

**DR Congo militia leaders deny village massacre**  
**By AFP**  
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Two former Congolese militia leaders accused of war crimes on Wednesday denied knowledge of an attack in northeast Democratic Republic of Congo in which 200 villagers were massacred.

"I was not in Bogoro and I did not plan this attack," Germain Katanga told the International Criminal Court in The Hague, referring to the assault on Bogoro village in the mineral-rich Ituri province on February 24, 2003.

Katanga, 34, and Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui, 41, face war crimes and crimes against humanity charges for allegedly planning and directing the attack which prosecutors said targeted villagers belonging to the Hema tribe.

The two former commanders also stand accused of using child soldiers in their ethnic Lendu and Ngiti-based rebel armies which attacked civilians and fought against Hema militia.

Last week in summing up, prosecutors recounted witness testimony of "victims being burnt alive", "babies being thrown against walls" and how women were forced into becoming sex slaves after the attack.

"To all those who have lost their lives, their property or possessions, I would like to extend my deepest sympathy," Katanga said Wednesday in wrapping up his own case.

In his closing statement, Chui told judges he learnt of the Bogoro attack a few days later on March 6, 2003 during a "meeting with generals."

"My job was of a humanitarian nature. I was not a fighter, I was a nurse," Chui told the court, denying that he was ever a militia member.

Both men, whose trial started on November 24, 2009, pleaded not guilty. Judges will now deliberate on a verdict which will be pronounced "within a reasonable period," the ICC said in a statement.

Katanga is alleged to have led the Patriotic Resistance Force in Ituri (FRPI) and Chui led the Front of Nationalists and Integrationists (FNI).

In 2003, DR Congo was just beginning to emerge from a war that had embroiled the armies of more than six nations and the east was rife with violent militia groups.

Clashes in Ituri province broke out in 1999 and "devastated" the region said the indictment, leaving some 60,000 dead, according to NGO figures.