

Guilty Verdict Delivered in First ICC Trial Coalition for the International Criminal Court 14 March 2012

Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court (ICC)—the world’s first permanent international court to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide—today delivered a guilty verdict in the Court’s first landmark trial, *The Prosecutor Vs. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo*. Lubanga’s defense, however, has the right to appeal today’s decision.

Thomas Lubanga, a national of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), was found guilty of having committed the war crimes of enlisting and conscripting children under the age of 15 years and using them to participate actively in hostilities in the DRC between September 2002 and August 2003.

Sentencing is to take place on another date so that any additional evidence or information that might impact upon its duration can be taken into consideration by the judges. The time that Lubanga has already served in detention will also be taken into account. (...)

(...) The Lubanga trial is a milestone for the Rome Statute—the ICC’s founding treaty—which entered into force only ten years ago. The Lubanga case is one of the few international criminal cases in history to charge an individual with acts of enlistment and conscription of child soldiers. As such, the trial has done much to highlight the gravity of the crime of using child soldiers and has helped to bring the issue into international focus. During the proceedings, ten former child soldiers testified, as did a number of expert witnesses.

The trial is also noteworthy as the first instance of victim participation in an international criminal trial, with a total of 129 victims authorized by judges to participate through seven legal representatives. Reparations to victims for harms suffered may now be ordered by the ICC judges, which would be another groundbreaking first in international criminal jurisdictions. (...)

(...) Some 5.4 million people have died in the DRC since August 1998, making the conflict one of the world’s deadliest since World War II. For many years, victims and civil society in the DRC have demanded accountability. The opening of the Lubanga trial was considered a huge step forward for justice, but there is still a long way to go until peace is achieved in the country. (...)

To read the full press release, see [here](#).