



Date : Wednesday 14 March 2012

## **First ICC trial verdict: Lubanga convicted of war crimes committed in Ituri**

**At the end of the International Criminal Court's first trial, judges found Thomas Lubanga Dyilo guilty of war crimes committed in Ituri, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) between 2002 and 2003. Leader and President of the Union des patriotes congolais (UPC) and Commander in Chief of its Army, the Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo (FPLC), Thomas Lubanga was convicted of enrolling, conscripting and obliging children under the age of 15 to participate in the hostilities. FIDH and its member organisations in DRC, Association africaine des droits de l'Homme (ASADHO), Groupe Lotus and Ligue des électeurs welcome this historic decision which concludes trial proceedings opened 3 years earlier.**

<http://www.fidh.org/First-ICC-trial-verdict-Lubanga>



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"This first conviction by the ICC comes at the end of a pilot trial before the Court which will contribute to defining the practices of this unique and young institution", said **Souhayr Belhassen**, FIDH President. "The many lessons learned from these proceedings - including on the rights of the accused to a fair trial, the rights of victims to participate, the protection of witnesses and victims and the role of intermediaries - are already being applied in other trials now underway".

"This trial has contributed to raising awareness about the recruitment and use of child soldiers in DRC, and also in other conflict-affected regions, as war crimes. The conviction of Thomas Lubanga sends a strong signal to the perpetrators of international crimes that they will not escape justice", said **Jean-Claude Katende**, President of ASADHO.

129 victims participated in the Lubanga trial. They pioneered the application of the innovative provisions of the ICC Statute on the right of victims to participate fully in ICC proceedings. "The contributions of victims were essential in the Lubanga trial. For the first time, the victims expressed their views and concerns at various stages of the proceedings and, in particular, were able to contest the limited range of charges against Lubanga and request that crimes of sexual violence against the child soldiers be addressed", said **Paul Nsapu**, President of the Ligue des électeurs and Secretary General of FIDH.

"The Lubanga trial and the verdict should have a preventive effect on the commission of international crimes in the country, and especially the use of child soldiers. This verdict will contribute to consolidating the legitimacy of the Court, which is essential for the exercise of real, preventive authority", said **Dismas Kitenge**, President of the Groupe Lotus and Vice-President of FIDH. "It is now up to the Congolese authorities to arrest and transfer Bosco Ntaganda to the ICC who has been sought by the ICC for his alleged responsibility as the co-perpetrator of crimes for which Lubanga was convicted", he added.

The parties to the trial have 30 days to appeal the verdict. Separate hearings will be held by Trial Chamber I to decide on the sentence for Thomas Lubanga and the reparation to be ordered by the Court for victims.

Our organisations call on the ICC to deploy a strong outreach and communication strategy in DRC concerning the verdict and the next steps.

FIDH, ASADHO, Groupe Lotus and Ligue des électeurs call on the Office of the Prosecutor to continue investigations and prosecutions for the international crimes, in particular crimes of sexual violence committed in the Kivu provinces.

## [Read our dossier on the Lubanga Case](#)

### Background

Dates in the Lubanga Case	The DRC government refers the situation to the ICC
23 June 2004	ICC Prosecutor's Office opens an investigation on the situation in DRC

<b>17 March 2006</b>	International arrest warrant made public against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo
<b>17 March 2006</b>	Transfer of Thomas Lubanga to The Hague, detained in DRC
<b>9-28 November 2006</b>	Confirmation of charges hearing against Thomas Lubanga
<b>29 January 2007</b>	Decision to confirm charges against Thomas Lubanga
<b>26 January 2009</b>	Opening of the Thomas Lubanga trial
<b>14 March 2012</b>	Verdict delivered in the Thomas Lubanga case

The Court is continuing its investigations and trials for international crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo since the 1st July 2002.

Germain Katanga and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui are being tried for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the attack against the village of Bogorro in Ituri in 2003.

Callixte Mbarushimana, who was accused by the Prosecutor of crimes against humanity and war crimes in the Kivu provinces, was released on 23 December 2011, following the court's decision not to confirm charges against him.