

Raphael Lemkin

DEFINING THE CRIME

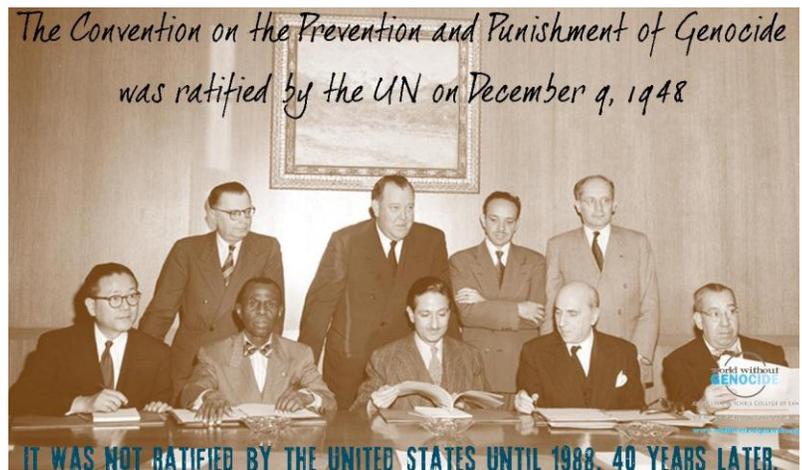
Winston Churchill said that the Nazi massacre was “a crime without a name.” There was no name to describe the extermination of people based only on who they are. Raphael Lemkin coined the term ‘genocide’ in 1943 following the horrors of the Holocaust. He wrote the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, which urges nations to prevent genocide and to punish perpetrators.

Genocides have happened on virtually every continent. Despite the laws to prevent it, the crime continues today.

CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was signed in December 1948 and has been in force since January 1951. Article II of the Convention defines genocide as **ANY** of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group.
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of one group to another group.



The United States ratified the Convention in 1988, forty years later. The late Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin gave 3,211 speeches in the Senate, a speech a day for 19 years —until Congress finally passed the measure.

World Without Genocide raises awareness about current situations of mass violence and human rights offenses. By learning about these conflicts and acting early to resolve them, it is possible to stop them from becoming full-out genocides. We believe in creating the political will to prevent and eliminate genocide.