

DOCUMENT 1

Raphael Lemkin created the term *Genocide*. He sent a letter to the *New York Times* editor explaining the importance of the concept of genocide.

Genocide before the United Nations

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

The representatives of China, India and Panama to the United Nations Assembly have brought forth a resolution which calls upon the United Nations to study the problem of genocide and to prepare a report on the possibilities of declaring genocide an international crime and assuring international cooperation for its prevention and punishment and also recommending, among others, that genocide should be dealt with by national legislation in the same way as other international crimes. . . .

International Concept

The concept of genocide thus is based on existing and deeply felt moral concepts. Moreover, it uses as its element well defined and already existing legal notions and institutions. Genocide is any acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

What we have to do is protect the great value of our civilization through such accepted institutions, adjusted to a formula of international law which is ever progressing. Because of lack of adequate provisions and previous formulation of international law, the Nuremburg Tribunal had to dismiss the Nazi crimes committed in the period between the advent of Nazism to power and the beginning of the war, as "revolting and horrible as many of these crimes were" to use the Nuremburg judgement.

It is now the task of the United Nations to see to it that the generous action of the three member states should be transferred into international law in order to prevent further onslaughts (attacks) on civilizations which are able to frustrate the purposes of the charter of the United Nations . . .

The Result

In 1948, the United Nations passed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which declares that "genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law." Article 2 of the Genocide Convention further defined genocide as: "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

Sources: Raphael Lemkin, *New York Times*, Nov 8, 1946 (adapted)
United Nations Genocide Convention

1A. Does the Irish Famine qualify as genocide? If so, why and if not, why not.

1B. According to Raphael Lemkin, how can the world community address the problem of genocide?
