

YEARBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW - VOLUME 14, 2011
CORRESPONDENTS' REPORTS

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC¹

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- Parliamentarians for Global Action, *Bangui Declaration for Justice and the Rule of Law* (National Assembly, Bangui, CAR, 13–14 October 2011) <<http://www.pgaction.org/uploadedfiles/Declaration%20ENG%20PGA%20CAR%20final.pdf>>

Members of parliament in Central African Republic ('CAR') held a consultative conference in the context of the ongoing peace consolidation efforts in the country. This parliamentary conference provided a platform to discuss the role of international justice and the rule of law in the peace-building process, including the strengthening of the national justice system. It offered an opportunity to underscore the contribution of the *Rome Statute* to the fight against impunity and the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights, as well as law reforms. The discussions brought together over 85 legislators from the recently elected parliament of the CAR, a selected number of parliamentarians from the sub-region (Chad, DRC, Mali and Tanzania) and Europe (The Netherlands) and members of the executive branches of the government, as well as leaders from international organizations, other relevant stakeholders and representatives of the civil society.

The opening session was concluded by the statement of H.E. Hon. Célestin Leroy Gaombalet, MP, Speaker of the National Assembly. Referring to the principle of complementarity in the *Rome Statute*, he emphasized the importance of strengthening national courts in order to allow the CAR to pursue alleged perpetrators of international crimes. He further stressed the importance of fighting impunity and of taking into account victims' rights to participate in the proceedings and to obtain reparations. Members of civil society (Central African League for Human Rights) and of the University of Bangui also participated actively during the two day conference to address different aspects from an activist and academic perspective, discussing the merits of the principle of universal jurisdiction as an example. Participants heard from another important actor, the International Organization of Francophonie ('OIF'), represented by Mr. Michel Carrier, Delegation for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights. Since 1989, the OIF has developed programmes in support of the rule of law focusing primarily on logistical support and the training of personnel, the organization of local seminars and the dissemination of information.

During the entire two days, the Consultations saw the extremely active and intense interaction by Central African MPs. Several Legislators insisted on the need to reinforce State presence in the countries' provinces, where the security situation is still very unstable and the threat of armed groups against the civilian population must be eradicated, including through an international operation for the arrest of Joseph Kony and the other leaders of the Lord's

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Resistance Army wanted by the ICC. Without that precondition, reinforcing domestic justice as such in those regions will be hard to attain. Therefore, the need to effectively integrate the provisions on international crimes and international cooperation for the fight against impunity as reflected in the revised *Penal Code (Central African Republic)* into the security sector reform was one of the demands expressed by the MPs. By the same token, a sufficient allocation of resources for the justice sector was identified as a core action to be undertaken by the government and the parliament. Those and other key outcomes were captured in the comprehensive *Bangui Declaration for Justice and the Rule of Law*, which was adopted at the end of the conference by the MPs.

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