

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

My father worked in Kigali. He had six wives. My mother died when I was young. I was one of her two children. We had twenty-eight other brothers and sisters from my father's five wives.

When the genocide started, my father was in Kigali. He returned home to us on foot because he had left his car in Kigali. He told us that Tutsi people were being killed without pity.

Five days later, the killings started near us. There was great commotion as the *interahamwe* burnt houses, ate cows and killed people. They first killed my brother with his wife, and they were hung upside down from a tree. The killers then took us to a deep hole and threw us in it, after cutting us up with machetes. No one was left among my family members except me.

I was raped before being thrown in the hole. I was raped so shamefully and painfully that I wanted to die. I was only 25 years old and I thought how my life didn't have value anymore. When I remember this terrible period, I shiver a lot.

After abusing me, they threw me into the deep hole among the dead bodies. Someone was still breathing like me and after the killers' departure we tried to climb out but we couldn't. On the third day, I was able to escape but the other person was not able to and I think he died.

I thank God when I remember this time. I was rescued along with many others that were found alive in the bushes or among the piles of dead bodies.



Later, I had pains in my abdomen. I have always had headaches as well. I went to have an AIDS test and the result showed that I am HIV positive. I accepted the fact, but I had hope in God. I was lonely but when I came to this organisation, I met other people who had similar problems, as well as friends, parents, brothers and sisters who have pity for me. I have finally found someone to tell what I have seen and to share the sadness in my heart.

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