

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission Case Studies

### South Africa (Apartheid)

- In July 1995 South Africa's new parliament passed a law authorising the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Commission, chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was appointed in December 1995. The central purpose of the Commission was to promote re-conciliation and forgiveness among perpetrators and victims of apartheid by the full disclosure of truth. The Commission was charged with three specific tasks: to discover the causes and nature of human rights violations in South Africa between 1960 and 1994; to identify victims with a view to paying reparations; and to allow amnesty to those who fully disclosed their involvement in politically motivated human rights violations.
- (TRC) was set up by the Government of National Unity to help deal with what happened under apartheid.
- Based on the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No 34 of 1995
- The TRC effected its mandate through 3 committees: the Amnesty Committee, Reparation and Rehabilitation (R&R) Committee and Human Rights Violations (HRV) Committee
- The Register of Reconciliation gave members of the public a chance to express their regret at failing to prevent human rights violations and to demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation

### Northern Ireland Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Ireland and Britain

- Created in 2006 (by the International Institute of Peace Studies and Global Philosophy).
- It's purpose was to generate a forum for the reconciliation through examination of historic wrongs that people within Britain and Ireland feel were committed during the period of history in Ireland known as the 'time of Troubles'
- With particular concern to the split between Catholics and Protestants and their paramilitary wings
- It examines testimony concerning all aspects of the conflict in Ireland, and allows persons who have perpetrated acts of cruelty and injustice to come forward and apologise to those whom they have wronged, whether in Britain or in Ireland, and also to empower those working for peace and reconciliation to come forward and tell their own stories

### Australia/Canada (Residential Schools for Aboriginals)

- The Commission was part of a holistic and comprehensive response to the charges of abuse and other ill effects for First Nations children that resulted from the 'Indian residential school' legacy. The Commission was officially established on June 2, 2008, and was completed in June 2015.
- For over 100 years, Aboriginal children were removed from their families and sent to institutions called residential schools. The government-funded, church-run schools were located across Canada and established with the purpose to eliminate parental involvement in the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of Aboriginal children. The last residential schools closed in the mid-1990s.
- More than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were forced to attend these schools some of which were hundreds of miles from their home. The cumulative impact of residential schools is a legacy of unresolved trauma passed from generation to generation and has had a profound effect on the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians.

### New Zealand (Maoris)

- Education was used to "civilise" and convert Maori children as early as 1840, when New Zealand officially became a British colony. Boarding schools initially taught in the Maori language but soon qualified for subsidies only if lessons were in English. By 1960, only 26 per cent of children could still speak their native language.
- A Royal Commission report concluded in 1988 that assimilation policies oppressed Maori culture, and called for education that was culturally relevant and bilingual. Today, there are schools that once again teach in Maori, following a curriculum meant to incorporate and validate Maori culture. New Zealand has also paid hundreds of millions of dollars in reparations, mostly in relation to land claims, but several settlements also include apologies, and they acknowledge that the government contravened the original treaty that established the colony.
- There is no official Truth and Reconciliation Commission in place but there are calls for one to be established.

### TRC - (Korea)

- In 1997, a long-time human rights advocate was elected President. Kim Dae-Jung established a first Truth Commission in 2000. When this Commission completed its work in 2004, the Parliament felt that a further, much broader Truth and Reconciliation Commission was needed to examine Japanese colonialism, the partition of the Peninsula, and decades-long anti-communist dictatorships. In 2005, the South Korean Assembly therefore enacted a law establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- The Commission was tasked to investigate incidents regarding human rights abuses, violence, and massacres occurring since the period of Japanese rule to the present time, specifically during the nation's authoritarian regimes. The mandate covered approximately one century and started with the beginning of Japanese rule over Korea and ended with the fall of the authoritarian regimes in South Korea. The Commission was tasked to screen petitions received by individuals, investigate and decide cases, and recommend measures to help establish truth and reconciliation.

## National Unity and Reconciliation Commission - Rwanda

The NURC was created in 1999 with the goal to combat discrimination and to erase the negative consequences of the genocide on the Rwandan people. According to article 178 of the Rwandan Constitution, the NURC is focused on:

- Preparing and coordinating the national programs for the promotion of national unity and reconciliation;
- Putting in place and developing ways and means to restore and consolidate unity and reconciliation among Rwandans;
- Educating and mobilizing the population on matters relating to national unity and reconciliation;
- Carrying out research, organizing debates, disseminating ideas and making publications relating to peace, national unity and reconciliation;
- Making proposals on measures that can eradicate divisions among Rwandans and to reinforce national unity and reconciliation;
- Denouncing and fighting against acts, writings and utterances which are intended to promote any kind of discrimination, intolerance or xenophobia;
- Making an annual report and such other reports as may be necessary on the situation of national unity and reconciliation.