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to massacres in Darfur; from the "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and the Srebrenica enclave to the attacks on Kosovo Albanians; and from Sierra Leone to Uganda that the world has continued to witness malevolent deeds that surpass understanding.

At home, it is because of the culture "of impunity that we have lost the Father of the Nation and the national political leaders. These atrocities recur in spite of the increasing interest in bringing the perpetrators to justice. The perpetrators of international crimes sicken the conscience of a civilised society.

The Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which Bangladesh is a party, in its preamble, has laid down that there should be an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the heinous crimes and states that it is the duty of every state to exercise its criminal jurisdiction over those responsible for international crimes. International crimes are abhorrent conduct of the crudest form of denial of the basic right to life of individuals. Preservation of human dignity is an obligation of the states in the human rights regime created by the international community. It is not only for the rule of law, not only for the sake of justice, but for the sake of humanity that the perpetrators of genocide in 1971 be brought to justice and duly punished through a trial conducted in accordance with due process of law. Antonio Cassesse, the renowned international criminal law jurist, in his report to UN General Assembly wrote in 1994:

"How could one hope to restore the rule of law and development of stable, constructive and healthy relations among ethnic groups, within or between independent states if the culprits are allowed to go unpunished? ...How could a woman who had been raped or a civilian whose parents or children had been killed in cold blood quell their desire for vengeance if they knew that the authors of these crimes were left unpunished and allowed to move around freely, possibly in the same town where their appalling actions had been perpetrated? The only civilised alternative to this desire for revenge is to render justice."

The words of Cassesse are relevant for the Bangladesh case with equal force.

Why trial at domestic level?

The reluctance of the international community to bring the perpetrators of the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh to trial was the reason why further genocidal atrocities could not be prevented. However, the later international tribunal's emerging jurisprudence in prosecuting