



Press Release

Gbagbo in the Hague: ALNEF denounces the imperialistic justice of the ICC!

Only two days after the end of the third meeting of the African Left Networking Forum (ALNEF), held in Bamako (Mali) from 25th to 27th November 2011, we were informed that Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, former President of the Ivory Coast, overthrown on April 11, 2011 by the French occupation army in the Ivory Coast, was deported to the Hague to face charges of "crimes against humanity" brought by the controversial ICC prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo. It must be recalled that when the post-electoral crisis erupted in December 2010 in the Ivory Coast, the ICC prosecutor declared that "Mr. Gbagbo will be held responsible for all human rights violations in the country during the crisis". Such declarations show that Mr. Gbagbo was already convicted, far before the alleged crimes for which he was accused had even taken place. Mr. Ocampo has clearly shown a lack of neutrality in the Ivorian crisis, in flagrant violation of the spirit that should characterize an institution like the ICC.

Not before October 2011 did the ICC start its investigations on alleged human rights violations during the post-electoral crisis in the Ivory Coast, and these investigations are still continuing. The speed and rush with which Laurent Gbagbo was transferred to the Hague are extremely disturbing and suggest a manipulation of international justice for political purposes.

Reports from various human rights organizations have repeatedly accused both Gbagbo and Ouattara-Soro forces for having "committed massacres against civilians" during the post-election crisis in the Ivory Coast. Mr. Gbagbo was transferred to the Hague to face trial for alleged crimes committed by his army forces. What about Alassane Ouattara and Guillaume Soro, whose troops are also accused daily of having committed terrible atrocities and war crimes against civilians and political opponents? What is the justification for this full impunity enjoyed by Soro, Ouattara and their forces?

It should be recalled that in November 2004, former French President Jacques Chirac ordered the massacre of 64 Ivorian citizens (at the Hotel Ivoire in Abidjan) by the French occupation army in the Ivory Coast. In April 2011, French president Nicolas Sarkozy ordered the bombing of the Ivorian presidential palace and military barracks in Abidjan, killing many unarmed Ivorian citizens, the exact number of which is still unknown. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) as well as human rights organizations have accused the so-called "Republican Forces" of Mr. Ouattara and Mr. Soro of having coldly massacred over 800 people, after they entered the town of Duékoué on March 30, 2010. "Le Canard Enchaîné", a reliable French newspaper, in its edition of April 6, 2011, also stated that French authorities had "provided ammunitions and assault rifles" to Mr. Ouattara's troops, who have been accused of the massacre of civilians in Duékoué.

Why is the ICC prosecutor closing its eyes to the crimes of Chirac, Sarkozy and the French occupation army in the Ivory Coast? Is the ICC a jurisdiction which applies only to Africans?

The ALNEF is therefore astounded that only Mr. Gbagbo has been referred to the ICC while no French officials nor any members of the Ouattara regime have so far been prosecuted.

ALNEF is convinced that the quasi-clandestine transfer of Mr. Gbagbo to the Hague will not ease the political situation in the Ivory Coast, which remains very unstable and characterized by:

- Lack of transparency in the organization of parliamentary elections by an Electoral Commission which is completely controlled by the government, causing the exclusion of the political opposition;

- Endemic poverty among the people of the Ivory Coast while French imperialism, through its multinational corporations, is hijacking the country's resources through a so-called "reconstruction" program;

- Arbitrary detention of hundreds of political prisoners, FPI activists, former officials and family members of former president Gbagbo;

- Abuses perpetrated by the FRCI of Mr. Ouattara against opposition activists and presumed supporters of Mr. Gbagbo;

- Massive violations of human rights with the ban on opposition rallies and open attacks against opposition activists;

- Obstacles to press freedom through death threats, intimidation and jailing of journalists from the opposition newspapers;

Considering the above points:

- The ALNEF firmly condemns the illegal transfer of Mr. Gbagbo to the ICC and is deeply troubled by the selective and discriminatory justice of the ICC, which carries the risk of forever discrediting this institution whose creation had been applauded by human rights organizations;

- The ALNEF fears that the transfer of Mr. Gbagbo and the manhunt suffered by his supporters on the ground in the Ivory Coast, could rekindle tension and trigger the resumption of civil war in the country;

- The ALNEF calls for the postponement of legislative elections until a peaceful environment is

created and a genuinely independent electoral commission is established to ensure fair and equitable elections;

- The ALNEF calls for the African Union and all African governments to withdraw from the Treaty of Rome, since the proof has now been given that the ICC was created solely to serve the political interests of the imperialist powers and not the protection of human rights;

- The ALNEF calls upon the Soro-Ouattara regime to immediately cease all acts of violence against opponents and journalists and to guarantee all forms of democratic freedom, won through struggle by the people of the Ivory Coast;

- Finally, the ALNEF strongly supports the working people and progressive forces in the Ivory Coast, in their struggles for freedom, democracy and the rule of law .

The struggle continues!

Johannesburg, Dec. 6, 2011

On Behalf of the Secretariat of the ALNEF,

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