

Iowa High School Model United Nations

Political and Security

State Sponsored Terrorism/ Genocide

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Background

The word Genocide wasn't coined until 1944 (USHMM.) In 1948 genocide was defined at The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such; Killing members of the group; Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." This was adopted in 1948 by the United Nations. The convention also made genocide illegal and today all governments are expected to obey the international law.

While the Holocaust was a proximate reason for the creation of the term, genocide is nothing new. Most cases of genocide are based on a controlling government, or religious conflicts. In fact since the creation of the United Nations, over 50 countries have experienced genocide. (Genocide Watch) Two of the best known genocide cases since the holocaust have been the situations in Rwanda and Darfur. In 1994, in Rwanda, over three-quarters of a million people were slaughtered in less than 100 days (USHMM). The country is still being affected by the genocide, and still today many people are still being convicted of genocide. A lasting effect of the situation is the strain the exiles play in the Democratic People's Republic of Congo. Since 1997, over 2.5million people have died in the civil war resulting from militia groups trying to seize power. (Genocide Watch) The second situation mentioned, Darfur is the largest current situation. It is estimated that during certain months 100,000 may die, and already 2 million people have lost their lives (USHMM). Many other nations are currently on a watch list of nations that may soon experience genocide.

What Has Been Done/Past U.N. Actions

As previously mentioned, the whole movement against state sponsored terrorism, genocide, was started at the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide in 1948. The convention set a basis for the series of trials of people convicted of genocide. The trials began in 1988, and trials still continue for those involved in the Rwandan genocide. The preferred solution to this problem is of course the prevention of genocide, so the UN has committees and agencies that help monitor countries at risk of genocide. Monthly meetings are also held at the UN headquarters in New York. (Genocide Watch)

Also, when a victimized country agrees, which seldom happens as most genocide is led by the government, the UN can help provide troops for the nation to fight the genocide.

Sometimes, member states of the UN will offer countries money to help fight their battle against genocide.

Possible Solutions

The United Nations believes that genocide should be prevented, but there are many ways this could be done. In 2004, on the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, the UN secretary general outlined five ways he believed genocide could be prevented. These include protection of civilians in armed conflict, preventing impunity, providing clear warning preceding possible genocide, moving quickly when genocide develops, and preventing armed conflict altogether. (United Nations) All of these ideas are possible solutions to the problem. While another solution is for the UN to send troops, it is most unfortunate that many countries, such as Sudan, will not accept the aid.

Questions to Consider

How could the committee best address a solution to this problem?

What other preventative measures could be taken?

Should the UN play a bigger role in preventing genocide?

How can the UN do this within the UN's limitations?

What sort of aid should be given to governments who will not accept UN troops?

How can the effects of genocide on neighboring countries be minimized to further prevent genocide?

Consulted/Recommended Sources

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,
<http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>

Prevent Genocide International , <http://www.preventgenocide.org/law/convention/>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <http://www.ushmm.org/>

Genocide Watch, <http://www.genocidewatch.org/>

Africa Renewal press release, United Nations,
http://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/Press%20release_April6_DPI_Rwanda_Event_Final.pdf