

ICC Rejects Arrest Warrant for Mudacumura for DRC Crimes

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Judges at the International Criminal Court in The Hague have rejected a prosecutors' request to issue an arrest warrant for a commander of a brutal Rwandan Hutu militia that has terrorized eastern Congo for years.

In a written decision Thursday, the judges said that ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's May 15 request failed to provide necessary information about the alleged crimes of Sylvester Mudacumura, the supreme commander of the militia, the FDLR

Mudacumura is charged with five counts of crimes against humanity and nine counts of war crimes committed between 2009 and 2010 in Congo's North and South Kivu provinces. The charges include attacks against civilians, murder, mutilation, rape, torture, and destruction of property.

But the judges said the request "fell short of the proper level of specificity" in describing the crimes for which Mudacumura was being sought.

Thursday's decision came just a day after Moreno-Ocampo received another setback in his efforts to prosecute crimes in Democratic Republic of Congo.

On Wednesday, the court rejected his appeal against a decision to drop war crimes charges against another prominent member of the FDLR, Callixte Mbarushimana, who faced eight counts of war crimes and five counts of crimes against humanity in eastern Congo.

The eastern DRC has been plagued by continuing armed conflict and violence since the end of Congolese civil war in 2003. The area is home to many militia groups, including the FDLR, which was established by ethnic Hutus who took part in the 1994 Rwandan genocide of Tutsis and fled to Congo after the killing spree was stopped.

Efforts to integrate the groups into Congo's army have largely failed.