

“The best way to honor the victims of serious crimes is to bring to justice their alleged executioners” Press Release No. 004/CN-CPI/SK/RDC/2008, by Descartes Mponge Malasi, South-Kivu Focal Point for the National Coalition for the ICC in DRC, 25 May 2008

The South-Kivu focal point for the national Coalition for the ICC in DRC (CN-CPI) welcomes the arrest by the Belgium government of the Congolese Senator and President of the Congolese Liberation Movement (Mouvement pour la Liberation du Congo), Jean Pierre BEMBA GOMBO, whose forces have allegedly committed serious crimes in the Central African Republic.

With this arrest, Belgium joins the DRC in the list of countries that demonstrate their true desire to cooperate with the ICC in arresting those it pursues. It is true that Jean Pierre BEMBA still benefits from the presumption of innocence before his eventual conviction, but his arrest is a strike for the ICC, and carries a dual message:

- The arrest is a sign of the willingness of the ICC to honor the victims of serious crimes;
- The arrest is also a message to criminals that the bell for their immunity tolls throughout the world and that they should stop committing crimes lest they in turn fall into the nets of national and international criminal justice.

In light of the fact that the ICC cannot judge all the crimes within its jurisdiction and fulfill the quest for justice of thousands of victims of serious crimes, it is high time for the Congolese Parliament to pass a law implementing the ICC Statute and granting the Court’s international jurisdiction, thereby lifting the protective veil of immunity under which several criminals hid.

The South-Kivu focal point for the national Coalition for the ICC in DRC (CN-CPI) asks other states and international actors to cooperate urgently with the ICC to bring about the arrest of the well-known Bosco NTAGANDA who continues to command CNDP troops in North Kivu despite the arrest warrant hanging over him.

To the Congolese people, the South-Kivu focal point for the national Coalition for the ICC in DRC (CN-CPI) asks that they not allow themselves to be manipulated by troublemakers who might attempt to politicize this arrest.

Translation is unofficial and provided by CICC Secretariat