Official Transcript: François Bembatoum (Part 6 of 6)
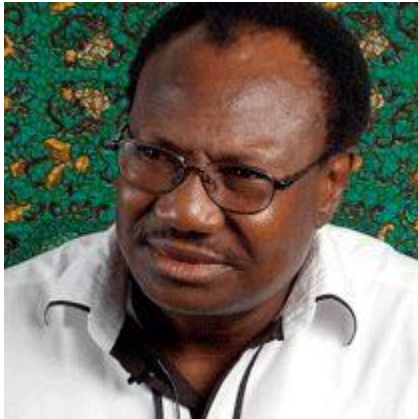
Role:	Chief Interpreter
Country of Origin:	Cameroon
Interview Date:	22 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan
	John McKay
Videographer:	Max Andrews
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

François Bembatoum speaks to the challenges of translating testimonies at the ICTR, emphasizing the necessity to remain neutral when translating emotional or graphic material, and noting that important nuances described by witnesses can be easily lost in translation. He draws attention to the gradual desensitization of Tribunal staff to human suffering as a result of their work, advocating strongly for trained medical professionals to provide psychological support to Tribunal personnel, as well as to detainees and witnesses.

The transcript of Part 6 begins on the following page.

Part 6

00:00   **Lisa P. Nathan: John, do you have anything else?**

00:02   **John McKay: No, this has been fantastic.**

00:03   **Max Andrews: I have one.**

00:05   **LPN: Okay. Max has a question that he would like me to ask you and I hope I word it well, but you can . . . So it has to do with, do you, and I might change it around a bit because of your, some of your answers earlier.**

00:22   **LPN: It has to do with hope for the future, hope for the human race and your thoughts on that, given some of your answers earlier about humanity being worse than animals. But you're still here, you're still participating, you still laugh and have relationships, beautiful relationships with human beings here. So what are your thoughts on the future and hope for the humanity?**

00:56   Unfortunately, y-, I, I believe that humanity hasn't, hasn't learned lessons, you know at least from the genocide that occurred in Rwanda. I mean look at the world today. (___), how many wars are going on, unabated? And there is no, there is no really serious sign that the trend is going to change any, any time soon.

01:32   So I don't know. The, the, the whole thing sounds like the world or hu-, humanity needs a war somewhere. Humanity needs people to be dying somewhere, violent deaths somewhere for it to feel that it exists. And that is, that is – this is a terrible thing, a terrible conclusion to come to.

02:10   I don't know whether you have children, but I do have children. I would want them to live in a better world where there would be more peace, you know. Where people would be talking, where there's – nobody will decide to wage war because he or she believes that he's superior culturally or, or his or her civilizatio-, civilization is, is, is better and superior to the civilization of the one next door.

02:43   The genocide in Rwanda is, is – fits perfectly in the scenario that has been on for quite a, quite a number of years. What is going to save humanity? I don't know, I don't know. Spending 12 years here in this tribunal maybe helped me grow more aware, you know of the tragedy, but it is a continuous tragedy in more and more countries.

03:19   It's, it's, it's, in Rwanda it was a, it was a genocide, fine. In some other countries (__) it is, it is open war. The common factor is that people die. Human beings killing other human beings sometimes for reasons that are flimsy, for misunderstandings that could have been solved quite easily through dialogue, but I don't know. I'm, I'm very pessimistic about the future of humanity, if you want to know my conclusion.

04:06   **LPN: I do. Do you have anything else that you would like to say or share with us?**

04:13   No. I, I think that I've gone, I've gone deep enough, you know into certain things that have been kept inside me. It definitely helped me voicing them out. I, I hope, I, I hope that by the time I leave this place not long from now, at least that's according to my plans, I hope that I, I will not suffer too much from, from the trauma, but definitely I'm not optimistic about the future of humanity. I hope I'm wrong.