



Parliamentarians *for Global Action*
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برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

PGA Press Release – For Immediate Release

**International Law and Human Rights
Programme
Contact:**

The Hague
Ms. Maia Trujillo
Senior Programme Officer
maia.trujillo@pgaction.org
Tel. +31.70.360.4433

New York
Ms. Leyla Nikjou
Senior Programme Officer
leyla.nikjou@pgaction.org
Tel. +1.212.687.7755 (ext. 104)

**PGA welcomes the adoption by the Central African Parliament of the law establishing
a Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic**

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) congratulates the National Transitional Council (NTC) of the Central African Republic (CAR) which adopted by a large majority, on 22 April 2015, the bill establishing a Special Criminal Court in CAR. The vote follows the adoption on 5 February 2015 by the Council of Ministers of the bill establishing this Court which will be responsible for investigating serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the CAR, including crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide. Along with other Human Rights organisations, PGA welcomes this [vote](#) as it is an important step in the fight against impunity, in restoring the Rule of law in CAR as well as in the long-term stabilization of the Great Lakes region.

PGA hails the outstanding work of PGA National Group in CAR, led by Beatrice Epaye and Mr. Gervais Lakosso, who played a major role in the rapid adoption of a crucial bill for the restoration of peace in CAR. In the weeks before the vote at the NTC, [PGA urged the Members of the NTC to quickly pass the bill](#) and provided technical assistance to ensure that the final text guaranteed an independent, just, effective Court that complies with international law standards.

The complementary work between the Special Criminal Court and the ICC will enable both bodies to share the burden in a country where numerous crimes were committed. Cooperation between national authorities and the ICC will be strengthened, and CAR will serve as an example to be followed in the international fight against impunity.

The first source of law for the Court being the national criminal law, it is essential that it is accompanied by reforms to the national legal framework regarding international crimes,

including the full implementation of the Rome Statute of the ICC, of which CAR is a State Party since 2001. Such reforms are crucial to implement effectively the principle of complementarity in order to fight against impunity and to give justice to thousands of victims of chronic armed conflict in CAR.

Thus, to enhance the impact of the SCC, PGA encourages the NTC to support its creation by taking additional measures in order to ensure adequate reparations for victims, if necessary, by the establishment of a Special Trust Fund. Furthermore, in light of the prevailing insecurity in CAR, the Central African Government should also adopt special measures to protect witnesses. Such measures will encourage witnesses to participate in the trial, thereby ensuring the smooth conduct of proceedings. Finally, PGA regrets the article referring to the principle of non-application of immunities before the Court has been withdrawn, but still hopes that the said principle will be respected through the course of the proceedings before the Court, in light of international law and domestic law as article 162 of the Central African Penal Code forbids any immunities for perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide.

While extremely serious crimes continue to be committed in CAR, PGA urges the Central African authorities and the United Nations multidimensional integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African (MINUSCA) and other parties to establish the Special Criminal Court as soon as possible. Now that the law establishing the Court was adopted, it needs qualified staff but also political support and funds for its operation. The UN Security Council should also ensure that the support of the MINUSCA, including logistical and financial works correctly.

Members of PGA in CAR hailed the adoption of the law and are still mobilised to make sure of the prompt establishment of the Court and the effectiveness of the proceedings before it.

Statement by Ms. Beatrice Epaye, MP and PGA Member: *“Central African parliamentarians have done a remarkable job to pass this bill, crucial for the restoration of peace in the Central African Republic. The Central African people have suffered enough and it is now time for the perpetrators of atrocities to be held accountable for their actions. Cooperation with the ICC and the expertise of international staff within the Court will not only enable to guarantee the proper conduct of investigations and procedures, but also to collaborate and support the national staff, thus contributing properly to the establishment of a fair and effective national justice system long term-wise.”*

Statement by Mr. Gervais Lakosso, MP and PGA Member: *“Over a number of years, impunity in CAR has been one of the main reason of the country’s instability. The Central African Republic will greatly benefit from this Court to try perpetrators of serious crimes, prevent such crimes from happening in the future and especially to provide the Central African people the opportunity to get in the way of reconciliation. CAR must now work closely with the international community to establish this Court as soon as possible and to ensure that it receives the support it requires.”*

Statement by Ms. Barbara Lochbihler MEP (Germany) and Co-convenor of PGA International Law and Human Rights Programme: *“With this vote, the Central African Republic sends a strong message to all perpetrators of international crimes in the Great Lakes region, that their crimes will not go unpunished and that they will be held accountable. With the support of the PGA network, the Central African authorities must now pursue in this path*

by implementing the Rome Statute, by reinstating an effective national judicial system and ensuring that justice is brought to victims.”

About PGA

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is the largest transnational network of Members of Parliaments from all regions of the world who, in their individual capacity, support the effective operation of the ICC and domestic jurisdictions to end impunity. The PGA network is assisted by a small secretariat that facilitates the cooperation and exchange by member MPs to achieve these goals and provides technical cooperation on legal advice and advocacy.

Members of PGA have contributed to 76 of the 123 ratifications of, or accession to the Rome Statute to date. PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC. The PGA Campaign for the Universality and Effectiveness of the Rome Statute system receives support from:

*THE **EUROPEAN UNION** (EUROPEAN INSTRUMENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS)*



*GOVERNMENTS OF **THE NETHERLANDS, SWITZERLAND, ESTONIA, LIECHTENSTEIN** AND*



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