

Situation in Central African Republic II

ICC-PIDS-CIS-CARII-03-022/25_Eng

Updated: September 2025

The Prosecutor v. Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona

ICC-01/14-01/18

Accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in Central African Republic (CAR) between December 2013 and December 2014. Charges partially confirmed on 11 December 2019. Trial opened on 16 February 2021. Closing statements on 9-12 December 2024. Convicted and sentenced on 24 July 2025. The verdict and sentence are subject to appeals. In ICC custody.

Alfred Yekatom



Date of birth: 23 January 1975

Place of birth : Bimbo, Central African Republic

Nationality: Central African Republic

Title: Former commander in the Anti-Balaka movement

Warrant of arrest: Issued on 11 November 2018 | Unsealed on 17 November 2018

Transfer: 17 November 2018

First appearance: 23 November 2018

Confirmation of charges hearing: 19 – 25 September and 11 October 2019

Confirmation decision: 11 December 2019

Opening of the trial: 16 February 2021

Closing statements: 9-12 December 2024

Verdict and sentence: 24 July 2025

Situation: In ICC custody

Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona



Date of birth: 30 June 1967

Place of birth : Begoua, Central African Republic

Nationality : Central African Republic

Title : Former senior leader and the "National General Coordinator" of the Anti-Balaka movement

Warrant of Arrest: Issued on 7 December 2018 | Unsealed on 13 December 2018

Arrest: 12 December 2018

Transfer: 23 January 2019

First appearance: 25 January 2019

Confirmation of charges hearing: 19 – 25 September and 11 October 2019

Confirmation decision: 11 December 2019

Opening of the trial: 16 February 2021

Closing statements: 9-12 December 2024

Verdict and sentence: 24 July 2025

Situation: In ICC custody

Charges

On 24 July 2025, Trial Chamber V found Mr Ngaïssona and Mr Yekatom guilty of a number of charges brought against them of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Bangui and the west of the Central African Republic between September 2013 and at least February 2014.

Key judicial developments

REFERRAL AND OPENING OF THE INVESTIGATION

On 30 May 2014, the Prosecutor received a referral from the Central African authorities regarding crimes allegedly committed in CAR since 1 August 2012. On 24 September 2014, the Prosecutor opened a second investigation in CAR regarding crimes allegedly committed since 2012.

WARRANTS OF ARREST

On 30 October 2018, the Prosecutor submitted under seal the application for the issuance of a warrant of arrest for Mr Yekatom. The warrant of arrest for Mr Yekatom was issued under seal by Pre-Trial Chamber II on 11 November 2018 and unsealed on 17 November 2018.

On 30 October 2018, the Prosecutor submitted under seal the application for the issuance of a [warrant of arrest](#) for Mr Ngaïssona. The warrant of arrest was issued under seal by Pre-Trial Chamber II on 7 December 2018 and unsealed on 13 December 2018.

ARRESTS AND TRANSFERS

On 17 November 2018, Mr Yekatom was surrendered to the ICC by the Central African authorities and transferred to the ICC detention centre.

On 12 December 2018, Mr Ngaïssona was arrested in France by the French authorities. On 23 January 2019, he was transferred to the ICC in The Hague, Netherlands, following the completion of necessary national proceedings.

INITIAL APPEARANCES

The initial appearance of Mr Yekatom before Pre-Trial Chamber II took place on 23 November 2018. The initial appearance of Mr Ngaïssona before Pre-Trial Chamber II took place on 25 January 2019.

The Chamber verified the identity of the suspects, and ensured that they were clearly informed of the crimes they are alleged to have committed and of their rights under the Rome Statute of the ICC in a language they fully understand and speak.

JOINDER OF THE CASES

On 20 February 2019, Pre-Trial Chamber II joined the cases of Mr Yekatom and Mr Ngaïssona. For the Chamber, joint proceedings will serve to enhance the fairness and expeditiousness of the proceedings by avoiding the duplication of evidence, inconsistency in the presentation and assessment of evidence, undue impact on witnesses and victims, and unnecessary expense. In joint cases, each suspect shall be accorded the same rights as if such suspect were being tried separately.

CONFIRMATION OF CHARGES

The confirmation of charges hearing took place on 19 – 25 September 2019 with closing statements on 11 October 2019.

On 11 December 2019, Pre-Trial Chamber II partially confirmed the charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity brought by the Prosecutor against Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona and committed them to trial. The Chamber declined to confirm the remaining charges that were not supported by the evidence presented by the Prosecutor. The redacted version of this decision was [published](#) on 20 December 2019. On 11 March 2020, Pre-Trial Chamber II [rejected](#) the [Prosecution's Request for Reconsideration of, or alternatively Leave to Appeal, the "Decision on the confirmation of charges against Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona"](#).

TRIAL

On 16 March 2020, the ICC Presidency [constituted Trial Chamber V](#) to be in charge of this case and is composed of [Judge Bertram Schmitt](#), [Judge Péter Kovács](#) and [Judge Chang-ho Chung](#).

The trial [opened on 16 February 2021](#) before Trial Chamber V. The prosecution called 114 witnesses to testify. The Legal Representatives of Victims also called three witnesses to testify. The Defence teams for both accused called a total of 56 witnesses. The Chamber called one witness.

On 27 and 28 August 2024, the presentation of evidence of the Defence ended with an [unsworn statement of Mr. Ngaïssona](#). Prior to the holding of closing statements, the parties have also filed their [closing briefs](#).

The closing statements took place from 9 to 12 December 2024. Statements were made by the Office of the Prosecutor, the Legal Representatives of Victims, and the Defence, followed by questions from the Chamber.

On 13 and 16 December 2024, the parties and participants filed their submissions on potential sentencing. A hearing on potential sentencing was held on 8 and 9 January 2025.

VERDICT

On 24 July 2025, Trial Chamber V found Mr Ngaïssona and Mr Yekatom guilty of a number of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Bangui and the west of the Central African Republic between September 2013 and at least February 2014.

Mr Yekatom was convicted of committing jointly with, and/or through others, the following crimes in the context of the attack on Bangui, the events at Yamwara, and during the advance of the Anti-Balaka through the PK9-Mbaïki axis:

- i) the war crimes of attacks against the civilian population as such, murder, displacement, directing an attack against a building dedicated to religion, torture and cruel treatment; and
- ii) the crimes against humanity of murder, forcible transfer and deportation, imprisonment and other forms of severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, persecution and other inhumane acts.

However, by majority, Mr Yekatom was not found to bear responsibility for the war crime of conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into an armed group and using them to participate actively in hostilities. Consequently, he was acquitted for these charges.

Mr Ngaïssona was convicted of aiding, abetting or otherwise assisting in the commission of the following crimes, committed in the context of the attacks on Bangui and Bossangoa, the events at Yamwara, and during the advance of the Anti-Balaka on the PK9-Mbaïki axis:

- i) the war crimes of attacks against the civilian population as such, murder, displacement, directing an attack against a building dedicated to religion, torture, cruel treatment and destructing the adversary's property; and
- ii) the crimes against humanity of murder, forcible transfer and deportation, imprisonment and other forms of severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, persecution and other inhumane acts.

Mr Ngaïssona was found not guilty of the war crimes of pillaging and directing an attack against a building dedicated to religion in connection with the attack on Bossangoa. Consequently, he was acquitted for these charges. Mr Ngaïssona was also acquitted for the charges of rape as war crime and crime against humanity that took place in Bossangoa.

SENTENCE

On 24 July 2025, Trial Chamber V sentenced Mr Yekatom to a total of 15 years of imprisonment and Mr Ngaïssona to a total of 12 years of imprisonment. The time spent in detention by Mr Yekatom since 17 November 2018 and by Mr Ngaïssona since 12 December 2018 will be deducted from their respective sentences. The convicted persons will remain in the ICC detention centre until the ICC designates a country or countries to serve their sentence. The verdict and sentence may be subject to appeal.

APPEALS

On 26 September 2025, the Defense of Mr Ngaïssona and of Mr Yekatom, as well as the Office of the Prosecutor, filed their notices of appeals against the judgment in the case. The Appeals Chamber will rule on these appeals in due course.

VICTIMS PARTICIPATION

The judges have allowed 1,965 victims to participate in the trial. In this case, the judges appointed two separate teams of lawyers to represent two groups of victims authorized to participate, i.e. a group of former child soldiers, on the one hand, and victims of other crimes on the others:

- The group of victims of former child soldiers is represented by Counsel Dmytro Suprun
- The group of victims of other crimes is represented by five lawyers working in one single team: Counsels Marie-Edith Douzima Lawson, Abdou Dangabo, Paolina Massidda, Yaré Fall and Elisabeth Rabesandratana.

Composition of Trial Chamber V

Judge Bertram Schmitt, Presiding Judge
Judge Péter Kovács
Judge Chang-ho Chung
Judge Beti Hohler (Alternate Judge)

Representation of the Office of the Prosecutor

Mame Mandiaye Niang, Deputy Prosecutor
Kweku Vanderpuye, Senior Trial Lawyer

Defence Counsel for Mr Yekatom

Mylène Dimitri
Anta Guissé
Sarah Bafadhel

Defence Counsel for Mr Ngaïssona

Geert-Jan Alexander Knoops
Lauriane Vandeler

Legal Representatives of the Victims

Dmytro Suprun
Abdou Dangabo Moussa
Elisabeth Rabesandratana
Yaré Fall
Marie-Edith Douzima-Lawson
Paolina Massidda