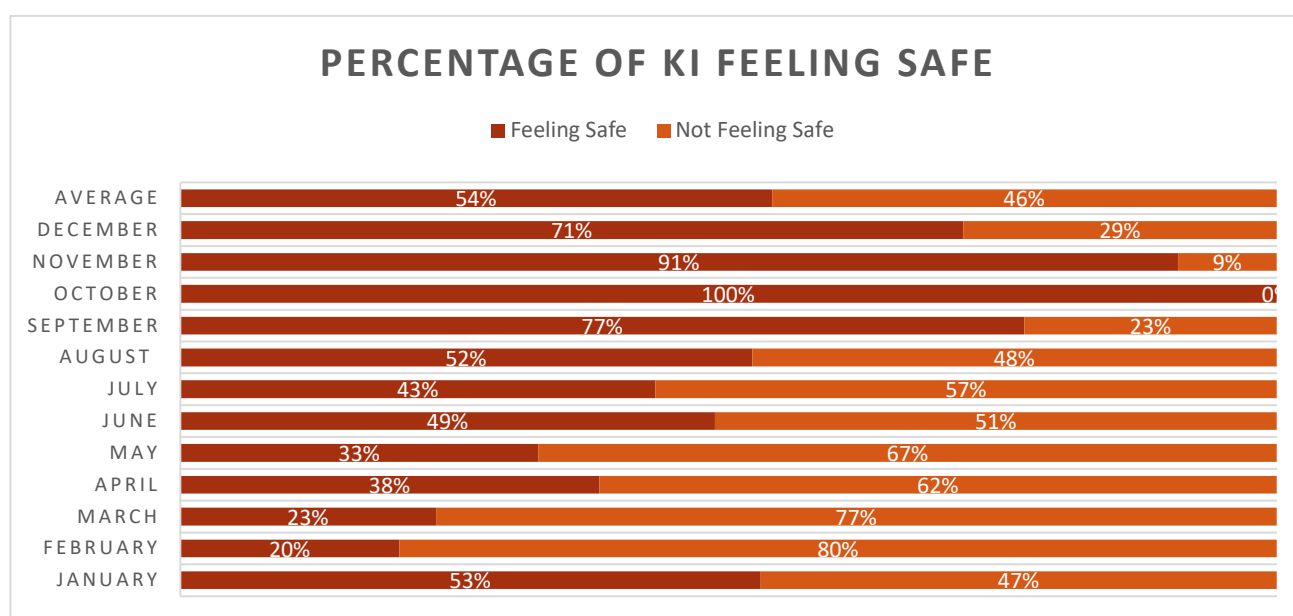


Data source: DRC Key Informant Interview database 2020

3.1.2 Safety and security

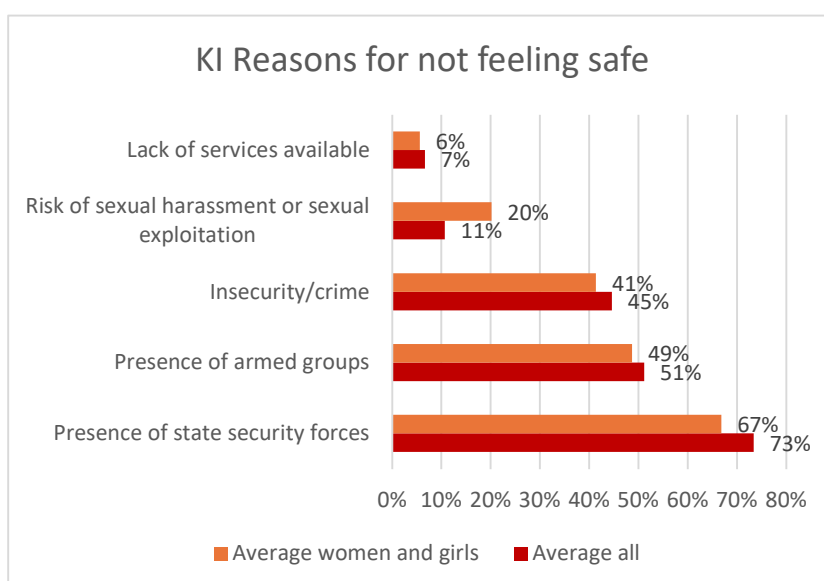
The feeling of safety and security was consistently reported low by KIs across the 12 months period of protection monitoring in 2020, with an average of 46% of KIs who did not feel safe during the year of 2020. These sentiments were highest between February and August 2020, following which they decreased. The lack of safety in this period can be corroborated with the major events that took place those months: elections, youth day and Mt Cameroon race in February; Unity day in May, and the launch of the PPRD June-August. While the feeling of safety seemed better in October and November, it deteriorated again in the last month of the year, which is the month in which regional elections took place and lockdown days occurred.

When asked specifically about the feeling of safety of women and girls in the community, 46% of KIs on average throughout 2020 said that they do not feel safe.



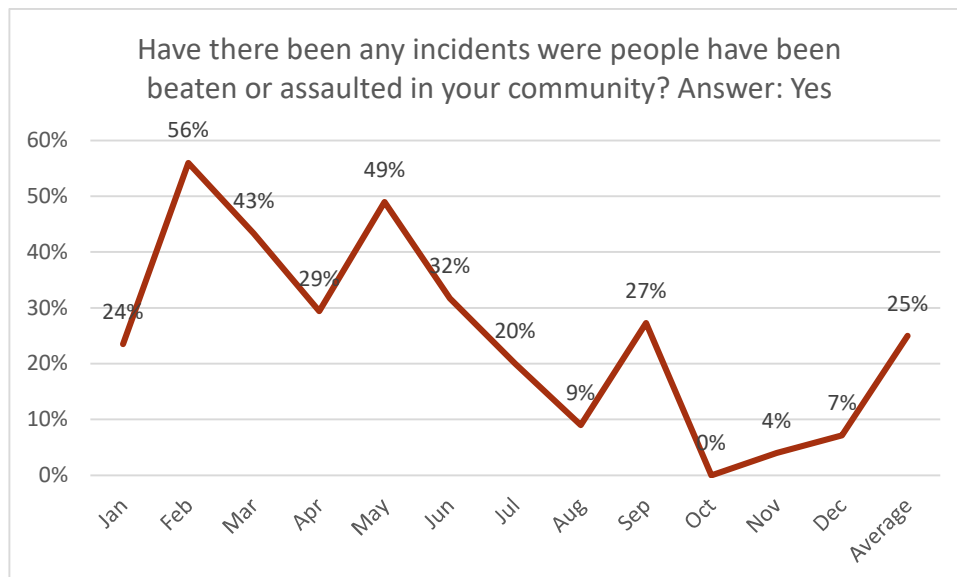
When asked about the reasons for these perceptions, 73% of the KIs mentioned the presence of state security forces (SSF), 51% mentioned the presence of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and 45% referred to insecurity/crime that takes place in their community. These were also the top 3 reasons mentioned when asked why women and girls do not feel safe in the community.

The main difference for women and girls is that 20% of KIs mentioned that women and girls do not feel safe because of the risk of sexual harassment and exploitation, versus 11% of KIs who mentioned this as a reason for the community as a whole, including men.

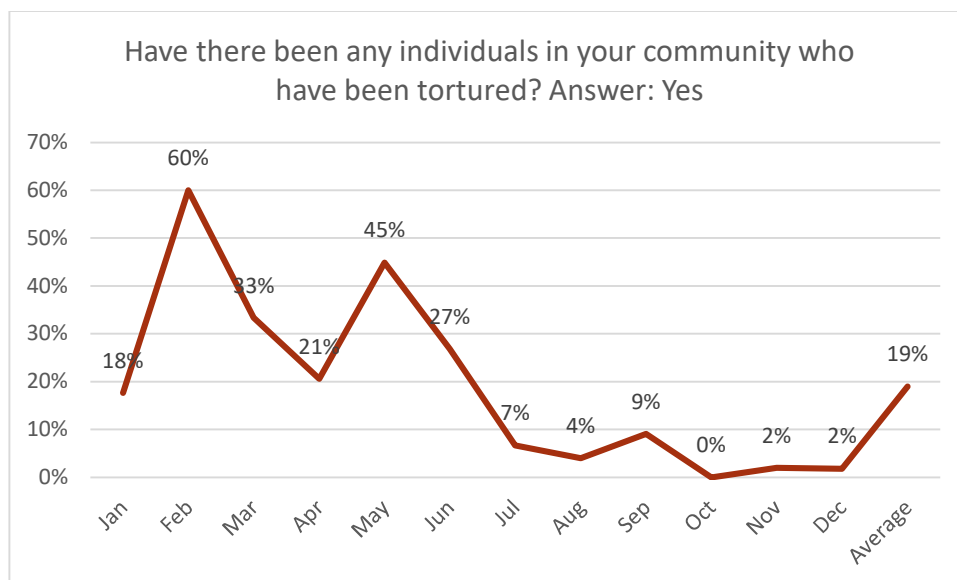


3.1.3 Assault/beating and torture

The average percentage of KIs reporting incidents of assaults/beatings in 2020 is 25%. The months of February – June were above this annual average of 25%, with a particular peak in February and May, during which 56% and 49% of the KIs reported incidents of assaults/beatings in their community.



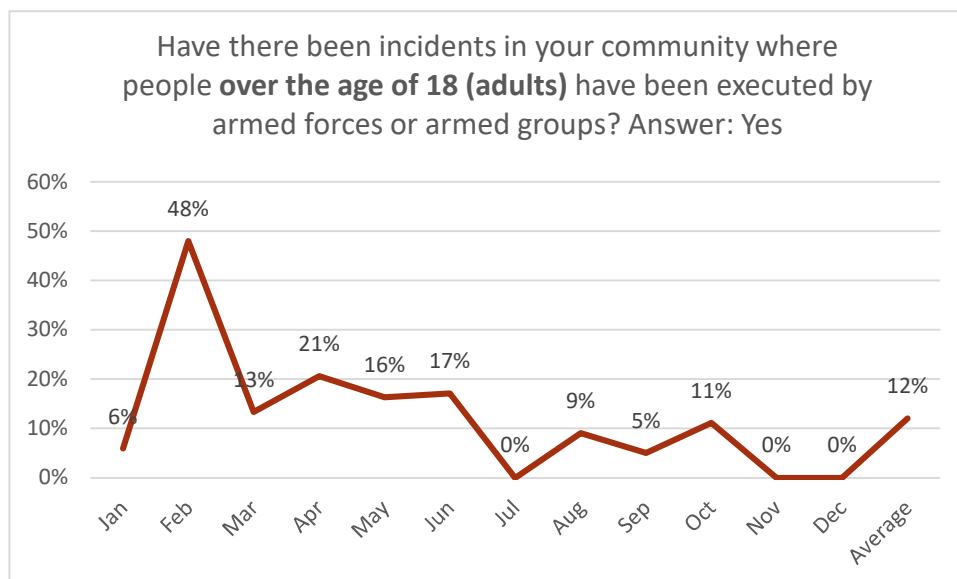
While the average percentage of KIs reporting incidents of torture in their community was 19% in 2020, the months of February and May are clear peaks in the year, with 60% of KIs and 45% of KIs reporting such incidents respectively.



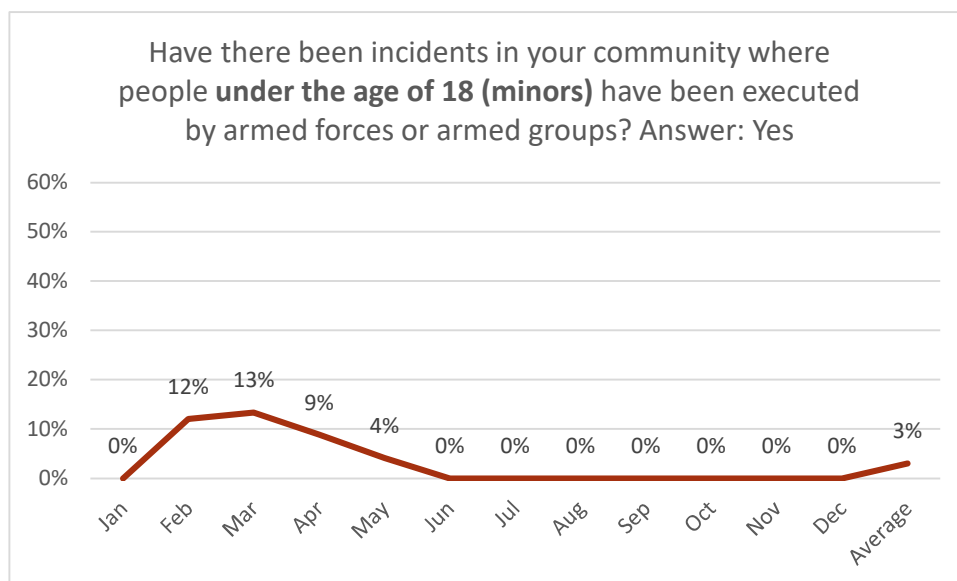
3.1.4 Killings

Similarly, the percentage of KIs reporting the executions of adults (aged over 18 years old) by armed groups or armed forces is particularly high in February, with 48% of the KIs reporting such incidents, compared to a 12% yearly average. The months of April to June are also particularly touched by a higher rate of adults' executions, with 21% in April, 16% in May and 17% in June reporting executions in their

community. 207 specific incidents of extra-judicial killings were reported to DRC in 2020, the majority in the months of May and June.

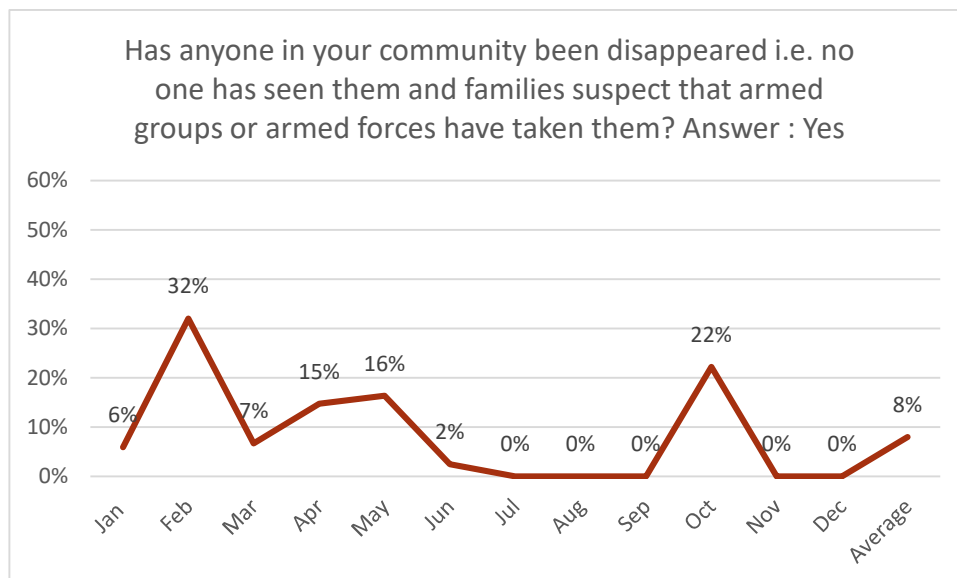


In parallel, while the yearly average for the reporting by KIs of killing of children was just 3%, all these reports came in the February to May 2020.



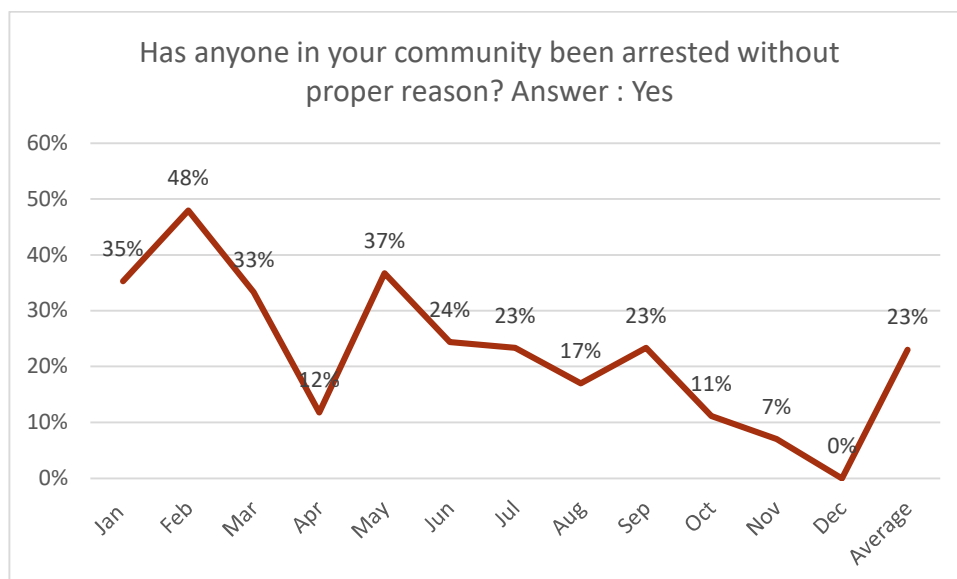
3.1.5 Forced disappearance

As per the percentage of KIs reporting suspected forced disappearances by armed groups or armed forces in their communities, three peaks can clearly be observed: in February with 32 percent of KIs reporting suspected forced disappearances, in April and in May, with 15 and 16% of KIs reporting such incidents and in October, with 22% of KIs making such reports. The annual average is 8%.



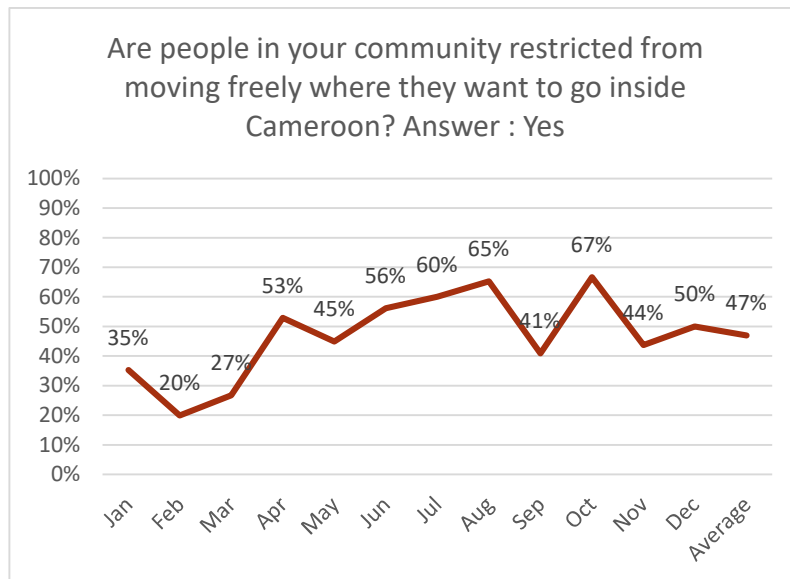
3.1.6 Arbitrary arrest

KIs reported arbitrary arrest incidents throughout the year, with an average of 23% of KIs reported such incidents in their community. As seen at the start of the report in the specific protection incidents reported to DRC, a peak can be observed in the number of arbitrary arrests in February (48% of KIs) and in May (37% of KIs) dropping only after September 2020.

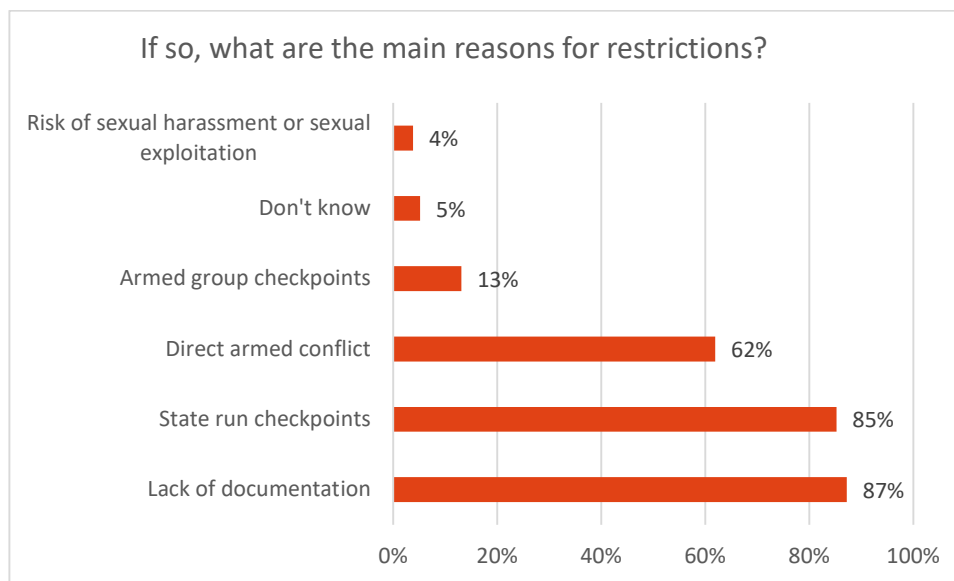


3.1.7 Restriction of movement

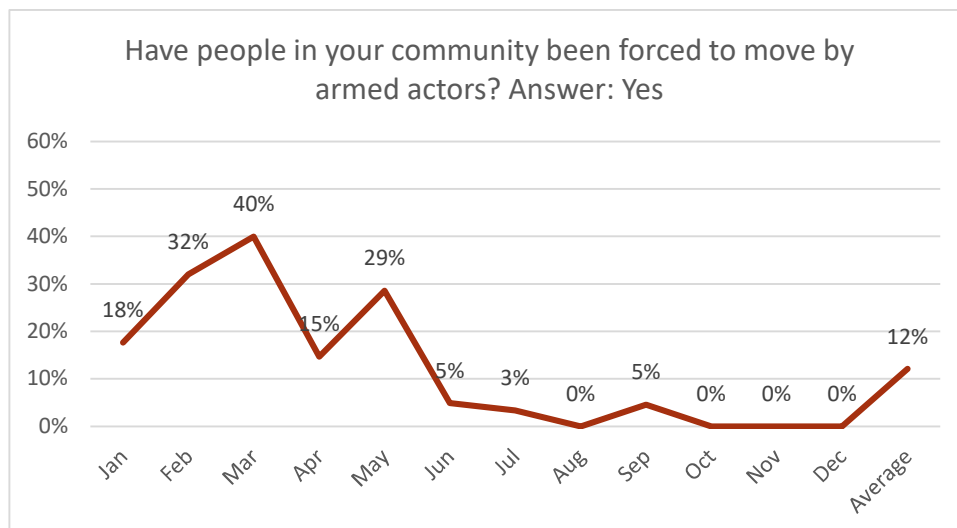
Over the course of the year 2020, 47% of KIs reported that people in their community are restricted from moving freely. This was highest between April and August 2020, with another peak in October. The outbreak of COVID-19 led the government of Cameroon to put in place several measures starting in March, including restrictions on movement and travel within the country.



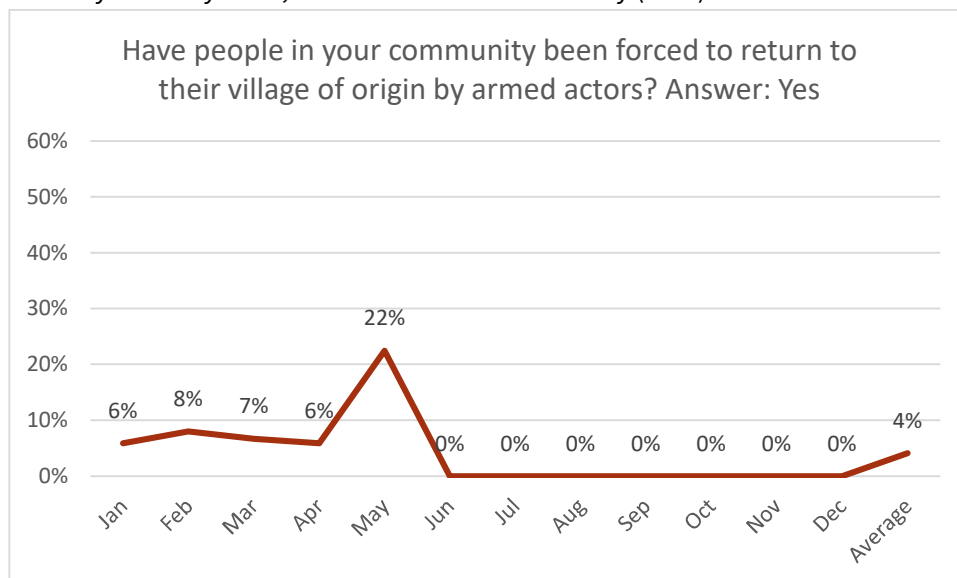
When asked to clarify the main movement restrictions people in the community face, KIs highlighted lack of documentation (87%), checkpoints (state run 85%, and armed groups: 13%) and restrictions due to direct armed conflict (62%). A smaller percentage (4%) also mentioned the risk of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation as a factor of restricted movement.



When asked whether people in the community had been forced to move by armed actors, 12% of KIs in 2020 confirmed that this occurred in their community. This was especially reported at the beginning of the year, between January and May.



Although only 4% of KIs reported forced returns in their communities, all these incidents occurred between January and May 2020, with a clear increase in May (22%).

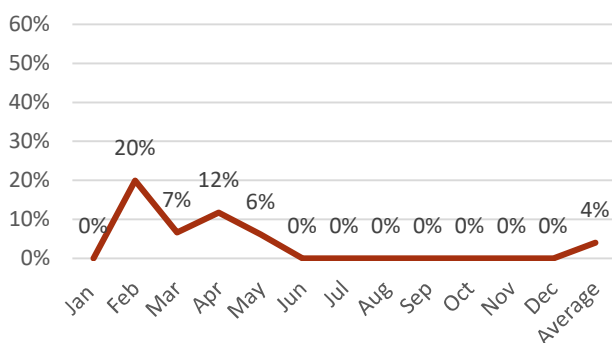


3.1.8 Forced recruitment

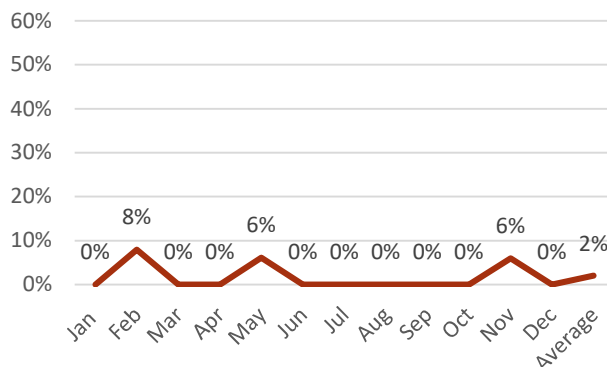
Reports of forced recruitment into armed groups or forces was low throughout the year, with 4% on average for child recruitment and 2% for the recruitment of adults. A peak in the percentage of KIs reporting incidents of forced recruitment of adults and forced child recruitment can also be observed in February with as many as 20% of the KIs reporting such incidents with regards to minors and 8% with regards to adults. Although not often reported by KIs, DRC FGDs on child protection throughout the year did bring up the issue of children being involved with armed groups in the majority of communities. It is worth analysing this issue further in a separate evaluation to understand the real extent of this problem.

Has anyone **under the age of 18 (minors)** joined the armed forces or an armed group to work in any capacity e.g. soldier/ cook/ cleaner/ wife/ guide/ porter?

Answer : Yes



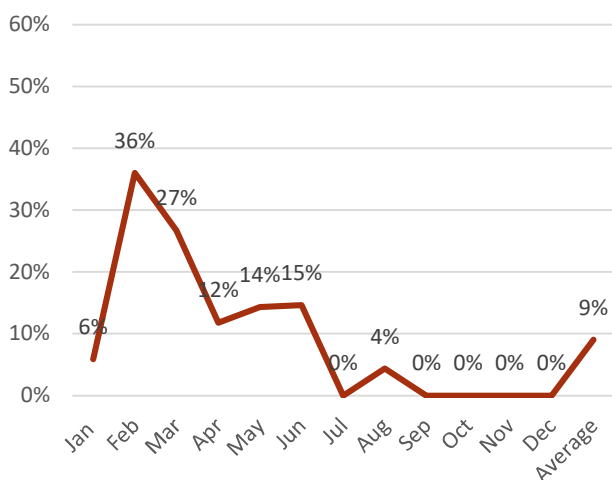
Has anyone **over the age of 18 (adults)** been forced or coerced to join the armed forces or an armed group to work in any capacity? Answer : Yes



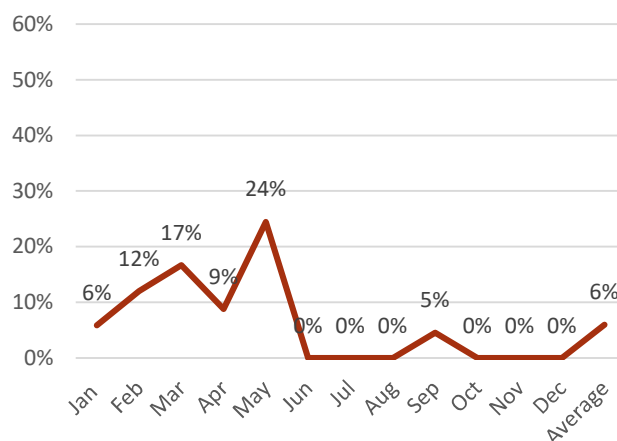
3.1.9 Destruction of land/property

The number of KIs reported destruction of land/property was 9% on average during 2020, with the vast majority of reports between February and June. The clear peak occurred in February, with 36% of the KIs reporting destruction of land/property in their communities. In that same period, KIs reported incidents of people being forced out of their homes/lands, with a peak of 24% of KIs reported this issue in May 2020.

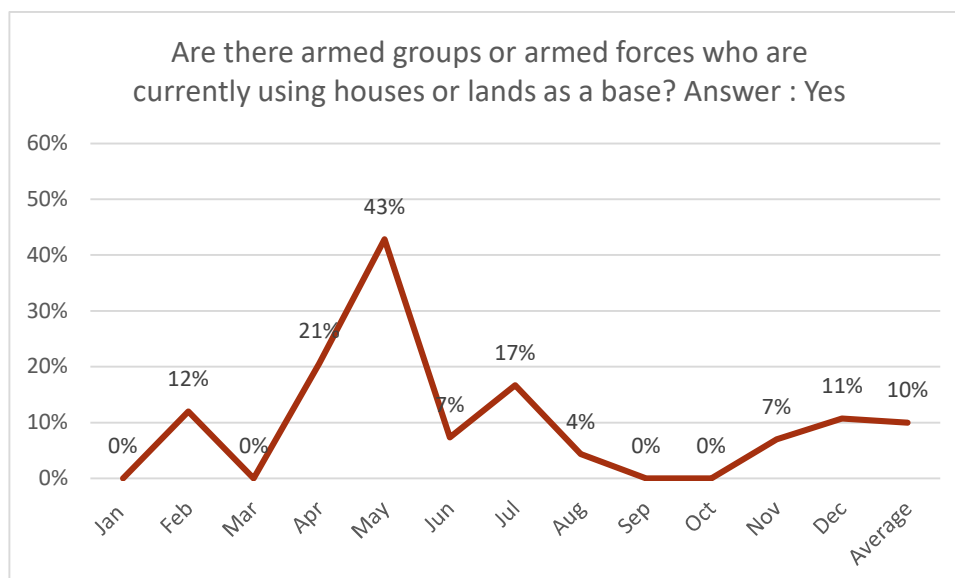
Were your home or lands destroyed/burned down? Answer : Yes



Has anyone in your community been forced out of their homes or home lands? Answer : Yes

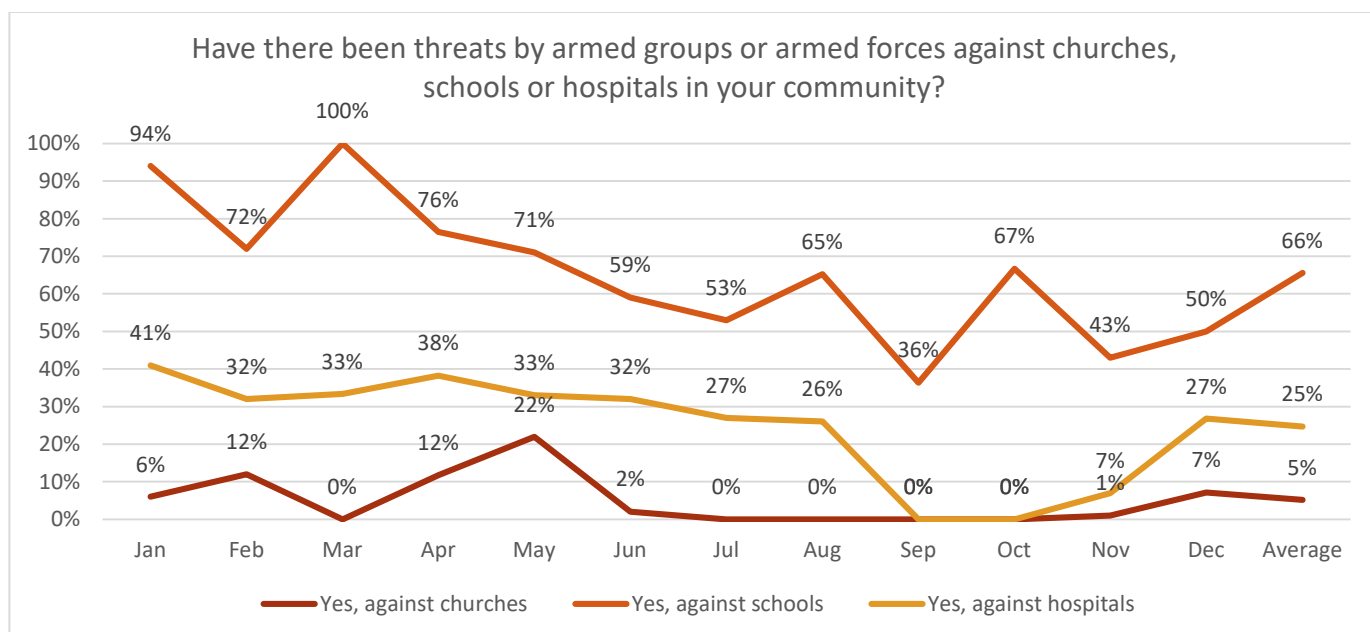


Similarly, in May there was a clear increase of KIs reporting (43%) that armed groups/forces are currently using houses/land in the community as a base. A smaller peak was observed in February (12%) and again in November and December.



3.1.10 Threats against institutions

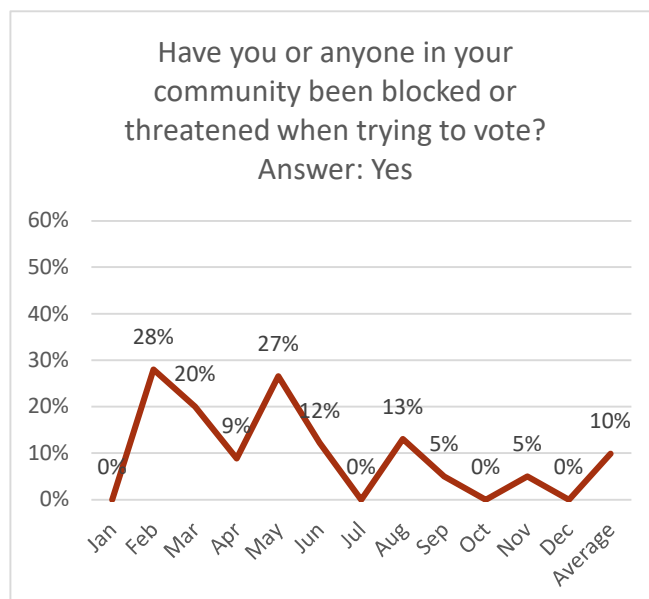
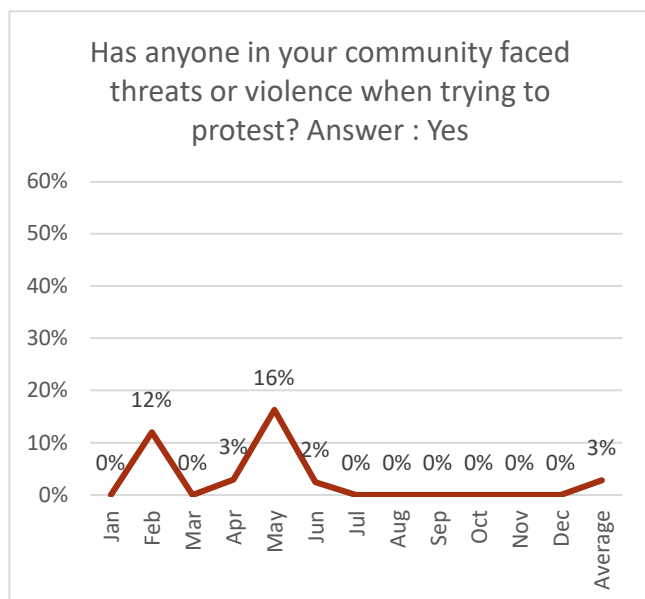
In terms of threats against institutions in the community, KI reported high rates of threats against schools (66% average in 2020). In January and March this percentage went as high as 94% and 100% respectively. Another peak could be observed in October at the start of the school year, which saw violent incidents targeting schools, including the incident in Kumba where armed men stormed a school and arbitrarily killed eight students. In addition, 25% of KIs in 2020 reported threats against hospitals. Threats against churches remained low throughout the year at 5% on average, with one clear peak in May (22%). Churches were forced to close following the COVID-19 outbreak, which was enforced by the military and might explain the peak in April-May.



3.1.11 Restrictions on the rights to vote and protest

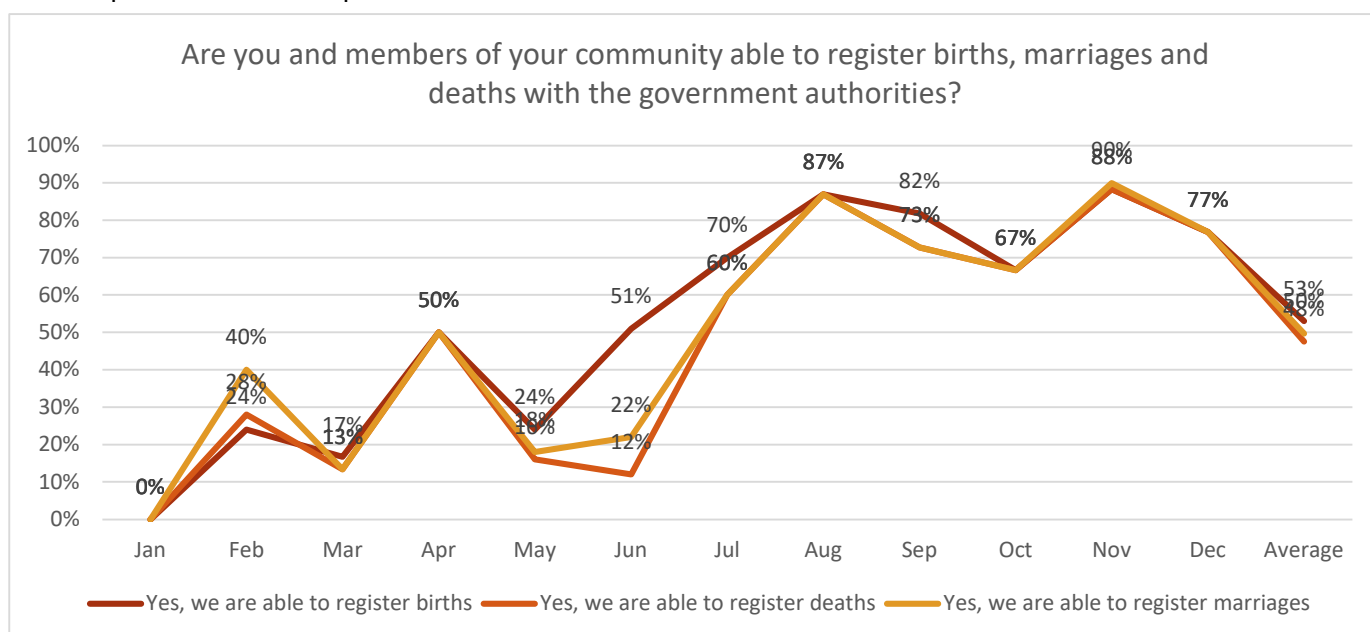
Restrictions on the right to protest and vote were reported at 3% and 10% average respectively. Clear peaks can be observed in February and May 2020. Although not reported in December by KIs, DRC did

receive reports in that period about the targeting of people participating in the elections, including kidnappings and killings.

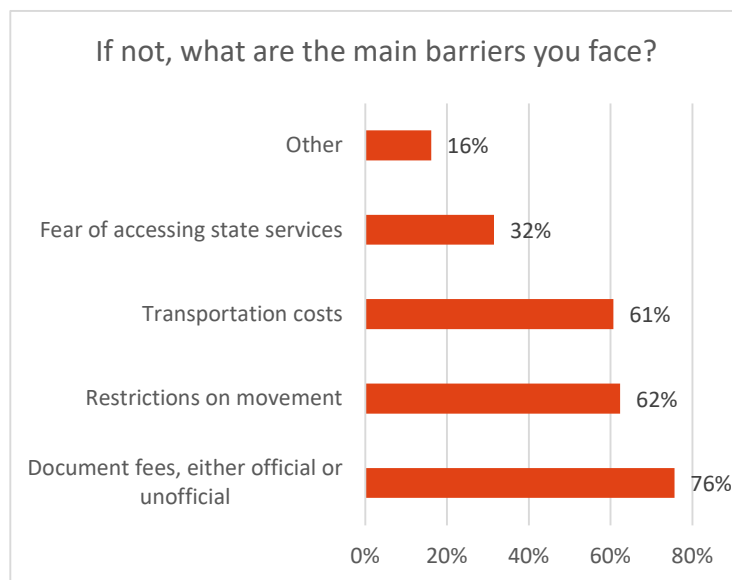
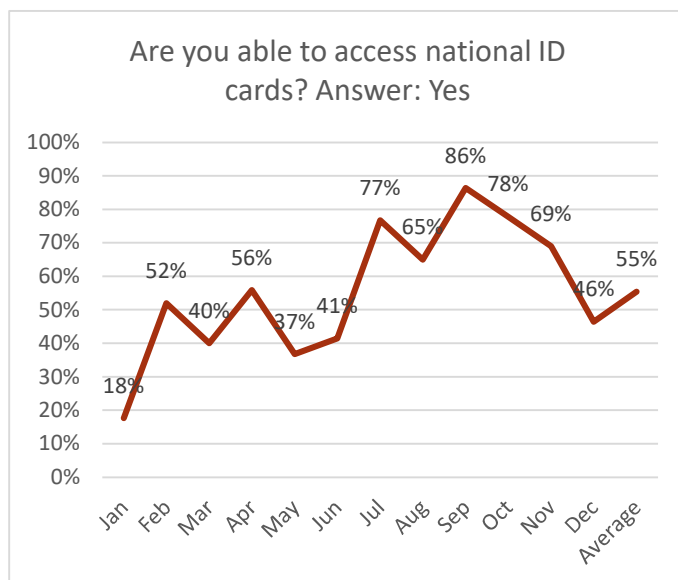


3.1.12 Access to civil documentation

53% on average said they could register births, 48% said they could register deaths and 50% said they could register marriages. This sentiment seemed to increase between June and August with another peak in November. The COVID-19 outbreak explains the results in the first half of the year, since government institutions closed for a period of time and only restarted slowly at partial capacity. At the beginning of the outbreak in Cameroon, transportation costs were high and few face masks were available, impacting people travelling to and entering government buildings to access civil documentation. Most government institutions in rural communities had already closed due to the conflict and people continue to have to travel great distances to be able to access civil documentation. Without a valid ID card, travelling through checkpoints becomes impossible.



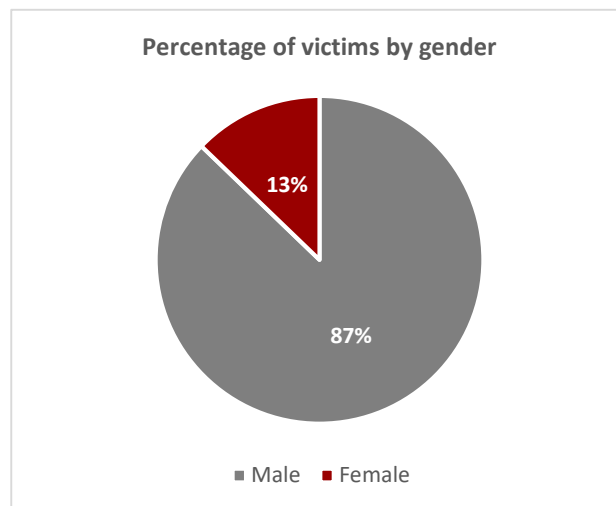
A very similar curve can be observed when asked specifically about national ID cards. 55% on average said they could access those throughout the year. The main barriers for accessing civil documentation were reported to be document fees, both official and unofficial fees (76%), restrictions on movement (62%), transportation costs (61%) and fear of accessing state services (32%).



3.2 Victims' Profile

The entire civilian population in the SW/NW are exposed to or are being affected by the ongoing crisis, however, incidents involving men and particularly young men were reported more frequently to DRC.

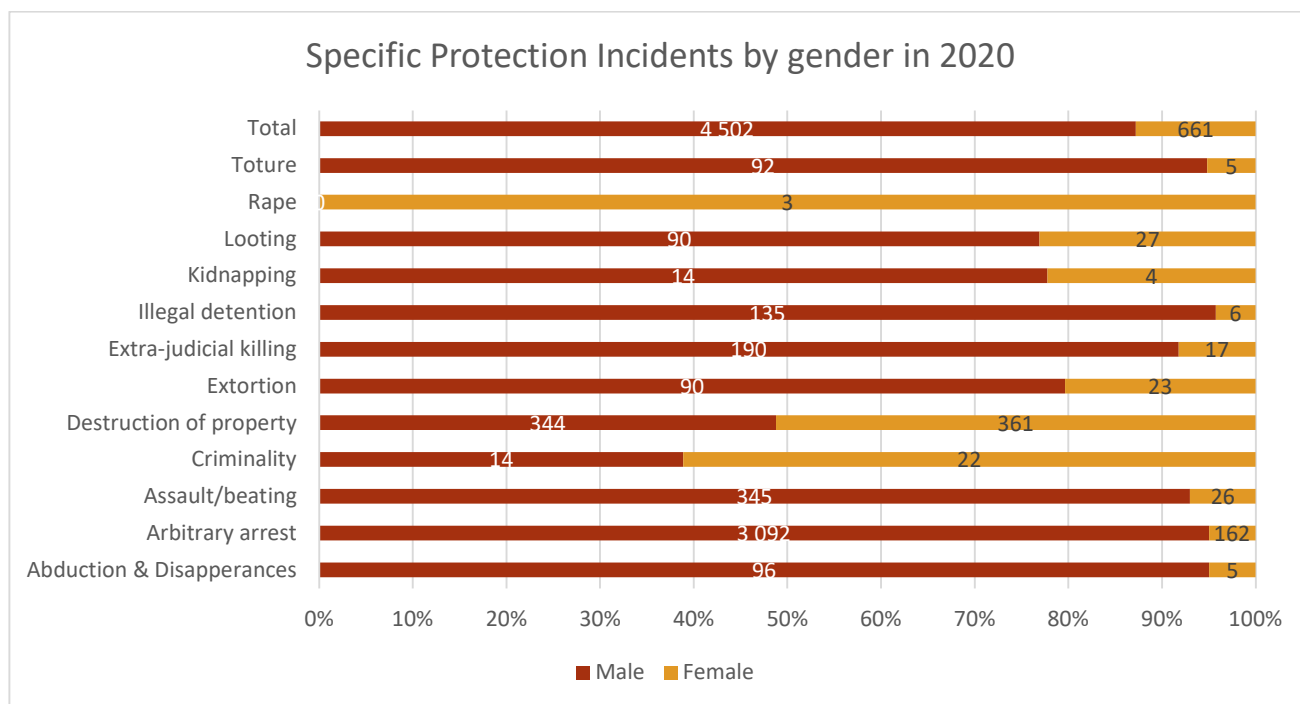
This is in line with the high number of arbitrary arrest incidents reported to DRC. Men are more likely to be affected by these incidents due to their presumed memberships or affiliation with the non-state armed groups. 87% of specific protection incidents (not to be confused with KIIs) reported to DRC involved men. This demography was particularly exposed to extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests, illegal detention, disappearance, beating, and torture.



Data source: DRC Protection Incident Tracker 2020

It is highly likely that Gender Based Violence (GBV) is considerably underreported due to the sensitivity, stigma, and risk associated with reporting at the community level. Anecdotal evidence from beneficiaries through conversations with DRC staff and Focus Group Discussions has highlighted that the crisis has increased vulnerabilities to GBV and negative coping mechanisms (including survival sex) among women and teenage girls as majority of them have taken on non-traditional roles. The risk of arbitrary arrest restricts men and adolescent boys' movements which has changed roles and responsibilities within households, forcing men to stay within their community and sending women and children to the market, access the fields, or fetch water or firewood. Frustration of

being unable to fulfill the socially expected role of provider and protector of the family, combined with the fact that violence is considered socially acceptable in some communities, has reportedly led to increased domestic violence. In addition, information collected through 24 FGDs conducted by DRC in Fako and Meme divisions shows that the crisis has also increased exposure of children to child protection risks including child labour, early marriage, sexual and physical violence, and engagement with armed groups.



4. Key Recommendations

4.1 To the Government of Cameroon

- To fully respect and implement the African Union Convention on Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which the Republic of Cameroon ratified by decree N°2014/610, of the 31 December 2014.
- To ensure the protection of its citizens at all times.
- To acknowledge the humanitarian suffering created because of the ongoing crisis.
- To facilitate uninhibited humanitarian access to assist the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and all others affected by the crisis.
- To actively participate in and promote peaceful and inclusive solutions to the conflict.

4.2 To the diplomatic community

- To call for a cease of the ongoing military actions which are impacting civilian populations.
- To advocate for peaceful solutions to the conflict amongst all relevant duty-bearers.



- To hold duty-bearers for state action against civilians to account for ongoing violations of International Humanitarian Laws (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL).
- To advocate for and contribute to mobilization of sufficient resources for the assistance of crisis-affected-populations, for their resilience and self-reliance.

4.3 To the Ambazonian non-state armed groups

- To allow safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assessment and response to principled humanitarian actors.
- To respect and contribute to the safety and dignity of civilian populations in contested areas.
- To recognize the human rights of populations to basic services including education and documentation.
- To actively participate in and contribute to peaceful solutions to the conflict.