

International Criminal Court convicts Ugandan commander for war crimes

TAGS: GS-2: International Relations

CONTEXT:

- The **International Criminal Court** on Thursday **convicted Dominic Ongwen**, a Ugandan child soldier-turned-Lord's Resistance Army commander **of war crimes and crimes against humanity**.

The International Criminal Court

The first permanent court set up to try those accused of:

- **War crimes**
- **Crimes against humanity**
- **Genocide**



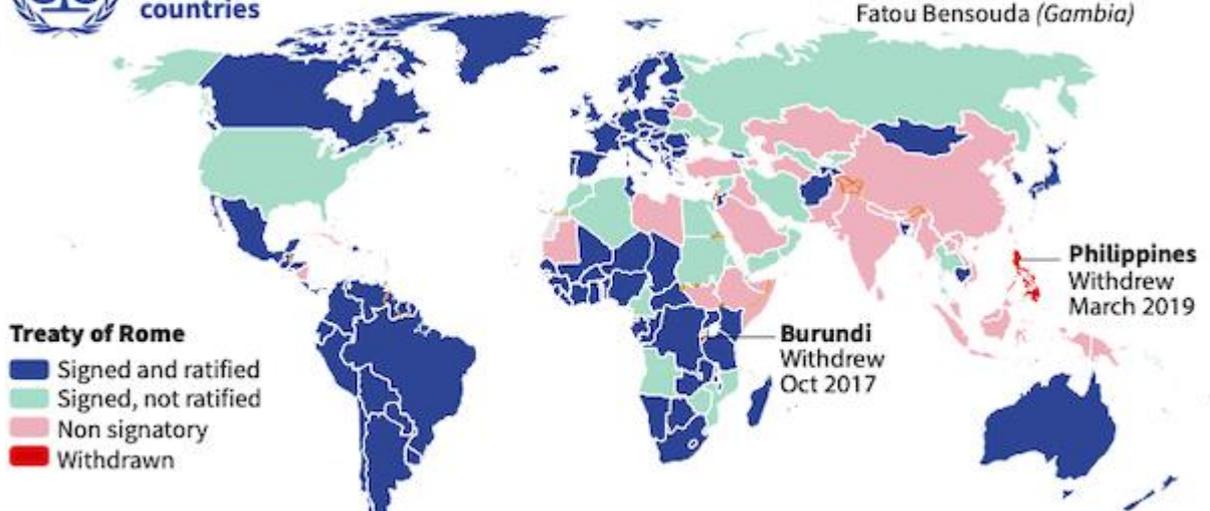
123 member countries

Created

- July 2002
Entry into force of the Rome Statute, the founding treaty
- January 2003
The court begins its work

Organisation

- Based: **The Hague (Netherlands)**
- **18 judges**
- President: **Chile Eboe-Osuji (Nigeria)**
- Prosecutor: **Fatou Bensouda (Gambia)**



WHAT WAS THE ISSUE?

- Ongwen ordered attacks on refugee camps and waged a **bloody campaign in four African nations**.
- His aim was to set up a **state based on the Bible's Ten Commandments**.
- He killed more than 1,00,000 people and abducted 60,000 children

ICC CASE DETAILS:

- **Reign of terror:** Dominic Ongwen, 45, was **found guilty of 61 charges** over a **reign of terror in the early 2000s**, including the first conviction by the ICC for the **crime of forced pregnancy**.
 - "His guilt has been established beyond any reasonable doubt."
- **White Ant:** Ongwen, nicknamed "**White Ant**", was convicted of charges including **murder, rape, sexual enslavement** and the **conscription of child soldiers**.
 - He denied all the charges.
- **Landmark judgement:** Human Rights Watch said the case was a landmark in **achieving justice for victims of the Lord's Resistance Army**.
- Ongwen is the **first LRA leader to be tried** before the ICC, and the **first to be convicted** for LRA crimes anywhere in the world.

LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY:

- The LRA was **founded three decades ago** by former Catholic altar boy and **self-styled prophet Kony**, who launched a bloody rebellion in northern Uganda against President Yoweri Museveni.
- The United Nations says the LRA **killed more than 1,00,000 people** and **abducted 60,000 children** in a campaign of violence that spread to **three other African nations** —
 1. **Sudan,**
 2. **Democratic Republic of Congo and**
 3. **Central African Republic.**

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT:

- It is a **court of last resort** for the prosecution of **serious international crimes**, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
- It is the **first permanent, treaty based**, international criminal court
- **Treaty:** Its treaty, the **Rome Statute**, was adopted in July **1998**.
- **HQ:** Hague, Netherlands.
- **Composition:** Presided over by a **president and two vice-presidents**
- **Term/Tenure:** Three-year terms.
- **Function:** ICC investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the **gravest crimes of concern** to the international community:
 1. Genocide,
 2. War crimes,
 3. Crimes against humanity and
 4. Crime of aggression.



SOURCE: The Hindu

MCQs:

Q. Consider the following statements regarding International Criminal Court.

1. It is a court of last resort for the prosecution of serious international crimes.
2. It is headquartered in Paris, France.
3. Its treaty, the Rome Statute, was adopted in July 1998.

Select the correct answer using the code below.

- a) 1 and 2 Only
- b) 2 and 3 Only
- c) **1 and 3 Only**
- d) 1, 2 and 3

ANS: C