

AI Index: PRE 01/135/2013
19 March 2013

DRC: Bosco Ntaganda must be surrendered to the ICC

The United States and Rwandan governments must move quickly to ensure the safe surrender of Bosco Ntaganda, to the International Criminal Court (ICC), Amnesty International said today.

The US State Department confirmed that Bosco Ntaganda – who heads a faction of the M23 armed group - arrived at the US Embassy in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, on 18 March 2013 and requested to be transferred to The Hague. The US pledged to facilitate this request.

Amnesty International is calling on the US and Rwandan authorities to ensure that Bosco Ntaganda's rights are protected pending his transfer to the ICC, where he can face a fair trial with full respect for his rights.

“Surrendering Bosco Ntaganda to the ICC should act as a strong deterrent to others and help break persistent cycles of impunity that wrack eastern DRC,” said Sarah Jackson, Amnesty International's Deputy Africa Director.

“Bosco Ntaganda is accused by the ICC of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ituri, eastern DRC in 2002 and 2003. Crimes that caused untold suffering to the people of eastern DRC.”

Despite the ICC arrest warrant issued in 2006, Bosco Ntaganda was never arrested by the DRC or UN authorities. On the contrary, he was made a general in the Congolese army in January 2009, as part of a peace agreement integrating armed groups.

“For the last six years, victims have been waiting for his arrest and surrender to the ICC. It is important that this finally happens,” said Jackson.

Amnesty International is also calling on the Congolese authorities to apprehend Sylvestre Mudacumura, the military commander of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, so that he too is surrendered to the ICC.

“It is the obligation of every state to deny a safe haven to anyone suspected of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.”

The ICC first issued an arrest warrant for Bosco Ntaganda in 2006 on allegations of recruiting children under 15 as soldiers into the Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo (FPLC) in Ituri between 2002 and 2003.

In July 2012, the ICC issued a second arrest warrant on allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including for murder, rape and sexual slavery, also alleged to have taken place in 2002 and 2003.

Bosco Ntaganda later led the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP), whose members

committed serious human rights abuses, including a massacre at Kiwanja, North Kivu, where more than 150 civilians were killed in November 2008.

In April 2012, Bosco Ntaganda led a mutiny creating the M23 armed group whose fighters have committed numerous human rights abuses, including unlawful killings, forced recruitment of children and rape.