



For immediate Release

Concern over validity of International Criminal Tribunal judgments

Kigali 20.06.2013- IBUKA expresses concern over the recently leaked letter - from the ICTY's very own judge Frederik Harhoff - questioning the credibility of the Tribunal President, Judge Theodor Meron. The letter severely criticizes the ICTY Appeals Chamber for their controversial acquittals, asserting that Judge Meron has exercised "persistent" and "intense" pressure on his fellow judges to allow high-ranking criminals to go free. Judge Harhoff claims that Meron did so in order to protect the political interests of certain powerful Western states, at the expense of the thousands of victims of atrocities committed during the wars in ex-Yugoslavia.

"How do we now explain," asks Judge Harhoff, "to the thousands of victims that the court is no longer able to convict the participants of the joint criminal enterprise, unless the judges can justify that the participants in their common goal actively and with direct intent contributed to the crimes?"

As an organization representing the rights and interests of genocide victims, IBUKA has taken the accusations made by Judge Harhoff very seriously, as they raise questions regarding the credibility and the quality of justice rendered by UN-backed *ad hoc* tribunals, including the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Indeed, Meron is also the president of the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Like his colleague from the ICTY, IBUKA has repeatedly expressed its dissatisfaction with Meron's acquittal decisions. Harhoff's assertions now add to the evidence that they may be politically motivated."

"While the nature of the accusations against Judge Meron would normally be approached with prudence, they should also be accorded their due weight, given Meron's previous controversial decisions to acquit some of the most notorious genocide masterminds in Rwanda, including the recent cases of two former ministers from the genocide government, Mugenzi and Mugiraneza, who were both acquitted by the Appeals Chamber presided over by Judge Meron - despite the 30-year sentences previously delivered by the Lower Chamber," said Professor Jean Pierre Dusingizemungu, the president of IBUKA. "It would be a mistake to simply dismiss these cases offhandedly as conspiracy theories, as some less informed people might be inclined to do."

The revelations by the Danish Judge seriously undermine the reputation and the trust in the UN's International Criminal Tribunals, which have cost the international community a great deal in terms of both time and money. IBUKA therefore calls on the United Nations Security Council to commission an independent team to investigate more thoroughly the allegations made against Judge Meron. And in light of the proven partiality of Judge Meron, IBUKA strongly urges the revision of all cases rendered by the ICTR's Appeals Chamber under the presidency of Judge Meron

Prof. Jean Pierre DUSINGIZEMUNGU

President IBUKA