



Parliamentarians for Global Action
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PGA's Press Statement - For Immediate Release

International Law and Human Rights Programme

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PGA SUPPORTS THE CREATION OF A SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Hague/New York, 23 February 2015: In light of its numerous statements and calls for action, PGA strongly supports the creation of a Special Criminal Court to fight against impunity for the international crimes committed since 2012 in the territory of the Central African Republic (CAR).

CAR has been the theatre of serious violations of international humanitarian law since 2012 where crimes against humanity, war crimes and possibly acts of genocide or ethnic cleansing have been allegedly committed. The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened an investigation in CAR in December 2004 and has brought charges against Jean-Pierre Bemba, Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for crimes against humanity and war crimes. In addition, in light of the recent events, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC opened a [second investigation](#) with respect to crimes allegedly committed since 2012, which PGA [welcomed](#). Both times, the authorities of CAR referred the situations to the Court triggering such investigations and affirming their commitment to justice. The need for accountability is still however immense and as national authorities have the primary obligation to start investigations and prosecutions for those allegedly responsible of the most serious crimes of international concern, the creation of a Special Criminal Court is crucial in order to bring to justice such individuals, sharing the burden with the ICC, which can only prosecute the most responsible for those crimes due to its limited capacities. The Court would also be beneficial for CAR as it would create a fair and effective structure within the Central African national system to fight impunity, focused exclusively on prosecuting the most serious international crimes.

PGA members in CAR remain committed to ensure that these crimes will not go unpunished and impunity will not be tolerated. PGA members in CAR are mobilized to vote in the National Transitional Council for the swift adoption of the draft law creating the Special Criminal Court.

Statement by Chair of the PGA National Group in CAR, Hon. Marcel Djimasse: *“Victims of the most serious crimes of international concern, deserve to see justice being done and the establishment of a Special Criminal Court is certainly a very important step in the right direction. The draft law as adopted on 5 February, 2015 envisages the obligation upon Central African Republic authorities to bring those allegedly responsible for such crimes to justice. This is crucial, as sustainable peace depends on the existence of strong and effective national accountability mechanisms that not only can investigate and prosecute individuals for the commission of international crimes, but that can also have a deterrent effect. I am convinced that the Special Criminal Court would be a key tool to fight against impunity, bringing perpetrators to justice and paving the way for sustainable peace in CAR.”*

Statement by Dep. Emilie Beatrice Epaye, PGA Member: *“Impunity in CAR has led to repeated cycles of violence, with the emergence and multiplication of armed groups committing atrocities that deeply shock the conscience of humanity. These heinous crimes committed against CAR victims indeed offend the entire humanity, and the Special Criminal Court would act as an agent of the entire international Community in fighting against impunity, in complementarity with the efforts of the ICC, bringing justice for those serious international crimes, thus fulfilling CAR’s obligation under international law and its duties towards the victims. This Court would also contribute to the international efforts undertaken to bring about long term peace and stability in CAR and the region.”*

Statement by Sen. Alain Destexhe, Co-convenor of the International Law and Human Rights Programme: *“I welcome the creation the Special Criminal Court, as its integration in the domestic judicial system of CAR can bring the expertise necessary for the successful investigation and prosecution of heinous international crimes of a very complex nature. Additionally, this complementary justice mechanism **will** strengthen **cooperation with the ICC** contributing to the effective implementation of the Rome Statute system in CAR and setting an example to be followed by other countries, such as the DRC with the establishment of Mixed Chambers, where atrocities have been and/or are being committed.”*

Statement by MEP Barbara Lochbihler, European Parliament (Germany), PGA Member, International Law and Human Rights Programme Co-Convenor: *“Over the past years, CAR has witnesses repeated cycles of extreme violence which have left the country with a significant number of challenges; accountability for the commission of the most serious crimes, being one of them. It is therefore important to welcome and support the creation of a Special Court with a mandate to investigate and prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Given the difficult security situation for investigating crimes involving armed groups that are still active, such a Court can bring international expertise and experience in the investigation and prosecution of these crimes. This mixed court will strengthen and reinforce accountability mechanisms in CAR and will bring hope to victims who want justice to be done.”*

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)



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