

Central African Republic militia leader and football executive, transferred to ICC

Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona, the coordinator of a mainly Christian militia faction in the Central African Republic and a senior African football executive, has been transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to face accusations of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In a [statement](#), the Court, which is based in The Hague, the Netherlands, detailed an extensive list of some of his alleged crimes, including murder, torture, persecution, mutilation, deportation or forcible transfer, enforced disappearance and “other inhumane acts.”

Mr Ngaïssona was arrested on 12 December last year in France, on a warrant for crimes allegedly committed in CAR during 2013 and 2014. In a press release, the ICC said that the date of his initial appearance before the court will be announced “soon.”

Speaking on Wednesday to UN News, ICC spokesperson Fadi El Abdallah outlined the next steps in the case: “The Pre-Trial Chamber Two of the ICC found reasonable grounds to believe that Mr Ngaïssona is liable for these charges”, he said, adding that the pre-trial hearing would “confirm the identity of the suspect, ensure that he understands the charges and confirms the language in which the proceedings should be conducted for his understanding”.

He said it would also set a date “to begin the confirmation of charges hearing, which is a pre-trial hearing allowing the judges to decide whether or not the case should move to a trial.”

The ICC Registrar, Peter Lewis, thanked the French authorities, and those of the Netherlands, for their cooperation in the arrest and transfer of the accused to the Court.

Mr. Ngaïssona, who was Minister of Youth and Sports under François Bozizé, President of the Central African Republic from 2003 to 2013, reportedly denies any involvement in the violence.

According to news reports, he was the political coordinator of the Christian anti-Balaka militia, which rose to prominence after the mainly Muslim Seleka rebels, swept Mr. Bozizé from power. The militia has been blamed for numerous killings since 2013.

Mr Ngaïssona was elected in February 2018 to the executive committee of the Confederation of African Football, despite the objections of some human rights groups.