

## Portrait of El hadj Amadou AMANI

El hadj Amadou AMANI is Coordinator of the Justice and Corrections Administrations Support Section of MONUSCO in South Kivu. Amadou is tall man, with a heavy build, a smiling face, and a calm and confident demeanor. Inside his massive chest beats a sensitive, humble and generous heart. This is evident from his answer when I ask him to tell me some of his best memories (His long and rich judicial career must be filled with thousands of stories to



share, I think to myself.). Instead he tells me of how, on a deserted road in Haiti a few years ago, he helped an old lady to get her donkey back on its feet. *“The donkey, heavily laden with charcoal, had fallen down and lay across the road linking Cap-Haitien and Fort-Liberté,”* he says. *“And for several hours, in the hot sun, the poor old woman had, with a sense resignation, waited for some increasingly unlikely help when Providence brought me to that place,”* he says, adding that being able to help her was one of the proudest moments in his life. This story goes back to the period between 2002 and 2005 when Amadou was posted in Haiti, working in a UNDP Rule of Law project as criminal justice specialist.

One of his boyhood dreams was to become a medical doctor but, realizing he was not that good at mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics, he chose to study Law. He went to Cheikh Anta Dip University of Darkar, Senegal, where he graduated with a Master's degree in Legal Sciences with a specialization in Private Judicial Law, and then he went on to earn an advanced diploma from the *Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature* (ENAM, Training College for the Judiciary) of Paris, France.

With those qualifications under his belt, he returned to his country, Niger, where, after completing his Civic Service, he served as a judge for 14 years, from 1988 to 2002. In parallel, he furthered his education and acquired more legal and technical tools by taking specific specialist courses, including in Administrative Dispute Resolution from the *Institut International d'Administration Publique* (IIAP) of Paris, France, and in Business Law from the *Institut des Affaires Publiques* (IAP) of Charleroi, Belgium. No wonder, therefore, that he rose progressively through the ranks within the judicial hierarchy, serving successively as investigating judge, justice of the peace, president of court, public prosecutor, president of the indictments division (civil and criminal divisions), and first president of the court of appeal. He was afterwards appointed National Director of Judicial Affairs and the Seal at the Ministry of Justice in Niamey. Amadou also served in other related positions including that of President of the Electoral Commission (several times), President of the National Anti-Drugs Commission, and part-time lecturer at the University, at the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), and in various training institutes. His services to his country earned him the decoration of *Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Niger* (Knight of the National Order of Niger).

Amadou as a judge conducted numerous trials and handled a great number of civil and criminal cases. I have asked him to tell us what he learned from his experience working in his judicial capacity. Here is his testimony reflecting the values that shaped his character and personality: « *I learned to know and love more and more this profession that requires enthusiasm, modesty, patience and pride on the part of those who embrace it. I learned that to judge, we must want to listen, try to understand and want to decide. I learned that we must never ignore national law and international standards, the existing objective legal rule. In addition, I learned that we must always have regard for the person who suffers, whether in relation to his/her freedom, reputation, family or emotional life. I learned that when he/she appears before a free and independent judge, a man or woman should not feel humiliated before justice is done. I learned that a judge should only be concerned with the trust and respect that he deserves and is due, and that only from this trust and respect does a judge derive his/her legitimacy.* »

Armed with this experience, Amadou joined MONUSCO in 2005, as Legal Affairs Advisor and Regional Coordinator of the Justice and Corrections Administration Section, first in Kinshasa and currently in Bukavu.

On several occasions, he has acted as Head of Office in the absence of the incumbent, which afforded him the opportunity to attend high-level forums that discuss both the strategy for the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions establishing the Mission's mandate, and the preparation of the action plan.

It is then this wealth of experience and knowledge that he has been able to share with Congolese judges in his capacity as Judicial Affairs Advisor in Kinshasa and Bukavu. In fact, his tasks consist in supporting the DRC Government's efforts to establish a democratic, independent and professional judicial system, and to combat impunity for serious crimes being committed in the country, especially sexual violence, including by ensuring victims have access to civil and military justice.



In addition, Amadou AMANI plays an important role in promoting action and collaboration between his Section and other Sections of the Mission, and with UN agencies and national authorities, and this has contributed significantly to gaining their trust.

Within the framework of efforts to professionalize judicial institutions, Amadou AMANI's technical support to judicial authorities in Kinshasa and Bukavu has been essential in analyzing the judicial system, identifying dysfunctions of the criminal justice system and causes of blockages in the proceedings, and developing and proposing solutions and measures to allow cases to move forward and reduce the number of irregular detentions. His technical advice provided in the context of the development of key draft laws and the Congolese Constitution has been much appreciated, along with his support for the establishment of a mechanism for resolving electoral disputes in the country. In addition, Amadou AMANI has helped in training Judicial Police officers and members of civil society organizations, including women's associations. He has to his credit several training seminars organized to strengthen the

professional capacities of magistrates and registrars working in different courts. He has also developed and delivered training modules to general and senior officers, non-commissioned officers and rank and file soldiers of the Congolese army with the aim of raising awareness among them about the Code and rules of military discipline and prevention of human rights violations.

His contribution toward reinforcing the judicial system, restoring State authority and establishing the rule of law in the DRC has him earned positive testimonies and two Certificates of Merit from the government.

Colonel Mutanzini M., Military Avocate General of the FARDC, testifies that « *This UN officer is a hardworking, conscientious and always available man. I have always been impressed by his great sense of justice. Thanks to him, the military justice system has ceased to be discredited and has recovered a good reputation.* »

« *Amadou AMANI is known for his professional and moral qualities, his integrity and humility, his great sense of leadership, and team spirit,* » says Biliaminou Alao, Head of MONUSCO's Public Information in Bukavu. « *He has earned the confidence and high regard of his coworkers and supervisors, and that of his national and international partners. He stands as a role model of excellence in various areas of life. He is perceived as a very warm, sensitive, communicative, and sympathetic person.* »

Other testimonies underscore « *his personal and professional qualities* », thanks to which « *he has maintained good relationships with everybody, working and interacting with people of various origin and from all sectors of society : ordinary rural people, farmers, local authorities and leaders, national and international partner NGOs, private sector partners, public administration officials, government members, and members of the diplomatic corps* ».

His supervisor Charles Frisby, for his part, notes: « *Amadou Amani possesses strong managerial qualities. He knows how to delegate with a minimum of supervision. His good judgment allows him to take timely decisions based on sound situation analysis.* »

Married and father of six girls, El hadj Amadou AMANI splits his free time between spending time with his family, reading, and playing sports.