

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

---

Volume 7 | Issue 5

---

2024

© 2024 *International Journal of Law Management & Humanities*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://www.ijlmh.com/>

Under the aegis of VidhiAagaz – Inking Your Brain (<https://www.vidhiaagaz.com/>)

---

This article is brought to you for “free” and “open access” by the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities at VidhiAagaz. It has been accepted for inclusion in the International Journal of Law Management & Humanities after due review.

In case of **any suggestions or complaints**, kindly contact [Gyan@vidhiaagaz.com](mailto:Gyan@vidhiaagaz.com).

---

**To submit your Manuscript** for Publication in the **International Journal of Law Management & Humanities**, kindly email your Manuscript to [submission@ijlmh.com](mailto:submission@ijlmh.com).

---

# Brutality Unleashed: The Ruthless Reign of Idi Amin

---

SHIVANG MEHADUDIA<sup>1</sup> AND TAVISHI RASTOGI<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*Idi Amin, a military officer, and the president of Uganda from 1971 to 1979, was born in Koboko, Uganda, on August 24, 1925, and passed away in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on August 16, 2003. He seized power through a military coup in 1971 that overthrew President Milton Obote, and his regime quickly descended into a terrifying period of tyranny and terror, marking the beginning of one of Africa's darkest chapters. His eight-year rule was characterized by extreme brutality, human rights abuses, and economic mismanagement, leaving an indelible mark on Uganda's history. Idi Amin's legacy is the one of infamy and tragedy. He is remembered as one of Africa's most brutal dictators, responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Ugandans and the displacement of many more. His regime's atrocities continue to haunt Uganda, and his name remains synonymous with tyranny and oppression. Initially, he was seen as a charismatic and popular figure who had made promises to bring back the lost stability back to Uganda which propelled him through the ranks, and he quickly rose to become one of Uganda's most senior military officers by the early 1970s. In January 1971, he orchestrated a coup against President Milton Obote while Obote was attending a Commonwealth summit in Singapore. Amin accused Obote of tyranny and corruption, and within days, he declared himself president, effectively seizing power and establishing a military government. This research paper will allow us to explore the dark side of Idi Amin's reign through the lens of both domestic Ugandan law and international legal principles.*

**Keywords:** *Idi Amin, Human Rights Violations, Genocide, International Response, Legacy, impact, Uganda, Human Right Abuses, Africa, Regime, Tyranny, International law.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Idi Amin, a military officer, and the president of Uganda from 1971 to 1979, was born in Koboko, Uganda, on August 24, 1925, and passed away in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on August 16, 2003. He seized power through a military coup in 1971 that overthrew President Milton Obote, and his regime quickly descended into a terrifying period of tyranny and terror, marking the beginning of one of Africa's darkest chapters. His eight-year rule was characterized by extreme

---

<sup>1</sup> Author is a student at Christ University, Bangalore, India.

<sup>2</sup> Author is a student at Christ University, Bangalore, India.

brutality, human rights abuses, and economic mismanagement, leaving an indelible mark on Uganda's history.

Idi Amin came to power through a military coup in January 1971. Amin, initially seen as a charismatic and popular figure, promised to bring stability to Uganda. However, his rule quickly descended into a period of authoritarianism and widespread human rights abuses. His brutality manifested in widespread torture, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances of perceived political opponents, intellectuals, and anyone deemed a threat to his rule. The regime employed a network of security forces and military personnel to suppress dissent, leading to a pervasive climate of fear and insecurity. One of the primary aspects of Amin's reign was ethnic persecution. His regime targeted specific ethnic and religious groups, leading to mass killings. He exploited existing tensions between different ethnic groups in Uganda. Amin, a member of the Kakwa ethnic group, targeted communities such as the Acholi and Langi which led to massacres and forced displacements.

The expulsion of Uganda's Asian community further signified Amin's brutality. In 1972, Idi Amin issued a decree that resulted in the forced expulsion of around 60,000 Asians from Uganda. This decision had profound and lasting consequences, both for the individuals and families directly affected and for the broader Ugandan economy. The expelled Asians were primarily of Indian and Pakistani descent and had been an integral part of Uganda's economic landscape for generations. Many of them were successful business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals who had played a significant role in various sectors, including commerce, industry, and the professions. They were involved in businesses ranging from manufacturing and trade to services, contributing substantially to the country's economic development. Amin's eccentric nature made him responsible for the death of 300,000 civilians during his regime and his government was also accused of perpetrating genocide against specific ethnic and political groups in Uganda, most notably the Acholi and Langi tribes.

(The Genocide Convention defines genocide as acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group)

Amin's brutality extended beyond Uganda's borders, gaining international notoriety during the Entebbe Hostage Crisis in 1976. A Palestinian and German terrorist group hijacked an Air France plane and, with Amin's approval, landed it at Entebbe Airport. The subsequent rescue mission by Israeli forces highlighted Amin's unpredictability and his willingness to involve Uganda in international crises for personal gain. Amin's rule saw widespread human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings, violating the principles

outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**(A) The last days of Amin's Brutal regime:**

Amin's downfall began well before the final days, marked by a disastrous invasion of Tanzania in 1978. Tanzanian forces, supported by Ugandan exiles, retaliated swiftly, gradually reclaiming Ugandan territory. The military had been receiving rumours of rebellion, and even his closest allies were pulling away from the increasingly unstable leader.

As Tanzanian-led forces moved closer to Kampala, Idi Amin's understanding of reality started to slip away. He began believing in strange ideas, asking for imaginary reinforcements, and blaming supernatural forces for his problems. His speeches that were once filled with big talk and threats, turned into confusing rants, showing that he was falling apart. As the nation's capital prepared for what was sure to happen, robberies and acts of violence broke out, reflecting the panic in the State House and the chaos in the streets. Soldiers, who weren't getting paid and were feeling disheartened, left their positions, making the city feel like it was on the edge of total disorder. Despite all this confusion, Amin seemed strangely distant, planning his escape instead of leading a final stand.

On April 4th, 1979, Tanzanian troops reached the outskirts of Kampala. Instead of a violent encounter, it was a slow and careful approach, gradually overcoming the city's defences. As the noise of enemy tanks drew near, Amin finally admitted the impending defeat. He quickly gathered his family and supporters, rushing to load them onto trucks and helicopters. On the night of April 10th, a surreal scene unfolded, reminiscent of a dystopian movie. In the darkness, a group of helicopters took off from the presidential palace, carrying Amin and his group into an uncertain future. Meanwhile, on the ground, the city echoed with gunfire and cheers as Tanzanian forces entered Kampala.

Amin's escape by air was not a well-planned withdrawal but a frantic attempt to save himself. He initially sought refuge in Libya, joining forces with another dictator, Muammar Gaddafi. However, the initially warm reception soured, leading Amin to move from one place to another, going from Iraq to eventually settling in Saudi Arabia, where he spent the last 24 years of his life in luxurious exile. The period following Amin's escape marked a critical moment for Uganda. Mass graves discovered across the country exposed the horrifying legacy of his rule. The unearthed graves contained thousands of victims who had suffered torture and murder, serving as a grim reminder of the brutality that had plagued the nation.

In his luxurious confinement, Amin's false beliefs endured. Despite his diminishing group of followers, he continued to imagine himself in power, recounting made-up memories and making

outrageous claims. In a feeble attempt to regain some authority, he even challenged his successor to a boxing match. In 2003, Idi Amin's life came to an end in Saudi Arabia. He passed away as a lonely and pitiful figure, far removed from the throne he once held, and only the faint echo of his boastful statements remained. However, his death did not mark the end of the wounds inflicted by his regime on Uganda. The scars from his cruel rule endured, serving as a poignant reminder of how fragile peace is and the devastating consequences that come with unrestrained tyranny.

The story of Idi Amin's fall is not just a chronicle of one dictator's demise, but a cautionary tale for all who yearn for absolute power. It strongly emphasizes that even the most powerful tyrants will eventually collapse, leaving behind destruction and a nation in need of recovery. Idi Amin's final days were not a triumphant departure but a frantic attempt to survive—a fitting conclusion to a reign of terror that has left an enduring mark on Ugandan history.

## **II. DOMESTIC LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

Before the regime of Idi Amin, Uganda's legal and political landscape bore the imprint of its colonial history. Having been under British rule since 1894, Uganda inherited a legal system rooted in English common law. This system was marked by a hierarchical structure of courts, mirroring that of the British legal system. Local courts, magistrates' courts, and a Supreme Court constituted the judicial framework, administering justice according to established English legal principles.<sup>3</sup> This colonial legacy significantly influenced Uganda's legal education and the administration of justice, with lawyers trained in English law and legal procedures. Politically, Uganda underwent significant transformations leading up to independence. The constitutional framework evolved from the Uganda Order in Council of 1902, which established a legislative council for the protectorate, to the 1962 Constitution. This constitution, in effect upon independence, established Uganda as a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government. The head of state was the Queen of England, represented by a Governor-General, while the Prime Minister led the government. The political landscape was shaped by the presence of prominent parties like the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), led by Milton Obote, and the Democratic Party (DP), led by Benedicto Kiwanuka. Competitive elections determined the composition of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister, underscoring a nascent democratic process.<sup>4</sup> The legal system of pre-Idi Amin Uganda was further enriched by

---

<sup>3</sup> "Uganda Constitution (April 1966)," 10 J. Afr. L. 56 (1966), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-african-law/article/abs/uganda-constitution-april-1966/29D5F9D70538F406D7127BC10DF05C6A>.

<sup>4</sup> Embassy of the Republic of Uganda, "History and Political Situation," <https://washington.mofa.go.ug/uganda/history-and-political-situation>.

customary law, particularly in rural areas. Customary law, rooted in indigenous traditions, coexisted alongside English common law, providing a framework for resolving disputes and regulating community affairs. This dual legal system reflected the diverse cultural fabric of Uganda, with customary law often addressing matters related to family, land tenure, and inheritance. However, Uganda's pre-Amin era was not devoid of challenges. Political instability, ethnic tensions, and socioeconomic disparities posed significant hurdles to governance and national unity. Issues such as land ownership, ethnic representation, and regional imbalances frequently ignited political tensions and conflicts. Despite the existence of democratic institutions, these underlying tensions simmered beneath the surface, foreshadowing the tumultuous events that would unfold during Idi Amin's regime. In essence, the legal and political system of Uganda before Idi Amin's regime was a complex interplay of colonial legacies, constitutional frameworks, and indigenous traditions<sup>5</sup>. While it operated within a democratic framework, the country grappled with deep-seated challenges that would ultimately shape its trajectory in the years to come.

#### **(A) Erosion of the rule of law and the suspension of the constitution**

During Idi Amin's rule in Uganda, constitutionalism was severely eroded as the regime systematically dismantled the rule of law and suspended the constitution to consolidate power. Amin's government disregarded legal norms and democratic principles, resorting to authoritarian tactics to suppress dissent and maintain control.<sup>6</sup> The regime employed arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, and torture to silence political opponents and intimidate the population. The constitution was effectively suspended, and Amin ruled by decree, bypassing legislative and judicial checks on his authority. Institutions meant to uphold the rule of law, such as the judiciary and legal system, were co-opted or undermined, rendering them ineffective in protecting citizens' rights. The erosion of constitutionalism under Amin's regime resulted in a climate of fear, impunity, and lawlessness, where basic freedoms were trampled upon and the state's power went unchecked.<sup>7</sup>

#### **(B) Human Rights Abuses:**

Idi Amin's regime in Uganda, from 1971 to 1979, was characterized by widespread and

---

<sup>5</sup> "An Overview of the Legal System in Uganda," Title of the Publication, (2020) [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341776281\\_AN\\_OVERVIEW\\_OF\\_THE\\_LEGAL\\_SYSTEM\\_IN\\_UGANDA](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341776281_AN_OVERVIEW_OF_THE_LEGAL_SYSTEM_IN_UGANDA).

<sup>6</sup> Solomon Muchwa Asimwe, Constitutionalism, Democratisation and Militarism in Uganda, (2016) [https://ir.umu.ac.ug/bitstream/handle/20.500.12280/1243/Asimwe\\_SASS\\_ARTICLE\\_2016.pdf?sequence=1](https://ir.umu.ac.ug/bitstream/handle/20.500.12280/1243/Asimwe_SASS_ARTICLE_2016.pdf?sequence=1).

<sup>7</sup> Ruth Butterworth, Uganda Under Amin], Vol. 1, No. 6, New Zealand International Review [Page Number 22-24] (1976), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45232832>.

egregious human rights abuses, which resulted in the suffering and deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Amin's rule was marked by arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, torture, forced disappearances, and the persecution of political opponents, ethnic minorities, and other perceived enemies of the state. One of the most notorious aspects of Amin's regime was the rampant use of state-sponsored violence and terror to suppress dissent and maintain control. Political opponents, journalists, intellectuals, and members of rival ethnic groups were targeted for harassment, intimidation, and violence.<sup>8</sup> The regime's security forces, including the notorious State Research Bureau and the paramilitary group known as the Public Safety Unit, operated with impunity, committing gross human rights violations with little fear of accountability. A significant number of individuals were subjected to torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment while in detention. Methods of torture included beatings, electric shocks, sexual violence, and the use of makeshift instruments of torture. Many detainees were held in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, deprived of necessities such as food, water, and medical care. Forced disappearances were also a common tactic employed by the Amin regime to instil fear and silence dissent. Individuals would be abducted by state security forces or government-backed militias and never seen again. Their families often lived in a state of perpetual uncertainty, unable to obtain information about their loved ones' fate or whereabouts. The mass killings orchestrated by Amin's regime, most notably the persecution of ethnic minorities such as the Acholi, Langi, and other groups perceived as political threats, resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.<sup>9</sup> The regime's policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide aimed to eliminate perceived enemies and consolidate power, leading to widespread devastation and trauma across the country. In the face of these grave human rights abuses, the international community condemned Amin's regime and called for accountability and justice. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, enshrines fundamental human rights principles, including the right to life, liberty, and security of person, and the prohibition of torture and arbitrary detention. Similarly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) establish legally binding obligations on states to respect and protect human rights. Despite these international legal standards, the Amin regime brazenly flouted its obligations under international law, perpetrating atrocities on a massive scale. The legacy of Amin's reign of terror

---

<sup>8</sup> [Derek R. Peterson], "Government Work in Idi Amin's Uganda," [Vol. 91 Issue 4] *Africa* [620-640] ([2021]), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/africa/article/government-work-in-idi-amins-uganda/E50AE1D0990CE0E8657A78DFE0C4CE43>.

<sup>9</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Idi Amin," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idi\\_Amin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idi_Amin) (last visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2024).

continues to haunt Uganda to this day, underscoring the importance of accountability, justice, and the protection of human rights in preventing future atrocities and building a more just and equitable society.<sup>10</sup>

### III. INTERNATIONAL LAW AND AMIN'S REGIME

#### (A) The Crime of Genocide:

The Genocide Convention, formally known as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, is a crucial international legal instrument adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. It defines genocide as acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. The convention prohibits genocide, requires signatory states to prevent and punish acts of genocide, and calls for cooperation in bringing perpetrators to justice.<sup>11</sup>

Amin's policies of ethnic cleansing and persecution targeted specific ethnic groups, such as the Acholi, Langi, and other perceived political opponents, resulting in mass killings, displacement, and suffering on a massive scale. The regime's actions exhibited clear elements of genocidal intent, as outlined in the Genocide Convention. Amin's government systematically targeted members of certain ethnic groups based on their identity, with the objective of destroying them in whole or in part. Massacres, forced disappearances, and other atrocities were carried out as part of a deliberate campaign to eliminate perceived enemies and consolidate power.<sup>12</sup> Despite the clear applicability of the Genocide Convention to the atrocities committed during Amin's regime, the international response was largely ineffective in preventing or addressing the crimes. The convention calls for signatory states to take action to prevent and punish genocide, but the political context of the Cold War and the reluctance of powerful nations to intervene in Uganda's internal affairs hampered efforts to hold Amin's regime accountable. The failure to effectively invoke the Genocide Convention to stop the atrocities in Uganda serves as a stark reminder of the challenges of enforcing international law in the face of political interests and power dynamics. However, the legacy of Amin's reign of terror underscores the ongoing relevance of the Genocide Convention and the need for continued efforts to prevent and punish genocide wherever it occurs.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Peterson, D. R., & Taylor, E. C. (2013). Rethinking the state in Idi Amin's Uganda: the politics of exhortation. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 7(1), 58–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2012.755314>

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, *Genocide Convention Fact Sheet* (2023), [https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Genocide\\_Convention\\_FactSheet\\_ENG\\_2023.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Genocide_Convention_FactSheet_ENG_2023.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Devyani Jain, *The Genocide Convention and Challenges to its Effective Application*, SSRN (May 4, 2012), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2050892> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2050892>.

Leonard Boyle, E. (2017). *Was Idi Amin's Government a Terrorist Regime? Terrorism and Political Violence*,



Idi Amin's regime in Uganda flagrantly violated multiple provisions of the Genocide Convention through its targeted persecution and violence against specific ethnic groups. Contravening Article II, the regime's policies aimed at destroying, in whole or in part, ethnic minorities such as the Acholi and Langi through mass killings, displacement, and suffering. Additionally, Amin's government propagated genocidal ideologies, violating Article III by inciting violence and hatred against targeted groups. Despite genocide being recognized as a crime under international law according to Article IV, perpetrators operated with impunity, with little accountability for their atrocities. Furthermore, the regime's failure to enact effective legal mechanisms to prosecute those responsible for genocide represented a violation of Article V. The regime's actions underscored the urgent need for the international community to uphold the principles of the <sup>14</sup>Genocide Convention and ensure accountability for perpetrators of mass atrocities.

### **(B) Crimes Against Humanity:**

During Idi Amin's regime in Uganda, numerous crimes against humanity were perpetrated, constituting widespread and systematic attacks against civilians. Amin's government engaged in a range of atrocities, including murder, torture, rape, forced disappearances, and persecution based on political affiliation, ethnicity, and religion. The regime's security forces, including the State Research Bureau and other paramilitary groups, operated with impunity, targeting political opponents, journalists, intellectuals, and members of ethnic minorities.<sup>15</sup>

Thousands of innocent civilians fell victim to arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, and torture, with many subjected to horrific abuses while in detention. Forced disappearances were commonplace, leaving families in anguish and uncertainty. These crimes against humanity, characterized by their widespread and systematic nature, inflicted untold suffering and left a lasting legacy of trauma on Ugandan society. The atrocities committed during Amin's regime underscored the urgent need for justice, accountability, and the protection of human rights in preventing such egregious violations from recurring.<sup>16</sup>

### **(C) State Responsibility:**

The concept of state responsibility for international wrongs holds states accountable for

---

29(4), 593–609. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2015.1005741>

<sup>14</sup> Mark Leopold, Chapter Abstract, Yale Scholarship Online, Oxford University Press, <https://academic.oup.com/yale-scholarship-online/book/43130/chapter-abstract/362018965?redirectedFrom=fulltext&login=false>, 239.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Leopold, Idi Amin and the Uses of Political Buffoonery, Yale University Press Blog (Mar. 23, 2021), <https://yalebooks.yale.edu/2021/03/23/idi-amin-and-the-uses-of-political-buffoonery/>.

<sup>16</sup> *Id*

violations of international law, including human rights abuses and breaches of international obligations. During Idi Amin's rule in Uganda, the state bore responsibility for numerous egregious violations of human rights and humanitarian law. Amin's government perpetrated widespread and systematic atrocities, including mass killings, torture, forced disappearances, and persecution of political opponents and ethnic minorities. These actions constituted clear breaches of Uganda's obligations under international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various international treaties and conventions. As a result, the Ugandan state was accountable for failing to prevent, investigate, and punish these violations, as well as for any direct involvement or complicity in the commission of such crimes. The international community, recognizing the state's responsibility for these wrongs, called for accountability and justice, highlighting the importance of holding states accountable for their actions under international law.<sup>17</sup>

#### **IV. INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

##### **(A) The Lack of Effective Action:**

The international community's response to Idi Amin's brutal regime in Uganda was characterized by significant limitations, reflecting a combination of geopolitical considerations, institutional constraints, and a lack of political will to intervene forcefully. Despite widespread reports of gross human rights abuses and atrocities committed by Amin's government, effective action to address these violations was largely absent, allowing the regime to perpetrate crimes against humanity with impunity. One of the primary limitations was the geopolitical context of the Cold War, which influenced the responses of key global powers. During the 1970s, Uganda found itself amid broader regional and international power struggles, with the United States and the Soviet Union vying for influence across Africa. Amin's regime, although condemned by many Western countries for its human rights abuses, strategically positioned itself as an anti-communist ally, particularly during the later years of the Cold War. This geopolitical calculus led some Western nations to turn a blind eye to the regime's atrocities or to engage in limited forms of diplomatic pressure rather than more robust action.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the lack of a cohesive and coordinated international response further hampered efforts to address the crisis in Uganda. While there were condemnations and resolutions passed at the United Nations and other international forums, there was no consensus on how to effectively intervene to stop the

---

<sup>17</sup> Oxford Bibliographies, *International Refugee Law*, Oxford Bibliographies (Online), <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199796953/obo-9780199796953-0031.xml> (last visited Apr. 6, 2024).

<sup>18</sup> UNHCR, *Uganda: A Model for Refugee Protection*, UNHCR (Online), <https://www.unhcr.ca/news-stories/special-features/50uganda/> (last visited Apr. 6, 2024).

atrocities. Divisions among member states, particularly those with vested interests in the region, prevented the adoption of meaningful measures to hold the regime accountable or to protect civilians from harm. Additionally, the institutional capacity and mechanisms for international intervention were limited during this period. The concept of "humanitarian intervention" was not as well-established or widely accepted as it is today, and there were few international mechanisms in place to prevent or respond to mass atrocities. The United Nations lacked a standing army or rapid response force, and the idea of military intervention to protect human rights was met with scepticism by many member states. Furthermore, logistical challenges and the absence of a clear mandate for intervention hindered the ability of international actors to effectively intervene in Uganda. Concerns about the potential for military escalation, the safety of foreign nationals, and the stability of the region complicated efforts to devise and implement a coherent strategy for addressing the crisis.<sup>19</sup>

### **(B) The Development of International Criminal Law:**

The establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) marked a significant milestone in the development of international criminal law, providing a permanent institution dedicated to prosecuting individuals responsible for the most serious crimes of international concern. *Established by the Rome Statute in 1998 and coming into force in 2002*, the ICC has jurisdiction over crimes such as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression. Its creation was a response to the need for a global mechanism to hold perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable and to ensure justice for victims.<sup>20</sup> The ICC's relevance to future situations akin to Amin's rule lies in its role as a deterrent against impunity and as a mechanism for bringing perpetrators of gross human rights violations to justice. By providing a forum for impartial and independent prosecution of individuals responsible for such crimes, the ICC serves as a bulwark against tyranny and ensures that those who commit atrocities cannot evade accountability, thereby contributing to the prevention of similar atrocities in the future.<sup>21</sup>

## **V. CONCLUSION WITH LEGACY AND CONTINUING IMPACT**

### **(A) The Search for Justice- Ugandan Efforts to Address Human Rights Violations of the Amin Era:**

In the aftermath of Idi Amin's brutal regime in Uganda, efforts have been made to address the

---

<sup>19</sup> Voice of America, "Uganda Debates Effort to Revise Legacy of Idi Amin," VOA Africa (Online), <https://www.voaafrica.com/a/uganda-debates-effort-to-revise-legacy-of-idi-amin/7352884.html> (last visited Apr. 7, 2024).

<sup>20</sup> United Nations, Treaties, United Nations (Online), <https://treaties.un.org/> (last visited Apr. 7, 2024).

<sup>21</sup> *Rome Statute*, Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome\\_Statute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome_Statute) (last visited Apr. 7, 2024).

human rights violations perpetrated during that period. These efforts have included initiatives such as exhumations of mass graves and the establishment of memorials to honour the victims and commemorate their suffering. Exhumations have been undertaken to uncover the remains of those who were unlawfully killed or disappeared during Amin's rule, providing closure to families and communities who have long sought answers about the fate of their loved ones.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, memorials have been erected to serve as places of remembrance and reflection, ensuring that the atrocities committed during Amin's era are not forgotten and that future generations understand the importance of upholding human rights and preventing such abuses from occurring again. These initiatives represent important steps in Uganda's quest for justice and reconciliation, acknowledging the pain and trauma inflicted on the country by the Amin regime and honouring the memory of those who suffered and died as a result.<sup>23</sup>

### **(B) Lessons Learned for International Law- Effective Enforcement Mechanisms and the Development of International Criminal Law**

The atrocities committed during Idi Amin's rule in Uganda serve as a stark reminder of the importance of effective enforcement mechanisms and the development of international criminal law in holding perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable. The lack of meaningful international intervention during Amin's regime allowed the atrocities to continue unchecked, highlighting the need for stronger mechanisms to prevent and respond to such crimes. The establishment of institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) represents a significant step forward in this regard, providing a forum for the prosecution of individuals responsible for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression. By holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring that justice is served, international criminal law plays a crucial role in deterring future atrocities and promoting peace, stability, and respect for human rights around the world. The lessons learned from the Amin era underscore the importance of robust enforcement mechanisms and the continued development and strengthening of international criminal law to address the most serious crimes of international concern and to prevent impunity for those who commit them.

\*\*\*\*\*

---

<sup>22</sup>Ralph D. Nurnberger, "United States and Idi Amin: Congress to the Rescue," 28 *African Studies Review* 123 (2014). <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/african-studies-review/article/abs/united-states-and-idi-amin-congress-to-the-rescue/669343D95C35F77068F7EE932733E5B9>

<sup>23</sup> Lowman, Thomas. "Amin Reframed: The UK, Uganda, and the Human Rights 'Breakthrough' of the 1970s." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2023, pp. 492–512

**VI. REFERENCES**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UcnYek3OWQ> THE RISE AND FALL OF IDI AMIN DADA, THE LION OF AFRICA
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Innn86OQ97o>\_\_\_CAPTURING IDI AMIN: DOCUMENTARY
3. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv18sqz3m#> IDI AMIN: THE STORY OF AFRICA'S EVIL ICON, MARK LEOPOLD, YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2020
4. <https://www.netflix.com/watch/81083004?trackId=255824129> HOW TO BECOME A TYRANT: REIGN THROUGH TERROR, NETFLIX (2021)

\*\*\*\*\*