



Maitre Sylvestre Bisimwa (prosecutor „The Congo Tribunal“) receives the first five out of 2000 DVDs of the film in the local languages Swahili and Lingala (f.l.n.r. Dorothee Wenner, Milo Rau, Sylvestre Bisimwa, translator, Arne Birkenstock) Photo: ©2018 Doctivism e. V. / Florian Liedel

Press release

Congo Tribunal becomes an institution - already collected 100'000 euros!

"Let's create two, three, many Congo Tribunals"

(Berlin/Cologne/Bukavu, 10.03.2018) **On 9.3. the campaign "Let's create two, three, many Congo tribunals" was officially launched at the Akademie der Künste (Berlin) in the presence of investigator-in-charge Sylvestre Bisimwa, jury member Wolfgang Kaleck, director Milo Rau and producer Arne Birkenstock. With the campaign, Fruitmarket, IIPM and Langfilm, together with a group of Congolese and European lawyers, human rights activists and journalists, are continuing the fight against impunity in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which began with the Congo Tribunal. As the first international art project ever, the "Congo Tribunal" is to become a legal institution in the coming months, which will deal with the mass and economic crimes in the region in Eastern Congo with a series of local civil society tribunals. In order to support the planned tribunals financially, in terms of content, organisation and logistics, the non-profit association DOCTIVISM collects donations. The project is also supported by the Swiss Federal Councillor for Justice, Simonetta Sommaruga and the German Federal Judge Dr. Nikolaus Berger.**

To date, **more than 100,000 of the total 350,000 euros in donations** have already been received. In a first pilot phase, 2000 DVDs were produced to inform the population in the Democratic Republic of Congo about the project. **The aim is to realize five more Tribunale in the Eastern Congo and to document them extensively.** A detailed schedule of the campaign "Let's create two, three, many Congo tribunals" can be found at the end of this press release.

If the institutions of this world are no longer fulfilling their most pressing tasks, we must create new institutions. Rau's project to save the world seems megalomaniac. But we live in times when this madness and this kind of art is sorely needed." ('Süddeutsche Zeitung' on the occasion of the cinema launch of the "Congo Tribunal")

"The aim is to create further tribunals along the lines of the film and to turn all these tribunals into an institution, a legal form and to finally put an end to impunity in Congo. (Milo Rau, director "The Congo Tribunal")

In 2015, Milo Rau initiated the **"Congo Tribunal"**, **"the most ambitious political theatre project of all time"** according to The Guardian. In the tradition of Jean-Paul Sartres and Bertrand Russell's "Vietnam Tribunal" in Bukavu (Eastern Congo) and in Berlin, Milo Rau, who was recently described by the German weekly newspaper DIE ZEIT as "the continent's most influential director", had gathered more than 60 witnesses and experts to the probably bloodiest economic war of our time. Rau and his team led by the lawyers Sylvestre Bisimwa and Jean-Louis Gilissen investigated three specific cases to determine the causes of the misery that has been paralysing Congo for decades. The resulting documentary of the same name, which was celebrated equally by the public and the press at its world premiere at the **Locarno Film Festival 2017**, won the **Zurich Film Prize**, was awarded a **"Special Mention"** by the International Jury at **DokLeipzig** and is **nominated for the Swiss Film Prize** in two categories. Since its release in the autumn of 2017, the film has been successfully touring Europe and was shown at the **IFF Rotterdam 2018**, **Solothurn Film Festival 2018**, **Berlinale 2018** and **CPH: DOX**. Further information is available at: www.the-congo-tribunal.com.

Of the nearly 1,000 witnessed cases, only three could be negotiated in Bukavu and Berlin in 2015, however, in their entirety. Victims of mass crime and civil society in the provinces of North and South Kivu continue to demand **justice and an independent and impartial tribunal capable of applying the rules and principles of law to a fair trial**. In the coming year, the internationally renowned lawyers **Jean-Louis Gilissen**, criminal defence attorneys and victim representatives at the International Criminal Court and President of the "Congo Tribunal", and **Sylvestre Bisimwa**, Congolese human rights lawyer and investigator of the "Congo Tribunal", **intend to establish a continuous legal investigation of human rights violations at local level in civil society**. They are supported by other lawyers as well as politicians, journalists and artists, besides the team of the "Congo Tribunal" also by the journalists **Solange Lusiku** ("Le Souverain") and **Colette Braeckman** ("Le Soir"), the Swiss Minister of Justice **Simonetta Sommaruga**, the German Federal Judge **Nikolaus Berger** or the sociologists **Harald Welzer** and **Jean Ziegler** - a complete, constantly updated list can be found at www.doctivism.org.

With the initiative **"Let's create two, three, many Congo tribunals"**, several tribunals (initially five are planned) will be set up at the sites of past mass and economic crimes in Eastern Congo to collect credible evidence for the crimes and to demand a charge against the perpetrators. **In order for the victims of the civil war in eastern Congo to be given a voice and the truth about past crimes to be heard, we depend on your support!**

Press Reports & Testimonials "The Congo Tribunal"

"The project is invaluable to our country." *Denis Mukwege, Alternative Nobel Prizes, Director of the Panzi Hospital (Bukavu)*

"I support the Congo Tribunals because they can help people there to regain lost hope for justice. The Congo Tribunals can strengthen civil society's efforts to outlaw human rights violations in the civil war regions." *Dr. Nikolaus Berger, Judge at the Federal Supreme Court of Justice (D)*

"An important, necessary and militant work." *Reason of the jury DokLeipzig for the "Special Mention"*

"The filmmaker ennobles cinema and does what reality cannot do." *Jury statement for the "Zurich Film Award"*.

"And despite all the horrors shown in the film, it is important to me not to lose sight of hope. Because if the 'Congo Tribunal' has proved one thing, it is that the truth can be found, no matter how complicated the connections are. And justice is possible here and now. We just have to make them." *Milo Rau, director "The Congo Tribunal" (CH)*

"70 percent of the people affected by extreme poverty live in countries rich in raw materials. That must make us think. It also has something to do with us and with the companies doing business in these countries. There must be no legal spaces for them. A tribunal, such as that of Milo Rau in Congo, can give a voice to the victims. This is important. Because it is a first step against impunity." *Simonetta Sommaruga, Federal Councillor for Justice (CH)*

"The martyrdom of the Congolese people does not want to end. Foreign corporations have been plundering the country for more than 50 years. The state is devoured by corruption, arbitrariness and nepotism. The 'Congo Tribunal' fulfils a historically invaluable role: for the first time it creates transparency and justice in the greatest economic war of our time - and strengthens the admirable resistance of the Congolese people." *Jean Ziegler, Member of the Consultative Committee of the UN Human Rights Council (CH)*

"This political bomb ripped ministers from their chairs." *Wiener Zeitung*

"Where politics fail, only art can help." *DIE ZEIT*

"For the first time in history, the question of responsibility for crimes is being asked here" *taz - die tageszeitung*

Further processes

Ten screenings and workshops of the documentary film "The Congo Tribunal" to raise public awareness

In a first step, the documentary film on the first "Congo Tribunal" will be screened at ten locations in the provinces of South and North Kivu to inform the population, to identify people and organisations interested in the legal investigation and to inform them about this form of symbolic jurisprudence.

2000 Guides for those affected

In order to prepare witnesses, victims and perpetrators for their testimony, detailed information material is needed to explain in detail the modalities and risks of a testimony. The film "The Congo Tribunal" will also be used for this purpose. DVDs and brochures are produced and translated into local languages such as Swahili or Lingala.

Hearings within the framework of five local civil society tribunals

Tribunal negotiations will eventually take place in five of the ten places introduced in the southern and northern Kivu. For each of these negotiations there are detailed hearings on the ground with all parties involved in the conflict.

Participation of 6-8 international lawyers

The interviews of the witnesses will be conducted by 3-4 African lawyers, supported by 3-4 high-ranking lawyers from Europe and North America.

20 independent participants and observers

The jury of the tribunals is made up of a number of independent national and international human rights experts, journalists, scientists and politicians. Its task is to formulate observations, analyses and recommendations at the end of the hearings.

Interpreters for five tribunals

The hearings, statements and results of the 5 Tribunals will be translated from the national languages of Swahili and Lingala into English, French and German and the statements of the experts back into the national languages.

Psychological and medical support on site

During the tribunals and film screenings, a psychologist and a physician are required on site to provide appropriate pastoral and medical care for the participants and the audience.

Personnel and guarding of the 15 events

Independent local staff is needed to organise, carry out and secure the five tribunals and ten film screenings. The witness protection programme and security on the spot will be supported by the Congolese police and MONUSCO.

Film documentation and online archive in five languages

The sustainability of the project is ensured by the fact that the statements and results of the Tribunals are filmed and made publicly available worldwide. This requires a website and online documentation in five languages: English, French, German, Swahili and Lingala.

DOCTIVISM e.V. was initiated by:

Dr. Peter Bach, Lawyer | Eva-Maria Bertschy, Dramatist | Arne Birkenstock, Director & Producer | Sylvestre Bisimwa, Lawyer | Stefan Bläske, Dramatist | Uli Gaulke, Director | Jean-Louis Gilissen, criminal defence lawyer and victim's representative at the International Criminal Court The Hague | Martin Hegel, Arts Manager | Sebastian Lemke, Director & Producer | Milo Rau, Writer & Director | Moritz "mo." Sauer, Writer | Anja Theismann, Media Artist | Olivier Zobrist, Producer

Media partner: taz - die tageszeitung

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