



Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Alex Obote Odora (Highlight)



Role:	Chief of Appeals
Country of Origin:	Uganda
Interview Date:	22 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan John McKay
Videographer:	Nell Carden Grey
Interpreter:	None

In this highlight, Alex Obote Odora speaks on...
prosecution and reconciliation

The transcript of the highlight begins on the following page.

- 00:24 You see, as a lawyer, I find understanding the concept of reconciliation very difficult. You p-, you as a prosecutor, you go and look what you call the best possible evidence – that’s actually the worst thing that somebody did, okay. And you present that in the courtroom using these same witnesses to whom those all very bad things were done to them. They assist you through your trial and the fellow gets convicted.
- 00:39 Then you want to turn around and say, “Please go and reconcile with this guy,” okay. I don’t know whether one tries seriously to put themselves in the shoes of these individuals when one is preaching reconciliation. I think reconciliation need, needs time and it needs to be delinked from criminal prosecution. The two cannot go together. Somehow, the statute tells us that they should go together and they’ve not told us practically, how can it be done? That’s the difficulty.
- 01:13 That’s why some people appreciate Gacaca because Gacaca is not a criminal prosecution process. It is a political process where somebody admits responsibility and then somebody is re-absorbed into the community. And they should not confuse that with criminal prosecution because it is not. It is a political process.
- 01:38 And I don’t think the, the, the tribunals are institutions that are best suited for reconciliation because the nature of the work of a prosecutor is not reconciliation. I think that, that they demand too much from a prosecutor to collect all the worst evidence, get a conviction and then turn around and say, “Oh, let us forget the past.” It’s very difficult.