



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Ellis Odjurhe (Part 4 of 4)



Role:	Prison Operations Officer
Country of Origin:	Nigeria
Interview Date:	16 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewer:	Lisa P. Nathan
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Ellis Odjurhe speaks about his responsibilities as a Prison Operations Officer where he oversees the daily operations of the Tribunal's detention facilities. He stresses the need for improved security measures to adequately protect detainees and prison staff. He also emphasizes the need for rules to apply equally to judges, lawyers, investigators and others. Odjurhe further calls attention to the Tribunal's humanitarian and high quality detention services that stand in contrast with the poverty and harassment many detainees face after release.

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Part 4

- 00:00 **Lisa P. Nathan: So I have a question for you that is, it is not a question I'm asking you in your – to answer as a UN – in your UN role but just as a person.**
- 00:11 Yeah.
- 00:12 **LPN: How do you feel about the, the UN does not – in the ICTR there's no capital punishment. What do you think of that?**
- 00:20 I think it's a good idea to me in person. I think it's a good idea because I think it is not for man to really – that's based on my personal philosophy . . .
- 00:30 **LPN: Mm-hmm.**
- 00:31 . . . it's not for man to really condemn a fellow man com-, entirely for any act because you don't know what led to it. I think God knows better. So capital punishment should be left in the hands of, of the creator not for, for, for man to, to mete out. So I think it is a good idea. And it has really helped the situation here.
- 00:57 I do say it many times that here we are lucky that we are running a facility where people are – the pe-, the, the, the kind of people who are sent here are not people who are sentenced to death or something more horrendous. Otherwise there would have been situations where the in-, the, the, the detainees or the inmates would have been very desperate to . . .
- 01:32 They would try everything to beat our security measures. So that has helped us a lot because with this problem we are having with this question of differentiating between who to search thoroughly and who not to search thoroughly, it could be a real source of danger to the facility. A lot of things can come in and which can aid the prisoner in escape.
- 01:57 So when they consider the fact that, "After all I'm, I'm not, I'm not sentenced to death, maybe f-, after some time I will still get out of the jail (____) and the condition here is not bad," so there, there, there is no cause for them to be that desperate to break out of jail. So I think it has really helped us.
- 02:17 **LPN: Thank you. For my last question I would like to know what you think about justice, 'cause here in this facility now you have some people who are accused, but you also have people who have been found guilty of genocide and for crimes against humanity and here they are in your facility. And I'm, I wonder what your thoughts on justice are.**
- 02:39 Okay, can you explain that properly again? We have people who are?
- 02:43 **LPN: Well you have people here who have been tried and convicted . . .**
- 02:48 Yeah.

- 02:49** LPN: . . . of some very horrific crimes. So I'm sure you've thought about those crimes . . .
- 02:56 Yes, yes. Yes.
- 02:57** LPN: . . . what these people have done. And here they are in this international justice system.
- 03:02 Mm-hmm.
- 03:03** LPN: What do you think about that?
- 03:05 Well I think the international justice system is a good thing to encourage, because it will really help this idea of impunity. This idea of people being in power and feeling that they can do whatever they like. It will really discourage it. And if it can, if the United Nations can really carry this to a far extent to reach everywhere, I think there would be more sanity in the world, yes.
- 03:37** LPN: I hope you're right. I, I did tell a mistruth, I have one more. If you could speak to the Rwandan people, what would you want to tell them?
- 03:47 I-, in what respect?
- 03:49** LPN: As you're – in your role here at the detention center. There have been I'm, I know – I am sure you have read . . .
- 03:56 Okay.
- 03:57** LPN: . . . the critiques of Rwandans, so what would you want them to know?
- 04:00 Well, I think the average Rwandan's intention or hope is that those found guilty should be condemned completely. That's – I don't know if I'm quite right but I think from some media report we used to hear from time to time, they criticize everything. Every liberal step we take here, they criticize it. It's to tell them that, that punishment or whatever should be left in the hands of the judicial system to decide.
- 04:41 Whatever the judicial system decide should be accepted. The idea of expecting the extreme to happen is not a very good idea. That should be left in the hands of God and they should learn to forgive and forget.
- 05:00** LPN: Thank you. Thank you very much for your time, sir.
- 05:05 Thank you.