



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

At 19, with my parents we left our home for Butare town. We split up and my brother and I went to the office of the *préfecture* where we remained for more than a month. While there, I was raped on a daily basis by numerous different men.

I remember about six of them. There was a man responsible for our safety, and he too raped me. Many of the girls and women there were also raped; they used to take us behind the houses into the bush. The killers came every day and picked women out. The group of men who came varied from day to day, or indeed they might return several times in one day. They were violent. I was hit by one of them because I didn't want to sleep with him.

A man who worked at the office took me back to his house. But there too I was repeatedly raped.

Lots of other *interahamwe* used to come to his house for meetings, and they also took advantage of me and raped me. So that I wouldn't go back there, he told me that all the other refugees at the office of the *préfecture* had been killed.

After three days I could bear it no longer and I got him to take me back to the *préfecture* office. Twice, I escaped a massacre; on one occasion it was because soldiers hid my friend and I. Because they'd raped us several times, they thought of us as their *protégés*.

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