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Ocampo links more MPs to chaos militia

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International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo.

By ERIC SHIMOLI eshimoli@ke.nationmedia.com News Editor, at The Hague
Posted Sunday, September 4 2011 at 21:00

IN SUMMARY

- Judges told in secret session that the three helped Ruto and Kosgey plot attacks on PNU supporters

Three more MPs have been accused of being part of the leadership of a murderous network that planned and carried out killings, looting and evictions in the Rift Valley Province.

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They were named in a private session during the ongoing confirmation of charges hearings at the International Criminal Court (ICC) where three of the six people Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo accuses of bearing the greatest responsibility for the 2007 post-election violence are appearing.

Acting as subordinates

The prosecution accuses the three lawmakers of acting as subordinates of MPs William Ruto and Henry Kosgey, who have been named as the heads of the network.

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They are accused of providing the political leadership to an organisation that had military, elders and media components.

The allegations have been denied by Mr Ruto, Mr Kosgey and Mr Joshua Sang, who is alleged to have composed the media wing of the network through his Kass FM broadcasts.

Requests for the evidence to be heard in private were made by lead prosecutor Cynthia Tai on Friday and later by a lawyer representing Mr Sang on Saturday.

The ICC's rules of evidence prohibit the media from making public the identities of persons named in private sessions.

The three politicians are from the Rift Valley, which bore the brunt of the violence.

Mr Moreno-Ocampo told the Pre-Trial Chamber on Thursday that Mr Ruto was the head of a military command that masterminded post-election violence after the disputed 2007 General Election. (READ: First group of ICC suspects in the dock)

He alleged that the unit was made up of former military commanders and that Mr Ruto and Mr Kosgey organised supporters to call Kass FM to spread hate messages and direct gangs where to attack.

Mr Moreno-Ocampo added that the three not only organised the attacks, but also facilitated the arming of the militia gangs with guns, machetes and bombs.

Mr Kosgey will on Monday be in court to defend himself against claims of plotting a campaign of murder, deportation and persecution of non-Kalenjins from Rift Valley to gain political power.

At the weekend, the three suspects and their lawyers were exuding confidence that they would be vindicated at the end of the hearings.

On Monday morning, the first witness called by Mr Kosgey is expected to give evidence.



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Dismissed allegations

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Already, witnesses called by Mr Ruto — former General Service Unit commander Samson Cherambos and Mr Henry Kiptoo — have testified.

They dismissed allegations that the Eldoret North MP had held meetings at his Sugoi home in Eldoret to plan the violence and distribute money and weapons.

The prosecutor has accused Mr Ruto and Mr Kosgey of recruiting retired army generals Augustine Cheruiyot and John Koech as well as Mr Cherambos to plan the massacre.

Mr Cherambos denied the allegations on Saturday.

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In his opening statement, Mr Moreno-Ocampo said the violence was not spontaneous and that the election dispute gave the suspects an excuse to exploit existing tensions and enmity between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin.

Ruto's defence team led by Mr David Hooper accused Mr Moreno-Ocampo of failing to produce exonerating evidence.

Enough evidence

Judges Ekaterina Trendafilova, Cuno Tarfusser and Hans-Peter Kaul will decide whether there is enough evidence to commit the three to full trial after the confirmation hearings.

The case against Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta, Civil Service head Francis Muthaura and Postmaster-General Hussein Ali is scheduled to begin on September 21.



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