

Official Transcript: Ellis Odjurhe (Part 2 of 4)



Role:	Prison Operations Officer
Country of Origin:	Nigeria
Interview Date:	16 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewer:	Lisa P. Nathan
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Ellis Odjurhe speaks about his responsibilities as a Prison Operations Officer where he oversees the daily operations of the Tribunal's detention facilities. He stresses the need for improved security measures to adequately protect detainees and prison staff. He also emphasizes the need for rules to apply equally to judges, lawyers, investigators and others. Odjurhe further calls attention to the Tribunal's humanitarian and high quality detention services that stand in contrast with the poverty and harassment many detainees face after release.

The transcript of Part 2 begins on the following page.

Part 2

- 00:00 Lisa P. Nathan: So can you tell me about your role here; like what kind of responsibilities you have?**
- 00:07 Yeah, I am here as Operations Officer. My main duty is to ensure orderliness within the facility and ensure the safety of all the detainees, staff and so on. So to this end, I normally organize officers in various schedules to provide security coverage for their movement from here to the court.
- 00:43 And by the time they finish from the court, they are escorted safely back here. If there is need for them to be evacuated for medical checkup, I make sure I make adequate arrangements to see that there is sec-, security coverage for the movement. So basically that is it.
- 01:07 LPN: I'm sure it keeps you quite busy.**
- 01:09 Mm.
- 01:10 LPN: So can you tell me, since you've been here, has there been s-, anything – you heard me ask this question earlier – that has surprised you about the way things work here at the ICTR or at the detention center? Or an event that surprised you?**
- 01:25 Yes, what surprises me most here is that it appears – like the Commanding Officer rightly mentioned the other time – it appears that much regard is not being given for security measures. When you try to apply them there is a lot of opposition.
- 01:52 When the lawyers – as he said, when the lawyers come here, most of, not all of them, there are some of them who are quite cooperative, but some of them when they come they give a lot of trouble to the officers at the gate.
- 02:09 For example there is no way you can say that you have searched someone when actually that person is still in possession of something that is unauthorized. Somebody – when you say you've searched someone it is assumed that that person is free of anything that can constitute nuisance or any form of danger to the facility.
- 02:32 But here we, we, we have a situation where a lawyer will come and maybe the officer at the gate ask him, "Let me open this book and see what is there." They say, "Ah, no, you want to see my legal ma-, materials. You want to see my defense." Okay, if I don't open it and you keep some currency notes here, there is no way the machine can detect that you have currency notes there. Now you go in, you pass the, the, maybe about a 1,000 or 2,000 dollars to a detainee.
- 03:05 With which if other security measures are not properly taken care of, he could, he could, I mean that could aid him in facilitating his escape if he wishes to. So I think there is not much support or much regard for the need to really ensure that security regulations are completely obeyed.

- 03:36 Because it's really important, it's not just for any other thing it's for both the, the, the protection of the detainees themselves and the staff. So I th-, I wish there was more cooperation with the security system here. So.
- 03:57 LPN: So if you were involved in another international detention center, and it, for . . .**
- 04:03 Yeah.
- 04:04 LPN: . . . would there be anything else that, you mentioned security and more, more security basically and more respect for the security.**
- 04:13 Yes.
- 04:14 LPN: Are there something else on your mind or a couple of other things that you can think of that you would recommend be implemented in the future?**
- 04:22 Yes, I think not something other than what I've just said but I think basically the, the idea will be the need to make the administration really understand the need for security rules to be equally applied to everybody.
- 04:45 Not a section of people, not that this is a, a, a lawyer, he should be treated differ-, different-, differently, this is an investigator, he should be treated differently, no. I think that is what I would want the administration to really support the security with.