

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

When genocide started, I was in South West Rwanda. I had just moved to the area, and hardly knew anyone. The place was peaceful until the 11th April when the killing of Tutsis began.

Groups of *interahamwe* were searching for Tutsis to kill. They collected all those they labelled Tutsis in one place. They then separated the men from the women. Hundreds of *interahamwe* surrounded us, all armed with machetes, guns and clubs. They then proceeded to hack all the men to death.

Day after day, many more people were brought to the site. The head of the *interahamwe* would select people to kill, and women and girls to rape. I cannot remember how many times I was taken, raped, then returned to be united with my son. Nor can I remember how many times I wished I could be killed with my child, instead of being put through the daily torture of gang rapes and violence. I will never forget the pain and fear on the faces of the children. There was no one to save them. They cried and screamed until their last breaths. It was a long painful death. Those who were lucky were shot dead. I must have witnessed thousands of people killed.

I survived the ordeal after being raped every day for 60 days. But I did not escape the killer HIV virus. I tested HIV positive. My son, now in his early teens, doesn't know. I pretend that everything will be alright. I still have a few relatives who can take care of him when I die. I am currently working in a bank and earning enough to pay for my treatment. But there are many women like me who can't afford treatment, and who are waiting for their deaths.

The killers still have their families. They have parents, children and homes to go to. They get their treatment paid for. While their victims live with the legacy of genocide. Survivors have nothing to go back to. We have no parents, children and homes to go to. But without justice, there will never be healing for the survivors.

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