

Failed DRC Investigations by the ICC claim NGOs

On Monday August 28, the International Criminal Court announced its charges against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, President of the Union Patriots Congolais UPC in Eastern DRC. ‘ The Congolese Coalition for Transitional Justice and the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice are disappointed but not surprised by the announcement at the Hague during Monday’s press briefing by the ICC ’, said Raphael Wakenge, Co-ordinator for the Coalition and Brigid Inder, Executive Director of the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice.

‘ The ICC has built its case on narrow charges against one of the most brutal militia groups in the Eastern DRC therefore excluding many victims and survivors from participating in the justice process’, said Mr. Wakenge.

‘ Crimes committed by the UPC include widespread rape and sexual slavery, crimes ignored by the Court in their investigations and consequently in the case against Mr. Lubanga, the first indictee to stand trial at the ICC’, Mr. Wakenge said.

Earlier this month the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice submitted information to the Prosecutor detailing examples of gender based crimes committed by the UPC. ‘ There is substantial evidence available to show that rape and other forms of sexual violence have been a defining characteristic of the conflict in Ituri and that the UPC amongst other groups has committed these crimes’, said Ms. Inder.

‘ Although the ICC is focusing on child soldiers solely in the first case, it doesn’t appear to have been willing to undertake investigations into the rape of girls abducted by the UPC for the purposes of conscription into the militia’, Ms. Inder added.

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