

Trial Hearing

(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 Patrice-Edouard

5 Ngaïssona - ICC-01/14-01/18

6 Presiding Judge Bertram Schmitt, Judge Péter Kovács,

7 Judge Chang-ho Chung and Judge Beti Hohler

8 Trial Hearing - Courtroom 1

9 Tuesday, 27 August 2024

10 (The hearing starts in open session at 9.34 a.m.)

11 THE COURT USHER: [9:34:00] All rise.

12 The International Criminal Court is now in session.

13 Please be seated.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:34:26] Good morning, everyone.

15 Court officer, please call the case.

16 THE COURT OFFICER: [9:34:31] 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: [9:34:49] Thank you very much.

22 I ask for the appearance of the parties.

23 Mr Vanderpuye, for the Prosecution, first.

24 MR VANDERPUYE: [9:34:55] Good morning, Mr President, your Honours. Good

25 morning, everyone. The Prosecution is represented today by Sylvie Wakchom in the

1 back, with Tuomas Oja, Yassin Mostfa, Pierre Belbenoit-Avich, Maria Berdennikova,
2 Lucio Garcia, Olivia Struyven, and myself. Good morning.

3 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:35:15] Thank you.

4 Ms Rabesandratana.

5 MS RABESANDRATANA: [9:35:20](Interpretation) Good morning, your Honour,
6 ladies and gentlemen of the Bench. Good morning to one and all. The legal
7 representatives, Paolina Massidda is representing them, and myself, Elisabeth
8 Rabesandratana.

9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:35:32] Mr Suprun.

10 MR SUPRUN: [9:35:34] Good morning, Mr President. Good morning, your
11 Honours. The former child soldiers are represented by myself, Dmytro Suprun.
12 Thank you.

13 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:35:45] I turn to the Defence.

14 Ms Dimitri next.

15 MS DIMITRI: [9:35:49] Good morning, Mr President. Good morning, your
16 Honours. Good morning, everyone. Mr Yekatom is present in the courtroom,
17 represented today by Ms Sarah Bafadhel, Ms Anta Guissé, Ms Sabrine Bayssat,
18 Mr Gyo Suzuki, and myself, Mylène Dimitri.

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:36:03] And, Mr Knoops, please.

20 MR KNOOPS: [9:36:06] A very good morning, Mr President, your Honours. Good
21 morning, everyone in the courtroom. The Defence team of Mr Ngaïssona is almost
22 in its entirety in the courtroom. The first row, the right side, is Ms Chiara Giudici,
23 Michael Rowse. On my left side, Barbara Szmatala, Marie-Hélène Proulx,
24 Mrs Knoops-Hamburger Carry, Despoina Eleftheriou, Mathias Goffe, Sara Pedroso,
25 Lehna Guidou, Justine Crête, and Melissa Beaulieu.

1 That was my -- maybe one of my last tests as counsel to remember all the members.

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:36:45] But -- but you have done well. Thank
3 you very much, Mr Knoops.

4 As requested, the Chamber gives, today, Mr Ngaïssona the opportunity to exercise his
5 right to make an unsworn statement in his defence, according to Article 67(1)(h).

6 Mr Ngaïssona, you may remain seated if you wish to do so.

7 You have the floor.

8 MR NGAÏSSONA: [9:37:22](Interpretation) Thank you, your Honour. Thank you,
9 Presiding Judge.

10 Your Honours, distinguished members of the Court, I am very honoured, your
11 Honour, and I would like to thank you most sincerely for giving me this opportunity
12 to address you and the Court today. This day will remain immortal in my life and
13 I thank you for it.

14 Your Honours, as you have seen on the screen, this is the outline for my statement
15 today, which starts with an introduction and ends with the elections in 2015* in
16 Bangui.

17 Your Honours, my name is Edouard Patrice Ngaïssona. I was arrested in Paris at the
18 Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport further to an arrest warrant issued by the
19 International Criminal Court on 12 December 2018, and at 5 a.m., as I got off the plane,
20 and I was transferred to the ICC detention centre on 23 January 2019 where I remain
21 to this day.

22 Your Honours, I was born on 30 June 1967 in Ombella-M'Poko in Bangui*. I am an
23 engineer, specialised in water and forests, an operator in the economy, and I have
24 held the following positions: Acting head of the national fish farming extension
25 service at the Landja fish farming centre in Bangui; head of the equipment and

1 financial department at the ministry of waters and forests; and, in 2013, I was
2 appointed Minister for Youth and Sport, Arts and Culture.

3 And now I would like to turn to the various elections where I succeeded in being
4 elected to a position.

5 I became a member of Parliament for the 4th arrondissement of Bangui in 2005 and
6 for Nana-Bakassa in 2011. I was elected vice chairman of the finance committee of
7 the National Assembly in 2005 and first quaestor at the National Assembly in 2011.

8 Your Honours, I've also held various responsibilities in the world of football. I was
9 elected president of the Stade Centrafricain club in 1997, elected vice president of the
10 Bangui Football League in 2002, and president of the Central African Football
11 Federation in 2008. I was elected president of UNIFFAC - that is, the Union of
12 Central African Football Federations - which includes eight countries, those being the
13 Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo-Brazzaville,
14 Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, and Sao-Tomé and Principe, and that
15 was in 2017. I was also elected a member of the CAF executive committee in 2018.

16 I turn now to other appointments I have held in the world of sports. I was vice
17 chairman in charge of organising the African youth cup of nations. That was a CAF
18 competition that was in 2017. I was a member of the FIFA Club World Cup
19 organising committee from 2012 to 2017; member of the committee for the member
20 associations of FIFA in 2017; member of the confederation of African football
21 organising committee for the African Cup of Nations in 2018.

22 I also hold a number of honours. I am -- I was awarded the honour of Commander
23 of the Central African Order of Recognition in 2004, Commander of the Central
24 African Order of Merit in 2005, and Gold Medal of the Central African Order of
25 Sporting Merit in December 2009.

1 Your Honours, distinguished members of the Court, allow me to explain to you and
2 to the Court the events which I experienced and what I witnessed of the events that
3 shook the Central African Republic, as well as what the people of the Central African
4 Republic themselves went through. I'd like to talk to you about the beginning of the
5 crisis back in 2012 and the Seleka coup d'état.

6 First of all, the Central African crisis did not start with the period when former
7 President François Bozizé was in power. I will, however, try to focus on the period
8 relating to the charges against me, your Honours.

9 When this major crisis organised by the Seleka coalition started in 2012, more
10 specifically on 10 December 2012, I wasn't in Bangui; rather, I was in Tokyo, in Japan
11 for the Club World Cup for which I was a member of the organising committee.
12 And there I followed the events like everyone else on television from my hotel room.
13 It was on 22 December 2012 that I returned to Paris where I spent Christmas with my
14 family.

15 On 26 December 2012, I was on an Air France plane bound for Bangui when two
16 hours into the flight we were told that the flight was going to turn back to Paris
17 Charles de Gaulle airport as the security situation in Bangui was such that the plane
18 could not land.

19 And that's what happened. We returned to Paris Roissy-Charles de Gaulle where
20 we were taken care of by the airline.

21 The airline put us up in a hotel on the outskirts of Roissy and the airline offered each
22 passenger the opportunity to choose an itinerary that would take them back to their
23 own country. I chose to go to Douala, and then from Douala to Bangui.

24 The next day, on 27 December, I boarded the Air France plane bound for Douala.

25 We took off at 10 a.m. and arrived into Douala at 4.20 in the afternoon. Once there,

1 and after a great deal of effort, I managed to catch the only flight available to Bangui
2 on the same day, and that with Sky Airline.

3 It was almost 7 p.m. when I arrived in Bangui, and I could feel the tension in the
4 country as the Seleka advanced, committing atrocities as they moved through the
5 interior of the country. These atrocities were relayed to us by community radio
6 stations and Radio Ndeke Luka.

7 Your Honours, all Central Africans were overcome with fear, myself included. The
8 pressure from the Seleka on the government and on the civilian population was
9 permanent. At that time, also, Radio Ndeke Luka gave a horrific account of how the
10 Seleka had beheaded a civil servant working in Bria. The Seleka had first asked him
11 to crawl like a goat on all fours before slitting his throat. This account was like a cold
12 shower. That was the effect that it had on all Central Africans, and it also gave rise
13 to a number of peaceful demonstrations calling on the international community to
14 help the Central Africans to halt the progress of the columns of calamity that were
15 moving across Central African soil.

16 Your Honours, I took part in the demonstration in January 2013 to call for peace for
17 my country and to call upon the then head of state, François Bozizé, to enter into a
18 dialogue with their leaders to stop the worst that was about to happen in the country.
19 However, that initiative came from all the MPs at the time, which is why a peaceful
20 march was organised in support of the dialogue that was planned to take place in
21 Libreville, in Gabon. The people of the Central African Republic thought that
22 dialogue would resolve the situation. But, as it transpired, there was a
23 well-organised plan to bring down Bozizé's regime, using any means that they saw fit
24 to achieve that end.

25 The rebellion started very suddenly, at the very moment that the Bozizé government

1 granted the right to exploit black gold in the Grand Nord region with a view to
2 developing that region. But the real reason, which they don't want you to
3 understand, is that an invisible hand pushed this rebellion.
4 The Prosecutor is wilfully turning a blind eye when it comes to those who are really
5 responsible for the repeated crises in the CAR.
6 Your Honours, the Seleka are a mix of mercenaries from Chad, Sudan and Niger, and
7 a minority of Central Africans from the far north of our country, the Central African
8 Republic, they being led by Michel Djotodia. This rebellion destroyed everything in
9 its path, killing, raping torching, destroying religious facilities, civil registries
10 everything was targeted*.
11 Coup d'états have been a recurring occurrence in our country, your Honours, but
12 they'd never led to this level of chaos before. Bangui is the centre of political power
13 and if Bangui were to fall into their hands, it would be all over. So why invade the
14 whole country with heartless people to sack and bleed the poor people who had
15 nothing to do with politics? Why were they targeting certain categories of people
16 including the Gbayas?
17 Your Honours, they had precise demands that were understood by all Central
18 Africans. I recognise that the far north of the Central African Republic is more often
19 isolated during the rainy season and this has been the case since the country's
20 independence, and that is a legitimate grievance of the inhabitants of that region.
21 But why is it that just when the government in Bangui recognised the problem, gave it
22 recognition and signed a contract with China to explore and exploit the oil in the
23 region, why at that very moment did they take up arms? It doesn't make sense. Is
24 it that someone does not want the Chinese to exploit the oil for the good of the
25 country and of the region? That's what we have to try and ascertain.

1 They took advantage of the 2011 elections and used them as an opportunity to start
2 this war in the Central African Republic.

3 But the question I ask myself is: Is this really about the 2011 elections? In my
4 opinion, the answer is no. It was a carefully designed plan to destabilise the country.
5 In Africa in general the opposition never accepts the results of elections, and the
6 Central African Republic is no exception. The opposition prefers arms to dialogue.
7 Now, your Honours, what had to happen did happen despite the agreements made
8 during the dialogue in Gabon. In other words, the red line at Damara, 75 kilometres
9 from the capital Bangui, was violated.

10 At the time I was the first quaestor in the office of the National Assembly and I was
11 asked to head the department in charge of youth, sports, arts and culture. I was
12 there for a month and a half. At the same time, I was serving my second term in the
13 national assembly, followed by my position as president of the Central African
14 Football Federation. The last official event I attended was the festivities on
15 15 March 2013 at the 20,000-seat complex. These festivities were attended by the
16 heads of the republic's institutions.

17 Then I fell seriously ill, your Honours. I couldn't feel my limbs any longer. I tried
18 to treat myself with pharmaceutical products, but it didn't work.

19 My whole family decided that I should see a traditional healer. My family was
20 obliged to take me to the Lobaye region, 25 kilometres from Mbaïki, to a small village
21 called Bombele, to the home of a traditional healer called Guy Maleka. I was
22 accompanied by several members of my family and my in-laws. These were Faustin
23 Ngaïssona, my younger brother; Frédéric Ngaïssona; Angèle Ngaïssona, my younger
24 sister; and my in-laws, Dieudonné and Antoinette Malessoua. They were with me
25 because my state of health at the time was worrying.

1 Three days later, my wife came from Paris, in France. She came straight to -- to be
2 with me.

3 One day after her arrival, at the place where I was being treated, Radio Ndeke Luka
4 was talking about the lightning advance of the Seleka on Bangui, the capital. On
5 Sunday, 24 March, at 1 p.m., Radio Ndeke Luka announced that the capital had been
6 taken by the Seleka and that their vehicles were moving around the town.

7 Immediately afterwards, my younger brother Frédéric Ngaïssona received a call from
8 Bangui asking him to tell me to leave where I was because the Seleka were looking for
9 me. Everyone was overcome with fear. I absolutely had to leave where I was in
10 order to be safe.

11 The traditional healer went to get me a motorbike taxi to take me through the forest to
12 the border with the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville. But my youngest sister refused
13 to come with me, preferring to return to Bangui to be with my father. Also, my
14 in-laws, Mr and Mrs Malessoua, also had to go back to Bangui for their children. So
15 four of us took motorbike taxis through the forest on very rough roads, very rough
16 tracks, as far as the Congolese territory, the territory of Congo-Brazzaville, deep in the
17 bush. One of the motorbike taxidriviers knew the head of the border post very well,
18 so they took us straight to him.

19 The head of the border point received us. I introduced myself and my family. He
20 said to me, "Ah, I've heard what's happening to you." Then he told me that his wife
21 was from the Central African Republic, so we were like brothers-in-law. He took us
22 in that night, and he realised the state of my health, so without delay he went to have
23 the pygmies come and -- so that they could treat me through the night. At 5 a.m. the
24 next day he gave me other medicines to help me over the course of my journey.

25 We left the next day at 5 a.m. to arrive in a village where a Congolese logging

1 company was based. The village is called Mouale and it's on Congolese territory.
2 Now, there's a gendarmerie post at the entrance to the village. We were checked
3 there. The gendarme who was there took us to the brigade office. When we
4 arrived at the brigade office, the deputy brigade commander received us. We
5 handed over our passports. Then he left the office to make a telephone call. When
6 he had finished his call he came back to tell us that the central authorities had agreed
7 to take us in. We stayed in Mouale for two days before being taken to Enyele, which
8 is the main administrative centre commonly known as the sub-prefecture*.
9 There, when we arrived, we found six people who were already there by chance:
10 David Gbanga, the former CEO of Radio Centrafrique; Landry Depot, the former
11 deputy director and current director general of the gendarmerie in Bangui. He was
12 there with his two young children. Also Dieudonne François Batawapi-Yepi, the
13 former sub-prefect of Dekoa, with his son.
14 So, together, there were 10 Central Africans in all. We spent just one night in Enyele.
15 The next day, at 6 a.m., we were taken in a four-wheel drive pickup truck to Ouessou.
16 We arrived in Ouessou in the evening, where all the arrangements had been made to
17 take us across to the prefecture. At Ouessou we were taken to a hotel at our own
18 expense. For the duration of our stay, once we had settled into the hotel that night,
19 no one came back to see us. It was only six days later that an officer of the Congolese
20 national police came to tell us that "tomorrow you will be received by the authorities".
21 The next day, the police officer came to us to take us to the prefect's residence. And
22 there, to our great surprise, we found ourselves face to face with our late ambassador,
23 Mrs Fayanga, may she rest in peace, and the minister for territorial administration of
24 Congo-Brazzaville.
25 Once the introductions were over, the ambassador took the floor to tell us this: "The

1 authorities of this country cannot allow all those who were responsible during the
2 regime that has just fallen in the Central African Republic to remain here on its soil.
3 So you will have to think quickly and inform us of your final destinations so that the
4 minister can make a decision." End of quotation.

5 So each of us proposed a final destination. I said that once I arrived in Brazzaville
6 I would take plane tickets for myself and my family to travel to Douala in Cameroon.

7 David Gbanga said the same thing as me. Colonel Landry Depot and the former
8 sub-prefect gave their destination as being the Democratic Republic of Congo. Once
9 everyone had given their destination, she said okay, but she specified that we would
10 be monitored until we had left the soil of Congo-Brazzaville, and we agreed to that.

11 At the end, I spoke on behalf of the delegation, thanking them for their understanding
12 and telling them that we would be leaving Ouessou the day after their visit. And so it
13 was, the next day, we arrived at the bus station at 10 past five in the morning. Given
14 the state of my health, the ticket inspector agreed that we should board first, and at 6
15 a.m. the bus set off for Brazzaville via Oyo, the village of the President of the Republic
16 of Congo-Brazzaville, Mr Denis Sassou-Nguesso, arriving at Brazzaville at around
17 11 p.m.

18 In the meantime, Laurent Tago had booked me into a hotel a five minute's walk from
19 Brazzaville airport. We arrived at the hotel at midnight. The next day, my cousin
20 Laurent Tago fought to find us seats with Air Camerco. I would like to express my
21 gratitude and appreciation, and that of my family, to him.

22 When we got to the airport, we learned that the plane was considerably delayed, and
23 we took off at 1 a.m. with a one-hour stopover in Kinshasa in the DRC, finally
24 arriving in Douala at 3.30 in the morning. After the usual formalities, we left the
25 airport for the Lumière hotel in Akwa, Douala, where we arrived at around 4.40 a.m.

1 So, your Honours, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished members of the Court, exile to
2 Cameroon.

3 When I woke up, I left my room having showered to get my strength up a bit after
4 everything I had gone through throughout that painful and arduous journey. I no
5 longer remember the exact date when I left Brazzaville airport and my exact arrival at
6 Hotel Lumière. That information is* in my diplomatic passport, which I returned to
7 the ministry for foreign affairs. It contains lots of information about my multiple
8 trips when I arrived in Cameroon.

9 At the Hotel Lumière, I met up with the acting consul, Mr Denis Dombia, who was
10 sitting down and had been awaiting for me along with some Central Africans and my
11 Cameroonian friends; namely, Phillipe Bony, who was a journalist who worked at
12 Canal 2 International at Douala and whose family was Yaoundé; Dieudonné Mafouo,
13 with whom I had been doing business throughout a lengthy year; and Cypréen Chidi,
14 who is also a Nigerian businessman in Cameroon.

15 Now, all these people were there, had been awaiting my arrival. We reunited with
16 them. There was an atmosphere of relief, of joy. Seeing me in the flesh dispelled
17 their anxiety. I stayed with them, with my friends, talking about my misadventures
18 and they all told me that they had been extremely anxious because they had had no
19 news about me and telephones were not getting through.

20 Your Honours, Presiding Judge, members of the Court, there was -- had been the
21 problem of my wife's French residence permit, that was left behind in Bangui*. Upon
22 the incitement of our children in Paris*, we decided to go up to Paris. But my wife
23 had left her French residence permit in Bangui with her big sister and we needed to
24 have that permit before being able to travel, and when my brother, Aboubacar Hadji
25 had done everything he could at my sister-in-law's to get hold of the document and

1 send it on through a Central African merchant who used to come to Douala on
2 business. And then there was the state of health of Barnabé Ngaïssona, my little
3 brother, and my younger sister Angèle Ngaïssona, which was of great concern to me,
4 and they had to be got out of the country to keep tabs on their house, given that my
5 father was by that point too old and lacked both the strength and resources to look
6 after them.

7 In anticipation of the mass arrival of my family in Bangui, I enlisted the help of my
8 friend Dieudonné Mafouo to help my little brother Faustin Ngaïssona to help find
9 two houses for rent. And this is what he did for me. He found me a house at Deido,
10 in Douala in Cameroon, and a flat in Ndokoti at Douala.

11 Upon arriving in Paris, your Honours, I stayed almost three weeks. I received a
12 telephone call from Faustin Ngaïssona telling me that my little brother Barnabé
13 Ngaïssona has arrived, who at that point was already very ill, and that he had found
14 houses that I had left instructions to find before my departure. He also asked me to
15 come back quickly to deal with all of that. I explained the situation to my wife and
16 my children, the need to go to Douala, Cameroon, very quickly.

17 During my stay in Paris, I had the unexpected visit of Mr Joachim Kokaté. When he
18 rang at the door, it was my son Luther Ngaïssona who opened up to him -- opened
19 up the door to him and showed him into the room where I was sitting. He was in a
20 desperate state, your Honour, and I told him that the most important thing was that
21 he was still alive and that he was lucky enough not to be at Bangui when everything
22 happened.

23 I showed him to what extent I had lost weight, and he said, and I quote, "But those
24 people over there, they're devils. I know them. I know them very well. If they
25 had come across me at Bangui, they would have cut me into tiny pieces after what

1 I said against them at Brazzaville. It's god that sent me on that mission". End of
2 quote.

3 Whilst he was with me, he asked me whether I'd had news of the former president,
4 President Bozizé, and I told Kokaté that the president was at the Hotel Hilton as far as
5 I knew. And he asked me how could he go about visiting him, and I had made him
6 no answer on that particular point. There were only two of us sitting at the table and
7 I asked him how he had gone about getting my address. Kokaté told me that he had
8 got my address through his friend Basile Kodongbia, the father of the Kodongbia
9 international. And then Kokaté stood up and left.

10 I had never had a meeting with Kokaté, not in France, not in Cameroon. One day in
11 Douala he called me to invite me to eat at Douala, at the Douala port, to go off and eat
12 with Koyagbele, he was with Koyagbele, and I refused. What else he did during that
13 time I know absolutely nothing about.

14 Your Honours, Presiding Judge, I know Kokaté. I knew him in government after the
15 Libreville Accords in Gabon when he left the Seleka rebellion to come and betray
16 them in Bozizé's government at the time and when he was asked to make a statement
17 at Libreville. And that's how he went off with Abakar Sabone, Ringuy le Gaillard
18 and other persons to set themselves against the Seleka leaders. And, upon their
19 return, in exchange, he was appointed minister.

20 Now, in the government from a protocol perspective Kokaté had precedence over me.
21 He was on an official trip when the Seleka took Bangui. He stayed in France, but
22 I don't know in what city. And when he was at N'Djamena to represent the so-called
23 Anti-Balaka resistance fighters, I really have no idea. During that particular period,
24 if I -- if memory recalls, I was in Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire.

25 Now the return to Douala. I received a phone call from Faustin, telling me about the

1 arrival of my younger brother. Do forgive me.

2 THE INTERPRETER: [10:16:03] Says the accused.

3 MR NGAÏSSONA: [10:16:04](Interpretation) I then went away from Douala on

4 14 May, and before arriving at Douala, my friend had already arrived with my eldest

5 daughter. As soon as I arrived I went to join them at the Hotel Somatel. I came to

6 see my family who was at that point in a house surrounded by a fence that I rented in

7 the Deido neighbourhood next to Grand Moulin in Douala. In total, there were 28

8 people in that particular house where I had taken up lodgings in the Ndokoti

9 neighbourhood behind the lower secondary school Larousse Belle-Vie. In all, there

10 were 10 people in my accommodation, including four children enrolled into school.

11 And in the big compound, where most of the family was, there were almost 15

12 children who were going to school. There was a huge load weighing down on my

13 shoulders, your Honours. And as the situation deteriorated in Bangui, many people

14 came into Cameroon, running away from the Seleka killings, and that's how I agreed

15 to take in under my roof the former social affairs minister Mrs Sayo Bernadette.

16 After that, I also took in the former neighbourhood chief Issa from Boy-Rabe,

17 Mrs Ibrahim, who was with us almost a month, at the time of the demise of my

18 younger sister Angèle Ngaïssona. So all those people were sleeping in the house

19 that was fortunately fenced off.

20 Some would sleep in the lounge, others in the veranda. It was very difficult, but,

21 you know, these are human beings, and I was duty-bound to bear the load with the

22 little means that I had for my family. I also did it for Central Africans, or the Central

23 Africans who would come to me. Sometimes my family put up some people in the

24 big family concession at Deido without my knowledge.

25 Regarding the villas, that has been talked about, your Honours, I never bought one

1 single house in Cameroon. I don't have one. I only rented a house for my family,
2 and an apartment for myself and the other members of the family.

3 Your Honours, upon my return from France on 14 May, after having installed the
4 entire family, I had to organise a match fixture between the Central African Republic
5 and South Africa. So I had to make a trip to Yaoundé where the -- where the head
6 office is of the football Cameroonian federation, since that I had negotiated with the
7 federation to receive its help for arrangements that had to be made to welcome our
8 guests coming from South Africa. So it was around 16 or 17 May. Staying in
9 Douala wouldn't enable me to set everything in motion to make sure that that
10 championship would go well, and so it was because of that that I decided to go briefly
11 to Yaoundé for the championship. But before leaving Yaoundé, I first asked
12 Mr Phillipe Bony to book me a temporary flat for a month's rental so that I could
13 organise the match.

14 Bony rented me a house located near the Yannick Noah complex, the tennis
15 champion -- Franco tennis man -- in the Togolo neighbourhood in Yaoundé, and that's
16 where I stayed for that match fixture between CAR and South Africa. And when
17 I was at Yaoundé for the match, the health of my younger siblings deteriorated, and
18 once the match was over, around 13 June, I told Bony that I was going to leave to
19 meet up with my seriously ill younger siblings.

20 So, your Honours, my exit from the Central African Republic was not expected, was
21 not scheduled. It was a case of force majeure. I left without the requisite resources
22 to look after myself, to look after my family in France. And my father had stayed in
23 Bangui with the children of my eldest brother who had died in 2002.

24 You can see that the Confederation of African Football at the time, the late president
25 Issa Hayatou, made me a humanitarian donation of 20,000 American dollars, and the

1 FIFA sent me the same amount. This money enabled me, first, to help my family
2 and the school fees of my children in France and at Douala, but -- and the lion's share
3 went to look after my younger siblings whose lives I didn't manage to save, your
4 Honour. But, I also received help here and there, which enabled me to survive
5 during my exile.

6 Several times I called Mr Bertrand Colios to send me money, and also Célestin
7 Yanindji. Your Honours, Kolios was a go-between me and the former deputy
8 director of the Morocco-Central African bank, Mr Ali Chaïbou - today, he's the
9 national director of the BEAC, the state banks of Central Africa - because this
10 gentleman preferred that I not call him directly in order to avoid him trouble, because
11 he is the young -- he's Djotodia's younger brother. And that's why these calls went
12 to Kolios because Kolios was acting as a go-between. This has nothing to do
13 whatsoever with the popular uprising for the Central African resistance. I wanted to
14 say that I never received from the former President Bozizé one single penny.
15 Sometimes I helped those who stayed after him in the *Golfe* villa. They had
16 something. Sometimes they* would call me because they* had nothing to eat, and if
17 the electricity had come down, if there was an outage, electricity outage in the house,
18 I would come to pay for them out of a sense of humanity, but without anything in
19 return.

20 What's true is that the situation of my country was of great concern to me, to see it
21 held hostage by a string of foreign mercenaries, forcing its daughters and sons into
22 exile abroad. This was a situation that was very worrying for all Central Africans
23 irrespective of their religion or their ethnic group, because the crisis hit every corner
24 of Central Africa.

25 If I'm being accused of helping people, I accept that willingly, your Honours. But it's

1 in my nature, and that's how my father and mother brought me up and taught me.

2 I wasn't brought up, I wasn't taught to commit violence and in a climate of violence.

3 My family never taught me verbal violence, nor nastiness nor hate. I feel no hate in

4 my heart in respect of my neighbour, because, for me, the blood of an innocent is to

5 be protected at all costs and is very dear to god. And, for me, it's absolutely out of

6 the question to prompt somebody to hurt his neighbour.

7 When I was in Cameroon, I moved around a lot, your Honours, for football, to go and

8 see my family in France, but also my friends in Côte d'Ivoire and in the -- within

9 Cameroon. And sometimes I would go on the road to buy my family food supplies;

10 for example, cassava, gobo, jute, smoked meats, plantain bananas, yams, taro,

11 et cetera, et cetera.

12 Regarding all my trips outside Cameroon, you'll find evidence to that effect in the

13 passports I had at the time, and even in the diplomatic passport that we have applied

14 for * and are* still waiting to receive despite all the efforts made by my Defence team

15 to obtain that document but as yet in vain. Cooperation requests remain a dead

16 letter. To this day, your Honours -- to this day, that diplomatic passport has been

17 mysteriously mislaid, or it's disappeared, while it was only in 2016 that I handed it

18 back.

19 At the Douala airport, that's where I did all my trips from when I was in Cameroon.

20 Your Honours, honourable members of the bench, in Cameroon I never saw, nor met,

21 Adrien Poussou, Zokoue Hissene, Martial Wango, Guerson Nganadekoe, Levy Yakité,

22 Ngaikosset Eugène, or Martial Gallaut. It's true I met and saw a number of Central

23 African nationals in Yaoundé when I was preparing that football fixture. In Douala,

24 many Central Africans, many struggling Central Africans would come and see me for

25 help and I would willingly answer that call at the time if I had some resources to offer

1 however small. And there were lots of Central Africans who came to help me
2 during -- well, after the death of my little brother Barnabé Ngaïssona in July 2013 and
3 that of my younger sister Angèle Ngaïssona in the beginning of September 2013.
4 I kept her body at the morgue in the Deido hospital in Douala because in July I had
5 sent Barnabé Ngaïssona's dead body in Bangui and his body had been desecrated by
6 the Seleka when they arrived in the Bangui M'Poko airport. And that's why I didn't
7 want a second time to see the desecration of another member of my family's body.
8 Your Honours, as regards the meeting in Paris, I'm now going to explain matters to
9 you regarding the meeting in Paris, the meeting which led to FROCCA.
10 As my family in France could not attend the funeral of my younger brother Barnabé
11 Ngaïssona owing to a lack of money, I was obliged to go to Paris, in France, to grieve
12 with them towards the end of July 2013. When I arrived at the house in
13 Saint-Pierre-du-Perray there were many Central African nationals who came to help
14 me. Information was circulating. It was said that a rally was being organised in
15 Paris to which all Central African nationals were invited. Mr Lin Banoukepa, who
16 I knew from before because he was the lawyer who had assisted my family in
17 regularising their French permits, well, he had called me to inform me about this
18 gathering. When I arrived at this place where the meeting was held on 3 August
19 I saw many Central Africans of many ethnicities and religions, including
20 Lin Banoukepa, Jean-Serge Wafio, Commander Kogbo, the treasurer general of the
21 KNK Hadja Maboula, Mr Ngoubou Guillaume, François Bozizé, and his sons Francis
22 and Socrates, and many other people I don't recall. There were almost 30 of us,
23 I don't remember exactly. I know an agenda had been prepared prior to the meeting,
24 your Honours, but Lin Banoukepa took the floor to explain that he himself had
25 initiated the gathering and that the situation in our country was of concern to us all

1 and that, as President Bozizé was in France, he might be received by the French
2 authorities and that "the contribution of all Central Africans on the ground could be
3 useful in supporting the president's efforts". End of quotation.

4 He wondered what could be done to draw the international community's attention to
5 the chaotic situation in the country. It was Lin Banoukepa who came up with the
6 idea that to have our voice heard here in Europe we needed to have a legal status that
7 would enable us to knock on the doors of -- of all the political parties in France and in
8 Europe. So that was the reasoning that we were given.

9 Then after Lin Banoukepa had spoken, President Bozizé took the floor to say that
10 *what Mr Lin had just said was correct and was logical. Several people took the
11 floor, but I myself did not speak at the meeting. What I do know is that
12 Mr Guillaume Ngoubou took the floor to say, "President, it's preferable that we have a
13 structure on which we can rely in conducting our various approaches". End of
14 quotation.

15 So at that point everyone agreed that the proposal was a good one, and so it was that
16 the name "FROCCA" was arrived at. And the remit of the FROCCA was to collect
17 information on what was happening in the Central African Republic and to inform
18 the international community and diplomatic missions of that information.

19 Now, nothing military was mentioned at that meeting, your Honours. We only
20 discussed the diplomatic and political aspects. This was also the only meeting
21 I attended in Paris. And at that point in time I didn't know Poussou. Was he there?
22 I don't know. This -- that was the first and last time I attended a meeting in Paris, or
23 in France. Other than that, I simply took advantage of my football-related travels to
24 extend them with stays in Paris to be with my family.

25 Now, as regards the alleged meetings of Bozizé's so-called circle -- now, I know

1 nothing about that, nor do I know where President Bozizé was staying in Paris. At
2 the time I didn't know Maxime Mokom, so I can't speak of him. And I never met the
3 former director general of the BEAC, Yvon Songuet. That's the truth, your Honours,
4 even if one seeks to distort reality. Indeed, I think that here in Europe nothing can
5 escape attention if one is determined to know the true facts.

6 The Prosecutor should have tried to find out where former President Bozizé was
7 staying in Paris during that period and also should have asked the hotel where he
8 was staying, if Mr Ngaïssona had visited the hotel. What is more, there are security
9 systems in place in these places. It would be best to consult the CCTV footage, as in
10 Yaoundé and Cameroon, to corroborate Poussou's story.

11 Also, Poussou came here to say that he was in telephone contact with me. That is
12 simply and absolutely not the case. It's not true. It would be very easy to check
13 whether I ever called Poussou, or he me, in 2013. There were no such calls, your
14 Honours, and, therefore, you will find no such records. You'll not find any
15 communication with a certain Poussou during that period, your Honours.

16 Furthermore, I -- I don't go to cafes or bars, and at no time during that period did I go
17 to any cafes on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. Once again, the Prosecutor could have
18 checked the geolocations of our two telephones to ascertain whether I was ever with
19 Poussou in the places he speaks of.

20 Your Honours, one day, I received a call from Lin Banoukepa when I was in Douala.
21 He told me that he had collated information in the form of a memorandum that he
22 had wanted to send to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York, but
23 that the person who had submitted or who had relayed the memorandum had
24 betrayed us. He explained that the idea had been that Yvon Songuet submit the
25 memorandum, but that Socrates Bozizé had proposed a certain Poussou who he

1 considered to be someone with knowledge of the United Nations, and that, with him,
2 we would have a better chance of the memorandum reaching the hands of the
3 Secretary-General of the United Nations.

4 Lin went on to say that when Poussou arrived in New York, he had in fact delivered
5 the document to the incumbent Seleka prime minister rather than to the UN
6 Secretary-General. I notice that once again it was Socrates. He was always going to
7 betray his father with his cousins. It's very unfortunate, an unfortunate state of
8 affairs. That's what I said.

9 So this was the first time I'd heard the name "Poussou", and the first time I had
10 telephone and physical contact with him was when he was appointed to the prime
11 minister's staff by Prime Minister Mahamat Kamoun in 2014. It was Prime Minister
12 Kamoun who gave him my telephone number so that he could call me and I took the
13 opportunity to record his number then, and you will find his number in my telephone
14 contacts.

15 Your Honours, I would like to say a few words about the period of Djotodia's
16 resignation. I would like to tell you something about my short stay in Yaoundé to
17 collect my visa.

18 I also encountered Bernard Mokom in Yaoundé. He is the son of a woman from my
19 village, the village of Nana-Bakassa. We call each other "cousin" in the broader sense,
20 but, in reality, in fact, we have no familial ties. We would sometimes bump into
21 each other in the street and talk, but at the time I didn't know his* children.

22 One day, towards the end of November, early December, 2013, I went to Yaoundé to
23 collect my visa so that I could travel to Morocco as part of the -- as part of my efforts
24 to organise the Club World Cup in Marrakesh in Morocco, which was to start on
25 7 December 2013. And as he was in financial difficulty he asked me to give him

1 some money to buy credit for his phone. Now, that day he wanted to call someone
2 and he didn't have any credit and as I was with him, I lent him my phone.
3 He moved away from me to talk on the phone. When he finished talking, he said to
4 me, "Cousin, your grandson wants to say hello." I took the phone from him and for
5 the first time in my life I spoke to Maxime Mokom. And he said, "Ata" - in Sango
6 "ata" means grandad - and I said also, "Ata, how are you?" He replied that he was
7 okay but that he was hungry. I told him that the situation was very tough pretty
8 much everywhere. He told me that his father had relayed to him what had
9 happened to my younger siblings and how they had died. At the end, I asked him if
10 I could keep his number. He agreed to that, which is why his number is my
11 contacts.
12 I don't know anything else about him, your Honours, because I don't know him
13 personally. I don't know his job title, let alone his profession. I don't know him
14 from Adam. I don't know if he has a military background, for instance. But when
15 I returned to Bangui on 14 January 2014, I didn't see him. He only arrived in
16 February.
17 Your Honours, there's one thing that I'd like to make clear to you, your Honours,
18 about my relationship with Bernard Mokom. We saw each other very rarely in
19 Bangui because each of us was occupied with his work. He is the younger brother of
20 President François Bozizé, but he had a bad time under the Bozizé regime. Bozizé
21 had thrown him in prison. He was then released a year and few months later. So
22 even in Cameroon, when I was in Yaoundé to prepare for the South Africa versus
23 Central African Republic match, he came to see me to complain about his situation.
24 And from time to time I would help him. Sometimes he even asked me for my
25 telephone to call people and I gave it to him. And so it was that if he was in

1 difficulty, I would come to his aid -- not only him, but all exiled Central Africans who
2 would approach me if I was able to.

3 So to wrap up on the matter of the visa, I visited the Moroccan embassy with the
4 economic adviser from the Central African Republic in Yaoundé to collect my visa.
5 Once I'd collected it, I went straight back to Douala.

6 Now, Presiding Judge, your Honours, concerning the attack of 5 December, all the
7 media - the French, Cameroonian, and Central African media - had been talking for a
8 long time about this imminent attack on 5 December 2013. It wasn't a secret. And
9 after the attack, everyone was calling their relatives, trying to get news of their
10 families and the situation in Bangui in general.

11 On 7 December 2013, I took an Air France flight to Marrakesh via Paris Charles
12 de Gaulle airport, and I stayed there until 22* December 2013, which actually was the
13 end of the tournament. I then went straight to Paris to spend Christmas with my
14 family.

15 After the Christmas celebrations I wanted to spend new year's eve with the other part
16 of my family who were in Douala. So it was that on 28 December 2013 that
17 I returned to Douala and spent new year's eve with my family before going to see my
18 friends at the Ivorian Football Federation in Abidjan in February 2014. I visited them
19 to seek their help.

20 It was in Côte d'Ivoire that I saw on the France 24 television channel that the leader of
21 the Seleka, Michel Djotodia, had resigned in N'Djamena in Chad. I immediately
22 started calling people in Bangui to apprise myself of the situation in my country.
23 I also called several members of my family as well as the former minister of state the
24 late Cyriaque Gonda.

25 After, I left Abidjan for Douala and I started to think about how to get back to my

1 country. My younger brother Abba Gonifio Fulbert, who is a colonel in the customs
2 service, reassured me that I could return home without fear and that the situation was
3 calm.

4 Now, before that call I had also received a call from Sebastian Wenezoui, telling me to
5 come down because he had received a visit from the whites. They had asked him
6 who should run the country if Djotodia resigned. He had immediately thought of
7 me, and that's why they asked him to tell me to come back promptly. I asked him,
8 your Honours, "Why me?" He replied that he had explained to them that I was
9 much loved by young people in the country because of my role in football and that
10 I could bring peace and social cohesion back very quickly. And that's why he was
11 calling me. I asked him to give me some time to think about what he had just told
12 me.

13 After hanging up, I tried to contact some people in Bangui to get their views and
14 I discussed the matter with some members of my family in Douala, in France before
15 deciding to return to Bangui.

16 After I went into exile, my father could no longer live freely in Bangui. He and the
17 rest of my family were terrorised by the Seleka. He no longer lived in the family
18 compound; rather, he had fled the house to take refuge in the Damala neighbourhood
19 in Bangui where he continued to -- where he continued to be hunted down. So
20 unable to continue living Bangui, he had fled to hide in Bossangoa with my older
21 brother Célestin Willbozoumna. But the situation there was just as untenable.

22 I was informed about the situation in Bossangoa by the former minister of state, the
23 late Cyriaque Gonda.

24 Now, as he was a member of the transitional national assembly, I begged him to do
25 everything he could to go and find him and bring him back to Bangui to his place and

1 protect him. That was around October 2013, about two weeks after the Bossangoa
2 attack. And that's what he did. He took a lot of risks. He managed to find my
3 father at the bishopric and to get him into a vehicle for Bangui. On the way, on the
4 road, my father was almost killed. In the end it was thanks to the international
5 MISCA forces who accompanied them that my father's life was saved.

6 When he arrived in Bangui, my father refused to sleep at Gonda's house because he
7 felt that when he had been threatened by the Seleka on the road no one had done
8 anything to defend him, so my father preferred to stay in the Boy-Rabe
9 neighbourhood. But he didn't sleep at home; rather, he slept with helpful people in
10 the neighbourhood, and that until Djotodia resigned in N'Djamena. From that point
11 on, he returned to the family home and lived there.

12 Your Honour, honourable members of the bench, I'd like now to address you on the
13 matter of my return to Bangui. Regarding the reasons of my return, I am genuinely
14 appalled to hear here in the Prosecutor's narratives that my return to Bangui, to my
15 own country, was intended to espouse the cause of the resistant people called the
16 Anti-Balaka.

17 Your Honours, I'm -- I'm a Central African. Under my country's constitution, the
18 Central African Republic, nobody can be forced into exile. Not only that, my father
19 stayed in the country. He suffered the Seleka persecution and this had a
20 considerable effect on me during my exile. Despite my trying to persuade him to
21 leave and meet up with me in Cameroon, he refused, and he said that he would
22 prefer dying in his own country.

23 I lost my mother and now I've only got my father left. Was I simply to abandon him?
24 You can't buy parents, your Honour, honourable members of the Bench. I'd already
25 been separated from him by force for almost 10 months, and to find an opportunity to

1 meet up with him, because I am his sole source of support, so why couldn't I leap on
2 an opportunity to meet up with my only dad that I'd left in circumstances beyond my
3 control? Only a deranged child wouldn't do so. Today I've lost him because I'm
4 not by his side to look after him, to take care of his state of health, to feed him and --
5 and a variety of other things.

6 If it's said that I returned to Bangui to join the Anti-Balaka resistance, I say no. It's
7 totally over the top and absurd. These resistance people, it was they who came up to
8 me, my humble person, to ask me to help them, to have their cries heard by the
9 Central African and international authorities. And I felt it was the call of duty to
10 save my country. It was they who bear witness to the inside workings of the
11 resistant people called the Anti-Balaka. They came to tell you my role before this
12 Chamber, your Honours, and not those who invented their story and at no point in
13 my life I met.

14 Your Honours, honourable members of the Bench, I performed this task lovingly to
15 restore peace and to go to the polls, the elections in 2015-2016, risking my life to do so.
16 I returned to the country on 14 January 2014, and before leaving Douala, I asked my
17 little brother, the customs official, Abba Fulbert Gonifio, to buy me a mattress and a
18 mat, and also to see whether at my father's house I could have a room free because
19 my house had been destroyed by the Seleka. I also informed Sebastian Wenezoui of
20 my return to Bangui. And I returned, embarking on a Sky Airline flight and arrived
21 at Bangui. And on my arrival, I was taken out of the VIP lounge where I met up
22 with Sebastian Wenezoui, warrant officer Bafio, chief warrant officer Theodore Koisse,
23 and the president of the political party the MSCA, Wilibona, who had come at the
24 behest of the former, late, state minister Cyriaque Gonda. He took me in his car to
25 my father's house.

1 Your Honours, with your leave, perhaps I can take a break now. Perhaps in the
2 second session I can continue.

3 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:56:40] Of course, Mr Ngaïssona. I had the
4 same idea, to be honest.

5 Let's have a break until 11:30.

6 THE COURT USHER: [10:56:47] All rise.

7 (Recess taken at 10.56 a.m.)

8 (Upon resuming in open session at 11.31 a.m.)

9 THE COURT USHER: [11:31:32] All rise.

10 Please be seated.

11 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:31:56] Mr Ngaïssona, it has been brought to our
12 attention that you would prefer to finish after this session, that now commences, and
13 continue tomorrow; is this correct?

14 MR NGAÏSSONA: [11:32:19] *Pardon?*

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: No, no problem.

16 MR NGAÏSSONA: [11:32:21](Interpretation) Please forgive me, your Honour.

17 Seeing how things are going, I'll see whether I can finish in the second session, round
18 off on the point that I had embarked upon. But if I do require extra time, I will let
19 you know, your Honour.

20 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:32:49] We are -- we are fine with that,
21 Mr Ngaïssona. Please let us know. You have still the floor.

22 MR NGAÏSSONA: [11:32:57](Interpretation) Thank you.

23 Honourable Members of the Bench, alongside the road at Boy-Rabe, I was welcomed
24 by the local population with shouts of joy. The women were throwing down their
25 wraps, which meant that the vehicle had to slow down right next to the Ngouboutou

1 brothers evangelical church, the compound adjacent to that of my father's. At that
2 particular place, I saw a densely packed crowd in front of my father's gate. I got out
3 of the vehicle and I started greeting some people and then I went inside
4 the compound to embrace my father. He took me into the lounge for prayers.
5 Once the prayers are over, I went out and I saw in front of the gate a number of young
6 people alongside some adults, some wearing *gris-gris* on them. People -- the people
7 told me that these were Anti-Balaka -- or so-called Anti-Balaka resistance people. I
8 went up to them, I greeted them, I introduced myself to them. Some told me,
9 "President, we know you, just -- you don't need to introduce yourself to us." They
10 knew me due to the role that I held in the football world. I thanked them and went
11 off again to stay with my father and my father's brothers with their wives who had
12 come to visit me, including my cousins and people from the church.
13 At that particular time, Honourable Members of the Bench, Wenezoui was also there.
14 Before leaving, he said, and let me quote: "*grand-to*, tomorrow morning I'll come with
15 the Sangaris to take you to sort out what's expected with the general of the French
16 mission."
17 The following morning at 10 a.m. I heard the sound of engines approaching
18 the compound. When they arrived, they asked me to get into their armoured vehicle,
19 but I preferred to travel with the MSK* political party President*, Mr Wilibona.
20 Once we had arrived at the airport, the French military vehicles stayed not too far
21 from a base where I encountered many members of the so-called Anti-Balaka
22 resistance. That's where I came across Captain Charles Ngremangou for the very
23 first time and several Anti-Balaka resistance people. Wenezoui came up to me to tell
24 me that a lieutenant of the French army, who was nearby, was the general's envoy
25 and that the general gestured that I could go up to him.

1 Honourable Members of the Bench, I went up to him. We greeted each other. And
2 he said, "Are you Mr Ngaïssona?" And I answered, "Yes, that's me." And he asked
3 me to hand him my dossier that the general was waiting for. And I asked him,
4 "What -- what dossier?" And he answered, "The candidature dossier to run in
5 the transitional presidential election." And I said, "Ah, I wasn't told about that.
6 And you're also saying that the deadline for handing in these candidacies is getting
7 very close. So how can I go about this in so short a space of time to complete
8 a dossier with all the necessary paperwork? I simply can't do that. I don't have my
9 birth certificate, I don't have my certificate of nationality. All my documents were
10 spoiled and defaced by the Seleka. My house was ransacked. So I really don't
11 know how to -- how to go about things. And even if you were to file my
12 candidature, Mr Lieutenant, who would vote for me over there? The assembly is
13 mainly made up of Djotodia appointees, which means that they will trust a candidate
14 from the Seleka camp. And so it will prove very, very difficult for me."
15 Your Honours, he said to me, "If it's us who submit your entry, your dossier, we'll
16 find a way to get you through." End of quote.

17 The problem was that I didn't have my civil status records on me. The only
18 document I had on me was my passport. And he said that he would put this
19 problem to his superior, the general, and that he would come back to me through
20 Sébastien Wenezoui. He didn't understand that Wenezoui hadn't explained things
21 to me when I was still at Douala. And the lieutenant and I then went our separate
22 ways and I returned among the so-called Anti-Balaka resistant people.

23 It was at that juncture that the Anti-Balaka resistance people suggested to me that I
24 help them, but I didn't answer immediately. I asked to go back home and I was
25 escorted by the Sangaris. Wenezoui went with me. He asked me to be

1 the mouthpiece of the so-called Anti-Balaka resistance people. I wasn't sure. I
2 asked them to give me a bit of time. Then, the Anti-Balaka resistance people from
3 Boy-Rabe went up to me and asked the same thing. They insisted, they insisted so
4 that I would help them, because they had nobody to bring their demands before
5 the new national and international authorities. And I told them, "Okay, but, on one
6 condition. And only -- only if you accept to abide by the orders of the government
7 and the international forces to not loot, steal or attack anybody, including
8 the Muslims, and to not wreak havoc, irrespective whether people get what they want
9 or not. And I ask you to get everyone to toe the line and pull together,
10 unconditionally. And my conditions", I said, "are non-negotiable."
11 It was only after that I called Wenezoui to tell him what I thought and that I agreed to
12 help them. After that, I warned him about their elements getting out of control.
13 I didn't know any of their elements. So they, they'd have to be made to act
14 responsibly. The next day, I asked those who had come to see me to attend
15 a meeting at my father's house and I also asked Wenezoui to bring some resistance
16 senior officials, Anti-Balaka resistant senior officials so that we could speak face to
17 face and so that the others could hear from my mouth the rules that had to be abided
18 by before I could commit to help them.
19 On 16 January 2014, the Cameroonian general who was the head of the chief of staff
20 of the MISCA force, General Toumenta, he called Wenezoui and told him that he
21 wanted to see the political representative and some senior members of the resistance.
22 The next day -- the next day, in his offices, he wanted to see them for a talk.
23 Wenezoui called me up to tell me that he would see things with Captain Ngremangou
24 so that he could give me the names of the Anti-Balaka resistance leaders and that I
25 could see things with Lieutenant Konate, who was in the 4th district, to see whether

1 he could appoint other Anti-Balaka resistance chiefs from Boy-Rabe to go with me.
2 So the next day we went with about eight or 10 people, I can't quite remember how
3 many exactly. But once we arrived, they took away all our telephones. The general
4 said, "except the minister's telephone", he said. And the general told us that he had
5 information according to which some individuals were organising a boycott of
6 the presidential elections, the man or woman president who would be responsible for
7 bringing back peace in the country and that he was doing his utmost to make sure
8 that that election went smoothly and properly and that nobody was to get in the way
9 by causing any trouble. And that's why the chief contacted all the individual groups
10 to talk with them. So I spoke and I said, "General, I don't understand what you're
11 saying. You're saying that today people are daring to try to stop this election. Well,
12 everybody is expecting, with bated breath, to have a president who will very swiftly
13 bring back peace. And the so-called Anti-Balaka resistance people are not against
14 the elections. On the contrary, they want, during these elections, that a woman
15 candidate is chosen because the men have proved their limits -- their limitations.
16 And what I understand from two or three officials' statements, that they want that
17 the candidate that emerges as the winner of this election thinks of them so that people
18 from the provinces can go off again."

19 At the very same moment, your Honours, at the time when the last person to speak,
20 the general received a telephone call and he stepped out to take the call. Upon his
21 return, he announced to us that -- that we were all under arrest, without telling us
22 the reason why. Shortly after, the general called me up -- called me into his office--
23 corrects the interpreter - and he said, "Mr Minister, I just received an official call
24 which tells me that -- well, telling me that I have to keep you under guard because,
25 according to some information, the Anti-Balaka resistance may try to boycott

1 the elections for transition President." And he -- "Well, I passed on what you told
2 me", he said, "but they didn't seem to understand. But I'll continue talking and I'll
3 come back to you on this because this is just not right. I invited you here, me
4 personally, I don't know who he had spoken to and the -- who had made that official
5 call."

6 We stayed all night at Camp M'Poko, your Honours. And then the following
7 morning the general called me up to say that, ultimately, the people he had spoken to,
8 the person who had made the official call had heard reason and that I was going to be
9 freed and that he would have me accompanied by the MISCA force to take me home.
10 And I accepted, and around 9 in the morning we left Camp M'Poko to set off on our
11 journey.

12 Upon our return, a cortège was made up with the MISCA force all the way through to
13 my father's house. On our arrival there was a crowd of people with people of
14 the Anti-Balaka resistance people in that crowd who wanted to take on
15 the international forces. I didn't realise until I received a call from the general, who
16 told me, "Mr Minister, you need to speak to the crowd because they intend to attack
17 those who escorted you." Immediately I went out of the compound to speak to
18 the crowd and ask, you know, "What's -- what's going on? Why do you want to
19 have a go at the very forces that are here to help us? Move aside. Let them come
20 through."

21 So they went with us~-- interpreter correction: "They are here with us, they need to
22 be thanked and not threatened. They've done nothing." End of quote.

23 Upon my return I reported to some senior officials among the Anti-Balaka resistance
24 people present of what had been said with the general and to explain
25 the misunderstandings that had occurred as to why we were maintained at

1 Camp M'Poko -- at M'Poko camp, and at the end the Anti-Balaka resistance people
2 decided unanimously to support the candidature of a woman, Mrs Catherine
3 Samba-Panza, because all the men had failed. And this came about while she was
4 campaigning on the radio and they told me that this was the only person, the only
5 person who helped them. And they said that they -- that she called "*A Kété amolesgué*
6 *ti mbi gbaticien*", translation being "My obstinate children", giving an approximate
7 translation, your Honours, says the accused. So for them she was a mum who
8 would be -- who would make sure that they would be looked after and they could
9 answer and meet their concerns if she won the elections. And that's why when she
10 was elected I wrote to her to congratulate her on her fabulous election.
11 Your Honours, members of the Bench, once Mrs Samba-Panza was elected,
12 immediately I sent her, on behalf of the Anti-Balaka resistance, a letter of
13 congratulations in the radio stations but also in the written press, hoping that she
14 would take in hand the crisis and put an end to it. That was my hope and it was also
15 the hope of the Anti-Balaka resistance people. And after her election she made
16 a gesture, a motherly gesture to the Anti-Balaka resistance people when she sent
17 Mrs Brigitte Andara, mayor of Bangui's 4th arrondissement, with a sum of money of
18 3 million CFA francs. Shortly after, we received an invitation from her to go and
19 visit her at her home near the Ngaragba neighbourhood in the 7th district of Bangui.
20 And when we arrived at her house, I didn't think there would be other groups there,
21 but it was on arriving there that I realised that the resistance movement called
22 the Anti-Balaka was -- was deep water that nobody could plumb the depths of and
23 hope to control. It was like a tide, like a sea tide.
24 And the president received us with two people standing either side of her, one her
25 political adviser, Minister Anicet * Guiyama. I didn't know the person from

1 the other group, except Léopold Bara, who I had met for the very first time at Douala
2 and I'd asked for his vehicle to take some goods to Bangui. She welcomed us and
3 then she spoke to tell us why she had made the invitation, particularly that she knew
4 why the Anti-Balaka resistance people had revolted -- had entered into revolt and that
5 she would call for -- and she was calling upon us to help bring back peace to
6 the country, the country that was bereft of any administration. And as a mother, she
7 would do her utmost to meet her concerns and we should also help her to get to that
8 successful end. Each group spoke to thank her for the invitation that she had
9 made -- extended and made willingly. I said to President Samba-Panza, "I believe in
10 you and the resistance people believe in you and are ready to offer you support in
11 your weighty role." And the president replied by thanking us for what we said and
12 said that she was banking on us and that she could also trust us.

13 And so we stood up and -- and said goodbye to her before leaving. And it was
14 during that particular meeting that -- that I met Léopold - or, interpreter correction -
15 that I learned that Léopold Bara had represented the Anti-Balaka resistance people at
16 N'Djamena in Chad with Kokaté and a former Minister Bonda. When taking her
17 oath, the President Samba-Panza made her first trip to Boy-Rabe to visit the internal
18 displaced persons of the Catholic church of Monaster. The Boy-Rabe population
19 threw on the ground their wraps so that she would walk upon them. There was lots
20 of hope welling up in the population but also among the Anti-Balaka or so-called
21 Anti-Balaka resistance movement people.

22 Your Honours, distinguished members of the Court, a few days after his -- his oath,
23 the president of the National Transitional Council called me through his protocol
24 office to let me know that he wanted to see me. The following day, I received by his
25 director -- by the director of his office, Mr Firmin Ngrebada, and shortly afterwards I

1 saw Léopold Bara and Joachim Kokaté come in. The director of his office received
2 them and together we sat on a sofa opposite him. We then followed him into
3 the president's office. He came out again and the three of us found ourselves in
4 the office of the president of the National Transitional Council, or CNT. He
5 explained to us that he and President Samba-Panza had decided to call upon us as
6 representatives of the Anti-Balaka resistance and that representatives of
7 the movement should be part of the government that she wanted to put in place, and
8 so he had thought to the three of us. He asked us to send him our curricula vitae
9 and said that he would hand them over to the new prime minister. The next day,
10 each of us came to hand our CV in to the president of the National Transitional
11 Council, Ferdinand Alexandre Nguendet.

12 Now, a few days after, the president of the National Transitional Council collected
13 the dossiers and two days later I received a phone call from Prime Minister André
14 Nzapayéké who asked me to come and see him at his home in the Sica district next to
15 Marie Jeanne Carron secondary school. I spoke with him for half an hour and at the
16 end he informed me that he had sent my dossier to be vetted to establish whether
17 I was of good moral standing and that the final decision lay with the president of
18 the Republic. I bid him farewell, took my leave and went home.

19 A few days later, the government was announced on national radio. But only one
20 person was appointed to the government and that was Léopold Bara. A few
21 moments after the announcement, a crowd of enraged resistance members besieged
22 me, asking why we were not represented in the government, in this new government.
23 Who was going to make demands on our behalf?
24 Your Honours, they vented their anger on national radio and in the public* press and
25 even to the international community. However, I advised them not to fall into that

1 trap. I told them that President Samba-Panza knew what she was doing and that
2 Mr Léopold Bara had represented the Anti-Balaka in N'Djamena and therefore it was
3 normal for President Samba-Panza to appoint Léopold Bara to represent them. They
4 retorted that they did not know him. The next day, the decree appointing him to
5 the prime minister's office was issued and Joachim Kokaté was appointed advisory
6 minister to the prime minister's office.

7 Now, this in turn raised tensions to new heights. I was obliged to call the president
8 of the National Transitional Council to explain the situation to him. He said to me,
9 "Yes, cousin, I saw your call, but I was busy with the president, telling her how
10 unhappy I was with her government and that, on the other side, the Seleka side, there
11 were more of them and I made it clear to her what I thought." That's what
12 the president of the National Transitional Council said.

13 I told him that this was precisely what I was calling about too. I was calling because
14 tensions were running very high and I didn't know what to do. He told me that
15 the president would contact me to make good her mistakes and that in the interim
16 the young people needed to be calmed down.

17 I went back to them to explain things, but in the meantime Wenezoui had come to tell
18 us that Mrs Samba-Panza had called him and promised to rectify and reframe things.
19 And it was following this that Mrs Samba-Panza told Wenezoui that the Anti-Balaka
20 resistance in his area should make a proposal for appointments and that she would
21 study the proposal. And that's how a meeting came to be organised at my father's
22 home. The meeting was attended by leaders of the resistance known as
23 the Anti-Balaka. And further to that meeting, a proposal for appointments to
24 leading positions was set out and it was Wenezoui who took the proposal to
25 the president of the Transition*.

1 Now, only two individuals were appointed further to the proposal, namely Charles
2 Ngremangou as director of the Minister of Defence's Office, and Séraphin Personne
3 Féikéré, as *chargé de mission* at the office of the president of the Republic.

4 All of these proposals were made by the leaders and members of the resistance
5 known as the Anti-Balaka in my presence. And the proposal was unanimously
6 adopted to be sent to the President*.

7 Now, your Honours, in early February 2014, after her investiture, the president
8 invited us to come and see her at the palace. She received us in the cabinet room and
9 reiterated her desire to continue her work to bring about peace and reconciliation
10 amongst the people of the Central African Republic. She wanted to achieve these
11 objectives before the elections and she also wanted our help.

12 I took the floor to thank her for her invitation, to thank her for her time and her
13 proven commitment to leading the country towards peace and reconciliation. For
14 me it was a commitment that we were ready to support. She expressed her wish to
15 see the country pacified very rapidly, and this for the good of the Central African
16 people. She stated that she wanted our support in that difficult task that she was
17 undertaking. I took the floor to make a proposal to her. Your Honours, I said to
18 her, "Excellency, in the light of everything you have just told us, I am very much in
19 agreement with you. The issue for the Anti-Balaka resistance is that most of those
20 who I see have come from the provinces, so I would like to make a proposal that
21 would enable those who have come from the hinterland to return. Madam President,
22 I suggest that you receive the leaders of the Anti-Balaka resistance who have come
23 from the hinterland, in other words, the provinces and the villages, and that you
24 explain to them that you have inherited a very difficult situation where there is no
25 money and that you wish to offer to provide them with large vehicles that will take

1 them home while you negotiate with the partners of the Central African Republic.

2 And that once you have secured funding, you will send them something to enable
3 them to take up their rural* activities anew. I think they will understand you and
4 agree to go back home." That was my proposal.

5 And I made it because I believed that the young people that I had seen were very
6 amenable. And, what's more, the months of March and April were approaching and
7 the rains were coming for their fields. The president thanked me for the proposal
8 and said that she would call me again to see how things could be put into motion as
9 soon as possible. So I was expecting the president to call me about the proposal that
10 I had made for members of the Anti-Balaka resistance to return to the provinces. But
11 nothing came of it and I don't know what happened.

12 Honourable Judges, distinguished members of the Court, to my great surprise, and
13 everyone else's, on the radio we heard an unexpected statement made in Mbaïki by
14 the president and by General Soriano of the Sangaris calling members of the
15 Anti-Balaka resistance enemies of peace. Now, that caused a great deal of frustration,
16 not only within the Anti-Balaka resistance, but also among the general population.

17 Now, I was really taken aback, because she had asked me to help her and I had put
18 a proposal to her, I had also gone back to explain the proposal to those who had
19 asked me to speak on their behalf and I had told them that I was awaiting her
20 feedback. Immediately after that statement was made, RFI called me seeking my
21 reaction. I replied by saying that the Anti-Balaka resistance was not the Defence and
22 Security Forces and therefore was not responsible for the security of the people. But,
23 rather, it was Mrs Samba-Panza who had been elected to restore peace, not
24 the Anti-Balaka resistance. I said that the Sangaris too had been remitted to bring
25 peace and that therefore the Sangaris forces could not shift their responsibilities to

1 the Anti-Balaka resistance either. And indeed how did one distinguish the other
2 armed forces from the Anti-Balaka resistance?

3 The journalist asked if what I was saying was that the general was incompetent. I
4 replied, "Those are your words. They must rise to their responsibilities and bring
5 peace instead of levelling accusations."

6 President Catherine Samba-Panza was deceived by her advisers, who led her to
7 believe that by proceeding in that fashion the international community would allow
8 her to extend her term of office, owing to the unrest in the country, as had happened
9 in Madagascar. Now, I understood the game perfectly well. It was incumbent
10 upon the government to take account of the Anti-Balaka resistance's demands, as well
11 as cantonment. If she had tried cantonment, it would have helped in establishing the
12 real Anti-Balaka resistance numbers. However, the circle around Samba-Panza was
13 manipulating her to divert her away from her objective, which was to work for peace,
14 security and reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

15 Now, after that statement to RFI, on the morning of 10 February at around 7 a.m. I
16 received a call from an unknown number. It was in fact the commander in charge of
17 the Cameroonian MISCA contingency. He said, "Today it's the turn of your sector to
18 disarm and we're on our way to you." I said, "Okay, Commander, do your job."

19 I was taking breakfast at the time. In fact, in reality they had already surrounded my
20 father's compound without me knowing it. It was my cousin who warned me and
21 said, "We're leaving." And when we left through our small emergency gate I saw
22 a lot of police posted all around the compound. One hundred metres from
23 the compound the commander called me again, "Excellency, can you authorise us to
24 enter the compound? And are you there?" I replied, "Yes, sir." I called Junior
25 Mokpem, who was still in the compound and told him to open the gate for them. As

1 soon as he had opened the gate, they -- they rushed towards the sitting room, they
2 immediately let off smoke-bombs, accompanied by gun blasts and that lasted
3 10 minutes. I looked at my cousin and said, "You saved my life. Thank you,
4 cousin."

5 That day, they arrested everyone they found in front of them, even if that person was
6 not a resistance fighter. That day, several people who had come to visit me that very
7 morning were arrested.

8 My father's house was uninhabitable for a fortnight. The air in the house was
9 unbreathable owing to the tear gas. As it was -- as the compound was fenced in,
10 the whole family slept outside within the compound. I immediately called in
11 the journalist to show them the impact of the damage done by the international force
12 and I also had a bailiff survey the damage and take note of the bullet holes in
13 the armchairs and in the walls. Everyone who visited the site said that it was clearly
14 a planned assassination attempt on me. And it was because of that event that those
15 who had asked me to speak on behalf of them to the authorities in Central Africa and
16 to the international authorities, they published a press release in the private and
17 public press, as well as on the radio.

18 Now, following this very serious incident, someone explained to me that my
19 assassination had in fact been ordered by Jean-Jacques Demafouth. And
20 Jean-Jacques Demafouth had come in an unmarked black car with dark tinted
21 windows to the courtyard of the Boganda secondary school in the 4th arrondissement
22 Bangui. He had spoken to three soldiers in Sango, and the soldiers with whom he
23 had spoke were not foreigners, but they simply wore Cameroonian armbands,
24 although they were not Cameroonians.

25 Your Honours, a few weeks later, my brother-in-law, the former minister Jacob Gbeti

1 informed me that Jean-Jacques Demafouth had commissioned his nephew, a retired
2 gendarme called Roger Kogbowali to kill me. He told them to bring him my head.
3 After that, I had no desire either to help the Anti-Balaka resistance nor
4 the government, let alone the president. A few people like Jacob Mokpem Bionli,
5 Ngaya Alfred Legrand and some leaders of the Anti-Balaka came to see me and said,
6 "Minister, please don't abandon the children, otherwise the situation will get out of
7 control. Please pull yourself together, Excellency, and help these children."
8 I had -- I devoted tremendous physical, mental and intellectual strength to
9 the presidential and legislative elections your Honours. In April, on the 15th, I
10 received a call from Samba-Panza's political adviser, the advisory minister Clément
11 Anicet Guiyama, who said he wanted to see me on behalf of
12 President Catherine Samba-Panza. The next day, between 1 and 2 in the afternoon,
13 he came to find me at my father's house. I received him in the living room, where
14 there were still bullet marks to be seen. He was amazed with what he saw. Then
15 he explained that the president had instructed him to re-establish contact and
16 dialogue with me in order that I might help them to establish peace with
17 the Anti-Balaka, given that she had lost the confidence of the population after
18 the statement that she and General Soriano had made in Mbaïki. She wanted to
19 meet me. I agreed on condition that some leaders of the resistance accompany me
20 because they had a lot that they wanted to say to her.

21 On 17 April, we went to the presidency for a meeting with the president. On that
22 day, I remember that a number of people were present. There was the director of
23 the president's private office, Mr Mabigui. Jean-Jacques Demafouth was present.
24 Mahamat Kamoun, special adviser to the president was there, and General Antoine
25 Gambi. Christian Yamalet, secretary general to the presidency, as well as Professor

1 Clément Anicet Guiyama, political adviser to the presidency.

2 I don't remember the exact turnout on behalf of the Anti-Balaka, but I do remember
3 that the following people were also present:

4 Maxime Mokom, Judicael Mongazoui Orofei, Dieudonné Ndomaté, Sylvestre
5 Yagouzou.

6 Now, during this meeting each leader of the resistance the Anti-Balaka explained at
7 length their indignation at the behaviour of the international force which was
8 allowing certain Central Africans to wear MISCA uniforms in order to use violence
9 against them. They also complained of the aggressive communication and
10 statements made with respect to them and their positions. The president promised
11 to do her utmost to address at least some of their concerns and to work together with
12 them towards reconciliation. When she finished speaking, I took the floor to explain
13 to her that the attack on my father's home had been organised and planned by
14 Jean-Jacques Demafouth and that I had solid information implicating him in
15 the attempted assassination on me.

16 Your Honours, Jean-Jacques Demafouth, who was in the room, looked very
17 uncomfortable throughout the remainder of the discussions. The president was
18 stunned by what I had to say, but she made no comment. At the end she thanked us
19 and adjourned the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the chief of staff, Mr Mabigui,
20 asked me to follow him. Once in his office he told me that the President had left 4
21 million Central African francs to feed the Anti-Balaka and it was up to me to release
22 the funds. But, in fact, at the end of the day it was Maxime Mokom who recuperated
23 the funds*.

24 Just as I was signing the discharge or the receipt, Demafouth came into the office.

25 He stated that MISCA was in front of the palace and that he was coming for

1 Ngaïssona. The director of the private office was astonished and asked what all this
2 was about. Demafouth replied that he had no idea. I then turned to the director of
3 the private office and said, "Director, ah, is the hunt for Ngaïssona not over yet?
4 Why are you persecuting me?" He replied, "No, Minister, the president was very
5 sincere with you, but he was most ill at ease with that which was happening."
6 Meanwhile, General Toumenta and Prime Minister André Nzapayéké were already
7 together with the president.
8 Shortly afterwards, the president's protocol officer came to collect the director of
9 the private office. He took me a few minutes later into the president's office. Upon
10 entering, I saw across from me the president, and on my left General Toumenta next
11 to Prime Minister André Nzapayéké. I asked the general if he had an arrest warrant
12 against me and he answered me, "Of course not", but that he had received
13 instructions to arrest me but that the time was not ripe and the prime minister had
14 made a proposal to the president that he was going to put me. The president said
15 afterwards -- said at that point, "If Mr Ngaïssona signs the document, then you can
16 take him to make a statement before the public prosecutor before freeing him, before
17 releasing him." The prime minister opened his notebook, he held a piece of paper to
18 me and asked me to copy out by hand on a clean sheet of paper exactly what he had
19 already prepared. It was a statement where I would commit to continue to work
20 towards peace. I didn't want to take any risk. I wanted to avoid people getting out
21 of hand and so I did what they asked me to do.
22 After that, the general took me off to the gendarmerie, where the prosecutor of
23 the time, Mr Ghislain Grésenguét was waiting for me. And he took my statement in
24 an office and at the end he had me read my statement, which I then signed.
25 The prosecutor asked me to come to his office every Monday, which is what I did,

1 until he himself told me that I no longer needed to come. And it was already 8 p.m.
2 by that time and it was very dark outside and Toumenta drove me back in his car and
3 he asked me -- and he told me, rather - corrects the interpreter - that he didn't
4 understand what was going on in the country but he was going to ring me up so that
5 we could talk about that.

6 The next day I received a telephone called from Clément Guiyama, a minister adviser,
7 who told me that it was Demafouth who had asked the MISCA to come and arrest me.
8 And when the general arrived, it was he who had said to the president, "You're
9 making here a serious mistake in arresting Mr Ngaïssona. I -- I'll arrest Ngaïssona,
10 but it's he who's helping us appease the situation. So why did you call him in here
11 to -- only to arrest him? The others will no longer trust you, Mrs President." End of
12 quote.

13 And that's how the president came up with the idea of making this proposal of
14 a document that I signed. And I explained to her that it was because what I had
15 said -- because of what I said during the meeting with -- at the president's office
16 against Demafouth that he did that. And Mr Guiyama apologised to me.

17 One evening General Toumenta called me up to come and -- to ask me to come to his
18 house around 7 a.m. the following morning. And upon arriving, he -- he told me
19 exactly what the president's adviser told me and he added that, if the president wasn't
20 careful and continued to listen and to be manipulated by Jean-Jacques Demafouth,
21 then he was going to put her* back up against the wall. And he gave me a huge
22 amount of advice. I spoke to him of the -- of Demafouth's assignment to -- that
23 Demafouth had sent to kill me and he -- he said that he was aware of this and he had
24 asked a report from a commander of a Cameroonian unit who was entrusted on that
25 case for that day. And he even confirmed information according to which civilians

1 had been disguised to wear a military bridge, a MISCA military badge and that
2 the commander in question had been subjected to very rigorous disciplinary action.
3 Honourable Members of the Bench, Honourable Presiding Judge, on a regular basis
4 we would speak. And he helped considerably -- he helped me considerably in my
5 endeavours. And he received my advice as well when I heard things or I actually
6 saw things go awry with the MISCA. Immediately I would tell him of that and after
7 he would then offer advice. And there was a sort of an entente cordial that I would
8 work with that very worthy Cameroonian general who -- who's -- who's -- I mean,
9 the future of the CAR was very dear to his heart. But, unfortunately, death ripped
10 him away from Central Africans who loved him dearly and he had a high sense of --
11 of duty. Peace be on his soul.

12 Your Honours, the transitional government understood the work that I had done to
13 restore peace and that my life was under threat by some quarters of the Anti-Balakas
14 who didn't want to continue on the road to peace. And I was also threatened by
15 the Andjilo family, and by Andjilo himself, who wanted to endanger my life. And
16 this was one of the ways that the transitional government tried to protect me,
17 understanding the crucial role that I had in the return of peace to the Central African
18 Republic.

19 This is borne out by decisions made by Ande Koyara, minister of defence, on
20 30 October 2015 bearing the reference number 751. As well as of the decision of
21 the deputy chief of staff to the Central African Army, Mr General Victor Yacoub, with
22 reference number 318, emanating from the national defence ministry.

23 After all these events I preferred working directly with the Seleka senior officials
24 rather than the President. At the same time - with certain Seleka leaders -- we had set
25 in motion a working project aimed at moving towards peace together, without

1 waiting for the government*. Because what I saw in the government's conduct was
2 that if we didn't stand up to the mark and shoulder responsibility to achieve
3 reconciliation, then the government wouldn't do anything at all. And that's why I
4 took it upon myself, alongside some Anti-Balaka resistance officials, to go and see
5 the current transport minister, Djono Aba Gotrond, at his home. And we came to an
6 agreement that this was the right way forward and that now we had to put together
7 a project with a mandate and also identify partners to finance what had to be done.
8 After a number of meetings, we put together a programme of actions that had to be
9 undertaken with a budget that was put at around 49 million FCFA. During our
10 discussions, we said that we would have to send our project, this budgeted project to
11 the Central African government first of all before -- and get -- to get their point of
12 view before sending it on to the international community, because the work that we
13 were doing, well, it was the government that should have taken it upon itself to do
14 that. We handed on the project to the president, but we received absolutely no
15 feedback from her, neither did we receive any feedback from the government.
16 Shortly afterwards, we started receiving invitations from the minister for
17 reconciliation, Mrs Montaigne. There were several meetings. During these
18 meetings, we -- started to advise us to merge the resistance movement called the
19 Anti-Balaka because the government wanted one single interlocutor to facilitate their
20 work*. The NGO Mouda made -- also did this approach with the NGO Pareto to
21 merge the Anti-Balaka resistance movements in Bangui and the Anti-Balaka --
22 so-called Anti-Balaka resistance in the south. In the month of June 2014, I received
23 an initial visit from Vivien Beina and Paleon Zilabo in my office in the football
24 federation to talk about a need for a meeting that the Mouda NGO wanted to have
25 with me.

1 A few days later, I received a telephone call from a certain Anna Samba-Panza, who
2 introduced herself as the person responsible for the NGO Mouda. She came to see
3 me with Beina and Zilabo. And they explained the need to group together
4 everything into one single coordination to make sure that demands would have
5 weight and that we could weigh in negotiations led with the government and the
6 international community because if everybody were acting individually, then they
7 wouldn't answer us.

8 She explained to me that we had to move quickly because there was a programme for
9 dialogue with the Seleka outside of the Central African Republic, which I had no -- no
10 knowledge of. So, I called upon the leaders of the Boy-Rabe sector so-called
11 Anti-Balaka resistance movement to tell them about this need to go to this meeting
12 and to get on with the people in the south.

13 During the discussion, everybody accepted to undertake this meeting according to
14 the proposals of these two NGOs, Mouda and Pareto. The two NGOs set the date
15 and location in -- on the United Nations Developments premises, the former head
16 office opposite the ministry for transport in Bangui. Now, these discussions lasted
17 several hours and there emerged a unified coordination and news of which was
18 carried by the media and relayed by the government but also to the international
19 community. The coordination was designed to further peace and reconciliation.

20 After the setting up of this coordination, we were called to the president's office for
21 a meeting with the political parties and civil society to announce to us that there
22 would be a dialogue organised at Brazzaville in Congo. The president also asked
23 the leaders of political parties and civil society to be part of that dialogue process. I
24 had done a number of things with the representative of
25 the President Denis Sassou-Nguesso who was the mediator of the Central African

1 crisis, Mr Mokoko. Despite my best efforts, there was no outcome that actually
2 emerged, for the reasons I really don't know. And it was only actually when, when
3 all political actors and the government felt that on our side we were working together
4 with the Seleka to achieve a dialogue with the Anti-Balaka -- between the Anti-Balaka
5 resistance people and the Seleka, because we were looking for money, they
6 announced the holding of a dialogue at Brazzaville in Congo.

7 Honourable Members of the Bench and distinguished members of the Court, it was
8 during the preparatory meetings for dialogue that the president ordered us to strike
9 up contact with the resistance people in the provinces so that they would be part of
10 the delegation, whilst placing a quota for each entity, capped therefore at 23 people,
11 that would be taken in charge by the government, their expenses. Upon leaving
12 the meeting, I asked the leaders to identify and contact their counterparts in
13 the Anti-Balaka resistance movement in the hinterland so that they could come to
14 Bangui and to enable the delegation to be ready for the trip. Beforehand, I made
15 sure that I got in touch with some Muslims at PK5 in the 3rd arrondissement of
16 Bangui with whom I was in constant contact, in order to work together in preparing
17 the forum. I can give you a name as an example. Mr Abdoul Wahid. He is
18 the head of the Muslim pilgrims* in Bangui.

19 So we left Bangui in a government-chartered plane, chartered by the Congolese
20 government, and it did lots of to-and-froes. And I went into the last chartered flight,
21 which landed in the evening. The delegation of the Anti-Balaka resistance entity
22 were housed in a small hotel where everybody was housed throughout the entire
23 duration of the forum.

24 Distinguished members of the Bench, distinguished members of the Court,
25 the Congolese President Denis Sassou-Nguesso opened the forum with Catherine

1 Samba-Panza in attendance and with all of the political delegations, as well as
2 the civil society, including a delegation of a political platform. There was also
3 the cardinal of the Democratic Republic of Congo. After the opening, I was called
4 upon to make a speech on behalf of the Anti-Balaka resistance, which whetted lots of
5 appetite in the room. The Seleka representative didn't speak during the opening
6 speeches. Then President Catherine Samba-Panza spoke and, at the end,
7 President Sassou-Nguesso adjourned the meeting.

8 Now, in terms -- in terms of the apportioning of the groups and breaking them up
9 into workshops for each specific theme, the Seleka representatives refused to be part
10 of the discussions to provide a contribution to ironing out or offering a solution to
11 the crisis that was shaking our country*. President Sassou-Nguesso entered into
12 the fray, calling upon each group in his palace to try and provide a solution.

13 The Anti-Balaka resistance team was the second to be received and it was on that
14 occasion that I handed over the demands of the Anti-Balaka resistance by hand.

15 The president, the mediator president took due note and promised that he would
16 hand them on to Catherine Samba-Panza, the president of the Central African
17 transitional government, would hand them over by hand with his suggestions. And
18 at the same time, he also communicated the Seleka's demands who wanted
19 the transition president to resign and to set up an alternative transitional government.

20 In response, we said that it wasn't possible to go from one transitional government to
21 the next. It's true that the president could improve upon certain points, admittedly,
22 but it wouldn't be acceptable that she would be relieved of her presidential function.

23 We wanted her to continue right way through to the next elections to extricate*
24 the country from its crisis, the crisis that was continuing to buffet it, and that she
25 should make concessions for all stakeholders, including civil society and political

1 parties, to be actively involved in a balanced fashion in the peace process*. And she
2 thanked us for our position and gave us advice before we ultimately left the palace.
3 After our meeting with him, he called once again upon the Seleka to -- for their view
4 of -- to offer the view of the Anti-Balaka resistance people who didn't share, who
5 didn't bind this idea of another transition and who wanted Catherine Samba-Panza to
6 remain president of the transition government.

7 At that particular point, the Seleka brought out a fresh statement saying that they
8 would agree with continuing with the process. The mediator thanked them and
9 urged them to act upon that immediately. As soon as they left the palace, they
10 immediately made other statements, saying that the Central African Republic should
11 be partitioned. The mediator became absolutely furious upon hearing about that
12 and he called upon them and sent me into the plenary room and tried to get me
13 from -- well, sent people to get me from the plenary room to bring me to the palace of
14 the Congo Republic. And when I arrived the mediator was there, alongside
15 religious leaders such as the current cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga, the sultan of
16 Ndele, Dhaffane. The leading representative of the Seleka delegation, he was also
17 there. For the Seleka, there was the former minister Idriss Salao personal adviser to
18 Djotodia was there. Djono Abbel Ahaba was there, the current transport minister.
19 The former minister of finance, Abdallah Kadre, was there, and other names that I
20 forget.

21 Your Honour, the President Sassou took the floor to express how unhappy he was
22 about the Seleka's approach and he paid tribute to the Anti-Balaka resistance
23 delegation who had said what they were going to do and stood by it, contrary to
24 the Selekas. And he asked me to speak to my Central African brothers.

25 Honourable Members of the Bench, I took the floor to talk to the Seleka

1 representatives and I begged them to give a chance to the Central African people who
2 were suffering the desperate consequences of this crisis, this long tunnel where there
3 was no light. And it's up to us to give them a glimmer of hope and not to add extra
4 suffering to what they've already gone through. If you have in your heart a light of
5 love for our country and its people and if -- and if you forget this idea of
6 the partitioning of our country, you must remember that our country is one and
7 indivisible. At the time end of what I said, the mediator said, you've just heard your
8 brother speak. Immediately, Minister Dhaffane took the floor to say, "Mr Mediator,
9 excellency, if what my brother Minister Ngaïssona is saying and if he's saying it right
10 from the bottom of his heart, I will sign the agreement without the slightest
11 condition." The mediator president once again thanked us and once again asked us
12 to retake our seats in the auditorium because he was going to follow us into the room
13 to close the forum.

14 But President Sassou-Nguesso had very much reproached the sultan, saying that
15 a territory leader shouldn't have -- shouldn't say one thing and then its opposite in the
16 next breath. And that when a chief speaks he should stand by what he says. "You
17 gave me your promise, you gave me your word as a leader. And as soon as you're
18 out of the door of my palace you change tack. It's not -- that's not exacting
19 responsibly."

20 When I rose to leave, it was the cardinal of the Democratic Republic of Congo that
21 took me by the arm to say to me, "My son, you'll go far. May god bless you.

22 During all these negotiations, the President Catherine Samba-Panza hasn't been with
23 us. Before the signing ceremony, the representative of the Seleka, Mr Dhaffane,
24 spoke to officially state the Seleka's commitment without conditions to further
25 the negotiations of the Brazzaville forum and in favour of said negotiations."

1 The next day, while I was in the market, the representative of Mrs Catherine
2 Samba-Panza ran up to me to ask me to go immediately to the airport. I put my
3 luggage together as quickly as possible and off I went, with Florent Kema and
4 Dieudonné Houronti. In the plane, she told us that she wanted us -- wanted to
5 travel with us to show the Central African people that -- that we were henceforth
6 united, that we were one to achieve peace. Dhaffane, Jean-Jacques Demafouth and
7 Sayo were also in the plane. Once we arrived in Bangui --

8 (Mr Yekatom exits the courtroom)

9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:49:08] Mr Ngaïssona, can you stop a moment.
10 Ms Dimitri, is there an issue with Mr Yekatom?

11 MS DIMITRI: [12:49:14] There is, Mr President. I'm told by the security officer that
12 he needs translation because the security officer doesn't speak French, so a member of
13 the team went in the other room to discuss. I'm sorry for the interruption.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:49:27] No, you don't have to be sorry for
15 the interruption. It's very important that he understands everything.

16 Since we have a break. Mr Ngaïssona, you provided us with an itinerary, so I see
17 there is a lot what you want to tell us further. So you wouldn't be able to finish
18 today, I -- I understand. I also understand from what we have been made known is
19 that you would prefer to -- to stop midday, so to speak, that would be shortly, in
20 a couple of minutes. And we also understand that it must be exhausting to speak
21 alone for a couple of hours.

22 So is my impression correct? Would it be okay to say that we now stop the hearing
23 for today and you finish tomorrow with your statement?

24 MR NGAÏSSONA: [12:50:24](Interpretation) I understand what you say,
25 your Honour. Perhaps I could use just the 10 minutes that remains, and possibly

1 then tomorrow I can continue, with your leave.

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:50:41] Of course. If we are sure that
3 Mr Yekatom gets translation, then -- what is the problem, by the way, with regard to
4 that? Can we --

5 MS DIMITRI: [12:50:53] I think it's a health issue, but the security officer doesn't
6 understand what is being said by Mr Yekatom because the security officer doesn't
7 speak French.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:51:01] Yeah.

9 MS DIMITRI: [12:51:02] Which is why now someone went with the security officer
10 to see what is the issue with Mr Yekatom.

11 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:51:08] So, but if we have here a health issue I
12 think he would simply have to finish for today.

13 You understand that, Mr Ngaïssona, if there is a health issue with Mr Yekatom, I
14 think it's best to -- to stop here.

15 And we hope that Mr Yekatom will be better tomorrow. And if there is a problem
16 with Mr Yekatom tomorrow, we can do it, perhaps, that he follows from the detention
17 centre, if this would be possible, yeah.

18 So, let's conclude the hearing for today, under these circumstances, and we continue
19 tomorrow at 9.30.

20 THE COURT USHER: [12:51:46] All rise.

21 (The hearing ends in open session at 12.51 p.m.)

22 CORRECTIONS REPORT

23 The following interpretation corrections, marked with an asterisk *, are brought into
24 the transcript.

25 Page 3 line 15 : [...] today, which starts with an introduction and ends with the

1 elections in Bangui.

2 is corrected to

3 [...] today, which starts with an introduction and ends with the elections in 2015 in

4 Bangui.

5 Page 12 line 6 : [...] That information will be in my diplomatic passport

6 is corrected to

7 [...] That information is in my diplomatic passport

8 Page 24 line 11 : [...] and I stayed there until 27 December 2013

9 is corrected to

10 [...] and I stayed there until 22 December 2013

11 Page 3 line 22 : [...]Your Honours, I was born on 30 June 1967 in Ombella-M'Poko in

12 Bimbo.

13 is corrected to

14 [...]Your Honours, I was born on 30 June 1967 in Ombella-M'Poko in Bangui

15 Page 7 line 9 : [...]This rebellion destroyed everything in its path, killing, raping,

16 torching, destroying religious facilities, civilian states, all targeted.

17 is corrected to

18 [...] This rebellion destroyed everything in its path, killing, raping torching,

19 destroying religious facilities, civil registries everything was targeted.

20 Page 10 lines 7-8 : [...] We stayed in Mouale for two days before being taken to Enyele,

21 which is the provincial administrative centre which we call the sub-prefecture.

22 is corrected to

23 [...] We stayed in Mouale for two days before being taken to Enyele, which is the

24 main administrative centre commonly known as the sub-prefecture.

25 Page 12 lines- 20-22 : [...] We Your Honours, Presiding Judge, members of the Court,

1 there was -- had been the problem of my wife's French residence permit, my wife who
2 had remained in Bangui, and pressed by our children in Paris, we decided to go up to
3 Paris.

4 is corrected to

5 [...] Your Honours, Presiding Judge, members of the Court, there was -- had been the
6 problem of my wife's French residence permit, that was left behind in Bangui. Upon
7 the incitement of our children in Paris, we decided to go up to Paris.

8 Page 17 line 6 : [...] They had something. Sometimes he would call me because he
9 had nothing to eat,

10 is corrected to

11 [...] They had something. Sometimes they* would call me because they* had
12 nothing to eat,

13 Page 18 lines 13-15 : [...], and even in the diplomatic passport that I was asked for and
14 that we're still waiting to receive despite all the efforts made by my Defence team to
15 obtain that document but as yet in vain.

16 is corrected to

17 [...], and even in the diplomatic passport that we have applied for and are still
18 waiting to receive despite all the efforts made by my Defence team to obtain that
19 document but as yet in vain.

20 Page 20 lines 9-10 : [...] Then after Lin Banoukepa had spoken, President Bozizé took
21 the floor to say that he thought that what Mr Lin had just said was correct and was
22 logical.

23 is corrected to

24 [...] Then after Lin Banoukepa had spoken, President Bozizé took the floor to say that
25 what Mr Lin had just said was correct and was logical.

1 Page 22 line 21 : We would sometimes bump into each other in the street and talk, but
2 at the time I didn't know her children.

3 is corrected to

4 We would sometimes bump into each other in the street and talk, but at the time
5 I didn't know his children

6 Page 29 line 19 : When they arrived, they asked me to get into their armoured vehicle,
7 but I preferred to travel with the MISCA political party, Mr Wilibona.

8 is corrected to

9 When they arrived, they asked me to get into their armoured vehicle, but I preferred
10 to travel with the MSK political party President, Mr Wilibona.

11 Page 34 line 25 : And the president received us with two people standing either side
12 of her, one her political adviser, Minister Guiyama.

13 is corrected to

14 And the president received us with two people standing either side of her, one her
15 political adviser, Minister Anicet Guiyama

16 Page 36 line 24 : Your Honours, they vented their anger on national radio and in
17 the private press and even to the international community.

18 is corrected to

19 Your Honours, they vented their anger on national radio and in the public press and
20 even to the international community.

21 Page 37 line 25 : And further to that meeting, a proposal for appointments to leading
22 positions was set out and it was Wenezoui who took the proposal to the president of
23 the Transitional Council.

24 is corrected to

25 And further to that meeting, a proposal for appointments to leading positions was set

1 out and it was Wenezoui who took the proposal to the president of the Transition.

2 Page 38 lines 4 to 6 : It was the leaders of the resistance known as the Anti-Balaka

3 who had arrived at the set of proposed appointments in my presence and it was

4 unanimously agreed that the proposal should sent to the president.

5 is corrected to

6 All of these proposals were made by the leaders and members of the resistance

7 known as the Anti-Balaka in my presence. And the proposal was unanimously

8 adopted to be sent to the President.

9 Page 39 line 3 : you will send them something to enable them to take up their farming

10 activities anew.

11 is corrected to

12 you will send them something to enable them to take up their rural* activities anew.

13 Page 43 lines 20 to 23 : Once in his office, he told me that the president had left

14 4 million Central African francs to feed the Anti-Balaka and it was up to me to

15 disperse the funds. But in fact at the end of the day it was Maxime Mokom who

16 collected the funds.

17 is corrected to

18 Once in his office he told me that the President had left 4 million Central African

19 francs to feed the Anti-Balaka and it was up to me to release the funds. But, in fact, at

20 the end of the day it was Maxime Mokom who recuperated the funds.

21 Page 45 line 21 : then he was going to put a back up against the wall.

22 is corrected to

23 then he was going to put her back up against the wall.

24 Page 46 lines 23 to 25 : After all these events, I preferred working directly with the

25 Seleka senior officials rather than the president. Along -- well, at the same time, we

1 had struck up with certain Seleka senior officials a working project to move towards
2 peace together without expecting anything from the government.

3 is corrected to

4 After all these events I preferred working directly with the Seleka senior officials
5 rather than the President. At the same time - with certain Seleka leaders – we had set
6 in motion a working project aimed at moving towards peace together, without
7 waiting for the government.

8 Page 47 lines 16 to 20 : [...], we started receiving invitations from the minister for
9 reconciliation, Mrs Montagne. There were several meetings. During these
10 meetings, we -- started to advise us to merge the resistance movement called the
11 Anti-Balaka because the government wanted one single interlocutor to help them
12 work.

13 is corrected to

14 we started receiving invitations from the minister for reconciliation, Mrs Montaigne.
15 There were several meetings. During these meetings, we -- started to advise us to
16 merge the resistance movement called the Anti-Balaka because the government
17 wanted one single interlocutor to facilitate their work.

18 Page 49 line 18 : He is the head of the Muslims in Bangui.

19 is corrected to

20 He is the head of the Muslim pilgrims in Bangui.

21 Page 50 line 11 : [...] the crisis that was shaking the country for reasons that nobody
22 could fathom who was there.

23 is corrected to

24 [...] the crisis that was shaking our country.

25 Page 50 line 23 to page 51 line 3 : We wanted her to continue right way through to the

1 next elections to exit the country from its crisis, the crisis that was continuing to buffet
2 it, and that she should make concessions for all stakeholders, including political
3 parties and civil society, and that these matters should be involved in a balanced
4 fashion in the peace process. And she thanked us for our position and gave us
5 advice before we ultimately left the palace.

6 is corrected to

7 We wanted her to continue right way through to the next elections to extricate
8 the country from its crisis, the crisis that was continuing to buffet it, and that she
9 should make concessions for all stakeholders, including civil society and political
10 parties, to be actively involved in a balanced fashion in the peace process.

11