



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

In June 1994, at 12 years old, my daughter should have been preparing for her final primary school exams in Gitarama. Instead she was ill, distraught and unable to accept the reality that she had been raped repeatedly, together with her aunt and I.

My daughter, my sister-in-law and I were not only raped. We were raped and beaten every day for a month. They kept about thirty women and girls in a house. They beat up the other women so badly that they all died. Since the men were people we knew, I suppose they spared my family so as to embarrass us.

Everyone who wanted a woman would come to the house. They took whoever they wanted into the bush; sometimes they took us all there. The same man would take me one day, my daughter the next day and my sister-in-law the next. Several of the men did this. We could not move because they said we would be killed if we ventured out.

What they did to the women they killed, is just too terrible. They were literally beaten to death with sticks and masus. They stripped them down to their underwear before they killed them. Some were left completely naked and then paraded around the men. We were made to walk seven kilometres naked, then we would be raped. Anyone who would not walk back, would be killed. We made many of these trips and witnessed many deaths. I am now forced to dwell on the suffering of women who I saw killed in front of me, beaten to death with burning wood.

My daughter, my sister-in-law and I are now all sickly. We know we may have contracted HIV virus, but we cannot afford the treatment. So we do not see a reason to take a test because we can't do anything about it. We are just waiting for our death.

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