



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Ellis Odjurhe (Part 3 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.

The transcript of Part 3 begins on the following page.

Part 3

- 00:00** Lisa P. Nathan: Don asked if I would ask you if you've ever had any escape attempts, or that you know of any, maybe that happened before you came.
- 00:10 So far there has been none but it cannot be said that it cannot happen. Possibly it has not happened because of the security measures in place.
- 00:27** LPN: Yes, I understand.
- 00:29 And besides that, I think another thing that has made it, that has made all the detainees or – yes all the detainees – not to be that inclined to escape may be the condition of detention. Because I think the condition of detention here is really very good.
- 00:52 It's very good in the sense that we have seen from experience occasions when people are discharged after they are, they finish their, their, their time here, they, they, they are reluctant to go. Yes, they prefer this place. They said the outside is – they don't consider outside that safe. We've had situations like that.
- 01:14** LPN: Can you say more, what do you mean by not safe?
- 01:18 They, they, they – I don't, I don't really, I cannot say specifically what they, they, they are afraid of, but they allege that, that the present, rather their, their, their antagonists or rather the, the other tribe in the, in Rwanda there will be hunting them and so forth. Those are their claims about it. I don't know how correct that is.
- 01:46 So I think they say that – and apart from that, there was a situation where somebody actually after completing his sentence here, when he was to be discharged – an old man – he was crying for days. He was saying that okay now he, he, he is not having the freedom to go back to America- I think he was in, in, in the U.S. before he was arrest-, I mean, his arrest.
- 02:11 And at the time when he finished his term and he was to be rel-, released, the old man was crying because it was, this is a place where if at night a detainee is in trouble, he, he, he calls out, the duty officer goes there to attend to him. If he needs medical attention, the med-, the medical officer will be brought immediately, that -- no matter what.
- 02:36 Under any conditions the, the, the medical officer wi-, will be brought. But he, I think what was disturbing his mind was the idea that, "By the time I go out, would I have all this help?" Because now he was not free to go back to U.S. to mi-, to mix with his f-, family. I think the U.S. government, they refused him entry because he was – they, they said he's a convict. As a convict they cannot admit him back to U.S.
- 03:04 So a-, after his discharge here, he had to get an accommodation around in town here. The (___), the, the, the children arranged an accommodation for him to stay there in town and I think later the wife came. And really not much later after that, the man

died. So I think he foresaw the hardship as compared with the situation here, because here they are really, really comfortable.