

Official Transcript: Roland Amoussouga (Part 4 of 13)



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| Role: | Spokesperson for the Tribunal |
| Country of Origin: | Togo |
| Interview Date: | 29 October 2008, 30 October 2008 |
| Location: | Arusha, Tanzania |
| Interviewers: | Batya Friedman Donald J Horowitz Ronald Slye Robert Utter |
| Videographer: | Max Andrews |
| Interpreter: | None |

Interview Summary

Roland Amoussouga discusses his extensive history working for the UN and with the Rwanda Tribunal. As Chief of External Relations he describes the function and operation of the strategic planning section of the Tribunal and reflects on the difficulty of working in Kigali immediately following the genocide. He highlights the need to train and prepare staff members sent to work in post-conflict situations, and emphasizes the need to create training manuals for humanitarian workers placed in conflict situations in the future.

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Part 4

- 00:00 And for me working along with the military personnel, the expert-, the forensic experts as a lawyer with various group, to achieve a result was a quite good experience for me. And it is why I believe that any team that goes in should be multi-skilled team that has to go in. Not just a team of doctor or a team of lawyer because everything is interrelated.
- 00:30 A group of expert being deployed and each with their responsibilities, with the, the possibility of exchanging is very helpful. Those are the lessons that I learned from this initial dispatch. And also the need, the experience that we gathered has, I believe, has been documented and has to be used in the sense that it can become a training manual for people who have been dispatched in circumstances like that so that they can be fully well prepared.
- 01:13 I also believe that given the way things are happening throughout the world, the UN should have somewhere a database of what I will call the “humanitarian firefighters,” who once you have been in such a situation, they have to log you into a database and from time to time like what they do for the vets, for the people who are soldiers, they recall you from time to time and give you a briefing to update you, to help you to update your skills, so that these people can be a reliable source, resources for any deployment that the UN can order.
- 02:05 Because this is an, an experience that is unique. I hope it will not happen all the time but the reality is showing otherwise, you see. Sudan is there. Various mission, even peacekeeping in the DRC. Those are realities that you have to equipped. And you should not allow all those expertise that have been developed to go and to die.
- 02:31 And we need such things and that’s why a provision must be made to help out in due course the humanity to have at least on standby the, those firefighters. I, I don’t know if it will be firefighters but I will call it humanitarian fighters who can get in and when you’re putting together a program to deploy people to do it.
- 03:06 And what is very sad is that the consistent error or mistake of, of the UN is that we do not yet – or even of mankind is that we do not have a consistent approach in documenting and in keeping and safeguarding the experience that has been gathered throughout a process. And we seem to repeat the same error when we have to tackle si-, similar issues when they arise.
- 03:47 And then there is a need to develop a kind of strategy that will be a global and long sustainable strategy that will be designed specifically to record the experience. To design a strategy out of it, to design a training manual, to maintain the, these human resources that can be tapped in any time there is a need. Because those experience, those experiences are tremendous; you cannot get it if you are not there.
- 04:25 And for me I was very privileged to have been at the beginning of the process till the time of my re-deployment to Arusha where I continued the legal aspect of it because I

was involved in the handling of the investigation, in the handling of the humanitarian crisis, in the rebuilding process of the society, in the capacity building process, in the, in the process of monitoring and preventing further abuses, and in the strengthening of the new state that is been in formation at that time.

05:09 And then after two years and three months, I moved down to here to start also from scratch the p-, judicial process. Because when I came in as a legal officer, I was in charge of designing the witness protection program. And I design it from scratch; from my own experience I tap in and then I manage it for six years before moving to this new aspect of it.

05:41 And I believe, and that's what makes personally myself to feel confident that I have serve a lot, I have learned a lot. And I wanted to see the process ending at some point so that I can cover the whole cycle of the whole process involving Rwanda. And by next year, I will be completing my 15 years working exclusively on Rwanda which is almost more than half of my professional years.