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## **LUBANGA GUILTY VERDICT MARKS VICTORY FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE**

(WASHINGTON, D.C., March 14, 2012) – Today the International Criminal Court (ICC) convicted Thomas Lubanga Dyilo of committing war crimes involving the use of child soldiers in the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Lubanga was found guilty of enlisting, conscripting, and using children under the age of 15 in armed hostilities in his role as the alleged leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots and its former military wing, the Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo. Lubanga’s trial is the first to be completed by the ICC.

Don Kraus, CEO of Citizens for Global Solutions and co-chair of the Washington Working Group on the International Criminal Court said, “Lubanga’s guilty verdict is a landmark moment in the short history of the Court. For the first time in the history of humanity, nations have come together and established a permanent means of holding tyrants and human rights abusers accountable, while providing a fair system of justice, even for the most heinous crimes. This is how we build a safer, more secure world.”

The Lubanga decision is a significant marker for the continued development of international law. It has laid the groundwork for the kind of trial that Joseph Kony, another notorious perpetrator of war crimes involving child soldiers, deserves. Kraus stressed, “During the past decade we witnessed the Court mature from a fledgling institution, to one that delivers results, holds mass killers accountable, and helps bring justice to their victims. The precedents set in this case will affect how the ICC administers justice for the rest of this century, if not beyond”

The United States should use the occasion of Lubanga’s guilty verdict to reexamine its relationship with the ICC. Citizens for Global Solutions, along with Amnesty International USA, United to End Genocide and 9 other organizations, sent an [open letter to Congress](#), calling for the U.S. “to support a continuing, positive U.S. relationship with the Court.” The letter notes, “The U.S. has long supported accountability for perpetrators of mass atrocities – a conviction that dates back to the Nuremberg trials. However, current U.S. legislation limits U.S. cooperation with and funding for the Court, except for very limited circumstances. As the Court has matured, now is the time for the US to consider an evolution of its relationship with the ICC as well.”

Citizens for Global Solutions advocates for increased U.S. engagement at the International Criminal Court. The American Service-Members Protection Act, passed in 2003, still prohibits U.S. support or cooperation with the Court in most instances. Kraus urged that, “now that the Court’s has demonstrated its ability to hold fair and deliberative proceedings, this would be an excellent moment for Congress to reexamine U.S. policy towards the ICC. The Court has matured and America’s relationship with it should do so as well.”

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Citizens for Global Solutions has worked tirelessly for decades promoting international justice. The organization advocated for the Court's creation, attended the conference that established the Court in 1998, pushed for the Clinton administration to sign the Rome Statute, and fought hard against the Bush administration's position of undermining the Court. Kraus noted, "Since the Court's creation in 2002, its acceptance and legitimacy in the world community has dramatically increased. From the U.N.'s request for an investigation into the Libyan conflict to Syrian protesters calling for President Bashar Al-Assad to stand trial at the ICC, it is encouraging that the ICC is now regarded as a major tool to end the impunity of war criminals and provides justice for their victims."

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***Citizens for Global Solutions** is a groundbreaking national movement that supports responsible and cooperative U.S. foreign policy.*

***The Washington Working Group on the International Criminal Court (WICC)** is a coordinating group of the legislative and governmental affairs offices of American non-governmental organizations committed to the International Criminal Court. It supports, coordinates, and provides materials for education and advocacy about the Court. Citizens for Global Solutions co-convenes the WICC.*