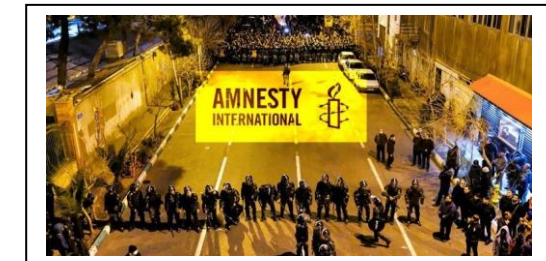
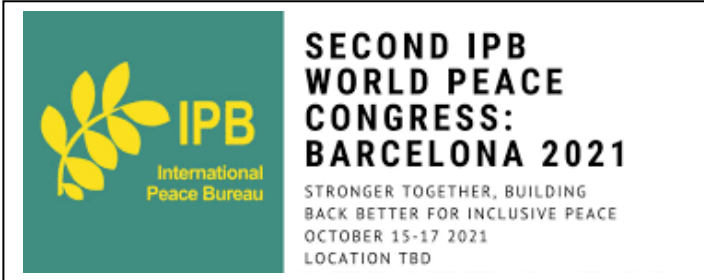


Aim #21: How do various organizations respond to Human Rights violations and atrocities?



Human Rights Organizations	
Organization	Mission Statement
Amnesty International	"Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. In pursuit of this vision, Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of these rights."
Human Rights Watch	"Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. We scrupulously investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power to respect rights and secure justice. Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that works as part of a vibrant movement to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all."
The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	"The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. UNHCR strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, or to return home voluntarily. By assisting refugees to return to their own country or to settle in another country, UNHCR also seeks lasting solutions to their plight."
Norwegian Refugee Council	"We stand up for people forced to flee. NRC is a determined advocate for displaced people. When we witness injustices, we alert the world. We promote and defend displaced people's rights and dignity in local communities, with national governments and in the international arena. NRC's Internal Displacement Monitoring Center in Geneva is a global leader in monitoring, reporting on, and advocating for people displaced within their own country."
International Crisis Group	"The International Crisis Group is an independent organization working to prevent wars and shape policies that will build a more peaceful world. Crisis Group sounds the alarm to prevent deadly conflict. We build support for the good governance and inclusive politics that enable societies to flourish. We engage directly with a range of conflict actors to seek and share information, and to encourage intelligent action for peace."

Mini Lecture

- Multinational treaties bound countries to adhere to human rights principles and defend them when necessary. When these treaties were violated, nations convened special courts to judge the perpetrators.
- In response to the violent 20th century, several governments, organizations, and individuals, took steps to support the victims of injustice. They identified and investigated human rights abuses and tried to hold the perpetrators accountable.
- In the more than 70 years that have passed since the end of WWII, the nations of the world have made a number of international agreements and conventions, some supported by judicial bodies, that focus on human rights. The following are just a few examples.
- The **European Convention on Human Rights** went into effect in 1952- its articles similar to those of the UN Declaration. The Convention also had an enforcement mechanism, the **European Court of Human Rights**, established in 1959. When an individual believed his/her rights had been violated and had not been fairly dealt with in the person's national courts, he/she might petition to have the case heard before the ECHR. States could also bring cases against other states (for ex. Ireland vs. Britain in 1976).
- The **American Convention on Human Rights** was established in 1969 with the same goals as the UN Declaration in the Western Hemisphere. The **Inter-American Court of Human Rights** was the enforcement arm. The Convention was weak because not all the countries joined (the U.S. Senate never ratified the convention treaty).
- The **International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY)** established by the UN in 1993 was created to indict those responsible for war crimes in Bosnia.
- The **International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)** was established by the UN in 1994 to prosecute those responsible for the genocide in Rwanda.
- It was not only multinational agreements that promoted people's health, human rights, well-being, and dignity. A network of organizations was created to protect people from the perils of the modern world and the threats posed by oppressive governments. The following are just a few examples.
- **Amnesty International (AI)** was founded in 1961 in London as a **nongovernmental organization (NGO)** and has evolved into a worldwide entity, with offices in 50 cities & 3 million members. Its mission is to fight human rights abuses worldwide. "bring torturers to justice, change oppressive laws, & free people jailed for voicing their opinions."
- **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)/Doctors Without Borders** was founded in 1971 provides emergency medical care to millions of people caught in crises in more than 60 countries. With more than 30,000 volunteers & employees, MSF aids in armed conflict, epidemics, or natural disasters. They also aid people who face discrimination or neglect from their local health systems.
- Another organization that provides emergency medical care the **Red Cross**. Both MSF and Red Cross remain neutral in conflict zones, but MSF publicizes or calls out human rights abuses that lead to medical crises, the Red Cross does not.
- The **International Peace Bureau (IPB)** was founded in 1891 to promote peace by emphasizing disarmament, the development of international law, peaceful settlement of conflicts, an establishment of an international court, and reallocating military expenditures. The IPB established 300-member organizations in 70 countries.
- Other Human Rights Organizations include **Human Rights Watch**, the **UNHCR**, **Norwegian Refugee Council**, and **International Crisis Group**. See chart ← for each organization's mission.

Review Questions:

1. What are some of the reasons that human rights organizations developed? What are some issues they aim to tackle?
2. Why did individual organizations develop? What are some issues they aim to tackle?

Enduring Issue: Human Rights; Cooperation

What is the International Criminal Court? What purpose does it serve?

Directions: Read the excerpt below and respond to the questions.



The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** investigates and tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: (1) genocide (2) war crimes and (3) crimes against humanity.

The Court tries to hold those who have committed crimes accountable and to help prevent these crimes from happening again. The Court was initially created by the United Nations under a treaty called the **Rome Statute**, but it is independent of the UN. What is significant about the ICC is that it is the world's first permanent international criminal court. Unlike the international tribunals such as the Nuremberg Trials and the Tokyo Trials, the International Criminal Court is a permanent body.

While the ICC has certain powers, the ICC also has its limitations. The ICC can only deal with crimes committed after 1 July 2002 when the Rome Statute came into force. Additionally, the ICC has no police force to track down and arrest suspects. Instead they are dependent on national police services to make arrests and transfer suspects to The Hague, the city in the Netherlands where the ICC holds its trials. Additionally, the ICC only has jurisdiction for crimes committed in the territory of a state which has ratified the treaty. Currently, not all nations have ratified the treaty. Of the 139 nations that had signed the Rome Statute, 31 have not ratified. This means crimes committed in countries like Ukraine, Algeria, and Jamaica cannot be taken to the ICC. Furthermore, countries such as the United States, Israel, and Russia have declared that they no longer intend to ratify the treaty. Consequently, crimes committed in the United States, Israel, and Russia cannot be heard in the ICC.

The court's first verdict, in March 2012, was against Thomas Lubanga. He was the leader of a militia in the Democratic Republic of Congo and was convicted for enlisting child soldiers. He was sentenced in July 2012 to 14 years.

1. What is the ICC?
2. What powers does the ICC have?
3. What are the ICC's limitations?
4. Why can't the ICC prosecute crimes before July 2002?
5. What was the court's first verdict?