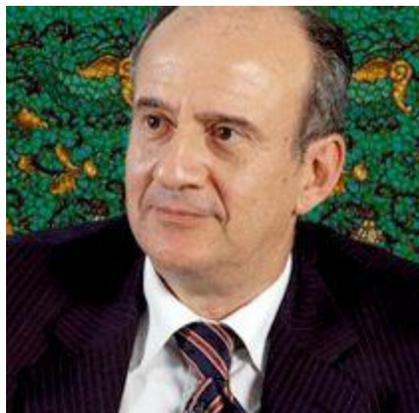


Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Alessandro Caldarone (11 of 12)



Role:	Senior Officer of External Relations
Country of Origin:	Italy
Interview Date:	3 November 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
Videographer:	Nell Carden Grey
Interpreter:	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 11 begins on the following page.

Part 11

- 00:00 Donald J Horowitz: Let's talk for a minute more about some of your experiences and the experiences of your colleagues in having to deal almost daily – and you did it before the ICTR began – with the actualities of the events in Rwanda in 1994 and the horror of that.
- 00:25 DJH: We were talking a little bit before about the interpreters and how they have to hear very difficult things and then change the language and have it come out, go in the ear and come out the mouth, and some of the residual poison may stay over time psychologically and so forth.
- 00:43 Oh (___) . . .
- 00:43 DJH: Yeah. And you yourself have had this. So perhaps, can you think of something that the, the ICTR would, could do to assist the staff in that way as they are here over years doing these things? And tell us a bit about your experience.
- 01:01 (___), no, for sure that is, I mean I had nightmares myself during long time. And I think the stress that I had at the lawyers, it's not because I'm physically weak, or – it's because you get tired to accumulate all this. Victims are all the Rwandese. I think even in International Criminal Court up to now, there is no definition of who is a victim.
- 01:29 That is the problem also of, juridically speaking, who is a victim because all of them are victims directly or indirectly, I mean. And, and, no, the thing is when you are in Rwanda and people tell you story what happened to them, what happened to the family, their family, they show you the holes where, where they were hiding. It's not the same that when you go in court now after ten years, 12 years; looking people, witnesses, talking about something.
- 02:05 But, you are an interpreter and understand them. It must be very hard for them, but still you don't know the person. But when you are in Rwanda and you know the people, and you put faces on the drama, I think that, that is, is quite different in term of intensity.
- 02:25 What I can tell you is when I was in Rwanda, I mean even after Rwanda, w-, when they asked me to become chief of the lawyers I start crying, (___) crying seriously.
- 02:36 When I saw the first detainee, I was, it was really changing inside even though I was trying to control myself, but it's not easy to control y-, yourself. So it's a hard experience. And in '95, you had bodies everywhere in Rwanda. You, it's not like now.
- 02:58 And when you were going also around, and I don't remember the name of a church there. It was, even when they were open the gate, you have bodies there still in decomposition, still with the dress, the clothes.

- 03:14 The flesh was still there. The smell; you could not remove the smell from, from you during days. I was taking seven, eight showers per day and the smell of death was in me.
- 03:29 I- it, it was really a, a, a very difficult experience, very, very, difficult experience. And that white flies around the bodies and, and you go in a church and, and you think that the church is something that should not happen there. Should not happen anywhere.
- 03:48 But you see how everything has been – it, it, it was hard. It was really hard. Even now is hard.
- 03:55 DJH: Yeah. How have you managed to sort of accommodate, if that’s maybe a silly word, so that you can do your job, so that you are not walking around totally depressed . . .**
- 04:09 I . . .
- 04:09 DJH: . . . and, and, and how can you advise as to some of the other staff people?**
- 04:15 You know, I think in my, my case because I can't, I cannot talk for the other people of course but I, I think it's, it's my love for the Rwandese which really pushed me not to have to collapse when I was seeing what I, I've s-, I've seen, because I was the only one who, who could have helped them.
- 04:34 If I was collapsing myself, who is going to help them? We don't have to forget that when you have even the UN, other, other colleagues, they were just doing their own career.
- 04:46 They were just trying to accuse people, to find evidence against people, whatsoever, it – the Hutu or the Tutsi, it doesn't matter. It was just, "I want something to have a promotion." That what people were doing.
- 05:01 Colleagues, colleagues became playboy. They became rich people. I have, you know I accused colleagues in a newspaper in, in Rwanda. You have people coming from a village in, in Europe. They go in five stars hotel. They receive a salary they have never seen in their life. The, the girls in Rwanda are beautiful. And they were going behind those girls without taking into account that those girls were alone. They created prostitutions.
- 05:35 And I accused them, in the press. And one of the reasons I'm in Arusha is because I was on the point to be fired and the President of that time of the tribunal, Judge Laïty Kama he liked me and he wanted me to stay in Arusha. I had a, a serious confrontation with some colleagues because this was completely amoral, no, no morality in this type of behaviors.
- 06:03 So not only you have a work to be done, but on the top, you have this kind of injustice around you. And you have to react because if you don't react to injustice, you do injustice yourself. And that what I've been trying to do. It was hard because I had to fight with my own what I've seen, the bodies, talking with people.

- 06:28 I was in Kibeho at the, when they closed the camp. I saw so many bodies myself. I think nobody here in the Tribunal have seen so many people killed as I have seen myself, nobody.
- 06:40 I've saw – and on the top, I had these colleagues. You know my report that I did when I was responsible, somebody else, another colleague did another report because he never recognized the fact that I was in charge of that sect-, of that mission.
- 07:03 I didn't ask anything. It was given to me. I just did the work, () respecting everybody. We, they put a Commission of Inquiry and finally, my colleague was fired because he did something completely a nonsense. So, not only you have a work to be done, but you have this people coming around like – honestly like shark, honestly.
- 07:27 And, and you have to, to, to fight all the time. You have to fight all the time.
- 07:33 DJH: So, in a certain way, you're talking about, am-, at least among other things, you survived by fighting.**
- 07:40 That is why you see, I . . .
- 07:41 DJH: . . . by fighting injustice.**
- 07:42 I say you have to change the system. The UN has to be changed by the, from the bottom to the top. If you don't change the mentality of those people, if you don't have training, education, a proper one, that, the UN will never really achieve the ultimate goal of justice because within ourselves, we don't have it.