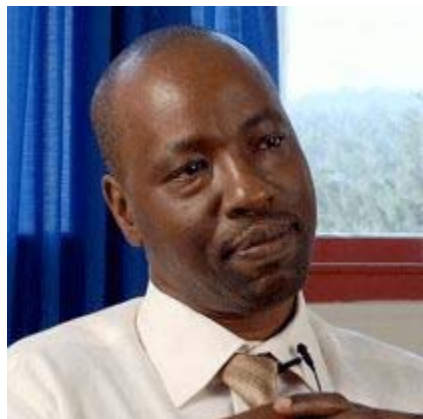




# Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

## Official Transcript: Straton Musonera (Part 3 of 6)



<b>Role:</b>	Information Officer
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Rwanda
<b>Interview Date:</b>	14 October 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Arusha, Tanzania
<b>Interviewers:</b>	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
<b>Videographer:</b>	Max Andrews
<b>Interpreter:</b>	None

### Interview Summary

Straton Musonera discusses his experience working on outreach and capacity building programs for the ICTR, including capacity building of the judicial sector in Rwanda. He addresses the special insight and knowledge he has as Rwandan working for the Tribunal. Musonera explains the challenge of working daily with testimony and information about the genocide, yet also needing to retain a certain distance from it to function professionally. He emphasizes the need for an outreach program for courts such as the ICTR around the world, to ensure that people know justice is being pursued.

*The transcript of Part 3 begins on the following page.*

## Part 3

- 00:00** Lisa P. Nathan: So before you touched on how when you first were working here, how hard it was for you to relive basically the events every day, to face those but to be able to pull yourself back and be somewhat objective. Can you, take as much time as you need, can you give me like a specific example of how that, what that was like from one of those days?
- 00:25 Yeah, I can give you an example. I used to follow court proceedings here. Sometimes you could, I could hear one lawyer saying something or a witness saying something that I was against, that, something that I couldn't accept.
- 00:50 I could, myself, I could feel really, really, very bad but this as time went by, I changed completely because I understood that as a court staff, these people are doing their job and this job requires cross examination, examination in chief and they must show as much as possible that the witness is credible and that they must show that their client is for instance is not guilty.
- 01:35 So I understood all of those kind of situations later on, but at the beginning, it was hard. Sometimes I was leaving the, the, the, gallery or when I was watching the, on the, on the TV screen, I could leave just and go back to my office because I couldn't bear the, the kind of me-, me-, message, the kind of feeling that was coming out of such a kind of message delivered by a witness or any lawyer in the court.
- 02:16** LPN: So, what would be an example of a message of a witness that would . . .
- 02:21 For instance, I remember for instance that at tha-, at the time that some lawyers were asking some proof that genocide took place, and for me it was really horrible. I couldn't understand that because we heard that news, even some reports came out. Some investigations from the United Nations were published, so I couldn't understand how the lawyers could not understand that genocide took place in Rwanda.
- 02:56 But later on, I understood the kind of techniques that they were using. And that's why f-, any courts needs to have an outreach program all over the world so that the outreach program can break down the kind of language that average people in the street or in the country cannot understand, so that those people can understand what those courts are doing, because they deliver justice in the name of those same people.
- 03:41** LPN: So you just used the word justice.
- 03:43 Yes.
- 03:44** LPN: What would your definition of justice be?

03:49 Justice. Hmm. It's not easy . . .

**04:00 LPN: No.**

04:00 . . . but i-, in my opinion, I think that when a crime is committed in any society, the balan-, the social balance in the society is broken, being in a family or in the, in the society. So to bring back the balance, there is, there is a need of reparation so that's why we need justice to show, we need, we need a justice system, a judge and lawyers to come forward and really show people what's really the, to, to indicate, to just show the truth to the people.

04:57 And this is very important because in my opinion, justice and truth go hand in hand. Sometimes, they don't really, justice doesn't show the truth based on the evidence that were put forward by witnesses or in front of the court so the judge will deliver his judgment based on the e-, evidence put forward by the parties.

05:32 So, and that's why in many cases people don't understand why for instance this person was not found guilty or was found guilty. They don't understand that everything is based on the evidence that were produced. So for me, in a nutshell, justice is to bring back a balance, in a, a social balance which was missing in the society because of a crime or an offense that were committed by a given person.

**06:17 LPN: Do you feel that your . . .**

06:19 It's a definition which is not a legal definition because I'm not a lawyer.

**06:25 LPN: Understood.**