



ICC: NPWJ and the NRPTT welcome the opening of the confirmation of charges hearings against Callixte Mbarushima

Brussels-Rome, 16 September 2011

The confirmation of charges hearings started today in the case of *The Prosecutor v. Callixte Mbarushimana* before Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and will continue until 21 September 2011. This public hearing, where the Prosecutor, the defence and victims' representatives will present their submissions, is the first phase of the case against Mr Mbarushimana. It will determine whether there is sufficient evidence to commit him to trial on the basis of the charges brought against him by the ICC Prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo.

On 25 January 2011, Mr Mbarushimana arrived at the ICC detention centre in The Hague after having been arrested on 11 October 2010 by the French authorities. Mr Mbarushimana is allegedly criminally responsible for five counts of crimes against humanity (murder, torture, rape, inhumane acts and persecution) and six counts of war crimes (attacks against the civilian population, destruction of property, murder, torture, rape and inhuman treatment) committed in the context of an armed conflict in the Kivu Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2009.

Statement by Alison Smith, Legal Counsel of No Peace Without Justice

“No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) and the Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty (NRPTT), welcome the opening of the confirmation of charges hearings against Callixte Mbarushimana as an important step forward for the victims of the Kivu region in their quest for justice.

“It is significant that on 11 August 2011, Pre Trial Chamber I granted 130 persons the status of victims, authorising them to participate in the proceedings relating to this stage of the case. The ICC stands as the last guardian of justice and for many victims, represents their only chance to see perpetrators being held accountable and to seek redress for the violations they suffered.

“For the Court to maximise its impact on victims and affected communities, it is of the utmost importance that effective and sustained outreach activities are carried out. NPWJ and the NRPTT call on the ICC to take immediate steps to increase its outreach program in DRC to promote understanding of the legal proceedings and to manage expectations. With the confirmation of charges hearings, the information needs on the ground have increased and we fully expect the Court to engage with victims and affected communities so that they can follow the process and finally see justice being done.”

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