

**This is the testimony of Laetitia, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide**

In 1991, my family and I were harassed and seriously assaulted by neighbours, forcing us to move from Ruhengeri to Gisenyi where we were when the genocide began. I spent two weeks living in a forest, with nothing to eat but mud, until hunger flushed me out and I begged shelter from some neighbours.

There was a man who was married with two children. When his wife went out to farm, he would abuse me. He raped me three times during the week that I was staying there. He told me that if I didn't comply, he would call people to kill me. He injured me. When I told his wife about it, she questioned him. He replied that he didn't want any arguments. He told his wife that he was going to turn her out at the same time as me. I didn't want to create problems between them, so I went to look for shelter elsewhere.

I was only 14 at the time. I moved from house to house, once hiding for three days in a hole for storing compost, and then spent more days in the forest, barely escaping from a series of other dangers, including almost being buried alive. Before finding my way to the Congo, I was raped by a soldier. At the end of the genocide, I returned to Rwanda, pregnant from the rapes.

**Today's Reading of the Testimonies marks the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, in support of survivors like Laetitia.**