



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Colette Ngoya (Part 4 of 8)



Role:	Translator
Country of Origin:	Cameroon
Interview Date:	13 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J. Horowitz
Videographer:	Max Andrews Nell Carden Grey
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Colette Ngoya reflects on her role as translator during the early days of investigations in Kigali, Rwanda, and later during trial proceedings in Arusha, Tanzania. She addresses challenges of translating difficult material, such as evidence and witness statements regarding rape and killings. Ngoya also discusses difficulties in translating legal terminology, learning differences between civil and common law systems, and with the Tribunal's system for three-way translation using English, French, and Kinyarwanda. She emphasizes the importance of public education in law.

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Part 4

- 00:00 **Lisa P. Nathan: So you've been working here like I said for 11, over 11 years, is there something in your experiences here that you'd like to tell us about before we go on any further? Something . . .**
- 00:13 No I'd rather, I'd rather answer your questions. Yeah.
- 00:16 **LPN: Okay, okay. So I'm going to ask you some questions that deal with your, your ideas about the tribunal in your role as a translator. And you were talking about you learned about the differences between civil and common law. You had some classes – or maybe classes isn't the right way to put it, but you had some meetings where people were explaining to you some of the differences.**
- 01:06 **LPN: Have you – as you've been doing your work and listening to the trials and hearing about them, wh-, what are your reflections on the combination of those two systems of law here for the system of international justice?**
- 01:25 I don't think technically I'm, I know enough about . . .
- 01:30 **LPN: Yes I understand () this is not your . . . yes.**
- 01:33 Yes, yeah, I don't think I know enough to speak in that capacity in such an environment, yeah.
- 01:39 **LPN: Okay. Okay. So for some of the crimes that have been – the charges and the indictments against some of the defense . . .**
- 01:54 Mm-hmm.
- 01:55 **LPN: . . . that have come up, there have been some talking about rape as genocide and there have been – I imagine that in some of the work that you did in Kigali you were hearing the, or dealing with the testimony of witnesses who were talking about their experience of rape . . .**
- 02:22 Mm-hmm.
- 02:23 **LPN: . . . during and then you were, and then the, the, those indictments moved forward and different things happened in the different cases.**
- 02:33 Mm-hmm.
- 02:33 **LPN: Do you have – and I'm not – this is just for you as a human being . . .**
- 02:40 Mm-hmm.
- 02:40 **LPN: . . . to answer this question, not that you have a, a legal background but in your reflections as a human being, how do you feel those cases were handled? The, the cases that dealt with rape. After reading the testimony and, and hearing about it from the witnesses' point of view and then seeing the cases go through.**

- 03:06 I remember that this tribunal is the first place where a, a rape was considered as genocide. I don't know whether I put it the right way but – and as a woman I think it's a great thing. And it is also here that for the first time a woman was charged of rape. A woman was charged of . . .
- 03:30 LPN: Mm-hmm.**
- 03:32 So I think it's good, it's a good thing, is a good progress in whatever the law is doing. I don't know the technical whatever, but I think it's a good thing that this can happen. That's what I can say, yeah.
- 03:53 LPN: By, when you were here did you work – I, I don't know that your time was together with Judge Kama at all?**
- 04:03 Yeah, yeah.
- 04:04 LPN: Do you have any reflections; did you ever work with him directly?**
- 04:09 No . . .
- 04:10 LPN: No.**
- 04:10 . . . no. But I, when I, yeah, when I came to the tribunal he was here and the four years that I spent in Kigali and the first year that I spent here he was still alive.
- 04:22 LPN: He was still here in Arusha during that time?**
- 04:22 Yeah, (___), yeah, yeah.