Defining the Crime

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which included a provision for the prevention and punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, now known as the Genocide Convention, was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1948, and entered into force on January 12, 1951. It is a legal instrument that sets out a definition of genocide and outlines the responsibilities of states to prevent and punish this crime.

Promises vs Prevention

The Genocide Convention requires states to prevent and punish the crime of genocide. Despite this, more than 200,000 people were killed in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. In that case, the international community failed to prevent the genocide, and the perpetrators faced no consequence for their actions.

A Responsibility to Protect

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a norm that originated from the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. It states that states have a responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. If a state is unwilling or unable to protect its population, the international community has a responsibility to intervene.

United Nations 2005 World Summit

At the United Nations World Summit in September 2005, 189 leaders from all regions of the world approved the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle. They committed to work together to prevent violations of the Responsibility to Protect in the future.

Making a Difference

The Responsibility to Protect is not just a principle but also a practical approach to prevent human rights violations. It requires states and the international community to take action to prevent and respond to violations of human rights.

Genocide whose responsibility?