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## **Trial Begins for Canadians Linked to War Crimes**

By Kelly Patterson

Three former employees of a Canadian mining company went on trial yesterday on charges of complicity in war crimes over a 2004 massacre in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Canadian Pierre Mercier, former general manager of Anvil Mining Ltd.'s Congolese subsidiary, as well as two South Africans are accused of having "knowingly facilitated" war crimes committed by Congolese troops when the military suppressed an uprising near Anvil's Dikulushi mine, killing at least 70 civilians.

Nine members of the Congolese military are also on trial, charged with the summary execution of 26 civilians, as well as with rape and looting.

A UN report last year found the copper-mining company lent a plane and vehicles to the troops, and that Anvil drivers helped transport corpses after the massacre.

At issue in the trial is whether Anvil's employees were forced to help by the military, as the company says, or whether, as a military prosecutor concluded this fall, staff "voluntarily failed to withdraw" the vehicles.

None of the three former employees appeared in court yesterday.

Lawyers for Anvil said their clients, who no longer live in the country, had not received a proper summons to appear in court.

Robert LaVallière, a spokesman for Montreal-based Anvil, would not comment on the case, but said the company "will follow the legal procedures" of the country's courts.

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