



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Roger Pionana (Part 1 of 7)



Role:	Investigator
Country of Origin:	Madagascar
Interview Date:	15 October 2008
Location:	Butare, Rwanda
Interviewers:	John McKay Batya Friedman
Videographer:	Patricia Boiko
Interpreter:	Emmanuel Bimenyimana

Interview Summary

Roger Pionana discusses his experience as an investigator in Rwanda, speaking in particular to the ICTR's use of female investigator teams when seeking information about gender-based violence. He addresses investigation strategies in a situation where large numbers of people were involved with the crimes. Pionana speaks to the difficulty of finding witnesses in the early days after the genocide, when many Rwandans had fled the country, and describes the process of approaching possible witnesses for the first time.

The transcript of Part 1 begins on the following page.

Part 1

- 00:00** John McKay: My name is Professor John McKay, I'm from Seattle University, School of Law, we are here in Butare, Rwanda and today is October 15th, 2008. With me also is Dr. Batya Friedman, from the University of Washington and our, our cameraperson today and our producer is Dr. Patricia Boiko. And would you please tell us your name and your role at ICTR and your nationality?
- 00:32** Mon prénom est Roger, mon nom est Pionana, je suis Malgache, donc je viens de Madagascar, je suis enquêteur au Tribunal Pénal International, au sein du bureau du Procureur.
- 00:50** JM: Very good. Très bon. So, we, we, we now would like to, just right at the very beginning, take you back to the year 1994 and, and ask you, where were you in 1994, in the spring of 1994?
- 01:06** En 1994, j'étais dans mon pays, j'exerçais comme magistrat au sein du Ministère de la Justice de Madagascar, mais ce n'était que en 1996 que j'ai été recruté par les Nations-Unies pour travailler au sein du TPIR.
- 01:32** JM: And let me introduce our interpreter and ask you to tell us your name, fo-, for the record also.
- 01:38** *Interpreter: My name is Emmanuel Bimenyimana. I'm a language assistant with the Office of the Prosecutor at ICTR.*
- 01:43** JM: Thank you very much, and if you could please tell us what, what he said? Where he, he, where he was in 1994?
- 01:52** *Interpreter: He was in his country, Mada-, Madagascar and he was working with the Ministry of Justice as a magistrate and in 1996 he was recruited by UN to work with ICTR.*
- 02:12** JM: And when did you first hear about the, the genocide here in Rwanda and what did you think?
- 02:20** En 1994, en avril 1994 jusqu'au mois de mai 1994, j'ai suivi comme tous mes compatriotes des séquences vidéo qui ont été diffusées par la télévision nationale malgache et j'ai vu ce qui s'est passé au Rwanda.
- 02:40** *Interpreter: In 1994, in April and May he was following what was going on in Rwanda from his national TV broadcast like many other people who did all over the world.*
- 02:57** JM: Did you think then that maybe you would be working here in Rwanda with the ICTR?

- 03:04 Je n'avais pas encore prévu de travailler pour le TPIR et je n'ai jamais pensé que je serais recruté par le TPIR.
- 03:14 *Interpreter: At that time I didn't think that I would work with ICTR, I'd never had that idea that I would work with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.*
- 03:27 JM: And in your work now you have met many Rwandan people, you have become very familiar with the genocide and what has happened – what, what does it mean to you now to be working on this issue, the issue of the genocide?**
- 03:41 Vous pouvez traduire?
- 03:45 *Interpreter: Dans tes services, tu as eu des contacts avec beaucoup de Rwandais, au sujet du génocide, et donc quel est ton sentiment sur le génocide?*
- 03:56 Le génocide est vraiment un crime très atroce. Lorsque j'étais arrivé ici la première fois en avril 96, ma première mission qui avait commencé le mois de mai 1996 était de venir à Butare et nous avons regardé les sites de, de, de conservation des restes des humains qui ont été tués et vraiment, ça m'a vraiment, vraiment impressionné, à tel point que j'avais en tête vraiment de, de, que, que, que les, les auteurs des crimes soient vraiment sanctionnés, parce que c'est vraiment atroce.
- 04:48 *Interpreter: Genocide is a very atrocious crime and in 1996, when I came here in Rwanda, I was appointed to work in, in the investi-, for the investigations in Butare and we were visiting many massacre sites and what I saw really impressed me and in my mind I was saying that these people who did this must be punished.*