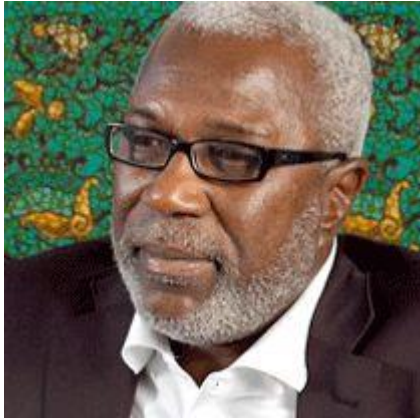




Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal

Official Transcript: Bocar Sy (Part 5 of 9)



Role:	Chief of Press and Public Affairs
Country of Origin:	Senegal
Interview Date:	30 October 2008
Location:	Arusha, Tanzania
Interviewers:	Lisa P. Nathan Donald J Horowitz
Videographer:	Nell Carden Grey
Interpreter:	None

Interview Summary

Bocar Sy discusses his responsibilities at the ICTR Press Office and the many obstacles he had to overcome to create an effective media program. Two key challenges included the fact that the ICTR initially saw no need for a press office and the severe limitations on communication posed by an inadequate technological infrastructure in Arusha. Sy speaks about the various methods used by the Press Office to disseminate information about the ICTR to the public.

The transcript of Part 5 begins on the following page.

Part 5

- 00:00 **Lisa P. Nathan: So I just have, myself, two more questions; the first one is as you look back on your time here, is there something that you are proud of in your work here? Maybe many things . . .**
- 00:11 Ah yes.
- 00:11 **LPN: . . . but can you think of one thing that you are willing . . .**
- 00:16 Proud of one thing so, no, no, one thing, one thing's (____) difficult.
- 00:19 **LPN: Well . . .**
- 00:21 Let's say that during these 12 years now, yes, that I have spent, that I spent here, I think that I can, I can, I can be proud yes, of, of what has been done by my unit, by my department, by I mean myself and my colleagues who (__) working with me is, as you say I was mentioning to you, to convince people that our job, our, our part, that, that we have also part in the mission, was not so easy.
- 00:59 And that the most difficult things in this house is maybe to have the information on time, to get it on time. The job can be done, it is done by the judge in the court, they have, they, they can take decisions, they can take whatever sign the paper, but they never think about forwarding or giving it to the press. For the press to be able to write on time, to disseminate it on time, to do whatever should be done. That is, that was what from the beginning I'm, I'm dealing with that you know.
- 01:34 Every time I have to, to try to convince people that, fine, what, what you think that is maybe a confidential for you, maybe it is not, you know, for the, for the press people. Confidential meaning for you that it, it shouldn't be, go out or if, if it goes out it can create problems, which is true that, that we respect. But sometimes it is just from your perspectives, you know, that this is confidential, this is not so.
- 02:04 And as I told you, and as, as I told them sometimes, they can hide an information from me and, and I (_____) information from outside. I mean from outside, I say, s-, something is wrong in these things. I'm an inside, inside the house, I am, I don't have access to the information and some of my colleagues who are freelance going around in the corridors or whatever can get it, this information and disseminate it before I get the information.
- 02:39 And sometimes what happens is they come to me and (__), "Can you confirm the information?" I say, "How can I confirm information that I don't have? Where did you get that information? (____)." And they say, "Okay, we have you know, our, our networks," which, which is very good. I don't have any problem about that.
- 02:55 But now things has really improved yes, a lot, yes, because I think that they know exactly what the press has done for them. I think that we have done an important job. It is not enough for sure because you know, you see where we are. You, you came from

Washington, you see, the time it cost you to, to join this place what I can say is, is out of, it took hours and hours to get here.

03:32 But it is – we have, we have done what, what, what was, what was in our – yes, possibility. It, it could have been improved if at the beginning, as I tell, if tomorrow they have to set a tribunal and I don't know, that they consult me or they consult whatever journalist. First thing that I will tell them is put in place a communication team.

03:57 Put in place an of-, a, an information teams and around that maybe you can build your system, you can build your, whatever you want but without the information part of the, of the job will not be really done. That's on my view.

04:18 LPN: So I began that question asking you if there's something that you're proud of and my understanding of that is how things have turned around here and how now there is a recognition of the important role that the press plays in order for the world, for the Rwandese to know what's going on here.

04:35 LPN: Is there – the flip side to that question I'm also going to ask – so is there something that you are not so proud of from the press point of view? Something that you wish either you could go back and change or you would recommend for the future from the, the press perspective?

04:51 Yes, yes, whi-, which is – as you say which is the, the, the opposite of what I'm proud of but it is, it is included in that yes, because I'm proud of the change of perspectives that, that I hope that have occurred here you know, since I'm here, since I'm dealing with the colleagues from the, they, they can be Office of the Registrar, Prosecutor, or the chambers, for them now to, to, to know or now to feel that we are also part of the missions.

05:27 The, the, the press is – part, part of the mission is – that also the, the, the – but the whole thing, I'm not proud, I'm not proud, I'm not proud. But let us say that I could, I could, I could have been more – I could, I could, I could, I could have convi- them, convinced them, you know. I don't know, better convince them, you know, for them, for the administration because I depend, I'm, I'm part of the registry; whatever I can do should be supported by the registrar, should be supported by the administration.

06:12 But, but as I, I could, I could have been more diplomat or more – I, I don't to, I don't know the, which word to use but I could have, I could have been – I could have convinced them more for them, you know, to put in place whatever is needed because up to now we don't, we don't, we are, we are, as I say, we are short of, we are short of staff and whatever things like that.

06:43 And, and to try to, to respond to, to, to your question is that, we have a press office downstairs but it took me many, many years to convince them that we need a place to house journalists who come you know, to visit us. They can be journalists coming for one day or three, or two days, or one week or whatever or being here in a permanent basis but we should have what is called a press office.

07:16 Where we can put facilities like telephone lines, you know, electricity, tables for them, put the TV for them to screen what is going on. They don't need to go to the courtroom; they can sit there and watch in the screen what is going on, thing like that. But it took me a lot of, a lot of, a lot of, a lot of – not fight but you know, arguing with people, you know, exchange of whatever.

07:44 And I remember when, that at that time the Chief of Administration at the time, told me one day, "Can you imagine how you want to treat your journalists, you are treating them like your babies. You want to give them whatever they need." I say, "That, that's my job, I have to treat them well, if you want them to report on our work." Well, anyway, yes, I could have been more convi-, convincing yes, (_____) "convaincre," we'll say in French, yes.

08:17 **LPN: Thank you.**