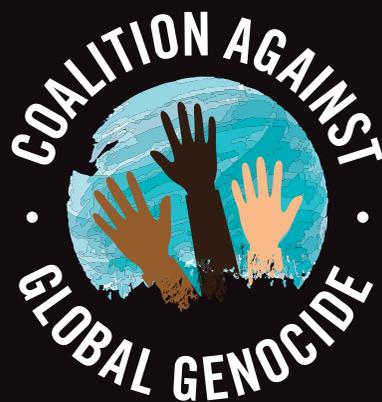




THE DEAD WEIGHT OF *COMPLACENCY*

an exhibition by:



This exhibition is sponsored by the **Coalition Against Global Genocide**, along with supporting organizations, to raise public awareness and *to condemn heinous acts against humanity.*

The exhibit focuses on selected events – *it is by no means inclusive of all genocides and crimes against humanity throughout history.* We present the facts in a non-biased manner and do not intend to offend any ethnic, political, national, religious, or cultural sensitivities.

We hope that each viewer will use this information to take positive action and educate others to *prevent future atrocities.*



WHAT IS GENOCIDE?

The word "genocide" is derived from "genos," which is Greek for "race" or "tribe"; "cide," which is Latin for killing.

It is defined as:

"the systematic destruction by a government of a racial, religious, or ethnic group."

A CRIME WITHOUT A NAME

Polish Jewish scholar, author, and lawyer Raphaël Lemkin coined the term *genocide* in 1943 in his book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. The book was a continuation of Lemkin's 1933 Madrid Proposal. Lemkin argued that if it could happen in the Ottoman Empire, it could happen anywhere. It happened once; it can happen again. Genocide would need to be codified as an international crime that could be punished anywhere. Up to that point, no international convention existed to cover crimes perpetrated by a state (or party in power) against its own people.

On December 9, 1948, Resolution 260 (III) A: The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the UN General Assembly. The Convention entered into force on January 12, 1951. In 1945, the Allies convened the International Military Tribunal at Nürnbeg. None of the Nazi war criminals were found guilty of genocide.

September 2, 1998, at the UN Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, Judge Laity Kama pronounced the first ever verdict in a UN Tribunal for the crime of genocide. "The accused, Jean-Paul Akayesu, you are declared guilty of genocide." (In late January of 1997, at a genocide trial conducted in Rwanda, the highest ranking genocidaire in Rwandan custody, Froduald Karamira, was convicted of genocide and sentenced to death.)

Each genocide has its own story line, setting, and characters, but all have a common theme, common processes, and tragic outcome. Each have its unique aspects, and yet there are startling parallels and connecting threads from each one of them to the others.

IN THE PRESENT CONVENTION

Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group such as:

- A. Killing members of a group;
- B. Causing serious bodily harm or mental harm to members of the group;
- C. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- D. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- E. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

It is a crime to plan or incite genocide, even before the killing starts, and to aid or abet genocide. Criminal acts include conspiracy, direct and public incitement, attempts to commit genocide, and complicity in genocide.

THE 10 PROCESSES OF GENOCIDE

According to internationally recognized genocide scholar, Dr Gregory Stanton, genocide develops through ten processes that are predictable but not inexorable. Preventive measures can stop the processes.

The processes are not linear. They can occur simultaneously, and all of the processes are logically related to each other. Their logic is similar to a nested Russian matryoshka doll. Classification is at the center. Without it the processes around it could not occur. As societies develop more and more genocidal processes, they get nearer to their end goal of genocide.

1 CLASSIFICATION

Classifying the world into us versus them.

2 SYMBOLIZATION

Giving names to those classifications like Jew and Aryan, Hutu and Tutsi, Turk and Armenian, Bengali and Pashtun. *Sometimes the symbols are physical, like the Nazi yellow star.*

3 DISCRIMINATION

Creating laws and customs that prevent groups of people from exercising their full rights as citizens or as human beings.

4 DEHUMANIZATION

Perpetrators call their victims rats, or cockroaches, cancer, or disease. Portraying them as non-human makes eliminating them a "cleansing" of the society, rather than murder.

These first four processes taken together result in what James Waller calls "Othering."

5 ORGANIZATION

Hate groups, armies, and militias organize.

6 POLARIZATION

Moderates are targeted who could stop the process of division, especially moderates from the perpetrators' group.

7 PREPARATION

Plans for killing and deportation are made by leaders, and perpetrators are trained and armed.

8 PERSECUTION

Victims are identified, arrested, transported, and concentrated into prisons, ghettos, or concentration camps, where they are tortured and murdered.

9 EXTERMINATION

Genocide, the intentional destruction, in whole or in part, of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.

10 DENIAL

A continuation of a genocide, because it is a continuing attempt to destroy the victim group psychologically and culturally, to deny its members even the memory of the murders of their relatives.

These processes are a useful model because they help us see when genocide is coming and what governments can do to prevent it.

The movement that ends genocide in this century must arise from each of us who have the courage to challenge discrimination, hatred, and tyranny. We must never let the wreckage of humanity's barbaric past keep us from envisioning a peaceful future when law and democratic freedom will rule the earth.

NATIVE AMERICANS

A CENTURY OF GENOCIDE THAT KILLED millions OF indigenous people

The genocide against American Natives was one of the most massive, and longest lasting genocidal campaigns in human history. It started, like all genocides, with the oppressor treating the victims as sub-humans. It continued until almost all Natives were wiped off the face of the earth, along with much of their language, culture and religion.

The population of North America prior to the first sustained European contact in 1492 CE is a matter of active debate. Various estimates of the pre-contact Native population of the continental U.S. and Canada range from 1.8 to over 12 million. Over the next four centuries, their numbers were reduced to about 237,000 as Natives were almost wiped out.

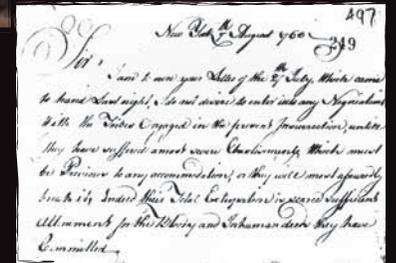
Columbus described the Arawaks — the Native people in the West Indies — as timid, artless, free, and generous. He rewarded them with death and slavery. For his second voyage to the Americas, Columbus took the title "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" and proceeded to unleash a reign of terror unlike anything seen before or since. When he was finished, eight million Arawaks — virtually the entire native population of Hispaniola — had been exterminated by torture, murder, forced labor, starvation, disease and despair. The Spanish cut off the legs of children who ran from them. They poured people full of boiling soap. They made bets as to who, with one sweep of his sword, could cut a person in half. They loosed dogs that "devoured an Indian like a hog, at first sight, in less than a moment." They used nursing infants for dog food. The Spaniards eventually went on to conquer Mexico and the southern U.S.

The British occupied areas from Virginia northward. Hans Koning wrote: "From the beginning, the Spaniards saw the native Americans as natural slaves, beasts of burden, part of the loot. When working them to death was more economical than treating them somewhat humanely, they worked them to death. The English, on the other hand, had no use for the native peoples. They saw them as devil worshipers, savages who were beyond salvation by the church, and exterminating them increasingly became accepted policy.



The Trail of Tears – the forced relocation of thousands of Native Americans – resulted in thousands of deaths.

The military orders to use smallpox-infected blankets on Native Americans.



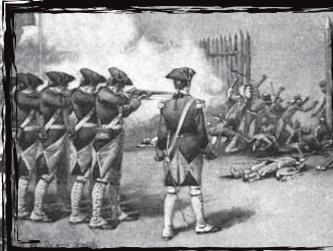
Hundreds of Indians were killed in skirmish after skirmish. Other hundreds were killed in successful plots of mass poisoning. Their canoes and fishing weirs were smashed, their villages and agricultural fields burned to the ground. Indian peace offers were accepted by the English only until their prisoners were returned; then, having lulled the natives into false security, the colonists returned to the attack. It was the colonists' expressed desire that the Indians be exterminated, rooted 'out from being longer a people upon the face of the earth.'

In a single raid the settlers destroyed corn sufficient to feed four thousand people for a year. In the 18th century, George Washington compared them to wolves, "beasts of prey" and called for their total destruction. In 1814, Andrew Jackson supervised the mutilation of 800 or more Creek Indian corpses that his troops had killed.

Extermination of all of the surviving natives was urged by the Governor of California officially in 1851. An editorial from the Rocky Mountain News in Denver, CO in 1863; and from the Santa Fe New Mexican in 1863 expressed the same sentiment. In 1867, General William Tecumseh Sherman said, "We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux [Lakotas] even to their extermination: men, women and children."



Andrew Jackson presides over the decimation of the Seminole nation at Pensacola, Florida. His string of victories against Native Americans helped to solidify the reputation of this future president of the United States of America.



Artist rendering of a massacre in upstate New York.



1892 | American bison skulls piled up before being ground for fertilizer.



Buffalo were routinely slaughtered en masse to cut off Native Americans from their primary food source.

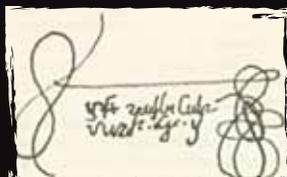
SPANISH INQUISITION

350 YEARS OF TERROR

Established by papal bull in 1478, the first task of the Spanish Inquisition was to question Jewish converts to Christianity and to expose and execute those found guilty of reversion. Authorities then turned on Spanish Jews in general, sending 300,000 into exile. Next in line were humanists and Lutherans. No rank was exempt. Children informed on their parents, merchants on their rivals, and priests upon their bishops. Those denounced were guilty unless they could prove their innocence. Nearly 32,000 people were publicly burned at the stake; the "fortunate" ones were flogged, fined, or imprisoned.

Medieval church courts which were set up to root out religious beliefs at odds with the Roman Catholic teachings of the day, whether in the form of Protestantism, Judaism or Islam. Most vigorous in Spain, the Inquisition spread to Portugal, France and elsewhere, and was infamous for the use of torture.

No other organization for religious persecution ever equaled the Spanish Inquisition in intensity, scope, ruthless efficiency, and an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope. From its establishment in 1478 until its abolishment in 1834, no one expected its tribunals, which relentlessly sought to destroy everyone who was not a Roman Catholic Christian.



The signature of Torquemada.

The Spanish Inquisition: AD 1478-1834

In 1478, Pope Sixtus IV, allows Ferdinand and Isabella to establish a special branch of the Inquisition in Spain. There is believed to be a danger to the church from Jews masquerading as Christians.

Such Jews are referred to as Marranos ("swine"). Their forced conversion is the result of anti-Semitic violence during the previous century. To escape the likelihood of death at the hands of Christian mobs, many Jews (probably about 100,000) accept baptism. But a considerable number continue to practice their Jewish faith in secret.

The first Grand Inquisitor is appointed in 1480. He is Tomas de Torquemada, who himself comes from a family of converted Jews. His dedication to his task will become legendary.

In 1492, Torquemada persuades Ferdinand and Isabella to expel from Spain all Jews who are unwilling to convert to Christianity. About 160,000 of them leave the country. Ten years later the same demands are



Saint Dominic Presiding over an Auto-da-fe, Pedro Berruguete, 1475. Oil on wood. 60 5/8" X 36 1/4". Prado Museum, Madrid.



The behavior that led to the Inquisition was deeply ingrained into European society. Richard I ("The Lionhearted") of England allegedly slaughtered some 2700 Muslim men, women, and children during the Third Crusade on August 20, 1191.

made of the Spanish Muslims. From being one of the most tolerant countries in Europe, in the heyday of Cordoba and Toledo, Spain becomes the most intolerant. The Inquisition extends its sway to Latin America, to Portugal and to the Spanish Netherlands. It is not finally suppressed until 1820 in Portugal and 1834 in Spain.

With the expulsion of the Jews, the Inquisition had free reign, as its authority was supposed to extend only to Christians, not Jews or Muslims, and every Jew in the King's states had been baptized (New Christians) or expelled. If they continued practicing the Jewish religion, they were sinful relapses ("fallen again").

According to Rummel's own data, several million individuals were murdered by the Spanish monarchy during the Inquisition.



This woodcut shows some of the methods the Inquisition employed.

NAMIBIA 1904

More than 2/3 of the Native Population Killed

White Europeans forced black Africans to become slaves. White Europeans deprived black people of their homes and communities and cultures. White Europeans sent their missionaries to change black people's religion to their own. And in the 19th century white Europeans began moving into Africa to occupy the land as well.



In the 1880s Germany made South West Africa their own colony, and settlers moved in, followed by a military governor who knew nothing at all about Africa or its peoples.

In January 1904, the Herero, rebelled. Under their leader Samuel Maherero they began to attack the numerous German outposts. They killed German men, but spared women, children, missionaries, and the English or Boer farmers whose support they didn't want to lose. At the same time, the Nama chief, wrote a letter to Theodor Leutwein, telling him what the native Africans thought of their invaders, who had taken their land, deprived them of their rights to pasture their animals on it, used up the scanty water supplies, and imposed alien laws and taxes. His hope was that Leutwein would recognize the injustice and do something about it.

The German Emperor replaced Major Leutwein with another commander, this time a man notorious for brutality He said, "I wipe out rebellious tribes with streams of blood and streams of money. Only following this cleansing can something new emerge."

October 2, 1904, an order was issued to exterminate the Herero from the region. "All the Herero must leave the land. If they refuse, then I will force them to do it with the big guns. Any Herero found within German borders, with or without a gun, will be shot. No prisoners will be taken. This is my decision for the Herero people".



By shooting or enforced slow death in the desert from starvation, thirst and disease (the fate of many women and children), those who still lived were rounded up, banned from owning land or cattle, and sent into labor camps to be the slaves of German settlers. Many more Herero died in the camps, of overwork, starvation and disease.

By 1907, in the face of criticism both at home and abroad, von Trotha's orders had been canceled and he himself recalled, but it was too late for the crushed Herero. Before the uprising, the tribe numbered 80,000; after it, only 15,000 remained.

During the period of colonization and oppression, many women were used as sex slaves. ("I find it appropriate that the nation perishes instead of infecting our soldiers.") In the Herero work camps there were numerous children born to these abused women, and a man called Eugen Fischer, who was interested in genetics, came to the camps to study them; he carried out medical experiments on them as well. He decided that each mixed-race child was physically and mentally inferior to its German father (a conclusion for which there was and is no respectable scientific foundation whatever) and wrote a book promoting his ideas: "The Principles of Human Heredity and Race Hygiene". Adolf Hitler read it while he was in prison in 1923, and cited it in his own infamous pursuit of "racial purity".

The Nama suffered at the hands of the colonists too. During the Nama uprising, half the tribe (over 10,000) were killed; the 9,000 or so left were confined in concentration camps.



© Thomas Köhler / afrol News 16
Aug. 2004

German Minister Wiczeorek-Zeul
meeting with Herero Chief Christian

ARMENIA

THE FIRST MODERN GENOCIDE

During and after WWI — beginning in 1915 — the Ottoman Turkish Empire committed the world's first modern genocide by eliminating 1.5 million indigenous Christian Armenians. The ongoing legacy of this genocide is profound for regional and global reasons alike.

It was this very event — the erasure of Armenians in their ancestral homeland in modern Turkey — that triggered genocide studies and laws. In 1921, after an Armenian survivor assassinated the chief organizer of the Armenian massacres, Raphael Lemkin launched his decades-long research that resulted in his creation of the term “genocide” and the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Lemkin prophesied that what happened to Armenians in WWI would soon haunt others. He was right: in WWII Lemkin lost nearly every relative in the Holocaust. To him, the Armenian Genocide was an archetype — an intentional killing of an entire civilization.

The lessons of the Armenian Genocide evoke the dangerous mix of colonization, authoritarianism, false progressivism, and racism. The 1908 coup by the “progressive” Young Turks overthrew the Sultan with support from Christian Armenians — the indigenous and occupied peoples of Anatolia — that were promised equal rights but were soon unjustly blamed for a WWI Turkish-Russian battle defeat. The latter served as cover for the decision to end this ancient civilization. While this erasure had ideological components (Young Turks envisioned a racially pure Turkic-speaking state, viewing Armenians — now labeled as traitors — as the primary obstacle), it also had practical goals: Armenians, as the last and largest Christian population in the region, posed a hindrance to creating a Turkey for Turks, while empty Armenian homes and farmlands addressed the urgent need for housing Balkan-fleeing Muslim refugees.

Perpetrated under the cover of “war zone relocation,” the Armenian Genocide consisted of primarily five stages. First, the Genocide commenced with the slaughter of nearly all able-bodied Armenian men serving in the Ottoman military, who were disarmed and ordered to dig their own graves. Then, on April 24, 1915, observed globally as Armenian Genocide Memorial Day, Armenian civilian leaders — including parliamentarians, poets, and priests — were mass-arrested and executed. Third, the remaining population — mainly women, children, and the elderly — were forcibly “relocated” to the Syrian desert, enduring rape, starvation, dehydration, murder, and enslavement during the exodus. Then — and perhaps most chilling — when the Young Turk leadership learned that many Armenians had outlived the death marches, they deployed military units to the Syrian desert to massacre the starving survivors. Finally, Armenian private and community properties, including many of the world's earliest churches, were declared “abandoned” and confiscated.



Armenian Genocide refugees from Turkey, concentrated in Jerusalem in 1918, fed and clothed by American gifts. Photo courtesy: Library of Congress



Armenian woman kneeling beside dead child in the Syrian desert. Photo courtesy: Library of Congress

Like every genocide, the Armenian Genocide has similarities with other “final solutions,” but it also has distinct features. The Armenian Genocide is probably the most “successful” genocide: today no Armenian communities exist in their ancestral Western Armenian (Eastern Turkey) homeland. An enduring feature of the Armenian Genocide is the Turkish state's denial of this monumental crime. The most astonishing feature of the Armenian Genocide, however, is its modern resonance: Turkey denies this crime (it calls it a wartime “relocation”), while threatening to repeat it.

For over a century scholars warned that Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide poses a grave geopolitical danger. The prophecy materialized in 2020-2023, when Turkey collaborated with its ethnolinguistic extension Azerbaijan to assault with Israeli-made weaponry and ethnically cleanse the disputed Armenian-populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh), with the “final solution” perpetrated in September 2023, following a nine-month starvation siege. At the time of this panel's writing, Turkey and Azerbaijan were threatening Armenia with further aggression. The existential threats Armenians face is a primary reason why advocates across the world insist on raising awareness about the Armenian Genocide, including achieving global recognition that only materialized in the U.S. in 2021.

Numerous Armenian Genocide monuments have been erected worldwide, including one at the Colorado State Capitol. This monument in downtown Denver — unveiled in 2015 on the 100th anniversary of the commencement of the Armenian Genocide — is a replica of a medieval headstone destroyed by the Azerbaijani government in its early 2000s covert eradication of indigenous Armenian heritage. The Colorado monument stands as a memorial to the victims but also a warning to the dangers of unchecked totalitarianism, racism, and genocide denial. It also honors Coloradans that generously raised funds in the 1920s to help “the starving Armenians,” a solemn reminder of the importance of standing up for human rights everywhere.



The Colorado State Capitol Armenian Genocide Khachkar Memorial. Photo courtesy: Simon Maghakyan

UKRAINE

DECADES OF TURMOIL

Ukraine has a history of profound turmoil. As part of the Soviet Union, under the rule of Joseph Stalin, it was marked by a series of devastating events including forced collectivization, political repression and a man-made famine that claimed the lives of millions.

The name "Ukraina" means "borderland", and was first given to the frontier lands round Kyiv in the 12th century. Control of the region was disputed between Poland and Russia over several centuries, and for some time the western part of present-day Ukraine was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The Ukrainian people retained their sense of nationhood whatever regime was in power, and in the 19th century experienced a "cultural awakening" as well. After the First World War, an attempt to form a republic of Ukraine was crushed by Russia's Red Army, and most of the country became part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. (Part remained with Poland to the west.)

Ukraine's natural riches are its "black earth" — the fertile crop-growing soil — plus coal and iron. The great expanse of cornfields, "Russia's granary", was of great value to the Soviet regime, which had little interest in the opinions or welfare of the people who farmed it. These peasant farmers were now ordered to adopt communist policies. In 1921-2 the attempt to impose this order, and the seizing of Ukrainian food supplies by force, coincided with a natural drought. The result was a famine in which a million people died.

In 1924 Stalin became the leader of the USSR. He was determined to crush nationalism in Ukraine, and also to break the resistance of the kulaks, a term used by Russians to describe the smallholders who had made a success of their farms. The Stalin-led regime ruled by fear and force, with the aid of ruthless party activists and the powerful and brutal secret police. In 1928 the kulaks found that their taxes had been raised. Then they were asked to provide greater quantities of grain. Their farms were forcibly confiscated for collectivization. In response, many rebelled violently; some slaughtered all their animals before handing over their farms; others destroyed their machinery. Punishment was severe, and many were shot. A man-made famine was created



It was so common for people to die in the streets that passers-by stopped taking notice.



The Chicago Tribune's front-page story on the 1933 Ukrainian genocide, February, 1935.

deliberately to starve political resisters to death. Up to 7 million people in ethnic Ukrainian regions died of hunger. Some of the too-slow-to-die were shot in large numbers to hasten the genocide. The quota demands were lifted in 1933, but until 1935 further millions of kulaks and their families were deported to labor camps in Siberia and Kazakhstan. Many died in the appallingly harsh conditions there.

By the end of 1933, nearly 25 percent of the population of the Ukraine, including three million children, had perished. The Kulaks as a class were destroyed and an entire nation of village farmers had been laid low. With his immediate objectives now achieved, Stalin allowed food distribution to resume inside the Ukraine and the famine subsided. However, political persecutions and further round-ups of enemies continued unchecked in the years following the famine, interrupted only in June 1941 when Nazi troops stormed into the country. Hitler's troops, like all previous invaders, arrived in the Ukraine to rob the breadbasket of Europe and simply replaced one reign of terror with another.

On February 24th, 2022, Russia began a war of aggression against Ukraine. Since then, its invasion has been met with staunch resistance and Russian forces have been driven from the suburbs of Kyiv. However, the conflict has led to an increasing number of war crimes and attacks on civilian targets perpetrated by Russian soldiers. In Bucha and a number of other towns occupied by the Russian Army, investigators have uncovered mass graves. Reports of torture, forced deportation, and sexual violence are also common. As the conflict continues with no end in sight, more Ukrainians are falling victim to Russia's genocidal campaign.



Ukraine released a stamp in 2003 so that the 1933 genocide will not be forgotten.

A famous poster from the era shows the personification of the famine in a German-style military helmet, but with Soviet insignia.

NANJING MASSACRE

"THE RAPE OF NANJING"

There were many incidents of mass crimes against humanity during the 1930's perpetrated by the Japanese army. Of these, perhaps the most serious was the "Nanjing Massacre."

On December 9th, 1937, the Japanese army launched a massive attack on the city of Nanjing – then the capital of China. Three days later, the Chinese defense forces retreated across the Yangtze River leaving the city unprotected from "an orgy of looting and mass execution." 300,000 to 340,000 civilians died. 20,000 to 80,000 women were raped.

On December 13th, a large number of refugees tried to escape from the Japanese by swimming across the Yangtze River, but they were trapped on the east bank without transportation. Meanwhile, the Japanese arrived and fired at the people on the shore and in the river. A Japanese soldier reported the next day that he saw an uncountable number of dead bodies of adults and children covering the whole river. He estimated that more than 50,000 people were killed.

When the Japanese troops first entered the city on the 13th, more than 100,000 refugees or injured Chinese soldiers crowded the streets. The Japanese relentlessly fired at these people. The next morning, tanks and artilleries entered the city to continue the slaughter. Dead bodies covered the two major streets of the city and became "streets of blood". Chinese soldiers – who had been arrested, injured or tried to escape – were sent outside the city to be massacred, several thousand to tens of thousands at a time.

Numerous atrocities occurred within and around the city, and the victims were largely civilians. Japanese soldiers invented and exercised inhumane and barbaric methods of killing. The brutalities included shooting, stabbing, cutting open the abdomen, excavating the heart, decapitation, drowning, burning, punching the body and eyes with an awl, and even castration or punching through the vagina.



Severed heads served as warnings to the Chinese.



Decapitations were rampant with Japanese invasions.

During the six weeks of the Nanjing Massacre, an estimated 20,000 women were raped by the Japanese soldiers. Most were brutally killed afterwards. The Japanese soldiers even raped girls less than ten years old, women over seventy, pregnant women and nuns. Those who resisted were killed immediately.

The Japanese organized burning of buildings in the city. After they set fire to the buildings with gasoline, they hid and killed people who came to extinguish the fire. Numerous people were killed by fire. Nanjing, once a beautiful historical city, was burned to ashes.

After being convicted of war crimes by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, two Japanese leaders, Matsui and Tani Hisao were executed after World War II.



Hundreds of rape victims were left in the streets amongst the dead and dying.

Nanjing was not unique in being the victim of Japanese atrocities before and during World War II. This map shows 11 genocidal incidents.

THE HOLOCAUST

Millions Of Lives Lost in History's Darkest Chapter

1938-1945 | More than 6 million Jews and over 4 million others including political opponents, homosexuals, people with disabilities, Roma and Sinti and religious groups such as Jehovah witness were murdered during the Holocaust.

It began with a boycott of Jewish shops and ended in the gas chambers at Auschwitz as Adolf Hitler and his Nazi followers attempted to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe. Jews at this time composed only about one percent of Germany's population of 55 million persons. But they were gradually shut out of German society by the Nazis through a never-ending series of laws and decrees, culminating in the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 which deprived them of their German citizenship and forbade intermarriage with non-Jews. They were removed from school, banned from the professions, excluded from military service, and were even forbidden to share a park bench with a non-Jew.

In March 1938, Hitler expanded the border of the Nazi Reich by forcibly annexing Austria. A brutal crackdown immediately began on Austria's Jews. They also lost everything and were even forced to perform public acts of humiliation, such as scrubbing sidewalks amid jeering pro-Nazi crowds. Years of pent-up hatred toward the Jews was finally let loose on the night that signaled the beginning of the Holocaust.

The Night of Broken Glass (Kristallnacht) occurred on November 9/10 after 17-year-old Herschel Grynszpan shot and killed Ernst vom Rath, a German embassy official in Paris, in retaliation for the harsh treatment his Jewish parents had received from the Nazis.

Many German and Austrian Jews attempted to flee Hitler's Reich. However, most Western countries maintained strict immigration quotas and showed little interest in receiving large numbers of Jewish refugees. This was exemplified by the plight of the *St. Louis*, a ship crowded with 930 Jews that was turned away by several countries including Cuba and the United States. The ship was forced to return to Europe, soon to be under Hitler's control.



German Nazi death camp Auschwitz in Poland, arrival of Hungarian Jews, Summer 1944

The Nazis attempted to quell increasing reports of the Final Solution by inviting the International Red Cross to visit Theresienstadt, a ghetto in Czechoslovakia containing prominent Jews. A Red Cross delegation toured Theresienstadt in July of 1944 observing stores, banks, cafes and classrooms which had been hastily spruced-up to create the illusion of well-being. They also witnessed a delightful musical program put on by Jewish children. However, after the Red Cross departed, most of the ghetto inhabitants, including all of the children, were sent to be gassed and the model village was left to deteriorate.

By 1944, the tide of war had turned against Hitler and his armies were being defeated on all fronts by the Allies. However, the killing of Jews continued uninterrupted. Railroad locomotives and freight cars badly needed by the German Army were instead used by the SS to transport Jews to Auschwitz. In May, Nazis under the direction of SS Lt Colonel Adolf Eichmann boldly began mass deportation of the remaining population of European Jews. From May 15 to July 9, over 430,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz. During this time, Auschwitz recorded its highest daily number of murders and cremations at just over 9,000. Six huge open pits were used to burn the bodies as the number of dead exceeded the capacity of the crematories.

The Soviet Army reached Auschwitz on January 27, 1945. By that time, an estimated 1,500,000 Jews, along with 500,000 Polish prisoners, Soviet POWs, Roma and Sinti had perished there. As the Western Allies pushed into Germany in the spring of 1945, they liberated Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, and Dachau. Now the full horror of the twelve-year Nazi regime became apparent as British and American soldiers, including Supreme Commander Dwight D Eisenhower, viewed piles of emaciated corpses and listened to vivid accounts given by survivors.



LEFT: Denver resident Howard Rosen escaped the Nazis as a teenager in 1938. In 1945, he returned to his childhood home of Stuttgart — this time, as a victorious G.I.
Photo courtesy of Howard Rosen.

RIGHT: a 1946 photo of Denver resident and child survivor, Rosalyn Kinkel, in the Feldafing Displaced Persons camp's kindergarten where she lived with her father.
Photo courtesy of Rosalyn Kinkel.



Mass murder did not only occur at the death camps. In this series of photos, taken by German soldiers, Jews are forced to dig their own graves, then slaughtered.
Photos courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; taken from The Camp Men, French L. MacLean, Schiffer Military History, 1999.

BABI YAR

MASS MURDER BY THE NAZIS

In Kiev, the Nazis murdered approximately 100,000 people in a ravine named Babi Yar.

After the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, they pushed east. By September 19th, they had reached Kiev. Many believed the Germans would free them from Stalin's oppressive regime. In only days, they would see the true face of the invaders. Looting began immediately. Then the Germans moved into Kiev's downtown. On September 24 — five days after the Germans entered Kiev — a bomb exploded around four o'clock in the afternoon at the German headquarters. Then they cordoned off the area and gathered people in the vicinity as suspects. For days, bombs exploded in buildings in the Kreshchatik that had been occupied by Germans. Many Germans and civilians were killed and injured.

By the time the bombings finally stopped on September 28, the Germans already had a plan for retaliation. On this day, the Germans posted a notice all over town that read:

"All Jews living in the city of Kiev and its vicinity are to report by 8 o'clock on the morning of Monday, September 29th, 1941. They are to take with them documents, money, valuables, as well as warm clothes, underwear, etc. Any Jew not carrying out this instruction and who is found elsewhere will be shot. Any civilian entering flats evacuated by Jews and stealing property will be shot."

On the morning of September 29, tens of thousands of Jews arrived at the appointed location. Each person held onto their family members and belongings. Children were crying. They couldn't see what was happening up ahead. Most waited hours in this crowd — only slowly moving toward what they thought was a train. Soon after people passed through the gate into the Jewish cemetery, they reached the front of the mass of people. Here, they were to leave their baggage. Some in the crowd wondered how they would be reunited with their possessions; some believed it would be sent in a luggage van. The Germans were counting out only a few people at a time and then letting them move farther on. Machine-gun fire could be heard nearby. For those that realized what was happening and wanted

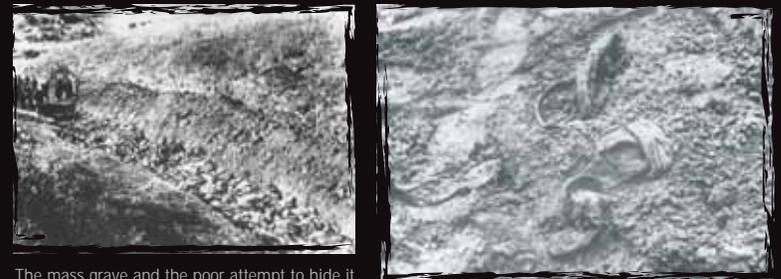


German soldiers look for survivors to kill
Photos courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



This ravine, known as Babi Yar, was filled to the brim with the dead. Photo © Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden, courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; taken from *The Camp Men*, French L. MacLean, Schiffer Military History, 1999.

to leave, it was too late. There was a barricade staffed by Germans who were checking identification papers of those wanting out. If the person was Jewish, they were forced to remain. Taken from the front of the line in groups of ten, they were led to a corridor, about four or five feet wide, formed by rows of soldiers on each side. The soldiers were holding sticks and would hit the Jews as they went. The soldiers kept shouting: "Schnell, schnell!" laughing happily, as if they were watching a circus act. Screaming and crying, the Jews exited the corridor of soldiers onto an area overgrown with grass. Here they were ordered to undress. Those who hesitated had their clothes ripped off them by force.



The mass grave and the poor attempt to hide it.

Babi Yar is the name of a ravine in the northwestern section of Kiev. Anatoli described the ravine as enormous: deep and wide, like a mountain gorge. It was here that the Nazis shot the Jews. In small groups of ten, the Jews were taken along the edge of the ravine. One of the very few survivors remembers she "looked down and her head swam, she seemed to be so high up. Beneath her was a sea of bodies covered in blood." Once the Jews were lined up, the Nazis used a machine-gun to shoot them. When shot, they fell into the ravine. According to the Einsatzgruppe Operational Situation Report No. 101, 33,771 Jews were killed at Babi Yar on September 29 and 30. But this was not the end of the killing at Babi Yar. The Nazis next rounded up Gypsies and killed them at Babi Yar. Patients of the Pavlov Psychiatric Hospital were gassed and then dumped into the ravine. Soviet prisoners of war were brought to the ravine and shot. Thousands of other civilians were killed at Babi Yar for trivial reasons, such as a mass shooting in retaliation for just one or two people breaking a Nazi



The Babi Yar memorial in Ukraine. Memorials also exist in Israel and Denver, CO, U.S.A.

**"No gravestone stands on Babi Yar;
Only coarse earth heaped roughly on the gash;
Such dread comes over me."**

— Yevgeni Yevtushenko, 1961

CROATIA

Genocide IN Croatia BY THE Ustaše Regime

The greatest genocide during World War II, in proportion to a nation's population, took place, not in Nazi Germany but in the Nazi-created puppet state of Croatia.

Between 1941-1945 some 750,000 Serbs, 60,000 Jews and 25,000 Gypsies – men, women and children – perished in a gigantic holocaust. These atrocities were perpetrated by the Ustaše regime, the Independent State of Croatia, which was established in power by the Nazi government of Germany during World War II. They fiercely hated Serbs, Jews, Communists and all other non-Catholics. Their goals were to convert Croatia into a pure Croatian and Roman Catholic independent state. On 1941-July-22, Dr. Mile Budak, the Ustaše Minister of Education and Cults, said: 'The movement of the Ustaše is based on religion. For minorities-Serbs, Jews and Gypsies, we have three million bullets. We shall kill one part of the Serbs. We shall transport another, and the rest of them will be forced to embrace the Roman Catholic religion. Thus, our new Croatia will get rid of all Serbs in our midst in order to become one hundred percent Catholic within ten years.'

During 1941 to 1943, the regime slaughtered at least 250,000 Serb residents of Croatia and Bosnia, and more than 20,000 Jews. Some Serbs, particularly members of the elite, were not even offered the option of conversion to avoid being killed. The the Ustaše government was dissolved in May 1945. After the war, most of the Ustaše leaders escaped to South America or Spain. Since the end of World War II, political and ideological conflicts in the area have made the documentation and verification of victim statistics extremely difficult. To cover the trail of terror and murder, authorities of the Independent State of Croatia burned official records from the Jasenovac camps first in early 1943 and again upon evacuation in 1945.



The Black Legion. The Ustaše militia responsible for massacres against Serbian civilians.



Ustaše soldiers pose with bodies at the Jasenovac Concentration Camp. Right: Emaciated children rescued from the camp.



1991-1995: Fifty years later another genocide took place in the new state of "democratic Croatia". These Serbs in the Gospić Christian Orthodox graveyard of Siroka Kula were among the first to fall victim at the hands of the Croatian the Ustaše. On two nights between October 16 and 18 1991, Serbs were slain and burned in Perusic near Gospić, Croatia. Again, neither women nor children were spared. Croatia has filed charges of genocide against Yugoslavia in the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Croatia estimates that some twenty-thousand people died in the ensuing six-month war. The Croat authorities also allege that Yugoslavia created conditions for further ethnic cleansing by encouraging Serbs to flee Croatia during its campaign to recover Serb-controlled areas in Krajina in 1995.

It was rather an onslaught of the Serb-led Yugoslav People's Army — the third biggest army in Europe at the time — and Chetniks on the civilian population of Croatia and all that exists on its territory as a witness to its history or part of what makes its continuing existence possible. In this onslaught, no discrimination between combatants and non-combatants, military and civilian targets was made. The Serbs refused to be bound by any moral or legal rules, and systematically committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, including genocide.

There has been some debate concerning the definition of genocide, but that is of no concern here, as the Serbs have committed this crime on the definition contained in the UN Genocide Convention.



As a clerical-fascist state, the Catholic clergy were integrated into the highest levels of government. Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac (far right) officiates at a Croatian state ceremony in 1941. U.S. News & World Report



Croatian SS Troop recruiting poster. "The great leader Adolf Hitler and Chief Dr. Ante Pavelic invite you to defend your hearths. Join the ranks of volunteers."

GUATEMALA

GENOCIDE OF THE MAYANS

An estimated 200,000 people were killed between 1966 and 1990, including the many thousands who "disappeared" in the genocide of Mayan people.

The Guatemalan government, using the Guatemalan Army and its counter-insurgency force (whose members defined themselves as "killing machines"), began a systematic campaign of repressions and suppression against the Mayan Indians, whom they claimed were working towards a communist coup.

"The Silent Holocaust"

Working methodically across the Mayan region, the army and its paramilitary teams, including "civil patrols" of forcibly conscripted local men, attacked 626 villages. Each community was rounded up, or seized when gathered already for a celebration or a market day. The villagers, if they didn't escape to become hunted refugees, were then brutally murdered. Others were forced to watch, and sometimes to take part. Children were often beaten against walls, or thrown alive into pits where the bodies of adults were later thrown; they were also tortured and raped.

Victims of all ages often had their limbs amputated, or were impaled and left to die slowly. Others were doused in petrol and set alight, or disemboweled while still alive. Yet others were shot repeatedly, or tortured and shut up alone to die in pain. The wombs of pregnant women were cut open. Women were routinely raped while being tortured. Women –



Guatemalan survivors remember their family members that "disappeared".
© Center for Justice and Accountability



Mass grave exhumation.

now widows – who lived could scarcely survive the trauma:

"The presence of sexual violence in the social memory of the communities has become a source of collective shame."

Peace talks were set up by the UN in 1991, but made poor progress. Suspended in 1993, they were resumed in 1994 under a new democratic government led by the country's former human rights ombudsman. The government and URNG signed an accord on human rights protection. Other issues were discussed over the next year. A peace agreement was finally signed in 1996.

In April 1998 a report, the Catholic Church's "Recuperation of Historical Memory" (also called "Never Again"), was published, which placed the responsibility for most of Guatemala's war crimes squarely on the army.

A report, entitled "Guatemala: Memory of Silence" was presented in February 1999. Its discoveries clearly revealed a governmental policy of genocide carried out against the Mayan Indians. Apart from being carried out by individuals, unnamed, the genocide was clearly also the responsibility of a hostile institutional structure.

Of the human rights violations recorded, the State and the Army were responsible for 93%, the guerrillas for 3%.



Excavation of victims from mass graves.



CAMBODIA

the deaths of nearly a quarter of Cambodians

In proportion to its population, Cambodia underwent a human catastrophe unparalleled in this century. Out of a 1970 population of probably near 7,100,000, Cambodia probably lost slightly less than 4,000,000 people to war, rebellion, man-made famine, genocide, politicide, and mass murder.

The vast majority, almost 3,300,000 men, women, and children (including 35,000 foreigners), were murdered within the years 1970 to 1980 by successive governments and guerrilla groups. Most of these, a likely near 2,400,000, were murdered by the communist Khmer Rouge. Under Pol Pot's leadership, and within days of overthrowing the government, the Khmer Rouge embarked on an organized mission: they ruthlessly imposed an extremist program to reconstruct Cambodia (now under its Khmer name Kampuchea) on the communist model of Mao's China. The population must, they believed, be made to work as laborers in one huge federation of collective farms. Anyone in opposition — and all intellectuals and educated people were assumed to be — must be eliminated, together with all un-communist aspects of traditional Cambodian society.

So, at short notice and under threat of death, the inhabitants of towns and cities were forced to leave them. The ill, disabled, old and very young were driven out as well, regardless of their physical condition: no-one was spared the exodus. People who refused to leave were killed; so were those who didn't leave fast enough, and those who wouldn't obey orders.



Tuol Sleng Museum in Phnom Penh



Tuol Sleng Museum in Phnom Penh

All political and civil rights were abolished. Children were taken from their parents and placed in separate forced labor camps. Factories, schools and universities were shut down; so were hospitals. Lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, scientists and professional people in any field (including the army) were murdered, together with their extended families.

Religion was banned, all leading Buddhist monks were killed and almost all temples destroyed. Music and radio sets were also banned. It was possible for people to be shot simply for knowing a foreign language, wearing glasses, laughing, or crying. One Khmer slogan ran "To spare you is no profit, to destroy you is no loss." Also targeted were minority groups, victims of the Khmer Rouge's racism. These included ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai, and also Cambodians with Chinese, Vietnamese or Thai ancestry. Half the Cham Muslim population was murdered, and 8,000 Christians. Civilian deaths in this period, from executions, disease, exhaustion and starvation, have been estimated at well over 2 million. From 1995 mass graves began to be uncovered, revealing the genocide's horrifying extent. The resurrected bones and skulls have been preserved to create simple and potent memorials of the dead in "the killing fields" where they died. At the torture center in Phnom Penh, Tuol Sleng, where the Khmer Rouge terrorized and murdered their own members, not only skulls but also identity photographs of the victims are displayed on the walls: this bleak, unhappy place has also become a memorial.

The killing fields continue in the form of more than 2 million landmines that threaten innocent children and families. Cambodia has the largest per capita percentage of mine amputees in the world, with one in every 236 Cambodians living with lost limbs.

EAST TIMOR

THE LITTLE-KNOWN GENOCIDE

The East Timor genocide, carried out by Indonesian forces in 1975-1999, involved widespread killings, forced displacement and human rights abuses resulting in the deaths of an estimated 200,000 people.

The aggressor is resource-rich Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country and a major center of multinational corporate activity. The victim is East Timor, a former Portuguese colony 400 miles north of Australia. In 1974, the overthrow of Portuguese dictator Marcelo Caetano led to self-government for East Timor. On December 7th 1975, the Indonesian army invaded East Timor and took control of the half-island. About 100,000 of the original population of 600,000 died during the first year of occupation. The military "used harsh tactics to coerce cooperation from the people and solidify Indonesian rule. These methods included forced migration, rape, forced sterilization, forced military service, torture, murder, and harassment." By 1999, "One in four East Timorese is thought to have lost his or her life in the struggle." Indonesia eventually won control of the territory, killing over 200,000 Timorese — one-third of the population — in one of the worst genocides since World War II.

But most Americans have never even heard of East Timor.

Unlike the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the editorial response to the Indonesian annexation of East Timor was one of virtual silence. The Washington Post issued no editorial condemnation of Indonesia in the month following the invasion. But they did run 19 editorials on Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in the month following that invasion.



Indonesian military operations during the invasion of East Timor. Dec 7, 1975



In the last couple of years, media coverage of East Timor has grown in some news outlets. This is largely due to the November 12, 1991 Santa Cruz massacre in Dili, the capital of East Timor. In the presence of Western journalists, the Indonesian army fired upon a peaceful crowd gathered at a cemetery for the memorial service of a young pro-independence activist slain by the military two weeks earlier. Over 200 people died as a result. The video footage of the massacre, as well as eyewitness accounts and grassroots pressure, forced Western governments to pay attention. Although certainly comparable to Tiananmen Square in terms of brutality, the Santa Cruz Massacre was barely covered in the U.S. mass media. Unfortunately, the general media silence on East Timor has left the U.S. public in the dark, helping to facilitate one of the great genocides of the late 20th century.



Scenes from the Santa Cruz massacre in 1991.

Sixty-six non-governmental organizations from 16 different countries have sent a letter to Indonesia's President Megawati Sukarnoputri, urging her to put more effort into returning East Timorese children to their families. In 1999, during East Timor's struggle to achieve independence from Indonesia, thousands of children were separated from their families and taken to orphanages and other institutions throughout Indonesia. The signers of the letter are urging Indonesia's government to take immediate action to speed up the process of reunification.

BOSNIA

A TRAGIC ETHNIC CONFLICT

In July 1995 Serb troops and paramilitaries led by Ratko Mladic descended on Srebrenica and began shelling it. They had already dealt with Muslim soldiers in the countryside villages. Now they were besieging Srebrenica's thousands of Muslim civilians.

Food supplies and water began to dwindle, buildings were damaged, people were injured. Soon Serb troops were able to take up positions close the town's outskirts. In Bosnia's capital, Sarajevo, a radio message from an amateur operator in Srebrenica was heard: "Please do something. Whatever you can. In the name of God, do something."

The Serbs' bombardment intensified. Thousands of Muslims made for the Dutch compound – some killed by shells as they fled. Throughout the day a stream of refugees was slowly admitted inside: up to 6,000 by nightfall. 20,000 more were left waiting outside. There was no food, little water, and a lot of fear.

The following morning representatives of the Dutch battalion and of the Muslims heard that Mladic had made a promise: everyone would be allowed to cross out of Serb territory, but the men would have to be screened first, so that war criminals could be detected, before rejoining their families. Meanwhile, Serb troops quietly surrounded the Dutch HQ.

Soon afterwards Mladic himself appeared, caught on film in genial mode and reassuring a group of women that all would be well. ("Thank you," they cried.) After him came large numbers of trucks and buses. Serb troops at once began separating off the men from women and children among the civilians outside the UN compound. Women and children were forced on to the trucks and buses. As they were deported, they could hear gunfire echoing round the hills; and they saw corpses lying by the road.



The following day the transports returned to fetch more women and children. There were now no men to be seen among the people in the street, and soon no women and children either. By noon the Serbs were ready to deal with the remaining thousands inside the camp. The Dutch gave the order: "Leave the camp in groups of 5". The Serbs stood at the entrance, once again isolating the men and boys.

The deportation of Srebrenica's population took 4 days, and the UN assisted in a way it didn't foresee and couldn't prevent: the Serbs removed the Dutch soldiers' blue peacekeeping helmets and later wore them themselves to trick escapees into handing themselves over.

Up to 7,500 men and boys over 13 years old were killed. They were trucked or marched to their places of death. Up to 3,000, many in the act of trying to escape, were shot or decapitated in the fields. (Mladic had sent out his written order to "block, crush and destroy the straggling parts of the Muslim group." It was carried out.) 1,500 were locked in a warehouse and sprayed with machine gun fire and grenades. Others died in the thousands on farms, football fields and school playgrounds. The whole action was carried out with military efficiency. It is said that the transport drivers were each forced to kill one man, to deter them from testifying against the Serb troops later.

Thousands of the bodies were buried in mass graves. US aerial reconnaissance film shows the signs of a mass grave being covered by earth-moving equipment.



The UN war crimes tribunal has found former Bosnian Serb general Radislav Krstic guilty of genocide in the 1995 murder of almost 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica. He was sentenced to 46 years in prison.



Former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic died in prison at the Hague Saturday, March 11, 2006.

RWANDA

A NATION SHATTERED

A devastating and rapid ethnic conflict in which extremist Hutu militias systematically killed an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus within a span of 100 days.

For many centuries, Rwanda's two groups shared the business of farming, essential for survival, between them. They have also shared their language, their culture, and their nationality. A wedge was driven between them when the European colonists moved in. It was the practice of colonial administrators to select a group to be privileged and educated "intermediaries" between governor and governed. The Belgians chose the Tutsis: landowners, tall, and to European eyes the more aristocratic in appearance. This introduction of class consciousness unsettled the stability of Rwandan society. Some Tutsis began to behave like aristocrats, and the Hutu to feel treated like peasants. An alien political divide was born.

The Hutus chose armed resistance. In 1956 their rebellion began (it would cost over 100,000 lives). By 1959 they had seized power and were stripping Tutsi communities of their lands. Many Tutsis retreated to exile in neighboring countries, where they formed the Front Patriotique Rwandais, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), trained their soldiers, and waited. After gaining power — and, in 1962, independence for Rwanda — a politically inexperienced Hutu government began to face internal conflicts. A ceasefire was achieved in 1993, followed by UN-backed efforts to negotiate a new multi-party constitution; but Hutu leaders and extremists fiercely opposed any Tutsi involvement in government.

On April 6, 1994, the plane carrying Rwanda's president was shot down, almost certainly the work of an extremist. This was the trigger needed for the Hutus' planned "Final Solution" to go into operation. The Tutsis were accused of killing the president, and Hutu civilians were told, by radio and word of mouth, that it was their duty to wipe the Tutsis out. First, though, moderate Hutus who weren't anti-Tutsi should be killed. So should Tutsi wives or husbands. Genocide began.

Up to a million people died before the RPF was able to take full control. Unlike the instigators of the killings of Armenians in 1915, and of Jews and Roma in 1941-5, no one tried to keep the genocide in Rwanda a secret. Journalists and television cameras reported what they saw, or what they found when the genocide was over. There was even a UN force (UNAMIR) in place, monitoring the ceasefire and now obliged to watch as people were killed in the street by grenades, guns and machetes. "We have no mandate to intervene." UNAMIR did their best to protect trapped foreigners,

◀ 5,000 people seeking refuge in this church were killed by grenade, machete, rifle and burning alive. photo by Scott Chacon, Dublin, CA, USA



Deep gashes are visible in the skulls that fill one room at the Murambi School.



Chip Samodvilla/Getty Images



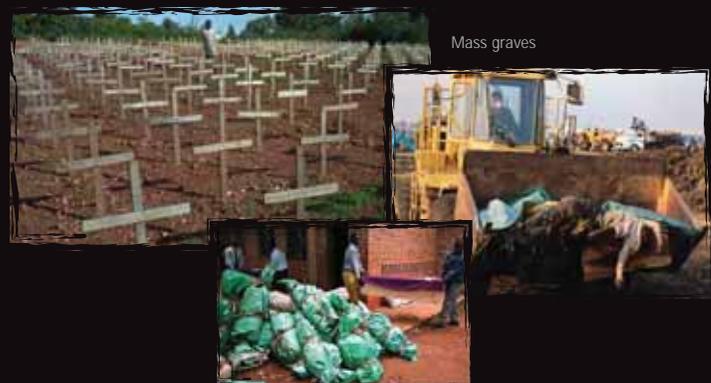
Skeletal remains of victims on display at a church which is now the Ntarama Genocide Memorial

until they were pulled out of Rwanda altogether. But the genocide organizers were conscious of the risks of international scrutiny: over the radio the killers were constantly incited to continue, but 'No more corpses on the roads, please'. Corpses in the countryside were covered with banana leaves to screen them from aerial photography.

Although large in scale, this genocide was carried out entirely by hand, often using machetes and clubs. Local officials assisted in rounding up victims and making suitable places available for their slaughter. Tutsi men, women, children and babies were killed by the thousands in schools. They were also killed in churches: some clergy colluded in the crime. The victims, in their last moments alive, were also faced by another appalling fact: their cold-blooded killers were people they knew.

The definition of 'genocide' was an international sticking-point. There'd been at least 10 clear warnings to the UN of the 'Hutu power' action, including an anxious telegram from the UNAMIR commander to the then UN Secretary General (Boutros Boutros Ghali) three months before the event. The UN Security Council met in secret after the start of the violence. At this meeting Britain urged that UNAMIR should pull out (and later blocked an American proposal to send in a fact-finding mission when the death toll had reached six figures). Council members resisted admitting 'that the mass murder being pursued in front of the global media was in fact genocide.' Genocide required action that no one wanted to take.

Once it was inescapably clear that genocide was indeed going on, it was too late. The USA had actually banned its officials from using the term. Finally, in June, Secretary of State Warren Christopher grumpily conceded, "If there's any particular magic in calling it genocide, I've no hesitancy in saying that."



Mass graves

DARFUR

ETHNIC CLEANSING IN WESTERN SUDAN

The government of Sudan is responsible for “ethnic cleansing” and crimes against humanity in Darfur, one of the world’s poorest and most inaccessible regions.

Starting in 2003, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Arab “Janjaweed” militias committed numerous attacks on the populations of Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa ethnic groups. Sudanese army and Janjaweed forces killed Muslim religious leaders, raped and murdered civilians and caused mass migration. Villages, food stocks and other essential supplies were destroyed. Villages were looted and torched systematically. The number of deaths from violence, disease and starvation is estimated at 200,000 to 400,000.

At least 2 million people in the Darfur region were displaced from these fertile farming communities and fled to UNHCR camps in neighboring Chad where international aid was meager. Allegations of gross human rights abuses by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir resulted in the issuance of two ICC arrest warrants in 2009 and 2010 al-Bashir became the first ever sitting head of state to be wanted by an international court.

Ten years later the Sudanese government created the Rapid Support Forces and in 2023 war again came to the Darfur region as well as other parts of Sudan in a civil war between the Sudanese Army and RSF, led by two successors of al-Bashir. In Darfur, the RSF and its allied militias have engaged in targeted, ethnically-motivated violence against non-Arab populations. Reports of widespread sexual violence and the destruction of entire villages are reminiscent of crimes from the early 2000s. It is estimated that 600,000 people have been displaced.

Another region of Sudan fought a civil war until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. In 2011 the southern states of Sudan held a referendum and in July 2011, South Sudan declared its independence from Sudan. The Dinka and Nuer people in this oil rich region have struggled with power and in 2013 civil war began. All forces and groups torture, rape, and kill civilians along ethnic lines and regularly abduct or recruit children. Over 400,000 civilians have been killed in the conflict. In 2023, 1.6 million South Sudanese are internally displaced, and 2.2 million are refugees in neighboring countries. Increased inter-communal violence and attacks on civilians in Unity, Warrap, Lakes, Jonglei, and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area threaten the prospect of peace.



A government supported Janjaweed fighter. Espen Rasmussen/AFP/Getty Images



Refugee women and children are often targets of sexual violence by armed gangs. (Getty)



The aftermath of an attack in the village of Masteri in West Darfur in 2020. (AP)

ETHIOPIA

THE TIGRAY CRISIS

Ethiopia's northernmost region of Tigray is at the center of a civil conflict involving ethno-regional militias, the federal government, and the Eritrean military.

The civil war in Ethiopia began in 2020 after months of tension between prime minister Abiy Ahmed's government and the ethnic Tigrayan political party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The conflict turned violent in November 2020 when the TPLF attacked a government military base. In response, the government ordered a military operation into Tigray to allegedly prevent further instability in the region. To help fight the TPLF, Ahmed secretly invited Eritrean national forces into Ethiopia.

Up to 600,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the conflict or died as a result of the man-made famine in Tigray, and more than two million have been displaced.

According to the United Nations, all parties to the conflict have committed "serious abuses and violations of human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law," many of which "may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes." Ethiopian and Eritrean federal forces have reportedly killed the largest numbers of civilians in Tigray. These forces have committed massacres, sexual and gender-based violence, extra judicial killings, indiscriminate shelling, and large-scale forced displacement. The Ethiopian government blocked access to food, basic supplies, and healthcare in the Tigray region, causing thousands of deaths. Tigrayan forces and other armed groups also have committed mass atrocities during the conflict.

A Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, mediated by the African Union, was signed on November 2, 2022, between the Government of Ethiopia and Tigray People's Liberation Front. The peace agreement delivers a road map to end the civil war and has led to a significant decrease in violence by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces and Tigrayan Defense Forces. However, civilians continue to suffer egregious human rights violations perpetrated by Eritrean and regional militia forces. The unraveling of past agreements and the worsening situation in Ethiopia's Oromia region mean civilians may still face a serious risk of mass atrocities.

Content provided by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



A woman stands in line to receive food donations at a school turned into a temporary shelter for people displaced by conflict. March 15, 2021.
Baz Ratner/Reuters



BURMA

Genocide of the Rohingya

After decades of persecution, Burma's Rohingya minority suffered attacks at the hands of the Burmese military in August 2017 that included mass killing, rape, torture, arson, arbitrary arrest and detention, and forced displacement of more than 700,000 people.*

On March 2, 2022 the United States made a historic determination: the atrocities committed against the Rohingya by the Burmese military constitute genocide and crimes against humanity. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken made this announcement in front of Rohingya and Holocaust survivors at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This statement was a long-awaited recognition of the brutal persecution and violence suffered by this predominantly Muslim community from Burma's Rakhine State. Recognition was an important step. Now we must focus on protecting the Rohingya who have been displaced and those who remain in Burma. The Rohingya suffered decades of violence, discrimination, marginalization and persecution—including a crescendo of violence that spurred the genocide determination. Their plight continues to this day. The very military that committed genocide against them staged a coup in February 2021. Since then, the military has cracked down on civilians across the country. All of the structures that led to the persecution of the Rohingya remain in place. And since the coup the military has introduced even more repressive measures, including growing restrictions on the remaining 600,000 Rohingya's freedom of movement with increasing security checkpoints, arrest, detentions, and extortion while keeping the apartheid-like conditions in most of Rakhine state, where many live, largely inaccessible to independent monitors.

At the same time, the situation of the approximately one million Rohingya in refugee camps in Bangladesh drastically deteriorated. With practically no educational or economic opportunities and surrounded by rampant crime, refugees become prey to human traffickers. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2022 saw a massive



Rohingya Refugee Camp in Bangladesh, photo by John Owens (VOA)



Aerial view of a burned Rohingya village in Myanmar - September 2017
Zlatica Hoke (VOA) - Screenshot from the source video by Voice of America



People struggling for aid at the border of Bangladesh and Myanmar
©UNFPA Bangladesh/Naymuzzaman Prince

increase in the number of people fleeing by boat over the previous year, and it was the deadliest for these attempts to flee over sea since 2014. Rohingya refugees today are forced to choose between an array of dangerous options: they could embark on a perilous journey by boat to other southeast or south Asian countries; they could return to Burma, where they would face a risk of genocide; or they could remain in Bangladesh where they face growing insecurity and hopelessness.

For decades, the world focused on supporting Burma's pro-democracy movement, perhaps with the hope that building democracy would naturally benefit all groups in the country. Yet even as Burma was making steps toward democracy, the violence against the Rohingya was culminating in genocide. The world cannot repeat the mistakes of the past. As policymakers in the US and elsewhere try to push back the brutality of Burma's military and support a future democracy, we cannot lose sight of the vulnerable communities who may be targeted along the way.

The Rohingya crisis must be addressed as part of a larger problem in Burma—the absence of human rights and democracy. The military dictatorship that ruled Burma for years has systematically oppressed ethnic and religious minorities, including the Rohingya. To tackle the ongoing persecution of the Rohingya and the fight for democracy in Burma, both issues must be addressed together. As the world has learned through the experience of the Rohingya people—genocide was committed when it appeared the country was becoming more democratic—no genuine democratic change can be built on the backs of the persecuted.

The Rohingya have suffered for too long and have endured unimaginable violence and persecution. It is time for the world to stand with them and support their journey toward justice, equality, and freedom.

Wai Wai Nu is founder and executive director of Women's Peace Network in Burma, and a former Genocide Prevention fellow with the Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide.

Naomi Kikoler is the director of the Museum's Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide.

Excerpts from: One Year after US Genocide Determination, Rohingya Community Remains at Risk

*from the exhibition "Burma's Path to Genocide" United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

CHINA

PERSECUTION OF THE UYGHURS

The Uyghur community is a Turkic Muslim minority group of about 11 million people who live predominantly in the province of Xinjiang, in western China.

The Chinese government has persecuted Uyghurs for decades, and has long attempted to assimilate Uyghurs into the country's majority Han identity. **In recent years, the government has escalated this repression.**

Today, the Chinese government uses sophisticated social and technological surveillance systems to control everyday aspects of Uyghur life, suppress their identity, and detain approximately one million people.

Beginning in 2016, the Chinese government began constructing a network of detention centers where an estimated one to three million Uyghur civilians have been imprisoned. Chinese authorities have separated children from families, and many Uyghur people living outside China have no contact with or information about detained relatives. Uyghur people face arrest and detention for practicing their religion, for family ties to other detainees, or even for attending a foreign university. Within detention centers, inmates report torture, forced labor, and mandatory teaching to renounce Uyghur culture and the Muslim faith. Chinese authorities have argued that state crackdowns are necessary to contain Islamic extremism and Uyghur separatist movements in Xinjiang. The actions of the Chinese government, however, go far beyond any reasonable objective.

Content provided by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



July 2015, outside the Id Kah Mosque, men and women pray during Eid al-Fitr, a joyous Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan. Police vehicles and security line the public square in Xinjiang, China. *credit: Alexandra Williams*



The Museum is gravely concerned that the Chinese government may be committing genocide against the Uyghurs. There is also reasonable basis to believe that the government of China is committing crimes against humanity, specifically the crimes of imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty, persecution, torture, sexual violence, forcible transfer, enslavement, and forced sterilization. These crimes are some of the most serious known to mankind. The trauma they cause can endure for generations.

SOUTH SUDAN

CIVIL WAR in A YOUNG NATION

South Sudan, the world's youngest country plunged into a civil war just two years after it gained independence from Sudan in 2011.

The conflict has displaced more than four million people and led to the deaths of nearly 400,000 civilians. Government forces have committed horrific crimes against humanity against civilians — including killings, acts of sexual violence, torture, and abductions. They often target victims on the basis of their ethnicity or perceived political affiliation. Meanwhile, dozens of local militias have also committed atrocity crimes against civilians.

Even though the war formally ended in early 2020, the government continues to attack anyone who opposes its policies as well as other civilians, including activists and journalists. The government is encouraging local conflict and deliberately starving and displacing civilians from specific ethnic groups. It is also preventing international humanitarian aid from reaching those who desperately need it. Seven million people in South Sudan do not have access to enough food on a daily basis. International attention to the situation is fading, even though South Sudan remains at high risk for new mass atrocities in the future.

The United Nations has repeatedly concluded that parties on all sides, and particularly government forces, have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. Yet only a few low-level perpetrators have faced any form of justice. Without meaningful accountability, perpetrators will not be deterred from committing ethnically-motivated violence and mass atrocities in the future.

Content provided by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



A SPLA-In Opposition soldier walks with her weapon through the elephant grass in rebel-held Magwi County of South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria State, August 2017. Jason Patinkin/US Holocaust Memorial Museum.



A refugee woman waiting to be taken to a refugee camp after fleeing fighting in South Sudan, 2017. Jason Patinkin/US Holocaust Memorial Museum

GENOCIDE: A GLOBAL CONCERN

HOW SAD FOR HUMANITY THAT "GENOCIDE" IS PART OF A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE



First they came for the socialists,
and I did not speak out *because I
was not a socialist.*

Then they came for the trade
unionists, and I did not speak out
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I
did not speak out *because I was
not a Jew.*

Then they came for me — *and there
was no one left to speak out for me.*

~ Pastor Martin Niemöller

THANK YOU

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