

WALLEYN & BLANMAILLAND

Luc Walley
France Blanmailland

Avocats - advocaten

To CIVITAS MAXIMA
Place Longemalle 1
Case Postale
1211 Genève 4

SUISSE

Brussels, 27 July 2024

N. réf. : W10027
V. réf. : -
Concerning : Michel DESAEDELEER

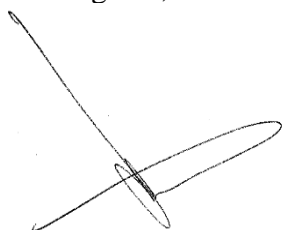
Madam, Sir,

On your request, I can confirm the following:

- I am member of the Bar of Brussels since 1972 and counsel at the International Criminal Court (ICC) since 2006.
- I have been involved as a lawyer for more than 25 years with some of the major international extra-territorial cases in Belgium including Rwandan and Guatemalan cases. I was also a legal representative of victims in the Lubanga case at the ICC and held the position of executive council member within the ICC Bar Association.
- Between 2010 and 2016, I represented several citizens of Sierra Leone who were victims of arbitrary detention, slavery and inhuman treatment in diamond mines situated in the Kono district during the civil war.
- In January 2011, I lodged in their name a criminal complaint for war crimes and crimes against humanity with the Federal Prosecutor of Belgium against the Belgian (and US) citizen Michel Desaeleer, whose name was mentioned as one of those involved in such crimes in a UN-report and in the book "Blood Diamonds" of Gregg Campbell.
- After several years of investigation by Belgian police, the federal investigating judge in Brussels considered that sufficient elements were available for an international arrest warrant against the suspect, who was arrested in Spain, Malaga, and transferred to Belgium in September 2015.
- Mr Desaeleer died in custody in September 2016 at the time the investigation was going to be closed and the case to be referred for trial. The prison guards discovered his death when early in the morning they wanted to transfer him to the Tribunal for an important hearing in the case.

- During the investigation from September 2015 to September 2016, the detention of Mr. Desaeleer was confirmed from month to month by the Tribunal of First Instance (*Chambre du conseil*) and by the Appeal Chamber (*Chambre des Mises en Accusation*). The suspect was always assisted by his lawyers and had access to the voluminous case file. He had also the opportunity to participate in the investigation and to ask for additional evidence.
- I consider that the Office of the Federal Prosecutor, the Judge of Investigation and the team of police investigators in Belgium handled this case in an exemplary professional way and always made their decisions totally independently.
- The investigation took several years because numerous witnesses were to be interrogated in several countries, including Belgium, the US and Sierra Leone and many documents were seized, also during a search of M. Desaeleer's house in the United States.
- Hundreds of pages of documentary evidence had to be translated and the judge and investigators spent several weeks in Sierra Leone for questioning of witnesses and gathering of forensic evidence in the region of Kono.
- During all this time, no suspicion of false evidence ever came up, and even the defense lawyers of M. Desaeleer never presented any evidence about irregularities in the investigation.
- On the contrary, the information initially available and provided by the victims I represented was confirmed by many other sources during the investigation, including new evidence from the close environment of the suspect.
- M. Desaeleer was prosecuted for complicity of war crimes, but he was never accused of killing of people or eating of human bodies.
- The investigation being secret, only myself as the lawyer of the victims, the Federal prosecutors and the lawyers of M. Desaeleer had access to details of the case file. Since his death this case file has been archived and not made public.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Luc Walley
luc@walley.be