

Official Transcript: Roland Amoussouga (Part 8 of 13)



Role:	Spokesperson for the Tribunal
Country of Origin:	Togo
Interview Date:	29 October 2008, 30 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Batya Friedman Donald J Horowitz Ronald Slye Robert Utter
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Roland Amoussouga discusses his extensive history working for the UN and with the Rwanda Tribunal. As Chief of External Relations he describes the function and operation of the strategic planning section of the Tribunal and reflects on the difficulty of working in Kigali immediately following the genocide. He highlights the need to train and prepare staff members sent to work in post-conflict situations, and emphasizes the need to create training manuals for humanitarian workers placed in conflict situations in the future.

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Part 8

- 00:00** Ronald Slye: Okay, so I'm Ron Slye . . .
- 00:02 Yes.
- 00:03** RS: . . . a law professor at Seattle University.
- 00:04 Nice meeting you.
- 00:06** RS: And we're continuing our conversation from the other day. You had mentioned in the earlier interview capacity building. Could you tell us a little bit about what you and your office have done in capacity building?
- 00:19 Okay. You know at the beginning of the tribunal we felt it was important to have a program that we call the Outreach Program. 'Outreach' for the simple reason that the tribunal is based in Arusha two hours away from Kigali, the site of the genocide. So it was important to bridge the gap between the grassroot and the mass of, the masses of Rwanda and the place where justice is being rendered.
- 00:57 As a result we designed an outreach program that has the main target which was the Rwandan population from bottom to up. We focus on communication and we establish one of the key documentation center called Umusanzu in Kigali. Thanks to the graciousness of the government of Rwanda, they made available to us free of charge a big building that we transformed into a huge documentation center.
- 01:38 We wired that documentation center to enable the public to follow what is happening here. It's a place where we have books, where we have tapes, where we have computers, access to internet that help the legal practitioners as, as well as the, the population to come research, read about the tribunal and also listen sometimes to what is happening through the tapes.
- 02:12 And our colleagues on the ground organized a roving tour, mini-exhibition tour to various provinces to hold town hall meetings with the population to show them the tapes about what is happening in the tribunal, and answer questions. We also design a strategy with the national radio station to broadcast live decisions of the court.
- 02:45 Unfortunately we did not have authorization to link up the tribunal to the national radio so that they can follow on a day-to-day basis live proceedings from Arusha. Unfortunately it did not happen. We also target the university by providing scholarships to students to come and spend three months minimum or six months in Arusha to research and to prepare their dissertation around topics relating to ICTR works, international humanitarian law.
- 03:22 We also offer similar programs to professors to come and help out. We also help the civil society; the human rights groups, the survivors groups to come and learn, to see what is happening, counting on them in return they can pass and share their knowledge acquired during their stay here with the people belongings to the groups.

- 03:51 That is what the outreach program was intended to do until the time when in 2005, as part of the completion strategy, a resolution – not a sol-, a -solution but a declaration of the General Assembly invited us to help Rwandan people to strengthen their judicial sector. And then what we did was to couple our Outreach Program with a program aimed at enhancing the capacity of the judiciary.
- 04:28 And in order to do that we ha-, we proceeded to do needs assessment in conjunction with the Rwandese authorities. We set up a task force designed to put together a plan, joint plan with Rwanda to identify areas in the judiciary sector where we can assist. Based on the action plan that has been designed and adopted, then we move in to have target groups.
- 05:03 To begin with we identify judges, the cl-, the court clerks and how, how could we enhance their ability to go high tech by introduct-, by introducing information technology into the management of their docket, similarly to what we have here. So our legal library and reference service has been very . . .
- 05:42 **Note: Gap in interview. Gaps occurred due to interruptions during the interview, technical issues, or corrupted data files.**
- 05:53 **RS: You were talking about the, the different target groups.**
- 05:57 Yes, we identify different target group starting from the judges and the court system, the media, the coverage of any proceedings because we understand that one of the key issues there is the communication of the information coming from the judicial sector to the public and also all the other periphery-core elements such as universities for the training, student, the civil society like human right groups et cetera, et cetera.
- 06:38 So basically although the UN did not give us money to put in those programs, we managed to use the scarce resources that we have as well as some resources that were given to us by the European Commission. And we were able to set our training module for the people of Rwanda. One of the training module targeted the legal information management, the legal reporting, the media case jurisprudence for legal reporting journalists.
- 07:25 We also trained them in the case management, the use of online tools for legal research for lecturers, legal methodology to student, to legal practitioners. The use of specialized documentary software training for legal librarian, which are working for the Supreme Court in all those judiciary sectors.
- 07:56 And we also initiated a mentoring program through an attachment. An attachment meaning that we are going to have lawyers or judges or registry members of the judiciary in Rwanda coming to spend three months with us here in Arusha, and they are going to be assigned specific tasks. And then throughout the process they will learn by seeing others practicing and getting themselves associated to the management of the daily affairs in those respective areas.

- 08:45 And this program is designed to strengthen their abilities. We have also training that our judges as well as former judges or former prosecutors organize for prosecutors, for judges, for defense counsel. We have also initiated program to en-, to bring accused persons to trust Rwandese defense counsel.
- 09:14 And one of them has been appointed as co-counsel, which was unique, and some lawyers from Rwanda are part of the defense team which is a great deal of progress. And we organized also symposia in Rwanda to bring the judges together to exchange. Here of course we have to be very careful in terms of attaching judges to the chambers.
- 09:45 But in various areas like the prosecutions area we have various Rwandese who have been recruited who are assuming highest responsibilities in the Office of the Prosecutor to enable them to acquire a lot of experience that they can transfer back to the people down there. So we have initiated those programs and slowly, slowly we have been doing it.
- 10:15 The Prosecutor's office is closely in contact with them. They're associated to whatever we have in terms of training and at the end of November we have a major forum designed to bring together all the prosecutors of the international criminal tribunals and the national prosecuting officials of various countries.
- 10:44 And they are going to have three days here to exchange about the techniques. And we also train them to know how to make use of the database that we have in terms of evidence management that can help them to prosecute, before the national domestic jurisdictions, crimes committed by Rwandese who are in their country as refugees.
- 11:13 That at least they can use the universal jurisdiction principle in the case it is accepted in their country to prosecute crimes of that levels, by relying heavily on the database that we have. How could we share that, how to have shareable folders containing evidentiary materials relating to those kind of criminals who are at large.
- 11:38 We want also to help the Rwandese people to enhance their knowledge; theoretical and practical knowledge. And the exercise that we did with them, particularly through the Office of the Prosecutor, resulted in their confidence to request that cases be transferred to Arush-, to Kigali because they believe forcefully through this capacity building program, that they have receive enough knowledge which will enable them to effectively handle cases that ICTR could transfer to them.
- 12:22 But unfortunately for reasons contained in the decisions of the appeals chamber, such cases have not yet been authorized but the door is still open. If they improve on their system, they may have the advantage or the good fortune to receive some cases. But the legal education process is ongoing. It's not just even in the normal judiciary; it is not one time business.
- 12:56 As you know, you are a professor, is nobody has ever learned enough. We have to continue learning and continue helping out. That's why ICTR in cooperation with the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute organized this for this a biennial meeting

and are discussing issues and responses co-, to contemporary judicial challenges in the area of judicial education.

- 13:26 To which Rwandese magistrates, judges including the vice president of the Supreme Court were invited and they are attending this. And if you were in the room yesterday, the first lecture of the president was on the, on a very key issue – the heritage of the international criminal jurisprudence.
- 13:56 How could you domesticate the heritage of the international criminal justice jurisprudence? To make sure that you have case law available to you and you can draw inspiration from the case law and making sure that you apply the concepts that have been developed by the tribunal and make this to grow.
- 14:18 And as you know, the tribunal has influenced and continues to influence the normative progress in Rwanda when it comes to the concept, the definition of concepts, when it comes to the legal reform as well as the legislative reform that led to the abolition of the death penalty, that led to the establishment of the framework, the legal framework that will enable the prosecution of cases that ICTR referred to them. And ICTR has a multi-faceted program to support the capacity building.