

**Cour
Pénale
Internationale**



**International
Criminal
Court**

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No.: ICC-01/05-01/08

Date: 03 November 2009

TRIAL CHAMBER III

Before:

**Judge Adrian Fulford, Presiding Judge
Judge Elisabeth Odio-Benito
Judge Joyce Aluoch**

SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

IN THE CASE OF

THE PROSECUTOR

V. JEAN-PIERRE BEMBA GOMBO

Public

Prosecution's Submission re: Sango Translation and Interpretation issues

Source:

The Office of the Prosecutor

Document to be notified in accordance with Regulation 31 of the *Regulations of the Court* to:

The Office of the Prosecutor

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Victims Participation and Reparations Other Section

1. During the Status Conference on the 7 October 2009, Trial Chamber III (“the Chamber”) requested that the Office of the Prosecutor (“the Prosecution”) identify the exact nature of the challenges of preparing Sango translations of witness statements for the purpose of the witness familiarization process.¹
2. Sango is a widely-spoken language in the Central African Republic (“CAR”), and is the preferred language for many of the Prosecution’s witnesses. However, most of them are unable to read in Sango.
3. Over time, Sango has become an official language of the CAR and a group of academics have formally standardised the language, by implementing a specific writing system and, where necessary, creating new Sango words to fill in gaps where no words previously existed. Although the official system also uses the Latin script, it calls for accents that require prior instruction in order to be able to read texts.
4. The Prosecution’s experience suggests that the average Sango-speaker is not necessarily familiar with the new writing system and words used in the official Sango orthography (if a person were to be sufficiently educated to know the system, they would likely understand French in any case). These inherent limitations are complicated by the fact that many of the Prosecution’s witnesses are illiterate and would require assistance in reading their own prior statements, which were interpreted and recorded in French or English at the time they were made.
5. Given that most of the witnesses will require assistance during the familiarization process to understand their written statements, the Prosecution

¹ ICC-01/05-01/08-T-14-ENG, 7 October 2009, p. 13 lines 19-25, p. 14, lines 1-5.

submits that the Registry should arrange for the simultaneous interpretation of written statements in Sango during the witness familiarization process.

6. Additionally, during the trial, it will be imperative to have Sango interpreters available when Sango speaking witnesses testify. On 12 October 2009, the Prosecution met with the Registry to share the Prosecution's concerns and ensure that the interpretation needs of Sango speaking witnesses are met at trial.



Luis Moreno-Ocampo, Prosecutor

Dated this 3rd day of November 2009

At The Hague, The Netherlands