

Uganda: the first LRA rebel to appear before the International criminal court

Kampala, Uganda, 21 January 2016 - Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) welcomes the confirmation of charges concerning Dominic Ongwen, a commander of the Lord's Resistance Army rebel group, being held before the International Criminal Court (ICC) today. As a victim-centered organization, ASF believes that this is the first step towards justice for the many victims of one of the longest conflicts in Uganda. ASF hopes that justice will be served, those accountable punished and that victims are able to receive redress and reparation.

Known by the alias *white ant*, Dominic Ongwen was the alleged commander of the Sinia Brigade of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group in Northern Uganda. He was abducted by the LRA at the age of ten. During his years with the Lord's Resistance Army he apparently rose through the rebel ranks to become a commander. He is presented as one of the top LRA commanders responsible for the killing of more than 100,000 people and the abduction of 60,000 children. Mr. Ongwen is also the first of 5 alleged LRA commanders to be prosecuted before the International Criminal Court. He is charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes.

At the confirmation of charges hearing taking place at The Hague today, the judges will determine whether there is sufficient evidence to establish substantial grounds that Mr. Ongwen committed each of the crimes charged in relation to the prosecutions' allegations. *"The affected communities in Northern Uganda have been expecting to see this trial begin for a very long time now"*, explains Dorah C. Mafabi, ASF Head of Mission in Uganda. *"A large majority of victims seek the truth and want the perpetrators held accountable for the atrocities they committed. The victims are also seeking reparations and compensation for what they lost during the conflict."*

ASF believes that the prosecution of Dominic Ongwen and other warlords like him for war crimes and crimes against humanity is part of the healing process for the communities affected by such gruesome atrocities; and it is hoped will deter future criminal acts.

ASF works closely with local organizations and victim communities in Northern Uganda; empowering them with knowledge and information on international criminal justice broadly and specifically on the rights of victims and the trial process. Today, ASF and its partner the [Justice and Reconciliation Project](#), are in the city of Gulu, Northern Uganda, together with representatives of affected communities for the [live screening of the confirmation of charges hearing in this case](#).

Contact and additional information

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