

Eight Stages of Genocide

STAGE 1: CLASSIFICATION

All cultures have categories to distinguish people into "us and them" by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality: German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi. Bipolar societies that lack mixed categories, such as Rwanda and Burundi, are the most likely to have genocide.

The main preventive measure at this early stage is to develop universalistic institutions that transcend ethnic or racial divisions, that actively promote tolerance and understanding, and that promote classifications that transcend the divisions. The Catholic church could have played this role in Rwanda, had it not been given by the same ethnic cleavages as Rwandan society. Promotion of a common language in countries like Tanzania or Cote d'Ivoire has also promoted transcendent national identity. This search for common ground is vital to early prevention of genocide.

STAGE 2: SYMBOLIZATION

We give names or other symbols to the classifications. We name people "Jews" or "Gypsies", or distinguish them by colors or dress; and apply them to members of groups. Classification and symbolization are universally human and do not necessarily result in genocide unless they lead to the next stage, dehumanization. When combined with hatred, symbols may be forced upon unwilling members of pariah groups: the yellow star for Jews under Nazi rule, the blue scarf for people from the Eastern Zone in Khmer Rouge Cambodia.

To combat symbolization, hate symbols can be legally forbidden (swastikas) as can hate speech. Group marking like gang clothing or tribal scarring can be outlawed, as well. The problem is that legal limitations will fail if unsupported by popular cultural enforcement. Though Hutu and Tutsi were forbidden words in Burundi until the 1980's, code-words replaced them. If widely supported, however, denial of symbolization can be powerful, as it was in Bulgaria, when many non-Jews chose to wear the yellow star, depriving it of its significance as a Nazi symbol for Jews. According to legend in Denmark, the Nazis did not introduce the yellow star because they knew even the King would wear it.

STAGE 3: DEHUMANIZATION

One group denies the humanity of the other group. Members of it are equated with animals, vermin, insects or diseases. Dehumanization overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder.

At this stage, hate propaganda in print and on hate radios is used to vilify the victim group. In combating this dehumanization, incitement to genocide should not be confused with protected speech. Genocidal societies lack constitutional protection for countervailing speech, and should be treated differently than in democracies. Hate radio stations should be shut down, and hate propaganda banned. Hate crimes and atrocities should be promptly punished.

STAGE 4: ORGANIZATION

Genocide is always organized, usually by the state, though sometimes informally (Hindu mobs led by local RSS militants) or by terrorist groups. Special army units or militias are often trained and armed. Plans are made for genocidal killings.

To combat this stage, membership in these militias should be outlawed. Their leaders should be denied visas for foreign travel. The U.N. should impose arms embargoes on governments and citizens of countries involved in genocidal massacres, and create commissions to investigate violations, as was done in post-genocide Rwanda.

STAGE 5: POLARIZATION

Extremists drive the groups apart. Hate groups broadcast polarizing propaganda. Laws may forbid intermarriage or social interaction. Extremist terrorism targets moderates, intimidating and silencing the center.

Prevention may mean security protection for moderate leaders or assistance to human rights groups. Assets of extremists may be seized, and visas for international travel denied to them. Coups d'état by extremists should be opposed by international sanctions.

STAGE 6: PREPARATION

Victims are identified and separated out because of their ethnic or religious identity. Death lists are drawn up. Members of victim groups are forced to wear identifying symbols. They are often segregated into ghettos, forced into concentration camps, or confined to a famine-struck region and starved.

At this stage, a Genocide Alert must be called. If the political will of the U.S., NATO, and the U.N. Security Council can be mobilized, armed international intervention should be prepared, or heavy assistance to the victim group in preparing for its self-defense. Otherwise, at least humanitarian assistance should be organized by the U.N. and private relief groups for the inevitable tide of refugees.

STAGE 7: EXTERMINATION

Extermination begins, and quickly becomes the mass killing legally called "genocide." It is "extermination" to the killers because they do not believe their victims to be fully human. When it is sponsored by the state, the armed forces often work with militias to do the killing. Sometimes the genocide results in revenge killings by groups against each other, creating the downward whirlpool-like cycle of bilateral genocide (as in Burundi).

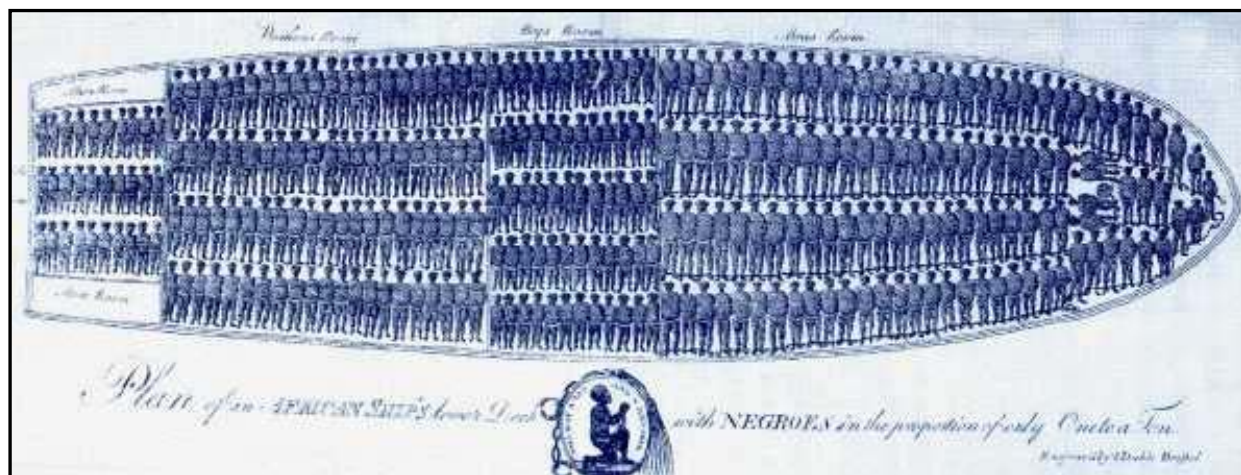
At this stage, only rapid and overwhelming armed intervention can stop genocide. Real safe areas or refugee escape corridors should be established with heavily armed international protection. The U.N. needs a Standing High Readiness Brigade or a permanent rapid reaction force, to intervene quickly when the U.N. Security Council calls it. For larger interventions, a multilateral force authorized by the U.N., led by NATO or a regional military power, should intervene. If the U.N. will not intervene directly, militarily powerful nations should provide the airlift, equipment, and financial means necessary for regional states to intervene with U.N. authorization. It is time to recognize that the law of humanitarian intervention transcends the interests of nation-states.

STAGE 8: DENIAL

Denial is the eighth stage that always follows a genocide. It is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres. The perpetrators of genocide dig up the mass graves, burn the bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses. They deny that they committed any crimes, and often blame what happened on the victims. They block investigations of the crimes, and continue to govern until driven from power by force, when they flee into exile. There they remain with impunity, like Pol Pot or Idi Amin, unless they are captured and a tribunal is established to try them.

The best response to denial is punishment by an international tribunal or national courts. There the evidence can be heard, and the perpetrators punished. Tribunals like the Yugoslav, Rwanda, or Sierra Leone Tribunals, an international tribunal to try the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and ultimately the International Criminal Court must be created. They may not deter the worst genocidal killers. But with the political will to arrest and prosecute them, some mass murderers may be brought to justice.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade



The slave ship "Brookes" built for 421 slaves; packed with 700

Unlike most twentieth-century cases of premeditated mass killing, the African slave trade was not undertaken by a single political force or military entity during the course of a few months or years. The transatlantic slave trade lasted for 400 years, from the 1450s to the 1860s, as a series of exchanges of captives reaching from the interior of sub-Saharan Africa to final purchasers in the Americas. It has been estimated that in the Atlantic slave trade, up to 12 million Africans were loaded and transported across the ocean under dreadful conditions. About 2 million victims died on the Atlantic voyage (the dreaded "Middle Passage") and in the first year in the Americas.

Source : Seymour Drescher [The Encyclopedia of Genocide](#)
"Slavery as Genocide" (ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1999) pp.517-518

Genocide of the Native Americans

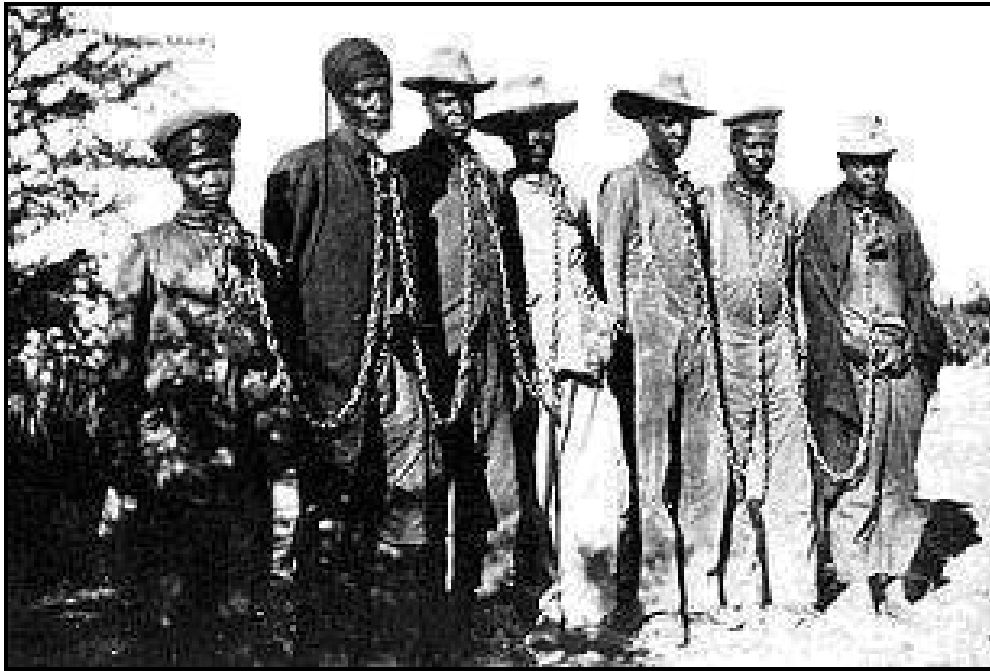


"The Trail of Tears" Painting by Robert Lindneux in the Woolaroc Museum, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

The genocide of peoples indigenous to the U.S. portion of North America proceeded along different tracks, each defined by the policies of the colonial power pursuing it. The colonization began in 1607 when England's Jamestown colonists arrived in present-day Virginia with instructions to "settle" the already heavily populated coastal area. Beginning in 1830, the U.S. undertook a policy of "removing" all native people from the area east of the Mississippi River. In the series of interments and thousand-mile forced marches which followed, entire peoples were decimated. The Cherokees, for instance, suffered 50 percent fatalities during the "Trail of Tears"; the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles and Creeks, 25 to 35 percent apiece.

Source: Ward Churchill [The Encyclopedia of Genocide](#) "Genocide of the Native Populations in the United States" (ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1999) pp.434-436

The Herero Genocide



Hereros captured by the German Military in 1904.

The Herero Genocide occurred between 1904-1907 in current day Namibia. The Hereros were herdsman who migrated to the region in the 17th and 18th centuries. After a German presence was established in the region in the 1800s, the Herero territory was annexed (in 1885) as a part of German South West Africa.

A series of uprisings against German colonialists, from 1904–1907, led to the extermination of approximately four-fifths of the Herero population. After Herero soldiers attacked German farmers, German troops implemented a policy to eliminate all Hereros from the region, including women and children.

The Armenian Genocide



Source: Henry Morgenthau, Sr. Ambassador Morgenthau's Story (Doubleday, Page & Co., 1918,) Fig. 50.

The Armenian Genocide was carried out by the "Young Turk" government of the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923. Starting in April 1915, Armenians in the Ottoman armies, serving separately in unarmed labor battalions, were removed and murdered. Of the remaining population, the adult and teenage males were separated from the deportation caravans and killed under the direction of Young Turk functionaries. Women and children were driven for months over mountains and desert, often raped, tortured, and mutilated. Deprived of food and water, they fell by the hundreds of thousands along the routes to the desert. Ultimately, more than half the Armenian population (1,500,000 people) was annihilated. Pontic Greeks and the Assyrians were also targeted by the Ottoman Turks.

The Ukrainian Genocide/The Great Famine



Source: The Artificial Famine/Genocide in Ukraine 1932-33 Web site
(www.infoukes.com/history/famine/index.html)

In 1932-33, Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, imposed the system of land management known as collectivization. This resulted in the seizure of all privately owned farmland and livestock. By 1932, much of the wheat crop was dumped on the foreign market to generate cash to aid Stalin's Five-Year Plan. The law demanded that no grain could be given to feed the peasants until a quota was met. By the spring of 1933, an estimated 25,000 people died every day in the Ukraine. Deprived of the food they had grown with their own hands, an estimated 7,000,000 persons perished due to the resulting famine in this area known as the breadbasket of Europe.

Source: The History Place - Genocide in the 20th Century Web site
(www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/genocide/stalin.htm)

Rape of Nanking



Source: China: Past & Present Web site (www.bergen.org/AAST/Projects/ChinaHistory)

In December of 1937, the Japanese Imperial Army marched into China's capital city of Nanking and proceeded to murder 300,000 out of the 600,000 civilians and soldiers in the city. After just four days of fighting, Japanese troops smashed into the city with orders issued to "kill all captives." The terrible violence - citywide burnings, stabbings, drownings, rapes, and thefts - did not cease for about six weeks. It is for the crimes against the women of Nanking that this tragedy is most notorious. The Japanese troops raped over 20,000 women, most of whom were murdered thereafter so they could never bear witness.

Source: The History Place - Genocide in the 20th Century Web site (www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/genocide/nanking.htm)

The Holocaust



Source: Teresa Swiebocka [Auschwitz: A History in Photographs](#) (Indiana University Press, 1993)

In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million. Most European Jews lived in countries that the Third Reich would occupy or influence during World War II. By 1945, close to two out of every three European Jews had been killed as part of the "Final Solution", the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe. Although Jews were the primary victims of Nazi racism, other victims included tens of thousands of Roma (Gypsies). At least 200,000 mentally or physically disabled people were murdered in the Euthanasia Program. As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Nazis persecuted and murdered millions of other people. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war were murdered or died of starvation, disease, neglect, or maltreatment. The Germans targeted the non-Jewish Polish intelligentsia for killing, and deported millions of Polish and Soviet citizens for forced labor in Germany or in occupied Poland. From the earliest years of the Nazi regime, homosexuals and others deemed to be behaving in a socially unacceptable way were persecuted. Thousands of political dissidents (including Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists) and religious dissidents (such as Jehovah's Witnesses) were also targeted. Many of these individuals died as a result of incarceration and maltreatment.

Source: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/>)

Mao Tse-tung's Cultural Revolution



Source: Ji-Li Jiang's Web site (www.jilijiang.com/red-scarf-girl)

October 1, 1949 marked Mao Tse-tung's proclamation of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese Communist Party launched numerous movements to systematically destroy the traditional Chinese social and political system. One of Mao's major goals was the total collectivization of the peasants. In 1958, he launched the "Great Leap Forward" campaign. This act was aimed at accomplishing economic and technical development of the country at a faster pace and with greater results. Instead, the "Great Leap Forward" destroyed the agricultural system, causing a terrible famine in which 27 million people starved to death.

Source : R.J. Rummel [The Encyclopedia of Genocide](#) "China, Genocide in: The Communist Anthill" (ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1999) pp.150

The Killing Fields: The Cambodian Genocide



Source: The History Wiz Web site (www.historywiz.com/cambodia.htm)

From 1975-1979, Pol Pot led the Khmer Rouge political party in a reign of violence, fear, and brutality over Cambodia. An attempt to form a Communist peasant farming society resulted in the deaths of 25% of the population from starvation, overwork, and executions. By 1975, the U.S. had withdrawn its troops from Vietnam, and Cambodia lost its American military support. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge seized control of Cambodia. Inspired by Mao's Cultural Revolution in Communist China, Pol Pot attempted to "purify" Cambodia of western culture, city life, and religion. Different ethnic groups and all those considered to be of the "old society", intellectuals, former government officials, and Buddhist monks were murdered. "What is rotten must be removed" was a slogan proclaimed throughout the Khmer Rouge era.

Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Source: The Genocide Factor Web site (www.genocidefactor.com/image6.htm)

In the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, conflict between the three main ethnic groups - the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims - resulted in genocide committed by the Serbs against Bosnian Muslims. In the late 1980's a Serbian named Slobodan Milosevic came to power. In 1992 acts of "ethnic cleansing" started in Bosnia, a mostly Muslim country where the Serb minority made up only 32% of the population. Milosevic responded to Bosnia's declaration of independence by attacking Sarajevo, where Serb snipers shot down civilians. The Bosnian Muslims were outgunned and the Serbs continued to gain ground. They systematically rounded up local Muslims and committed acts of mass murder, deported men and boys to concentration camps, and forced repopulation of entire towns. Serbs also terrorized Muslim families by using rape as a weapon against women and girls. Over 200,000 Muslim civilians were systematically murdered and 2,000,000 became refugees at the hands of the Serbs.

Source: The History Place - Genocide in the 20th Century Web site (www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/genocide/bosnia.htm)

The Rwandan Genocide



Source: Father Ryan High School Web site (www.fatherryan.org/holocaust/rwanda/picture.htm)

Beginning on April 6, 1994, groups of ethnic Hutu, armed mostly with machetes, began a campaign of terror and bloodshed which embroiled the Central African country of Rwanda. For about 100 days, the Hutu militias, known in Rwanda as *Interhamwe*, followed what evidence suggests was a clear and premeditated attempt to exterminate the country's ethnic Tutsi population. The Rwandan state radio, controlled by Hutu extremists, further encouraged the killings by broadcasting non-stop hate propaganda and even pinpointed the locations of Tutsis in hiding. The killings only ended after armed Tutsi rebels, invading from neighboring countries, managed to defeat the Hutus and halt the genocide in July 1994. By then, over one-tenth of the population, an estimated 800,000 persons, had been killed. The country's industrial infrastructure had been destroyed and much of its population had been dislocated.

Source: The History Place - Genocide in the 20th Century Web site (www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/genocide/rwanda.htm)

The Genocide in Darfur



The remains of the village of Jijira Adi Abbe in Darfur, western Sudan, after the government attack.

Violence and destruction are raging in the Darfur region of western Sudan. Since February 2003, government-sponsored militias known as the Janjaweed have conducted a calculated campaign of slaughter, rape, starvation and displacement in Darfur.

It is estimated that 400,000 people have died due to violence, starvation and disease. More than 2.5 million people have been displaced from their homes and over 200,000 have fled across the border to Chad. Many now live in camps lacking adequate food, shelter, sanitation, and health care.

The United States Congress and President George W. Bush recognized the situation in Darfur as "genocide." Darfur, "near Hell on Earth," has been declared the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today.

Source: Excerpt from the Save Darfur Coalition Web Site
(www.savedarfur.org)