

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 International Criminal Court
2 Trial Chamber V
3 Situation: Central African Republic II
4 In the case of The Prosecutor v. Alfred Rombhot Yekatom and
5 Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona - ICC-01/14-01/18
6 Presiding Judge Bertram Schmitt, Judge Péter Kovács and
7 Judge Chang-ho Chung
8 Trial Hearing - Courtroom 1
9 Friday, 2 December 2022
10 (The hearing starts in open session at 9.32 a.m.)
11 THE COURT USHER: [9:32:24] All rise.
12 The International Criminal Court is now in session.
13 Please be seated.
14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:32:41] Good morning, everyone.
15 Court officer, please call the case.
16 THE COURT OFFICER: [9:32:46] Good morning, Mr President. Good morning,
17 your Honours.
18 This is the Situation in the Central African Republic, in the case of The Prosecutor
19 versus Alfred Rombhot Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona, case reference
20 ICC-01/14-01/18.
21 And for the record, we are in open session.
22 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:33:05] Thank you.
23 I ask for the appearances of the parties. We start with the Prosecution.
24 MS PRATHABAN: [9:33:11] Good morning, Mr President, your Honours, everyone
25 in the courtroom.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

- 1 The Prosecution today is represented by Ms Sylvie Wakchom, Mr Kweku
2 Vanderpuye, Mr Yassin Mostfa and myself, Manochitra Prathaban.
3 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:33:25] Thank you.
4 I turn to the representatives of the victims.
5 MS DOUZIMA: [9:33:31](Interpretation) Good morning, your Honour,
6 your Honours.
7 The representatives of the victims of other crimes are *Maître* Paolina Massidda,
8 *Maître* Gabriella dos Santos, Madam Mouhia Asso and myself, *Maître* Douzima.
9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:33:56] Mr Suprun.
10 MR SUPRUN: [9:33:57] Good morning, Mr President, your Honours.
11 The former child soldiers are represented by myself, Dmytro Suprun, counsel at the
12 Office of Public Counsel for Victims. Thank you.
13 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:34:03] Thank you.
14 I turn to the Defence. We start like always with Ms Dimitri.
15 MS DIMITRI: [9:34:07] Thank you, Mr President.
16 Good morning. Good morning, your Honours. Good morning, everyone in the
17 courtroom.
18 Mr Yekatom is present in the courtroom. He is represented today by Mr Gyo Suzuki,
19 Mr Tobie Raphaël Godue and myself, Mylène Dimitri.
20 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:34:19] Thank you.
21 And finally, Mr Knoops.
22 MR KNOOPS: [9:34:23] Very good morning, Mr President, your Honours. Good
23 morning. Good morning, everyone.
24 Good morning, Mr Ngaïssona.
25 Our team today consists of Ms Despoina Eleftheriou and Saskia Afande and myself.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Thank you.

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:34:39] Thank you. And also for the record, we
3 said it already yesterday, but Mr Ngaïssona is following from the detention centre
4 upon request and exceptionally granted by the Chamber as said yesterday.
5 Most importantly, for today we have a new witness.

6 Mr Witness, good morning. Can you hear and understand me well?

7 WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

8 (The witness speaks French)

9 (The witness gives evidence via video link)

10 THE WITNESS: [9:35:14](Interpretation) Good morning.

11 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:35:14] Good morning. On behalf of the
12 Chamber, I would like to welcome you to the courtroom. You are called to testify to
13 assist this Chamber in the case of Mr Yekatom and Mr Ngaïssona. There are
14 protective measures put in place for you. It might be that the Prosecution will repeat
15 them, so I don't have to say this from the side of the bench. But, Mr Witness, there
16 should be a card in front of you with the solemn undertaking to tell the truth. Please
17 be so kind and read this card out aloud.

18 THE WITNESS: [9:36:01](Interpretation) Thank you, Madam.

19 I solemnly declare that I will tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

20 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:36:11] Thank you. And obviously, the translator
21 is a woman because I'm addressed, therefore, as a madam, but that is not a problem of
22 course.

23 You are now under oath, Mr Witness, so you have to tell the truth. And you have
24 been reminded already in the preliminary meetings what this means and how
25 important it is, not only to tell us the truth but also to tell us everything, what is

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 important and what you are asked.

2 A few practical matters before we start with your testimony. Everything we say here
3 is written down and interpreted. And to allow for the interpreters to follow
4 everything and to get everything, we have to speak at a relatively slow pace. And
5 please start only speaking when the person that has asked you a question has finished
6 and perhaps wait a couple of seconds and then give us your answer.

7 Thank you very much.

8 And with that, I give the floor to the Prosecution.

9 QUESTIONED BY MS PRATHABAN:

10 Q. [9:37:16] Good morning, Mr Witness.

11 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:37:17] Ms Dimitri.

12 MS DIMITRI: [9:37:18] I'm really sorry. I apologise. I think my client has a
13 technical issue. He can't hear. If you allow me two seconds just to sort it out,
14 Mr President.

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:37:27] Yeah, yeah, of course. Yeah, yeah,
16 perhaps it is easy to solve. Otherwise we need a technician.

17 MS DIMITRI: [9:37:35] Thank you.

18 (Pause in proceedings)

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:37:50] Solved?

20 MS DIMITRI: [9:37:52] Unfortunately not. I'm told by the security guard, he tested
21 all three booths and they are not working. There is a technical problem on the
22 bench.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:38:02] So then we have to solve that before we
24 continue because --

25 MS DIMITRI: [9:38:06] May I -- because I know time is of the essence here, if I may

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 suggest a practical solution. Maybe Mr Yekatom could sit at Mr Ngaïssona's bench,
2 and we could test it from there, if that works.

3 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:38:20] Well, of course, if that works, no problem.
4 We can at least give it a try.

5 (Pause in proceedings)

6 MS DIMITRI: [9:39:33] Now the other bench is not working either.

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:39:38] So if this is an issue that cannot be
8 solved -- no, it has been solved. Okay.

9 Then, Madam Prosecutor, you have the floor.

10 MS PRATHABAN: [9:39:50]

11 Q. [9:39:50] Good morning, Mr Witness. We met briefly a few days ago. Let me
12 introduce myself once again. I am Manochitra Prathaban and I'll be asking you
13 questions today on behalf of the Prosecution. I want to thank you for coming to
14 testify today.

15 The Presiding Judge has informed you about the protective measures and what this
16 means is that your identity will not be revealed to the public. Only to those in the
17 courtroom.

18 Now, if you feel that your answers might reveal your identity and you wish to go into
19 private session, please let us know.

20 This morning I'll be asking you a few questions in private session about your
21 background, followed by questions about your previous statement, specifically to
22 clarify portions of it.

23 I plan to cover four topics with you. If any of the questions I ask are unclear or you
24 do not understand, please let me know, and I will rephrase it.

25 If at any point you feel that you need a break, please let us know.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Lastly, as the president pointed out, both my questions and your answers will being
2 interpreted, so it's very important that we speak slowly to help the interpreters do
3 their job.

4 Are you with me so far?

5 A. [9:41:35] I have followed you well.

6 Q. [9:41:37] Thank you.

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:41:39] I assume we go shortly to private session
8 for the personal ...

9 MS PRATHABAN: [9:41:45] Yeah, the biographical information, yes.

10 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:41:49] Information, yes, bio information.

11 (Private session at 9.42 a.m.)

12 THE COURT OFFICER: [9:42:11] We're in private session, Mr President.

13 MS PRATHABAN: [9:42:16] Thank you.

14 Q. [9:42:17] Mr Witness, as you just heard, we are in private session. And what
15 this means is your answers will not be heard by the public.

16 Could you please state your full name for the record.

17 A. [9:42:36] Yes. My name is (Redacted)

18 Q. [9:42:47] Thank you. And what is your date of birth?

19 A. [9:42:56] I was born on (Redacted)

20 Q. [9:43:01] Can you confirm that you are a Central African national?

21 A. [9:43:13] I am a Central African national.

22 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:43:18] We have to fix the video link before we
23 continue. It's back.

24 Please continue.

25 MS PRATHABAN: [9:43:24]

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

- 1 Q. [9:43:24] Mr Witness, can you hear me?
- 2 A. [9:43:35] I can still hear you.
- 3 Q. [9:43:37] Where were you born?
- 4 A. [9:43:44] I was born in (Redacted)
- 5 Q. [9:43:48] You relocated to Mbaïki in (Redacted); is that right?
- 6 A. [9:44:01] From (Redacted) to Mbaïki in (Redacted). (Indiscernible)
- 7 THE INTERPRETER: [9:44:12] (Redacted), corrects the interpreter.
- 8 MS PRATHABAN:
- 9 Q. [9:44:21] Can you tell us which neighbourhood in Mbaïki you lived in?
- 10 A. [9:44:34] I was in (Redacted) neighbourhood.
- 11 Q. [9:44:41] And what is your religion?
- 12 A. [9:44:51] I am Muslim by religion.
- 13 Q. [9:44:56] And what is your ethnicity?
- 14 A. [9:45:04] I am from the (Redacted)
- 15 Q. [9:45:11] In (Redacted), you became (Redacted)
- 16 (Redacted); is that right?
- 17 A. [9:45:33] That's indeed correct.
- 18 Q. [9:45:34] And in (Redacted)
- 19 (Redacted); is that right?
- 20 A. [9:45:50] That is indeed correct.
- 21 MS PRATHABAN: [9:45:55] Mr President, we can revert to open session now.
- 22 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:46:04] Then we do that.
- 23 Open session.
- 24 (Open session at 9.46 a.m.)
- 25 THE COURT OFFICER: [9:46:18] We're back in open session, Mr President.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 MS PRATHABAN: [9:46:21]

2 Q. [9:46:22] Mr Witness, I will now ask you a few questions about your previous
3 statement. Is it correct that you were interviewed by the investigators of the Office
4 of the Prosecutor back in August and October 2017?

5 A. [9:46:45] That's correct.

6 Q. [9:46:46] And you gave a statement to the investigators; is that right?

7 A. [9:46:56] That's correct.

8 Q. [9:46:58] All right. And for the record, the statement is at tab 5 of the
9 Prosecution binder, CAR-OTP-2063-0369. And the French translation is at tab 7.

10 Mr Witness, did you make that statement voluntarily?

11 A. [9:47:34] This declaration is made in relation to the crisis which took over the
12 country of which I am a witness and a victim of.

13 Q. [9:47:47] Thank you. And you had a chance to carefully review the statement
14 recently, and you identified certain corrections; is that right?

15 A. [9:48:05] That's correct.

16 Q. [9:48:09] And for the record, the corrections are at CAR-OTP-0000-0735.

17 Mr Witness, can you confirm that, read together with the corrections which you have
18 made, your statement is true to the best of your knowledge and recollection.

19 A. [9:48:46] Everything that I gave by way of the declaration is what I experienced.

20 Q. [9:48:54] Thank you. And would you agree for the Chamber to use your
21 statement and the corrections as evidence in this case?

22 A. [9:49:13] It is these elements, Madam.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:49:18] Well, I take it that there is no problem and
24 I would say that the requirements for Rule 68(3) of the statement of the witness are
25 fulfilled with the corrections made by the witness. I think you have given the ERN

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 numbers already. Okay, then we can continue.

2 So, just to make it clear, Mr Witness, you stand by what you said at the time to the
3 investigators of the Prosecution.

4 THE WITNESS: [9:49:52](Interpretation) That's indeed, correct.

5 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:49:53] Okay. Then we can continue. It's not
6 necessary to have the exact wording.

7 MS PRATHABAN: [9:50:01] Thank you, Mr President.

8 Q. [9:50:03] Mr Witness, your statement is already quite complete, but I will be
9 asking you a few questions just to clarify what you had previously told the
10 investigators. We will start with the first topic, which relates to the 5 December
11 Anti-Balaka attack on Bangui.

12 At paragraph 24 of your statement, you described being in Bangui during the
13 5 December attack. So I would just like to get some details on what you experienced
14 that day. Now, please be mindful that we are in open session, so do not reveal any
15 identifying information.

16 Let me start with the first question. How did you know that it was the Anti-Balaka
17 that attacked Bangui?

18 A. [9:51:05] I was travelling to Bangui in response to a request made by {ICR:
19 (Redacted)} and, as such, I was in Bangui.

20 And at that time {ICR: (Redacted)} and it was the 7th when the Balaka burst in. And
21 I had to be patient. I had to wait. And I had to be too patient. I had to go back
22 because I had {ICR: (Redacted)} better there.

23 And that's the reason I returned. But I knew it was the Balaka who burst in on
24 5 December. I remember that.

25 Q. [9:52:04] Thank you.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [9:52:04] Indeed, 5 December, it's also in the French
2 transcript correctly. Yes.

3 MS PRATHABAN: [9:52:11]

4 Q. [9:52:11] Thank you, Mr Witness. You said "the Anti-Balaka burst in". But
5 how did you identify the Anti-Balaka elements, if you could recall?

6 A. [9:52:35] I'm a Muslim, and taking the Anti-Balaka came in and I had to protect
7 myself, because they were looking for everybody who was a Muslim. And there was
8 a lot of stress at the time. People had to protect themselves.

9 Q. [9:53:00] Thank you. You mentioned you had to protect yourself. Can you
10 tell us where you were when the attack began.

11 A. [9:53:15] When the attack began, I was at {ICR: (Redacted)}
12 (Redacted)}

13 Q. [9:53:31] And could you provide some details on what you did as the attack was
14 taking place.

15 A. [9:53:47] When the attack took place, I had to protect myself. So I didn't go
16 anywhere. {ICR: (Redacted)}

17 Q. [9:54:02] And to your knowledge, are you aware of how the Muslim civilians
18 around you in Petevo reacted when the attack began, if you know?

19 A. [9:54:23] Everybody had to protect themselves. {ICR: (Redacted)}
20 (Redacted)
21 (Redacted)}

22 and Petevo -- the Petevo imam was lynched, and then I took my measures to not go
23 anywhere because I was already targeted.

24 Q. [9:55:05] Thank you for that. That's helpful.

25 And at paragraph 24 of your statement, you said you had to remain in Bangui

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 because it was not safe to travel. And you have already mentioned now that the
2 Muslims were being targeted, but could you elaborate on why it was unsafe to travel.

3 A. [9:55:36] When the attack took place, there was a witch hunt. Everything was
4 being done to try and get hold of the Muslims, and it wasn't possible to travel. But
5 as I am used to being on {PFR: (Redacted)}, I didn't want to stay in Bangui. I took the
6 risk to go back to {PFR: (Redacted)}.

7 Q. [9:56:11] Thank you. And you said there was a witch hunt. Could you
8 explain who -- who was behind this witch hunt.

9 A. [9:56:36] Well, the area that starts with PK9, which goes to Lobaye, to Mbaïki, it
10 was Mr Yekatom's group which were there, and they had put up roadblocks from
11 PK9 to Mbaïki. So the Mbaïki zone was under his area. That's Mr Yekatom, who
12 had a nickname of Rombhot.

13 Q. [9:57:23] Thank you for that, Mr Witness, which brings me to the next topic,
14 actually, the circumstances of your return to Mbaïki.

15 You said that you stayed in Bangui for almost a month, at paragraph 24 of your
16 statement. Now, did you return to Mbaïki before or after Djotodia's resignation?

17 A. [9:57:59] Yes. After the resignation of Djotodia, before Mbaïki had been taken
18 over by the Seleka, and these are not people you can collaborate with. They don't
19 respect the principle of Islam. So it was after the resignation of Djotodia that I had to
20 go back. Because you couldn't stay in Bangui doing nothing. That's why I got up
21 my courage and took the risk of returning, but taking a lot of precautions at the same
22 time.

23 Q. [9:58:52] Thank you for that, Mr Witness. That's really helpful.

24 And you talked about precautions. And at paragraph 27 of your statement, you
25 described {ICR: (Redacted)}

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 What was the reason for this?

2 A. [9:59:18] Because to identify a Muslim, they do that with the black marks on the
3 face. And it's easy to recognise a Muslim. So I had to disguise myself and my
4 accent, because I'm a Central African first of the {ICR: (Redacted)} ethnic group before
5 going into Islam. So I have my accent, and my accent -- with my accent, I can pass
6 through. And I disguised myself in order to flee. Everybody was fleeing. And
7 they were all looking for the Muslims, and the Muslims were taking risks.

8 But, first of all, I'm a Central African from the {ICR: (Redacted)} who -- before
9 embracing Islam. So my accent -- from my accent, nobody can know that I'm
10 Muslim, and that is how I was able to disguise myself in order to return. And with
11 all -- throughout, with the roadblocks, all the way to Mbaïki.

12 Q. [10:00:35] Now, you mentioned that "they were all looking for Muslims".
13 Could you clarify who you were referring to when you say "they".

14 A. [10:00:55] The group of the Anti-Balaka, because they were the ones who put up
15 roadblocks all the way from PK9, all the way to Mbaïki. So when there is a team
16 there, there is a chief, a head of team that gives commands, orders.

17 Q. [10:01:31] Thank you for that detail, Mr Witness. Just one last question on that.
18 You talked about the fact that there were roadblocks and you had to disguise yourself
19 because you were going to be recognised as a Muslim, but how did you learn this?

20 A. [10:01:55] Well, everybody knew it. When there is such an event, one needs to
21 take -- to make arrangements, because all the vehicles that went through, and the
22 Seleka first, and then the retaliation from the Anti-Balaka. So who said Seleka said
23 Muslims. And now we had to pay the price of being Muslims, because everybody
24 thought that anyone who was a Muslim was a Seleka. So we had to take precautions.
25 And everybody knew about it. It was unavoidable.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [10:02:54] Thank you. That's really helpful.

2 And moving forward, at paragraph 29, you talked about reaching the first roadblock
3 which was at PK9 bridge and that's where you saw Mr Yekatom. And you say that
4 you knew he was the chief of the Anti-Balaka because he was giving orders and the
5 Anti-Balaka obeyed him.

6 Now, could you provide us with some details on the interactions between the
7 Anti-Balaka elements and Mr Yekatom at this roadblock, if you could recall.

8 A. [10:03:39] Yes. When I was going back -- I didn't know this man very well, but
9 as any good chief, he is identified. And him, he had been introduced. And it was
10 up to me who had taken the risk of going back home, it was for me to know who was
11 who and who was doing what. So that's more or less how -- but I didn't know him
12 very well before. I used to see him because he lived in Kina. He used to go to
13 Mbaïki to visit his parents. But I did not know that all of a sudden he would head a
14 group.

15 Q. [10:04:38] Thank you for that. But my question was more in terms of, you say
16 that he was acting as a chief and there were Anti-Balaka elements around him, so
17 what was the interaction between them, between the elements there and Mr Yekatom,
18 if you have observed this?

19 A. [10:05:04] Well, I was extremely stressed. I could not afford to be identified, so
20 I knew he was the leader because he was known. He was giving instructions, and
21 his elements would obey his instructions. So when somebody gives instructions, it
22 implies that he's the leader.

23 Q. [10:05:32] Thank you, Mr Witness. And you talked about hearing him instruct
24 the Anti-Balaka elements. How far were you from Mr Yekatom when you heard
25 this?

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 A. [10:05:51] We were in the vehicle. All the vehicles that were going by were
2 stopped. What vehicle could have gone by without being stopped? How?
3 Because there were barricades. And the leader would come and give instructions,
4 and the men would go around the vehicles to spot Muslims through their accent. So
5 questions were asked to all those who were on board the vehicle. And through their
6 accent, they would know that they are from Central Africa. I had the prayer stain, so
7 I had to put on a disguise so that they wouldn't know. They would go around the
8 vehicle, and when the vehicle was stopped, these elements would come. And him as
9 a leader, he would give instructions. And maybe he would ask for everybody to
10 come down to see if there were some Muslims.

11 So that was at a -- that wasn't at a big distance. The vehicle was stopped, and they
12 would come close to the vehicle. That was their job.

13 Q. [10:07:21] Thank you for the clarification. That's really helpful.
14 Now, you talked about other vehicles being stopped at this checkpoint. While you
15 were there, did you see the Anti-Balaka elements identifying any of the people there
16 as Muslims?

17 A. [10:07:46] At that time no Muslim could take that risk. I took that risk because
18 I'm first and foremost a Central African national and from an ethnicity -- a local
19 ethnicity, so through my accent they could not identify me as a Muslim. That's why
20 I took that risk. And it may be that in other vehicles before or after that was the case,
21 but I don't know. I just know what happened in my vehicle when they asked
22 whether there were Muslims in that particular journey.

23 Q. [10:08:25] Thank you for that. Moving on to paragraph 27, you talked about
24 crossing nine Anti-Balaka roadblocks. And the first one was at the PK9 bridge.
25 How were you able to identify that the remaining eight roadblocks were in fact

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Anti-Balaka roadblocks?

2 A. [10:08:54] Well, at that time everything was Anti-Balaka, because the whole
3 Lobaye was under control of the Anti-Balaka. From Mbaïki, Pissa, Lessé, all the way
4 to the exit towards Boboua, all that was Anti-Balaka.

5 Q. [10:09:24] Could you describe the locations of these other eight roadblocks.

6 A. [10:09:38] Excuse me?

7 Q. [10:09:40] Now I would like to know, can you describe the locations of the
8 remaining eight roadblocks. So the first one was at PK9 bridge, and you say there
9 were eight other roadblocks. Do you recall where they were?

10 A. [10:10:05] Well, that's a long time ago. It was in 2013. We're in 2022. So
11 there were barriers, and I was stressed. The main objective for me was to reach my
12 destination.

13 Q. [10:10:23] That is completely understandable, Mr Witness. But do you recall
14 passing by Sekia or Pissa on your way to Mbaïki?

15 A. [10:10:42] There was a barrier at Pissa as well. That was a strategic point.
16 Pissa is a crossroad. When going towards Mbata, et cetera, from Pissa, you can even
17 go to Lessé. So that was a strategic roadblock. PK9, Pissa, Mbaïki, and then other
18 roadblocks that they would put on the road. But we couldn't identify all of them,
19 but there were strategic ones.

20 Q. [10:11:31] Thank you for that. That's really helpful.
21 So you mentioned Pissa. Do you recall passing by Bimon?

22 A. [10:11:50] Bimbo is before the PK9 bridge.

23 Q. [10:11:53] Sorry, I think my pronunciation is not accurate. It's Bimon,
24 B-I-M-O-N.

25 A. [10:12:07] Yes, at Bimon there is a bridge. Bimon is the limit between Ombella

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 M'Poko and the Lobaye. So there's a roadblock there.

2 Q. [10:12:24] What about Kapou?

3 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:12:33] Yes, Ms Dimitri.

4 MS DIMITRI: [10:12:34] Mr President, for the record, I think this is borderline

5 suggesting. He said twice that he doesn't know. He doesn't know where they are.

6 That he said the entire zone was Anti-Balaka. The -- "*l'essentiel c'est arrivé à*

7 *destination*". He doesn't -- he is unable on his own to identify them. Now, if my

8 learned friend goes from location to location, in my opinion, she's suggesting the

9 location and the value of the answer is --

10 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:13:13] The value of the answer is up to us to

11 assess, like I always say, but I also think you can shorten the procedure. The witness

12 has clearly stated today, and also in his witness statement, that there were eight or

13 nine roadblocks. Well, they have been somewhere, and I assume that they were not

14 one after the other, after 500 metres the next. So I think you can really move on.

15 MS PRATHABAN: [10:13:40]

16 Q. [10:13:40] Thank you, Mr Witness.

17 You mentioned at paragraph 30 that you gave the Anti-Balaka some money and they

18 let you go. How much did they ask to let you pass?

19 A. [10:14:05] I was not the only one to give money. It was an opportunity for

20 them to racket people. So all the passengers had to give money. I only had 6,000

21 francs with me. No more. So everybody had to give money before we could go

22 through. And regarding the other roadblocks, as they knew that their chief was at

23 PK9 and he had already checked, all these other times we were let through.

24 And I, who had taken the risk to travel, I could not afford to be identified because I

25 was so stressed. At that time, it was really a big stress because my life was at risk.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [10:15:15] Thank you, Mr Witness. And you said that you knew their boss
2 Yekatom at PK9 had already taken care of business in your statement, and you
3 mentioned it again here. So what made you think that? What made you think that
4 Mr Yekatom was their chief?

5 A. [10:15:46] Let me come back to this. Mr Yekatom, I did not know him. I did
6 not know that all of a sudden he would lead a group of that magnitude. But when a
7 chief is being presented, we are supposed to know who the chief is, to take the right
8 arrangements. I was already being stressed and I was told this is the chief. So I
9 avoided -- then it was really crucial, it was important not to make any mistake that
10 would identify me. Try to put yourself in my shoes. That was a really crucial time,
11 and I had to avoid any mistake. I had to try and make sure that I couldn't be
12 identified.

13 Q. [10:16:49] Thank you, Mr Witness. I can only imagine how difficult it would
14 have been to be in your shoes.

15 So moving on. At paragraph 31, you talked about recognising some of the
16 Anti-Balaka at these barricades. Now I would like to get some details from you
17 about these Anti-Balaka.

18 And for that purpose, Mr President, I'd like to go into private session.

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:17:12] Private session.

20 (Private session at 10.17 a.m.)

21 THE COURT OFFICER: [10:17:28] We're in private session, Mr President.

22 MS PRATHABAN: [10:17:31] Thank you.

23 Q. [10:17:32] Mr Witness, do you recall the names of these Anti-Balaka that you
24 had previously interacted with who were in the -- who were at the barricades?

25 A. [10:17:56] The Anti-Balaka that I recognised were people that I was not

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 acquainted with. I knew that this was X, it was somebody I knew, but I didn't know
2 his name. And I didn't know that all of a sudden they would become Anti-Balaka.
3 These are people that if you go to them, if you know them, you know their name.
4 But if you are not acquainted, you don't know. And I was surprised to see that they
5 were the ones who had become Anti-Balaka. But that's it.
6 Let's not imagine things. I did not know them. I had seen them. I knew them by
7 sight, but I didn't know who they were. Let's not imagine things.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:19:00] So we could have stayed in open session,
9 but you never know, of course.

10 We can go back?

11 MS PRATHABAN: [10:19:06] I have one more question to follow up on that.

12 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:19:09] Okay.

13 MS PRATHABAN: [10:19:12]

14 Q. [10:19:12] Thank you, Mr Witness, you are right. Thank you for being accurate
15 with your answers.

16 And you said you had been acquainted with them. Could you give us a bit of details
17 on -- in which setting you were acquainted. Was it part of your work, social events,
18 neighbourhood?

19 A. [10:19:39] Well, it was social events because (Redacted)

20 (Redacted)

21 (Redacted)

22 (Redacted)

23 And that's how I became acquainted with some people. But we were not really
24 knowing each other well enough to know our names and to identify one another.

25 Q. [10:20:29] Thank you for that.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 We can revert to open session.

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:20:33] Open session.

3 (Open session at 10.20 a.m.)

4 THE COURT OFFICER: [10:20:46] We're back in open session, Mr President.

5 MS PRATHABAN: [10:20:50] Thank you.

6 Q. [10:20:52] Okay, Mr Witness, I would like to show you a video now, and this is a
7 documentary that was produced in 2016. And the footage that I'll be playing for you
8 purports to be in Mbaïki.

9 And for the record, this is at tab 9, CAR-OTP-2118-0415. And I'll be playing from
10 minute 53:30 to minute 54:26. No interpretation of this footage is necessary. It's
11 just the location we are interested in.

12 (Viewing of the video excerpt)

13 MS PRATHABAN: [10:22:56]

14 Q. [10:22:56] Mr Witness, were you able to see the video?

15 A. [10:23:11] The first point is the -- the paying station of Boto.

16 Q. [10:23:26] Thank you for that, Mr Witness.

17 Are you referring to the building which is shown now at 00:54:08? Is this what you
18 are referring to?

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:23:40] Well, it's difficult for the witness. I think
20 we have to show it, simply. At least my monitor has frozen at 54:08:03. So I
21 understood it that the witness meant the first building, the small building that was
22 shown. So perhaps we have to show it again, or whatsoever, to make it clear what
23 he is referring to.

24 MS PRATHABAN: [10:24:03]

25 Q. [10:24:03] Mr Witness, you heard the president. And we would play the

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 beginning of the video again. And if you could just tell us -- my colleague will be
2 showing the extract, and if you could tell us if that building is what you are referring
3 to.

4 (Viewing of the video excerpt)

5 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:24:35] Please stop. Stop, stop, stop.

6 First of all, to make this a little bit shorter, do you recognise this building and where it
7 is located?

8 THE WITNESS: [10:24:59](Interpretation) That's the tollgate of Boto entering Mbaïki.

9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:25:05] Thank you.

10 MS PRATHABAN: [10:25:09]

11 Q. [10:25:09] Thank you, Mr Witness. And now we will play and stop at minute
12 54. There will be a white building, and that's the location we are interested in, if you
13 are able to recognise it.

14 (Viewing of the video excerpt)

15 MS PRATHABAN: [10:25:46]

16 Q. [10:25:47] Do you recognise this white building that's behind Mr Yekatom?

17 A. [10:25:56] That is a building that is in the compound of ISDR. The university of
18 ISDR.

19 Q. [10:26:18] Thank you for that. That's helpful.

20 And you mentioned about the tollgate at the beginning of the video. Was it there in
21 2014, if you recall?

22 A. [10:26:39] This tollgate has been there for a very long time. When the Seleka
23 came in, they occupied that tollgate. And after they left, the Balaka took it over.

24 Q. [10:26:57] Thank you. That's helpful.

25 And you said ISDR. Could you help us -- explain what that is.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 A. [10:27:14] This is the university institute for rural development.

2 Q. [10:27:24] Thank you. That's really helpful.

3 Now, I will be playing for you another extract, from minute 59:48 to minute 61. And,
4 again, no interpretation of the footage is necessary. It's the location we are interested
5 in.

6 (Viewing of the video excerpt)

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:28:25] I think you can ask the witness if he
8 recognised the location.

9 MS PRATHABAN: [10:28:30] Thank you, Mr President.

10 Q. [10:28:32] So you can see here at minute 60 there is a barrier that's shown on this
11 video. Do you recognise this barrier, Mr Witness?

12 A. [10:28:54] That is the barrier at Sekia, 30 kilometres from Bangui.

13 Q. [10:29:07] Thank you. That's really helpful.

14 And have you ever recalled passing through this barrier?

15 A. [10:29:24] You had to go through there to go to Mbaïki. That was the tollgate
16 in Sekia. And the second tollgate was at the entrance of Mbaïki in Boto, so you had
17 to go through here to go to Mbaïki.

18 Q. [10:29:52] Thank you, Mr Witness. That's really helpful.

19 You referred to the tollgate at the entrance -- sorry, I think my learned friend has an ...

20 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:30:01] Ms Dimitri.

21 MS DIMITRI: [10:30:02] Not an objection, just a -- just a clarification. Unless I -- I
22 am a bit lost. You said at minute 60?

23 MS PRATHABAN: [10:30:10] Yes.

24 MS DIMITRI: [10:30:10] But what I have on my screen is --

25 MS PRATHABAN: [10:30:19] It says an hour.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 MS DIMITRI: [10:30:21] Okay. Yes, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I'm a bit --

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:30:23] Sometimes there are different expressions
3 for the same thing. So actually, for a second, I was also doubting, but then I thought,
4 okay, it might be the same. No, but it's fine. It's no problem.
5 Please continue.

6 MS PRATHABAN: [10:30:39] Thank you.

7 Q. [10:30:40] So you talked about the tollgate at the entrance of Mbaïki that was
8 taken over by Anti-Balaka. Do you recall when this is -- when this was?

9 A. [10:31:06] I have no memory of that. At that time, it was a time of stress. So
10 the tollgate was occupied by the Anti-Balaka. They did their thing at this command
11 post. I didn't invent it.

12 Q. [10:31:35] That is understandable. Thank you, Mr Witness.

13 Just to go back to the barrier that you identified. How did you know that this was in
14 Sekia?

15 A. [10:31:54] This barrier is a tollgate. It's the service of the public works to
16 maintain the roads, and they set up this tollgate. And when there was the crisis that
17 took over the country, when that arose, people occupied it to make it their roadblock.
18 Because there are actually two tollgates; one when you leave PK9 in Sekia, there's
19 this -- that one, and then afterwards at the entrance of Mbaïki, there's another tollgate.
20 There aren't three or four of them. There were two. And it was set up as a barrier.
21 You can't go through there without being noticed. I spoke about the stress. I didn't
22 feel well in myself.

23 Q. [10:33:01] Thank you, Mr Witness.

24 And do you recall passing by these tollgates in 2014?

25 A. [10:33:17] It's the road that goes to Mbaïki. There isn't another road. You

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 have to go on it.

2 Q. [10:33:28] Thank you, Mr Witness. Now, at paragraph 32 your statement, you
3 mentioned that when you arrived in Mbaïki, the Anti-Balaka had started threatening
4 the Muslims. Could you explain how you knew about these threats.

5 A. [10:33:58] Once I got to Mbaïki, I couldn't stay because I {ICR: (Redacted)}
6 So I went back there. And it was at that time, finding anything to eat was difficult.
7 I was on {PFR: (Redacted)}. I have everything available to me. So that's why I went
8 back there. And when I went back, there was incredible tension. It was very tense.
9 Well, it had to be done. I had to go back to Mbaïki, to the town, because we were
10 under protection. All those who were Muslims were under protection from the
11 Congolese contingent, the democratic Congolese contingent. And I had to come
12 back to Mbaïki because everything was occupied by the Anti-Balaka. And staying
13 there, that was at my own risk.

14 Q. [10:35:13] So do I understand correctly that these threats were something that
15 you witnessed?

16 A. [10:35:25] Yes, indeed. When I was on {PFR: (Redacted)}, the situation was very tense. A
17 lot of Muslims went to the Catholic church even, St Jeanne d'Arc. Others went to the
18 cooperative of Mbaïki. Should one stay there? No, you had to go to Mbaïki. And if you
19 needed to -- everyone want to save themselves, and that's what they did.

20 Q. [10:36:20] Thank you. Now, I would like to show you a report, and this is at
21 tab 1, CAR-OTP-2001-2237. And this report is from the Human Rights Watch. It
22 was published on February 12, 2014. I'll be reading an extract from it and I have a
23 few questions for you after that.

24 Thank you, Mr Court Officer.

25 Could we go to the page ending in 2245. And could we scroll to the bottom. Yes,

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 perfect. Thank you.

2 So it says here:

3 "In Mbaïki, on February 4, despite the deployment of French forces, Human Rights
4 Watch found Anti-Balaka fighters threatening elderly Muslim men in the main
5 market, running their fingers across their throats in front of the old men."

6 Now, is this something that is consistent with your experience?

7 MS DIMITRI: [10:37:49] Mr President.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:37:51] Yes.

9 MS DIMITRI: [10:37:51] Again I think it's quite suggesting. You take an extract
10 from a report and you ask the witness if this is consistent with what he or she saw.

11 There is -- we could ask the witness how did they -- what did you see when
12 you -- what do you mean when you say that the Anti-Balaka threatened them, what
13 did you see, rather than putting a specific extract and asking the witness to confirm.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:38:15] I actually agree, I agree with Ms Dimitri.
15 I don't think damage is done here.

16 But, Mr Witness, let me put the question - I'm the Presiding Judge - to you. So have
17 you been aware, have you seen that people from the Muslim population have been
18 threatened by the Anti-Balaka?

19 THE WITNESS: [10:38:54](Interpretation) What I will tell you, when you are in a
20 stressful situation, what attitude do you have to adopt? You have to save yourself.

21 We were hiding. We were in hiding. And we were looking for a way out. You
22 can't rely on somebody else, because everybody's got their life in their hands. And
23 so to say that to become a spectator to see how others are threatened, no, that's not
24 something. I'm a Muslim. I'm not going to take that risk of going to be an inspector.

25 But you will also be taken like the others. There are lots of cases. So that's what I

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 would say.

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:40:01] Thank you.

3 So, Ms Dimitri, if there was any suggestion, it did not work out.

4 Please continue.

5 MS PRATHABAN: [10:40:10]

6 Q. [10:40:11] Mr Witness, you talked about having certain responsibilities in your

7 community. I will not give the details because we are in open session. Now, as

8 part of these responsibilities, did the Muslim civilians report to you about threats that

9 they faced from the Anti-Balaka?

10 MS DIMITRI: [10:40:40] Mr President, I'm sorry. Again, what did the Muslim

11 community report to you?

12 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:40:46] Well, I have no problem with this

13 question. So, we don't know if something has been reported, but we should not

14 make it too complicated, but in case there have been reports, the witness can provide

15 us with the information, what the content of these reports were. So we continue

16 with that, with the answering this question.

17 So, Mr Witness, have you received any reports from the Muslim -- fellow Muslim

18 population about threats, about things that happened to them?

19 THE WITNESS: [10:41:29](Interpretation) This was a crucial time, a time of stress.

20 Everybody was trying to save themselves. There was a majority of Muslims who

21 welcomed -- were welcomed within the Catholic Church St Jeanne d'Arc centre.

22 Everybody was looking for a means of protecting themselves. Who will take up the

23 courage of making such a report? Nobody. Because the essential point is to try and

24 save your skin. And we were trying to look for a way out. But how? How to find

25 a way out.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:42:17] Mr Witness, that was my fault. My
2 question was not precise enough. So I did not mean report in a technical sense. I
3 meant if people have talked to you, talked to you, simply, have spoken to you and
4 have told you what has happened to them. This was what I meant. Not a report in
5 a technical sense.

6 THE WITNESS: [10:42:47](Interpretation) Yes, yes, we would talk and have
7 exchanges with each other. We were in a difficult time. So we had to have
8 exchanges with each other, to exchange information in order to take the requisite
9 measures. That's it. And it was like that. Afterwards, the Chadian contingent
10 decided to be a guarantee of repatriating all the Muslims of Lobaye, and we took
11 advantage of that in order to get to Bangui. Of course we talked to each other
12 because we were in a situation of distress and stress about everything.

13 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:43:33] And what these fellow Muslim people
14 told you, did this conform with what you experienced yourself? So were they -- let
15 me put it this way: Did they express the fear that they could not stay there in Mbaïki
16 and the surroundings, that they had to leave? Was the sentiment, so to speak, that
17 was conveyed to you?

18 THE WITNESS: [10:44:05](Interpretation) Yes. We spoke to each other. Even I am
19 a person a Central -- person from the Central African Republic, Central African, so
20 this problem was put to me, that it was necessary for everybody to go to Chad,
21 because there was an opportunity to take refuge in Chad. I'm a Central African.
22 I'm not a Chadian. So we would talk in that sense. People had no willingness to
23 stay because it was going to cost you your life if you stayed. And, yes, we would
24 certainly talk about that. That gives you an idea.

25 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:44:50] Thank you.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Please continue.

2 MS PRATHABAN: [10:44:53] Thank you, Mr President.

3 Q. [10:44:56] At paragraph 32 of your statement, you also referred to the Christians
4 insulting the Muslims. So you talked about the Anti-Balaka threatening the Muslims,
5 and you talked about the Christians insulting the Muslims. So I understand this to
6 mean that the Anti-Balaka were separate from the Christians; is that correct?

7 A. [10:45:31] At that time, there was no longer any cohesion when you have such
8 tension. Even as far as we were concerned, I speak about myself as a Central African
9 who embraced Islam, I was seen as a traitor. We were seen as traitors, those who
10 had embraced Islam. So this type of words, is that going to encourage us to stay?
11 You had to leave. That's it.

12 Q. [10:46:08] And how were you able to identify the Anti-Balaka elements in
13 Mbaïki?

14 A. [10:46:23] You just saw people's behaviour, what they were wearing,
15 what -- they were there. Because I spent time in Mbaïki, in Lobaye. I knew
16 everybody. Particularly those of us who were there, we knew each other. And
17 when you see people coming from outside and their behaviour and what they wear,
18 you know. But you couldn't approach them because you were just trying to save
19 yourself.

20 Q. [10:47:07] Thank you, Mr Witness. You talked about what they wore. Could
21 you give us a bit of details on what you meant by that.

22 A. [10:47:25] Well, when people wear certain things, I don't know exactly how to
23 define it, but on their arms and on their neck, you had to try and define it or
24 determine it. And that's why there was this question. The way they dressed, we
25 had nothing to do with that, when it came to their attire.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [10:47:58] Thank you. And do you recall these people referring to themselves
2 as Anti-Balaka?

3 A. [10:48:14] Physically like that, well, it was a time when people wanted to be seen.
4 They weren't in hiding. They wanted to be seen. And when they were out of the
5 crowd, they were seen by people. So they were reigning as masters. You had to
6 avoid approaching them. They were reigning as masters.

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:48:44] I think you can move on because the
8 witness -- it's absolutely understandable, of course. I always say it's very difficult, if
9 not impossible, to really put yourself in the shoes of a witness, of a victim who has
10 gone through these things, but still the witness has made clear and it is
11 understandable that he wants to stay away, wanted to stay away as far as possible.
12 Please continue.

13 MS PRATHABAN: [10:49:11]

14 Q. [10:49:11] Thank you, Mr Witness. Did you ever learn where the Anti-Balaka
15 in Mbaïki were based?

16 A. [10:49:30] This dimension, I didn't even want to know where they were. For
17 me, the most important thing was to leave, to get out of the situation.

18 Q. [10:49:44] Thank you, Mr Witness. At paragraph 33 of your statement, you
19 refer to Muslims from the surrounding towns, including Mongoumba, Mbata,
20 Batalimo, returning to Mbaïki. Does this mean that these Muslims were previously
21 residents of Mbaïki?

22 A. [10:50:15] They were residents. And because the situation was like this, all the
23 Muslims in Mbaïki had to be grouped together because we were trying to find the
24 means to find an exit. So all these Muslims who were resident over a long period,
25 some of them had even been born in these towns mentioned here, all of them had to

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 leave these towns in order to get to Mbaïki to find a way out. And that's what
2 happened with regards to this group.

3 Now, we all went from Mbaïki to Bangui with the aid of the Chadian contingent.

4 Q. [10:51:12] Thank you, Mr Witness. I will be covering your evacuation in a bit,
5 but before that, did you learn the reasons why they returned to Mbaïki?

6 A. [10:51:34] Oh, who could resist this situation? Everybody was in a situation of
7 stress. You had to get back to Mbaïki. And the conditions were such that those
8 who wanted to leave Mbaïki had to basically just leave all their possessions and get
9 into the vehicle. So they left. And the most essential thing was to save yourself,
10 save your skin, and that was it.

11 Q. [10:52:24] And do you recall approximately when they started arriving in
12 Mbaïki?

13 A. [10:52:43] Nobody could imagine it. The most important point was to come
14 together. Because at that time, I didn't want to go back to it. It's a scar within me,
15 deep inside me. I don't want to go back into it because I thank God because I'm still
16 alive and I left. And I had to abandon everything. And I don't want to go back to it,
17 because it's too shocking.

18 I left -- I left everything that I {PFR: (Redacted)}

19 I left empty-handed. And today in Bangui, I'm an internal displaced person. I'm
20 not coming back on to that. Thank God I am safe. That's it.

21 Q. [10:53:46] Thank you, Mr Witness. We can only imagine how difficult and
22 what experience you have gone through, what a difficult experience you went
23 through.

24 Now, I have one question I would like to ask you, but I would like to go into private
25 session briefly for this.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:54:00] Well, we trust you that there is a reason
2 for that.

3 Private session for this question.

4 (Private session at 10.54 a.m.)

5 THE COURT OFFICER: [10:54:19] We're in private session, Mr President.

6 MS PRATHABAN: [10:54:25] Thank you.

7 Q. [10:54:26] Now, at paragraph 33 of your statement, you talk about taking in
8 some of these Muslims who had returned to Mbaïki. So I want to ask you a few
9 questions on that. What did these Muslims that you spoke to tell you about their
10 experience?

11 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:54:48] Why in -- yeah, I understand. Yeah,
12 okay. We could have -- yeah, please continue, Mr Witness.

13 THE WITNESS: [10:55:05](Interpretation) First of all, solidarity. We were all in this
14 situation, this situation of distress. You had to provide hospitality to our brothers
15 who came from towns, surrounding towns, and we spoke about our -- the state of our
16 spirit. How are we going to get out of this situation in which we found ourselves?
17 So we would speak to each other. We would ask God to open a path, to open a way
18 out for us. And there were some who swore that they would never return to the
19 Central African Republic, particularly to our Chadian brothers. And since we came
20 back, some of them have gone back to Chad. And they have never come back to the
21 Central African Republic. We just waited to depart. But it didn't prevent us from
22 speaking to each other, to encourage each other.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:56:31] We go to open session.

24 MS PRATHABAN: [10:56:33] One last question.

25 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:56:34] Yeah, but the reason why we are in

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 private session is the fact that the witness took victims in. Now that this is spoken
2 out in private session, I think anything that has been told can be elaborated in open
3 session.

4 Open session.

5 MS PRATHABAN: [10:56:54] Okay.

6 (Open session at 10.57 a.m.)

7 THE COURT OFFICER: [10:57:07] We're back in open session, Mr President.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:57:11] We can stay in open session because we
9 don't have to mention the situation. So, yeah, okay.

10 MS PRATHABAN: [10:57:17] Thank you, Mr President.

11 Q. [10:57:20] Do you know approximately how many Muslim families in Mbaïki
12 were sheltering the Muslims who had left these towns?

13 A. [10:57:40] There were several of them. There were several families who gave
14 that hospitality to their brothers, but it didn't last for a long time because the tension
15 was increasing and increasing. We were all localised. People knew that they were
16 Muslims, so we had to find opportunities. And our Catholic brothers, you have to
17 give them flowers. They accepted to provide us with hospitality, to some of our
18 Muslim brothers, within the Catholic Church St Jeanne d'Arc, and that is how we
19 were all taken to Bangui afterwards.

20 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:58:35] Would this be a good point to have the
21 break?

22 MS PRATHABAN: [10:58:38] Yes, your Honour.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [10:58:39] Okay. Then we will have the break until
24 11.30. Thank you.

25 THE COURT USHER: [10:58:45] All rise.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 (Recess taken at 10.58 a.m.)

2 (Upon resuming in open session at 11.30 a.m.)

3 THE COURT USHER: [11:30:36] All rise.

4 Please be seated.

5 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:30:43] Just for the scheduling for today, we have
6 to finish at quarter to 4. Because of that, we are shortening the lunch break. So we
7 will have the lunch break from 1 to 2. And, please, we would really appreciate it if
8 everybody would keep this schedule in mind.

9 Yeah, you can continue.

10 MS PRATHABAN: [11:31:06] Thank you, Mr President.

11 Q. [11:31:09] Mr Witness, just before the break, we were talking about the Muslim
12 civilians who had left from the neighbouring areas and had return to Mbaïki. So my
13 question is: Are you aware of what the living conditions were like during this
14 period for you and your family?

15 A. [11:31:43] It was very difficult, difficult conditions. Without exaggerating, very
16 difficult.

17 Q. [11:31:59] Thank you, Mr Witness. And I imagine it's quite traumatic to think
18 about this, but it would be quite useful for us to hear the details. So when you say
19 "difficult conditions", are you talking in terms of food, overcrowding? What is it in
20 terms of?

21 A. [11:32:27] In every respect. Sanitary, food. In any case, it was very, very, very
22 difficult.

23 Q. [11:32:46] Thank you for the clarification, Mr Witness.

24 I'll be now moving to the third topic which is your evacuation from Mbaïki. Could
25 you explain why you had to leave Mbaïki.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 A. [11:33:09] Well, when the situation was extremely tense, no one could protest or
2 stay in Mbaïki. We had to find a way to leave and find somewhere to seek shelter.
3 So some people went back to Bangui where they had parents. And like me, I'm not a
4 native from Lobaye. It's the circumstances that led me to live in Lobaye, and I had to
5 decide to go back to my own place. And that's what happened.

6 Q. [11:34:03] Thank you. And at paragraph 33, you describe being evacuated on
7 long-frame vehicles really packed with people. Do you recall approximately how
8 many long-frame vehicles there were that day?

9 A. [11:34:27] There were several long-framed vehicles. And at the time we didn't
10 think of counting how many, because people were all over the place, were shoving
11 one another, and the condition that was imposed on us, i.e., no luggage, and everyone
12 was trying to find a place on a vehicle before departure. There were several of them.
13 And they decided to evacuate first children, women, and elderly people, and then
14 valid adults.

15 Q. [11:35:20] Thank you for sharing your experience with us, Mr Witness.
16 You talked about women -- first the children, then the women and then the elderly
17 being evacuated. Would you be in a position to give us an approximate of how
18 many people, how many women and children there were?

19 A. [11:35:45] That I don't know. There were several. There was whole -- entire
20 families moving. So you multiply that by the number of households, it's difficult to
21 know. There were many of us. It was a population that was being displaced.
22 Those who were born there, those who had moved to this place. And it was a crucial
23 moment, so it was difficult to imagine. But there were several people. Many
24 children. Children were in greater numbers than others.

25 Q. [11:36:30] Thank you for the clarification, Mr Witness. Now, I would like to

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 show you a video. This was taken on 20 February 2014. It's from a different
2 location in Central African Republic, but it shows an evacuation. So I would like to
3 ask you to see the video, and then I have a question after that.

4 For the record, this is at tab 8, CAR-OTP-2107-1708. And for the interpreters, the
5 translation is at tab 12, CAR-OTP-2127-4403. I'll be playing the first 22 seconds.

6 (Viewing of the video excerpt)

7 "Journalist: It's a race for life for thousands of Muslims in the Central African
8 Republic. The old, the young, the women - all rushing to safety. Their fear is not
9 unfounded. The Christian Anti-Balaka militia are on a killing spree, hunting
10 Muslims wherever they can find them ..."

11 MS PRATHABAN: [11:37:54]

12 Q. [11:37:55] Mr Witness, were you able to see and hear the video?

13 A. [11:38:11] I saw the video. But many evacuations happened at the level of
14 Kilometre 5. Because when we were all deported from Mbaïki, there were two
15 points. The first point was the Central Mosque and the second point was the
16 M'Poko. And from M'Poko, there were evacuations towards Chad and other
17 countries, because there were even flights for some colonies that would go -- that
18 would leave through flights and others that went to Chad by road. But at the level
19 of Kilometre 5, I was also offered to get on a vehicle going to Chad, and I refused
20 because I'm not from Chad. That's the reason I invoked. I was at home in the
21 Central African Republic, so I wanted to stay home. And that's why I was present.

22 But when we were all deported from the Central Mosque, {PFR: (Redacted)}

23 (Redacted)

24 (Redacted)

25 (Redacted)}

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 So there were two points, at the Central Mosque and M'Poko as well.

2 Q. [11:40:16] Thank you, Mr Witness. You have basically provided the
3 information that I had wanted to ask about. So I will now move on to my final topic
4 for the day, which is the situation, the living situation you faced at the Central
5 Mosque in Bangui.

6 Now, you explained in your statement and also today that following your evacuation
7 from Mbaïki, you stayed at the Central Mosque in Bangui and the living conditions
8 there were bad and while some people had tents, others had no shelter. Now I
9 would like to show you two photographs in relation to this. They were taken on
10 20 March 2014.

11 For the record, the first picture is at tab 16, CAR-OTP-2073-0258.

12 Mr Witness, can you see the image?

13 A. [11:41:34] That's the Central Mosque.

14 Q. [11:41:37] Thank you. And does this image accurately reflect the conditions
15 that you faced at the Central Mosque when you were there?

16 A. [11:42:04] On this image, as I said earlier on, there were people who had tents,
17 but you had people who slept directly on the ground on a mat. So not everybody
18 was sheltered by a tent. These were the circumstances. We weren't at home there
19 forever. We couldn't live in luxury. So we had to be subjected to these living
20 conditions.

21 Q. [11:42:39] Thank you for the details, Mr Witness. I would like to show you
22 another image, and this is at tab 6, CAR-OTP-2073-0265.

23 Can you see the image, Mr Witness?

24 A. [11:43:12] It's still the Central Mosque.

25 Q. [11:43:15] And what you see in this image, how does this relate to your own

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 experience?

2 A. [11:43:33] I don't know what comment I could make. That's the situation we
3 were in.

4 Q. [11:43:46] Does it reflect the conditions that you faced at the mosque?

5 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:43:52] He has answered that. You can continue.
6 "That's the situation" he was in and "we were in" is his answer.

7 MS PRATHABAN: [11:44:00] Thank you, Mr President.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:44:01] Please continue.

9 MS PRATHABAN: [11:44:03] We can stop displaying the image, Mr Court Officer.
10 Thank you.

11 Q. [11:44:09] At paragraph 35 of your statement, you mentioned that you met
12 many Muslims from different areas taking refuge at the mosque. Do you recall
13 which areas they were from?

14 A. [11:44:27] There was the Malian colony. {ICR: (Redacted)} And there was a
15 Senegalese, a Nigerian, a Chadian, Sudanese colonies. And that's it.

16 Q. [11:44:51] Thank you. And when you referred to colonies, is it my
17 understanding that these were people who had lived in the Central African Republic
18 for a long time?

19 A. [11:45:11] Some people were born here that became -- that took the nationality,
20 that became Central Africans. And when the crisis erupted throughout the country,
21 they were frightened for their lives. And when this possibility was given to them to
22 go back to their country of origin, people decided to go back to their country of origin.
23 Many stayed in Mali, in Chad, in Sudan and elsewhere because of that crisis. Even
24 though they didn't know their country of origin, because they were born here, they
25 grew up here, they are familiar with this country, but because of the circumstances,

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 they had to leave the country, the Central African Republic.

2 Q. [11:46:18] Thank you. So which areas did these people come from?

3 A. [11:46:36] In CAR or their original country? We were all in Lobaye. I'm
4 talking about people who were born and grew up in Lobaye, and due to the
5 circumstances had to claim their country of origin and had to go back there.

6 Q. [11:47:01] Thank you for the clarification, Mr Witness. And at the same
7 paragraph you said, and I quote: "I learnt that they fled their areas because they
8 were afraid of reprisals from the Anti-Balaka."

9 Could you clarify how you learnt this information.

10 A. [11:47:31] Well, when one is in such a situation of distress, people who came
11 from surrounding towns -- I'm working in the social sphere, so I know that this
12 person comes from that town and what they have experienced because we have
13 exchanged, we have shared. And for us, our concern was to get out of there in order
14 to survive, to be alive. And that's what happened. Others died, but those who
15 stayed alive, it's not through our strength. It's God who protected us, because God
16 knew that there would be some testimony given about this crisis.

17 Q. [11:48:31] Thank you, Mr Witness.

18 Now, I would -- for the next questions, I'll be asking -- relate to a certain responsibility
19 you played while you were at the mosque. And since there is a risk of witness
20 identity being revealed, I would like to request --

21 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:48:49] Private session.

22 MS PRATHABAN: [11:48:50] Yes, thank you.

23 (Private session at 11.49 a.m.)

24 THE COURT OFFICER: [11:49:12] We're in private session, Mr President.

25 MS PRATHABAN: [11:49:15] Thank you.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [11:49:17] At paragraph 39 of your statement, you described (Redacted)

2 (Redacted)

3 are you able to provide an estimate of how many Muslim civilians there were as

4 IDPs?

5 A. [11:49:50] At the time there were two sites. There was the Central Mosque site

6 and the Nasreddin (phon) of the Ali Babolo mosque site. So when we were all

7 deported from Mbaïki to Bangui and were accommodated in the Central Mosque,

8 (Redacted)

9 (Redacted)

10 (Redacted)

11 (Redacted)

12 (Redacted)

13 (Redacted)

14 (Redacted)

15 (Redacted)

16 (Redacted)

17 (Redacted)

18 (Redacted)

19 (Redacted)

20 (Redacted)

21 (Redacted)

22 (Redacted)

23 (Redacted)

24 (Redacted)

25 (Redacted)

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 HCR heard about our issues and gave some tents for the mosque and especially the

2 Ali Babolo mosque. Because people were outdoors and they had no protection.

3 (Redacted)

4 thanks to HCR, that tents were sent to the Ali Babolo mosque.

5 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:53:05] Mr Witness, thank you for this

6 information. But did it come to your attention also (Redacted)

7 (Redacted)

8 how many roughly, perhaps you might not have an exact figure, but how many

9 internally displaced people were there at the moment?

10 THE WITNESS: [11:53:45](Interpretation) At the level of the Central Mosque, there

11 were a thousand people. There were no room left. The Central Mosque is very

12 large, but in the compound, it was full, and beyond the fence, you had people who

13 slept on mats and who used tarpaulins, et cetera. And the same goes for the Ali

14 Babolo mosque. People were waiting for the distribution of items, of goods.

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:54:22] Thank you.

16 MS PRATHABAN: [11:54:25]

17 Q. [11:54:26] Thank you for the details, Mr Witness.

18 (Redacted)

19 do you recall how many Muslims (Redacted)?

20 A. [11:54:46] Well, I don't know how to give this figure because if we had to add up

21 all the people, it's -- it's too much. There were too much stress. What can I say? It

22 was an opportunity for some people who had not been displaced to enter the group.

23 Even in Bangui, to join the group. So there was us who came from further afield, but

24 you had people from Bangui who were running away from the reprisal. So there

25 was a big crowd. I cannot tell you exactly how many. (Redacted)

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 (Redacted)

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:55:47] I think we -- and it's absolutely
3 understandable, we don't get a precise figure here.

4 MS PRATHABAN: [11:55:53]

5 Q. [11:55:54] Thank you, Mr Witness. And you also described in the same
6 paragraph (Redacted)

7 (Redacted)

8 A. [11:56:14] The aid came from the humanitarian organisations. We had DRC
9 that brought some goods, some produce, flour, rice, sugar and other produce

10 (Redacted)

11 Q. [11:56:42] (Redacted)

12 could you tell us if there was sufficient aid for all the IDPs.

13 A. [11:57:02] These circumstances (Redacted)

14 because there were children, elderly people. And every time there were produce

15 that came from DRC, IOM, HCR, Mercy Corps, and all these humanitarian entities

16 would bring us aid.

17 Q. [11:57:38] Thank you, Mr Witness.

18 Mr President, we can revert to open session now.

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [11:57:42] Yeah, open session.

20 And I take it that you are coming to the end.

21 (Open session at 11.58 a.m.)

22 THE COURT OFFICER: [11:58:03] We're back in open session, Mr President.

23 MS PRATHABAN: [11:58:08]

24 Q. [11:58:08] Mr Witness, we have reached the last question that I have for you
25 today. You described having to flee your home, your community in Mbaïki, and

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 that would have had an impact on you. I want you to describe to the Chamber what
2 this impact was on you, your family and your community.

3 A. [11:58:39] Well, when I was in Mbaïki, {ICR: (Redacted)}
4 (Redacted)}

5 because that's what gives you all the produce. And I was {ICR: (Redacted)}. I even
6 left my house in Mbaïki {ICR: (Redacted)}

7 And when this crisis erupted throughout the country, it had an impact on myself and
8 my family. And it pushed me into a different dimension because I kept on thinking
9 about everything I had lost. I had to leave everything behind me. And all this had
10 an impact on me, on my health. {ICR: (Redacted)}
11 (Redacted)}

12 And that's the impact it had, what this unfortunate crisis held for me and my family
13 and that of others. That's what I can say.

14 Q. [12:00:13] Thank you, Mr Witness.

15 Are you able to describe or share with us the impact it had on the Muslim community
16 in Mbaïki?

17 A. [12:00:34] Well, the impact was such that today many Muslim brothers who
18 lived with us in Mbaïki are no longer on this earth because of this crisis. Because
19 people were used to the forest, and all of a sudden everything changed. And when
20 people left for Chad, many lost their lives because they could no longer -- they
21 couldn't resist the temperature, because they were used to the forest in Lobaye. And
22 compared to what they lived in Chad, it was different.

23 So I can't tell you how many in the Muslim community, but the fact that they had to
24 be displaced because of this crisis means that many of them lost their lives. I
25 managed to resist, and I thank God for it, because if I think of it, many lost their lives.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 And it has to be said, it had an impact.

2 Q. [12:01:55] Mr Witness, I have no further questions for you today. I want to
3 thank you very much for your time and your patience in answering all of my
4 questions.

5 And thank you also to the Chamber and the interpreters.

6 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:02:09] Thank you very much.

7 Are there any questions by the representatives of the victims?

8 Ms Massidda?

9 MS MASSIDDA: [12:02:15](Interpretation) Yes, Mr President. Just three or four
10 questions of follow up.

11 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:02:20] Okay.

12 MS MASSIDDA: [12:02:22](Interpretation) Thank you very much.

13 QUESTIONED BY MS MASSIDDA: (Interpretation)

14 Q. [12:02:28] Good afternoon, Witness. My name is Paolina Massidda, and in
15 these proceedings I represent certain victims who are participating in the
16 proceedings.

17 I would like to put certain follow-up questions to you with regard to what Madam
18 Prosecutor already asked you. Please be indulgent with me because I'm going to put
19 questions to you which will seem obvious to you. But we were not in the place
20 where the events took place, so I would ask you to help me to better understand.
21 Thank you.

22 Now, in paragraph 24, for the purposes of the transcript, from your witness statement,
23 Witness, you indicated there that at the time, just to give you the reference here, here
24 I'm talking about the time that {ICR: (Redacted)}
25 during the attack on Bangui of 5 December 2013. And in your witness statement,

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 you mentioned that you succeeded in avoiding all problems because {ICR:

2 (Redacted)}

3 Could you tell us what type of problems that you are referring to.

4 A. [12:04:12] {ICR: (Redacted)

5 (Redacted)

6 (Redacted)

7 (Redacted) The 5th the Balaka entered the town. {ICR: (Redacted)

8 (Redacted)} That is his choice. Mine too. I have my choice. I embrace Islam.

9 Given that it was a very tense situation, it was necessary to -- well, if it was found out
10 that he was sheltering a Muslim, he was going to suffer. Because I was passing. I
11 was there one day with them, and it was necessary to leave him and to go back. And
12 that was the risk that there was. So I indeed left his house.

13 Q. [12:05:38] Yes, Witness, I would remind you that we are in open session. I
14 would like to stay in open session. And that's the reason why I put a very precise
15 question to you.

16 Now, you answered on another point, which wasn't my question. My question was:
17 You say that you were there and that's the reason why you avoided any problems.
18 So what were the problems for a Muslim in Bangui on 5 December 2013?

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:06:15] This has been covered already by the
20 Prosecution. Next question.

21 MS MASSIDDA: [12:06:19] Thank you. I take the point, Mr President.

22 Q. [12:06:27](Interpretation) I'm now going on to another question.

23 Witness, I would ask you for clarifications, and I would be grateful if you would
24 listen to what my question is. You have already answered on what happened. So
25 I'm really interested in specific questions.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Now, on paragraph 25 of your witness statement, you indicate that during your stay
2 in Bangui, you were going to continue to exchange with your family who were in
3 Mbaïki. And you said that your family informed you of the increasing tension that
4 there was between Christians and Muslims in Mbaïki. Could you give us some
5 details about what your family told you about this increasing tension.

6 A. [12:07:42] The increasing tension that my family informed me about with
7 regards to my stay in Bangui was that us, as Muslims, we were under threat with
8 regards to the passing of the Seleka in Lobaye. So now there was increasing tension
9 after the departure of the Seleka.

10 Q. [12:08:14] Thank you.

11 A. [12:08:19] Everything needed --

12 Q. [12:08:19] I cut you off. I'm sorry.

13 A. [12:08:21] I said that's why there was a need to join my family. In the case, if
14 there was peace, there would be peace together. Thank you.

15 Q. [12:08:36] Thank you. Paragraph 26, you indicated that there was tension
16 between Christians and Muslims in Petevo and that you decided to leave, and your
17 reason for leaving was due to the hostility towards Muslims. Could you give us
18 certain examples of how this hostility manifested itself.

19 A. [12:09:20] {ICR: (Redacted)} the mayor of the 6th arrondissement who was
20 governing this neighbourhood of Petevo, she called a meeting between Muslims and
21 Christians with a view to finding palliative measures. Now, during these days

22 {ICR: (Redacted)}

23 (Redacted) together with the imam. And when this meeting was called, {ICR:

24 (Redacted)} because of the circumstances, believing that solutions would be found

25 there, solutions which could arrange the situation. But that was no longer the case.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 When a group of young people found out that there were Muslims at the meeting,
2 such as the imam -- he is from Petevo. {ICR: (Redacted)
3 (Redacted)}, they started
4 to demonstrate and then even lynched the imam. That's the reason why today the
5 imam left and fled for Chad.

6 Q. [12:11:16](No interpretation)

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:11:18] Ms Massidda, this is exactly what was
8 already said in paragraph 26. And it's a Rule 68(3) statement. Please only
9 questions that go beyond that and are specifically related to victims' issues. We
10 don't repeat that. Otherwise we don't have to go through the whole procedure.

11 MS MASSIDDA: [12:11:38] Thank you for your guidance, Mr President. The
12 problem is that I cannot really control -- my question was very specific.

13 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:11:46] Yeah, but the answer was also very
14 specific and was exactly in concordance with what has been said in paragraph 26.

15 MS MASSIDDA: [12:11:58](Interpretation)

16 Q. [12:11:59] Witness, my last question, you indicated this morning that you had to
17 leave behind you, before getting on to a lorry leaving Mbaïki for Bangui, you had to
18 abandon all your possessions. Since the events, have you been able to go back to
19 Mbaïki?

20 A. [12:12:29] Well, after the events, I've passed through. But to say that I went to
21 my home or where I was, no. No way. Because when I came back and I was
22 determined to meet with the humanitarian workers who have a responsibility, I was
23 also trained by humanitarian organisations, and I was passing through and I wasn't
24 going to stay there. So I was just passing through. But saying that I would go to
25 my home, I wouldn't do that. I couldn't do that because everything that I lost, there

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 was just no point in going to see whatever traces there were of it. Thank you.

2 Q. [12:13:25] Thank you very much.

3 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:13:26] Thank you, Ms Massidda.

4 Mr Suzuki, you have the floor.

5 MS DIMITRI: [12:13:33] Mr President, just for the record, I forgot --

6 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:13:36] Or not.

7 MS DIMITRI: [12:13:37] I'm sorry, but I forgot to indicate for the record that

8 Mr Jean-Michel Kola joined us at the second break.

9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:13:45] Well, I have already seen him, but now he

10 is also on the record.

11 Yeah, Mr Suzuki, you have the floor.

12 MR SUZUKI: [12:13:51] Thank you, Mr President.

13 Good afternoon, Mr President, your Honours. I'm happy to start with a couple of

14 topics, but you would your Honours be happy for us to potentially take the break a

15 little bit early once I have gone through those discrete topics?

16 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:14:03] Please tell us when you think you -- you

17 reach a point where you start something completely new and then we will have the

18 break.

19 MR SUZUKI: [12:14:11] Thank you, Mr President. I'm grateful. If I could just

20 have a moment to set up.

21 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:14:27] Perhaps in the meantime I have a

22 question to the witness.

23 Mr Witness, a question from the Presiding Judge. So is it -- I understand from what

24 you said that everything you have lost at the time is still lost. Is that a correct

25 understanding?

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 THE WITNESS: [12:15:01](Interpretation) I've lost everything. I don't know what
2 additional comment I can make on that. What I've lost, I've already lost it. I don't
3 know who is going to give it back to me.

4 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:15:13] Thank you.

5 Mr Suzuki.

6 MR SUZUKI: [12:15:20] Thank you, Mr President.

7 QUESTIONED BY MR SUZUKI:

8 Q. [12:15:25] Good afternoon, Mr Witness.

9 Can you hear me, Mr Witness?

10 A. [12:15:35] I'm listening to you.

11 Q. [12:15:36] Good afternoon. We met earlier in the week, but I will reintroduce
12 myself. My name is Gyo Suzuki and I'll ask you a couple of questions on behalf of
13 Mr Yekatom today. I don't think I will be very long, so I'll ask for your patience in
14 advance and hopefully we get through this quickly.

15 Is that clear enough?

16 A. [12:16:04] I'm at your disposal.

17 Q. [12:16:08] Thank you, Mr Witness. I'm going to start with your time in PK5.

18 In your witness statement, you referred to a Colonel Ismail and a General Chafar who
19 were Seleka in PK5. And I am going to show you a document, Mr Witness.

20 Mr Court Officer, if you could take us to the document in Defence tab 6. It's not for
21 public display. For the record, that's CAR-OTP-2087-9033, at 9058, please.

22 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:17:02] Which tab is it? Perhaps it escaped my
23 attention.

24 MR SUZUKI: [12:17:08] My apologies. That's Defence tab 6.

25 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:17:09] Thank you.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 MR SUZUKI: [12:17:10] Thank you. Mr Court Officer, if you could kind of zoom in
2 to the top right quarter. A little bit more perhaps. Perfect. Thank you.

3 Q. [12:17:21] Mr Witness, can you confirm that these two individuals, we see
4 them -- their names there, so when you say General Chafar you're referring to General
5 Daoud Achaffi; is that correct? Is that his full name?

6 A. [12:17:52] I knew him by that name, General Chafar.

7 Q. [12:18:00] Okay. Thank you, Mr Witness. And Colonel Ismail, is that Colonel
8 Ismail Said that we see on this diagram as well, if you know?

9 A. [12:18:28] Colonel Ismail.

10 Q. [12:18:29] And General Chafar, is it correct that he was responsible for
11 coordinating weapons for the Seleka?

12 A. [12:18:40] Yes, he was the one who coordinated Kilometre 5.

13 Q. [12:18:56] Thank you. And it's also correct that distributed weapons amongst
14 self-defence groups in PK5?

15 A. [12:19:11] My position last time, when they found out that {ICR: (Redacted)
16 (Redacted)
17 (Redacted)}

18 while it wasn't the case. They already had an idea in mind, and I was afraid. I was
19 in an environment where everybody had weapons. And when they made this
20 proposal to me, I said okay. {ICR: (Redacted)} they were there. But the product
21 came in high numbers, and we stocked it in the Ali Babolo mosque. And it was at
22 that time that they had a surprise for us. And when they came, it was in order to get
23 it and with threats. And we had to withdraw, and they took advantage of it to take
24 all the stocked product. That's the point.

25 Q. [12:20:41] I apologise, Mr Witness. My question perhaps wasn't clear. Setting

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 aside the matter of your experience with General Achaffi and the product, the
2 distribution of products, my question is, were you aware that General Achaffi was
3 distributing weapons to self-defence groups in PK5? Is that something that you
4 heard while you were in PK5?

5 A. [12:21:26] What I didn't see and what I didn't experience myself, I can't say.

6 Because my position was this {ICR: (Redacted)}

7 (Redacted)} But because they had a specific scheme in mind, they made {ICR:

8 (Redacted)}

9 And afterwards, it was -- I found out their plan was to take all of the stock. The rest
10 wasn't something I knew about. I wasn't used to such a system.

11 Q. [12:22:08] And while you were in PK5, Mr Witness, did you hear of an armed
12 self-defence group called Texas?

13 A. [12:22:29] This name or nickname Texas, I've got no idea about it. But people
14 did have weapons. Because they set themselves up as self-defence groups, they had
15 weapons, but I'm not in their environment to know any more about it.

16 Q. [12:22:55] Thank you, Mr Witness. I'm going to change topics now. In your
17 witness statement you speak about the killing of the mayor of Boboua called Adamou
18 Dewa. And yesterday the Court heard testimony from the *préfet* or the prefect of
19 Lobaye, Alexandre Kouroupe-Awo, and he said that he heard from Yousseuf Nana,
20 that the mayor of Boboua was killed by people who came from PK25 in Boda.

21 Is this something that you can confirm?

22 A. [12:23:50] Yes. The mayor, the deceased mayor, Dewa, he was the {ICR:

23 (Redacted)}

24 He also {ICR: (Redacted)} And we would talk when he came. And when we were
25 in this stressful situation, it {ICR: (Redacted)}

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 (Redacted)} -- and he told me about his tragic disappearance, that elements came at 3
2 o'clock in the morning to get him and they tied him up. And that was in the mosque,
3 that was in the mosque where he was shot with his two boys. And his younger
4 brother, Youssouf Nana, he got into the forest with his family and God gave them
5 grace in order to reach Bangui. And that's something I know about.

6 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:25:11] Mr Witness, do you recall if Mr Youssouf
7 told you who were the perpetrators of this crime?

8 THE WITNESS: [12:25:31](Interpretation) There was a commander who is a pastor, a
9 server of God of the Apostolic church. He was the one who gave me this
10 information. Other elements came from Lessé commune, 25 kilometres from Boda as
11 well.

12 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:25:59] Thank you.

13 MR SUZUKI: [12:26:03] Thank you, Mr President.

14 Q. [12:26:07] So just to be clear, Mr Witness, the elements or the individuals who
15 participated in this attack, they didn't come from Mbaïki; is that correct? They came
16 from Boda, Lessé, that area; is that right?

17 A. [12:26:31] Yes. All these elements, as I said a moment ago -- well, Lobaye was
18 invaded by the Anti-Balaka, and the Anti-Balaka have a supreme leader. And they
19 left to different sectors. And that's how -- because you could go back from Pissa, if
20 you left you would go into Lessé, and then go towards Boboua and Ndangala and
21 then afterwards other locations. Ndanga, Ndanga it is. So you would go
22 back -- via Pissa you'd go to Ndanga, and Ndanga you would go to Boboua.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:27:24] Mr Witness, you said that they were not
24 from Mbaïki. I have here paragraph 36 of your statement in front of me. And there
25 you said, please listen to me, you said the following:

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 "The Anti-Balaka who killed the mayor were led by Massako Louis, a pastor for the
2 Apostolic Church. The other Anti-Balaka from Mbaïki", you said at the time, "who
3 took part in the attack were Melvy Mokonzi ... Cyril Nzokpian, Nestor Demou,
4 Etienne Guereko and Firmin Dopani. Dopani is the one who shot the mayor."
5 So this sounds a little bit as if you got very specific information about the perpetrators
6 of this crime. Is this something, when I read it to you, your former statement, that
7 you recall?

8 THE WITNESS: [12:28:32](Interpretation) Yes, I remember. There were two cases.
9 There is the case of the mayor, Adamou Dewa, from Boboua. And the second case is
10 the case of the second deputy of the mayor of Mbaïki, who succumbed into the hands
11 of the Anti-Balaka. And that's the case of the second deputy mayor of Mbaïki. But
12 Adamou Dewa, that was led by a pastor of the apostolic church in Boboua.

13 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:29:13] Thank you.

14 THE WITNESS: [12:29:15](Interpretation) Those are the two cases.

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:29:17] Thank you, Mr Witness.

16 Mr Suzuki.

17 MR SUZUKI: [12:29:24] Thank you, Mr President.

18 If I could just have a very quick moment to confer with counsel.

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:29:42] Of course.

20 MR SUZUKI: [12:29:44] Thank you.

21 (Counsel confer)

22 MR SUZUKI: [12:30:27] Your Honour, actually, this -- with your leave, if we could --

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:30:32] Yeah. Of course. I'm always asking,
24 you know that. Do we need a shorter lunch break, put it this way? Well, when we
25 now have the lunch break, let's say, unshortened until 2 o'clock, then we would have

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 one hour and 45 minutes in the afternoon. So we have to be so flexible to try to
2 figure that out.

3 MR SUZUKI: [12:31:08] It might be safer, your Honours, if we have a shorter lunch
4 break.

5 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [12:31:12] Well, let's say then, because we cannot
6 make longer than two hours, until a quarter to 2. It means 13.45. Thank you.

7 THE COURT USHER: [12:31:28] All rise.

8 (Recess taken at 12.31 p.m.)

9 (Upon resuming in open session at 1.46 p.m.)

10 THE COURT USHER: [13:46:15] All rise.

11 Please be seated.

12 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [13:46:32] Good afternoon.

13 Now, Mr Suzuki, you still have the floor, obviously.

14 MR SUZUKI: [13:46:40] Thank you, Mr President. Good afternoon, again.

15 Q. [13:46:44] Hello again, Mr Witness.

16 A. [13:46:50] Hello.

17 Q. [13:46:52] Mr Witness, I'm going to go back, hopefully briefly, on the individuals
18 that you named as being involved in the attack on the mayor of Boboua.

19 Now, I understand that you got your information -- or, actually, we should probably
20 go into private session, Mr President, if you ...

21 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [13:47:19] Yes, I think so.

22 Yeah, private session.

23 (Private session at 1.47 p.m.)

24 THE COURT OFFICER: [13:47:36] We're in private session, Mr President.

25 MR SUZUKI: [13:47:40] Thank you, Mr Court Officer.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [13:47:44] I understand that you got your information about this incident from
2 (Redacted) and I have a document here from (Redacted) and I just want to put some
3 suggestions to you. In this document, (Redacted) says that Firmin Dopani is from
4 Bokoro in Lessé commune. Is that something you can confirm?

5 A. [13:48:18] That is correct.

6 Q. [13:48:20] And for the record, Mr President, that's document at
7 CAR-OTP-2056-0031.

8 Thank you, Mr Witness. And in the same document, (Redacted) says that Cyril
9 Nzokpian is the brother of the pastor Louis Massako, who lives in Boboua 1. Is that
10 something you can confirm as well?

11 A. [13:49:12] They are resident at Boboua.

12 Q. [13:49:17] And in the same document, (Redacted) says that Etienne Guerekon
13 was the chief of Anti-Balaka in Ndanga.
14 Can you confirm that as well, please.

15 A. [13:49:37] Ndanga is close to Boboua.

16 Q. [13:49:43] Apologies, Mr Witness. My question wasn't clear.
17 Etienne Guerekon or Guereko, he was the chief of the Anti-Balaka in Ndanga; is that
18 right?

19 A. [13:50:06] Ndanga, I said that Ndanga is close to Boboua. So in different
20 sectors, they were responsible, they were leaders of the Anti-Balaka.

21 Q. [13:50:22] Thank you, Mr Witness.

22 Again from the same document, Nestor Demou, according to (Redacted) he was an
23 Anti-Balaka in Boboua. Can you confirm that, please?

24 A. [13:50:42] He is from Boboua.

25 Q. [13:50:45] And the last name, Mr Witness, Melvy Makonzi, (Redacted) says that

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 he was a deputy Anti-Balaka from Boda. Can you confirm that?

2 A. [13:51:04] Indeed.

3 Q. [13:51:08] Thank you, Mr Witness.

4 Mr Court Officer, could you please take us to the document at Defence tab 8. That's
5 CAR-OTP-2055-1968. If you could take us to page 1973, please.

6 If you could zoom, scroll down a little bit, please, Mr Court Officer. A little bit
7 further. Perfect. Thank you.

8 Mr Witness, this article about the killing of the mayor of Boboua, I'm going to read
9 you a line from it. It says that -- well, I will paraphrase. It says that villagers told
10 the journalist that the killers of the mayor had left along the road to the northwest.
11 So the northwest from Boboua.

12 First of all, northwest of Boboua, that's the direction of Boda. Can you confirm that?

13 A. [13:52:31] No. It's in direction -- it's towards la Lessé. Some came from la
14 Lessé and some came from Boda.

15 Q. [13:52:44] And past Lessé is Boda; is that correct?

16 A. [13:52:59] While going towards Boda, you reach Ndanga. Ndanga is the
17 crossroad. And from there you go to Boda, and you also go to Lessé.

18 Q. [13:53:10] Thank you, Mr Witness.

19 Mr Court Officer, could you kindly go to the next page, to the fourth paragraph down,
20 please. Thank you.

21 Mr Witness, again I'll paraphrase. This journalist describes having been told that the
22 group -- I'll start again.

23 That they heard that a group of Anti-Balaka led by a man called Firme had passed
24 through a roadblock and boasted of the killing of Adamou Dewa, and they showed
25 these other Anti-Balaka pictures and video of the attack, and the group continued on

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 to Boda. Is this something that you were aware of?

2 A. [13:54:31] I have no knowledge about this. The only thing that was said to me
3 by (Redacted)

4 that's all he told me about the murder. But as for the rest, I have no idea.

5 Q. [13:54:58] That's not a problem at all, Mr Witness. Thank you for your help.

6 I'm going to change topics. I think, Mr President, we can move into --

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [13:55:10] Open session, yes.

8 (Open session at 1.55 p.m.)

9 THE COURT OFFICER: [13:55:27] We're back in open session, Mr President.

10 MR SUZUKI: [13:55:30] Thank you, Mr Court Officer.

11 Q. [13:55:34] Mr Witness, today you referred to an incident where the imam of
12 Petevo was attacked during a reconciliation meeting by local youths. It's correct,
13 isn't it, that he was hospitalised after -- after this attack? Can you confirm that?

14 A. [13:56:02] After the attack, everyone went into their own direction. So about
15 his hospitalisation, I have no information.

16 Q. [13:56:13] Not a problem. Can you confirm that he was struck on the head
17 with a rock during this incident?

18 A. [13:56:32] Yes. They threw stones, and it's with those stones that he was
19 injured at the head. People were trying to grab him out, and he was spared.

20 Q. [13:56:55] Thank you, Mr Witness. Now, in your witness statement, at
21 paragraph 26, you say, and I cite in French: (Interpretation) "At that time I decided
22 to leave the place because of the hostility towards Muslims."

23 (Speaks English) So is it correct to say, Mr Witness, that after this incident, you left
24 Bangui immediately, one day, two days after this incident; is that correct?

25 A. [13:57:34] Well, after this incident, I didn't leave Bangui on the same day. I was

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 observing about -- I was observing how to leave Bangui. And a few days later I left.

2 Q. [13:57:49] Thank you, Mr Witness. So a few days later, less than a week. Is
3 that fair to say? You left less than a week after this incident to Mbaïki.

4 A. [13:58:13] I said that after this assault, I looked around, I observed. So I left my
5 brother's house because I didn't want him to be a victim of something, {ICR:
6 (Redacted)} So I looked around to see how to go back to Mbaïki.

7 Q. [13:58:42] I understand, Mr Witness. I understand you felt the urge to leave
8 quickly to ensure that your brother wasn't in danger. I'm just trying to get a little bit
9 more precision. So is it fair to say that it was a matter of days? Less than one week,
10 for example. Do you remember?

11 A. [13:59:11] After a few days, a few days. At the time, we were under stress, so a
12 few days later I left.

13 Q. [13:59:28] Of course, Mr Witness. That's perfectly understandable.

14 Mr Court Officer, if you could take us to the document at tab 5, please. For the
15 record, that's CAR-D29-0016-0097. If you could take us to 0099. And at the post at
16 the very bottom of the screen, please. Thank you.

17 Mr Witness, I'm going to read you a Facebook post from 13 December 2013. It says:
18 (Interpretation) "The youth in the Petevo neighbourhood had beaten up the imam of
19 the Petevo mosque."

20 (Speaks English) And, Mr Court Officer, if you could just go to the page before that, to
21 the second post down.

22 And again, a post, Mr Witness, from 13 December 2013, I'll cite in French:

23 (Interpretation) "An attempt at reconciliation between Christians and Muslims has
24 turned -- has become traumatic in the 6th arrondissement and more specifically in
25 Petevo."

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 (Speaks English) My question to you, Mr Witness, first of all, this is -- you'll agree
2 with me that this is the same incident that you referred to where the imam of Petevo
3 was attacked?

4 A. [14:01:26] Yes, I was in favour of this reconciliation. When the mayor conveyed
5 this meeting, I had to attend because we thought that it would lead to a genuine
6 reconciliation. However, it turned nasty. And it is when I saw that the imam was
7 assaulted that I left.

8 Q. [14:02:06] Thank you, Mr Witness. And so this date of 13 December 2013, does
9 that assist you to -- does that refresh your memory as to when this incident took place,
10 that accords with your memory?

11 A. [14:02:33] I think that we're in 2022, and since 2013, and with everything we've
12 gone through, it's difficult for me to sum up these memories because it's something I
13 didn't think we would reach that point. But justice and the law have taken this into
14 their hands nowadays and this is why I decided to make this statement and to appear
15 as a victim and as a witness. Thank you.

16 Q. [14:03:27] Of course, Mr Witness. So if you said that you left Mbaïki -- rather,
17 you left Bangui a couple of days after this incident, is it fair to say that, for example,
18 you spent New Year's, you were in Mbaïki for New Year's; is that something that you
19 might remember?

20 A. [14:04:05] New year? Who could celebrate the new year in this situation?
21 That was not my case. New year, I couldn't stay in Bangui. I had to leave in order
22 to join my family. Even if I had to die, I would die with my small family.

23 MR SUZUKI: [14:04:32] Mr President, if I could have a moment to confer.

24 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:04:34] Sure.

25 (Counsel confer)

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 MR SUZUKI: [14:05:13] Thank you, Mr President.

2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:05:14] Please proceed.

3 MR SUZUKI: [14:05:18]

4 Q. [14:05:19] Now, you said, Mr Witness, or you described also today that you
5 travelled back to Mbaïki in a truck and you said -- you spoke about being stopped at a
6 barricade in PK9. I'm going to show you some images, Mr Witness.

7 And, Mr Court Officer, if you could take us to the document at tab 3 of the Defence
8 binder. That's CAR-D29-0003-0032, at 0033, please.

9 Mr Witness, do you see that in front of your screen? It's a satellite image of Bangui.

10 Do you see that in front of you, Mr Witness? Or is it a little bit unclear, perhaps?

11 A. [14:06:53] I think that, as I said earlier on, {ICR: (Redacted)}

12 (Redacted)}

13 Q. [14:07:13] Of course, Mr Witness. My apologies. That wasn't very considerate.

14 What I might do is try to show you an image that's a little bit more zoomed up.

15 If you could take us, Mr Court Officer, to page 0038.

16 THE COURT OFFICER: [14:07:48] Counsel, the document has the suffix ending 0032
17 for all the pages, so if you could indicate which page that would be. Thank you.

18 MR SUZUKI: [14:08:03] It should be the page in front, actually. It says slide 7 on
19 mine, so hopefully it's the same. Thank you. Apologies for that.

20 Q. [14:08:13] Mr Witness, if you can't see this, then it's absolutely no problem at all
21 and I'll move on.

22 But do you see on the screen in front of you at the top left where it says "PK9 bridge"
23 in front of the -- or before the river M'Poko? If you can't see that, again, it's not a
24 problem at all.

25 A. [14:08:48] It's difficult.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [14:08:53] Of course, Mr Witness. Apologies.

2 The barricade that you were stopped at in PK9, is it correct that this barricade was
3 located before you crossed the river? So just in front of the river, that's where the
4 barricade was at PK9; is that correct?

5 A. [14:09:27] Yes. I'm trying to make an effort to see properly, but it's after that.

6 MR SUZUKI: [14:10:06] Maybe we will take the image off, Mr Court Officer, if you
7 don't mind. Thank you.

8 Q. [14:10:13] Setting aside the satellite image for a moment, Mr Witness, do you
9 remember exactly where the PK9 barrier was? Can you confirm that it was before
10 you crossed the river, that the barricade was located before you crossed the water?

11 A. [14:10:43] The barrier was before crossing the river.

12 THE INTERPRETER: [14:10:44] The bridge, correction from the interpreter.

13 MR SUZUKI: [14:10:51]

14 Q. [14:10:51] Thank you for that, Mr Witness.

15 I'm going to ask counsel to play a video and that's at OTP tab 2, CAR-OTP-2055-1915.

16 And I'll ask her to stop or just freeze the frame at 01:45, please.

17 THE INTERPRETER: [14:11:39] Message from the English booth: do you require
18 interpretation for this excerpt, please?

19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:11:47] Do we need interpretation for this
20 excerpt?

21 MR SUZUKI: [14:11:51] No.

22 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:11:51] Okay.

23 MR SUZUKI: [14:12:04]

24 Q. [14:12:05] Do you see that on your -- oh, yeah, I see that you should be able to
25 see that.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Mr Witness, you spoke about -- you spoke about the Anti-Balaka in Mbaïki having,
2 you said, "*des choses*" -- in French you said, "*Les gens attache les choses -- des choses*" --

3 A. [14:12:25](No interpretation)

4 Q. [14:12:26] -- around their necks, around their arms.

5 Now, you also said that the Anti-Balaka at the barricade --

6 A. [14:12:38] Indeed, that's what I said.

7 Q. [14:12:40] Thank you.

8 You said that the Anti-Balaka at the barricade were also wearing *gris-gris*. Can you
9 confirm that the *gris-gris* that you see on the image in front of you, this is the kind of
10 thing that these Anti-Balaka at the PK9 barrier were wearing. Can you confirm that?

11 A. [14:13:15] People would wear things around their neck and on their arms.

12 Each one had its own things. Some even covered their faces so that they could not
13 be identified, but others showed their faces.

14 Q. [14:14:07] Thank you, Mr Witness. Now, again, if you can't see the image in
15 front of your screen, it's not a problem at all. But if you do see the image on your
16 screen, you'll see that these individuals are wearing things around their neck. First
17 of all, can you see that, Mr Witness?

18 A. [14:14:43] Yes, that's what I was saying at an earlier stage. When I said to you
19 the people would tie things around, I don't know whether it was their *gris-gris* or not,
20 tie things around their necks, around their arms, that's what I was saying to you.

21 Q. [14:15:01] Thank you. And to be clear, the Anti-Balaka at the PK9 barrier were
22 wearing these *gris-gris* like the ones that you see in front of you; is that right?

23 A. [14:15:22] It was a whole team that was organised. So it's the same get-up that
24 they were wearing. So at that moment in time, we didn't even want to know any
25 more about it. We just simply wanted to get out of that trap.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [14:16:03] Thank you, Mr Witness. Now, there is one thing I just would like to
2 clarify from your testimony this morning. I understand that when you were at this
3 barricade you were highly stressed, you didn't want to be recognised, and you said, I
4 think, that you turned your face away at some point during this -- when you were
5 stopped at the barricade in PK9. Now, I understand that you knew or you learned
6 that Mr Yekatom was the chief of these elements, and I understand that you saw
7 elements that were searching the cars, but is it correct that you didn't see Mr Yekatom
8 himself?

9 A. [14:17:19] Can you please repeat your question.

10 Q. [14:17:23] Of course, Mr Witness. I apologise. It was quite long. I
11 understand that you -- at the PK9 barricade you saw elements that you understood to
12 be Mr Yekatom's elements, but is it correct that you didn't see Mr Yekatom that day?

13 A. [14:18:03] He was omnipresent. He was in charge of the team. He was
14 omnipresent. He was the one giving instructions. The main base was PK9, so he
15 himself was there, and he was giving instructions. And he was on horseback. He
16 was there. He was moving around. He's the leader.

17 Q. [14:18:47] I understand -- I understand that that was his base. Setting that
18 aside, Mr Witness, very, very specifically, when you were stopped at the PK9
19 barricade, did you see Mr Yekatom himself on that day?

20 A. [14:19:20] Madam, I'd like to repeat to you that he himself was present
21 personally. How did I come to know that? Well, I didn't know him personally, but
22 to say, "There he is, there's the leader."

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:19:43] The witness has answered now. You
24 have to move on.

25 MR SUZUKI: [14:19:53]

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [14:19:53] Was Mr Yekatom wearing *gris-gris* that day as well, Mr Witness?

2 I see from the French transcript that doesn't seem to have been interpreted, so I'll ask
3 again.

4 THE INTERPRETER: [14:20:28] Message from the English booth: The French
5 interpreter did not have her microphone on. Please wait.

6 MR SUZUKI: [14:20:28]

7 Q. [14:20:28] When you saw Mr Yekatom --

8 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:20:39] Yeah, we have to wait because the
9 microphone of the French interpreter was not on. That can happen. No problem.
10 Please try to proceed.

11 MR SUZUKI: [14:20:48] Not a problem at all, of course. Thank you, Mr President.

12 Q. [14:20:55] Mr Witness, I'll repeat my question. When you saw Mr Yekatom
13 that day at the barricade, was he wearing things around his neck? Was he
14 wearing -- was he wearing *gris-gris*?

15 A. [14:21:20] He was in his get-up but had no *gris-gris* as such. It was his elements
16 who did, but not him. I do not know whether under his clothes he had some. But,
17 you know, the state that I was in, I wasn't going to try and understand the who,
18 where, what, and how, and whether he was wearing *gris-gris* or not.

19 Q. [14:21:50] Of course, Mr Witness. That's, again, understandable. And my
20 friend spoke about this earlier today. I'm not going to dwell on it. Just in terms of
21 the other barriers that you stopped at, can you confirm that you stopped at a barrier
22 in Sekia, an Anti-Balaka barrier in Sekia, that day?

23 A. [14:22:27] Well, it was an ongoing flow of movement. When you get to a
24 barricade, they would check you. And the main point is managed by the leader.
25 He had already managed that before we got to other barricades. So other barricades

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 were just a pure formality.

2 Q. [14:22:57] I understand that, Mr Witness. But very specifically, do you
3 remember stopping at a barrier at Sekia?

4 A. [14:23:16] Not at all. Because as I said to you, things were already handled at
5 PK9, so the other ones were just a formality. You just had to give a little bit of
6 money for coffee, and you could carry on your way.

7 Q. [14:23:38] Of course, Mr Witness.

8 For my last question on this topic, I think it would be best to go into private session,
9 Mr President, with your leave.

10 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:23:51] Private session then.

11 (Private session at 2.24 p.m.)

12 THE COURT OFFICER: [14:24:07] We're in private session, Mr President.

13 MR SUZUKI: [14:24:14] Thank you, Mr Court Officer.

14 Q. [14:24:16] Mr Witness, this truck that you took down to Mbaïki, how many other
15 people -- do you remember roughly how many other people were on this truck with
16 you travelling to Mbaïki from Bangui?

17 A. [14:24:41] At that moment in time, there really was a concern associated with
18 transport. And when you come towards a truck, there really are a great deal of
19 people trying to get transport. It was a very turbulent moment.

20 Q. [14:25:04] Thank you. And did you know anyone on this truck, or you didn't
21 know anyone?

22 A. [14:25:20] I hail from Mbaïki. So, of course, the people that I travelled with,
23 well, we knew each other. Others were travelling to another destination, but some
24 from Mbaïki, well, we were known to each other.

25 Q. [14:25:42] Could you give us some names of the people that you know who

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 were on this truck with you?

2 A. [14:26:02] Madam, the question that you are putting to me, well, at that moment
3 in time - I don't really know what to say - it was a time of stress. So the most
4 important thing was to get to one's destination.

5 Q. [14:26:27] Of course, Mr Witness. I will move on.

6 I think we can return to public session, Mr President.

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:26:35] Public session.

8 (Open session at 2.26 p.m.)

9 THE COURT OFFICER: [14:26:56] We're back in open session, Mr President.

10 MR SUZUKI: [14:27:01] Thank you, Mr Court Officer.

11 Q. [14:27:09] Now, Mr Witness, at paragraph 32 of your witness statement, and I'll
12 cite this in French: (Interpretation) "When I reached Mbaïki, the situation was
13 stressful. The Christians would insult the Muslims. They were saying they did not
14 want Muslims in the area."

15 (Speaks English) My question, Mr Witness is, is this something that you noticed
16 immediately upon your return? So as soon as you were back in Mbaïki, you noticed
17 this?

18 A. [14:28:05] Well, that was what was going on. There was a situation of mistrust,
19 and the atmosphere that had existed between Christians and Muslims no longer
20 existed, especially since those of us who had embraced Muslim were being treated as
21 traitors. Well, that meant that our situation was truly deplorable. And it was with
22 regard to that position, with that state of tension, that we were obliged to leave
23 Mbaïki. And, as I said to you, I don't want to go back to Mbaïki, even despite
24 everything that I lost there.

25 Q. [14:28:56] I understand, Mr Witness. And in the same paragraph you say, and

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 I cite in French: (Interpretation) "The Anti-Balaka had started threatening Muslims,
2 but had not at that point taken a decision on what to do with them. They were
3 telling the Muslims to leave the area."

4 (Speaks English) So my question, again, Mr Witness: Is this something that you
5 noticed immediately upon your return to Mbaïki, that this was happening upon your
6 arrival in Mbaïki?

7 A. [14:29:48] As I said at an earlier stage, there was always already a situation of
8 mistrust. We were no longer accepted. They were saying that they no longer
9 needed Muslims in Mbaïki. So we had already been warned, and we needed to take
10 measures, which was what was done.

11 Q. [14:30:24] And at paragraph 33 of your witness statement, you said that the
12 Muslims from surrounding villages in -- or the villages surrounding Mbaïki, they had
13 fled to Mbaïki and they were looking for ways to leave Mbaïki.

14 Now, again, is this something that you learned as soon as you returned back to
15 Mbaïki, you saw that the Muslims in Mbaïki were already looking for ways to leave
16 the town?

17 A. [14:31:17] When I returned to Mbaïki with the intention of resuming {ICR:
18 (Redacted)} I didn't think that things would go that far. And as the situation
19 worsened, well, those who were in the surrounding villages, in view of the tension,
20 were obliged to come to Mbaïki with a view to finding a way out. And those people
21 were arrested. And there we are with internally displaced people.

22 Q. [14:32:30] Thank you, Mr Witness. Just more specifically, though, you said that
23 the Muslims were looking for ways to leave Mbaïki. So did you learn this upon
24 returning to Mbaïki?

25 So if I can rephrase. When you got back to Mbaïki, these displaced Muslims were

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 already looking for ways to leave Mbaïki; is that right?

2 A. [14:33:09] Yes, that is correct.

3 Q. [14:33:20] Thank you, Mr Witness.

4 A. [14:33:29] Thank you, madam.

5 Q. [14:33:39] At paragraph 19 of your witness statement, you say, and I cite in
6 French: (Interpretation) "A few people from the area of whom the Muslim people
7 joined them and collaborated with them."

8 (Speaks English) These Chadians that you refer to who collaborated or joined the
9 Seleka in Mbaïki, does this notably include or do they include the influential traders
10 and businessmen of Mbaïki?

11 A. [14:34:36] For your information, the Chadians who collaborated with the Seleka
12 were well identified. And even today, they cannot return to Mbaïki. And as we
13 speak -- as we speak today, those who did not collaborate with the Seleka are
14 returning to Mbaïki. However, those who did collaborate with the Seleka, well, they
15 can no longer be accepted there.

16 Q. [14:35:19] Thank you for that information, Mr Witness. Does the name
17 Mahamat Issaka, alias Max, do you know this individual?

18 A. [14:35:52] I know Mahamat Issaka. He is a well-known person from the town,
19 and his nickname is Max.

20 Q. [14:36:00] Is he one of the individuals who collaborated with the Seleka and who
21 can no longer return to Mbaïki for that reason?

22 A. [14:36:18] I think I would give the example of Mahamat Issaka, aka Max.
23 Today he has come to Mbaïki. He talks to people. But those who collaborated with
24 the Seleka, as I said to you, they can no longer set foot in Mbaïki today. That's
25 crystal clear. Because people have a bad memory of them. They were born there,

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 they invested there, but they collaborated with the Seleka, so they can no longer set
2 foot in Mbaïki.

3 Q. [14:37:03] What about Mahamat Siki Fateh, alias Debat, is he an individual who
4 collaborated with the Seleka and can no longer return to Mbaïki?

5 A. [14:37:30] This individual, Debat, who collaborated with the Seleka, well, I don't
6 want to talk about him. He can no longer set foot in Mbaïki because his house was
7 turned on its head, and even it was sold. So that's the information I can give you.

8 Q. [14:38:07] And can you tell us exactly what this Debat is understood to have
9 done with the Seleka? Do you have any information on that?

10 A. [14:38:27] Even I who embraced Muslim, he worried me.

11 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:38:39] I think that was clear enough. You
12 won't get more precise information, I think.

13 MR SUZUKI: [14:38:50] If your Honour would allow me just one follow up on that.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:38:54] If you want. You can give it a try, but
15 we will see.

16 MR SUZUKI: [14:39:00] Thank you, your Honour. I'm obliged.

17 Q. [14:39:03] Do you have anything more specific about that, Mr Witness - if you
18 don't, it's not a problem at all - what concretely he did during the Seleka regime?

19 A. [14:39:23] Well, he was in their company. When they moved around and
20 committed exactions, well, I wasn't there, but what I saw with my very own eyes was
21 that he was walking around with weapons. And even I who am speaking to you, I
22 who embraced Islam, he worried me. That's the clarification I can provide.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:39:58] So there was additional information,
24 yeah.

25 MR SUZUKI: [14:40:03] Thank you, Mr President.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [14:40:06] And thank you, Mr Witness, for the answer.

2 And what about an individual named Amousamil Abdoul Salam, the president of the
3 Muslim youth, was he also an individual who collaborated with the Seleka in Mbaïki
4 and for that reason can no longer return; is that correct?

5 A. [14:40:52] I don't have any information about that individual, because we were
6 at a distance. When the Seleka arrived, {ICR: (Redacted)} So I wasn't in Mbaïki.
7 {ICR: (Redacted)}

8 Those people I have information about, such as Max and Debat, I can tell you. But as
9 for the other person, I have no information.

10 Q. [14:41:36] And one last name, Mr Witness. Olmozame Mana, is he someone
11 who collaborated with the Seleka in Mbaïki?

12 A. [14:42:04] Please pronounce that correctly.

13 Q. [14:42:05] My apologies. Olmozame Mana. I hope that's better.

14 A. [14:42:16] Ah, Mana. Mana did not collaborate with the Seleka. He was
15 worried about the Seleka. He had his little activities. He had money.

16 Q. [14:42:47] Thank you, Mr Witness. And just to be clear, when you say they
17 can't return to Mbaïki, these collaborators, that's because the local population of
18 Mbaïki considered them as Seleka collaborators; is that correct?

19 A. [14:43:10] As I was saying or as I said earlier in my statement, those who
20 collaborated with the Seleka are well known, and they can no longer go back to
21 Mbaïki, with the exception of those who did not collaborate with the Seleka. Those
22 people, such as Max, et cetera, have gone back to Mbaïki.

23 Q. [14:43:51] And so when you say in French: (Interpretation) "Those who
24 collaborated with the Seleka are well known", (Speaks English) you mean that they
25 are well known among the local population of Mbaïki; is that right?

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 A. [14:44:19] That is right.

2 Q. [14:44:24] Thank you, Mr Witness.

3 Mr President, for the next two or three questions, if we could move into private
4 session.

5 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:44:33] Okay, private session.

6 (Private session at 2.44 p.m.)

7 THE COURT OFFICER: [14:44:51] We're in private session, Mr President.

8 MR SUZUKI: [14:44:54] Thank you, Mr Court Officer.

9 If you could take us to the document at (Redacted)

10 (Redacted)

11 Thank you.

12 Q. [14:45:28] And, Mr Witness, I won't ask you to look at that, but the (Redacted)
13 from -- well, I should give you context. This is a report, Mr Witness, from an NGO,
14 and it seems that the authors of this report interviewed a number of people in Bangui,
15 in Boda and in Mbaïki. And it seems -- well, there is an individual named or listed
16 (Redacted)
17 (Redacted)
18 (Redacted)

19 for the purposes of this report? Is that something that you remember?

20 A. [14:46:48] (Redacted)

21 Q. [14:46:51] Thank you, Mr Witness.

22 Mr Court Officer, if you could take us to the page at 0438. Thank you. A little bit
23 further down, please. The next paragraph. Perfect. Thank you.

24 Mr Witness, I'm going to read you part of this report. It says: "... a 2014 study on
25 social cohesion of refugees from CAR noted negative perceptions held by (primarily

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Christian) communities in CAR, towards Central African and Chadian Muslims; these
2 negative perceptions would likely negatively affect return."

3 My question, Mr Witness: You would agree that this corroborates what you just told
4 us about the situation in Mbaïki, these -- the fact that Chadian Muslims were unable
5 to return or some Chadian Muslims were unable to return because of negative
6 perceptions held by the local community? Would you agree with that?

7 A. [14:48:50] Saying that the return of the Chadian nationals to Mbaïki, it doesn't
8 concern everyone, because as I said earlier on, some names was mentioned, those
9 who collaborated with the Seleka, they are marked for life, and they are no longer
10 acceptable or accepted in Mbaïki. But those who didn't collaborate with the Seleka,
11 they are currently in Mbaïki. So we cannot talk about all the Chadian nationals.
12 Those who collaborated with the Seleka, they have been labelled, and they can no
13 longer go back.

14 Q. [14:49:40] Thank you for that precision, Mr Witness.

15 Mr Court Officer, if you could take us to page 0472. Thank you. And to the
16 footnote down at the bottom at 228, please.

17 Mr Witness, the authors of this report suggest in this extract, and I'll cite it:

18 "... it was often that interviewees of one religious identity referred to youth from the
19 opposing religious identity as moving interchangeably between the local self-defence
20 group and the national-level Seleka or Anti-Balaka forces. Indeed, some
21 interviewees made little distinction between the Seleka or Anti-Balaka and their local,
22 religiously similar self-defence group."

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:51:23] Well, I have seen less complicated
24 phrases, but try to formulate a question on that.

25 MR SUZUKI: [14:51:35]

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [14:51:35] Mr Witness, broadly speaking, is it fair to say that often people didn't
2 distinguish between Anti-Balaka and Christian self-defence groups?

3 I see my friend is on her feet.

4 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:51:56] Yes.

5 MS PRATHABAN: [14:51:58] Mr President, we can't ask the witness to speculate
6 what's in other people's mind. He can only speak for his knowledge.

7 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [14:52:04] Yeah, I think I agree with you, but that
8 doesn't matter because that's, anyway, the information that you want to elicit from the
9 witness. So personalise, please, the question. You understand what I mean by that?
10 Yeah. So ...

11 MR SUZUKI: [14:52:25] I think so, Mr President.

12 Q. [14:52:28] In your experience, in your conversations with people, did you find
13 that people would refer to Anti-Balaka and Christian self-defence group members
14 interchangeably? They wouldn't really distinguish between Anti-Balaka elements
15 and Christian self-defence group elements?

16 A. [14:53:11] I don't know what answer to give you because at that time, because of
17 the stress I was under, I could not make any distinction about who was doing what.

18 Q. [14:53:26] Thank you for that, Mr Witness. I'm almost at the end of my
19 examination. I am going to move on to another topic. In your witness statement,
20 you speak about the killing of the mayor of -- the deputy mayor of Mbaïki, Djido
21 Saleh. And you say at paragraph 37 that he was killed by an Anti-Balaka led by
22 Cobo and a man named Prince Mondounga.

23 My question, Mr Witness, is: Prince Mondounga is the grandson of Madam
24 Mondounga, the former adviser to the Mbaïki mayor; is that correct?

25 A. [14:54:29] That's correct.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Q. [14:54:30] Thank you.

2 Mr Court Officer, if you could take us to Defence tab 1, please. That's

3 CAR-D29-0010-0012. And that's not for public display, I think.

4 I promise this is the last image I'm going to ask you to try to see, Mr Witness. And if
5 you can't see, then it's not a problem at all.

6 The individual that you see in the white shirt, is that Prince Mondounga?

7 A. [14:55:28] That's him.

8 Q. [14:55:44] Thank you, Mr Witness.

9 Mr Witness, do you know an individual named Raymond Mongbandi?

10 A. [14:56:11] Raymond Mongbandi?

11 Q. [14:56:16] Yes, Mr Witness, do you know this individual?

12 A. [14:56:20] Mr Mongbandi, Raymond is the former mayor of Mbaïki.

13 Q. [14:56:24] Thank you. Did you -- when you were in Mbaïki during the Seleka
14 time, did you interact with Raymond Mongbandi at all? Do you remember having a
15 conversation with him or otherwise interacting with him?

16 A. [14:57:02] Mr Mongbandi is the former mayor of Mbaïki, and when the situation
17 deteriorated, at the time (Redacted)

18 Q. [14:57:28] Thank you. And the president of the Mbaïki youth, could you tell us
19 who was the president of the Mbaïki youth during the crisis?

20 A. [14:57:50] The president of the Mbaïki youth, I can't recall his name, because
21 when the crisis started, (Redacted). I thought it would be solved, and then it
22 deteriorated until I went back home. So I avoided having any contacts.

23 Q. [14:58:29] Thank you, Mr Witness. I realise I forgot to ask you a question. So
24 I'm going to go back to my previous topic.

25 Again, you said that Djido Saleh had been killed by an Anti-Balaka led by Cobo.

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Can you confirm that you are referring to Victor Cobo?

2 A. [14:58:57] Yes, that's the team. Cobo and Mondounga, because he is a Chadian
3 national. He was born in Mbaïki. And when the crisis erupted throughout the
4 country, people tried to go back home. Even as we were leaving, he did not want to
5 move. He preferred staying back in Mbaïki, and he paid the price for that.

6 Q. [14:59:35] Thank you for that, Mr Witness. And Victor Cobo, he was a local
7 chief in Mbaïki; is that right?

8 A. [14:59:51] Cobo was -- Cobo is in the club of Mondounga and others. They
9 were the ones who -- I don't know how to put it. They were reluctant. When the
10 situation deteriorated, they did not want to see any Muslims in the locality.

11 MR SUZUKI: [15:00:24] Mr President, could I confer for a moment?

12 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:00:32] Sure.

13 MR SUZUKI: [15:00:33] Thank you.

14 (Counsel confer)

15 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:00:59] In the meantime, Mr Knoops, do you
16 have any questions for this witness?

17 MR KNOOPS: [15:01:08] I would have one question, Mr President. Thank you.

18 MR SUZUKI: [15:01:18] Thank you.

19 I think for the last two questions, Mr President, we'll have to move into private
20 session.

21 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:01:25] Private session.

22 THE COURT OFFICER: [15:01:33] We're in private session.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:01:37] You're right of course. Thank you.

24 MR SUZUKI: [15:01:39] I apologise.

25 Q. [15:01:44] Mr Witness, the information you got about the killing of Djido Saleh,

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Private Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 you received this from (Redacted), is what you say in your witness statement. Can
2 you confirm that you're referring to (Redacted), also known as (Redacted)?

3 A. [15:02:21] Mr (Redacted), we call him (Redacted)
4 (Redacted)

5 When we were deported in Bangui, the Malian community stayed in Mbaïki under
6 the protection of MINUSCA from the RDC. And even Mr Youssouf Nana was part
7 of that same group. They were being protected by the Congolese contingent.
8 (Redacted) Mr (Redacted) called us to give us this information, that Mr Djido Saleh
9 had been assassinated by two groups -- two people of the Anti-Balaka group, and
10 they gave us the name. And he had witnessed it and told us about it. That's the
11 information.

12 Q. [15:03:42] (Redacted)
13 (Redacted)
14 (Redacted)

15 A. [15:04:23] (Redacted)

16 Q. [15:04:29] Thank you, Mr Witness. Those are all my questions for you. Thank
17 you for your patience.

18 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:04:34] Thank you, Mr Suzuki.

19 MR SUZUKI: [15:04:36] Thank you, Mr President.

20 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:04:37] Can we have this question in open
21 session?

22 MR KNOOPS: [15:04:41] Yes.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:04:41] Then we go to open session and then you
24 have the floor, Mr Knoops.

25 There is one question left by Mr -- I hope we can discuss this in open session. Yeah,

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 then -- then we go to open session. No change. But Mr Knoops is sitting down
2 comfortably, while Mr Suzuki is standing up again.

3 (Open session at 3.05 p.m.)

4 THE COURT OFFICER: [15:05:22] We're back in open session, Mr President.

5 MR SUZUKI: [15:05:30] My apologies for the confusion.

6 Q. [15:05:36] Sorry, Mr Witness, I do have one more topic for you. My apologies.

7 Could you tell us, when was the first time that you met Mr Yekatom?

8 A. [15:06:00] Meeting him personally or during that crisis?

9 Q. [15:06:07] Individually. Well, whichever came first. When was the first time
10 you met Mr Yekatom?

11 A. [15:06:24] I have never met him. I saw him, Mr Yekatom. He was known as
12 being an element of FACA. But afterwards, when there was this crisis, he was
13 known as a group leader. And when I met him was when I was going back to
14 Mbaïki, and he was presented as the chief of the Balaka -- the Anti-Balaka. And
15 that's -- it's afterwards that I remembered him as being a FACA. But to say that I
16 met him, no, no.

17 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:07:21] Actually, we understood -- I think it was
18 clear that you wanted to bring that out, but that was also clear, I think, from his
19 statement. I think those were your questions? One more?

20 MR SUZUKI: [15:07:34] A couple more --

21 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:07:36] Okay, okay. Good. Yeah, continue.

22 MR SUZUKI: [15:07:38] -- on this topic, Mr President, if you wouldn't mind.

23 Q. [15:07:40] And you said, Mr Witness, I think you said it today as well, that

24 Mr Yekatom would come to Mbaïki and visit his parents "and I would see him

25 sometimes." Can you tell us -- can you elaborate on that a little bit, please. Who

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 was he coming to visit in Mbaïki, do you know?

2 A. [15:08:13] No. He came to see his *relatives. As any good element of FACA
3 or gendarmerie of the police, you would say he's a FACA or he's a gendarme or he's a
4 policeman, and he would come to visit his *relatives. And that's how I knew of him.
5 And I was told he was a FACA. And when the crisis happened, that's when I saw
6 him wearing his Anti-Balaka cap.

7 Q. [15:08:49] Okay. And do you remember -- do you remember where you saw
8 Mr Yekatom in Mbaïki? On what occasion did you see him when somebody pointed
9 him out as a FACA? Do you remember anything about that?

10 A. [15:09:17] Well, we are talking about a city. When somebody arrives --
11 {PFR: (Redacted)}
12 so when somebody arrives, I am told, "This is X" or "This is Y." And that's it. But
13 there was no friendship or any relationship between him and I that would mean I
14 would approach him. I was just presented -- he was just presented as being either a
15 policemen or a gendarme or a FACA.

16 Q. [15:10:11] So when you say at paragraph 13 of your witness statement, and I will
17 cite in French: (Interpretation) "In 1999" --
18 (Speaks English) My apologies. That will have to be in private session for this last
19 question, Mr President.

20 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:10:31] I think we have -- he has already
21 confirmed this one. Perhaps you can simply skip that and continue with the second
22 phrase, "I interacted with" him, because we have talked about the other. We don't
23 have to repeat that and to only go for that to private session, yeah.

24 MR SUZUKI: [15:10:52]

25 Q. [15:10:52] Mr Witness, you suggested you were in contact with Mr Yekatom in

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 the context of your role at the time. So do I understand that you met him in your
2 capacity as the -- the role that you were playing or the role that you were exercising at
3 the time?

4 A. [15:11:30] I did not meet him. That's what I said. I did not meet him. But he
5 was introduced to me. Meeting someone is going to him and exchanging and
6 talking. But from a distance, being told, "This is Mr X." That's it. I did not meet
7 him.

8 Q. [15:11:53] This time I think -- this is the --

9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:12:01] Okay. Thank you very much,
10 Mr Suzuki.

11 MR SUZUKI: [15:12:04]

12 Q. [15:12:04] Thank you, Mr Witness.

13 My apologies.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:12:07] And I give now the floor to Mr Knoops.

15 MR KNOOPS: [15:12:11] Thank you, Mr President. Actually, I have question A
16 and B, I hope.

17 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:12:17] Either two half questions or two
18 questions.

19 MR KNOOPS: [15:12:18] Thank you, Mr President.

20 QUESTIONED BY MR KNOOPS:

21 Q. [15:12:24] Good afternoon, Mr Witness, on this late afternoon. My name is
22 Alexander Knoops. I am one of the counsel of Mr Ngaïssona.

23 I have the following question to you, sir: The prefect of Lobaye, Mr Kouroupe-Awo,
24 testified here on 28 November, a few days ago, and I quote from the English real-time
25 transcript, page 38, line 5 till 8, lots of young people "invented themselves as

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

1 Anti-Balaka ... they were basically hooligans ..." End of quotation.

2 My question to you, sir: Is this something you also experienced like the prefect in
3 2013 to 14?

4 A. [15:13:45] I would answer as follows: When the crisis came about, a lot of people
5 became involved in that group in order to become Anti-Balaka. They were real
6 Anti-Balakas. And when they arrived, they took people under their wing. And those
7 young people who did not have anything to do, well, they -- they made the most of
8 the situation in order to do bad things. So the area that I was in {PFR: (Redacted)}
9 they were not Anti-Balaka, those people there. But when the Anti-Balaka came and
10 took over the sector, everyone became Anti-Balaka. There we have it.

11 Well, as to what the *préfet* said, it is the truth, because the young people did join the
12 group when the Anti-Balaka arrived. For some people, it was the greatest
13 opportunity ever to do bad things.

14 Q. [15:15:11] And, sir, to your experience in those days, these young people who
15 the prefect qualified as hooligans, according to your experience, was anyone, any
16 authority able to control those young people who apparently, in the view of the
17 prefect, acted as hooligans?

18 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:15:42] Yeah.

19 MS PRATHABAN: [15:15:43] Mr President, this calls for speculation.

20 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:15:45] Well, it's borderline.

21 So, Mr Witness, at the time was there any state agency, so to speak, who could
22 provide security for the population, specifically for the Muslim population?

23 THE WITNESS: [15:16:23](Interpretation) I believe that at that time it was really
24 impossible to contain those youngsters who were off the rails. People were already
25 in an extreme situation and it wasn't at all easy to contain them. So that's what I

Trial Hearing
WITNESS: CAR-OTP-P-1823

(Open Session)

ICC-01/14-01/18

- 1 could say, more or less.
- 2 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:16:51] I think you have your answer,
- 3 Mr Knoops.
- 4 MR KNOOPS: [15:16:53] Thank you, Mr President.
- 5 Q. [15:16:55] Thank you, Mr Witness, for your answers.
- 6 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:16:59] Actually, I don't think that there is any
- 7 reason for so-called redirect. Is this correct?
- 8 MS PRATHABAN: [15:17:04] Yes, Mr President, we have no further questions.
- 9 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:17:06] So then this -- Mr Witness, this concludes
- 10 your testimony. As the Presiding Judge of this Chamber, and on behalf of the
- 11 Chamber, I would like to thank you, that you have made yourself available as a
- 12 witness in these proceedings and have testified before this Court. It is very
- 13 important that we have witnesses who come forward with what they experienced,
- 14 what they have gone through. This is important for us so that we can establish the
- 15 truth.
- 16 We wish you all the best and a safe trip back home.
- 17 THE WITNESS: [15:17:44](Interpretation) Thank you.
- 18 (The witness is excused)
- 19 PRESIDING JUDGE SCHMITT: [15:17:46] This concludes also the hearing for today.
- 20 The Court is adjourned.
- 21 (The hearing ends in open session at 3.17 p.m.)