



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

I was living comfortably with my family in Butare, when I was taken in by a soldier to work as a maid. I was 22. It was my only hope of remaining alive. The soldier used me and after a month he insisted that I should marry a man he brought to me. With no alternative, I remained with the man he imposed on me until after the genocide.

He warned me in clear terms that if I refused this husband, I would die. So, without further discussion, I went to live with this man. We lived together for four months and then I fled because he began to be violent towards me. Because I didn't become pregnant, he began beating me, saying that I didn't want to have a Hutu child. He had bought me a cloth. I wore it the whole time because I refused to dress in the clothes of people who had been killed.

I found out recently that I am HIV positive. I know the importance of receiving care; however I have no hope of getting hold of treatment. I am a member of a group of women in a similar situation; we try to encourage each other. We know that when one of us falls ill, we will be there to help each other. But this is only temporary relief, as we all are going to die one by one from the lack of treatment that is keeping so many other people alive and well for many years.

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