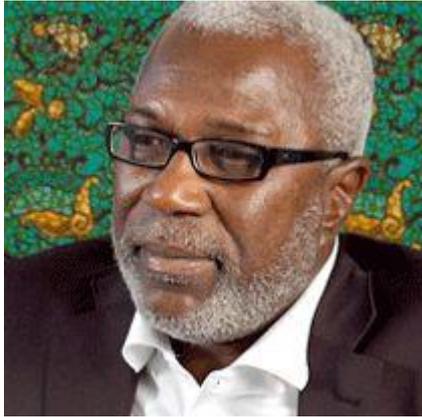




Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Bocar Sy (Part 8 of 9)



Role:	Chief of Press and Public Affairs
Country of Origin:	Senegal
Interview Date:	30 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
Videographer:	Nell Carden Grey
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Bocar Sy discusses his responsibilities at the ICTR Press Office and the many obstacles he had to overcome to create an effective media program. Two key challenges included the fact that the ICTR initially saw no need for a press office and the severe limitations on communication posed by an inadequate technological infrastructure in Arusha. Sy speaks about the various methods used by the Press Office to disseminate information about the ICTR to the public.

The transcript of Part 8 begins on the following page.

Part 8

- 00:00** Donald J Horowitz: Have you as part, and I not only mean you but your staff as well, as part of learning the context, have you actually you gone to Rwanda and visited some of the sites of the terrible events there?
- 00:17 Yes. My first contact with, with Rwanda was, was, was amazing, if I can use this word.
- 00:29** DJH: I think I understand.
- 00:30 You understand.
- 00:31** DJH: Go ahead.
- 00:34 I went to – yeah, that was my first mission, I was coming from here and I was very, very, very reluctant. I, I didn't know what I, what I will see there. I didn't know how I will feel. I didn't know what, what, what was, you know, the, the feeling, how, how people will, will, will behave. I don't know, I didn't know, I didn't know it. What I, what I, what I knew was just what I, what I, what I have seen on the TV when these things have happened and what I have heard here and that was just the beginning.
- 01:05 It was, it was, the court was not working in a, in a daily basis. We didn't have – the, the, the trial didn't start really and I was, I was just really, really, really scared. I don't know. But I was not so comfortable because I did not know what I will find there. And I went there, I was surprised first of all. (___), we were in 19', end of 1996, I think or beginning of 1997.
- 01:36 I went, I saw people very, I don't know, the, the, the towns of Kigali seems to be a town where – I mean, after these years it is, it's like nothing has hap-, have, have, have happened, have happened there like that.
- 01:53 But anyway I was, I was still not really comfortable. I, I was sure that I will see at the, at the corner of a street, maybe you know – I don't know, a body laying down there, forgotten or wha-, whatever, something which can remind me about the genocide, because one million people or something like that died in . . .
- 02:19 It should be some – how to say? Something – yes, anyway, you will in any case find something, which will remind you what have happened there, but that was not the case, right. And I went to see the, the, the Director of the Information at that time (___) for . . .
- 02:41 Someone called Major, Major Wilson and we are talking together and I told him, "Listen Major I have a problem because we are in 1997. I think, three years ago or two years and a half ago genocide have happened in your country, million of, something like between 800 and one million people have been killed here and I don't see anything which, which, which reminds me that, that these things has happened."
- 03:10 I told him I was, "I saw, okay, I s-, I saw bullets on the, on the, on the walls or on the buildings you know, this is of the, of, of the, of the bullets on the building but

something like, you know, people how, how, how they have suffered and things like that.” He told me, “Okay, yes, I understand what you mean but let me organize for you a visit of a sites of genocide.” That was maybe the – anyway, the day after he organized for me. I visited the first site and I went to . . .

03:46 DJH: Do you remember the, which site it was?

03:49 Miyami-, (_____), oh, Mi-, Mi-, oh. Miyamirambo, Mi-, Miyami-, Miyamirambo, Miya-, something like that.

04:02 DJH: Murambi?

04:03 Murambi, sorry. Murambi.

04:04 DJH: Yes, near Butare?

04:06 Near Butare, the site of Murambi on that small hill on, on the, on the city wall.

04:09 DJH: Yes, yes, yes.

04:13 And I went there, that day it was raining. It was raining as you say, you say in Eng-, cats and dogs. It was raining, that was my first contact with that site. It was sad, it was sad. Until now I have these, these images, I have these pictures on my, on my mind. That was, I was, I was really shocked. I get in that, in that school you know, because it was, it, it has been the (____) . . .

04:43 DJH: I have been there.

04:44 . . . in the school in that, in that, in that small hill, I visited that place. I saw the bodies, some bodies were lying there, the clothes were, weren't there. And because it was raining you know, it was also a smell coming from – I was, until now when I think about that I'm, I'm really shocked. Yes, that was my, my, my first contact with, with, with the site of genocide and what I saw there, I mean, I cannot describe it. I cannot.

05:20 DJH: I won't ask you to. Did that make a difference to you in your approach to your job, if you will? Having seen a place like that, how, how did it . . .

05:36 (____), as I say (____) it, it is – yes. If I can – but whatever, whatever I have to do to, to do my job I have – spec-, specially in, in this, in this, in this area now reporting on the, on the work of the tribunal, I have, I tried to, to, to do it the best I can because, because I, I think that is part of what I can you know, bring on this – for these Rwandese. To help them understand what have happened and help them also to build a new society. Yes, I think that it have, it have, it have changed my, my, my view yes, of . . .

06:39 DJH: I'm going to go to a different place now for a little bit. Thank you for sharing this with us.