PART ONE

NAVI PILLAY
On the contemporary international law and policy scene, there are not many people who match the eminent stature of Dr Navanethem Pillay. Her personage and her role in her time command for her an enduring tribute. We attempt to do that with this book.

The ‘Age of Navi’, as her times may be described, did not start with her appointment as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was made towards the end of July 2008. It started much earlier. To many, the ‘Age of Navi’ might have started with her election as a judge of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1995. She served in that capacity until 2003. In the last four years of her tenure at the ICTR, she served as the President that court. She was among the first judges of that international tribunal.

Since Navi Pillay stands out as a modern icon in the international effort to protect humanity from gross evil, there is a simple logic in setting her tenure at ICTR as the beginning of any era to which her name is associated. This is for the simple reason that the ICTR looms large as an international response to a monumentally gross crime against humanity that occurred in the age of modernity. That crime was the Rwandan Genocide.

And Navi Pillay’s role at the ICTR is truly iconic. The ICTR was the first international tribunal to try the crime of genocide: Navi Pillay was on that Bench. The ICTR was the first international tribunal to try a head of government for international crimes, including genocide and other crimes against humanity: Navi Pillay was on that Bench. The ICTR was the first known court—international or municipal—to hold that sexual violence can be an act of genocide: Navi Pillay was on that Bench. The list of [ICTR] ‘firsts’ to which Navi Pillay is associated does not end there; but we can stop now with the list for a little elaboration on one of the more prominent of these firsts.

Perhaps the most classic international legal development with which Dr Pillay is associated is the principle, alluded to above, that sexual violence can be an act of genocide. That principle was enunciated in...