



# Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

## Official Transcript: Straton Musonera (Part 2 of 6)



<b>Role:</b>	Information Officer
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Rwanda
<b>Interview Date:</b>	14 October 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Arusha, Tanzania
<b>Interviewers:</b>	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
<b>Videographer:</b>	Max Andrews
<b>Interpreter:</b>	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.

*The transcript of Part 2 begins on the following page.*

## Part 2

- 00:00** Lisa P. Nathan: So you've been working at the ICTR for about six years.
- 00:04 Yes.
- 00:05** LPN: And your, and your roles within the outreach and external affairs, is there something that you would like to tell me at the beginning? We'll be going into some different questions but there may be something that you would like to tell me at this time about your experiences here.
- 00:25 W-, when I joined the ICTR, I had mixed per-, feeling. I didn't really know very well the ICTR. Perception of the tribunal in Rwanda was really very, very negative at that time and people are saying that the tribunal is not really working. So, myself I was wondering really whether the ICTR was really d-, doing a, a good job.
- 00:59 And the second f-, perception I had was about I was really very positive about death penalty but when I joined the ICTR, my perception changed because I saw what any sentence, what the meaning of each of the sentences that, that are given here at the tribunal.
- 01:27 I saw that when someone is in jail away from him, his family, this is also a terrible situation. So adding to that, such a kind of life, a, a life imprisonment, I saw that this could be a punishment that can push that person to think again about the kind of crime that he committed.
- 01:55 But if you kill someone, he's gone so he cannot change. But someone who has committed crimes, he can be subjected to changes and he can even deliver another kind of message that the f-, that future generation can rely on, can learn about which can help to build a new society in our country. So those are really the two key perceptions that I had when I joined the, the ICTR.
- 02:33** **Note: Gap in interview. Gaps occurred due to interruptions during the interview, technical issues, or corrupted data files.**
- 02:43** LPN: Okay.
- 02:44 So the other thing that I forgot to mention is that the n-, negative perception was not ab-, a-, a-, about ICTR only. In Rwanda, it was a widespread per-, perception about the UN based on the role of the United Nations in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide. People were really, really, very, very negative about the, the UN.
- 03:17** LPN: So, what is your role now? What is, what are your responsibilities? Can you talk about . . .

- 03:26 I have two main responsibilities. I mobilize resources for the ICTR projects. Actually we have two budgets in the ICTR, two, two kinds of budgets. We have “assessed budget” that we received, we receive from the, the headquarters, but we have also extra budgetary resources that we receive from different donors to support various projects that could not be funded from the ordinary budget of the, of the ICTR.
- 04:07 So my role is to mobilize resources from outside donors. So the second role that I play, play is to support national jurisdictions as part of the ICTR completion strategy. For instance, now we have a progra-, a Capacity Building Program targeting Rwandan judicial officials so in this, in my capacity I try to, to put, to, to pull together all resources that we have in the tribunal so that this program can be implemented successfully.
- 04:52 Additionally, as someone who ha-, who has been involved in the outreach program, I intervene from time to time in the, in the design or implementation of the outreach program.
- 05:10 LPN: Can you speak to, in this role, what unique qualities do you feel you bring as a Rwandan working here in this . . .**
- 05:21 As a Rwandan working here, for instance in the outreach program, there is a kind of insight that I have that a foreigner doesn't have vis-à-vis a Rwandan. You know, when you are preparing an outreach program, you have to, to understand your, your target, your target au-, audiences, what they want and even their culture because any message is not ac-, accepted by a given group.
- 05:57 And also, you have to understand which kind of channel that you may use to impact on your targeted audience. That's as a, as a Rwandan, I have a certain knowledge of that because I worked in Rwanda and also I know the kind of feeling that my country mates have. I know the kind of problems that they have because even before working for the United Nations, I was working for a social mobilization program in Rwanda for United Nations Funds for, for Children, UNICEF.
- 06:43 So I know very well my country. I know my country mates, though it's, I cannot say 100% that I know everyone but I know the dyna-, social dynamics of my, my society and this is really, really, very, very important.
- 07:03 LPN: Do you feel that, or do you have something that you wish the people who worked here knew about Rwandans?**
- 07:13 Yes. First of all, if I can come back to the question that you asked before, working for the ICTR as a Rwandan, working for the ICTR is not easy because it's as if you live on daily basis the events that took place in your, in my cou-, in your country, in my country. So I live that

but at the same time, I must take a certain distance from the events that took place in my country so that I can be as much impartial as possible.

07:58 And this is not easy. At the beginning, it wasn't easy but I had to fight against myself to, so that I could manage to do that. It's not easy but it's possible. And this is really one of the best lessons that I learned from the ICTR. So, coming back to your question regarding . . .

**08:27 LPN: What you wish people here at the ICTR knew about Rwandans.**

08:32 Yeah. What I would like most people of the ICTR to know about Rwandans is to know the kind of suffering that Rwandans went through. A genocide is not a simple event. It's, it's, it's a horrible crime and really, I would like that my colleagues here at the ICTR visit Rwanda and understand the, the magnitude of the suffering that my country mate went through.

09:09 It's not easy to understand and maybe some of them will not even understand it but going to Rwanda, seeing the country itself, I think it can help them even in their daily work.