

PRESS RELEASE

The acquittal of Mr. Laurent Gbagbo and Mr. Charles Blé Goudé: "These acquittals must not make us forget the thousands of victims of the Ivorian crisis – victims in need of justice and reparations."

As Mr. Laurent Gbagbo and Mr. Charles Blé Goudé have been acquitted by the ICC, civil society renews its call so that the victims are not scarified in this international judicial procedure.

The Hague –former President of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo, and former Minister, Mr. Charles Blé Goudé, tried by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for four counts of alleged crimes against humanity committed during the post-election violence of 2010-2011, were acquitted after a number appeals for provisional release. Ivorian civil society strongly urges the ICC to ensure that victims can obtain justice and reparations. It also calls on the ICC to extend its investigations to all parties involved in the Ivorian crisis.

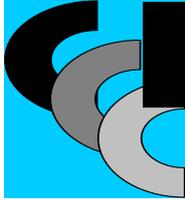
The acquittal pronounced by the Court stresses that it "upholds the requests for acquittals submitted by Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé concerning all charges against them and orders the immediate release of the two accused".

Trial Chamber I of the ICC concluded by a majority that the Prosecutor has failed to demonstrate several core constitutive elements of the crimes as charged, including the existence of a "common plan" to keep Mr Gbagbo in power, which included the commission of crimes against civilians "pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organisational policy"; and the existence of patterns of violence from which it could be inferred that there was a "policy to attack a civilian population".

The prosecutor failed to demonstrate that the public speeches by Laurent Gbagbo and Blé Goudé constituted ordering or inducing the alleged crimes.

The ICC issued an arrest warrant against Laurent Gbagbo on 23 November 2011 for charges of crimes against humanity (murder, rape, other inhumane acts or – in the alternative – attempted murder, and persecution) allegedly committed in the context of post-electoral violence in Côte d'Ivoire between 16 December 2010 and 12 April 2011. The cases of Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Blé Goudé were joined on 11 March 2015 and the trial opened on 28 January 2016.

Côte d'Ivoire on 15 February 2003 accepted the exercise of jurisdiction by the ICC with respect to crimes committed on its territory since the events of 19 September 2002, before ratifying the Rome Statute on 15 February 2013.



COALITION IVOIRIENNE POUR LA COUR PENALE INTERNATIONALE

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"This acquittal must not make us forget the thousands of victims of the Ivorian crisis who are in need of justice and reparations" said Ms. Doumbia Fanta, Executive Coordinator of the Ivorian Coalition for the ICC.

As for Mr. Ali Ouattara, President of the Board of the Ivorian Coalition for the ICC added: "The ICC would benefit from not giving false hope to victims of serious crimes. It must give victims confidence through credible investigations and decisions that take their interest into account. Moreover, it must also investigate all the parties involved in the Ivorian conflict so that today's impunity does not become the crime of tomorrow. »

The post-electoral crisis of 2010 resulted in more than 3,000 deaths and led to an investigation by the ICC in Côte d'Ivoire. Arrest warrants were issued against three individuals: Laurent Gbagbo, Charles Blé Goudé and Simone Ehivet Gbagbo.