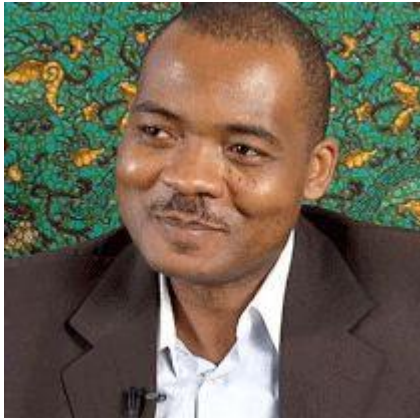




Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Jean-Pele Fomete (Part 2 of 15)



Role:	Program Director
Country of Origin:	Cameroon
Interview Date:	24 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Batya Friedman John McKay Robert Utter
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Jean-Pele Fomete speaks about his role in court management services, overseeing legal aid and capacity building for pan-African justice systems. He highlights the need for civil society support to make the Tribunal a success, which has been challenging in Rwanda. He also comments on the lack of infrastructure in Africa, and the difficulty in mobilizing resources and ensuring adequate access to information about the Tribunal's work. He discusses the positive and negative impacts of the ICTR and international human rights standards on Rwanda's justice system.

The transcript of Part 2 begins on the following page.

Part 2

- 00:00** Batya Friedman: So, I'd like to take you back to the spring of 1994.
- 00:05 Mm-hmm.
- 00:07** **BF: Where were you and what were you doing at that time?**
- 00:12 I was in Cameroon in Yaounde serving the foreign services of Cameroon and what is quite interesting is that in April of 1994 we were hosting a meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on security matters in Central Africa.
- 00:31 So I, I was assisting the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cameroon because that mechanism was part of my folio. So there were representatives of Rwanda in that meeting when everything erupted.
- 00:49** **BF: What was the conversation like?**
- 00:50** **Note: Gap in Interview (Approximately 30 seconds in duration.) Gaps occurred due to interruptions during the interview, technical issues, or corrupted data files.**
- 00:58** **BF: What were the conversations like in that meeting and among yourselves and with the Rwandan representatives?**
- 01:07 You know, the, the meeting was about designing a non-aggression pact. The meeting was about adopting series of measures aimed at building closer relationships between the member state of Central Africa, you know, including exchanges of envoys, you know, closer ties between policies of different countries so on and so forth, long-term action plan aimed at ensuring that the security in the region is fine.
- 01:45 So when we, we heard the news about what was going on, you know, it was towards the end of the, of, of the meeting and to tell you the truth it was not very clear as to what was happening in, in, in Rwanda. So it's, it's later on that we, we got the details about what was going on in Rwanda.
- 02:11 So the, the meeting went on, should I say, normally as I say it was towards the end, so it's later on that we heard about the magnitude of what was the happening in, in Rwanda.
- 02:27** **BF: So at this meeting when you first heard that things were going on, were people talking about it or was it just . . .**
- 02:37 Remember those who were representing Rwanda were representing the former government so th-, th-, you, you will expect them to say much about what was, what was going on other than saying "Yeah, there're fightings and the rebels are attacking and you know, we'll need, continue to need support from the international committee, community to fight back," and things like . . .

- 03:08 Th-, there was nothing special. There was not even a statement on, on what was going on. Yeah, just to tell you the, the, the – I later on wrote a papers just saying that we, we failed to do what we were supposed to do in that, in that context.
- 03:27 BF: Mm- hmm.**
- 03:28 Yeah.
- 03:29 BF: And then how did you come to understand that something different was going on in Rwanda? What . . .**
- 03:38 It's, right after when we were in the context of preparing our participation in the next general assembly which was in September 1994 that we're getting everything from our, from the news, from our, our mission in New York.
- 04:01 BF: Mm-hmm. And so then that's how you became aware of the genocide?**
- 04:08 Right after from, from the news we became aware of what, what was going on and what is quite interesting is at the same time in Cameroon in 1994 things were not doing that well.
- 04:22 BF: Mm-hmm.**
- 04:23 From 1992, the Cameroon people was fighting for a more open society, fighting for the shift from the one party political system to a multi-party political system and you could see that different ethnic groups were not speaking the same language and that through the media there were messages of, you could say hatred, you know, and things like that.
- 04:57 So I, I felt worried, I should say, and concerned, and that's why later on when I had the opportunity of joining the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, I did not hesitate.
- 05:17 I left my job in the foreign services and I went because I could see some – when I was reading what was going on in Rwanda, what was being said about the former Yugoslavia, I could established some, some parallel. Reading, going through some newspapers you could simply replace Hutu by a, another tribe, replace this political party by another one, but the rhetoric seems to be, at least to me, to be the same or comparable.
- 05:55 BF: And were you concerned something might also occur in Cameroon?**
- 05:59 Yes, that's what I was trying to say. I was very, very concerned.
- 06:01 BF: Yeah, yeah.**
- 06:03 Very.