

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

My search for safety during the genocide took me across several communes in Butare, where I braved roadblocks and had many encounters with killers. In all I lost five of my children. I was with other Tutsis who put up a spirited resistance on the hill in Ntyazo. Unable to defeat us, the killers brought in military reinforcements, and then came back to finish off the survivors and to rape the women. I was raped alongside my mother.

They put us to one side. First, we were raped by two soldiers. Then they passed us to others who raped us in turn. There were very many of them. After, they continued to hold the younger women though my mother was released. They set up camp and kept me there as their “wife.”

When the soldiers went to hunt Tutsis, it was the turn of their cooks to torment the women. Two of them shared me around the clock. I tried to escape, was caught and punished being gang raped by a dozen men.

I was the prey of all the militiamen. During the night, I gang raped again. I was so exhausted that I passed out. The muscles in my legs and back couldn't hold me up any longer. They wounded me so badly that I couldn't hold my urine. They left me to the mercy of dogs. I don't know how long I stayed stretched out on the ground. When I regained consciousness, I found myself with the *inkotanyi*. They told me that they had found me half-dead and that they had transported me to safety on a stretcher.

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