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Gbagbo ICC Trial a Step Forward in Fight against Impunity*Judges confirm charges of crimes against humanity against former Ivorian president*

The Hague— Yesterday's decision to try former Côte d'Ivoire president Laurent Gbagbo at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity is an important step forward in the fight against impunity in the country, the Coalition for the ICC said today.

Following months of deliberations, two of three judges in ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I found that evidence presented by the prosecution established substantial grounds to believe Gbagbo is responsible for crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, other inhumane acts (or in the alternative attempted murder, and persecution) allegedly committed during violence that erupted following Côte d'Ivoire's disputed 2010 presidential election.

"The many victims of Côte d'Ivoire's 2010-11 post-electoral crisis have long-awaited the prosecution of those responsible for the heinous crimes they suffered, and the decision to try Laurent Gbagbo at the ICC is an important step towards providing them with accountability," **said William Pace, convenor of the Coalition for the ICC, a global NGO network.** "Having a former head of state such as Gbagbo face trial at the ICC is a timely reminder that no one - no matter their station in life or place in society - is immune to prosecution in the Rome Statute system of international justice."

The crimes Gbagbo will face trial for are said to have been committed in the capital Abidjan between 16 and 19 December 2010 during and after a pro-Ouattara march on the RTI headquarters, on 3 March 2011 at a women's demonstration in Abobo, on 17 March 2011 by shelling a densely populated area in Abobo, and on or around 12 April 2011 in Yopougon.

He is accused of committing these crimes jointly with members of his inner circle and through members of the pro-Gbagbo forces or—in the alternative—for ordering soliciting and inducing the commission of these crimes or—in the alternative—for contributing in any other way to the commission of these crimes.

"This is another step forward for the victims of the post electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. The confirmation of charges against former president Laurent Gbagbo opens a new era for Ivorian human rights defenders and all those committed to fighting impunity," **said Ali Ouattara, president of the Ivorian Coalition for the ICC.** "We now hope that accountability will be extended to all perpetrators of serious human rights violations committed in Côte d'Ivoire since 19 September 2002. The Ivorian judiciary system must bolster the proceedings linked to the post electoral violence."

The confirmation of charges came after ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda submitted additional evidence to judges, who in June 2013 delayed issuing a decision on whether the case against Gbagbo would move to trial due to insufficient evidence.

They requested that the prosecutor to consider providing further evidence or conducting further investigation, emphasizing however that the evidence did not appear to be so lacking that it left them with no choice but to decline to confirm the charges. In her dissenting opinion Judge Christine Van den Wyngaert maintained that the evidence provided by the Prosecutor was not sufficient to send Gbagbo to trial, although she did not dispute that horrendous crimes were committed against civilians by forces loyal to Laurent Gbagbo.

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While Gbagbo can still appeal yesterday's decision, a chamber of judges will now be composed for the trial.

On 18 August 2014, the confirmation of charges hearing will take place in the case against Charles Blé Goudé, the former leader of the Young Patriots, the youth wing of Gbagbo's political movement. He is charged with similar crimes.

Simone Gbagbo is also wanted by the ICC for her alleged part in the post-election violence. However, Côte d'Ivoire has challenged the ICC saying it is willing and able to try the former first lady before a national court.

For more information visit our Côte d'Ivoire [webpage](#).

BACKGROUND: The ICC is the world's first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Central to the Court's mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unwilling or unable to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The Coalition for the International Criminal Court is a global network of civil society organizations in 150 countries working in partnership to strengthen international cooperation with the ICC; ensure that the Court is fair, effective and independent; make justice both visible and universal; and advance stronger national laws that deliver justice to victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. For more information, visit: www.coalitionfortheicc.org