



**Coalition for the International Criminal Court**  
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**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
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**JEAN-PIERRE BEMBA TRANSFERRED  
TO ICC DETENTION CENTER IN THE HAGUE**

*Former Vice-President of the DRC and Rebel Leader surrendered and transferred to the  
ICC in The Hague*

**WHAT:** On 3 July 2008, Jean-Pierre Bemba, alleged President and Commander in Chief of the “*Mouvement de Libération du Congo*” (MLC) was transferred to the ICC Detention Centre in The Hague, The Netherlands. Bemba was arrested in Belgium on 24 May 2008 on the basis of a warrant of arrest issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in the Central African Republic (CAR).

**WHY:** On 24 May 2008, ICC Pre-Trial Chamber III had unsealed a warrant of arrest against Bemba. A new arrest warrant was delivered on 10 June 2008, adding two new counts of murder. The warrant focuses on the period from 25 October 2002 to 15 March 2003 and states that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Jean-Pierre Bemba is criminally responsible, jointly with another person or through other persons, of three counts of crimes against humanity: murder, rape and torture, as well as five counts of war crimes: murder; rape; torture; outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment; and pillaging a town or place.

**WHO:** Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, alleged national of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), was born on 4 November 1962 in Bokada, in the Equateur province, DRC. Allegedly, Bemba was the President and Commander in chief of the “*Mouvement de Libération du Congo*” also referred to in the warrant as the « Banyamulenge » forces. Bemba is a former Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of Congo and a Senator in the Parliament of the DRC.

**HOW:** Bemba was surrendered and transferred by Belgian authorities on 3 July 2008. He arrived at 12:45 at the detention center of the Court. In compliance with Article 59 of

the Rome Statute on arrest proceedings in the custodial State, Bemba appeared on 28 May before the Belgian “Chambre du Conseil.” Following an appeal by Bemba’s counsels, the Brussels “Cour d’appel” refused to annul the ICC arrest warrant against him. On 19 June, the Belgian “chambre de mises en accusation” confirmed the second ICC arrest warrant delivered against Bemba on 10 June. On 27 June 2008, Belgium’s “Cour de Cassation,” the highest court of last resort, rejected a provisional release. According to Article 59 of the Rome Statute, once ordered to be surrendered by the custodial State, the person shall be delivered to the Court “as soon as possible.”

**NEXT STEPS:** Bemba will make an initial appearance before a Pre-Trial Chamber of the ICC. According to article 60 of the Rome Statute, upon the surrender of the person, the suspect must appear before the Court for the first time in a hearing in which the Pre-Trial Chamber must make sure that the person has been informed of the crimes which he or she is alleged to have committed, and of his or her rights under the Statute, including the right to apply to the Pre-Trial Chamber for interim release pending trial. Bemba will then choose a permanent counsel to represent him before the Court, and begin preparations for the Confirmation of Charges hearing.

**COMMENTS AND BACKGROUND:** Experts from international and local CAR human rights organizations are listed below for further comment and background.

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