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Ruto and Sang trial quietly reopens at the ICC



Side view of the International Criminal Court premises in The Hague (Photo: THTK)

Friday, January 17, 2014 - 01:50

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By The Hague Trials Kenya

A light drizzle and mild temperatures today in The Hague matched the atmosphere at the International Criminal Court, where the Ruto and Sang trial resumed this morning. In contrast to past benchmark dates in the case, the cavernous premises seemed barren. Journalists were few. No Kenyan MPs convened outside the courthouse, let alone in the public gallery; five front-row seats marked "Reserved for Kenyan delegation" stayed empty.

It was just as well. All hearings were closed, save for a 40-minute session that began around 3 p.m. Before going again into closed session and adjourning for the day just after 4 p.m., the public discussions were largely logistical. The judges heard submissions from the defence, the prosecution and the victims representation concerning trial scheduling; all parties agreed on the need for efficiency or, as Prosecutor Anton Steynburg put it, a "certain certainty in scheduling of hearings".

The prosecutor requested that a minimum two-week break be given in between future hearings in order to mobilize prospective witnesses, particularly in view of recent drop-outs. Given the dynamic situation, Katwa Kigen, attorney for journalist Joshua Sang, also requested that an updated list of anticipated witnesses be provided by the prosecution on a regular basis. Deputy William Ruto's attorney, Karim Khan, echoed his "learned colleague", as he referred to Kigen, urging for regular disclosure from the prosecution about the reason a witness may be unable to appear in court. The prosecution said it would make every effort to uphold such requests.

Deputy Ruto remains in Kenya, excused from physical presence as he proxies for a traveling President Uhuru Kenyatta. Steadily present in court has been Ruto's co-accused. Today Sang wore a burgundy tie and grey blazer, often stroking the side of his face, as he's seen to do.

Friday's hearings are scheduled to begin at 9:30. Ruto is expected back in court on Monday.

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