

Statement of Thierry TRIBUNAL-NDOKOBANDA

WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION:

Last Name: TRIBUNAL-NDOKOBANDA Gender: Male

First Name: Thierry

Father's Name: [01/18] PRV

Other names used: Abraham

Mother's Name: [01/18] PRV

Place of Birth: Bangui

Passport No [01/18] PRV

Date of Birth/Age: 01/07/1972

Nationality(s): Central African Republic

Ethnicity: Gbaya

Religion: Pentacostist

Language(s) Spoken: French, Sango

Language(s) Written: French, a little English

Language(s) Used in Interview: French (with interpretation in English)

Occupation: Senior X-Ray/Image Technician with FACA

Place of Interview: Bangui, Central African Republic

Date(s) and Time(s) of Interview: 08/12/2016 13:08 –16:12
05/02/2017 11:00 –15:10

Names of all persons present during interview:

[01/18] PRV (Investigator); [01/18] PRV (Associate Investigator); Thierry TRIBUNAL-NDOKOBANDA (Witness); [01/18] PRV (Interpreter).

Signature(s)

[01/18] PRV

[01/18] PRV

[01/18] PRV

[01/18] PRV

[01/18] PRV

[01/18] PRV

[01/18] PRV



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Procedure

1. I was introduced to [01/18] PRV and [01/18] PRV and I was told that they are Investigator and Associate Investigator respectively with the Office of The Prosecutor (OTP) of the International Criminal Court (ICC). I was introduced to [01/18] PRV and I was told that he 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 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.
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.

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[01/18] PRV

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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.

Background

11. I was born in Bangui. I have been serving in FACA and my current rank is lieutenant.
12. I was working as Senior Technician of x-rays/images at a military hospital in Bangui until the Seleka destroyed the hospital.
13. I do not have any job at the moment although I am still with the FACA. I have been waiting for my deployment order.

Zone Commander near Damara

14. Since December 2012, I was the FACA Zone Commander in PK-55, which is located near Damara. Following the clashes with the Seleka at Damara on 23 and 24 March 2013, the FACA were forced to withdraw and I fled with other FACA elements via Noala and Yanti to the Cameroonian border.
15. After two weeks, I got a call from the then Seleka Deputy Chief of Staff, Abdul KARIM, who asked me to come back to train the young Seleka recruits and integrate them in the FACA. I told KARIM that I could not return to Bangui without proper official orders and formalities fulfilled.
16. He agreed with my proposal and I subsequently met at Berberati with Seleka General AL KHATIM who was assigned by KARIM to officialise my return.
17. After fulfilling the proper formalities, I, together with about a battalion of FACA under my command, returned to Bangui, escorted by Seleka under the command of AL KHATIM.

Meeting with DJOTODIA

18. When I arrived in Bangui, it was still April 2013. I first met General Abdul KARIM, who subsequently introduced me to the then President Michel DJOTODIA at Hotel Ledger where the latter was staying at the time. On that occasion the President asked me to train young Seleka and integrate them into the FACA.
19. I told him that I wanted to serve my nation and would do whatever was required in that respect.

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Looting of [01/18] PRV house by the Seleka

20. I believe it was end of April 2013, when I heard that the Seleka had looted [01/18] PRV [01/18] PRV house which is located near NGAISSONA's compound in Boy Rabe. All my possessions and documents were in that house. I thought I should go and have a look at [01/18] PRV
21. I called [01/18] PRV to see how he was doing. He told me that he was in Bimbo and doing fine as he had managed to leave his house in Boy Rabe before the Seleka arrival at 0600hrs. When he told me that [01/18] PRV did not want to leave the house [01/18] PRV

Arrests and torture by the Seleka

22. I went to my see [01/18] PRV with three of my fellow soldiers, NGOETE, Adjutant Gaetan MOUSSA and Corporal MOTOBOLE.
23. On our way to [01/18] PRV we were stopped by about 100 Seleka who were positioned along the road opposite the compound of NGAISSONA, which the Seleka used as a base. Those Seleka were a mixture of Central Africans, Sudanese and Nigerians as they were of various complexions.
24. Some were wearing uniforms and others civilian clothes. I noticed they were armed with Kalashnikovs, RPG, CZ (which is a new model of Kalashnikov that can fire explosives) and a weapon called 'PANG' (which is designed to fire some kind of grenades as well).
25. They were very hostile towards us and wanted to seize our vehicle. We were dressed in our FACA military uniforms. They forced the four of us out of the car. When they noticed we were armed, they took our weapons and accused us of planning a coup against President DJOTODIA.
26. They tied our hands on the back and started beating us ferociously. They beat and tortured us continuously from 0600 to 1300hrs.
27. They beat me so badly that I still have marks on body. I have never suffered such pain in my life. The pain and torture are haunting me since.
28. The Seleka did all sorts of things to me and my men. One Seleka put his pistol against my temple and fired a shot, but for some reason the bullet did not hit me.

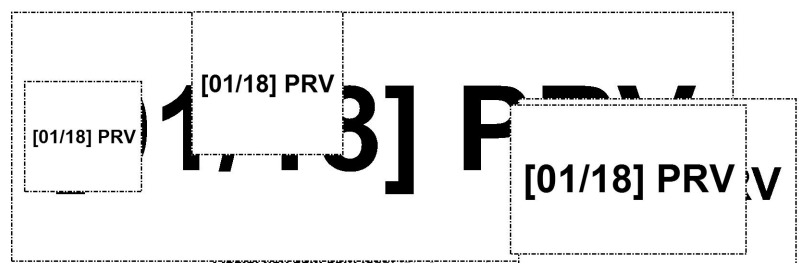
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29. The Seleka had lots of weapons, which they had taken from pillaging FACA barracks.
30. The Seleka beat us with rifle butts and lashed us with whips. They also used wooden sticks, batons and kicked us with their boots.
31. They also kicked and beat me so badly [01/18] PRV [01/18] PRV I have never gone through so much pain in my life.
32. At some point, Corporal MOTOBOLE could not bear the pain and suffering anymore and begged the Seleka to kill him. The Seleka then took him out and killed him at Boy Rabe market. I did not witness his killing but General ARDA told me this later on. I do not know if MOTOBOLE's body was ever recovered.
33. After my release, I heard that Gaetan MOUSSA also died from the torture and that the Seleka had killed NGOETE as well. I know that Gaetan MOUSSA's family buried his body, but I do not know what happened to NGOETE's.
34. The Seleka were interrogating us, while beating us. They accused me of mounting a coup against DJOTODIA and wanted to know where weapons were hidden or stored in Boy Rabe, because the population in Boy Rabe was known to be loyal to the former President BOZIZE.
35. I told them that, if I had intended to plan a coup, I would not have left the bush, but that, instead, I had left the bush and come to Bangui to serve my country. I told them their accusations were false.

Arrival of ADAM, MOUSSA and ARDA at Boy Rabe

36. At some point I heard the Seleka making some calls in Arabic, but I understand some basic Arabic. I heard them saying in Arabic "Asqar ana Bozize", which means that they had arrested men of BOZIZE.
37. Shortly after they made the calls, Seleka Colonel OUSTA, the eldest brother of DJOTODIA, arrived. He knew me, as I was working with him to train the Seleka recruits, and negotiated my release. The Seleka however refused to release me and one of them said that I had to be killed.
38. A few moments later, Seleka General ARDA arrived, followed by Seleka Generals Nouredine ADAM and MOUSSA. The Seleka continued beating us in the meantime.

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39. I recall MOUSSA was wearing a military camouflage uniform. He could not speak Sango. He did wear the insignia of general. He had messy hair. I did not know he was MOUSSA but learned this later from some Central Africans who had joined the Seleka. He had in his hands a mobile phone and a Motorola walkie-talkie and carried a pistol. He was escorted by his close protection.
40. ARDA was also wearing a military camouflage uniform with the insignia of General. I think he also carried a Motorola and a mobile phone. I did not know him either, but recognised him on TV after my release. He carried a PA (pistol) and was escorted by his close protection as well.
41. I knew Nouredine ADAM because I had seen him often in Miskine while visiting his cousin El Adji BIRAO who lived there. His cousin was more than 60 years old and his house was later on destroyed by the Anti-Balaka. I do not know where he is living nowadays.
42. Nouredine ADAM was wearing a military camouflage with the two-star insignia of General. He had a military (green/desert) colour turban wrapped around his neck. He carried an automatic pistol. He also held a Motorola and cell phone in his hands.
43. Nourredine ADAM's escort were all armed with Kalashnikovs, 'FAL'rifles and RPG's. They also carried mobile phones and Motorola radios as well.
44. I heard ARDA speaking in Sango to Nouredine ADAM. I heard him saying that I was one of BOZIZE's officers, who refused to recognise the Seleka's authority and did not respect the Seleka regime either. I heard Nourredine ADAM replying in Sango that whether we liked it or not, but we had no other choice than to recognise and respect the Seleka as they were in power.
45. Nourredine ADAM spoke Sango quite well. He left the spot with his escort after a while. He stayed for more than ten-fifteen minutes. I do not know in which vehicle he left.
46. The Seleka were not beating us while Nourredine ADAM, MOUSSA and ARDA were there. We were sitting on the ground with our hands tied all the time.

Interrogation by ARDA

47. After Nourredine ADAM and MOUSSA had left, ARDA came to me and told me in Sango he would call some journalists to see me.

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48. He told me that I and my men would be released if I would provide the correct answers to four questions which he would put to me in public in the presence of the journalists. He warned me that if I would not answer accordingly, we would be all killed.
49. The first question ARDA would put to me was where my elements were and I replied the Seleka had already taken him away. When ARDA heard this, he said that that one had already been killed.
50. The second question was if the Seleka were good and my answer should be affirmative.
51. The third question concerned my vehicle. DJOTODIA had given me a white vehicle Toyota, type 'BG80', which I had painted in camouflage style spots, as used by the Seleka. His question would be that I should confess that I had painted my vehicle to pillage Boy Rabe, thus falsely blaming the Seleka for the pillaging of Boy Rabe.
52. However, it was public knowledge that the Seleka had pillaged the Boy Rabe.
53. The answer to the fourth question should be to admit that I wanted to join BOZIZE's troops in mounting a coup against President DJOTODIA.
54. Less than fifteen minutes later, I could see the journalists arriving and ARDA took them to us. One journalist and the photographer, called [01/18] PRV were from Central African Republic, but the third one was a foreigner. I do not have any further details on them.
55. ARDA interrogated me as planned and questioned me as mentioned above and I responded according to his instructions. The journalists were recording the questioning.
56. I know it was recorded and afterwards broadcasted by "Africque24". The video footage can still be retrieved from "You Tube". The title of the video recording is called "*Pillages, Violences. Bangui sous haute tension*", published by AFP.
57. On this recording one can see me sitting next to the vehicle when being questioned by ARDA, in the presence of the journalists.
58. After the interrogation, the journalist left and [01/18] PRV ordered his men to untie me. My arms felt paralysed. The Seleka then tied a rope on my left wrist and dragged me and my men to their vehicle, but I cannot recall the brand of this vehicle. I heard ARDA saying: "Let's now take them away!"

Appearing before DJOTODIA at Ledger Hotel

59. It was around 1300hrs, when they took us away in their vehicle. The vehicle passed by the Boganda Lycee and stopped at the Ledger Hotel.
60. I believe that DJOTODIA had ordered his men to bring me to him. When we arrived at Ledger Hotel, I and my men were being taken out of the vehicle and had to wait outside near the main entrance.
61. A few minutes later, DJOTODIA came out of Ledger Hotel.
62. The Seleka took me in front of him and he told me that he had met me two weeks before. I told him: "Yours Excellency! I do not understand why I am here. If I were planning anything against the Seleka, I would not leave the bushes."
63. I believe this event at the Hotel Ledger took place towards the end of April 2013.
64. While being in front of DJOTODIA, I also told him that I thought I had been brought to him to get a promotion, but instead I was being accused of being a traitor by planning a coup against him.
65. DJOTODIA said that if I were drinking blood with BOZIZE, I had to be taken to the prosecutor. At that time, Abdul KARIM intervened and said that I should be taken to the SRI and not the prosecutor. SRI/CERD offices are located behind the "Institut Pasteur".

Detention at SRI and escape

66. I and my men were subsequently taken to SRI. There were not any windows in the cell we were kept in. We were given little food and water. There was no light and sun in the cell. We were kept in the dark for ten days and because of that I have now sight problems. I was verbally threatened at the SRI but not physically tortured.
67. On the first day of my detention, three French military, dressed in a "leopard style" uniform visited SRI. I think one was a "Sergeant-Chef" and the other two were his subordinates. They asked me if I wanted to be taken to another location. I replied to them that I preferred to stay at SRI.
68. After a week, I built some rapport with the guards of the SRI and eventually they treated me with more flexibility. Consequently, I along with my men managed to escape from SRI. It was around 1600-1700hrs when we escaped. It is however

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possible that that General Abdul KARIM had told them to let me escape. I know KARIM as I once was his superior in the FACA.

69. General KARIM is still in Bangui and lives near the National Assembly. KARIM may have committed crimes as he was associated with the Seleka. He was Corporal Chef in the FACA and General in the Seleka.
70. KARIM is mindful of his security because of his association with the Seleka. He recently went to ENAM and was threatened by other FACA, allegedly on the instructions of SAMBA PANZA.
71. After escaping from SRI, I first went to M'Poko airport as I could not go home.
72. I heard that, during the oath taking ceremonies of DJOTODIA, which took place at the National Assembly in August or September 2013, DJOTODIA had mentioned my name and the names of Captain NGAIKOSSE, Lieutenant GANAZOUI and Mrs YAKITE for being the instigators of the detonation that had occurred on the previous day in order to disrupt the oath taking ceremonies. This was broadcast on Central African radio.
73. DJOTODIA also stated in the same radio broadcasting that a reward of 5 million CFA was issued for my arrest. I did not hear this announcement, but learned this from people around me. When I heard this, I decided to leave Central African Republic for my safety.
74. I left the country with my brothers [01/18] PRV and [01/18] PRV [01/18] PRV (he does not mobile number) in September 2013. First, we went to Boali and then came back to Bangui to cross the river to Zongo in DRC.

Closing Procedure

75. I was informed that individuals, who according to the judges, qualify as victims will be entitled to participate in future Court proceedings and potentially to receive reparations. I was informed of the existence of the Victims' Participation and Reparation Section and its function, as well as of the procedure for applications. I consent to my personal data being shared with the Victims' Participation and Reparation Section.
76. 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.

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77. The investigators informed me of the protective measures that may apply during and after the investigation and/or trial proceedings.
78. 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.
79. I have given the answers to the questions of my own free will.
80. There has not been any form of coercion, duress, threat, promise or inducement which has influenced my account.
81. I have no complaints about the way I was treated during this interview.

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This statement has been read over to me in the English with interpretation in French 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: _____

[01/18] PRV

Dated: _____

[01/18] PRV

[01/18] PRV



INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION

1. I, **[01/18] PRV** 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 Thierry TRIBUNAL-NDOKOBANDA 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 Thierry TRIBUNAL-NDOKOBANDA who appeared to have heard and understood my translation of this statement.
5. Thierry TRIBUNAL-NDOKOBANDA 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:

[01/18] PRV

Dated:

[01/18] PRV

