

Aftonbladet, Sweden, 29 August 2008

Swede reported rape – was fired

Now he has been justified and awarded over 2 million [sek] in damages

The journalist Christian Palme reported the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for rape – and was fired.

Yesterday he was awarded 2.3 million [sek] in damages by the labour tribunal of the UN.

- It's incredible that one of the most important prosecutors in the world can remain in office despite being suspected of a serious sex crime, Palme says.

The allegation that Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the highest prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague has abused a woman sexually has received major attention internationally.

In March 2005 a female journalist in South Africa told a colleague of Palme at the ICC that she had been forced to sex by Moreno-Ocampo.

- I heard of this and tried to convince my colleague that we should report the chief prosecutor together, says Palme, who was a press secretary at the ICC.

Reported personally

But the colleague refused and the Swede wrote the report himself. Palme had a tape recording where the woman was crying and talking about the sexual molestation.

After this he was fired – by the prosecutor he had reported.

This summer the labour tribunal of the UN and the international organisations (ILOAT) found that the firing was wrong.

ILOAT wrote in its decision among other things that Palme had reasonable grounds for his complaint and awarded him altogether 2.3 million [sek] in damages, funds that have now been paid.

Not tried yet

The allegations against Moreno-Ocampo, who this summer called for arrest of the president of Sudan for genocide, have not been tried in court. That will probably not happen, because of the amount of proof available. But the information has already damaged the prosecutor.

The Daily Telegraph has called for his resignation and in Sweden the international law professor Ove Bring has questioned whether the

indictment of the president of Sudan wasn't a way to remove focus from the sex allegations.

Palme, who now works with the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, is satisfied with the award.

- But it is very remarkable that one of the most important prosecutors in the world can be accused of sexual crimes without any reaction from human rights organisations such as Amnesty and Human Rights Watch.

Oisin Cantwell