

This is the testimony of Stella, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide

Sometimes I forget where I am. Today we may be talking and, all of a sudden, I think I am in the forests in the Congo. Sometimes I see myself and around me, men are running, chasing me or raping me. Then, I realize I am in a normal setting. I have these hallucinations and nightmares. I have never overcome them. The militias took us to the forest. They were very mean and started raping us one after the other. Afterward, they thought we had died and they left us there.

Once they were gone, a kind Hutu lady nearby who saw what was happening came over to see if we were still alive. She took us to her house and gave us porridge. But the militias saw her and asked her why she was helping the cockroaches. Overcome by fear because they threatened to attack her, she told us to go back to where we came from. When night came, we slept in the bush. Every day, every night, a different man had sex with me forcefully. It was a surprise if a night passed and no man raped me.

My son was born on July 7, 1995. I'll never forget that day. I wished that he would die immediately after birth. I was surprised when he didn't because I didn't have any milk in my breasts to give him. My kid was almost a skeleton. But that man, that rapist was with me, and despite these problems, he kept raping me again and again.

My problem is that boy, my son. I don't think about Rwanda often. I think about my son. He is like a tree without branches. I am alone with him. I don't have any surviving relatives apart from my old mother. He is my life. He is the only life I have. I love him. If I didn't have him, I don't know what I would be. I ask myself, suppose I die now, what would happen to him? I would really be happy to have my life as it originally was before the war. Perhaps then, my son would have a future.



I ask you to tell the world that genocide happened in Rwanda, that we went through torture like no other person has gone through. Even the legacy of genocide is too much to live with. The international community has a debt to pay because they didn't come to our rescue. They should now come to support us in the legacy of genocide.

Today's Reading of the Testimonies marks the 15th Anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, in support of survivors like Stella.