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Herman J. Cohen, US Ambassador (retired) President
George H. Denison, Senior Vice President for Congressional Relations

May 25, 2018

International Criminal Court
Office of the Prosecutor
The Hague, Netherlands

Dear Sir,

RE: Case of **Jean-Pierre Bemba**

I am writing as a retired American diplomat who specialized in US-African relations. During my career, I spent considerable time working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During that period, I became acquainted with a number of senior Congolese political leaders, including Jean-Pierre Bemba.

I believe that Mr. Bemba's prosecution for crimes committed in the Central African Republic was legitimate, and that the guilty verdict was correct. Nevertheless, I believe that the result of his appeal of sentence on June 8, 2018 should result in a decision to consider his punishment complete with time already served, and that he should be released to assume his political leadership at this time of crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His leadership is badly needed at this time of political tension and regional violence.

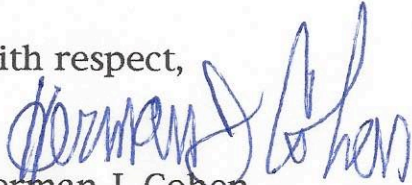
I have reviewed the specifics of his case. I note that Mr. Bemba was guilty of negligence in failing to control his troops who engaged in atrocities in the Central African Republic. This is a grave offense. However, there was no evidence that he himself engaged in such atrocities, nor that he directed his troops to engage in such atrocities. I believe that the time he has already served in prison is sufficient

punishment for his specific crime of negligence while commanding military units in combat.

The current government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is engaging in atrocity-like behavior. I hope that the Court is investigating, especially the death in 2017 of two UN researchers. The DRC nation is in the midst of a pre-electoral constitutional crisis. Jean-Pierre Bemba is the recognized political leader of the northwestern region, through his MLC political party. His presence would help the political leadership steer their country through a very difficult period during which the Congolese government is clearly planning to hold a fraudulent election.

I plead with the Court to consider my arguments, and to decide that Mr. Bemba has been sufficiently punished through prison time already served.

With respect,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Herman J. Cohen". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Herman J. Cohen

Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs