



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Justine Ndongo-Keller (Part 11 of 13)



Role:	Chief of Language Services
Country of Origin:	Cameroon
Interview Date:	8 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Donald J Horowitz Lisa P. Nathan
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Justine Ndongo-Keller describes various roles within the Language Services Department at the ICTR, clarifying differences among interpreters, translators and reviewers. She stresses the importance of effective, high-quality translation for the Tribunal's overall success, as well as the significance of review in the translation process. An original member of the language services team, Ndongo-Keller also provides a perspective on the department's evolution. She comments on the personal toll to individuals in language services from extensive exposure to materials about the genocide.

The transcript of Part 11 begins on the following page.

Part 11

- 00:00 **Donald J Horowitz: You've used some sort of short hand. You've s-, you've talked about ICTY.**
- 00:06 Yes.
- 00:07 **DJH: And you've talked about ICC so maybe you could tell us what those are.**
- 00:12 Yeah.
- 00:13 **DJH: ICTY.**
- 00:14 ICTY is the International Criminal Tribunal for the ex-Yugoslavia and then ICC is Inter-, International Criminal Court. Both of them are in The Hague.
- 00:25 **DJH: Okay, and my pretty much, my last question is you – and Lisa will be asking you some more – you see in the world what's going in places like Darfur and other places and unfortunately, there may have to be tribunals in the future or something to, to deal with those issues.**
- 00:54 **DJH: I guess my question would be simply if you had some suggestions; if there were going to be some sort of tribunal that would be helpful in the future for those, particularly as it relates to the work that, that you do and, and the people who work with you do, in terms of training or in terms of dealing with the emotional issues, of things of that sort of if, if you'd like to – if you had any suggestions, we'd be happy to hear them.**
- 01:31 **DJH: And if you'd like to think about it and tell (____), or tell Lisa . . .**
- 01:35 No, I, I, I wanted to say that how I wish we didn't have to make a suggestion because there was another, you know, a, a place where they, they, that we did what everybody thought will never happen again. But still, since it's happening what I can say is that if it was – they w-, they needed people like us, we will need to have a, a, a psychologist from the beginning.
- 02:06 It would be good to have a person, a person like that there that will be able to listen to what people have to say. And maybe even before listening, you know, it's good to be cautioned, you know, like when you're watching a movie and they tell you that careful, what you're going to watch is going to be like this. Maybe if you don't have a heart, don't watch it.
- 02:30 Then you know. If you decide to watch it, you will bear the consequences.
- 02:35 **Note: Gap in Interview (Approx. 5 minutes in duration.) Gaps occurred due to interruptions during the interviews, technical issues, or corrupted data files.**

- 02:43 Now I was saying that it will be good to have from the forego, from the beginning somebody – a, a, a psychologist that could be there to listen to people, to tell them what to expect, what the, the kind of stuff they were going to be listening to, they're going to be seeing.
- 03:07 And I could give you some terrible examples of things that, you know, I personally saw. Just in court like that is okay, they're going to – you know there was this journalist from Reuters. He was in Kigali when the massacres were happening and he made a footage of killings, you know.
- 03:28 You see somebody there and the next sequence that you have, the bodies lying somewhere. There was a lady with three daughters and, you know, the camera will come back and one is no longer there, you know, and this woman is talking and begging, then the camera comes back. The second child is no longer there, you know.
- 03:51 Then there's a pile of corpse, you know, terrible things then eventually she herself is on the floor. You see, these are things that, you know, will – or this girl, 19 year old girl, that said you know, people who came, come in the night, they would be drunk and this, and they will be raping her, all of them.
- 04:09 You know, and then the type of questions that they will be asking her that, "How many times, how did you do it, how?" You see – but yet these questions have to be asked, you know, by judges and by the defense to, to, so that the truth can come out. You have to know that these are the t-, type of things you're going to hear.
- 04:31 So, as maybe to prepare yourself, I don't know if one can be prepared to hear such things, but at least you know what is coming ahead and you could make a choice to hear them or not to hear them. I don't know. I mean, it's just, you know I'm thinking aloud so, I don't know.
- 04:50 Lisa P. Nathan: Were you able to incorporate any of those ideas here – as I don't believe you're now hiring new interpreters but over – well, and you've only been the chief here for less than a year – but did any of that happen formally or informally, letting new people . . . ?**
- 05:09 Informally we tell them that, you know, "The kind of stuff that you're going to hear is sometime not going to be easy." But I have to say that at this stage of the tribunal, you don't hear such hard stuff anymore because, like we're, we're in the closing stage, you know, and the stage of the closing of, like the presentation of the prosecutor case or the defense case.
- 05:40 We're not like at the beginning when witnesses have to come and say, "I was there, I saw it when they did this and they did that." So it's kind of less stressing, and you know, they're,

they are under less strain and stress than, than we were – even if it can be very, very difficult at some time.