



**Coalition for the International Criminal Court**  
**[www.iccnnow.org](http://www.iccnnow.org)**

MEDIA ADVISORY  
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***CICC PRESS BRIEFING***

**ICC BEGINS FIRST TRIAL: PROSECUTOR VS. THOMAS LUBANGA DYILO**

*Landmark Role for Victims in Trial of Congolese Warlord Facing Child Soldier Charges*

**WHAT:** In advance of the International Criminal Court's (ICC) first trial, in the case of *The Prosecutor vs. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo*, which will open on 26 January 2009, the Coalition for the ICC (CICC) will brief members of the media on the importance of this crucial turning point for international justice.

**WHEN:** Friday, 23 January 2009 at 11 a.m.

**WHERE:** CICC offices, Bezuidenhoutseweg 99A, The Hague, Netherlands.

**WHO:** Panel participants will include:

>> **Bukeni T. Waruzi**, Program Coordinator, WITNESS and former Director of Ajedi-Ka, an NGO in eastern DRC that works to demobilize child soldiers and reintegrate them into the local community. Bukeni will share his unique experience and discuss how the trial will impact affected communities, including child soldiers in the DRC.

>> **Katharine Orlovsky**, Legal Officer at the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice. Katharine will focus on gender-based crimes in the DRC, the situation of girl soldiers in the DRC and on the unprecedented participation of victims during

the trial. The Women's Initiatives, an international women's human rights organization advocating for gender-inclusive justice, has been instrumental in advocating for victims' rights at the ICC.

>> **Lorraine Smith**, Program Manager at the International Bar Association. As part of the IBA Monitoring and Outreach programme, Lorraine has been closely observing ICC proceedings since an early stage. She will focus on fair trial issues during the Court's first trial, including rights of defendants.

**WHY:** Less than seven years after the entry into force of the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the ICC – the world's first permanent court to try war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide – will begin its first trial.

The opening of the trial of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, the first suspect arrested by the ICC, is a clear sign that the International Criminal Court has made its mark on the world stage as a crucial actor in the struggle to end impunity for grave crimes and to deter their future commission.

To date, the ICC has issued twelve arrest warrants for investigations in four of the most brutal conflicts of our time: the Central African Republic; Darfur, Sudan; Uganda; and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Four suspects have been arrested. The Court is also monitoring at least eight other situations on four continents. A second trial is likely to start in 2009 against Congolese rebel leaders Germain Katanga and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Experts from DRC human rights organizations and international NGOs are listed on the following pages for comment and background on the trial.

In addition, the Coalition for the ICC will be launching a **blog** on the Lubanga trial; to follow the discussion, please visit our website at [www.iccnw.org](http://www.iccnw.org), which will be redesigned on 26 January.

### **NGOs in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

*Alphabetical by last name*

**Bukeni W. Beck, WITNESS and former Director and Founder of Jeunes pour le Developpement Integre-Kalundu/Projet Enfants Soldats (AJEDI-Ka/PES – Youth Development and Integration/Child Soldiers Project)**

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***Important notice:** The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), an independent NGO movement, is dedicated to the establishment of the International Criminal Court as a fair, effective, and independent international organization. The Coalition as a whole, and its secretariat, does not endorse or promote specific investigations or prosecutions or take a position on situations before the ICC. However, individual CICC members may endorse referrals, provide legal and other support on investigations, or develop partnerships with local and other organizations in the course of their efforts.*

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