

**INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTOR**

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Last Name: OKOA-PENGUIA

Gender: Male

First Name: Roger

Father's Name: [REDACTED]

Other names used: N/A

Mother's Name: [REDACTED]

Place of Birth: PISSA

Passport / ID number: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Nationality: CAR

Ethnicity: [REDACTED]

Religion: Christian

Language(s) Spoken: Sango, French

Language(s) Written: Sango, French

Language(s) Used in Interview: French & English

Occupation: Mayor of PISSA.

[REDACTED]

[Witness statement of CAR-OTP-P-2084]

[Witness signature]

[Initials of all persons present during interview]

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WITNESS STATEMENT

Procedure

1. I was introduced to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and told that they are investigators with the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) of the International Criminal Court (ICC). I was introduced to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and told that they are interpreters with the OTP of 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 the Central-African Republic between August 2012 and the 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 French with the help of French-English interpretation. I fully understand and speak French.
5. The investigators explained to me that I do not have to answer their questions.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The investigators have explained to me the reasons and importance of keeping my contacts with the OTP confidential, which I fully understand.
9. Having understood all the above issues, I confirmed my willingness to answer the investigators' questions.
10. 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 from someone else.

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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.

BACKGROUND

11. I am the Mayor of the PISSA and have been since 1993. I am also the dean (*doyen*) of all the Mayors of CAR. There is an Association of Mayors, the Mayor of BANGUI is the President, but I am the longest serving.
12. I was born and grew up in PISSA and had my primary schooling there. However I completed my secondary schooling at the French lyceum Barthélemy BOGANDA in BANGUI.
13. I left school in 1974 but I did not commence my political life until 1988, when I became a Municipal Councillor and then later became Mayor. Prior to my political career I worked for the former President BOKASSA. I was responsible for personnel services for his private company in PISSA. It was called "LE PAYSAN CENTRAFRICAIN". The company looked after interests of the rural people in the provinces of Central Africa. I worked for him from 1974 to 1979, until the end of BOKASSA's reign as President, then Emperor. The company was not part of any Ministry it was a private initiative of BOKASSA's. He was ousted in 1979 by Operation Barracuda, conducted by French troops.
14. I received this employment opportunity because I am from the same region as BOKASSA. I am from BOKASSA's village. BOKASSA had a large farm and had a lucrative agricultural and cattle business throughout the locality. After BOKASSA's removal from the presidency I stayed and worked in the village of PISSA. I also worked in agriculture and I worked on the farmland I owned.
15. After things stabilized I ran in the local elections and was elected as a Municipal Councillor in PISSA. Every citizen has the right to serve his community. I had the ambition and the right background so I worked to this goal. I was a Councillor from 1988 to 1993. I was in charge of the 1st Arrondissement of PISSA, responsible for many issues such as, education, agriculture, development, commerce, health; the goal was to get the population more involved. I was then appointed by the government as the Mayor of PISSA. The President appoints Mayors by decree after being proposed by the Prefects. I was appointed first by President KOLINGBA. I have been Mayor to this day.
16. Initially in PISSA there were five Municipal Councillors, there are six currently. They are elected positions and come with a small salary. It was a full time position. New municipal elections will be organised shortly; elections are

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regularly organised every five years. Where the Mayor is concerned, he is reappointed with each new President.

17. In 1993 the government decided to put in place a team to lead the municipality. I was first appointed by KOLINGBA, then PATASSE, then BOZIZE, then SAMBA PANZA, and currently by TOUADERA. It is my opinion that the Central African people are today still suffering because of DJOTODIA. He is currently enjoying life peacefully in BENIN.
18. Under each President there was a new decree signed by the President to keep me in place as Mayor. That is except for DJOTODIA, he did not get to the stage of appointing Mayors.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

19. As Mayor I lead the Municipal Council. My role is to identify local requirements and implement what needs to be done for the benefit of the community. The Municipal Council is made up of the Mayor and five Municipal Councillors, of which two are also Deputy Mayor. The five *Chefs de Groupe* and 62 *Chefs de Villages* are not part of the Municipal Council, but they can attend as observers.
20. As Mayor I represent approximately 30,000 people. The National Government is represented by M. Francis BANGUE-DOUNGOUPOU, the Prefect who is based in MBAIKI. He is responsible for the region of LOBAYE. The region of LOBAYE is divided into five Sous-Prefectures, each with its own Sous-Prefect. These Sous-Prefectures are as follows: MONGOUMBA, BOGANDA, BOGANGONE, MBAIKI, and BODA.
21. Sous-Prefectures are further divided into 13 Districts or Communes. These are as follows: MBATA, BALELOKO, PISSA, MOBOUMA, BOGOUNGO-GANZA, BODA, LOBAYE-NGOTO, BOGANDA, LESSE, NOLA, MBAIKI, BOGANGONE and MONGOUMBA.
22. I am the only person responsible to oversee the District of PISSA in collaboration with my line-managers, the Prefect and Sous-Prefect and with the other local Mayors.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE CRISIS.

23. In 2013 I was Mayor of PISSA. President Jacob ZUMA of South Africa told BOZIZE that he had to relinquish power so the South African Army could get out of the country. BOZIZE gave oil to the Chinese. The French were unhappy and put pressure on ZUMA to remove his troops from the Central African

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Republic. HOLLANDE said only France could solve the problems in CAR. When the Seleka progressed towards BANGUI, FOMAC troops were present. They made arm-bands for the Seleka but the South Africans thought they were allies and thirteen South-African military were killed in a gun battle with the Seleka.

24. A previously negotiated 'Red Line' had been set at DAMARA when BOZIZE went to Gabon and signed the Libreville Agreement in January 2013. The Heads of States had met at Libreville in GABON. When the Seleka entered the country there was the FOMAC who were deployed in DAMARA to stop their advance. The ones who attended the LIBREVILLE negotiations were BOZIZE, TIANGAYE, Prime Minister of CAR, DJOTODIA, Minister of National Defence Martin ZIGUELE, Jean-Jacques DEMAFOUT, and Crepin BOLINGOUBA. General AKAGA was in charge of the security in BANGUI, he was in control of FOMAC. FOMAC was an African regional military troop from the surrounding countries in order to assist in CAR.
25. Francois HOLLAND and Jacob ZUMA did not support BOZIZE. The Libreville Agreement did not last. Nouraddine ADAM, DJOTODIA and four or five other ministers met in SIBUT and declared that the Seleka was going to enter BANGUI on the 24th March 2013. The Seleka arrived in PISSA on the 27th of March. The army had capitulated and the Seleka took power. DJOTODIA was supported by Chad, France and Congo-Brazzaville. BOZIZE was told he had to leave the country in thirty minutes. He met up with his security team and allies in BERENGO and fled to Cameroon.
26. DJOTODIA received support and extra troops from Chad when the Seleka entered. He and the Seleka took power first in BOSSEMBELE, BENZAMBE, where BOZIZE was born, and in BOSSANGOA. They took all the weapons BOZIZE had stored there. They went in and found weapons in all the neighbourhoods of BANDORO, BRIYA, BIRAO, NDELE, and the military camps at CAMP BEAL, CAMPS de la GENDARMERIE and CAMP de ROUX
27. They took these weapons back to Chad and to the Sudan. A significant amount of them were also taken to PK5 (BANGUI), NDELE, BRIA and KAGA-BANDARO where all the local Muslims were armed with weapons by the Seleka. Most of the Seleka were Muslims, approximately 90%. There had been no threat against Muslims in CAR ever before, but traditionally Muslims carry a knife on them, hidden up their sleeve or behind their back. It is their tradition. When the Seleka came they handed automatic weapons to the Muslim civilian population in order to defend themselves against possible reprisal from their Christian neighbours. The Muslim minority had already taken power and it was now an Islamic State with a hidden agenda to conquer CAR. Muslims are found in the neighbouring countries to CAR, but CAR was still a predominantly



Christian country. With the arrival of the Seleka, Muslims controlled the entire centre of Central Africa. For a long time the Muslims were side-lined, however now that the Muslims were in power, they saw it as an opportunity to obtain weapons to keep in their warehouses and their houses.

28. Two problems were entangled; Francois HOLLANDE asked Chad to resolve the issue with the jihadists in Mali and he would take care of the issues in CAR. HOLLANDE sent in the Sangaris. He also created and called for an arms embargo at the UN Security Council. I knew this from phone conversations, RFI radio and TV. Most of the media were under the Seleka's control but there was still comprehensive and informative coverage. We were well informed at all times by the local press and television and radio and we were in contact amongst our colleagues the local Mayors.
29. The Seleka attacked and took over every official institution. They attacked the gendarmerie brigades, the local police stations, the military bases. All these men had fled for their lives. The Seleka were stating that all these men were BOZIZE's men and if seen they were to be shot and killed. We as civilians all fled into the forest and we abandoned our homes.

EVENTS IN PISSA

30. Many of the non-Muslims and Christian villagers had already built makeshift shelters in the wooded areas in case they needed to leave their houses. The majority of us knew that the Seleka were coming. We had built these makeshift houses and shelters and we would come and go depending on what was occurring in the village. We would listen to the Seleka activity and the villagers going back and forth from PISSA and base our movements on what was happening. We spent our time mostly in the bush or in the fields and we ate and slept there. I slept in the shelters as well, but when the Seleka arrived, I happened to be at my home.
31. We did have a Muslim population in PISSA. There was about 400-500 Muslims in the district of PISSA including children. This would be more than 50 families, they were numerous. They were all living within the community among non-Muslims. There were no problems between Muslims and Christians prior to the Seleka's arrival. The Muslims welcomed the Seleka because they were Muslims as well. They went to the mosque together. The apparent message to Christians was that the Muslims were now siding with the Seleka. It left a very bad taste with me, and with all the members of the community. Young Christians were becoming suspicious that the Muslims were getting armed because the Muslims were shooting in the air when there was a marriage or a circumcision to be

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celebrated. This was something new. They had not been doing this before the Seleka's arrival.

32. The Seleka arrived in PISSA on 27th March 2013, three days after taking power in BANGUI, shooting in the air to announce their presence. They chased the gendarmes out of their station. The Brigade was composed of about six or so gendarmes who all fled. The police stations were empty. The Seleka were well armed with a lot of weapons including some heavy weapons that had been stolen. The Seleka came in four or five vehicles, which were full of armed men and heavily loaded with weapons. The Seleka were wearing brand new military uniforms and berets. They had stolen all the new uniforms from the main military warehouse when they took BANGUI. Many had arrived in BANGUI in civilian clothes. Everybody knew this. I cannot say how I learned it. You could distinguish the Seleka from Central Africans as they were thinner, as Muslims usually are. They had the complexion of people from the Sahel. Central Africans from BIRAO, NDELE, and BRIA had received support from people from Muslim countries such as Mali, Niger and Sudan.
33. I was in my house in the centre of PISSA when the Seleka arrived. I remained at home and decided not to flee. The Seleka sent a message to me at my house informing me that they came to protect the people and the Mayor should not flee. The Seleka didn't pillage the houses, they were mostly interested in vehicles; they took all vehicles, private as well as those of the administration.
34. DJOTODIA had told his forces that the LOBAYE was the 'fief' of President DACKO, whose political party MDD (*Mouvement de Développement de la Démocratie*) he had ran for in previous elections. He wanted his troops to behave properly towards the population in the LOBAYE. The Seleka sent youngsters from the village to me informing me that I was to meet with them. I do not know whether the youngsters were Christians or Muslims. When the Seleka arrived they fraternised with the entire population not causing any particular problems. Some amongst the Seleka spoke Sango. The Seleka did not occupy the Mayor's office, but as a precaution we had emptied the archives earlier and stocked it somewhere safe.
35. At this time people still went to the market to buy their food. Most of the traders were Muslims. Muslims lived scattered within the community, they were traders mainly but some were cattle breeders and agriculturalists. When the Seleka arrived, the Muslims were happy and they came together and chatted over tea. Non-Muslims were scared as they heard about the Seleka destroying churches in the country. The Seleka even killed a journalist of a private press outlet in BAMBARI. The Christians were merely observing the Seleka; they did not try to interact with them. There was fear and suspicion, as there was with me and other



Christian community leaders. Later the Seleka explained to me that there was already change in the country and they were working with Michel DJOTODIA with a new vision of politics, The Seleka replaced the regular army, the FACA taking over their duties.

36. Fearing being attacked we slept in the bush in the open air, being bitten by mosquitos. It was possible to hear the Seleka shooting their guns, practising and familiarizing themselves with their weapons.
37. Near the Mayor's office there was a barrier and the Seleka took control of it, from July 2013 onwards. When they were aware of an Anti-Balaka movement was being formed, the Seleka started extorting money from the people moving through. The Seleka organized barriers and they took money from people. They racketeered and made money that way so the Seleka did not need to pillage houses.
38. My house actually stayed intact during the time that I fled to the bush. The barriers were the Seleka's main supply of goods and money. However the Seleka were pillaging people's private vehicles, computers, sofas, TVs etc., everything of value. There were barriers at PISSA gendarmerie, at PK9 in BANGUI and at SEKIA. People passing had to pay the Seleka. Their six leaders came to collect their share in turns. Each expected 60.000CFA a day in turn. Lorries were charged 20.000 or 25.000CFA, a moto taxi 500CFA, small cars 1.000CFA. A share also went to BANGUI as DJOTODIA came to power with several Seleka leaders who all wanted their share. I know this because I live in the community. In other communities the Seleka behaved even worse, killing people and cattle. The word went around. On a local level I heard this from the Seleka themselves.
39. There were many Seleka commanders and they interchanged constantly. I do not know who was in charge. Some had nick names such as ALKANTO, ANOUR, and LIBANAIS who terrorised the local people in PISSA and KADER who was sent by DJOTODIA. I do not know their real names now. I had nothing to do with them officially. I would see them on occasion when they greeted me on their way to their base at the old gendarmerie detachment. Areas occupied by Seleka were named 'red zones' by the population.
40. I saw the Seleka hit people, mainly young people. This started around the time that the rumours of the Anti-Balaka being formed started to circulate, approximately in July or August 2013. The Seleka imposed themselves as judges in the community, creating their own rules. If they heard or knew of family problems or disputes they would charge them and collect fines. The Seleka just made up their own rules and laws. If you were indebted to any Muslim in PISSA, the Muslim sent them to the Seleka and or the Seleka showed up at your door to



collect the debt. The fine usually had to be paid in double or triple. It was extortion and if people refused to pay, they were threatened with death, although I know of no actual killings, the threat was enough for people to sort things out among themselves. It was pure abuse of power, and abuse of authority.

41. In early October in BANGUI-BOUCHIA, in the MBATA commune two Muslim traders, civilians, were killed and as a consequence the Seleka went there to commit reprisal exactions against the non-Muslim population, Christians and animists alike. This was not the same incident as the one later at the PALMEX site. These two Muslims were not Seleka, they were traders. I do not know who killed these traders, but I believe they were suspected of hiding Seleka weapons, as the Seleka were moving around in civilian vehicles and were frequenting local Muslims traders, socialising and eating with them. Some local Muslim children even wore the Seleka uniform and joined the Seleka. Weapons were circulating everywhere.
42. During this period we heard rumours all the time about killings and Seleka reprisals against the local non-Muslim population. We heard that in BANGUI-BOUCHIA people had fled into the bush and were followed and killed by Seleka.
43. In PISSA the Seleka announced in advance that they were going to BANGUI-BOUCHIA with their comrades from MBAIKI. Information also came from the Seleka's local concubines or girlfriends in PISSA. The Seleka stole the private vehicles of local people and the administration alike. They paid local Christian young men aged between 20 and 40 years old a fee if they would lead them to hidden vehicles.
44. The Seleka Zone Commander for PISSA was 'Lt. ALKANTO'. It was a nick name and is the name of a movie director. He was previously a Corporal in the FACA and he had come with BOZIZE's 'Libérateurs'. I had heard he was called Adama HISSENE as well. ALKANTO had a light complexion, he spoke Sango and Arabic. He was in his forties and he was short with a limp because he had been shot when he entered with the Libérateurs. He was clean shaven. The first time I met ALKANTO was on 27th March 2013. As the Mayor I was called to see him to be briefed about the situation. After that we did not meet regularly. ALKANTO left when the Anti-Balaka took over BANGUI. ALKANTO is currently in PK5. ALKANTO brought his girlfriends from BANGUI to PISSA. They were Muslim girls. I do not know their names. In Muslim tradition, they cannot take local non-Muslim women, they have to make sure they are 'Islamised' first.
45. In MBAIKI, ANOUR was in charge of the Seleka. I cannot say much about ANOUR, except that he was killing people in the bush. He is a Chadian with a

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light complexion. He was slender as people from the Sahel are and he was tall, aged over forty. He had the military rank of 'Commander'.

46. There was a Seleka base in PISSA at the Gendarmerie Brigade. The Seleka had a big training base in BERENGO. In LOBAYE there were Seleka bases in BATALIMO, MBAIKI, BODA, BOGANAGONE, MONGOUMBA and BOGANDA. BERENGO, the former base of BOKASSA, was also a Seleka base, where DJOTODIA sent 1,490 civilians to be trained as Seleka. Zones were led by 'ComZones', 'Commandant de Zone'.
47. I was in PISSA and there was no phone network to warn the people in BANGUI-BOUCHIA. Nevertheless people would be informed by word of mouth.
48. On Saturday the 12th October at around 09:00 or 10:00h, two Seleka were killed at the PALMEX plantation, about twelve kilometres away from PISSA. PALMEX is a Lebanese privately owned plantation of palm trees. A Seleka vehicle and motorcycles collected the two Seleka bodies and Seleka elements started shooting in the air as they returned.
49. During the crisis the owners of big companies such as PALMEX, IFB (*Industrie Forestière de Batalimo*, a lumber plant) and PALME D'OR signed contracts with the Seleka leadership to deploy security guards, in order not to have the places looted and to provide protection for their companies as there were rumours that the Anti-Balaka might attack at any time to oust DJOTODIA. I am sure the Anti-Balaka had killed these two Seleka, but I was in PISSA and I would not know who exactly.
50. Caporal-Chef 'RAMBOT' Alfred YEKATOM was the leader of the Anti-Balaka in the area, he was already in the bush and his name was known everywhere in the country. They were not fighting the Seleka yet, but they were progressing in the bush, like military do. YEKATOM was a military. I was not in contact with the Anti-Balaka at this time. YEKATOM has many brothers, his brother Junior is also in the military.
51. IFB is a big enterprise in BATALIMO, 85Km from PISSA. It is privately owned by a French family called GADEN. Before the arrival of the Seleka, the Gendarmerie watched over the company. But to avoid vandalism IFB agreed that the Seleka would guard the company. After the Seleka had left, YEKATOM's Anti-Balaka guarded the company, just as they protected the other companies such as CENTRAPALM, and PALME D'OR.
52. The Anti-Balaka was a movement that came from BOUCCA, BOSSANGO, BOSSEMBELE, BANGUI, LOBAYE, MAMBERE-KADEI and NANA-MAMBERE

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to stop the Seleka's exactions. We heard from them first from mouth to mouth as the wood cutters in the forests had met some of them. That is how the rumours came to us. I have not heard YEKATOM's name on the radio, it came to us through rumours. There were rumours circulating within the community in PISSA that the Anti-Balaka intended to attack BANGUI, which they eventually did on the 4th to 5th December 2013. The Anti-Balaka was already present in the LOBAYE area, but had remained in the bush.

53. Coincidentally on Saturday 12th October four government ministers, Arsene SENDE, Minister of Justice and another Muslim Minister, Rosalie MAZANGUE, Arnold DEYA and someone called LEYA, now deceased and the Prefect for LOBAYE, Alexandre KOUROUPE AWO were present in PISSA. They were sent by DJOTODIA to calm the population after the killing at BANGUI-BOUCHIA. They brought essential goods for the people of PISSA, BANGUI-BOUCHIA, BOUCHIA, MBATA and BOKANGA, but they did not manage to go beyond PISSA because of the new incident at the PALMEX site. The Seleka were also present namely ALKANTO, LIBANAIS, and five or six elements. As the Seleka approached with the bodies of the two dead elements in their vehicles they were firing in the air. The military body guards accompanying the government delegation also fired in the air to show that they were armed.
54. Thanks to the presence of the government ministers they were able to talk with the Seleka and prevent any killings in reprisal that day. My good friend Philippe GADEN, who is now deceased, the Chief Executive Director of IFB, gave my phone number to Sergeant. CYRILLE of the Sangaris who called me to warn me that I was in danger and I should leave PISSA. Apparently the Seleka stated that there would be no killing that day but that I would be killed in the night. I left PISSA immediately, fearing for my life. I travelled back to BANGUI with Elizabeth MATHY a French Human Rights worker.
55. I remained in BANGUI until the 5th November when I received a telephone call from a Colonel KADER, who is also DJOTODIA's nephew, telling me to return to PISSA. Colonel KADER is a different individual to the SELEKA named ALKANTO that I mentioned earlier. I was [REDACTED] KADER [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Whilst in PISSA, KADER stayed at the post office, but his elements were stationed at the Gendarmerie base. I felt that I had no choice, I returned back to my house and village because it was my duty to return. As long as there were no longer any threats to my life I agreed to return home. I was instructed to return to the village to encourage the population out of the forest. From October onwards there were rumours were going around that DJOTODIA would leave office because the Seleka were committing many atrocities against the people. KADER did not threaten me. He was aware that I was absent from the village and DJOTODIA told him he had to do everything to get me to return

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to PISSA. KADER's permanent base was in GARABADJA in the 8th Arrondissement in BANGUI.

56. In PISSA two Seleka groups, the Chadians and those from CAR, specifically the Gula were constantly in disagreement with each other. The Chadians killed people, stole vehicles and killed cattle. That is why the Gula Seleka were disagreeing with the Chadian Seleka. The Chadian Seleka shot at the safe of the *Caisse d'Epargne et de Credit* but they did not succeed opening it, they only damaged it. It was not an open conflict, but there was tension between the factions at the barriers and the exactions in the country. It all started from the 12th October when the exactions against the non-Muslim population began being committed. DJOTODIA decided to send Gula Seleka to restore order as it was the Chadians and Sudanese who were committing exactions on the population.
57. I returned to PISSA on the 5th November. However I went back to BANGUI again on the 3rd December at the suggestion of the Sangaris who warned me by telephone that things were not going well in PISSA. The Sangaris Sergeant CYRILLE called me on my phone and said that they had received a call from Philippe GADEN. A change was about to happen. I believe that he received this information from French intelligence services. They did not expect anything from me but they were just concerned with my security, as a Mayor. Other Mayors were not warned. I was the only one as far as I know. It all depended on your relationships really. People were being informed about the tension between the Seleka and the Anti-Balaka. The Sangaris believed that I was at risk in case there would be a clash in my area.
58. A trader and farmer from BOYALI near PISSA, [REDACTED] confirmed there was tension and rumours circulated within the Muslim community and stated that DJOTODIA would not finish his term in office. I left PISSA on the 3rd December and my wife followed me two days later. We left the children with relatives in the village.
59. My vehicle had broken down so I came to BANGUI by public transport. I went to live in my house in [REDACTED]. In the early hours of the 5th December I was at my home in [REDACTED] during the night we heard gunshots everywhere in town, it was a Coup d'état. From the centre of BANGUI to my house in [REDACTED] is about 9 or 10 kilometres, I heard the gunshots and on RFI I heard that an attack took place on BANGUI. The attackers were moving quickly and seemed to be professional.
60. The Anti-Balaka attacked BANGUI in the night from 04 to 05 December 2013. There was an attack on key positions such the National Assembly and RADIO CENTRAFRIQUE. I was in [REDACTED] then, some distance from where it was happening. It was not reported initially who was behind the coup. Only later we

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learned that Anti-Balaka were behind the attacks. I could follow all this on the news media. There were already more than 500 dead by the end of the 5th December 2013 as reported by the RED CROSS.

61. I learned from the radio and the media such as RFI, Radio Ndeke Luka, and the BBC that the Anti-Balaka staged the coup on the 5th December. The Anti-Balaka was led, according to the radio, by Patrice NGAISSONA who self-proclaimed a few days after the coup as leader of the movement, while in fact the real actors were on the ground. People like YEKATOM, MAZIMBELE, DOUZE-PUISSANCES and others. In the neighbourhoods there were people in charge such as ANDJILO, MAZIMBELE, and YEKATOM. They were many, just like the Seleka warlords. Their names were frequently aired on radio. YEKATOM was in charge of BIMBO, BOEING, all the way up to us in LOBAYE. I don't know where the other leaders had their zone of responsibility. In LOBAYE it was safe because the Anti-Balaka protected the area.
62. [REDACTED] the 30th January 2014 because bullets were flying around everywhere in town. [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] it was calm and [REDACTED] on top of our food reserves at home. In BIMBO there was no danger because the Anti-Balaka protected the area, but you could hear gunshots in the town, in BOY-RABE, in COMBATTANTS and PK5. [REDACTED] The Seleka were killing many people, there were clashes between the Seleka and the Anti-Balaka. There were killings on both sides of the armed groups, with innocent civilians being killed by both sides. A few days later vehicles of the Red-Cross picked up the bodies to bury them at ZILA cemetery. I saw them pass and could smell the decomposing bodies. This was also reported on the radio, RFI especially, but also Voice of America, BBC, Ndeke Luka, and FM.
63. On 10th January 2014, the President of CHAD, Idriss DEBY, convened a summit in N'DJAMENA, pressuring DJOTODIA, and TIANGAYE to demission.
64. 20th January 2014, SAMBA PANZA was appointed, encouraged by France, to lead the transitional government. The situation calmed down. Muslims however fled from such villages as NDANGALA, BIMON, KAPOU, BOSSONGO, PK55, PISSA, SABE, MBATA, MONGOUMBA, BALELOKKO, MOBOMA, BONGONGOGANZA, and NOLA to MBAIKI. The reason for this was that the Anti Balaka were advancing along the PK9 to MBAIKI axis. The Muslims were scared of revenge reprisals of the Anti-Balaka against the Muslim civilians as the Muslims had attacked first from BIRAO all the way to BANGUI.



MEETING AT MBAIKI CHURCH

65. On 30th January 2014 a UNHCR vehicle took me to the Sainte Jeanne-d'Arc church in MBAIKI, where a meeting had been arranged concerning all the Muslims from the area that had fled to MBAIKI. I was requested to attend by Bishop GUERINO PERIN and Elizabeth MATHY. This meeting was attended by Alfred YEKATOM as Anti-Balaka leader for OMBELLA-POKO and LOBAYE and his men, the Sangaris, Bishop GUERINO PERIN, an Italian cleric, Prefect Alexandre KOUROUPE-AWO, the Police Commissioner, I do not remember his name, the Gendarmerie Company Commander, who was assigned there temporarily, Mahamat ABAKAR, the Delegate for the Muslim community, the Pastor of the Apostolic Church, Madam Elizabeth MATHY, a French representative for the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and a representative for UNHCR.
66. We were gathered in the compound of the parish hall. All the Muslims in MBAIKI were gathered there with their families in the BAGIRMI neighbourhood. A decision was taken to have the Muslims leave for their security, to avoid a blood bath, to avoid the Muslims being killed by the Anti Balaka. There were no more Seleka around to attend the meeting as the Anti-Balaka had driven them out. The Sangaris were there and took care of security. I travelled to MBAIKI especially for the meeting at the Church, after the meeting I travelled back to BANGUI. I travelled with Elizabeth MATHY, mediator in charge of Human Rights.
67. The meeting had been convened a week before by Elizabeth MATHY, who was negotiating with YEKATOM to avoid a bloodbath in MBAIKI. What was happening in BANGUI and other areas should not be repeated in MBAIKI. The aim was to reach peace in MBAIKI. The Seleka terrorists had left, but the peace was still threatened. If the Muslim civilians would not leave, many people would have died because the Anti-Balaka would have attacked them because it was suspected that all the Muslim civilians had weapons hidden. The Muslims even admitted this. It was Mahamat ABAKAR and several Imams who I do not know who confirmed this. YEKATOM did not directly threaten the Muslims during this meeting but said that it would be better if they left to avoid bloodshed.
68. Before the meeting of the 30th January, negotiations had been going on for a week between Madam Elizabeth MATHY, YEKATOM, the Bishop, ABAKAR, the Prefect and the other representatives. The Muslims were scared, they wanted to leave. On the 30th January a statement was made by YEKATOM who stated that his men only targeted the Seleka and that Muslims would be able to return after the calm had returned. YEKATOM was good with the Muslims. He said he did not have problems with Muslims. They only targeted the Seleka and he said

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DJOTODIA was a traitor bringing in mercenaries who destroyed CAR. I was there and heard everything he said.

69. It took another week before the Muslim civilians were able to leave from MBAIKI. Meanwhile they remained in the Muslim neighbourhood in MBAIKI. They were many Muslims in MBAIKI, it took 61 trucks to get them out. These trucks were sent by President DEBY. We are talking thousands of Muslims, I do not know how many exactly. Some stayed with other Muslims in their houses, others stayed in tents, and some were out in the open. They were eating what was left in the market. Some had brought small items only, such as bags of clothes and small suitcases. What they left behind was vandalised or taken by the population. The Muslim houses that were abandoned and had not previously been sold were entered by the local population and the Anti Balaka elements, who helped themselves to what they found. I was in BANGUI when the Muslims left MBAIKI on the 6th of February 2014.
70. Mahamat ABAKAR was the spokesperson for the PISSA Muslims and also for those in MBAIKI. ABAKAR had a house in PISSA, it is still there, but ABAKAR has left. The house is for rent I believe, it is being managed by the young man who was taking care [REDACTED] I do not have his telephone number. He was an educated man and a chief of the Muslim neighbourhood in PISSA. That is why he was chosen as the spokesperson.
71. When the Seleka came to BANGUI and the surrounding areas they were welcomed by Muslims who received weapons and ammunition from the Seleka but when the Anti-Balaka took over they realised they had made a mistake and they chose to flee when the Seleka abandoned them.
72. The situation was explosive. Some Christians were not happy with the Muslims, they felt they had welcomed them for fifteen years, then felt abandoned when the Seleka arrived. Christians saw the Muslims as jihadists and did not want them around anymore. This view was not just held locally but also across all the country where the Seleka caused problems and exactions on the non-Muslim community.
73. I believe that things have not changed since then. All the Muslims have weapons, even the traders. Now the same happens at PK5 (BANGUI). Even the UN recognises that PK5 is a Muslim stronghold and they are all armed. There are jihadists of Boko Haram there. Ali DARRASS' troops in the North are heavily armed today through Chad. There are no problems in PISSA today because all the Muslims are gone now. The Muslims from PISSA were regrouped in MBAIKI and then most were taken to Chad on 06 February 2014; some others are in PK5, in BODA and other towns and cities.

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ALFRED YEKATOM

74. On 30th January 2014 I first had personal dealings with YEKATOM. YEKATOM was a military man and he came across as very professional and competent. I limited my dealings with the Anti-Balaka to YEKATOM, as he was their leader. I do not know who his deputies were.
75. There were no Muslims left in NDANGALA, BIMON, KAPOU, BOSSONGO, PK55, SABE, MBATA, MONGOUMBA, BALELOKKO, MOBOMA, BONGONGOGANZA, NOLA, PISSA or the surrounding villages, they were all gathered in MBAIKI for their safety. Fearing reprisal attacks by the Anti Balaka. YEKATOM did not address Muslims in PISSA separately; he addressed them all together in MBAIKI.
76. I had no personal dealings with YEKATOM until I participated in the 30th January meeting at the Church in MBAIKI. I only knew of him since the movement went public. After 30th January I had many dealings with him, as he became a big man, a celebrity, a warlord who succeeded in his mission to oust DJOTODIA. My dealings with YEKATOM were personal.
77. The Anti-Balaka took over the country and they were dealing with ministers, the Mayors, the Prefects, the President. YEKATOM had 3,000 men behind him; some were armed with firearms, others with bladed weapons. I do not know how many men he had in PISSA. YEKATOM had men in PISSA, SEKIA, BODA, CENTRAPALM, MBATA, BATALIMO, PALMEX, PALME D'OR and PK9. The Anti-Balaka took over the bases of the Seleka in all these localities. All along the 107Km route between BANGUI and MBAIKI was controlled by YEKATOM. YEKATOM was very influential. He was instrumental in driving out the Seleka.
78. BANGUI is not far from PISSA about 70Km. I was a frequent traveller between BANGUI, BATALIMO, PISSA and MBAIKI. The PISSA barricade was initially taken over by Anti-Balaka when the Seleka left, they abandoned them. The same happened in MBAIKI, SEKIA, BATALIMO and PK9. The barricades had to be manned to prevent the enemy from coming back. The men manning the barriers were Anti Balaka elements, military and civilians alike. Just as in Seleka times a toll was levied sometimes, they called it 'formalities', it was their little recognition for having driven out the Seleka. It was small amounts to pay for their coffee, 100, 300, 500 per person who travelled through the barricades. As a Mayor, I was exempt of these formalities. By the end of 2014 or early 2015, during SAMBA PANZA's regime these illegal barricades were later removed. I frequently travelled through these barriers and I was not charged as I am a well-known personality.

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79. From the ousting of BOZIZE on the 24th March 2013 there were no police or gendarmes at the barriers. From January 2014 the Anti-Balaka manned these barriers. The Anti-Balaka were dressed in a military uniform. Many of the men were FACA. Generally the FACA were manning the barriers as there was big money involved. There were not any very young children as it was money related. I did not see children at the barriers. There was military around, but also the civilian Anti-Balaka that were present wore military uniforms. Some wore gris-gris to protect them from bullets, but that is their own beliefs, I am not concerned with this. Eventually YEKATOM left the police and gendarmerie to man the barriers. From 2014, when SAMBA PANZA took power, order returned little by little and she asked for FACA to return to their units.
80. I cannot estimate the number of times I met with YEKATOM, we lived in the same locality. YEKATOM rented houses in PISSA from 2014, when he was in charge of the area. He was all the time on the move and only stayed when he was en route elsewhere. In GBONDOKORO he had a house build with 14 or 15 bedrooms and also on in BIMBO. I would not describe him as a friend but as a compatriot. We could share a drink and eat together. He was a personality, even the current Head of State, TOUADERA, met with him. He is a Central African, a patriot. When I, as the Mayor, organised an event with food and drinks everybody would come, YEKATOM, MINUSCA, everyone. YEKATOM came to such events and ceremonies. He gave desks to the local school. He is currently building a high-school in KAPOU at his own expense in partnerships with parents.
81. YEKATOM was elected to the National Assembly in 2016. He had no official role before this, but from 2014 (when SAMBA PANZA had taken office) YEKATOM provided security in the area with his men, while there were no official authorities such as the police, gendarmerie or the FACA in place after the Seleka had left.
82. When I was informed that his Anti-Balaka elements were committing acts like fighting over a girl or domestic violence, I would tell YEKATOM to deal with those concerned. I would do this face to face or over the phone. I have YEKATOM's phone numbers. I can give you only one number, the one which I reached him most of the time. [REDACTED] When I informed YEKATOM, he assembled his men and spoke to them, he told them he had such and such complaint and he did not want to hear of such a thing anymore. I was present one day when I heard him address his elements and tell them to behave appropriately. He maintained discipline within his elements.
83. YEKATOM even created and put in place a private security company, called KOYA Security. He employed young people from the locality and also former

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Anti Balaka elements. This was a paid service under contract with the company that he provided security for such as PALMEX. I am not aware of the number of security guards YEKATOM employed. The law allows private security companies to be set up by people of good behaviour.

84. YEKATOM had positive sides where he is honest and good and listens well and is agreeable to requests. YEKATOM also has a bad side. When he takes a drink and is drunk, he becomes nervous and gets angry and ready to react. I have seen him cause problems to his wife or his elements in front of me. He was quick to get angry. I would tell him immediately that this was not proper behaviour if this happened in front of me. I saw him smack a young man who was selling drinks, also I saw him hit one of his elements.
85. YEKATOM was already a great personality and I believe if he would have had the proper education, he would have followed DJOTODIA as Presidential candidate, not Patrice Edouard NGAISSONA.
86. I heard rumours about the Anti-Balaka were not in complete agreement, this was an internal political disagreement with the Anti Balaka. They were fighting between themselves but nothing as such happened in LOBAYE, which remained ordered and calm under YEKATOM's control.

CHILD SOLDIERS

87. On 30th January 2014 I saw children in the towns of PISSA and, MBAIKI who were with the Anti Balaka. The children were armed with knives and machetes, wearing gri-gris. The children were amongst the adult Anti-Balaka when they were maintaining security in PISSA. These children were aged from 10 upwards and were part of the Anti-Balaka. The very young children, for instance the 10 year olds did small jobs, gathering intelligence, fetching water and so on. As a father and grand-father I can estimate accurately the ages of the children that I saw. Children from BIMBO to PISSA joined the Anti-Balaka. At first there were many children amongst the Anti-Balaka, but later they were released. I never asked YEKATOM why there were children amongst his ranks, nor did I ask him or them about their ages.
88. Rodrigue Kevin MBORORO was the coordinator of '*Enfants Sans Frontiers*' (ESF) locally, he would be able to tell you all about this. I do not know anything about '*Enfants Sans Frontiers*'.
89. According to information supplied to me by [REDACTED] there were 294 child soldiers in the LOBAYE area. I do not know the circumstances of these children joining the Anti Balaka. He made a list, which I never saw. While still in the Anti-

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Balaka they were called Child Soldiers. UNICEF and ESF negotiated with YEKATOM to release the children to be reintegrated in society. I was informed about this, as I was the Mayor, in June, July or August 2014.

90. In 2014 a ceremony took place in a tent in PISSA involving UNICEF, *Enfants Sans Frontiers* (ESF) and YEKATOM. The gathering happened under a mango tree. Children who had formerly been with the Anti Balaka were to be reintegrated back into the community. The children would be trained in agriculture, trading and mechanics. Some others would return to school. ESF took the children to school in MBAIKI, and later returned the children. UNICEF gave provisions to ESF for the children and provided people to teach them such skills as stitching and mechanics. There were girls as well as boys amongst the children. I was not involved in any of the other ceremonies involving the handing over of children by YEKATOM which took place before this ceremony.
91. As a Mayor I was contacted and informed about the change in the children's status. I recall that ESF put up a sign: '*Enfants PAS Soldats*'. I was present when the children at the town-hall were given the equipment upon the completion of their training. The children I saw were older boys and the girls. They were all over 15 years old. I do not remember the date of this ceremony.
92. There were Anti-Balaka all over the CAR, and I heard that children were with them but I did not see all of them. There were not many children at the ceremony I attended. These ceremonies took place in the different localities and it happened quickly. I was not involved in the arrangements.
93. Even the daughter of my niece was among them, she was a child soldier, I think she was sixteen at the time. Her name is Candine MAVODE.
94. There were also children re-integrated into the community who live in PISSA. I do not know names, or numbers, but UNICEF and ESF have all the files. I was not really interested in this matter. I do not think that YEKATOM was present when the equipment was issued to the children.

BODA

95. In LOBAYE the only place where you currently still find Muslims is in BODA. All the other Muslims in LOBAYE had gone to MBAIKI and on the 6th February all Muslim civilians were evacuated. I do not think BODA was under YEKATOM's control as there was a different Anti Balaka chief there. I do not his name.

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96. Boniface KADA [REDACTED] is the current Mayor of BODA. During Seleka times there was a Muslim Mayor, Awal MAHAMAT, who left in the crisis.

IFB (Industrie Forestière de Batalimo)

97. IFB helped me and the community a great deal because they paid taxes with which we could pay the costs of running the town hall, local schools, hospitals, pay salaries to the council employees. IFB used to pay its taxes to the Commune directly, but now they have to pay through BEAC, who then transfers the taxes to the CAR government. IFB went through tough times because of the crisis they were unable to pay their taxes to three communes. Because of this we were unable to continue the project to build a maternity hospital. I have been informed by the ICC investigators about an allegation that I sold wood to the value of 7,000,000 CFA sourced from IFB. This allegation is untrue and I completely deny it. The account details are at the Town hall and are available to be audited

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This statement has been read over to me in the English and French language 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 before the International Criminal Court.

Signed: [REDACTED]

Dated: [REDACTED]

INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

1. I, [REDACTED] certify that:
2. I am duly qualified to interpret from the French language into the English language and from the English language into the French language.
3. I have been informed by Roger OKOA-PENGUIA 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 Roger OKOA-PENGUIA who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of this statement.

[REDACTED] ICC RESTRICTED [REDACTED]

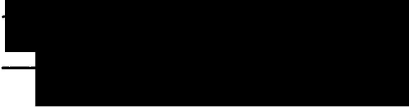
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5. Roger OKOA-PENGUIA has acknowledged that the facts and matters set out in his statement, as translated by me, are true to the best of his knowledge and recollection and has accordingly signed his signature where indicated.

Signed: 

Dated: 


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