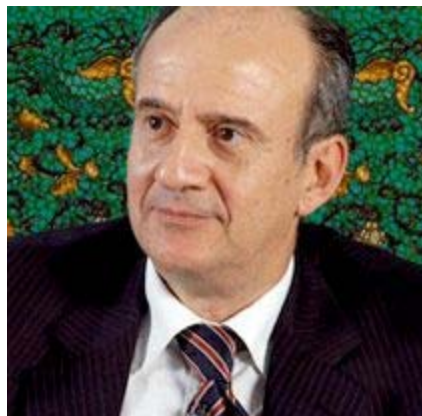




# Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

## Official Transcript: Alessandro Caldarone (1 of 12)



<b>Role:</b>	Senior Officer of External Relations
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Italy
<b>Interview Date:</b>	3 November 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Arusha, Tanzania
<b>Interviewers:</b>	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
<b>Videographer:</b>	Nell Carden Grey
<b>Interpreter:</b>	None

### Interview Summary

Alessandro Caldarone compares his experiences at the ICTR with his time at the EU-Human Rights Mission in Rwanda providing technical assistance. Caldarone reflects on a personal eye-opening moment during the defense of accused genocidaires when he realized that the perpetrators were not monsters but human beings. He questions the concept of 'victim' in the Rwandan context where everybody is, in some sense, victimized. He also suggests that the ICTR should be considered an extension of Rwandan justice.

*The transcript of Part 1 begins on the following page.*

## Part 1

- 00:00** Lisa P. Nathan: My name is Lisa Nathan. I'm from the Information School at the University of Washington and I'd like to thank you so much for your time today. And to begin, I would like you to say your name and you, where you're from, your home country and then your title here at the ICTR.
- 00:18 Thank you to you. It's my pleasure to be here with you. My name is Alessandro Caldarone. I am Senior External Relations Officer and adviser to the Chief of External Relation Strategic Planning Section in the tribunal, ICTR. And I am here since 1997.
- 00:39** LPN: And your home country?
- 00:40 Ah – is Italy. I'm Italian. I thought with my accent you would recognize immediately, so yeah.
- 00:47** LPN: So, can you give me sort of a, in brief the, the year that you started? You just mentioned it, but to re-state when you started at the ICTR and what different roles you have had; not a long description but sort of the titles of the different jobs you've had up until today.
- 01:06 Yeah. I started working in ICTR in 1996, March 1996. Before that experience, I was in the Human Rights Mission in Rwanda in 1995, so I started in '96 in ICTR as a legal officer at, at the Office of the Prosecutor. After a couple of months, I became the Chief of External and Internal Relations of the Office of the, of the Prosecutor in, in Kigali. At that time, it was quite difficult situation in all aspects.
- 01:44 Afterwards, I came to Arusha and I was the Chief of the Press during few months, but I didn't really like much to be in charge of the press. And I was dealing mainly with the Rwandese. At that time was Bocar Sy, I think he's somebody who is a chief now and so Bocar was dealing with all the journalist because he is a journalist.
- 02:09 And me, I was dealing more with the Rwandese because I believe that I was in Rwanda, and I saw what I saw, and so it was important for me to keep this contact with Rwanda because ICTR is for the Rwandese.
- 02:24 And after a few months in July 1997, I was requested to become the Chief of, the, the OIC, the Officer in Charge of the section of Lawyers and Detention Facility Management Section. The post was published and I got it so I became the chief of that section during about six years.
- 02:46 And it was very, very stressful because it was a lot of work. I was, at the beginning, I was alone. And, and after that – and now I am in, in, in the External Relations Section, yeah.

**02:58 LPN: Thank you. Can you, I'd like to go back in time a bit to 1994, the spring of 1994. Can you tell me where you were at that time?**

03:10 Yeah, at that time I was in South Africa. I was for the election and so I was, I was there. And I remember like it was yesterday that I put on the television and I saw crimes going on. And, at that time, honestly I, I didn't know exactly where Rwanda was. I have to admit it, you know. And I didn't know almost anything about that country.

03:40 And it was quite strange because I was a few kilometers from that country but I was, you know, with my background, European and I, I, I studied also in Canada and so on – so I saw at the television and I continued my life. And I went ahead and I went to Italy. And that is how I learned it, on the television like that.

**04:05 LPN: How did you come to then go to Rwanda? How did that come about?**

04:11 What happened is, is really a coincidence. I sent my application to – I don't even remember exactly. I think I, I, I knew somebody in the Eu-, European Union and I was discussing with him and they told me about a human rights mission in Rwanda, and, and I remember December of that year the (\_\_\_), at the Italian television a show with a Rwandan music.

04:38 And at that time I didn't recognize it because I didn't know anything about Rwanda. So but after some time, I watched the movie and it was the Rwandese, you know, the typical dance of "ta-ta-tan," the typical music is, is just beautiful.

04:53 And – so is a coincidence because after few months, I went to Rwanda as Deputy Coordinator of the First Human Rights Mission organized by the European Union. And I was the number two of that mission.

05:07 And so I arrived there. I didn't know anything about the history of Rwanda but the, the, you know, the, the, the experience I had, the human experience was so unbelievable. It was so strong. I remember I, I read everything on Rwanda; all the books, even I bought books on the counts that the adults say to the kids.

05:33 In Italy we have Pinocchio, we have you know, the counts – just to understand how is it possible that this happened? And it was really, really, a traumatic personal experience. It was very, very strong experience because everybody had victims. My driver, they killed the family, he himself was hiding in a hole during weeks. The house, the roof was destroyed by grenade.

05:59 My house girl, one day I accompany her at home. She was, at that time she was 22 years old, something like that and she had like seven, eight kids around her. My salary was helping them. Now I help her a little bit, as, also my driver. Now, she's in the States. She get married and she got the green, I mean, she, she's happy.

- 06:23 She called me not long time ago, so we keep contact with that person time by time. And my, my driver, unfortunately, passed away but at least he built his house. He, he did not have any more water coming, you know, the rain and so on. It was a very, very, difficult experience.
- 06:39 But what I'm proud of our human rights experience for the European Union, we put the accent on technical cooperation. We thought that at that time with the coordinator, we thought that investigation of genocide as organized by the UN and so on, I think yes it's important of course but you know, it was really enough.
- 07:02 We had individual dramas, drama. We talked the genocide in Rwanda. The genocide is the Rwandese. It's not, Rwanda doesn't mean anything as such. I mean, the people have been suffering. What can we do to help the people? And we really, we put in place program of technical cooperation.
- 07:22 And that was the difference between the European Union and the UN because we contributed with NGO. We, we sponsor projects. I mean, so many things, that – training for justice and legal programs, for the police. I was involved on all, all these, these activities.
- 07:42 That make the difference with the UN. They were more oriented in looking for genocide or to, try to, to find responsibility was for every which ethnical group or was a Tutsi or Hutu. They were just looking like that. We prefer to be a little bit more oriented on, on the individuals, yeah.