ICC prosecutors urge judges to continue Ivory Coast trial

October 1, 2018

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The Washington Examiner

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/oct/1/icc-prosecutors-urge-judges-to-continue-ivory-coas/>

[International Criminal Court](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/international-criminal-court/) prosecutors urged judges Monday to continue the trial of former Ivory Coast President [Laurent Gbagbo](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/laurent-gbagbo/) and a government ex-minister on trial for their alleged involvement in deadly violence that erupted after the country’s disputed 2010 presidential election.

Lawyers for [Gbagbo](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/laurent-gbagbo/) and former youth minister Charles Ble Goude filed motions earlier this year arguing that prosecutors presented insufficient evidence for the trial to continue and calling for the immediate acquittal of both men. The calls came at the end of the prosecution case.

But the [court](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/international-criminal-court/)’s deputy prosecutor, James Stewart, told the three-judge trial panel that the evidence so far is strong enough for the case to continue.

“At this midway stage of the trial proceedings, is there evidence … upon which any trial chamber acting reasonably could find the accused guilty of the charges?” Stewart said. “We submit the answer to that question is: Yes.”

[Gbagbo](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/laurent-gbagbo/) and Ble Goude, who were both in court for Monday’s hearing, have pleaded not guilty to four crimes against humanity charges, including murder and rape allegedly committed by pro-[Gbagbo](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/laurent-gbagbo/) supporters during post-election violence that left 3,000 people dead.

Prosecutors accuse [Gbagbo](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/laurent-gbagbo/) of unleashing violence in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to cling to office after losing a runoff to now-President Alassane Ouattara.

[Gbagbo](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/laurent-gbagbo/)’s historic trial, the [International Criminal Court](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/international-criminal-court/)’s first against a former head of state, began in January 2016.

Efforts by [ICC](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/international-criminal-court/) prosecutors to hold leaders responsible for crimes committed by subordinates or supporters have repeatedly run into serious problems.

The case against Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, who also was accused of involvement - before he became president - in post-election violence in his country, collapsed in December 2014 and earlier this year a former Congolese vice president, Jean-Pierre Bemba, was acquitted on appeal of crimes allegedly committed by his militia in the Central African Republic.