

Official Transcript: Charles Kamuru (Part 5 of 6)



Role:	Public Information Assistant
Country of Origin:	Rwanda
Interview Date:	28 October 2008
Location:	Kigali, Rwanda
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan
Videographer:	Nell Carden Grey
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Charles Kamuru discusses his role as a public information assistant at the Information Center in Kigali, distributing information between the Tribunal, various media outlets and the public outreach program. He discusses the methods of outreach used by the Information Center to inform the Rwandan public about the work, mandate and progress of the Tribunal. He also speaks about the training offered by the Information Center to legal practitioners in Rwanda to assist them in accessing ICTR documentation.

The transcript of Part 5 begins on the following page.

Part 5

00:00 Lisa P. Nathan: And you may have unique challenges because you, you are Rwandan, this is your home country but the ICTR activities have a special meaning for you. Are there challenges to your role that you can share with us?

00:20 Okay the challenges – the challenges of course they are there, especially like when we move up country, you find something when you are talking about the genocide, you know, there is a, the impact of the genocide has been on a large scale in Rwanda; so you see sometimes when you are talking about the genocide, when you are screening such documentaries, so sometimes they revive the memories of especially the survivors.

00:59 So, such a challenge has been, we have been coming across such a challenge but of course something which you have been doing for some time, we know how to address such challenges. Of course, we do explain to the people before about the film, and we explain to them, “Look, this one should not be a big problem for you,” so you know.

01:32 And we try to explain to them that, “Look, such films are educative, you need to watch them and at least know the history of the tribunal, the history of the genocide.” So at the end of the day, we find that such challenges can be coped up with. But of course sometimes, you might find also there are things like the budget constraints and this is a common phenomenon on any activity.

02:06 But, but what I can say, it has not been on a very large magnitude because we have tried our best. Of course the ICTR also through the support because the, they are, the, the tribunal’s management is giving a lot of importance to the Outreach Program.

02:30 It’s one of the projects which the management has really given a lot of importance, so funds are mobilized here and here to ensure that such a program is implemented. So basically the challenges, I can describe them in that way.

02:50 LPN: So if you could – I’m going to go back in time actually to where were you in 1994, in the spring of 1994? Do you remember where you were at that time?

03:05 In 1994, I was a student at the university. So I was studying in Ukraine; Ukraine, the former Soviet Republic. I was at Kharkiv State University of Economics in Eastern Ukraine, that’s where I studied. Besides being a journalist, I’m also an economist, so I was doing my economics course at Kharkiv State University of Economics, which I completed in 1996.

03:42 Then I came back to Uganda and from Uganda that’s when I came to Rwanda. So when I came to Rwanda as somebody who had previously liked the media profession, so by then you know the country had just come out of war. So, the first place I managed to get employment was in a media outlet, Radio Rwanda. So I said, let me try also the media profession and see.

- 04:19 So lucky enough, I joined the media system and I coped up with it immediately. I was a journalist; I was a news broadcaster in English. I was also doing a sports program in English. Yeah, in fact I think that I was one of the very first people, if not the first one to start a sports program in English on Radio Rwanda. Yeah, it was the first time. So, I . . .
- 04:58 LPN: Do you re-, oh, I'm sorry but do you remember when you first learned of the work of the ICTR, what you first thought about the ICTR when you heard of it, before you started to work here?**
- 05:10 Of course before I started to work here, even when I was working at Radio Rwanda, I used to come across many articles of the ICTR, press releases which we used to broadcast. As I told you before, we had a permanent journalist from Radio Rwanda station in Arusha, so he was feeding us with information on a regular basis.
- 05:33 And in turn we had to broadcast that information via the radio outlet so that Rwandans could know what was taking place at the tribunals. So I was, I was not well a conversant, but I had an idea of what was happening at the tribunal. Of course as somebody who's intelligent, somebody educated, I knew that it is a tribunal set up to try those who are responsible for the crimes committed in the country in 1994.
- 06:06 So generally I had, I had an idea about the tribunal. So when I came to work here, of course the job I was coming to do here was more or less related even to what I was doing at Radio Rwanda. So I saw myself as – I was not outside completely of what I was doing. So in fact to the experience which I had attained from Radio Rwanda was going also to contribute in making my work even more effective.
- 06:39 Yeah. So in fact, even when I was being recruited, so that one also contributed a lot in the tribunal accepting my candidacy because they needed somebody who had a journalistic experience, so.