

Charles A Adeogun-Phillips,

Wednesday, 20 July 2022, awarded Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD) with oration given by Professor Nick Vaughan-Williams

Chancellor

Our honorary graduand this afternoon is a distinguished lawyer and a pioneer lead international prosecutor in genocide and war crimes trials. It is a great pleasure to introduce CHARLES ADEOGUN-PHILLIPS.

Charles's legal education began here at Warwick, where he graduated with an LLB in 1989. This was complemented by an LLM in International Commercial Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 1994. Charles was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria in 1992, and in 1996 as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales. After several years in private practice, he joined the United Nations Organisation as a lawyer in 1997. For over a decade, he successfully led teams of international lawyers in the complex and pioneering prosecution of those who bore the greatest responsibility for the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in which around 800,000 civilians were killed. He prosecuted 12 high-profile international criminal trials before an international court, championing the cause of the victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Ten of these he led successfully as senior trial attorney and lead counsel: his elevation to the rank of senior counsel before an international court at the age of 35 is unrivalled.

The Rwandan genocide trials were complex, pioneering and precedent setting. There were no precedents, in substance or procedure: the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was the first to interpret the definition of genocide set out in the Geneva Convention of 1948. As lead prosecutor and Head of Special Investigations at the UN, Charles was exposed to legal practice alongside some of the world's finest legal practitioners; he was placed in the forefront of pioneering developments in international humanitarian and criminal law, culminating in his citation in Cresswell's *Who's Who in Public International*

*Law* in 2007. He contributed to the development and practice of guilty plea negotiations in the context of large-scale international crimes, having led complex plea negotiations in one of the Rwanda trials. And the process of prosecution involved difficult moral decisions – for example, balancing a witness’s usefulness to the prosecution’s case against the turmoil in their private life that the courtroom revelations would undoubtedly create. Witness protection

measures and the use of pseudonyms were all novel in this area and are still in existence today.

Charles’s work on behalf of the victims of the Rwanda genocide has been the subject of several books and annotated leading cases of international criminal tribunals. He has published articles on international criminal law and on victim compensation; has lectured at EU funded capacity- building training workshops on aspects of international litigation practice, and has been a guest speaker at prestigious educational institutions and on international TV programmes. In 2010, Charles returned to private practice as the founding partner of Charles Anthony LLP, a niche international law and business crime firm. Since then, he has been engaged in high-profile cases involving human rights, electronic and financial crimes, complex corporate fraud and corruption: in 2016, for instance, he led the prosecution in an unprecedented high-profile corruption trial in Nigeria.

During the Rwandan genocide trials, Charles was confronted almost daily by the terrible consequences of man’s inhumanity to man, yet he coped without losing his own humanity in the process. Today, we honour him for his outstanding work in successfully bringing the chief perpetrators to justice, and for his important contribution to the development of international criminal law.

Chancellor: In the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, CHARLES ADEOGUN-PHILLIPS.

599 words