

Statement of Alexandre KOUROUPE AWO

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Last Name: KOUROUPE AWO

Gender: Male

First Name: Alexandre

Father's Name: [REDACTED]

Other names used: None

Mother's Name: [REDACTED]

Place of Birth: MBAIKI

Passport No: [REDACTED]

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]

Nationality(s): Central African Republic

Ethnicity: Mbaka

Religion: Christian

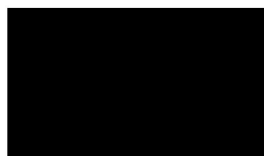
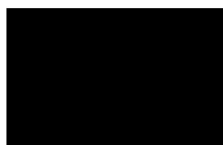
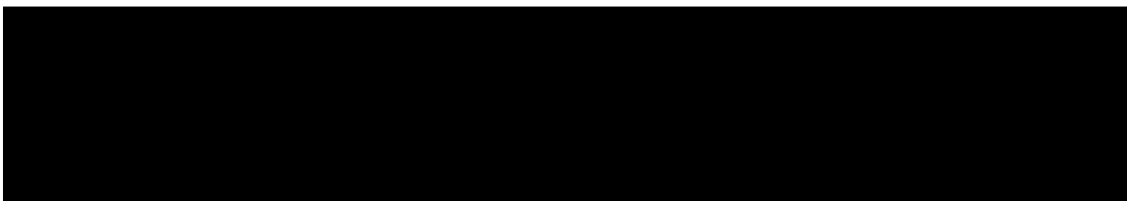
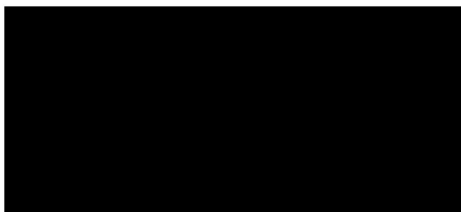
Language(s) Spoken: Sango & French

Language(s) Written: Sango & French

Language(s) Used in Interview: French & English

Occupation: Director of the Cabinet of the Ministry for Territorial Administration

Place of Interview: BANGUI, CAR



CAR-OTP-2069-0035



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Signature(s): Alexandre KOUROUPE AWO

WITNESS STATEMENT

Procedure

1. I was introduced to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I was told that they are Investigators with the Office of The Prosecutor (OTP) of the International Criminal Court (ICC). I was introduced to [REDACTED] and I was told that he is a Trial Lawyer with the OTP of the ICC. I was introduced to [REDACTED] and I was told that she is an interpreter for the ICC.
2. The investigators explained to me what the ICC is and described its mandate. They explained the role and mandate of the OTP within the ICC.
3. The investigators explained to me that they are investigating events that took place in Central African Republic from 1st August 2012 until present. I was informed that the OTP is contacting me because they believe I may have information relevant for establishing the truth.
4. I agreed that the interview would be conducted in English and interpreted into French. I fully understand and speak French.
5. The investigators explained to me that I do not have to answer to their questions. The investigators explained to me that they are seeking to find out the truth. I agree to tell the truth and that my answers to their questions are as complete as possible and reflect the best of my knowledge and recollection.
6. I was informed that any information I give to the OTP, including my identity, may be shared with the parties of the proceedings at the ICC; in particular the Judges, Accused persons, the Counsel of the Accused and the legal representatives of the victims.

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7. The investigators have explained to me the reasons and importance of keeping my contacts with the OTP confidential, which I fully understand.
8. Having understood all the above issues, I confirmed my willingness to answer the investigators' questions.
9. The investigators explained to me how the interview was going to be conducted. I was told that I needed to be as accurate as possible in my account and that I should state when I do not know the answer to or do not understand the question. I understand that I need to distinguish between what I have experienced or seen myself and what I have heard or learned about from someone else.
10. I was told that at the conclusion of the interview, I would be asked to sign a written statement after having had the opportunity to review it, make any corrections, or add additional information.

Education and background

11. I was born on [REDACTED] in MBAIKI, Central African Republic.
12. I attended primary school at the Prefectoral School in BERBERATI and at the BEGOUA Primary School in PK12, BANGUI.
13. I completed my Secondary education at the *Lycée d'Etat des Rapides* in OUANGO, BANGUI in June 1979.
14. I continued my studies in General Administration at the *l'Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature* (ENAM) in BANGUI. I completed my studies on the 30th of June 1982.
15. On the 1st of July 1982 I was posted at the Ministry of Territorial Administration (*Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire*) in BANGUI.
16. In May 2013 I was posted to MBAIKI and acted as the Prefect until I returned to BANGUI in September 2015.
17. I am presently the Director of the Cabinet of the Ministry for Territorial Administration.

The Seleka's Arrival in BANGUI

18. I was working in BANGUI when the Seleka arrived on 23 or 24 March 2013. I was a Central Inspector for the Ministry for Territorial Administration at the time. The



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military and Government fled and left everything behind. I lived in BIMBO approximately 9 km from the centre of BANGUI on the way to MBAIKI.

19. I heard news of attacks and looting by the Seleka elements. I personally was not a victim of the Seleka. The arrival of the Seleka slowed down the functioning of the Government administration. I continued to go to work if there was no fighting in the area. The Seleka Government posted me as the Prefect in MBAIKI.

MBAIKI – before arrival of Seleka

20. I worked in MBAIKI before the Seleka's arrival and it was a peaceful town. Everyone lived together in harmony. There were foreigners living in MBAIKI for 60-70 years. They were originally from SUDAN, MALI, NIGERIA and both CONGO's. There were also Europeans living in town who worked for forestry companies.
21. The population in MBAIKI by the end of 2012 was approximately 22000 to 25000. The Christian population was in the majority and about 1 out of every 10 individuals was a Muslim. The Muslim community were concentrated around the commercial area as they were generally businessmen.
22. I started working in MBAIKI in July 2013. Mr. Aristide SOKAMBI, Minister of the Territorial Administration, came the following day to MBAIKI to introduce me to the population.
23. At the time, the situation in MBAIKI was calm and there was no tension even following Seleka's arrival in town. The Seleka commander was a Colonel ANOUR Mahamat. I believe he was from BOUCA.
24. I had no problems in dealing with the Seleka. I already had 30 years' experience in administration and knew how to confront and communicate with an angry population. I knew that the Seleka was not a conventional army and I had to handle them with care. I had experience dealing with this type of situation without being confrontational.

My Role as the Prefect of MBAIKI

25. My role as the Prefect of MBAIKI was to act as the Government's representative in the area. I had to ensure the coordination of all Government services in the area. I was also responsible to enforce the Government's policy and decisions. I would disseminate information to the community verbally and through postings via the Mayor and/or Sub-Prefect of MBAIKI. They would then inform the neighbourhood Chiefs who would distribute the message to the population.



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26. I would also organise meetings with the population to hear their views and could address their problems directly or forward it to the Government if required. As a Prefect I do not have to wait for an instruction for the Government to act. I can also make my own decisions to ensure the smooth running of my area.
27. Finally, I received information from residents in the area and consulted with international organizations based there, including MISCA. As the Prefect I tried to keep myself aware for everything that was going on and tried to meet with Seleka and Anti-Balaka leaders. As a result, whenever there were crimes in MBAIKI or surrounding areas, they were reported to me. In addition, every time there was an incident, there was at least one person affected who contacted me.

Attack on BANGUI on 5 December 2013

28. The situation in MBAIKI changed after the Anti-Balaka attack on BANGUI on 5 December 2013. The Seleka stopped trusting the population as they suspected that there were Anti-Balaka supporters amongst them. There were isolated incidents of attacks by the Seleka in MBAIKI and surrounding areas. These were reported to me by individuals who had witnessed the attacks.

Crimes committed in BANGUI-BOUCHIA and SAFA

29. I recall an incident in BANGUI-BOUCHIA where two Muslims were killed by the Anti-Balaka in October 2013. The incident was reported to me by individuals witnessing the attack. I do not know the names of the specific persons responsible for the killings or who led this specific Anti-Balaka group. Afterwards, when the Anti-Balaka group arrived to MBAIKI from BANGUI, I heard rumours that the group responsible for the killings in BANGUI-BOUCHIA belonged to RAMBO. The Muslims apparently had weapons and they were killed for possessing these weapons. The Seleka in MBAIKI heard about this incident and went to the village and attacked the local population.
30. I was also informed of crimes committed in SAFA village by witnesses there. There was a youth from SAFA village who stole sheep belonging to the Seleka Colonel in charge of BODA. I do not remember his name. The Seleka retaliated and killed four people. I was the one who buried the fourth person whose body was half burned.

Crimes committed in MBATA

31. I was also informed by witnesses of crimes committed in MBATA, a village south-east of MBAIKI. On the day that DJOTODIA stepped down or the day thereafter, there was a celebration in MBATA town. The Muslims in town contacted the Seleka and asked them to come to the town. I believe on the same day, the Seleka travelled



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to MBATA and killed 6 people. Another person, a Muslim, was killed by the local militia.

32. After receiving this information, I decided to personally visit MBATA. I travelled to MBATA the next day together with two priests from MBAIKI, Alain (whose last name I do not know) and the other MONZANGA (whose first name I do not know). The former is presently in the Catholic parish of MBATA and the latter is in MBAIKI. At the time, both had different roles and positions in the Catholic parish. Alain was in charge of the parish's justice and peace program and MONZANGA was the CARITAS' representative, a Catholic non-governmental organization.
33. When we arrived to MBATA, I saw that there were houses that were destroyed and some which were burned. I was not able to take a closer look since immediately upon arriving we were confronted by a group of drunken youths acting oddly. Concerned for our safety, we felt obliged to leave. I believe the priests, Alain and MONZANGA, later returned to MBATA where they counted the number of buildings that had been burned or destroyed. They informed me that approximately 70 houses had been burned or destroyed in MBATA. I also know that the Red Cross also visited MBATA and provided help, including cooking tools.
34. Following this incident, all the Muslims living in MBATA moved to MBAIKI with the help of Seleka Colonel ANOUR. I know this because the Muslims who moved to MBAIKI informed me as such and I received similar information from Colonel ANOUR. The Muslims in MBATA were concerned that they would be attacked by the Anti-Balaka after the Anti-Balaka attack on BANGUI on 5 December 2013. After 5 December 2013, we noticed that the Anti-Balaka movement was gaining momentum as more and more people were joining their ranks. The Muslims also felt unprotected because there was no Seleka presence in MBATA. Colonel ANOUR suggested to the Muslims that he could move them to MBAIKI where they would be protected by the Seleka and to join other Muslims present in MBAIKI. The Muslims of MBATA agreed and fled to MBAIKI.
35. Following the departure of Muslims in MBATA, a man nicknamed "LAWA LAW" came to MBATA and organized the youth there as an Anti-Balaka group. I do not know where he was from or what his motivations were. LAWA LAW and his men established barriers in MBATA, stole people's property, threatened the local population, ate the products from the farms of residents there, and even stole their sheep. I was informed about this by individuals residing in MBATA.
36. In response, I travelled to MBATA again. I asked the youth there to organize and catch LAWA LAW and bring him to MBAIKI, but they did not because LAWA LAW had weapons. I later learned from residents in MBATA that another person, also from the FACA and from BANGUI, came to MBATA to assist LAWA LAW.



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The man managed to enter the Anti-Balaka group and become LAWAWA's assistant. I do not remember the assistant's name. LAWAWA's assistant later killed LAWAWA. The assistant then fled MBATA and never returned.

Displacement of Muslims to MBAIKI from other locations

37. In addition to MBATA, I know that Muslims from other remote towns and villages fled to MBAIKI with Colonel ANOUR's assistance – sometimes even providing him money to pay for the fuel required to aid their transportation. The towns and villages that I am aware of where this happened include the towns of SCAD, DOLOBO, PISSA, BAGANDO, and BOBOUA. I was given this information by the Muslims who came to MBAIKI and Colonel ANOUR.
38. I know there were crimes committed by the Anti-Balaka in these areas as well, but I do not remember the details.
39. The MBAIKI town hall has documents detailing the distribution of Muslims and non-Muslims in MBAIKI. A person who can help at the MBAIKI town hall for population statistics is [REDACTED] His telephone numbers are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I believe that there was anything between 500 to thousands of Muslims from other areas which were added to population of Muslims already residing in MBAIKI at the time.

Contact with ROMBO

40. I learned from others in MBAIKI that the Anti-Balaka presence in LOBAYE was growing as an Anti-Balaka group from BANGUI was marching to MBAIKI. This group was led by "ROMBO", whose real name is Alfred YEKATOM. I know this because ROMBO later told me he was the leader of the group. ROMBO's phone number was [REDACTED] and I used to speak with him occasionally by telephone.
41. Due to the increasing presence of the Anti-Balaka in the area, the Seleka leader based in PISSA, also named Colonel ANOUR, fled to MBAIKI with his troops prior to the Anti-Balaka's arrival there.
42. After the two Seleka groups met in MBAIKI, ROMBO tried to make contact with them. He knew the Seleka leaders since they had previously been in the FACA together. ROMBO contacted the Seleka leaders and told them to leave MBAIKI so that the Anti-Balaka could come in and take control of the city. I was told this by the two Seleka leaders.
43. Following this conversation, the two Seleka leaders contacted ROMBO and gave me the telephone. I asked the person on the telephone who was on the line and he said



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he was the person in charge of the Anti-Balaka in the area. The person on the telephone said he wanted to come to MBAIKI and meet the Seleka there because they were from the same FACA batch. I told him no, that it would not be possible for him and the Anti-Balaka to come to MBAIKI unless I met with them before they came to MBAIKI. The person who was on the line agreed and said I could meet them the following day in PISSA.

44. The next day, I visited the house of the gendarmerie company commander (BEMAKASSUI) and the two Seleka colonels to get their agreement before I met the Anti-Balaka in PISSA. I made sure to get their agreement so that they would not think I was taking sides in the conflict. The two Seleka colonels agreed with my meeting the Anti-Balaka in PISSA.
45. After receiving their agreement, I went to PISSA with a pastor (whose name I do not remember) and a priest, ANTAREZ, to meet with the Anti-Balaka in PISSA. I chose them because both of them were part of a religious platform together with an Iman that was set-up to prevent violence between Muslims and non-Muslims, as had occurred in other communities like BOUCA. We met some Anti-Balaka elements at the barrier in PISSA and we waited for 5-10 minutes before their leaders arrived. The team leader was ROMBO and he had assistants, including a man nicknamed "COEUR DE LION". I do not remember the names of his other assistants. I asked if we could go inside the church to speak.
46. We went inside the church with ROMBO and a few of his elements. I asked them why they wanted to come to MBAIKI. They explained that they wanted the Seleka to leave so that they could control MBAIKI. ROMBO explained that he had been recruited into the FACA at the same time as the Seleka colonels and that he wanted to speak with them to negotiate their departure from the area.
47. I told them I would go back to MBAIKI. If the Seleka agreed, I would tell them where to meet them and when.
48. When I went back to MBAIKI, I informed the Seleka of what the Anti-Balaka had said. They agreed to the meeting. I then called ROMBO to set up the meeting. The meeting was set 48 hours after my meeting with ROMBO in PISSA. I wanted the meeting to be held in BOBANGUI – but I did not tell the Seleka or Anti-Balaka of the place yet, just the time of the meeting. I did not want to tell them in advance to prevent any attempts to create problems.
49. At midnight of the day before we were supposed to hold the meeting, the Seleka called me to say they were leaving MBAIKI to go to another place directed to them by their superiors. I learned from others that they were going to BERBERATI to



meet their companions in BAORO. That way in case there was an attack, they could more easily move north.

50. The morning after the Seleka's departure, I called ROMBO and told him that the Seleka had left and that he could come to MBAIKI.

The Anti-Balaka arrival to MBAIKI

51. Following the Seleka's departure from MBAIKI, ROMBO came with two or three of his assistants (they were the same as those that were with him in PISSA). They included COEUR DE LION, who was later killed in BODA.
52. When they arrived, a meeting was held at a church. The people attending the meeting were the bishop of MBAIKI (an Italian nicknamed "RHINO"), some priests, some pastors, one or two police officials, the person in charge of the gendarmerie, leaders of the Muslim community, the delegate of the Chadian community (there were two groups of Muslims in MBAIKI including one group from Chad), a representative of the DRC and one of HCR. I do not remember their names because it was the first time we were meeting. This meeting occurred two days after my meeting with the Anti-Balaka in PISSA.
53. One of the issues we discussed was the movement of the Chadian Muslim community. At the time, the Muslims from Chad were targeted more so than the Muslims from Mali and Nigeria. I think the targeting of the Chadians was a continuation of the conflict with the Chadian elements of MISCA in BANGUI because people believed that they played games and only protected people from their community while neglecting Christians. The Chadian Muslim community in MBAIKI felt threatened and prior to the Anti-Balaka's arrival had spoken with the Chadian authorities to see if there was a way they could be evacuated. We discussed whether it was possible that the Chadian Muslims could be moved to BANGUI while the tensions settled down. Prior to this meeting the representatives from the Muslim community from Mali had also told me that they would leave with the Chadian Muslims if the latter was being evacuated.
54. At the end of the meeting I told ROMBO that since the Seleka had gone, the Muslim population was exposed, and he had to ensure the Muslim population that they would not be harmed. I felt that the risk was high that the Anti-Balaka would attack the Muslim population.
55. At the MBAIKI bus station, in front of a huge crowd (whose numbers I cannot approximate), ROMBO made a declaration warning Muslims not to attack the local population and the non-Muslim population not to attack Muslims. He warned that otherwise there would be a punishment.



56. ROMBO spoke for barely one minute. He spoke very "dryly", using a commanding tone. Due to his tone, the feeling of the population was that he had been paid to give this declaration. Some people thought he had been paid by the Muslim community. The same thing was also said about me, that I had also been paid to influence ROMBO's declaration. ROMBO left immediately after making his declaration.
57. That same night, or the next – I do not remember which one – COEUR DE LION and some his Anti-Balaka elements returned to MBAIKI where they decided to base themselves in the old Seleka base. I do not remember how many members of his elements were there. I just know that very few of them were from the military but a lot of them were young civilians who had joined the Anti-Balaka.
58. To prevent potential violence, we took some small measures to protect the population. In particular, I arranged that 1-2 gendarme patrol the area and gave them my service car. They patrolled at night until 4:30/5:00 am and were attacked by a group of Anti-Balaka, who took their weapons and the service car.
59. After these events, the Muslims in MBAIKI fled the town. They were escorted by the Chadian military using trucks that they had brought to help move the population. At this point, all of the Muslims in MBAIKI left the city except for the MBAIKI deputy mayor Djido SALLE, who was subsequently killed by the Anti-Balaka. When the Muslims left, they left with part of their properties. They left the rest of their property under the care of their neighbours. Some of them also left their houses under the care of the MBAIKI residents, others simply abandoned their houses.
60. After the Muslims left, one mosque was attacked by thieves from BANGUI and surrounding areas and another mosque had the metal sheets on its roof stripped. I do not think those responsible for these attacks were from the Anti-Balaka but I do not know for sure. I think it was just people who were using the opportunity to take what they liked. We tried to ensure that the population would not destroy the Muslim houses and I believe no house was destroyed. I also do not think Muslim properties were looted since the Muslims had taken measures before departing to secure their properties.
61. Some of the Muslims who left are still in BANGUI. There were also attempts by some of the Muslims to return, but it was not successful because there was anti-Muslim animus in MBAIKI, especially after it was reported that a church in FATIMA had been attacked by Muslims. People also feared that if Muslims stayed in the area, this would be the cause of fights because of the continued tension between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities.



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62. I note that after each meeting I had with the Anti-Balaka, I reported these meetings over the telephone to the Minister or Director of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the latter being a man named YANGANA-YAHOTE. I did the reports by telephone because I was afraid that my office could be raided by the Anti-Balaka or the Seleka, which would put me or others identified in my reports at risk.

Killing of Deputy Mayor Djido SALLE

63. I learned from someone in the community that following the departure of Muslims in MBAIKI, the Anti-Balaka killed Djido SALLE. Djido was a Muslim and the second deputy to the Mayor of MBAIKI. Even though Muslims had left MBAIKI, he refused to leave. Djido's wife was a Christian and pregnant at the time and that could have been why he did not want to leave.
64. Prior to his killing, I had learned from individuals in the community that he was going to be targeted by the Anti-Balaka. I advised Djido to leave as it was known that he had dealings with the Seleka and would give his vehicle for them to use. I heard that he had gone to BANGUI-BOUCHIA when the village was attacked by the Seleka.
65. I was later informed by someone from the community that the Anti-Balaka had taken Djido from his house and that they were going to the administrative area in town to kill him.
66. I contacted MISCA several time but they did not react to the situation.
67. I heard that Djido was killed in front of the gendarmerie building. They stoned him to death and cut his genitals off. Captain BEMAKASSUI of the gendarmerie was apparently present when Djido was killed. I do not know whether BEMAKASSUI did anything to stop the killing.
68. I do not know who killed Djido but heard that they were Anti-Balaka elements and that ROMBO was in charge of them. I do not know if ROMBO was present at the time of the killing.
69. I heard that after Djido was killed, MISCA reacted and chased the Anti-Balaka away from their base that was situated opposite the Gendarmerie building and the various positions the Anti-Balaka had in the neighbourhoods. I believe MISCA or ROMBO's elements then contacted ROMBO and informed him about the incident.
70. I was told by the investigators that ROMBO's call data records show that I was on the phone with ROMBO on 28 February 2014 and 1 March 2014, the former being



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the date when Djido was killed. I do not recall what ROMBO and I discussed during these calls.

71. After the Djido's killing, the head of MISCA in the area came to my house and told me that they had chased away the Anti-Balaka. I believe MISCA contacted ROMBO about the killing of the deputy mayor. I do not think ROMBO could come to MBAIKI because MISCA had come out to chase away the Anti-Balaka. I know that ROMBO would normally come to MBAIKI when MISCA called him to report misbehaviour of the Anti-Balaka. MISCA would call and give him that information. MISCA informed me of this. The commander of MISCA at the time was Colonel MALONGA. He was from the Republic of Congo contingent. When ROMBO would come in response to these requests he would call me in advance on his way and greet me.
72. I also know that at some point, MISCA was asked to arrest ROMBO. But instead of arresting him, they contacted him and asked simply to speak with him.
73. After the killing of Djido I saw ROMBO again when he came to MBAIKI, but we did not speak about the killing. I also do not know what happened to the persons responsible for the killing. I know MISCA and the gendarmerie were supposed to conduct an investigation on the incident. The only thing I know is that it was the Anti-Balaka group in MBAIKI that killed Djido. There were many of them in town.

Other crimes committed by ROMBO's elements

74. In MBAIKI and its surroundings there was a group of Anti-Balaka controlled by ROMBO and his people. They committed a number of crimes, establishing barriers, harassing the people, etc. They established barriers in various places, the roads to BANGUI, to BODA and to MBATA. This included at the base in PISSA. I travelled at times to BIMBO. From BIMBO to MBAIKI the Anti-Balaka had established barriers where they stopped and searched cars. I don't know how many there were. The official barrier was at PISSA. There is a barrier at PK9 across the bridge where there were official state services located. There was also a barrier at PK17. The PK17 barrier had been taken over and was controlled by the Anti-Balaka. At the barriers they collected money from vehicles passing and conducted searches of the vehicles. If there was merchandise they would force the owners to pay more.
75. I remember I was leaving MBAIKI to go back to BANGUI in September 2015 and there were barriers manned by armed individuals. These barriers had been abandoned by the Anti-Balaka at some point, but after an incident in BANGUI, the Anti-Balaka re-manned these barriers.



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76. ROMBO's elements also harassed people. Some of ROMBO's elements were armed and they threatened people at their houses to collect money and other goods.
77. Finally, I heard that the mayor of the NOLA commune in MBAIKI was killed on the road to BODA by people coming from PK25 in BODA. The information was relayed to me by a group from Amnesty International and later confirmed by the decedent's brother, YOUSOUFA. The decedent's name was Dewa ADAMOU. He was killed in BOBOUA. I took YOUSOUFA to the MINUSCA camp in MBAIKI where he stayed for a year. He's currently out of the camp of the MBAIKI neighbourhood. His telephone number at the time was [REDACTED]
78. I did not hear of any crimes committed by YEKATOM's elements against women or children.

Closing Procedure

79. I was informed that I may be called to testify before the Court. It was brought to my attention that ICC trials are held in public and explained to me that, as an exception to the principle of public hearings, the judges may apply protective measures to those testifying if circumstances require.
80. The investigators informed me of the protective measures that may apply during and after the investigation and/or trial proceedings.
81. I have nothing to add to the above statement nor do I have anything to clarify. I am available to be contacted in the future for clarifications or questions on topics not covered during this interview.
82. I have given the answers to the questions of my own free will.
83. There has not been any form of coercion, duress, threat, promise or inducement which has influenced my account.
84. I have no complaints about the way I was treated during this interview.



WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This statement has been read over to me in French with interpretation in English and (it) is true to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and I am aware that it may be used in legal proceedings before the International Criminal Court and that I may be called to give evidence in public before the International Criminal Court.

Signed

Dated:

INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

1. I, [REDACTED] certify that:
2. I am duly qualified to interpret from the English language into the French language and from the French language into the English language.
3. I have been informed by Alexandre KOUROUPE AWO that he speaks and understands the French language.
4. I have orally translated the above statement from the English language to the French language in the presence of Alexandre KOUROUPE AWO who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of this statement.
5. Alexandre KOUROUPE AWO has acknowledged that the facts and matters set out in her statement, as translated by me, are true to the best of his knowledge and recollection and has accordingly signed his signature where indicated.

Signed:

Dated:

