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Adverse Human Agency and Disasters: a Role for International Criminal Law?

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This chapter clarifies the relevance, potential and limitations of international criminal law in relation to preventing, mitigating and responding to disasters. 'Disasters are usually complex and rarely entirely 'natural' or entirely 'human-made'. In order to gauge the relevance of international criminal law in relation to disasters, it is crucial to examine how adverse human agency can intervene at various moments in the course of the development, impact, exacerbation of and recovery from a disaster. Depending on the circumstances, adverse human agency can be such that it meets the elements of an international crime, including when a disaster is not a sudden crisis but a slow and gradual decline over time.

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