

1933

RISE OF ADOLF HITLER

With the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor on 30 Jan 1933, the Nazi Party took control of Germany. In October, German delegates walked out of disarmament talks in Geneva and Nazi Germany withdrew from the League of Nations. In October, at an international legal conference in Madrid, Raphael Lemkin (a Polish-Jewish legal scholar) proposed legal measures to protect groups. His proposal did not receive support.



1944

THE CRIME IS NAMED Raphael Lemkin had fled Nazi-occupied Poland and arrived in the US in 1941. He introduced the term 'genocide' in 1944; before this, no term existed to describe a coordinated assault on civilian populations. Lemkin claimed that his introduction of the word



'genocide' was in part a response to Churchill's statement "We are in the presence of a crime without a name"



1945-1946

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL, NUREMBERG

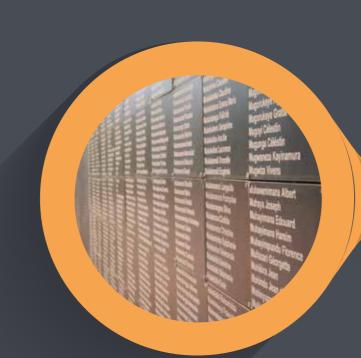
Between 20 November 1945 and 01 October 1946, the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg tried 22 major Nazi German leaders on charges of crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity and conspiracy to commit each of these crimes. It was the first time that international tribunals were used as a post-war mechanism for bringing national leaders to justice. The word "genocide" was included in the indictment, but as a descriptive, not legal, term.



1947-1948

CREATING AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON GENOCIDE Raphael Lemkin was a critical force for bringing 'genocide' before the newly-formed United Nations, where delegates from around the world debated the terms of an international law on genocide. On 09 December 1948, the final text was adopted unanimously. The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide entered into force on 12 January 1951, after more than 20 countries from around the world ratified it. Since then, many more countries

have followed suit: as of November 2015, 147 states have ratified or acceded to the treaty.



1950-1990s

UNFULFILLED PROMISE

Massive atrocities against civilian populations were committed in the years following the Holocaust and throughout the Cold War. The very countries that signed their names to the Genocide Convention, however, scarcely considered whether these atrocities constituted genocide.



1993

ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL

TRIBUNAL FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA (ICTY) In response to the atrocities occurring in Bosnia, the United Nations Security Council issued resolution 827, establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. This was the first international criminal tribunal since Nuremberg. Its jurisdiction is limited to crimes committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.



1994

A TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA

In October, following killings on a massive scale in Rwanda, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the ICTY to include a separate but linked tribunal for Rwanda: the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), located in Arusha, Tanzania.



1998

FIRST CONVICTION FOR GENOCIDE AND PERMANENT **COURT ESTABLISHED**

On 02 September 1998, the ICTR issued the world's first conviction for genocide in an international tribunal when Jean-Paul Akayesu was judged guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity for acts he engaged in and oversaw as mayor of the Rwandan town of Taba.

Through an international treaty ratified on 17 July 1998, the International Criminal Court was permanently established to prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The treaty reconfirmed the definition of genocide found in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It also expanded the definition of crimes against humanity and prohibits these crimes during times of war or peace.



2004

GENOCIDE IN DARFUR

For the first time in US government history, an ongoing crisis was referred to as a "genocide." On 09 September 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that genocide had been committed in Darfur. Though the United Nations and other governments agreed on the scale of atrocities being committed against civilians, they did not declare these atrocities genocide.

1915

between 1915 and 1923.

ARMENIA Beginning in 1915, ethnic Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were rounded up, deported and executed on orders of the government. The combination of massacres, forced deportation marches and deaths due to disease in concentration camps is estimated to have killed more than 1 million ethnic Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks

1939

WORLD WAR II/ HOLOCAUST

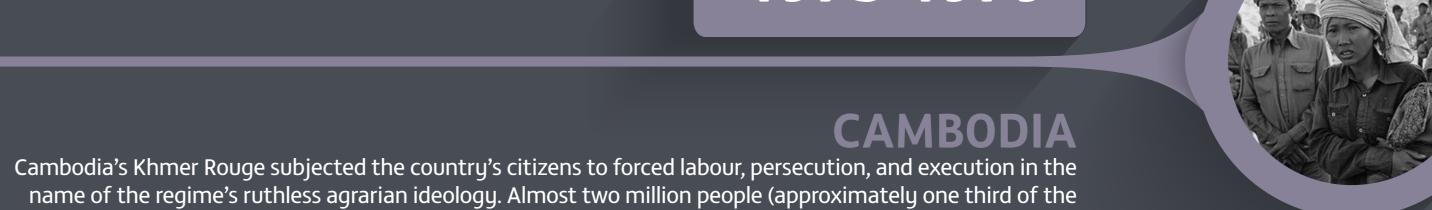
World War II began on September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland triggering an Anglo-French declaration of war on Germany. Nazi leadership used a variety of population policies aimed at restructuring the ethnic composition of Europe by force, using mass murder as a tool: they implemented a highly organized strategy of persecution, murder and genocide aimed at ethnically 'purifying' Germany, a plan Hitler called the 'Final Solution'. Included among these policies were the attempt to murder all European Jews, which we now refer to as the Holocaust, and the attempt to murder most of the Gypsy (Roma) population of Europe. Six million Jews and five million Slavs, Roma, disabled, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and political and religious dissidents were killed during the Holocaust.



1950s

SUDAN In one of the worst campaigns of mass slaughter since World War II, more than 2.5 million civilians have been killed in Sudan over decades of brutal conflict between north and south, in Darfur in the west, and in other regions. Since the 1950s, the Arab-dominated government of Sudan, centred in the capital Khartoum, has tried to impose its control on the country's African minorities living along the nation's periphery. The result has been a deadly mix of ethnic, religious, and politically motivated conflicts. Though the north-south civil war is now over (South Sudan gained its independence in July 2011), violence has continued. Citizens in Darfur and the border areas between the two countries remain at risk, and violence in South Sudan threatens to destabilize the newly independent country.





1991-1995

country's population) died in the "killing fields."



WARS OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Conflicts in the former Yugoslav republics of Croatia (1991-95) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995) were marked by massive war crimes and crimes against humanity. The conflict in Bosnia brought some of the harshest fighting and worst massacres to Europe since World War II. In one small town, Srebrenica, as many as 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were murdered by Serbian forces. In total, 100,000 people died during the Bosnian conflict; some 80% of the civilians killed were Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims).

1994

RWANDA

Civil war broke out in Rwanda in 1990, exacerbating tensions between the Tutsi minority and Hutu majority. In 1994, returning from a round of talks, Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana was killed when his plane was shot down outside of the country's capital, Kigali. Habyarimana's death provided the spark for an organized campaign of violence against Tutsi and moderate Hutu civilians across the country. The Hutu extremist–led government planned to wipe out the country's entire Tutsi minority and any others who opposed their policies. From April until mid-July, at least 500,000 civilians, mostly of the Tutsi minority, were killed in Rwanda with devastating brutality and speed while the international community looked on.

1996

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) - known as Zaire until 1997 - has suffered two wars since 1996. The first war in 1996 began as a direct result of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The second began in 1998 and involved the armed forces of at least seven countries and multiple militias. Over the last two decades, more than five million civilians have died in a succession of complex conflicts. Most have died from preventable diseases as a result of the collapse of infrastructure, lack of food and health care, and displacement.

2003



DARFUR With the international community focused on resolving the conflicts between the north and the south of Sudan, a growing conflict in Darfur was virtually ignored. In 2003, the situation exploded as the government of Sudan responded to a rebellion in the Darfur region, beginning a genocidal campaign against civilians that resulted in the deaths of over 300,000 and the displacement of over three million Darfuris. In 2010, the Sudanese government and the Darfuri rebels signed a ceasefire agreement and began long-term peace talks known as the Doha peace forum. However, since 2011, there has been no additional progress on these agreements and violence in the region

2011



SYRIA Since its outbreak in March 2011, the conflict in Syria has cost the lives of more than 400,000 people, displaced millions more, and involved numerous atrocities and crimes against humanity. The conflict is not simply a civil war between opposing armed forces. What began as a democratic uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's regime has transformed into a violent struggle between local, national, regional, and international forces, in which the Syrian government, extremist groups, and outside actors perpetrate atrocities against civilians as a systematic

continues to escalate with over 400,000 newly displaced in 2014.

SOUTH SUDAN

In July 2011, South Sudan became the world's newest country after its citizens voted for independence from Sudan. Southerners, mostly Christian and animist, fought against rule by the north and the imposition of Arabic language and culture. This came after five decades and two civil wars which claimed 2 million lives. The country faces great challenges as it seeks to build its democratic institutions, overcome a history of internal conflict based on ethnicity, and resolve ongoing tensions with Sudan over the region's oil resources.

2012

strategy of war.



Violent attacks, fanned by a campaign of virulent anti-Muslim hate speech that continues today, destroyed numerous Rohingya communities and displaced well more than 100,000. Today, the Rohingya in Burma are forcibly isolated, cut off from nearly all goods and services, and unable to provide for themselves. They have no legal status and face severe discrimination, abuse, and escalating violence. According to the United Nations, crimes against humanity have been, and continue to be, perpetrated against the Rohingya. Their treatment, combined with statements by government,

political, and religious leaders indicate that the Rohingya are being subjected to ethnic cleansing.

2013



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Political violence initiated by rebel groups opposing the government of the Central African Republic has taken on a religious dimension, and groups and individuals are now being targeted because of their Christian or Muslim identity.

2014



IRAQ In the summer of 2014, the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) conducted a violent campaign against civilians in northern Iraq, targeting in particular ethnic and religious minorities. The violence forcibly displaced more than

800,000 people and resulted in the deaths of hundreds, if not thousands, of civilians. There were also indications

that IS was perpetrating genocide against the Yezidi people; this was confirmed and declared by the UN in 2016.



2016

GENOCIDE IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

In June, UN investigators declared that Islamic State forces had committed genocide and other war crimes in a continuing effort to exterminate the Yazidi religious minority in Iraq and Syria and urged stronger international action to halt the killing and to prosecute the terrorist group. They based their findings on actions taken by the Islamic State since August 2014 against 400,000 members of the Yazidi community, followers of a centuries-old religion drawing on many faiths. It was deemed that IS sought to erase the Yazidis through killing, sexual slavery, torture, and all manner of inhuman and degrading treatment. For all the talk of justice for mass atrocities in Syria and attempts to force the international community to bring Syrian war criminals to account, the world has very little to show. However, several recent developments at the United Nations General Assembly could lay the foundation for the day when justice in Syria becomes possible. In December the UN General Assembly achieved something historic and unprecedented when it voted overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution creating "the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011." The International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) is mandated to collect and analyse evidence of mass atrocities and human rights violations in Syria with the aim of facilitating future international criminal proceedings.



FUTURE

LOOKING FORWARD

While the ICTY and ICTR, other ad hoc tribunals, and the International Criminal Court have helped establish legal precedents and can investigate crimes within their jurisdictions, punishment of genocide remains a difficult task. Even more difficult is the continuing challenge to prevent genocide.



