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**International
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TRIAL CHAMBER V

Before: Judge Bertram Schmitt, Presiding Judge
Judge Péter Kovács
Judge Chang-ho Chung

SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC II

**IN THE CASE OF
THE PROSECUTOR *v.* ALFRED YEKATOM AND PATRICE-EDOUARD
NGAÏSSONA**

**Public
With Confidential Annex**

**Fourth Registry Assessment Report on Victim Applications for Participation in
Trial Proceedings**

Source: Registry

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

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I. Introduction

1. On 19 March 2020, Trial Chamber V ("Chamber") issued its "Order Scheduling First Status Conference" ("Scheduling Order") in which it *inter alia* endorsed the victim application procedure previously adopted by Pre-Trial Chamber II ("PTC").¹ During the pre-trial stage, the latter had instructed the Registry in its "Decision establishing the principles applicable to victims' applications for participation" of 5 March 2019 ("Decision")² to:
 - i. classify victim applicants into three categories: (a) applicants who clearly qualify as victims ("Group A"); (b) applicants who clearly do not qualify as victims ("Group B"); and (c) applicants for whom the Registry could not make a clear determination for any reason ("Group C");³ and
 - ii. prepare "regular reports that list the applications for participation and classify them according to the three groups".⁴
2. The Registry hereby transmits its fourth report, on 105 complete applications ("Applications") to participate in the case of *The Prosecutor v. Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona* ("Case"). The Registry has assessed all of these Applications to fall in Group A.
3. The Applications are listed in the annex to the present submission ("Annex") and are being transmitted separately to the Chamber in accordance with paragraph 41(ii) of the Decision.

¹ Trial Chamber V, "Order Scheduling First Status Conference", 19 March 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-459, para. 8 (iv).

² Pre-Trial Chamber II, "Decision Establishing the Principles Applicable to Victims' Applications for Participation", 5 March 2019, ICC-01/14-01/18-141.

³ *Ibid.*, para. 41 (i). In paragraph 41 (ii) of the Decision, the PTC ordered the Registry to "transmits to the Chamber on a rolling basis and in unredacted form all complete applications and any supporting documentation in its possession".

⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 41(iii).

II. Procedural History

4. On 5 March 2019, the PTC issued the Decision, setting out *inter alia* the admission procedure for victims' participation in the Case.⁵
5. On 21 June 2019, the PTC authorised 15 victims to participate at the confirmation hearing in the Case ("First Decision on Victims' Applications").⁶
6. On 13 September 2019, the PTC authorised an additional 1,070 victims to participate in the proceedings ("Second Decision on Victims' Applications").⁷
7. On 11 December 2019, the PTC issued a decision partially confirming the charges against the accused ("Decision on the Confirmation of Charges").⁸
8. On 19 March 2020, the Chamber issued its Scheduling Order, in which it *inter alia*: i) endorsed the victim application procedure set out in the Decision;⁹ and ii) requested the Registry to provide an update and forecast on (additional) applications by victims to participate in the proceedings.¹⁰
9. On 22 May 2020, the Registry provided its Update on Victim Participation ("Update").¹¹
10. On 16 July 2020, the Chamber set the start of the trial on 9 February 2021 and the "end of the Prosecution's presentation of evidence as the deadline for the

⁵ See *supra*, footnote 2.

⁶ Pre Trial Chamber II, "Decision regarding the Registry's First Assessment Report on Applications for Victim Participation, the Registry's First Transmission of Group C Applications, the appointment of counsel for Victims of Other Crimes, and the victims' procedural position", 21 June 2019, ICC-01/14-01/18-227-Conf. A public redacted version was filed on the same day (ICC-01/14-01/18-227-Red).

⁷ Pre Trial Chamber II, "Decision regarding the Registry's Outstanding Transmissions of Applications for Victim Participation", 13 September 2019, ICC-01/14-01/18-338.

⁸ Pre Trial Chamber II, "Decision on the confirmation of charges against Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona", 11 December 2019, ICC-01/14-01/18-403-Conf. A public redacted version was filed on 20 December 2019. A corrected public redacted version was filed on 14 May 2020 (ICC-01/14-01/18-403-Red-Corr).

⁹ Scheduling Order, para. 8 (iv).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 3 (I).

¹¹ Registry, "Update on Victim Applications for Participation", 8 April 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-470-Conf-Exp-AnxIII. A confidential redacted version was filed on the same day (ICC-01/14-01/18-470-Conf-AnxIII-Red). A public redacted version was filed on 22 May 2020 (ICC-01/14-01/18-470-AnxIII-Red2).

transmission of victim applications by the Registry” (“16 July 2020 Decision”).¹²

11. On 17 July 2020, the Registry sought, by way of email, the Chamber’s guidance on a number of issues encountered during its assessment of victim applications.¹³
12. On 30 July 2020, the Chamber directed the Registry to seek its guidance on the record for a number of the issues raised.¹⁴
13. On 19 October 2020, the Victims Participation and Reparations Section (“VPRS”) transmitted 15 applications categorised in Group C¹⁵ and submitted a first assessment report on those applications (“First Transmission”).¹⁶
14. On 23 November 2020, the Chamber issued a decision on the merits of the applications included in the First Transmission (“23 November 2020 Decision”).¹⁷
15. On 30 November 2020, the VPRS transmitted 100 applications categorised in Group A (“Second Transmission”)¹⁸ and submitted a second assessment report on those applications.¹⁹
16. On 11 December 2020, the Chamber issued a decision on the merits of the applications included in the Second Transmission.²⁰

¹² Trial Chamber V, “Decision Setting the Commencement Date of the Trial”, 16 July 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-589.

¹³ Email from Registry to Trial Chamber V on 17 July 2020 at 13:41.

¹⁴ Email from Trial Chamber V to Registry on 30 July 2020 at 17:29.

¹⁵ Registry, “Registry’s First Transmission of Group C Applications for Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings”, 19 October 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-687.

¹⁶ Registry, “Registry’s First Assessment Report on Applications for Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings”, 19 October 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-688.

¹⁷ Trial Chamber V, “Decision on Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings”, 23 November 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-738.

¹⁸ Registry, “Registry’s First Transmission of Group A Applications for Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings”, 30 November 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-746.

¹⁹ Registry, “Registry’s Second Assessment Report on Applications for Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings”, 30 November 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-747.

²⁰ Trial Chamber V, “Second Decision on Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings (Group A)”, 11 December 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-765.

17. On 16 December 2020, the VPRS transmitted 119 applications categorised in Group A (“Third Transmission”)²¹ and submitted a third assessment report on those applications.²²
18. On 29 December 2020, the Chamber issued a decision on the merits of the applications included in the Third Transmission.²³

III. Classification

19. The annex to the present submission is classified as confidential in accordance with the Decision.²⁴

IV. Applicable Law

20. The present transmission is submitted in accordance with article 68(1) and (3) of the Rome Statute, rules 85 to 89 and 92 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, regulation 86 of the Regulations of the Court, and regulations 107 to 109 of the Regulations of the Registry.

V. Submissions

21. The 105 Applications transmitted under Group A include 60 applications from victims admitted to participate during the pre-trial stage as well as 45 applications submitted by victims subsequent to the Decision on Confirmation on Charges.²⁵

²¹ Registry, “Registry’s Second Transmission of Group A Applications for Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings”, dated 16 December 2020 and notified on 17 December 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-778.

²² Registry, “Registry’s Third Assessment Report on Applications for Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings”, date 16 December 2020 and notified on 17 December 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-777.

²³ Trial Chamber V, “Third Decision on Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings (Group A)”, 29 December 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-798.

²⁴ Decision, para. 41(iii).

²⁵ The victims admitted at pre-trial stage are: a/65064/19, a/65067/19, a/65073/19, a/65090/19, a/65097/19, a/65121/19, a/65132/19, a/65160/19, a/65161/19, a/65178/19, a/65231/19, a/65406/19, a/65756/19, a/65758/19, a/65766/19, a/65767/19, a/65771/19, a/65774/19, a/65844/19, a/65846/19, a/65847/19, a/65848/19, a/65855/19, a/65856/19, a/65969/19, a/65971/19, a/65974/19, a/66024/19, a/66027/19, a/66031/19, a/66033/19, a/66034/19, a/66035/19, a/66036/19, a/66040/19, a/66042/19, a/66047/19, a/66048/19, a/66049/19, a/66053/19, a/66058/19, a/66065/19, a/66066/19, a/66070/19, a/66075/19, a/66076/19, a/66077/19, a/66078/19, a/66079/19, a/66080/19, a/66082/19, a/66083/19, a/66091/19,

22. Applying the criteria set out in paragraph 31 of the Decision, the VPRS has assessed each of the 105 applications presently transmitted under Group A as complete. In conducting its assessment in accordance with paragraph 38 of the Decision, the VPRS confirms that each of the 105 applicants whose applications are being transmitted in Group A have met *prima facie* the following criteria:

- i. His or her identity as a natural person is established;²⁶
- ii. He or she has suffered harm;²⁷
- iii. The harm suffered is a result of an incident falling within the temporal, geographic and material scope of the Case.²⁸

Observations in relation to criterion (i)

23. Certain applications²⁹ falling under Group A contain minor discrepancies, pertaining to *inter alia*: the applicant's date of birth, an inversion of the applicant's first and last name, the applicant's signature date or the spelling of the applicant's name, or other minor inconsistencies in the information provided which appear to be the result of inadvertent errors. In these cases, the VPRS took note of the PTC's instruction that "a certain degree of

a/66092/19, a/66094/19, a/66095/19, a/66096/19, a/66097/19, a/66099/19 and a/66100/19. The Registry has reviewed their applications and concluded that the crimes suffered by these victims remained within the scope of the Case following the Decision on Confirmation of Charges.

²⁶ Decision, paras. 31-34. The VPRS notes that certain applications have been submitted by minors, applying on their own behalf (a/65128/19, a/65132/19, a/65186/19, a/65231/19, a/65232/19, a/65243/19, a/65405/19, a/65406/19, a/65412/19 and a/65413/19). For these applications, the VPRS has assessed the maturity of the applicant based on the information contained in the form in accordance with the Chamber's instruction (email from Chamber to VPRS, 30 July 2020 at 17:29). This includes personal information such as current occupation, marital status, number of children and dependants contained in page three of the form (which is not included in the version of the form transmitted to the Chamber). The VPRS also took into consideration the fact that the applicants have turned 18 since the time of the submission of their Application.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, paras 31, 35.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 37.

²⁹ The applications with minor discrepancies include: a/15031/20, a/15191/20, a/15244/20, a/15245/20, a/15345/20, a/15350/20, a/15357/20, a/15358/20, a/65064/19, a/65067/19, a/65090/19, a/65097/19, a/65160/19, a/65161/19, a/65231/19, a/65412/19, a/65846/19, a/66035/19, a/66042/19, a/66076/19, a/66077/19, a/66078/19, a/66082/19 and a/66098/19.

flexibility must be shown”³⁰ and considers that the discrepancies presented in these applications “do not call into question the overall credibility of the information provided by the applicant [...]”.³¹

24. Some applicants³² have submitted with their applications a “*Formulaire d’enregistrement des électeurs*” (also called “*Récépissé*”) to establish their identity. As previously indicated in the Registry’s report on proof of identity documents available in the Central African Republic, the Registry was informed that such type of document has been used by individuals in lieu of their electoral cards to vote on time for the 2015 elections, in the context of the crisis and the dysfunction of administrative institutions.³³ In addition, some applicants have submitted as identification means cards delivered by non-governmental organisations in the context of assistance programmes (“Entitlement card”).³⁴ In accordance with paragraph 25 of the Decision, the VPRS sought³⁵ and obtained³⁶ the PTC’s approval to consider such documents as sufficiently establishing the identity of applicants in the Case.

³⁰ Decision, para. 34.

³¹ *Id.*

³² These applications include: a/15245/20, a/15347/20, a/15358/20, a/15261/20 and a/15363/20.

³³ Registry, “Annex I to the Registry Report on Proof of Identity Documents Available in the Central African Republic and Transmission of Proposed Application Form for Victims Under Rule 85(b) of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence”, 28 February 2019, ICC-01/14-01/18-133-AnxI, para. 18. A sample of such document is available in annex II to the Registry’s report (See ICC-01/14-01/18-133-AnxII-Red2, pp.76-77).

³⁴ The VPRS found that in many instances displaced applicants had lost their identification document and had difficulties to access local authorities. However, they often possessed cards delivered by UN agencies, refugee camp management agencies or NGOs in a similar role, which they used in lieu of any other type of identification (See, ICC-01/14-01/18-133-AnxI, para. 21. A sample of such documents is available in annex II to the Registry’s report, see ICC-01/14-01/18-133-AnxII-Red2, pp. 78-80). The VPRS further found that similar Entitlement cards were used outside of the context of internally displaced persons camps/sites for beneficiaries of assistance projects/programmes such as those addressing vulnerable categories of populations. These applications include: a/65263/19, a/65756/19 and a/65766/19.

³⁵ Respectively, email from Registry to PTC on 28 August 2019 at 11:23 and email from Registry to PTC on 01 August 2019 at 18:33. The Registry noted (i) that both documents contained similar features to the ones considered to be valid by the PTC in the instant Case; and (ii) that many displaced victims had lost their identification documents (*see supra.*, fn. 34).

³⁶ Respectively, email from PTC to Registry on 29 August 2019 at 11:17 and email from PTC to Registry on 2 August 2019 at 15:20.

Observation in relation to criterion (iii)

25. In identifying the crimes falling within the scope of the Case, the VPRS looks solely at the alleged acts and - except in the case of alleged persecution - does not make any assessment as to the underlying grounds for their commission.³⁷
26. In accordance with the 23 November 2020 Decision,³⁸ the VPRS categorises within Group A applicants who mention crimes committed by Anti-Balaka groups in areas neighbouring the borders of Cattin or Boeing and clearly related to the alleged attack in Bangui on 5 December 2013.
27. The VPRS further notes that certain applications appear to provide an erroneous date (year) of the alleged events (5 December 2014 instead of 5 December 2013, or arrival of the Anti-Balakas in Mbaiki on 4 February 2013 instead of 4 February 2014) or do not explicitly state specific dates. However, they refer to publicly known events (such as for example the resignation of former President of the Central African Republic Michel Djotodia), or provide any other sufficiently detailed contextual descriptions that date the events.³⁹ In these cases, the VPRS applied the Chamber's instruction to assess applications "holistically by assessing their internal coherence and the overall context of the alleged acts".⁴⁰

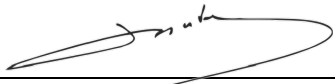
³⁷ As a result, the VPRS assesses within Group A applicants who have suffered harm from at least one of the crimes charged against the accused. The VPRS assesses whether the victims were "perceived as collectively responsible for, complicit with, or supportive of the Seleka" only in cases where the applicant appears to have suffered from the charged crime of persecution.

³⁸ 23 November 2020 Decision, paras 27-33.

³⁹ These applications include: a/15087/20, a/15352/20 and a/66094/19.

⁴⁰ Email from the Chamber to the Registry on 30 July 2020 at 17:29. The VPRS notes that such instructions were provided where applications contained discrepancies with regards to the date. The VPRS respectfully submits that the same logic should apply to those instances where an applicant did not provide an exact date but where the applicant's submission clearly relates to the events described in the Decision on Confirmation of Charges. The VPRS respectfully submits that such interpretation is consistent with the guidance provided by the Chamber in the 23 November 2020 Decision).

28. The Registry will continue to assess all applications in its possession according to the criteria established by the Chamber and will transmit all complete applications on a rolling basis in accordance with the deadlines set out in the 16 July 2020 Decision. Lastly, given the current volatile circumstances on the ground in the Central African Republic and Bangui in particular, the Registry is monitoring the situation and continues to assess how it impacts the victim-related activities of the Country Office. It will provide a more detailed situational report to the Chamber with its periodic update on victims admitted to participate in the proceedings as ordered by the Chamber⁴¹ or at an earlier stage if the Chamber deems it appropriate.



Marc Dubuisson, Director, Division of Judicial Services

On behalf of Peter Lewis, Registrar

Dated this 21 January 2021

At The Hague, The Netherlands

⁴¹Trial Chamber V, “Second Decision on Victims’ Participation in Trial Proceedings (Group A)”, 11 December 2020, ICC-01/14-01/18-765, para. 9.