

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-D29-P-5012

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 International Criminal Court
2 Trial Chamber V
3 Situation: Central African Republic II
4 In the case of The Prosecutor v. Alfred Rombhot Yekatom and
5 Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona - ICC-01/14-01/18
6 Presiding Judge Bertram Schmitt, Judge Péter Kovács, Judge Chang-ho Chung and
7 Judge Beti Hohler
8 Trial Hearing - Courtroom 1
9 Monday, 1 July 2024
10 (The hearing starts in open session at 9.32 a.m.)
11 THE COURT USHER: [9:32:31] All rise.
12 The International Criminal Court is now in session.
13 Please be seated.
14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:32:59] Good morning, everyone.
15 Court officer, please call the case.
16 THE COURT OFFICER: [9:33:03] Good morning, Mr President, your Honours.
17 This is the situation in the Central African Republic II, in the case of The Prosecutor
18 versus Alfred Rombhot Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona, case reference
19 ICC-01/14-01/18.
20 And for the record, we are in open session.
21 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:33:22] Thank you.
22 I ask for the appearance of the parties. Mr Vanderpuye.
23 MR VANDERPUYE: [9:33:28] Good morning, Mr President, your Honours. Good
24 morning, everyone. Good morning, Mr Witness.
25 Today the Prosecutor's office is represented by Sylvie Wakchom, Yassin Mostfa, and

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1 myself, Kweku Vanderpuye. Good morning again.

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:33:40] Thank you.

3 And for the representatives of the victims, Ms Rabesandratana.

4 MS RABESANDRATANA: [9:33:45](Interpretation) Thank you, Mr President.

5 Good morning, sir. Good morning to all the Judges, everyone here in the courtroom,

6 as well.

7 Today the victims are represented by myself, and by Ms Massidda, as well as

8 Mr Lariviere.

9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:34:11] Mr Suprun, next.

10 MR SUPRUN: [9:34:15] Good morning, Mr President. Good morning, your

11 Honours.

12 The former child soldiers are represented today by Amina Merrouche and myself,

13 Dmytro Suprun. Thank you.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:34:23] Thank you.

15 I turn to the Defence.

16 Ms Dimitri for the Defence of Mr Yekatom.

17 MS DIMITRI: [9:34:31] Good morning, Mr President. Good morning, your

18 Honours. Good morning, everyone.

19 *Bonjour, Monsieur le témoin.*

20 Mr Yekatom is present in the courtroom. This morning he's represented by

21 Ms Alexandra Baer, Mr Gyo Suzuki, Ms Lina Hammi, Ms Anne-Sophie Veillette,

22 Ms Sarah Bafadhel. We have Ms Anta Guissé who's on the train from Paris, she

23 should join us at the beginning of the second session. And myself, Mylène Dimitri.

24 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:34:59] Thank you, Ms Dimitri.

25 Ms Proulx next.

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1 MS PROULX: [9:35:00] Good morning, Mr President, your Honours. Good
2 morning, everyone. Good morning, Mr Witness.

3 Mr Ngaïssona today is represented by Despoina Eleftheriou, Cristian González Ruiz,
4 Mathias Goffe and myself, Marie-Hélène Proulx. And Mr Ngaïssona is present in
5 the courtroom.

6 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:35:16] Thank you very much.

7 And, most importantly, we have a new witness. We will start with the testimony of
8 the witness of Mr Madongagba.

9 First of all, Mr Madongagba, do I pronounce your name correctly? Please correct me
10 if I make a mistake.

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12 (The witness speaks French)

13 THE WITNESS: [9:35:37](Interpretation) Good morning, your Honour.

14 Madongagba is the pronunciation, and you have pronounced my name correctly.

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:35:45] Thank you very much.

16 You are here -- first of all, a very warm welcome that you have made yourself
17 available as a witness for this proceedings. You are called here to testify and assist
18 the Chamber in the case of the Prosecutor against Mr Ngaïssona and Mr Yekatom.

19 Mr Witness, there should be a card in front of you with a solemn undertaking to tell
20 the truth. Please be so kind and read the card out aloud.

21 THE WITNESS: [9:36:25](Interpretation) I solemnly declare that I shall tell the truth,
22 the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:36:39] Thank you very much. You are now
24 under oath.

25 Just a practical matter before we start with your testimony. You are aware that

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1 everything you say here and everybody else also is written down and translated into
2 various languages. Because of that, we all should speak relatively slow pace and
3 please wait with your answer until the person who has asked you a question has
4 finished and then wait a couple of seconds. But I see already how you are speaking,
5 that you are not someone who hurries so much that nobody understands him
6 anymore. Thank you very much. But keep that in mind during your testimony.
7 I give now the floor already Ms Dimitri.

8 MS DIMITRI: [9:37:25] Thank you, Mr President.

9 QUESTIONED BY MS DIMITRI: (Interpretation)

10 Q. [9:37:47] Good morning.

11 A. [9:37:48] Good morning.

12 Q. [9:37:51] As you know, my name is Mylène Dimitri and I'm one of the Defence
13 lawyers representing Mr Yekatom. As I explained to you over the past few days, I'll
14 be putting some questions to you about the events of 2012 to 2014. Today and
15 tomorrow.

16 Now, if ever you don't understand one of my questions, please don't hesitate to ask
17 me to repeat my question.

18 As the Presiding Judge has just explained to you, we're going to try to stay at
19 a reasonable pace, so I will be asking you questions and if -- could you please count
20 three or four seconds before you give your answer, because we have a number of
21 interpretation booths here with interpreters who are translating what -- everything,
22 what you're saying, what I'm saying, into French, into English and to Sango.

23 Now, I will be asking you some questions about what you've heard, what you've seen,
24 and please, if you think that an answer has to be given in private session, just say so,
25 and we will ask the Presiding Judge for permission to go into private session so that

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1 you can answer a particular question.

2 Have you understood my instructions so far?

3 A. [9:39:38] Thank you, Ma'am. I've understood. I have understood your
4 instructions, yes.

5 Q. [9:39:49] Thank you. We will now begin, and I'd like to ask you, please, to give
6 your full name, for the record.

7 A. [9:40:02] My name is Madongagba. My first name is Antareze-De-Neve.

8 Q. [9:40:21] Do you have a nickname, by any chance?

9 A. [9:40:27] I don't have a nickname, as such. But often I'm referred to as
10 Father Antareze.

11 Q. [9:40:42] Thank you.

12 What's your current occupation?

13 A. [9:40:53] At present, I am the parish priest at Saint Augustin's parish, Settati,
14 Morocco.

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:41:13] A positive remark, Mr Witness, I want to
16 laud you how you speak, it's really very, very well done. You speak at a pace that
17 the interpreters can very well follow. Thank you very much.

18 Ms Dimitri.

19 MS DIMITRI: [9:41:28] Thank you, Mr President.

20 Q. [9:41:30](Interpretation) Father Antareze, could you explain to us the difference
21 between an *abbé* in French and a *curé* in French.

22 A. [9:41:50] An *abbé* is a priest who works within a diocese. My original diocese
23 is the Mbaïki diocese in the Central African Republic. A *curé*, in French, is a priest
24 who is responsible for a parish.

25 Q. [9:42:25] Could you explain to us what are you doing in Morocco? What led

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1 you to going to Morocco and working there? What are you currently doing, other
2 than being in charge of a parish in Morocco?

3 A. [9:42:47] Thank you. I went to Morocco on 10 December 2022 to study, to do
4 training in the area of interfaith dialogue. It was offered to me by my bishop,
5 the bishop of Mbaïki. And so I went to Morocco and I studied at an institute in
6 Rabat, and it's called the Al Mowafaqa Institute, that's in the Arabic language. And
7 when I finished the training at this institute, the cardinal of Rabat, Father Cristobal
8 and my bishop from Mbaïki, Monsignor Jesús, suggested that I conduct an interfaith
9 experiment in the field. And so that is why I became the *curé* in Khouribga and also
10 Settat, with a number -- and I'm working with a number of students from
11 sub-Saharan Africa.

12 Q. [9:45:01] Now, when you say that you went to Morocco for training in interfaith
13 dialogue, inter-religious dialogue, did you have a dialogue or were you trained in
14 both the Catholic religion and Islam?

15 A. [9:45:22] Yes. Normally, any priest is trained in interfaith dialogue from
16 the time of the seminary. That was part of my training as a priest. When I went to
17 Morocco, I can say that it was to enhance my abilities in that area. It was capacity
18 building.

19 Q. [9:46:08] Now, once again regarding your personal information, could I ask you
20 your date of birth and your place of birth.

21 A. [9:46:22] I was born on 18 November 1974, in Bangui, the capital of the Central
22 African Republic. 18 November 1974.

23 Q. [9:46:42] Now, if I could ask you about your career. I believe that you said you
24 were working for the diocese of Mbaïki, but could you explain where in the Central
25 African Republic you were serving. Could you give us a brief overview of

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1 the various locations where you went to in the Central African Republic and at what
2 time you became a priest.

3 A. [9:47:22] Thank you.

4 Mr President, Honourable Judges, when I finished my training, I would call it
5 academic training, at the Bimbo seminary in Bangui, that was in the year 2003, and
6 then I was ordained as a deacon. That's the first step towards becoming a priest.
7 Once I had become a deacon, my bishop in Mbaïki at the time, Monsignor Rino,
8 assigned me to Saint Pierre Bagandou parish. That was in the diocese of Mbaïki, and
9 there I worked as a deacon. And once I became a priest in 2004, my bishop asked me
10 to continue working in Bagandou. So I worked in Bagandou from the year 2003 to
11 the year 2005.

12 *After Bagandou, my bishop asked me to go to Boganangone, so to the Saint Daniele
13 de Comboni parish, and that is towards the north, it's further than Boda, past Boda..
14 There I worked with a priest, a Polish priest who was a missionary there,
15 Father Marek. And once Father Marek had finished his mission, I continued as the
16 parish priest until the year 2009, late 2009.

17 At that point in time, late 2009, I was assigned to the Saint Family of Ngotto parish,
18 that was in Ngotto, the Holy Family parish. That was from the year 2009 to late
19 2011.

20 Then Bishop Rino asked me to go back to Mbaïki, to the cathedral in the centre of
21 town at the Jeanne d'Arc cathedral. That was late in 2011, so I worked in Mbaïki
22 from late 2011 until 2015.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:50:47] Yeah, Ms Dimitri, you will take it up from
24 there, I think. So we have now the whole professional career, but I think you will
25 concentrate on the Mbaïki period, I would assume.

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1 MS DIMITRI: [9:51:06] Thank you, Mr President.

2 Indeed, yes, but, as you probably know from the summary, we're going to go back to
3 Boganangone and the other localities, which is the reason why I wanted --

4 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:51:12] That's fine. That's fine, yeah.

5 MS DIMITRI: [9:51:33] Thank you.

6 Q. [9:51:36](Interpretation) Father, when you were in Mbaïki, did you just work at
7 the cathedral, the Jeanne d'Arc cathedral, or did you work somewhere else, or at
8 another church or parish or cathedral in Mbaïki?

9 A. [9:51:56] Thank you.

10 Mr President, in Mbaïki, I began working at the cathedral, the Jeanne d'Arc cathedral,
11 late in 2011 until 2014. From 2014 onwards, I went -- well, my bishop sent me to
12 Saint Augustin's parish in the centre of Mbaïki, so I worked at Saint Augustin's parish
13 from 2014 to 2015.

14 Q. [9:52:50] Now, over the years that you were in Mbaïki, so 20 -- from 2011, did
15 you talk to the various religious communities that were present in Mbaïki?

16 A. [9:53:10] When I got to Mbaïki late in 2011, it took me a while to find my
17 bearings, so to speak, at my new assignment.

18 Now, in 2012, the Mbaïki bishop, Monsignor Rino, asked me to train people for
19 the inter-religious platform in Mbaïki, with the imams of Mbaïki, the -- and
20 the various pastors in Mbaïki. So I started working as the coordination, or as
21 the person responsible for this interfaith platform.

22 Q. [9:54:18] Father Antareze, I don't know whether you've said this, but do you
23 know why Monsignor Rino asked you to create the interfaith platform?

24 A. [9:54:36] Thank you.

25 Mr President, Monsignor Rino asked me to set up this platform because already, you

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1 see, we were somewhat aware of the disturbances and the problems, the clashes,
2 the upheaval that was going on in the northern part of the Central African Republic.
3 And at that time, there were a number of social and political demands coming from
4 the north of the country. And the bishops, in particular Monsignor Rino, but others
5 as well, the bishop sensed that there was a danger that religion might be used as
6 a tool, an instrument, particularly a possible clash between Christians and Muslims.
7 The bishops sensed that they needed to be very careful and no one should fall into
8 that trap, namely using religion as a tool. He wanted some preventive measures put
9 in place, because in Mbaïki, Christians and Muslims have always lived together and
10 enjoyed social cohesion.

11 Q. [9:56:43] Thank you. I'd like to return to the interfaith platform in greater
12 detail and the role it played at the time of the events. I just wanted to continue with
13 your role in Mbaïki at the time.

14 At one particular time, did you play a particular role with the young people in
15 Mbaïki?

16 A. [9:57:21] As part of my work as a priest in Mbaïki, in addition to the interfaith
17 platform, first I was appointed chaplain at the Mbaïki modern *lycée*, so I was
18 the chaplain of the *lycée* and also at the agricultural college in Mbaïki, the CDR, so I
19 also worked as a chaplain there. At one particular point in time, the organisation of
20 the young people in Mbaïki asked me to be their adviser, so I worked as an adviser to
21 young people.

22 Q. [9:58:31] Now, in practical terms, being the chaplain at the *lycée* in Mbaïki, did
23 that mean that you were physically present at the *lycée*?

24 A. [9:58:43] Thank you.

25 Mr President, at the Mbaïki modern *lycée*, there is a chaplaincy, that is to say

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1 a building that was built by the Mbaïki diocese with a study hall and a library for
2 the students, with an office for the chaplain. So I worked in that building, working
3 with the students attending the *lycée*.

4 Q. [9:59:42] Now, in 2012 and 2013, in practical terms, what did that mean, being
5 the chaplain there, what did you do with the students?

6 A. [10:00:04] The chaplain service at the Mbaïki *lycée* consisted of providing
7 a presence of the Catholic church looking over these young people. Many of these
8 young people had come from surrounding villages, from the interior. So many of
9 these young people did not have any relatives in Mbaïki town. So they would come
10 in and they were out of their element, not feeling at home, with all that that implies.
11 A young person who comes to the town of Mbaïki from the interior, it's important to
12 have that presence to help the young man or woman, to providing support, spiritual
13 support, psychological support, no matter what the religion. There were young
14 Muslims, there were young Protestants, so we had to work with them and respect
15 their religious faith.

16 Q. [10:02:00] Thank you. I will change the topic a little bit.

17 Can you tell us how many churches are there in Mbaïki. If we look at 2013, during
18 that period, how many churches were there and how many mosques there were in
19 Mbaïki?

20 A. [10:02:24] Thank you. Mr President, in 2012/2013, with regard to the Catholic
21 church, I can say that in Mbaïki there was the St Jeanne d'Arc cathedral, where
22 the bishopric was also located, that was the bishop's compound or house. At the
23 town centre, city centre in Mbaïki, there was another Catholic parish,
24 the Saint Augustin parish. The Mbaïki cathedral was located about 2 to 3 kilometres
25 *from the centre, that is the entrance to Mbaïki when one is coming from Bangui.

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1 But the Saint Augustin parish is really at the centre, it is close to the hospital,
2 the municipality, the central market, and so on and so forth.

3 Now, that was concerning the Catholic church.

4 Now, there are two mosques in Mbaïki, the Baguirmi mosque, Baguirmi mosque, and
5 the Yerima mosque. Yerima can be considered as the largest mosque in the central
6 area, that is the Central Mosque which is close to the exit to -- from Mbaïki towards
7 Boda, near the market.

8 Regarding the Protestant churches, there were various Protestant churches, because
9 you had various branches, for example, the Apostolic church, the Church of Brothers,
10 the Baptist church and others that I cannot mention here. I cannot mention all of
11 them here.

12 Q. [10:05:12] And in 2013, did you know the name of the imam of the Baguirmi
13 mosque?

14 A. [10:05:26] The imam of the Baguirmi mosque, if my memory is correct, is called
15 Mr Diakite, Diakite Aboubakar.

16 Q. [10:05:59] Do you have any recollection, and if you don't know there is no
17 problem, are you able to tell us what was the proportions, the various proportions of
18 the various religious communities, for example, the Catholics, Muslims, Protestants,
19 what percentages did they represent amongst Mbaïki population in 2013?

20 A. [10:06:34] Thank you.

21 Mr President, in 2013, regarding the percentages of the population in Mbaïki, I can
22 say that the Muslims represented between 12 and 15 per cent of the population.
23 The Christians, or, rather, the Catholics, were between 40 and 50 per cent.
24 That is, when you add the Protestants, there would be up to 60 -- between 60 and
25 70 per cent of Christians. And then you have the animists, animists who practised

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1 traditional religions.

2 Q. [10:07:52] And during that time, did you observe that certain communities were
3 engaged in trading activities more than others?

4 A. [10:08:15] Thank you.

5 Now, concerning business or trading activities in Mbaïki, I think those who were a bit
6 more talented or skilled, and who I can say had a sort of monopoly on business, I
7 would say these were our Muslim brothers.

8 Q. [10:08:42] And according to your observations, did this create a sort of rivalry or
9 jealousy or envy, that is, the fact that the majority of traders were Muslims?

10 A. [10:09:10] Thank you.

11 Mr President, when I was talking about our Muslim brothers and sisters who were
12 talented in business or trading activities, when you talk of rivalries or jealousies,
13 during that period they were not perceived as such, because there was a certain
14 degree of harmony or cohesion. So non-Muslims collaborated with those Muslim
15 traders. It is possible that in the hearts of those non-Muslims there was that feeling
16 of jealousy and rivalry, maybe, but they were together because the non-Muslims were
17 being assisted in a way by those Muslim traders. The non-Muslims also had small
18 businesses, but they were in the -- in a community with the Muslims.

19 Q. [10:10:46] Can you describe to us the atmosphere between the communities
20 before the arrival of the Seleka. What were your observations in relation to
21 the various communities, and the atmosphere that was prevailing in Mbaïki prior to
22 that arrival?

23 A. [10:11:14] Mr President, before the arrival of the Seleka, and I can say towards
24 mid-2013 in Mbaïki, the relationship between the two communities was good.
25 The atmosphere was good. And each person was going about their business.

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1 The non-Muslims were far more involved in agriculture and animal husbandry,
2 raising of goats, and so on. Whereas our Muslim brothers were more involved in
3 trading and urban transportation. So, before the crisis, I can say that the relationship,
4 the atmosphere was good.

5 Q. [10:12:42] Earlier on you stated that Monsignor Rino had asked you to set up an
6 interfaith platform in Mbaïki. Do you remember the year in which that interfaith
7 platform was set up?

8 A. [10:13:09] Thank you.

9 Mr President, with regard to the creation of this interfaith platform, which I was
10 partially responsible for, at this point I cannot tell you precisely the date nor
11 the month, but I believe that the platform was created in 2012. That is when we
12 started working within the context of that platform.

13 Q. [10:14:02] Maybe I can assist you in situating this in time. Is there a week
14 which is dedicated to the unity of Christians?

15 A. [10:14:18] In the Catholic church there is one week which is indeed devoted to
16 unity amongst all Christians, that is an ecumenical week. It is always from 18 to
17 25 January. That is the week of prayer for the unity of all Christians. That is from
18 Rome, right from Rome throughout all Catholic dioceses. And I think that indeed
19 this was linked to the interfaith platform. Given that Monsignor Rino, given what
20 was prevailing in the Central African Republic and what was happening in the north,
21 with that risk of instrumentalisation, religious instrumentalisation between
22 the religions, Monsignor Rino didn't want this to be exclusively a Christian affair, but
23 that it should be broadened to include our Muslim brothers and sisters so that it
24 should be effectively an interfaith platform.

25 Q. [10:16:13] If I understand what you have said correctly, between 18 and

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1 25 January 2012, when the Seleka was advancing, that week, which is normally
2 devoted to the unity of Christians took on another iteration, that is you included other
3 faiths; is that correct?

4 A. [10:16:49] Yes.

5 Q. [10:16:57] Do you -- can you explain to us concretely what happened from 18 to
6 25 January on that -- in that year. How did you celebrate that unity week within
7 the religious community in Mbaïki, of course?

8 A. [10:17:22] Thank you very much.

9 Mr President, regarding that issue - I mean, this took place years and years ago - I can
10 recall that we received that mission to set up the interfaith platform and I myself
11 approached the imams and the pastors, so I myself, on behalf of the Catholic church,
12 took the initiative and I took my motorbike, because I had a bike at that time, and
13 I was moving from mosque to mosque, from church to church, to see the various
14 imams and pastors and expose to them that idea of a platform. And they welcomed
15 that proposal enthusiastically, which they accepted. I believe that we started
16 organising our meetings and, during the week of the unity of Christians in 2012, we
17 discussed that platform because that was the beginning of that forum.

18 Q. [10:19:06] I'm sorry, I am being told that I may have misled you. Are we
19 talking about 2012 or 2013? The Seleka came in in 2013, 24 March 2013. Now, did
20 this celebration that you are talking about, did it take place in 2012 or 2013? In any
21 case, was it the year during which the Seleka took over power?

22 A. [10:19:51] Very well. I know that the Seleka seized power in March 2013, but in
23 Mbaïki we had set up the platform in 2012, not in 2013. We had started in 2012, in
24 order to preserve peace and social harmony.

25 Q. [10:20:40] Two months before the arrival of the Seleka in Bangui, in March 2013,

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1 from 18 to 25 January 2013, was there a celebration in Mbaïki bringing together
2 the various religions?

3 A. [10:21:06] To be honest, I really do not remember specifically. But what I know
4 is that we probably carried out some activities, but since this was a really long time
5 ago, I do not have any specific recollection.

6 Q. [10:21:34] No problem at all.

7 Now, can you tell us about the discussions that you had within the interfaith platform.
8 When the Seleka started advancing, you talked about prevention, you said that you
9 used your motorbike to go and meet your Muslim brothers and other pastors. Now,
10 once that platform was set up, what type of discussions did you have within that
11 interfaith platform?

12 A. [10:22:17] Thank you.

13 Mr President, your Honours, we are talking here about the very heart of the activities
14 of the platform, because, as I said, the issue was to prevent possible conflicts, to
15 ensure that the social cohesion or harmony and peace which had always characterised
16 the various communities should continue in Mbaïki.

17 So, with my colleagues, the imams and the pastors, within the framework of
18 the platform, right from 2012 we had a series of sensitisation actions. The first act
19 was to raise awareness, to speak to raise awareness on social cohesion. There were
20 several themes on the dignity of man and the dignity of woman, freedom of religion,
21 the importance of peace for a society that wishes to develop itself.

22 We also talked about topical issues, including what was already happening in
23 the north. Many people were already aware of those things, one way or the other,
24 through the media and other channels. We discussed that and then we seized
25 the opportunity to raise awareness.

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1 Q. [10:24:41] And specifically, who was -- who were the members of the interfaith
2 platform alongside you?

3 A. [10:24:54] Thank you.

4 Mr President, that interfaith platform had a bureau. I was what I would call
5 the coordinator, not the chairperson. There was no issue of president. I was
6 probably the main animator.

7 There was Imam Diakite Aboubakar, the imam of Baguirmi. We didn't want him to
8 be alone, we wanted him to be accompanied by another Muslim leader. So there
9 was a Mr Issaka with him. And on the side of the Protestants there was Pastor
10 Jean-Pierre Mobia. There was also Pastor Jean-Pierre Paulinia (phon). Paulinia
11 Jean-Pierre was the secretary of that interfaith platform and I remember very well
12 why he was chosen as secretary. He himself during that period was the secretary of
13 the Mbaïki municipal council, so he was someone used to drafting reports and so on,
14 so he was chosen as secretary.

15 Q. [10:27:10] And how was the information within that platform disseminated,
16 what were the channels used?

17 A. [10:27:25] Thank you.

18 Mr President, as part of our activities, our main concerns were to raise awareness and
19 to sensitise people. We had several means of raising awareness. We used
20 correspondences, that is the writing of letters to each church and to each mosque to
21 raise awareness. And on more than one occasion, from time to time we would
22 organise public or mass sensitisation sessions in front of the Mbaïki municipal council,
23 because there is a large square in front of that premises where people can gather, and
24 it is easy to communicate with people. So those sensitisation sessions were
25 organised and those various communities were gathered, including Christians and

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1 Muslims.

2 And in such cases, a specific theme was chosen. We have said that there were many
3 themes, so it was possible to chose a theme, for example, on men and women who are
4 created in the image of god and who are equal irrespective of their religion. We also
5 talked about the importance of university -- universal fraternity, fraternity without
6 boundaries. So there were sessions such as those, and so the opportunity was given
7 to both Christians and Muslims to express themselves.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:29:53] Ms Dimitri, the Chamber would
9 appreciate it if you would now turn to the arrival of the Seleka and come near to
10 the time frame where the charges happened.

11 MS DIMITRI: [10:30:05] Thank you, Mr President.

12 It's my next question, but, just to clarify, the -- the creation of the platform has also
13 been discussed by more than one witness. It's going to be on the next video that I'm
14 going to show, which is why it was important for me to elicit it from this witness
15 because he's at the centre of -- of that platform. Thank you.

16 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:30:30] Please proceed.

17 MS DIMITRI: [10:30:36](Interpretation)

18 Q. [10:30:55] Before the Seleka arrived in Mbaïki, did you observe, thanks to your
19 various activities within the interfaith platform or your other activities within
20 the community, did you see any climate of fear? Did you have the impression
21 people were fearing the arrival of the Seleka in Mbaïki?

22 A. [10:31:15] Thank you very much.

23 Mr President, when the Seleka took control of Mbaïki - and I believe that was
24 24 March 2013 - given that Mbaïki is a town or a locality not very far from Bangui,
25 107 kilometres away from Bangui to the southwest, indeed, within the population of

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1 Mbaïki there was this feeling of fear. People were worried, so we were almost sure
2 that very soon the Seleka would be arriving in Mbaïki, and I still remember that. Yes,
3 indeed, there was that feeling of fear.

4 Q. [10:32:45] Father Antareze, I'll now play some video footage for you. This is
5 footage that shows the visit of Ms Samba-Panza to Mbaïki on 12 February 2014, along
6 with the minister of defence of France, Mr Le Drian. Just so that you might
7 understand that during your testimony we are going to be viewing various parts of
8 that footage, and I'm particularly interested in part of the speech given in the video
9 footage, so I'll be playing that for you and then putting some questions to you. Is
10 that all right with you?

11 A. [10:33:37] Yes, that's fine with me.

12 Q. [10:33:43] This is tab 1 of the Defence, CAR-OTP-2023-1636. I'm going to begin
13 with a screenshot at timestamp 06:19 and then I'll ask you a question about the person
14 that we see on the screen.

15 Father, do you recognise this person on the screen?

16 A. [10:34:20] Mr President, the person up on the screen here is -- I recognise this
17 person, it's Mr Alexandre Kouroupe-Awo. At that time he was the *préfet* of Lobaye.

18 Q. [10:34:54] Thank you, I'm going to show you another screenshot, 06:26 is
19 the timestamp.

20 Now, do you recognise these people in this photograph who are seated?

21 A. [10:35:08] Thank you.

22 Mr President, the white man, if I could put it that way, that's Monsignor Rino,
23 Guerrino Perin was his full name, and at the time he was the bishop of Mbaïki. And
24 beside him, the black man beside him is Father Maximin Mozanga, who at that time
25 was the general vicar of Monsignor Rino, so he was like his assistant.

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1 Q. [10:36:05] And were you present at that ceremony or that visit by
2 Ms Samba-Panza on 12 February 2014?

3 A. [10:36:20] Thank you very much.

4 Now, during that visit I was present, but I wasn't with the bishop. I was
5 coordinating things, you see, but I was there.

6 Q. [10:36:38] Thank you.

7 I'd now like to play a short passage and I'd like to read out to you what the prefect
8 said that day. So, from 19 -- 09:19 to 10:00.

9 And for the interpreters in the booth, you have the transcript at tab 2:

10 CAR-D29-0006-0107, at page 0110, line 27, to page -- to line 5 of the following page,
11 0111.

12 THE COURT OFFICER: [10:37:46] Could you please also put on the record whether
13 you want the video to be shown publicly.

14 MS DIMITRI: [10:37:51] Thank you for the reminder.

15 And, just for the record and to facilitate everything, everything I'm going to show is
16 going to be public, save for one item, and I'll specify at that moment that that -- that
17 the item has not to be shown to the public.

18 If the interpreter could give me a sign or heads-up when they're ready, please.

19 Q. [10:38:25](Interpretation) So I will now let you listen to what the prefect said
20 and then I'll put a number of questions to you.

21 A. [10:38:34] Very well.

22 (Viewing of the video excerpt)

23 THE INTERPRETER: [10:38:42](Interpretation of the video excerpt)

24 Sight translation:

25 "The Mbaïki commune, where we are right now, it wasn't part of the rest, but we can

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1 see a few signs left by the Seleka who spent nearly 10 months there. How did it
2 come to that? It was the product of intense work, intense awareness-raising done by
3 an interfaith platform made up of Catholic, Muslim and Protestant leaders working
4 with all levels of society. With a bit of courage, temerity, and at the risk of their own
5 lives, the administrative authorities, the prefects and some mayors, also helped out.
6 A number of NGOs, particularly international ones, were also part of this endeavour."

7 MS DIMITRI: [10:39:36](Interpretation)

8 Q. [10:39:38] First of all, you hear the prefect talking about awareness-raising done
9 by an interfaith platform. Was he talking about the platform that you were
10 coordinating?

11 A. [10:40:00] Thank you very much.

12 Mr President, in this footage, when the prefect of Lobaye, Mr Alexandre, talks about
13 the interfaith platform, I believe he is clearly referring to our interfaith platform.

14 Q. [10:40:27] Now, when the prefect was appointed by President Djotodia and he
15 set up operations in Mbaïki, did he play a particular role, did he assist with the work
16 of the interfaith platform?

17 A. [10:41:02] Thank you.

18 Mr President, I can say here that when Mr Alexandre Kouroupe-Awo was appointed
19 prefect of Lobaye by President Djotodia, and when he got to Mbaïki with
20 the interfaith platform, I can attest that we worked together in cooperation. He was
21 the prefect, you see, and we realised that he too wanted peace in his region. He
22 wanted cohesion between the two communities, and so, practically, we both
23 cherished the same hope, we had the same intent. It's true, he was the prefect,
24 whereas we were religious leaders. But he didn't take part directly in our meetings
25 of the platform, but when there was an activity under way, we would see him and he

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1 would be informed and, from time to time, we would work together.

2 Q. [10:42:31] Thank you. Could you now explain to us, in practical terms, how
3 things developed in Mbaïki when the Seleka arrived and set up their operations for
4 the first time in Mbaïki.

5 A. [10:43:01] Mr President, could we go into private session.

6 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:43:06] Yes, private session.

7 (Private session at 10.43 a.m.)

8 THE COURT OFFICER: [10:43:29] We're in private session, Mr President.

9 (Redacted)

10 (Redacted)

11 (Redacted)

12 (Redacted)

13 (Redacted)

14 (Redacted)

15 (Redacted)

16 (Redacted)

17 (Redacted)

18 (Redacted)

19 (Redacted)

20 (Redacted)

21 (Redacted)

22 (Redacted)

23 (Redacted)

24 (Redacted)

25 (Redacted)

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1 (Redacted)

2 (Redacted)

3 (Redacted)

4 (Redacted)

5 (Redacted)

6 (Open session at 10.46 a.m.)

7 THE COURT OFFICER: [10:46:58] We are back in open session, Mr President.

8 THE WITNESS: [10:47:09](Interpretation) Thank you, Mr President, your Honours.

9 As I was saying a few moments ago, when the Seleka arrived in Mbaïki, if I recall

10 correctly, that was early in April 2013, because the Seleka entered Bangui and took

11 control on 24 March, so the first group of Seleka members who got to Mbaïki were --

12 well, I think we can talk about panic, people scattering, people were afraid when they

13 heard talk about the Seleka, so many people fled. Not everyone. Because at that

14 time it was difficult to contain the situation, but I can say that large numbers of

15 people fled, either to the interior, to surrounding villages, or to their fields, their farms.

16 Many had fields in the forest, so they withdrew to those places. A few groups had

17 gone to the cathedral for their protection and security.

18 So I would say that the climate was one of widespread panic. So there you have it.

19 And they took control of Mbaïki, this first group of Seleka members. Then after,

20 a second group came in.

21 MS DIMITRI: [10:49:21](Interpretation)

22 Q. [10:49:22] And you and Father Maximin, how did you two respond when

23 the Seleka came to the town?

24 A. [10:49:40] Thank you very much.

25 Obviously, everyone was afraid. We too were afraid, because we really didn't know

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1 how things were going to unfold, but we were there. We did not flee and we did not
2 go into the forest. We were there at the presbytery and the bishop was also there at
3 the bishop's compound and I remember the first night we barely slept. According to
4 the information that we were getting, the Seleka, when they came to a particular place
5 they would loot and it would be chaos. So how could we sleep? It was difficult.

6 Q. [10:50:46] You said that people fled, you said that people scattered, that it was
7 madness. People took shelter at the cathedral. When people left their homes
8 because of the Seleka coming in, did they express their fears? Why did they run
9 away? What did they fear from the Seleka?

10 A. [10:51:19] Thank you.

11 Mr President, at that time people in Mbaïki, the people in Mbaïki had information
12 and it was not good information about the Seleka. So they were convinced that
13 when the Seleka came to a location, they would attack the non-Muslims much more
14 than others. So that's why people fled. That's why the non-Muslim population fled.
15 They had heard that, when they came in, they would attack the non-Muslim
16 population. And in the minds of the non-Muslim population, in Mbaïki in particular,
17 they feared for their lives. And in their mind, the Seleka, that meant looting. That's
18 what they were thinking. When they heard that the Seleka had entered Mbaïki, it
19 was true panic, people truly panicked.

20 Q. [10:53:02] You said that a second group of Seleka members came in. My
21 question to you is very simple: Do you remember the name of the leader of
22 the second group?

23 A. [10:53:20] Thank you very much.

24 Mr President, I remember full well what his name was, the head of the second group.
25 It was Colonel -- he was called a colonel.

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1 Colonel Anour was his name.

2 Q. [10:53:42] Thank you. We'll get back to Colonel Anour in a few moments, but
3 just one specific question about him. Did Colonel Anour speak Sango? And if so,
4 according to your information, your recollection, was he a member of the FACA of
5 the Central African Republic army?

6 A. [10:54:19] Thank you.

7 Mr President, Colonel Anour, in relation to the interfaith platform, we cooperated
8 with him quite a bit in comparison to the first group of Seleka elements who had
9 come in. So that particular colonel, the advantage of that colonel, for us, was that he
10 said he was from the Central African Republic. I believe he told me one day that he
11 had been born in the Central African Republic, so he was a citizen of the country, he
12 spoke Sango perfectly. As for the others who came in earlier, you see, that was not
13 necessarily the case. So that made cooperating with him much easier.

14 Now, I believe he was a FACA member. If I understood correctly, he was a FACA
15 member.

16 Q. [10:55:31] Thank you.

17 During that period of time, when the Seleka were there, did you hear about or did
18 you receive reports of some victims, if I can use the word "victims", that some of
19 the victims of the Seleka had been tied up using the arbatachar method?

20 A. [10:56:04] Thank you.

21 Mr President, that word, "arbatachar", this is something that I myself heard about, I
22 heard that word used. Some people were tied up with their hands behind their back.
23 That did happen. Apparently, it was one of the methods that the Seleka used. So
24 this word or expression, "arbatachar", is something I heard myself. I did not see any
25 instances of the Seleka getting someone and tying them up. I was not an actual

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1 witness of that. So I think we need to make that distinction. I think there is
2 a distinction between hearing about something and being a witness to something.

3 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:57:10] Indeed, Mr Witness, we appreciate it very
4 much that you distinguish between the two.

5 Ms Dimitri, it's shortly before 11.

6 MS DIMITRI: [10:57:18] Maybe, with your leave, Mr President, maybe just one more
7 question before -- before the break.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:57:25] Yeah.

9 MS DIMITRI: [10:57:26] Thank you.

10 Q. [10:57:28](Interpretation) You said that some members of the population fled
11 when the Seleka arrived in Mbaïki.

12 What did the authorities of Mbaïki do when the Seleka came in? And when I say
13 "authorities", I mean the administrative authorities, the gendarme, police officers,
14 the mayor.

15 A. [10:58:00] Thank you very much.

16 Mr President, to answer this question, when the Seleka came into Mbaïki, as I was
17 saying, it was utter madness, people panicked. And the administrative authorities,
18 the people responsible for government services, well, no one was left, no one was left.

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:58:31] A break until 11.30.

20 THE COURT USHER: [10:58:36] All rise.

21 (Recess taken at 10.58 a.m.)

22 (Upon resuming in open session at 11.34 a.m.)

23 THE COURT USHER: [11:34:11] All rise.

24 Please be seated.

25 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:34:31] Well, Ms Dimitri, you will not be

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1 surprised that it's still your turn.

2 MS DIMITRI: [11:34:39] Thank you, Mr President.

3 And for the record, Ms Guissé completed the marathon from Paris and has joined us.

4 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:34:45] Indeed. A little bit hidden in the back
5 but good morning, Ms Guissé.

6 MR KNOOPS: [11:34:52] Mr President, I'm replacing Ms Proulx, not from a
7 marathon, by the way.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:34:57] Well, this -- this is unpardonable, I would
9 say. So good morning -- good morning, Mr Knoops.

10 MR KNOOPS: [11:34:58] Good morning. I had just a run of 8 kilometres yesterday,
11 but not a marathon.

12 So congratulations, Ms Guissé.

13 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:35:08] Thank you, Mr Knoops. But you
14 replaced Ms Proulx, so to speak.

15 MR KNOOPS: [11:35:14] Yes, Mr President. Good morning, everyone.

16 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:35:16] So you are not a reinforcement.
17 Ms Guissé, please -- Ms Dimitri, you know.

18 MS DIMITRI: [11:35:31] Thank you, Mr President.

19 Q. [11:35:33](Interpretation) Good morning, once again. Mr Witness, another
20 topic that I will deal with you this morning.

21 To your knowledge, did the bishops meet with the president during the calendar
22 year?

23 A. [11:35:54] Thank you, your Honours.

24 *The bishops of the Central African church, they have two meetings per year,
25 during the calendar year. The first meeting is normally held in the month of January,

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1 that is at the beginning of the year, and the second meeting usually takes place in June.
2 For the meeting of the bishops in January, it is usually the opportunity for them to
3 send New Year wishes to the president of the republic, the head of state and to the
4 government.

5 Q. [11:37:01] Thank you. Now, I understand that there are two meetings per year.
6 In June 2013, do you have any recollection of any meeting with President Djotodia
7 and the bishops, including the bishop of Mbaïki, Monsignor Rino and -- which was
8 a meeting during which there was a message from the bishops addressed to President
9 Djotodia at the time, 2013. Does that ring a bell?

10 A. [11:37:48] Thank you, Mr President. I am aware of that message of the bishops,
11 following their meeting with President Djotodia. The message was addressed to the
12 people of the Central African Republic and the letter deals only -- not only with the
13 life of the church, since they are the leaders of the church, but also -- and, particularly
14 *given the context of 2013, they dwelt at length on the socio-political and economic
15 situation of the Central African Republic in that message of June 2013.

16 Q. [11:38:44] We're going to look at that message together, that is tab 42 of the
17 Defence, which is CAR-OTP-0075-1807. You are going to see it on screen. It is
18 a message of the bishops of the Central African Republic to the head of the state,
19 which appeared in the journal -- in the newspaper *Le Démocrate* at the time, because
20 you said that it was on 27 June 2013. And I'll read out certain pages of this message.
21 On page 1811:

22 "Your Excellency Mr President of the Transition, Head of State.

23 In January and June each year, the Conference of Bishops meets in the CAR in
24 ordinary session."

25 And in the third paragraph:

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1 "Excellency the President of the Transition, Head of State, the Conference of CAR
2 Bishops is a family of nine dioceses spread over the entire territory."

3 And we need to understand -- we want to understand that at the time that Djotodia
4 met with the president, the diocese of Mbaïki covered the entire Lobaye; is that
5 correct?

6 A. [11:41:00] Yes, the Mbaïki diocese covers the entire prefecture of Lobaye.

7 Q. [11:41:04] And further on in the message we can read:

8 "Something that has never been seen before. This summarises the general feeling of
9 the people in the face of the advance of the elements of Seleka. We have never
10 experienced in our territory a conflict so serious in its scope and its duration. Never
11 has there been any militaro-political conflict that disseminated with such violence and
12 throughout the territory. Never has a rebellion brought together such a heavy
13 presence of foreign combatants. Never has a crisis made us run such a serious risk
14 of religious conflict and the risk of social implosion. That is a spectacle that has
15 'never been seen' in all aspects.

16 At the social level, we have not seen everything in terms of losses in human lives,
17 rapes, pillaging, burnt villages, destruction of farms, violations and the ransacking of
18 private residences and the families illegally expropriated of their houses, occupied by
19 an armed band. The social fabric was completely torn apart."

20 Are you aware of this message that was sent to the president of the republic?

21 A. [11:43:19] Thank you very much, Mr President. I will not speak only of this
22 message, but usually at the end of their ordinary session, there is always a message
23 addressed to the political leaders, but also to the population. So this message of June
24 2013 -- 2013 was a critical message. So that is why the -- it was a public message, that
25 is why the press, the media circulated it. And I believe that it was, first of all, read

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1 out in the cathedral at the end of the closing mass of that conference.

2 Q. [11:44:18] I understand your statement that the bishop of Mbaïki, at the time
3 took part in that message and that meeting with President Djotodia. Do you know
4 how the bishops, including the bishop of Mbaïki, who covers the entire territory of
5 Lobaye prefecture, do you know how he collected information on events, which made
6 it possible for him to draft this message alongside the other bishops?

7 A. [11:44:55] Thank you very much.

8 Mr President, when the bishops are preparing themselves for their conference or
9 meeting, each bishop -- and we are talking here about nine dioceses -- each bishop in
10 his diocese organises one or several preliminary meetings with the various parish
11 priests in his diocese so as to examine closely the events in the particular diocese, so
12 as to go and share that information with his colleagues bishops. That is how I can
13 answer that question.

14 Q. [11:45:50] And so if I understand you correctly, the bishop of Mbaïki at the time
15 would meet with the various parish priests of the various parishes in Lobaye to
16 collect information on what is happening in Lobaye ever since the arrival of the
17 Seleka, in particular, so as to later contribute in that conference?

18 A. [11:46:19] Yes, that is correct. In any case, the word "bishop" means guardian,
19 that is the guard who is overseeing the situation. And so the parish priests in the
20 various parishes in the Mbaïki dioceses -- in fact, there were 10 parishes in the entire
21 territory of Lobaye, so the bishops collected information from the parish priests and
22 other church leaders -- and other leaders.

23 Q. [11:47:06] Now, concretely, on the field, based on your observations - and I
24 distinguish between what you were told and what you were an eyewitness to - now,
25 were you told that certain Muslim civilians in Lobaye, in Mbaïki, including Mbaïki,

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1 assisted the Seleka by pointing out the houses of non-Muslims in Mbaïki -- houses
2 that were prosperous?

3 A. [11:47:58] Thank you, Mr President.

4 Regarding what I know - and I'm speaking here about Mbaïki - when the Seleka
5 arrived in Mbaïki, the time that they needed to set up shop, to settle down
6 progressively, since most of them were Muslims, they had links, maybe not with all
7 Muslims, but probably with some of them. It was not so much the case with the first
8 group, because I talked about the first group and the second group. But this
9 concerned more the second group with Colonel Anour, because this group was in
10 contact with people and I could see them. They would go to their fellow Muslim
11 brothers. They would have tea together, so they were in contact. I saw them
12 several times. I saw Colonel Anour -- when I was passing on my bike, I would see
13 them with certain Muslims having tea.

14 Regarding Muslims, pointing out certain non-Muslims, I really do not know what I
15 can say about that because I don't know precisely what they said to each other.

16 Q. [11:49:55] And based on what you were told, these links that Colonel Anour had
17 with certain Muslims of Mbaïki, did you observe or heard anything in relation to
18 non-Muslims about fear or worries?

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:50:35] Before you answer, Mr Witness.
20 Mr Vanderpuye.

21 MR VANDERPUYE: [11:50:38] Thank you, Mr President. I think my colleague
22 could phrase the question somewhat less leading -- in a less leading fashion. There
23 have been a number of questions like that, but I thought I would raise it at this point.

24 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:50:52] Well, Ms Dimitri, that's a --
25 a semi-objection, so to speak. You can word it in a way that at least the Chamber has

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1 no objections to it. Thank you.

2 MS DIMITRI: [11:51:03] Thank you, Mr President. I'll do it.

3 Q. [11:51:13](Interpretation) Mr Witness, specifically in relation to those links
4 between Muslims and Colonel Anour and his men, what did you personally perceive
5 or observe? What did you hear from the non-Muslim population? What did they
6 say about those links?

7 A. [11:51:47] Thank you very much, Mr President.

8 If we come back to the context of 2013, with the presence of the Seleka, particularly
9 concerning the second group of Colonel Anour, many people were moving about,
10 many people had gone back to their houses. And the information that I received,
11 and the impression that non-Muslims had when they saw certain leaders of Seleka or
12 certain Seleka who went to visit their Muslim brothers, they were sure or convinced
13 that the Mbaïki Muslims were providing information to those Seleka concerning
14 them.

15 So one cannot deny that feeling of suspicion. So that feeling of suspicion really
16 existed and that gave rise to a climate of fear and suspicion. So the atmosphere was
17 not a good one.

18 Q. [11:53:25] And when the Seleka groups settled in Mbaïki, irrespective of
19 whether it was the first or second group, first of all, did they set up roadblocks or
20 checkpoints in Mbaïki?

21 A. [11:53:58] In relation to roadblocks, Mr President, the roadblocks that I can
22 mention here that had always existed, so these were not erected by the Seleka. For
23 example, there is the Pissa roadblock near the gendarmerie, 38 kilometres from
24 Mbaïki. There is Boto roadblock just at the entrance of Mbaïki town, when you are
25 coming from Bangui, and then there is the roadblock of Zanga, Zanga, which is about

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1 4 kilometres outside Mbaïki on the road to Boda. So you have Zanga, the Zanga
2 village, there is the roadblock there, a checkpoint there, then a roadblock at the exit of
3 Mbaïki, towards Mbata. So Mbaïki was surrounded by roadblocks and checkpoints.
4 According to me, these were official roadblocks, because normally they were manned
5 by gendarmes and policemen, particularly the gendarmes. And when the Seleka
6 arrived, they simply occupied those roadblocks and started controlling or checking
7 people passing by.

8 Q. [11:55:56] Specifically, with regard to the roadblocks at the time of the Seleka,
9 now, the unemployed or idle people -- the idle young people in Mbaïki, did they play
10 any role at those roadblocks, that is if you know?

11 A. [11:56:19] Thank you, Mr President.

12 What I saw is that, indeed, there were a few young idle people -- it was a bit -- young
13 people who looked a bit strange, because in Mbaïki, there were young people like that
14 who were conniving with the Seleka and who were used at those roadblocks. So
15 there were always Seleka people with them. They were never alone. I, myself, was
16 able to observe that and it is true.

17 Q. [11:57:19] And do you know why the Seleka was using those young people, that
18 is if you know? What was their objective?

19 A. [11:57:35] Thank you, Mr President.

20 I think that the Seleka was using those young people because they themselves were
21 not very familiar with the locality. These were people who had come from
22 elsewhere, so they were not very familiar with the environment. And since they had
23 the power, it was those young people, the unemployed, the idle. I'm not talking
24 about all the young people of Mbaïki. I was the adviser of young people in Mbaïki,
25 but it is sure that there were young people in Mbaïki whose conduct was not very

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1 positive and who were assisting the Seleka in that area.

2 Q. [11:58:36] You have mentioned the fact that the non-Muslims were convinced
3 that there was collaboration between certain Muslims and the Seleka, and you used
4 the word "suspicion". There was this suspicion, and you stated that they were
5 convinced that they were being pointed out and that those young people were being
6 used.

7 So my question is as follows: Did this have any impact on intercommunity tensions,
8 according to what you were able to observe?

9 A. [11:59:23] Intercommunity tensions, no. Now, if you are still looking at the
10 context, the people were there and, apparently, everything was calm on the surface,
11 but one could observe the Seleka moving about going to meet their Muslim brothers.
12 And so, with the information that people were receiving, I think one can use that
13 word "suspicion". There was that climate of suspicion arising from issues, such as
14 why were the Seleka aware of certain pieces of information. So, to people, it was the
15 Muslim brothers who gave them that information, or else the other young idle people
16 who gave them the information, so they were not seen in a positive light by their
17 compatriots.

18 Q. [12:00:52] Now, concerning the freedom of movement of the population, during
19 the time of the Seleka in Mbaïki, did you realise that there was an impact on the
20 freedom of movement of the population, whether it concerned going to schools, going
21 to administrative offices, carrying out their trading, carrying out their daily business?
22 Was there an impact on their daily routines?

23 A. [12:01:36] Thank you very much.

24 Mr President, regarding this question, I can say that there was an impact. We have
25 talked about school. When the Seleka arrived, there was nothing because the

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1 parents themselves, after the Seleka arrived, they had fled into the bushes. So one
2 cannot talk of school because the administration -- the administrative services were
3 no longer operational.

4 Q. [12:02:16] I will assist you. My second question was whether you observed any
5 impact on public transport during the period -- during the presence of the Seleka?

6 A. [12:02:36] Very well. During the period of the Seleka, since there was an
7 atmosphere of fear and terror, people were not able to travel like they would do in
8 normal times. But those of us priests, we were also afraid of moving about, not just
9 the civilians, we were afraid. At the level of those roadblocks controlled by Seleka, I
10 myself was stopped.

11 At that time, I was at the cathedral and I used to travel to Belou, Café Machado,
12 neighbouring villages 10 -- 5 kilometres from Mbaïki. I used to go there for masses,
13 because there were chapels there, and it was the priests of the cathedral who do
14 masses there.

15 Once I went there to make a mass on my motorbike, and on my return, I had
16 difficulties crossing that Seleka roadblock between Belou. One or two of them asked
17 money from me and I asked them, "Don't you recognise me? I'm always passing by
18 here." But I understood that it was not the same one -- ones because they were
19 rotating at the checkpoints.

20 So I had to discuss with them before being able to be allowed to continue on my way.

21 So if you can imagine that this happened to me, a priest, then if someone was
22 a civilian, then there would be a lot of harassment.

23 Q. [12:04:56] Did the activities of the interfaith platform, that is when the Seleka
24 arrived to Mbaïki, did those activities continue?

25 A. [12:05:10] Thank you.

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1 Mr President, during the period of the first group of the Seleka, because you always
2 have to take this into account - because the experiences were not the same between
3 the first group and the second group, so one has to always distinguish between the
4 two - I remember very well that context.

5 With the first group it was difficult, even those of us who were at the cathedral, it was
6 difficult for us to meet with the imams and the pastors, but I think I called them on
7 the phone. Certain pastors had even retreated with their families to their farms and
8 so on, but they subsequently returned, especially when the second group with
9 Colonel Anour arrived. So I think I can say that it was in fact with Colonel Anour
10 that we resumed the activities of our platform.

11 Q. [12:06:37] Did any special incident occur in the Mbaïki hospital during the
12 period of the Seleka?

13 A. [12:06:51] Thank you very much.

14 Mr President, when the first Seleka group came into Mbaïki, in April, as I was saying,
15 it was a scene of panic amongst the population. Indeed, there was looting of the
16 Mbaïki hospital, the Mbaïki district hotel -- hospital, and according to the information
17 received, the looting was orchestrated by that group of Seleka elements.

18 Within the hospital, there was a storeroom for pharmaceutical drugs, where
19 prescription drugs were sold for less money for the population, and it was Caritas
20 and the parish that organised that or supported that.

21 And so that spot where all the prescription drugs were being held, that was looted.

22 Also, a number of beds disappeared and I was part of the team that, after the looting,
23 went and saw what had happened. And indeed, a little bit of medication was still
24 there and we were able to pick up what was left and take it to the cathedral.

25 So that scene of looting of the prescription drugs really affected us, given the

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1 importance of that pharmacy to the population.

2 Q. [12:09:00] One last question on this topic. In Mbaïki, at the time, before the
3 Seleka arrived, could people use mass transit, the buses? If someone didn't have
4 a private vehicle, was it possible to use mass transit?

5 A. [12:09:31] Thank you.

6 Mr President, before the Seleka arrived in Mbaïki, amongst the population,
7 particularly our Muslim brothers, there were some people who did provide some
8 mass transit services with pickup trucks. There were non-Muslims as well,
9 particularly in Bangui, who had their vehicles and they used those vehicles to
10 transport people. But it was mostly Muslims. As for the others, it was
11 non-Muslims in Bangui with a bit of money or who had relatives in France or
12 Belgium or other foreign lands who would send money for transportation.

13 But --

14 THE INTERPRETER: [12:10:37] Correction: "would send vehicles for
15 transportation."

16 THE WITNESS: [12:10:39](Interpretation) But gradually as the roads got worse and
17 worse, it became difficult. There were a few Muslims from Mbaïki who did help
18 with mass transit.

19 MS DIMITRI: [12:11:01](Interpretation)

20 Q. [12:11:03] If I've understood you correctly, you're saying that the -- some
21 Muslims in Mbaïki were operating a sort of public transit service?

22 A. [12:11:17] Yes, that's right.

23 Q. [12:11:20] And the public transit at the time, before the Seleka came in, was
24 mostly used by whom? By the Muslims? By non-Muslims? By both groups?
25 Equal shares? Equal proportions?

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1 A. [12:11:40] Thank you.

2 Mr President, as I was saying before, before the Seleka arrived in Mbaïki, peace
3 prevailed. There was social cohesion, people could move about normally, be it
4 Muslims or non-Muslims. There were no problems. We lived freely, moved about
5 freely.

6 Q. [12:12:18] I'd like to ask you about 5 December 2013.

7 Now, on 5 December 2013, were you in the Central African Republic or not?

8 A. [12:12:30] Thank you.

9 Mr President, your Honours, on 5 December 2013, I was not in Mbaïki. I was
10 travelling to Bétou, Bétou and Enyellé, between those two places. Those are
11 locations in the Congo, Congo-Brazza.

12 I went to Bétou, and I spent nearly three weeks there at the invitation to a religious
13 ceremony from someone from the Central African Republic who was working there
14 and who was being a nun, actually, from the Central African Republic who was
15 working there and who was making her final commitment.

16 Coming from Bétou, I was -- I went back on a large pirogue and, coming from Bétou,
17 our boat was not able to get to Bangui because the events of 5 December were
18 underway. *So we stopped at PK9, at Bimbo-PK9, and there, and I got out of the boat,
19 I got my motorbike and I headed towards Mbaïki.

20 Q. [12:14:31] Now, on the way between PK9 and Mbaïki, were the Seleka manning
21 any checkpoints?

22 A. [12:14:45] Thank you.

23 Mr President, between Bangui and Mbaïki, when I came back to Mbaïki after my trip
24 to Bétou, I was on my motorbike and, indeed, there always were checkpoints. I
25 really don't remember all that much, but I remember that in addition to the usual

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1 checkpoints between Bangui and Mbaïki, between the usual checkpoints there, for
2 example, the one at Pissa, that's a normal checkpoint. And then there's the -- there
3 was the PK9 checkpoint, also a normal one. There were also a number of small
4 checkpoints, but that was what the situation was. So you had to stop, show some
5 identification, and then you would move along.

6 So it wasn't a normal situation. There were these small checkpoints as well.

7 Q. [12:16:11] I'd like to read something to you, Father, that indeed mentions Seleka
8 elements on the road between Mbaïki and Bangui.

9 This is dated April 2013, tab 3 of the Defence, CAR-OTP-2054-1371.

10 Now this article is up on the screen.

11 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:16:51] Mr Vanderpuye.

12 MR VANDERPUYE: [12:16:54] It's not clear to me if the witness is the subject matter
13 of this article, but if he's not, then I would suggest that the question to be put is going
14 to be a leading question to which I would object.

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:17:06] Ms Dimitri, can't you draw out of this
16 article the information that you want to elicit from the witness? You don't have to
17 read any article or whatsoever, you know we are not happy with that anyway. I
18 think there should be no problem to ask the witness in a way that he can provide you
19 with the information that you seek and without putting something that somebody
20 else has produced to the witness.

21 MS DIMITRI: [12:17:36] I understand, Mr President. However, I believe I laid the
22 foundation at this stage on the situation. The witness spoke about a 107 kilometre
23 track between Bangui and Mbaïki. He uses it with his motorcycle; he used it during
24 the Seleka time. He told us where the roadblocks were. So I was very careful to
25 elicit that information in a non-leading way.

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1 And now I just want to ask one question on -- on that article. It doesn't need to be
2 shown to the witness, but I have one question on the content of the article, given what
3 he said.

4 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:18:17] Well, give it a try, but please don't read
5 out parts of the whole article. Yes.

6 MS DIMITRI: [12:18:26](Interpretation)

7 Q. [12:18:29] Father Antareze, this is an article that talks about Seleka elements on
8 the road between Mbaïki and Bangui, the road of 107 kilometres that you just
9 mentioned, and mention is made of a number of checkpoints along this road. And
10 in the article, we read that -- well, you referred to the fact that it was not easy to get
11 through all these checkpoints, and this article makes reference to the fact that Seleka
12 members did various checks that were not compliant with human rights or the law.
13 Is this something that you saw? If you didn't see it with your own eyes, did you
14 hear reports of such things? Did members of your community tell you about such
15 incidents?

16 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:19:33] That's okay, Ms Dimitri, this way.

17 THE WITNESS: [12:19:43](Interpretation) Thank you, Mr President.

18 Now, to answer that question, I can tell you what I experienced myself. Several
19 times I was travelling about -- well, often, on my motorbike from Mbaïki to Bangui or
20 in the other direction. So I did mention those checkpoints -- these additional
21 checkpoints because they were in addition to the ones that we'd always had.

22 Now for them, was this a way to step up identity checks or increase security?

23 Perhaps. Perhaps. But one thing is for sure, it was a nuisance, it was a hassle. For
24 us priests, I would say who I was and I would be lucky, I would get through. But
25 according to the information I received from people whom I knew or information that

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1 I heard about all this harassment and hassle, in some cases people would be asked for
2 money. They would show their ID and, apparently, people said that some people
3 were actually struck, they received blows.

4 Let's say if a person didn't have any money or perhaps that person was behaving in
5 a way they didn't care for, they would actually strike people.

6 Q. [12:22:01] What did you see in Mbaïki by way of weapons, weapons that the
7 Seleka had?

8 A. [12:22:12] Thank you. Weapons the Seleka -- well, we saw some things, but we
9 can't see everything. Generally speaking, they had their Kalashnikovs most of the
10 time. We would see them with their Kalashnikovs when they would move about or
11 go to the market. I myself ran into some people -- some of them moving about,
12 going to the market, and they always had their Kalashnikovs.

13 Q. [12:22:58] I'd like to show you some video footage, and the images are taken
14 from 27 February 2014 -- 27 January 2014. This is tab 4, CAR-OTP-00002244. And
15 this is from timestamp -- well, from the beginning of the recording up to timestamp
16 1:22.

17 (Speaks English) And for my colleagues in the booth, you are on break for this video.
18 The interpretation is not necessary. It's just -- I'm just interested in the images.

19 (Interpretation) I'll let you watch the footage and then I'll put a number of questions
20 to you.

21 (Viewing of the video excerpt)

22 MS DIMITRI: [12:25:31](Interpretation)

23 Q. [12:25:38] Do you recognise some of these people on this footage?

24 A. [12:25:45] Thank you, Mr President. I recognise Mr Anour -- Colonel Anour in
25 particular. He was the leader of the second group of Seleka members. We worked

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1 with him, so, yes, yes. Mr Anour.

2 MS DIMITRI: [12:26:15] Just to clarify for the record, Mr President, I'll do a ...

3 Q. [12:26:22](Interpretation) And did the footage start at -- end at timestamp 49?

4 When it ended then, was that Colonel Anour?

5 A. [12:26:32] Yes, Mr President.

6 Q. [12:26:36] Thank you. My next question, Father Antareze, I'm not going to ask
7 you about what you saw, but what you heard about, what was reported to you. Did
8 you hear people talking about weapons being distributed by the Seleka at any point
9 in time to -- by the Seleka in Mbaïki?

10 A. [12:27:17] Thank you.

11 Thank you, Mr President, your Honours.

12 To answer your question about whether or not the Seleka distributed weapons to the
13 civilian Muslim population, that information was received, particularly when the
14 Seleka left. When the Seleka left Mbaïki, so when they left Mbaïki, it was at night,
15 and the next morning people saw that there were no longer any Seleka members in
16 Mbaïki.

17 Now I don't remember the exact date, it was before 30 January. That's when they left
18 Mbaïki.

19 There were some people amongst the non-Muslim population and when they spoke, I
20 don't know where they got their information from, but they were -- they were almost
21 convinced that that's what had happened, that the Seleka had armed. They said that
22 they had given weapons to their Muslim brothers before leaving. Some said that --
23 that there were Muslims in Mbaïki who had purchased weapons directly from the
24 Seleka. That's the information we got.

25 So that really fed the suspicions and the fear.

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1 Q. [12:29:27] So it fed the suspicion and the fears, but of whom?

2 A. [12:29:37] The feelings of suspicion and fear of the non-Muslim population, but
3 especially the young people, young non-Muslims because, you see, in Mbaïki, you
4 have the market -- the central market. And at the Mbaïki central market, there is one
5 place where fuel is sold. It's a small stall and it's young people who sell fuel there.
6 And when I buy gasoline there myself for my motorbike, that's where I go. It's
7 a spot where young people tend to gather, people talk, they speak to one another, and
8 so if you want to get information, you go there, to that particular spot. It's a way to
9 find out what's going on.

10 So for those young people, those -- the Muslims were armed. The Seleka had armed
11 them. That's the information that was going about.

12 Q. [12:31:04] Do you know someone called Mahamat Hissene, nicknamed "Deba"?

13 A. [12:31:28] Mr Deba, I believe. Yes, indeed, there was someone by that name,
14 a Muslim in Mbaïki. He was a trader. I didn't know him closely because, you see,
15 myself, personally, given that I've worked a lot more in the interior of Lobaye and
16 given that I was born in Bangui and I grew up there and all -- nearly all my training
17 was in Bangui, I went to Mbaïki and -- well, all this to say that there are some people I
18 don't know very well.

19 But I did meet some people through my work as part of the platform and I did live in
20 Mbaïki from 2011 to 2015, so this Mr Deba, I did see him. He was one of the young
21 Muslim leaders, yes.

22 Q. [12:33:09] And did you hear from young non-Muslims or non-Muslims in
23 general, any comments about the role of that Deba, that leader Deba?

24 A. [12:33:29] No.

25 MS DIMITRI: [12:33:57] I just want to double-check, if you don't mind. Thank you.

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1 Q. [12:34:12](Interpretation) Can you tell us where the Seleka were residing, where
2 were they based upon their arrival in Mbaïki?

3 A. [12:34:30] Thank you very much.

4 Mr President, when the Seleka arrived in Mbaïki, they were based at the prefecture of
5 Mbaïki, that is the premises of the prefecture and subprefecture, so this was at the
6 town centre close by the Mbaïki hospital. You have the gendarmerie premises, then
7 after that you have the subprefecture, and next to the subprefecture there is
8 a prefecture - and I'm talking here of buildings - and this is where the Seleka set up
9 their base.

10 And I'm trying to remember. There was another building known as SOCATEL, the
11 SOCATEL building. SOCATEL is a telecommunications company. It is a concrete
12 building, it's a big building between the gendarmerie and the city hall, so they
13 occupied that building also.

14 Q. [12:36:00] I would like to bring you back to the resignation in N'Djamena of
15 President Djotodia.

16 How did the population of Mbaïki react based on what you observed after the
17 announcement of the resignation of President Djotodia?

18 A. [12:36:28] Thank you very much.

19 Mr President, if I remember correctly, this was in January 2014. I don't know
20 whether it was on 10 January.

21 So the president had been in N'Djamena at an ECCAS summit, I believe, that is the
22 subregional organisation. He was asked to leave the summit, and so he resigned
23 right there. The information arrived in Mbaïki, and I remember that there were
24 groups of young people who were overjoyed. There were scenes of joy. At that
25 time the Seleka were still there, but the young people all celebrated in the

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1 neighbourhood.

2 Regarding the surrounding villages, I do not know, but I was also informed that there
3 were scenes of celebration, of joy -- celebrations by non-Muslims.

4 Q. [12:38:18] You have told us that Djotodia -- or, rather, resigned on 10 January.
5 The news arrived in Mbaïki. The Seleka were still in Mbaïki and then there were
6 young people celebrating joyfully in Mbaïki.

7 So how did the Seleka react to this celebration of the event by the young people in
8 Mbaïki?

9 A. [12:38:58] Thank you very much.

10 Mr President, what I can remember is that there were warnings. The Seleka fired
11 warning shots to intimidate those young people who were celebrating. We were in
12 the cathedral and we heard the sounds of those warning shots, but apart from that,
13 I'm not aware of any specific attack or any specific reprisals. I don't remember any
14 such things, but it is sure that they were warning shots.

15 Q. [12:39:55] A little earlier, you said that the Seleka in Mbaïki left the town at night
16 before 30 January.

17 My question is as follows: How did the Mbaïki population react when the Seleka
18 started leaving the town or the territory?

19 A. [12:40:29] Thank you.

20 Mr President, we were informed of the departure of the Seleka, so there were farewell
21 songs and all sorts of things. On the day preceding the night of their departure --
22 this is something that I remember. On the day itself, I was not aware - I don't think
23 anyone was aware - that there were going to leave. I was still on my motorbike. I
24 was leaving the cathedral to go to the city centre. It was in the afternoon, and I met
25 Mr Anour, the colonel. He himself was coming out on foot to speak with his Muslim

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1 brothers and I could not pass by him like that as if I had not seen him.
2 So when I saw him, I stopped and he himself turned around to approach me, and so
3 we greeted each other. I think that he had a good impression of me, because I was
4 trying to present myself as an upright person, because it was important for them, that
5 is, so that was my attitude.
6 So he had a good impression of me, he came and we greeted each other. I said, "Is
7 everything all right?" And then everything he said -- after that, he said, "*Abbé*
8 Antareze, I have a gift for you." And I said, "A gift?" And he said, "Yes." And his
9 face was serious, so I understood that it was not a joke. So he told me, "That vehicle
10 of mine", because it was a pick-up, he said, "That vehicle, I will give it to you as
11 a gift." And he -- said, "You're going to give it to me as a present?" And he said,
12 "You're my brother. I'm going to give it to you as a gift."
13 After the discussion, I told him that I could not accept. I didn't need it, so I could not
14 accept that present.
15 So at night, we were in the cathedral and it was really very late at night. I think it
16 was after midnight, I am not sure. And we saw Central African Seleka, because
17 amongst them there were Seleka who were clearly Central African nationals, because
18 we knew them. Do not forget that with Mr Anour's group, it was easy to speak with
19 the Seleka because Mr Anour spoke the language very well and there were many of
20 his men who said they were Central African Republic nationals.
21 So we saw two or three of them. The others left, but they refused to leave with them.
22 So they came and were seeking refuge at the Catholic mission, at the cathedral. So
23 they came and they met the security guard of the parish. They saw Father Maximim
24 and, with him, they came to call me.
25 So on that night, we learnt that the Seleka had left. Because of this, other Seleka had

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1 refused to leave. The bishop's house was right next door, but we didn't want to go
2 inform him at night. I remember this very well.

3 It was in the morning we made the morning mass with other priests, then we went
4 and saw Monsignor Rino. He was having his breakfast. We came and he thought
5 we were coming as usual to greet him, but we told him, "We have some news for you.
6 The Seleka has left." And he himself was surprised.

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:46:10] Ms Dimitri -- Ms Dimitri.

8 Mr Witness, how did the Muslim population, the civilian population react to the
9 departure of the Seleka? If you know, if you have any information about that.

10 THE WITNESS: [12:46:26](Interpretation) Thank you, Mr President. This was on
11 the day following the departure of the Seleka. It was daytime, so what was to be
12 done? I had to go out on my motorbike to see what was happening in the city centre,
13 so as to observe and make sure that there were no Seleka there, and see what was
14 happening there, how the atmosphere was there.

15 So I left, and as I was riding along, I greeted the Muslims that I knew. I don't
16 remember whether I met Mr Diakite, he was the imam of the Baguirmi mosque. So I
17 rode around a little bit and the impression that I had -- and this was still in the
18 morning, so while I was riding around, the impression that I had was that the
19 Muslims were calm. They were in their homes. They were calm. I even observed
20 that some of them did not open their stores. They preferred to stay at home.
21 Maybe they were afraid of something so they had stayed at home. So things were
22 rather calm, I believe.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:48:20] Thank you.

24 Ms Dimitri, please.

25 MS DIMITRI: [12:48:27] Thank you, Mr President. With your leave, just three

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1 follow-up questions on that topic.

2 Q. [12:48:34](Interpretation) You referred to the fact that Colonel Anour spoke
3 Sango and that two or three members of his group did not leave and they were
4 Central African nationals.

5 My question is, regarding the first group of Seleka who arrived in Mbaïki, am I to
6 understand that they did not speak Sango, just after having listened to you?

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:49:11] Before you answer, Mr Witness.
8 Mr Vanderpuye.

9 MR VANDERPUYE: [12:49:14] A couple things. First, he's already testified to it.
10 Second thing is that the basis of knowledge is unclear as to whether he spoke to every
11 individual in that group, or even a number of individuals in that group, for him to
12 draw the conclusion. Therefore, it would be speculative.

13 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:49:29] Well, actually, I don't agree. The witness
14 had contact with the colonel and also with the whole group, and he can of course
15 testify to what extent he perceived that these people from the Seleka spoke Sango,
16 were Central Africans. Not -- he may not have counted them, yes, of course, but still
17 he can provide us with information that might be useful.

18 So, Mr Witness, let me ask you a question. So you have already spoken about the --
19 let's say the provenance of the Seleka people. Of course, as I said, you have -- you
20 may not have counted them, but you said many of them were foreigners but also
21 many of them were from the Central African Republic. Could you specify more or is
22 this the information that you can provide us with?

23 THE WITNESS: [12:50:26](Interpretation) Thank you, Mr President. I said here at
24 the very beginning that I will tell you only what I know, because there are things that
25 I do not know, so I am limited in my knowledge.

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1 What I know is that when the first group arrived Mbaïki in early April, if I remember
2 correctly, we were not that happy with them.

3 Talking about Sango, well, there were individuals amongst them who, even from
4 their appearance, did not speak neither Sango nor French. They spoke only Arabic.

5 For me, it is not surprising to say that because I myself, I'm going to tell you that I
6 myself, one day, we were going to Boganangone and at Boganangone I saw that the
7 Seleka who was in command of the Boganangone area was, by his features,
8 a Sudanese. We know that, but that was also information that we received. He did
9 not speak French, nor Sango, and even by his appearance, we knew that he was
10 Sudanese.

11 So in the first group, you could see immediately that they were different from
12 Mr Anour's group, and in Mr Anour's group there were quite a few people speaking
13 Sango. So those other ones, we were never in contact with them.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:53:03] Ms Dimitri, I think we have covered that
15 sufficiently.

16 MS DIMITRI: [12:53:06] Thank you, Mr President.

17 Q. [12:53:09](Interpretation) A short while ago, you told us that Colonel Anour
18 offered you his vehicle as a present and you told him that you could not accept it.
19 But why did you refuse it? Why did you turn it down? Why didn't you accept that
20 present?

21 A. [12:53:39] Thank you.

22 Mr President, it is certain that I could not accept it -- I could not accept it. To begin
23 with, I think that is not the way that you give someone a present. You are just
24 passing by and someone tells you, "I'm giving you my vehicle as a present."

25 But also one should not forget that we were in a context in which we had been

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1 informed about pillaging carried out by the Seleka. So I did not know the origin of
2 that vehicle.

3 So it was also an issue of morality.

4 And regarding my work, imagine someone who was carrying out mediation and then
5 who receives a gift from someone from one of the camps. What are the other people
6 going to say?

7 Q. [12:54:53] Thank you. I'm going to move on to another topic --

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:54:58] Another topic always, you know --

9 MS DIMITRI: [12:55:02] Triggers a break.

10 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:55:03] Yeah, it puts me on alert.

11 What about shortening the lunch break until 2 o'clock now that we have five minutes
12 more, or is it -- and can you already tell us how much progress you have made,
13 Ms Dimitri?

14 MS DIMITRI: [12:55:17] I think I'm -- to be honest, I think I'll respect my time frame.
15 And if it can encourage the Chamber, the first part was the context, and the context
16 always triggers a lot of answers. Now my next topic is his first meeting with
17 Mr Yekatom. So I know that it's now going to take a different beat, a different pace.
18 I'm confident that I will respect the time that I provided the Chamber and the parties
19 and participants. And if ever it -- if ever it doesn't go well this afternoon, maybe
20 tomorrow we can shorten the lunch break, but I'd rather use the lunch break to cut
21 down some topics.

22 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:56:08] So I hear you.

23 And, Mr Vanderpuye, you have -- you know how much time Ms Dimitri needs? No.

24 MR VANDERPUYE: [12:56:14] No, but what I can assure you, at least pretty --
25 pretty certainly, is that I'm not going to take nearly as much time as we've estimated.

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1 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:56:24] Well, I also thought so, and I would
2 have -- indeed would have asked you in this context.

3 So let's have the lunch break then until 2.30.

4 THE COURT USHER: [12:56:36] All rise.

5 (Recess taken at 12.56 p.m.)

6 (Upon resuming in open session at 2.33 p.m.)

7 THE COURT USHER: [14:33:18] All rise.

8 Please be seated.

9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:33:48] Good afternoon, Mr Witness.

10 Good afternoon, everyone.

11 Ms Dimitri, you still have the floor.

12 MS DIMITRI: [14:33:56] Thank you, Mr President.

13 Q. [14:33:59](Interpretation) Good afternoon, Abbot Antareze. Now, the next
14 topic will be your first meeting with Mr Alfred Rambo Yekatom.

15 Can you please tell us about the first time that you met him in person?

16 A. [14:34:21] Thank you very much.

17 Mr President, your Honours, the first time that I met Mr Yekatom, physically
18 speaking, in the flesh, was in Pissa.

19 Q. [14:34:58] Can you explain to us how it is that you came to go to Pissa, and with
20 whom you went to Pissa, and what was the aim of that meeting in Pissa?

21 A. [14:35:09] My trip to Pissa was not by chance. There was a reason behind it,
22 namely that the Mbaïki inter-religious platform had taken the initiative of going to
23 meet the various forces in presence there, that were present there. And this was
24 because in that month of January 2014, the Seleka of Mr Anour were in Mbaïki, and
25 Mr Yekatom's people were virtually at the entrance to Mbaïki, in Pissa. And, as I

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underscored here on a number of occasions with regard to the context itself, there was this feeling of fear, of suspicion, of worry. We were fearful that there might be some clashes between the Seleka from Mbaïki and Mr Yekatom and his people, and that is why we decided at the level of the platform to go and talk to them, in order to suggest to both parties that there be a possible meeting at the cathedral of St Jeanne d'Arc. There we have it.

Q. [14:37:24] Now, before that meeting in the flesh in Pissa, did you have the opportunity to speak -- did you have any contact with Mr Yekatom?

A. [14:37:40] Thank you very much.

Mr President, it is entirely normal to speak with the interested parties, but it was over the telephone. Mr Anour was there in Mbaïki, so we could talk to him directly, but as for Mr Yekatom, we would talk to him over the telephone.

I no longer recall how I got hold of his telephone number, but I looked for it, I am sure of that. I wanted his contact details and I contacted him. He accepted this Pissa meeting and then we set up the day and the hour of the meeting.

Q. [14:38:46] Did you make that journey from Mbaïki to Pissa on your own or did you go in the company of somebody else?

A. [14:39:03] Thank you.

That trip from Mbaïki to Pissa, I did not make it alone because I was not working alone. And, if my memory serves me correctly, I was in the company of one of two pastors who were by my side. There was Pastor Jean-Pierre Mobia and Pastor Jean-Pierre Bonia (phon) and we were with the *préfet* of Mbaïki, Mr Alexandre. So there was a team of four of us, I believe.

Q. [14:40:11] And where did you meet, specifically, in Pissa?

A. [14:40:16] Well, when we arrived in Pissa, I believe that it was during the

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1 morning, so we went directly to the gendarmerie brigade of Pissa, and there's a
2 roadblock there, a checkpoint, and that is where Mr Yekatom's elements were based.
3 So, when we arrived, he, Mr Yekatom, was not yet there. We found his elements
4 there and they asked us a number of questions in order to ascertain who we were and
5 what we wanted. As to whether they were in the know or not, I don't know, but we
6 had to explain to them why we were there and at that moment, I believe that
7 Mr Yekatom -- well, Mr Yekatom arrived a short while after us. So we arrived first
8 and then he arrived after us, but there was not much of an interval between the two.
9 He came from Bangui. Now, as to whether he came from Bangui itself or whether he
10 had been somewhere else, I don't know, but he arrived on the Bangui side.
11 And when he arrived, and when I saw him physically -- well, even on the basis of his
12 voice, I heard his voice, I had heard his voice over the telephone, and when the leader
13 is present, you can feel it and we understood that it was him. He came to meet us,
14 he greeted us, and he was the one who suggested to us, or asked me -- he said,
15 "Father, where are we going to hold the meeting?" And I suggested to him that we
16 go to a room of the Saint-Esprit de Pissa parish.

17 Q. [14:42:58] You mentioned his elements with whom you had a brief discussion
18 before Mr Yekatom arrived. What were they wearing, these elements?

19 A. [14:43:13] Thank you. When we arrived, these elements were in military garb
20 with weapons. I believe that they were Kalashnikovs.

21 Q. [14:43:34] Would you be able to provide an estimation -- I'm not asking for a
22 specific answer here, but would you be able to estimate the age of these elements?
23 Can you give us an estimate of their age, please.

24 A. [14:43:59] Thank you very much. Mr Yekatom's elements who were there and
25 who greeted us, even if it wasn't very soft as a greeting, if you like, they were putting

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1 us -- they were drilling us with questions. I would say that these were young people,
2 but they're not young, young people. From what I could see, they were aged
3 between 25 to 35 years of age, approximately.

4 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:44:48] Well, that's a nice definition of not so
5 young, I think.

6 MS DIMITRI: [14:44:54] I won't take it personally.

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:44:57] We don't make a comparison to other
8 persons here in the courtroom, and what would qualify us, then, how we would be
9 qualified, still.

10 MS DIMITRI: [14:45:17](Interpretation)

11 Q. [14:45:19] Could you please now tell us about the meeting. I understood that it
12 was in the premises of the Saint-Esprit de Pissa parish. Now, who spoke on either
13 side and who said what, if you like, during that meeting?

14 A. [14:45:43] Thank you. Mr President, during that meeting in Pissa, the truth be
15 told, it was I who was the main moderator, if you like. I was the one who took the
16 floor in order to thank everybody for their willingness to take part in this meeting,
17 because it wasn't an easy thing. So I wanted to thank them first and foremost. And
18 then I suggested to them that they introduce themselves, that each person introduce
19 themselves. We found that this was important. Then, I took the floor again in
20 order to present the aim of this undertaking and that is how discussion ensued.

21 Q. [14:47:08] Do you remember what Mr Yekatom said during that meeting?

22 A. [14:47:23] Well, initially, when I spoke about the aim and the motivation behind
23 this meeting, well, we as a platform wanted to avoid any clashes in Mbaïki and, as I
24 have said here on a number of occasions, we underscored this matter.

25 And then subsequently I remember that when Mr Yekatom addressed the meeting, he

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1 introduced himself as FACA, as a member of the Central African army, as a FACA
2 member, and he said that he and his men were not there in order to attack the civilian
3 Muslims, but the movement was against Mr Djotodia and the Seleka.
4 So, he said that they were not there to have clashes against the civilian Muslims.
5 And what he said to us didn't make us overjoyed, but, let's say, it was in line with our
6 aim. Our aim as a platform was to maintain peace and that our brothers and sisters,
7 Muslim brothers and sisters in Mbaïki not become the victims of any clashes.
8 So we were, I would say, satisfied with that meeting and then we went back to Mbaïki,
9 satisfied with the outcome of the meeting. And he was in agreement with us
10 meeting at Jeanne d'Arc. There we have it.

11 Q. [14:49:56] I know that the question might seem a little strange to you and that
12 the answer might be self-evident, but at that moment in time during that meeting
13 whilst you were in Pissa, did you know -- well, let me start again.

14 Earlier, during your testimony, you referred to the presence of the Seleka in Pissa
15 when you were going through the roadblock in Pissa. Now, when you met
16 Mr Yekatom on that day at the Saint-Esprit de Pissa parish, did you know where the
17 Seleka from Pissa were?

18 A. [14:50:50] Thank you very much. Mr President, when we went to Pissa for that
19 meeting with Mr Yekatom and his men, there were no longer any Seleka present in
20 Pissa, they were in Mbaïki.

21 Q. [14:51:20] You indicated at an earlier stage that the Seleka of Mbaïki - that is to
22 say Mr Anour and his Seleka, with the exception of two or three of them - had left
23 Mbaïki in the night. Now, at the time when you were meeting with Mr Yekatom at
24 the Saint-Esprit de Pissa parish, were you aware that the Seleka were going to leave
25 Mbaïki?

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1 A. [14:51:57] Thank you. Mr President, when we undertook all of this in Pissa, I
2 myself did not know. And even at the level of the platform, there was the imam,
3 Aboubakar Diakite, and there was our brother Issaka, who were on the Muslim side,
4 and who were members of the platform bureau, but we didn't have any information
5 in this regard. We did not know that the Seleka were going to leave.

6 Oh, I apologise. I would like -- well, I said that we did not know, I did not know, so
7 I don't know whether the others did, but on the non-Muslim side, we, the priests and
8 the pastors, did not know.

9 As for our Muslim brothers, I can't say as to whether they knew or not. It's difficult
10 for me to say, but officially speaking, we had not received that information.

11 Q. [14:53:33] If I understand correctly, during that meeting with Mr Yekatom at the
12 Saint-Esprit de Pissa parish, it was discussed that there be a meeting organised
13 between himself and the Seleka from Mbaïki. Have I understood correctly the aim
14 of the discussions within the Saint-Esprit parish?

15 A. [14:54:14] Yes, precisely. It was with a view to organising the Jeanne d'Arc
16 meeting.

17 *Q. [14:54:31] Are you in a position to - because you did speak about the fact that
18 there would be a meeting on 30 January - are you able to estimate how many days
19 there were between the meeting at the Saint Esprit parish in Pissa and the one of 30
20 January at the St Jeanne cathedral in Mbaïki ?

21 A. [14:55:12] Thank you. Well, the Jeanne D'Arc meeting took place on
22 30 January 2014. And, if my memory serves me correctly, we had met Mr Yekatom
23 before the departure of the Seleka. The Seleka left around 26 or 27 January,
24 approximately, so that meeting took place a few days beforehand.
25 Now, I do apologise, because this was quite some time ago, so I've forgotten the

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1 specific date.

2 Q. [14:56:04] So I understand that the Seleka left during the night and they left
3 before 30 January. So did you nevertheless go ahead with a meeting at the Jeanne
4 d'Arc church, despite the fact that the Seleka had left?

5 A. [14:56:43] Thank you.

6 Mr President, just before the meeting that was planned at Jeanne d'Arc, the Seleka left.
7 They left and, despite that fact, we stayed on course and we held that meeting, and
8 that meeting took place at the date that had been planned, namely 30 January.

9 And why is it that we maintained that meeting at Jeanne d'Arc despite the departure
10 of the Seleka? Well, we're still within the context here, we deemed that it was
11 necessary for us to hold this meeting because the departure of the Seleka had fuelled
12 this climate of suspicion and fear. We were receiving information to the effect that
13 the Seleka, whilst they were leaving, had armed the Muslims and that some Muslims
14 had bought weapons.

15 So, Mr Yekatom and his men were there, there were the Muslims who were there, and
16 maybe, they, too, were frightened. There was also the non-Muslim population and
17 the youngsters. And, you know, as I said, there are youngsters who have nothing to
18 do, who were not well behaved, and anything could happen. So, there was that
19 feeling of fear that prevailed, because anything could happen. And that is why,
20 despite the absence of the Seleka, we wanted to hold that meeting at Jeanne d'Arc in
21 order to discuss this, to talk about peace.

22 Q. [14:59:36] You talked and used the word "necessary". You said, "Despite the
23 departure of the Seleka, in that context we deemed that it was necessary to go ahead
24 with the meeting". Why was it necessary?

25 A. [15:00:10] Thank you very much.

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1 Your Honour, I used the word "necessary" with regard to this feeling that prevailed,
2 this feeling of fear and of risk, of having possible clashes. I'm not a prophet of doom,
3 but in the context that there was, something had to be done. It was necessary to
4 open up the possibility of others to speak. We had to listen to each other and we had
5 to speak together about these issues, because the Muslims were there, and so perhaps
6 they, too maybe they too were afraid. No, I think they were afraid. *They were
7 afraid of a possible attack from Rombhot and his men. And I think if they were
8 afraid, what were they afraid of? So there was all this.

9 So you had to take into account all of that context, and we considered it necessary for
10 there to be this meeting in order to create a space where people could express
11 themselves, where they could listen to each other and where they could find a voice
12 together, or a pathway together. And I wasn't working alone. I also had to listen
13 and I talked about Monsignor Rino, who was the bishop of Mbaïki at the time, and he
14 gave his point of view. And there was the *préfet*, Mr Alexandre, who were there.
15 There were imams who were working. So these decisions, it wasn't the
16 *abbé* Antareze who took them. But we tried to listen to each other. We thought it
17 was important, we thought it was necessary for there to be that meeting with Jeanne
18 d'Arc.

19 Q. [15:02:53] Did you fear anything from non-Muslims in that context?

20 A. [15:03:00] Well, non-Muslims present, I think here, I wouldn't speak about
21 non-Muslims in general. And why? This was a lot more to do with the youth. I
22 think -- I think it was much more related to the youth. There was work that needed
23 to be done, because you don't know, it's young people, young people. And, in
24 particular, you know, when I speak about the context in certain Central African
25 localities at the time, and in a lot of villages and towns, there were groups of young

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1 people who called themselves auto-defence groups, and they -- self-defence groups,
2 and they would get up and say, "We've got information to say that there are conflicts,
3 intercommunity conflicts, in other localities in the Central African Republic."

4 And so we have taken into account all of this information, all these realities, in order
5 to decide what we can do in terms of the locality of Mbaïki, in order to avoid such
6 type of clashes. So we took account of all that.

7 Q. [15:05:04] Did you take into account the situation in Boda?

8 A. [15:05:17] Thank you.

9 President, indeed, when I speak about certain localities in the Central African
10 Republic, there -- well, I don't know. You had the situation in Boda, but I'm just
11 trying to reflect to see -- well, in Boda, what you also had was a conflict, an armed
12 conflict between the Muslim community and the non-Muslim community, and I think
13 that did influence us. It did indeed influence us and that's why I speak about certain
14 localities that had difficulties when it came to living together. And, among others,
15 we could perhaps come back to the issue of Boda, I don't know.

16 Q. [15:06:28] We will come back to it, but I just wanted to make a little aside in
17 terms of Boda before continuing with the meeting on 30 January.

18 So, briefly, without going into the details because we are going to come back to Boda
19 later, personally, at the time, did you go to Boda?

20 A. [15:06:58] Thank you.

21 Mr President, with regards to Boda, with regards to the conflict in Boda, I think that it
22 was pretty much at the -- during the same period, toward the end of the month of
23 January 2014. And at that time, at that time, no, but we didn't have too much
24 information at the time, because it was still a hot situation. We didn't have a lot of
25 information at the time. And you know that when it came to the means of

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1 telecommunication at the time --

2 Q. [15:07:50] If you would allow me to intervene, because I don't think you've
3 understood my question, and it's the phrase "at the time" which was probably wrong
4 from me.

5 In 2014, did you go to Boda?

6 A. [15:08:06] In 2014, we went to Boda towards the month of June-July 2014, but it
7 was a bit later. And in the meantime, with Monsignor Rino, we also went through
8 Boda in order to go to Boganangone.

9 Q. [15:08:33] I'm going to stop you there. Allow me to guide you a bit. We're
10 going to come back to Boganangone. I'm going to talk about all the different
11 localities. I just wanted to establish that you went to Boda, and now you say on two
12 occasions, and we're going to speak about your trip to Boda later. I just want to
13 make a little aside on Boda, because you are referring to the fact that it was very hot
14 in Boda at the end of January and you wanted to think about the date. And I would
15 like you to listen to an audio excerpt about Boda, and then I will have one or two
16 questions to put to you before coming back to the meeting of 30 January. Do you
17 understand me?

18 So, I'm going to have you -- just put in the context. This is an audio, this is dated
19 18 March 2014, and you are going to hear an adviser of the prime minister
20 André Nzapayéké, so the -- Joachim Kokaté, the adviser to the *primature*, and I want
21 to hear his remarks. And then I'll have one or two questions to put to you on the
22 context.

23 And this is at tab 27 of the Defence binder, CAR-OTP-2042-3246 -- 3464.

24 And for the interpreters, the transcript is at tab 28 of your binder, CAR-D29-0006-0053.

25 And if I could have a sign from the booth when you are ready. Very good. Thank

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1 you.

2 (Playing of the audio excerpt)

3 THE INTERPRETER: [15:11:29](Interpretation of the audio excerpt)

4 "So the Christians have had the time to explain to us why they don't want to
5 collaborate with Muslims. So, firstly, they said that they are natives of the town of
6 Boda and that they accepted to receive Muslims among them. The Christians,
7 according to them themselves, they aren't able to understand why it's only on the date
8 of 28 January that this unfortunate event which happened in Boda, and they ask
9 themselves why, why that? Why were houses burnt? Why were there deaths?
10 And they are not ready to become reconciled until the Muslims provide themselves
11 with clear explanations. They are not going to have reconciliation with them.
12 We've tried to discuss with Christians. We try to go a bit further. But the message,
13 and I'm not going to hide it from you, that was difficult for them. They accepted
14 Muslims with them. Muslims came and they did everything they enriched
15 themselves in their own terms. They had children with Muslims and even when the
16 Seleka arrived in Boda, the Muslims well received the Seleka in Boda. And they, the
17 natives, they also received the elements of the Seleka coalition in Boda and they were
18 living in perfect harmony. There wasn't trouble in Boda, but to their great surprise
19 on 28 January, after the departure of the elements of the Seleka coalition, a few hours
20 afterwards, the Muslims took weapons to attack them and burnt their houses, and
21 that's how they were obliged to defend themselves."

22 MS DIMITRI: [15:13:16](Interpretation)

23 Q. [15:13:17] Now, we heard an adviser of the prime minister speaking about the
24 situation in Boda and about this unfortunate event of 28 January where, after the
25 departure of the elements of the Seleka coalition, the Muslims of Boda took up arms

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1 in order to attack, attack the Christians, according to Joachim Kokaté.

2 Now, my question is whether you have heard anyone speak about this conflict
3 between the two communities in Boda?

4 A. [15:13:53] Thank you, Mr President.

5 We were -- well, we had information about that conflict, but I also have to stress that
6 at that particular time, in this moment we are speaking about, 28 January, so during
7 the conflict itself, we didn't have information. We had no information. It was after,
8 afterwards, that we got information. And, as I was saying, because we were going
9 between Mbaïki and Boda, and when I said that increasingly there was a feeling of
10 fear, of suspicion, of concern in Mbaïki, it was given -- because of all that information
11 that we were getting. And afterwards, with Monsignor Rino, we went to Boda in the
12 month of June and July. We also went there because we were informed that it was
13 difficult, as there had been cases of deaths, between 100 and 150 deaths. There were
14 hundreds of houses that had been set alight, without taking into account the numbers
15 of injured, et cetera. So at a particular time it was divided in two. So you had one
16 enclave with the Muslims and, on the other side, you had the non-Muslims, and a lot
17 of people had fled into their fields, so the town was dead. Boda was divided in two.

18 Q. [15:16:14] And in Mbaïki specifically, did you or members of the platform, or the
19 prefect, did any of you discuss -- well, you spoke about a risk, you spoke about fear
20 with regard to young non-Muslims, unemployed ones. Did you speak about this
21 risk as regards the reaction of these young non-Muslims, given the departure of the
22 Seleka and this conviction that they had armed the Muslims -- or that they would
23 have armed the Muslims?

24 A. [15:17:16] Mr President, indeed, there was this feeling that we've spoken about
25 here, which meant that we had to increase our commitment in order to ensure that

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1 this meeting of Jeanne d'Arc be an appropriate moment and a propitious moment,
2 and an opportunity to have dialogue -- to have dialogue, because as we were
3 convinced that it had to take place, and that's why, finally, we decided to have that
4 meeting.

5 MS DIMITRI: [15:18:11] I'm sorry, Mr President. Can I have just a moment, please.

6 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:18:25] Let's allow ourselves a short break,
7 Ms Dimitri. It doesn't matter. Just two or three minutes and then you can discuss
8 this. Please.

9 THE COURT USHER: [15:18:34] All rise.

10 (Recess taken at 3.18 p.m.)

11 (Upon resuming in open session at 3.25 p.m.)

12 THE COURT USHER: [15:25:00] All rise.

13 Please be seated.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:25:14] Ms Dimitri.

15 MS DIMITRI: [15:25:20] Thank you, Mr President.

16 Q. [15:25:21](Interpretation) *Abbé* Antareze, I wanted you to listen to another
17 excerpt of a speech of the *préfet* Alexandre. And, once again, the -- the speech of
18 Kouroupe-Awo is from February 2014, on the visit of Samba-Panza. And I'd ask you
19 to listen to a small part of it and then I'll have a question for you.

20 So it's tab 1 of the Defence binder, 20-1636 -- CAR-OTP. So we'll ask for 11:06, from
21 10:46. And the transcript is at tab 2 of the binder, CAR-D29-0006-0107, and
22 page 0111, lines 14 to 17 thereof.

23 If the interpreters could let me know when they've found it. Thank you.

24 (Viewing of the video excerpt)

25 THE INTERPRETER: [15:26:49](Interpretation of the video excerpt)

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1 **"Secondly, an attempt at reconciliation, at the point of being made between the
2 Seleka and the Anti-Balaka who had come from Bangui, prepared hand in hand with
3 the HCR, the DRC, the inter-religious platform and the prefect, was transformed into
4 a security meeting on 30th January 2014."

5 MS DIMITRI: [15:27:23](Interpretation)

6 Q. [15:27:24] Did you hear the *préfet* speak about the meeting of 30 January 2014?

7 It's using the terms was transformed into a security meeting. Was it also your
8 memory that this meeting, which firstly was between Yekatom's men and the Seleka,
9 was it then transformed into a security meeting? Did you hear that?

10 A. [15:27:56] Thank you.

11 Your Honour, your Honours, this meeting that took place at St Jeanne d'Arc in the
12 cathedral in Mbaïki was a meeting that was fundamental in our activities as an
13 inter-religious platform because, as I was saying a moment ago, despite the departure
14 of the Seleka at night, we were surprised because we weren't aware of it, we
15 considered it to be necessary for there to be this meeting. And here I saw in the
16 video you had the *préfet* use the term "security", "a security meeting", but it's
17 necessary to say that not everything was decided on in advance. Nothing had been
18 decided on prior to the meeting, or before this meeting.

19 So during this meeting, in the platform, the inter-religious platform, we wanted really
20 for all the forces in Mbaïki be -- we wanted for them to be present in order to discuss,
21 to have exchanges. And, as such, it was during this meeting that we all considered
22 that it was a good thing for Mr Yekatom and his elements to be able to take over
23 Mbaïki for security reasons, because, given that he himself had reassured us that he
24 had not come to harm the civilian Muslims, we took account of that and that was in
25 front of everyone.

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1 There were Muslim delegates at that meeting. There were Muslim delegates, there
2 was the mayor, the *préfet*, the bishop, Monsignor Rino. And there were Sangaris,
3 they were there as well. There were also our friends from the DRC, all there. And
4 it was during this meeting, and that's the reason why we proposed to Mr Yekatom,
5 who was there, to go and hold the same speech as he held during that meeting, to say
6 the same things to the population. And that was in order to have this restitution of
7 this meeting. That's what was done.

8 And after the meeting of Jeanne d'Arc, we all went to Mbaïki station for a restitution,
9 to give an official report or an official account to the population of that meeting.

10 Q. [15:31:39] I have two follow-up questions, Father Antareze.

11 Whose security are we talking about here? Whose security is desired?

12 A. [15:32:02] Thank you.

13 Mr President, this term "security" is used here in association with this feeling of risk
14 that we felt, we, the leaders of the platform. We, let's say -- well, Mr Yekatom
15 became, in our eyes, a type of partner who would be able to help us attain the
16 objectives that we had at the level of the platform, namely people who share the same
17 intentions as ourselves, somebody who could contribute. I believe that at that
18 specific moment we didn't have any fears in that regard and I believe that at that
19 specific moment in time he, Mr Yekatom, and his men were, in our minds, fit for
20 purpose, if you like.

21 You see, the work that we had undertaken at the level of the platform had required a
22 great deal of gymnastics, intellectual gymnastics, you know, how to seize an
23 opportunity, and it was in the light of all of this. And now that we are out of this
24 situation I think it's easier to talk about. But at the time itself, when the situation is
25 unfolding, it's no easy matter. And that is why we accepted. We knew that

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1 Mr Yekatom and his forces were not regular state forces, we were aware of that fact,
2 but there was virtually no one. So there we have it.

3 Q. [15:34:33] Father Antareze, I do thank you, but you didn't answer my question.
4 You were -- or you or the platform or the *préfet*, whose security were you attempting
5 to guarantee?

6 A. [15:34:54] Everyone's security. Everyone's safety. During the restitution of
7 that meeting at the station, at the town hall, we were all in attendance. I spoke
8 initially in order to introduce the context of that meeting, subsequent to which I
9 believe it was Mr Yekatom who took the floor, and his speech was rather decisive
10 because when he addressed the meeting, he said to everyone that he was there with
11 his elements and that he -- he was speaking Sango, you know, he was speaking the
12 local language. *He said -- in brief, he said, "I do not want any non-Muslim to get up
13 and attack a Muslim, nor should any Muslim attack a non-Muslim."
14 So he was asking everyone to go home. And I remember, it was virtually night-time
15 when we did a repeat of that meeting. It was about 5.30 p.m., about nightfall, and
16 everyone had gone home and it was virtually a curfew. No one was supposed to be
17 moving around at night-time. There we are.

18 Q. [15:36:42] Just a point of clarification here.
19 This speech where Mr Yekatom -- well, I'm not going to repeat what he said, but
20 you've just summarised in a number of words where he said everyone needed to go
21 home. Was that speech made inside the cathedral or was it at Mbaïki station? You
22 referred to two different locations.

23 A. [15:37:23] Thank you.
24 Mr President, that speech was given at Mbaïki station and it is a large space just by
25 Mbaïki town hall. And because there were a lot of people present, a lot of people -

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1 you know, the entire Mbaïki was there - that's why we chose that location, because,
2 generally speaking, we would hold such a meeting in front of the town hall. But it's
3 a smaller space in front of the *mairie* than in front of the station, so it was during that
4 repeat of the meeting that he took the floor to say what he said.

5 Q. [15:38:13] Thank you. At an earlier stage you said that you all deemed that it
6 was a good thing that Mr Rambo Yekatom and his men came into Mbaïki, and that
7 was the conclusion that you came to.

8 Now my question to you, when I say "you were expecting", that's you, you the people
9 of the platform, what were you expecting from Mr Rambo Yekatom?

10 A. [15:38:45] Thank you.

11 Mr President, at that specific moment in time, as I was saying, there weren't really any
12 state forces present. There was the Sangaris, but our concern was providing security
13 for Mbaïki itself. Mr Yekatom gave us the impression that he would be able to help
14 provide security for Mbaïki and thereby avoid any possible clashes between the two
15 communities, and that's the impression that he gave us.

16 So that is why we were somewhat reassured and that we should go with what he said
17 in the meantime. I'd really like to underscore this fact, because we thought to
18 ourselves that we could go along with him.

19 Q. [15:40:15] Now, with regard to the meeting that was held inside the cathedral,
20 the St Jeanne d'Arc cathedral, you spoke about the crowd, the population of Mbaïki
21 outside the station. Now, at the time when you were holding the meeting inside,
22 was it possible for the population to gain access?

23 A. [15:40:51] Thank you.

24 Mr President, when we held the meeting, we held it in a room, in a large room next to
25 the church, to the cathedral. It is the meeting room, and we, the priests, whenever

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1 we meet the bishop, that is generally where we would meet, and where the diocese
2 organises training, this is a training room also.

3 So, inside that room at Jeanne d'Arc on 30 January, there were those people who had
4 been invited and they were in attendance. Outside, there was the crowd. There
5 were those who were curious as to what was going on. They were looking on to see
6 who was arriving and attending that meeting. They were the ones who were there.
7 There we are.

8 Q. [15:42:12] Now, inside that room, do you remember in general terms what
9 Mr Yekatom said?

10 A. [15:42:27] Thank you. Mr President, during that meeting, I was the one who
11 was moderator, and during the discussions, I do not recall precisely every person
12 who took the floor but, *inter alia*, there was Mr Yekatom who addressed those in
13 attendance, and he reiterated to us once again what he had said to us in Pissa. So we
14 should not forget that the Mbaïki meeting followed on from the meeting in Pissa.
15 And if he had said something contrary to our aims, I don't know whether we would
16 have held that meeting.

17 So, during the meeting at Jeanne d'Arc, and in front of everybody, there were
18 personalities there such as the bishop of Mbaïki, there were also people who had
19 come from Bangui, there were international organisations in attendance, there was
20 the *préfet*, there were the Muslim delegates, so it really was quite something. And
21 when he took the floor in order to tell everybody that he had not come in order to
22 harm the Muslims, to harm the civilians, and that he was not there to take sides, it
23 was really a speech that brought everyone together. Of course, I am not god to
24 know what his deep-set intentions were, but that's what he said during the meeting.

25 Q. [15:44:43] I thank you.

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1 Now, how did he introduce himself in that meeting room?

2 A. [15:44:51] Thank you. Mr President, inside that meeting room, during that
3 meeting, Mr Yekatom introduced himself as a FACA, a FACA member. And, as I
4 said, saying that he -- they had risen up because of Djotodia, that the Seleka had come,
5 and speaking -- he was speaking in Sango, as if there were no men in the country. So,
6 we organised ourselves in order to show that there are men in our country. And it is
7 clear that it was against him and the Seleka. That's the kind of thing that he was
8 saying and he was saying that in front of everyone.

9 Q. [15:46:03] Are you able to estimate how many men were in the company of
10 Mr Yekatom on that day? Did he arrive with a number of vehicles, with one or two
11 vehicles? Are you able to give us an estimate?

12 A. [15:46:28] Thank you.
13 Mr President, now, the truth be told, I don't really recall how many men there were,
14 unless I'm mistaken. And if my memory serves me correctly, there were two
15 pickups, I believe, but not all of his elements were inside the meeting room for that
16 meeting.

17 Q. [15:47:03] How many elements were there inside that meeting room, according
18 to your memory?

19 A. [15:47:10] Mr President, if my memory serves me correctly, he was there,
20 Mr Yekatom was there, in the company of two or three elements who were close to
21 him. He was there in that meeting room and the meeting room couldn't contain
22 everyone. There were delegates, too. So, we could say that they were delegates.

23 Q. [15:47:37] You spoke about the presence of international organisations and
24 people who had come from Bangui. Could you be a little bit more specific. Which
25 international organisations were taking part in that meeting inside the meeting room?

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1 A. [15:48:06] Thank you. Mr President, your Honours, if my memory serves me
2 correctly, there was a lady, I forget the name, a lady who was working a lot with us
3 from DRC, and this is an international organisation, working -- I don't know whether
4 it's for displaced individuals or refugees, but the DRC, DRC. So, their headquarters
5 is in Bangui and that lady was also in attendance. I believe that there were also
6 people from the HCR, if I'm not mistaken, who had come from Bangui. But at that
7 moment in time, it might be that they had an office in Mbaïki, but they had come from
8 Bangui and they had collaborated with us or worked with us at the platform in order
9 to organise that meeting. But I would say that this meeting was really something
10 that had been prepared, not only in Mbaïki with partners, but it was something that
11 was prepared, you know, because we really were relying on this event a great deal.
12 There was also the mayor of Pissa who was in attendance, I remember, Mr Roger
13 Okoa-Penguia, Okoa-Penguia, who was the mayor of Pissa. I believe he's still mayor
14 of Pissa today. He was also there in attendance, with the Sangaris elements, who
15 were also there, and it was they who were providing security for that meeting.
16 There were one or two Sangaris elements posted at the entrance who were trying to
17 keep an eye on things to make sure that people didn't gain access with weapons or
18 with anything that might disturb the proper unfolding of the event.

19 Q. [15:51:09] So how were Mr Yekatom and his men dressed?

20 A. [15:51:16] If I remember well, I think that they were wearing military uniform,
21 military uniform.

22 Q. [15:51:23] You indicated a few seconds ago, you said, speaking about
23 international organisations, you indicated that they had an antenna in Mbaïki. Were
24 you speaking about DRC, HRC or both? Which one had an antenna in Mbaïki?

25 A. [15:51:57] Thank you. Mr President, with regards to this meeting -- or with

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1 regards to this question, I don't remember exactly which it was. Did they both have
2 an antenna in Mbaïki? But I think that the lady -- I'm trying to find her name, the
3 lady who was there, we met on several occasions. She came to Mbaïki several times.
4 So this wasn't a person who had just come specifically for the meeting, but she would
5 come to the bishopric and she would speak to us and we would have exchanges with
6 her, and I still remember that. And that's the reason why I think that they had their
7 antenna, yes, because there was somebody by the name of Mr Eloge, Mr Eloge, a
8 young Central African. He was also collaborating with us, and Eloge, was he the
9 antenna, the DRC antenna? It was quite a long time ago, but I do remember Eloge,
10 somebody called Eloge. That's it.

11 Q. [15:53:21] With the leave of the Chamber, I would ask you if you know the
12 name -- I'm going to give you a name, you can tell me if you know this name.

13 PRESIDING JUDGE SAMBA: [15:53:30] That's okay, absolutely.

14 MS DIMITRI: [15:53:35] Thank you.

15 Q. [15:53:36](Interpretation) Elisabeth Marty, do you know somebody by that
16 name?

17 A. [15:53:52] I haven't understood well.

18 Q. [15:53:56] Do you know somebody, or does the name Elisabeth Marty, does that
19 mean anything to you?

20 A. [15:54:09] Thank you.

21 Mr President, thank you. For this first name, Elisabeth -- the surname, perhaps not,
22 but the first name does remind me of something. I think it must have been that lady,
23 Elisabeth. But the surname, we don't usually call people by their surnames. But
24 Elisabeth does remind me of something, yes. Thank you.

25 Q. [15:54:39] During this meeting, did you know if photos were taken, if notes were

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1 taken during this meeting?

2 A. [15:54:49] Thank you.

3 Mr President, during this meeting of Jeanne d'Arc on 30 January 2014, I think that
4 photos were taken, because even the NGOs, we usually work with NGOs, but they
5 always take photographs, perhaps to justify the work they carry out. So I think that
6 there must have been photos.

7 And we, in terms of the platform, well, I was speaking about our secretary, the
8 platform secretary, and as it was at the bishopric where the cathedral was - well,
9 Maximin was there, and there were people from Caritas as well, people from Caritas
10 from Mbaïki, they were there in the room. So there were other people who were
11 taking notes. And in terms of the platform, there was our secretary and for the
12 photographs, there were people from DRC certainly who took videos.

13 MS DIMITRI: [15:56:23] Mr President, with your leave, I would like -- I know there's
14 four minutes left, but I'm on a roll here. Could I do the pictures?

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:56:31] Yes, why not, I think. If it takes a couple
16 of minutes more, it doesn't matter. I think it really fits now to show the pictures, yes.

17 MS DIMITRI: [15:56:37] Thank you.

18 Q. [15:56:39](Interpretation) So, *Abbé*, I'm going to go over certain pictures with
19 you, and we'll try and do it quickly.

20 So the first photo is at tab 5 of the Defence binder, CAR-D29-0010-0165.

21 Are you able to recognise certain people in this photograph which is on the screen?
22 And before answering this first question, we agree this is the room where the meeting
23 took place?

24 A. [15:57:39] Thank you.

25 Mr President, indeed, this room, this room -- well, I can't not recognise it, because

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1 that's where we always worked. We always worked there. So, really, that's it.

2 Q. [15:57:55] Very well. Thank you for that. Do you recognise some people on
3 this photograph?

4 And could I ask my colleague to enlarge it when you are giving some indications, if
5 that is indeed the case.

6 A. [15:58:21] Well, perhaps afterwards it could be zoomed in on. But, first of all, I
7 see myself, I'm there. I'm there, as if I had left to bring Mr Yekatom in, because just
8 after me, it's Mr Yekatom, just after me. And then there are our friends, the
9 delegates of Muslims who are there, of course.

10 Q. [15:59:02] I'm going to stop you. Just to clarify things for the record, your
11 friends, the delegates of Muslims, are these the three people who we can see at the
12 front of the photograph, at the forefront?

13 A. [15:59:16] Thank you.

14 Mr President, yes, it is the three who are at the front who are dressed in white.

15 Q. [15:59:24] So, you recognised yourself, followed by Mr Yekatom. So, just so
16 that it's clear, you are the one who is standing with a yellow shirt with leaves, with
17 green leaves on it and red flowers. And behind you, standing, there's Mr Rambo
18 Yekatom; is that correct?

19 A. [15:59:45] Yes. Thank you.

20 Mr President, indeed, I'm there in front in my yellow shirt with black marks on it, and
21 just behind me, it's Mr Yekatom. So it's as if I'd gone out to receive him, to bring him
22 in and show him his place. And --

23 Q. [16:00:11] So -- thank you. I'm going to go on to the next photograph, which is
24 at tab 7 of the Defence binder, CAR --

25 Before we go to the other photograph, do you recognise the person who is seated

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1 when you indicated previously in white, your three -- well, the three representatives,
2 the three delegates of the Muslim community, do you recognise the one who is sitting
3 in the middle?

4 A. [16:00:47] Mr Diakite could be the one in the middle. Perhaps it's him.

5 Q. [16:01:00] Thank you. And tab 7, CAR-D29-0010-00169.

6 Do you recognise certain people on this photo?

7 A. [16:01:27] Our two young men -- the two young men at the front, as if the other
8 one is Mr Deba, he looks like Mr Deba. He was one of the leaders of the youth, the
9 Muslim youth. So, both of them, if I'm not mistaken, they are the delegates of the
10 Muslim youth.

11 Now, after that -- should I continue in identifying people?

12 Q. [16:02:08] Yes, the ones who you recognise.

13 A. [16:02:13] The man -- the man who is there --

14 Q. [16:02:33] On the right or the left of the photograph?

15 A. [16:02:35] Well, we're still looking at the right.

16 Q. [16:02:37] On the right-hand side?

17 A. [16:02:43] No, not that one. Mr José -- Mr Josepha. Yes, Mr Josepha Bongoma.
18 Mr Josepha Bongoma. And he was the first deputy of the mayor, I think in Mbaïki.

19 Q. [16:03:05] So, just so it's clear, on the third table, starting at the beginning of the
20 photograph, by the window frame, Jean Josepha Bongoma, who was the first deputy
21 mayor in Mbaïki?

22 A. [16:03:19] Yes, the first deputy mayor in Mbaïki, because in Mbaïki, there was
23 him and there was Mr Saleh Djido as the deputies -- deputies of the mayor. So here,
24 it's Mr Josepha Bongoma. That's it.

25 Q. [16:03:44] Do you recognise anyone else on the photograph?

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1 A. [16:03:55] Can we zoom in a bit at the back?

2 Well, at the back, they are elements of the gendarmerie, but, you know, at that time,
3 these elements of the gendarmerie, they were there, but it was like they weren't there,
4 because -- so, this was the day after the departure of the Seleka, so the Seleka were
5 there but they were invited to that meeting. Because one of our concerns was to see
6 what to do so that, progressively, there be a re-establishment of state authority, and as
7 they were gendarmes, we invited them. But, really, at that time -- well, it was
8 difficult. But they were there. You could see them with their uniform of the
9 gendarmerie.

10 And there were also the people from Caritas. So I can see Mr Gabriel Zaba, and he's
11 of light complexion, behind the gendarme. And it is Mr Gabriel Zaba, at that time he
12 was responsible for the program, in charge of the Caritas program in Mbaïki. And
13 now -- he was the deputy director and he became director general.

14 Q. [16:05:53] And so it's clear, Gabriel Zaba, who was responsible for the Caritas
15 program, is the person who is wearing a polo, a polo which is blue with black stripes,
16 and the three people from the gendarmerie are -- they are behind. Well, they are the
17 men in military uniform, which you can see behind. There are three of them.

18 THE INTERPRETER: [16:06:28] Overlapping speakers.

19 MS DIMITRI: [16:06:28](Interpretation)

20 Q. [16:06:31] I'm going to present another photograph to you.

21 I think I'm putting pressure on the interpreters and I do apologise.

22 Tab 10, CAR-D29-0010-0172 -- so, I suppose that you recognise yourself in this
23 photograph.

24 Now, who is the person sitting down, whose face you are not hiding with your arm?

25 A. [16:07:07] Well, this is somebody who was in charge of the Muslims. I don't

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1 know whether it was the neighbourhood leader, but he was in charge in some
2 capacity, and if he was in charge, that's why we thought he needed to be there. So
3 he was a Muslim leader of some sort.
4 And next to him is a pastor with whom we worked a great deal. I believe that they
5 had been chosen to conduct some prayers, to lead some prayers, because that's how
6 we were supposed to start the meeting. I'm a Catholic, and I thought that it was
7 better to give the floor to a pastor and to a Muslim to -- to conduct the prayer session.
8 They were going to pray at the beginning and at the end of the meeting.

9 Q. [16:08:01] Thank you.

10 Now, next photo is tab 14, CAR-D29-0010-0177.

11 Do you recognise some people on that photograph?

12 A. [16:08:36] Well, the white lady at the back of the room, is that Madam Elisabeth,
13 maybe? You know, this is a long time ago, years ago now. It's probably her. It
14 would surprise me that she -- if she were not in attendance at this meeting, because
15 we discussed this a lot and we prepared this together.

16 Now, next to her looks like Mr Eloge. But in front of the lady is a nun, Sister
17 Charlotte. Sister Charlotte, who is a nun hailing from Mbaïki. I do not know -- well,
18 she had been chosen as a member of the special delegation in Mbaïki. I do not know
19 whether she was there as a member of the delegation. The mayor of Mbaïki is there
20 with his deputies, Mr Djido and Mr Bongoma Josepha and then there were the
21 councillors. So it may be that sister Charlotte was one of the advisers.

22 Now, the young gentleman at the front is called Emmanuel. The one wearing black,
23 his name was Emmanuel. He's a young man from Mbaïki and he was probably one
24 of the delegates from the youth, because he was a very active member of the youth
25 community in Mbaïki. There we are.

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1 Q. [16:10:53] Thank you. I'm going to now present to you tab 17,

2 CAR-D29-0010-0181.

3 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [16:11:32] Perhaps you can ask specifically --

4 MS DIMITRI: [16:11:34] Yeah, that's what I was going to do.

5 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [16:11:34] -- certain persons who we don't have to --

6 MS DIMITRI: [16:11:35] Yeah, that we didn't see.

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: Yeah, yeah, we don't have to repeat.

8 MS DIMITRI: [16:11:41](Interpretation)

9 Q. [16:11:41] Can you see the gentleman behind with a white polo T-shirt and some
10 black lines on his shoulders?

11 A. [16:11:52] Well, I can recognise that gentleman at the back easily. Well, the one
12 in the blue polo T-shirt is Mr Gabriel, indeed. He was in charge of the Caritas
13 programs.

14 Q. [16:12:05] Yes, but the one next to him? And my colleague is going to --

15 A. [16:12:12] Ah, there we are, that is Mr Jean Leonard who was, and still is, in
16 charge of the choir at the cathedral.

17 Q. [16:12:25] Very well. Thank you. So the one with the beige polo shirt and the
18 white -- and the black lines on his -- is Jean Leonard.

19 So I'm going to be moving on to another photo. So that's tab 8, CAR-D29-0010-0170.

20 So, there's Mr Yekatom at the beginning. Now, do you recognise the gentleman in
21 blue?

22 A. [16:13:11] Thank you. Mr President, next to Mr Yekatom in blue --

23 Q. [16:13:20] Yes, there we are. That's it, thank you.

24 A. [16:13:24] Him, the one in blue, that is Mr Alexandre Kouroupe-Awo, so he's the
25 *préfet* Lobaye.

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1 Q. [16:13:41] And who is to the right of Alexandre Kouroupe-Awo wearing a
2 yellow shirt?

3 A. [16:13:45] The one wearing a yellow shirt is Mr Raymond Mongbandi.
4 Raymond Mongbandi was the mayor of Mbaïki at that moment in time.

5 Q. [16:13:57] Thank you. And who is to the left of Alexandre Kouroupe-Awo,
6 wearing a black jumper?

7 A. [16:14:06] No, I do believe this is some form of uniform. I think he was from the
8 gendarmerie. Either he was the company commander, that is to say the one who
9 was in command of all the gendarmes of Lobaye, because the headquarters is in
10 Mbaïki. I believe that's him, but, you know, this is a post where people change a lot.
11 I believe that he was at that time the company commander and he was there
12 representing the gendarmerie of Mbaïki.

13 Q. [16:14:52] I'm not going to be showing it --

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [16:14:54] No, either we finish here or you have to
15 slow down. It's very difficult. I don't know how many photographs are left that
16 you want to show. I didn't think that --

17 MS DIMITRI: [16:15:08] Two or three. I'm almost done. I'll slow down.

18 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [16:15:09] Well, then we finish that, of course, this
19 exercise, yes.

20 MS DIMITRI: [16:15:29] Tab 6, I don't need to show it to the witness, it's the same
21 picture but it's a zoom out, CAR-D29-0010-0167.

22 But I now want to take the witness to tab 9, CAR-D29-0010-0171.

23 Q. [16:16:08](Interpretation) I know that he has his back to us, but do I understand
24 that the one wearing the DRC polo T-shirt is from the organisation that you've spoken
25 to us about, and from whom the lady by the first name of Elisabeth was working for?

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1 A. [16:16:30] Yes.

2 Mr President, I believe that -- I was saying that Elisabeth -- DRC, if my memory serves
3 me correctly, they had their office in Mbaïki, and Elisabeth would often come to
4 Mbaïki. There we have it.

5 Q. [16:16:53] Thank you. Tab 11, CAR-D29-0010-0174.

6 So, here we have the prayer that you were referring to, but now we can see the face of
7 the representative of the Muslim community. Can you remember his name?

8 A. [16:17:27] Thank you.

9 Mr President, I believe that this is Mr Diakite, the imam Diakite, with the pastor by
10 his side, the pastor who was part of our platform and with whom we worked a great
11 deal. Yes, yes.

12 Q. [16:17:59] Thank you.

13 Tab 12, CAR-D29-0010-0175.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [16:18:27] Well, these are the same people.

15 MS DIMITRI: [16:18:30] Yes, exactly, I'm sorry.

16 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [16:18:31] So I think it's not necessary to dwell into
17 that further. We have identified all of them.

18 MS DIMITRI: [16:18:35] I think I'm done.

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [16:18:37] Even the guy in the jumpsuit, which is a
20 uniform.

21 MS DIMITRI: [16:18:44] Yes. I think that's it, Mr President. Thank you, I'm done
22 with the pictures so far.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [16:18:49] Thank you very much. But I think it was
24 worth it. It was clearly connected to your examination before that.

25 Thank you very much, everyone. A special thank you to our witness. This

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- 1 concludes the hearing of today. We continue tomorrow at 9.30.
- 2 THE COURT USHER: [16:19:04] All rise.
- 3 (The hearing ends in open session at 4.19 p.m.)