



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Straton Musonera (Part 4 of 6)



Role:	Information Officer
Country of Origin:	Rwanda
Interview Date:	14 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Straton Musonera discusses his experience working on outreach and capacity building programs for the ICTR, including capacity building of the judicial sector in Rwanda. He addresses the special insight and knowledge he has as Rwandan working for the Tribunal. Musonera explains the challenge of working daily with testimony and information about the genocide, yet also needing to retain a certain distance from it to function professionally. He emphasizes the need for an outreach program for courts such as the ICTR around the world, to ensure that people know justice is being pursued.

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Part 4

- 00:00 Lisa P. Nathan: When you first came to the ICTR, did you have some goals in your time here?**
- 00:06 Yes. My goals first of all were to understand how a judicial, how a court functions, an international court. And I, I came to know that. The second goal was to improve my knowledge within the, my area of expertise, information, and I think this knowledge increased through different documents that I read and also through distance learning sta-, distance learning that I, I undertook when I, I joined the, the, the ICTR.
- 00:54 So, that also another goal which was, that I managed to, to, to achieve. The third goal that I'm struggling, that, along with my colleagues here, the ICTR to achieve, is to promote reconciliation in Rwanda. And as a Rwandan, it's not only a word, national reconciliation because I think also about fu-, future generations, my children, how are they going to grow up. So it's really a very, very important concept for me.
- 01:38 LPN: Can you speak for, to reflect on something I think you've thought of about quite a bit which is the, there's the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda with the UN, there's Rwandans' National Court System and then there's the process of the Gacaca Courts. How do you see those working together or do you see those working together?**
- 02:05 The-, they can work together but in my opinion, I may be wrong, I don't think they work together the way they are supposed to work together. I think more needs to be done and we have an international jurisdiction with, with its own rules and procedures. We have Rwandan National Justice Sy-, System with its own rules and procedures so really, it will be a success story if both international ju-, justice and national justice systems could come together and really work hand in hand.
- 03:02 It doesn't mean that there is no cooperation between ICTR and Rwanda. No, there is really a very good cooperation but this complementarity between the two justice system need to be seen and we really need to see it in, in, in a pragmatic way, in a, in a real way not just by seeing that the ICTR is prosecuting these people and Rwanda is prose-, no, no, no.
- 03:38 We really need to see that they are really, they re-, the-, they play a complementary role.
- 03:47 LPN: So a bit ago I asked you about your goals in working here and you mentioned a few that you felt you had achieved or gotten closer, and then reconciliation, you feel as though you're still working towards. How – is there an example or a specific instance that you feel proud of in your work here at the ICTR, something that you were a part of that you feel . . .**
- 04:16 Yeah. I was part of the team which restructured the outreach program of the ICTR and really that I'm proud of it. Now we have our information center in Rwanda, which is really

functional, which is really a flagship of our tribunal in terms of outreach program. They go to communes. They go to hills in Rwanda. They go to provinces to really raise awareness of the work of the tribunal among R-, Rwandan population.

04:58 We have a very, very good library in Rwanda with thousands of books and in, in our information center, and I contributed to the setting up of that library and I'm proud of it because in Rwanda we don't have a lot of books about international criminal law and this library helps a lot Rwandan law students, R-, Rwandan researchers and this is really a ve-, I'm really very proud of it.

05:36 The other thing is that I was also involved in the development of the Capacity Building Program targeting Rwandan judicial officials. Since I knew that they, th-, they have, they had some limitations in international criminal law, bringing that program to Rwandans was really a source of proud also for, for me. So whatever you do which my country mate can benefit is really a source of proud for me.

06:16 But I, I must say that I can't do whatever they want, so in order to, to, to be proud because here we have strict rules and regulations and I must abide by that. Whatever you do is what is a-, allowed by the rules and regulations of the tribunal.