



The "Non Violence" sculpture by Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd stands at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

GENOCIDES AND CONFLICTS in the 20th and 21st CENTURIES

world without
GENOCIDE

Genocides and Conflicts in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Preface

This book provides summaries of some of the mass atrocities that have occurred in the last hundred years. We have intentionally included conflicts that often are not studied in courses about genocide. We encourage readers to learn about these events for two reasons: first, when knowledge of these atrocities is not part of our shared history and memory, those who suffered, and their once-vibrant cultures and communities, are made invisible yet again. Second, it is important for us to realize the breadth of genocides across time and place. ‘Never again’ has come to mean ‘over and over again.’ Perhaps if we can recognize that genocide is a wide-ranging and repetitive scourge on the planet, we can someday reach a world without genocide.

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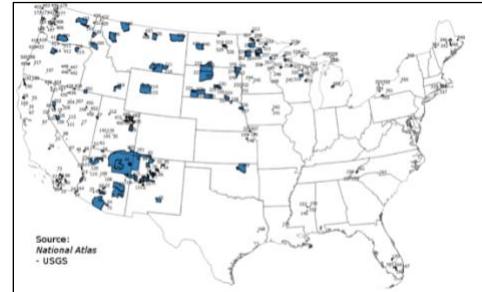
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Native Americans, 1492-Present

Where

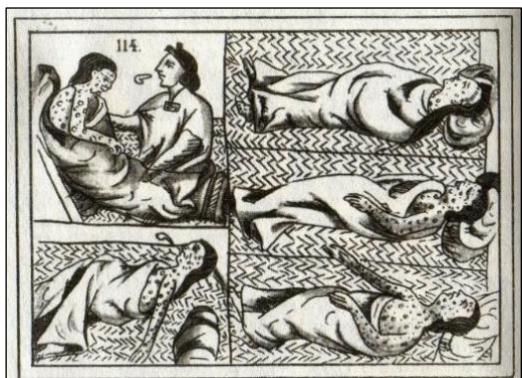
Native American *nations*, or tribes, originally spanned geographically from present-day Canada to Central America. At their peak, there were over 200 nations whose people spoke more than 200 languages and had their own unique cultures. The map on the right shows the location of tribes in the continental United States today.



Native Americans in the continental United States

When

European countries began sending explorers to the 'New World' after Columbus reached the Americas in 1492. The British and French established colonies in the early 1600s and many Europeans engaged in fur trading with the Native Americans.



Depiction of Native American smallpox victims

The Europeans brought **diseases** like smallpox, the plague, and measles that devastated the Native people who had no prior exposure or immunity to these diseases. An estimated 11 million deaths occurred between 1500-1900 from these causes.

The U.S. government began **forced removal** of Native Americans from their tribal lands in the 1830s. The Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, Creek, and Cherokee nations were removed from their homelands and forced onto lands set aside for them in present-day Oklahoma. Many made the 1200-mile journey on foot, some bound in chains, without adequate food, supplies, or the help promised by the government. Thousands perished along the way on this "Trail of Tears."

The federal government created the **reservation system** in 1851, forcing many Native Americans to move once again. Tribes were often given infertile land. Many hunting-based nations struggled to become farmers, with the result that starvation and disease became common. Native Americans were also encouraged or forced to wear European-style clothing, learn English, and convert to Christianity. These practices were mandatory for Native American children, who were forcibly removed from their families and sent to government-run or church-run boarding schools far from their families and their communities.

In 1887 the Dawes Act was passed to further encourage assimilation. Tribal land was converted into ownership by individuals. By doing this, Native Americans became subjected to state

authority rather than to tribal authority, and tribal affiliations were often terminated. This reduced or ended tribal power and decreased Native American lands by over half.

How

European diseases were most responsible for the massive decline in population. But fear, racism, and Manifest Destiny, a doctrine that U.S. expansion was destined by God, led the U.S. government to authorize over 1,500 wars, attacks, and raids on Native Americans, the most of any country in the world against indigenous people. Colonists used disease, removal, murder, and starvation to wipe out the Native people. In addition, tribes in the Great Lakes region depended on buffalo for physical, cultural, and spiritual sustenance. The buffalo population was deliberately killed. Buffalo had numbered over 30 million at the beginning of the 19th century; only a few hundred remained by the end of that century. One army colonel famously said, "Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone." Boarding schools, slaughter of the buffalo, allotment of tribal lands to Europeans, and forced relocation and assimilation were all used to eradicate Native American culture.



Chiricahua Apaches before and after boarding school

Response

The 20th century was a time of change for many Native American nations. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) was passed in 1934. It halted individual land allotment and returned some land to the tribes. The IRA acknowledged tribal authority and the right of self-governance, which led to the establishment of tribal constitutions and governments. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 gave Native Americans voting rights in the US for the first time, and the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 established Native Americans' right to free speech, the right to a trial by jury, and protection from unreasonable search and seizure, among other important civil rights.

Native Americans today face considerable challenges. They have the highest poverty rate of any ethnic group in America, with 27% of the population below the poverty line. There are currently 90,000 homeless or under-housed Native American families. Historical trauma and systemic economic disadvantages contribute to alcohol and drug abuse, and Native people have been the most affected of all U.S. groups by the Covid-19 pandemic. Native American women face epidemic levels of violence, nearly 90% of which is perpetrated by non-Natives. Jurisdictional issues make it difficult to prosecute white perpetrators who commit crimes against Native American women on reservations. Despite facing significant and persistent obstacles, however, Native Americans have achieved successes in many fields and have significantly increased their political representation in state and federal government.

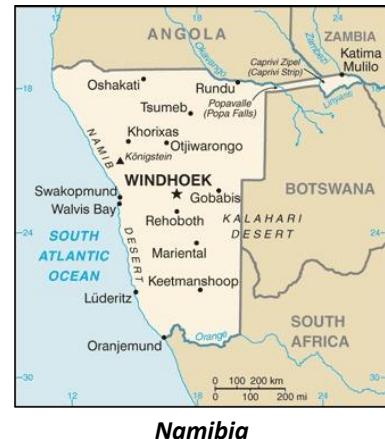
Namibia, 1904-1907

What

The genocide of the Herero and Nama in Africa, perpetrated by Germany during the Second Reich, is largely unknown. Germany had colonial control of an area known as German Southwest Africa. Between 1904 and 1907, German military forces committed genocide against that country's indigenous populations to gain control over the land.

The German government ordered the murder of the indigenous Herero and Nama people through battle, forced starvation, forced dehydration, sexual violence, life-threatening medical experiments, and incarceration in concentration camps. These actions became the blueprint for Germany's strategies to exterminate Jews and other targeted populations during the Holocaust of World War II, 1933-1945.

While record-keeping from the period makes it difficult to quantify the total loss of life, it is estimated that 80% of the Herero people and 50% of the Nama people perished over the three-year genocide.



Where

Namibia is located in southern Africa and is bordered by South Africa, Botswana, Angola, Zambia, and the Atlantic Ocean. The area was a German settler colony, and many Germans moved there in search of farmland at a time of scarcity of arable land in Germany.

In 1915, during World War I, South Africa began a military occupation of the country, officially ending Germany's colonial rule. South Africa maintained apartheid-style control over Namibia until Namibian independence was won in 1990 after extended and brutal conflict.

How

In 1904, leaders of the Herero attacked a German fort in the town of Okahandja in protest of German policies. Later that year, Nama leaders also organized an armed resistance to German rule. The German backlash was swift and cruel.

German colonial institutions reinforced an ideology of racial hierarchy before, during, and after the genocide. This ideology justified German control over much of Namibia's arable land, as well as the mass killings of indigenous groups that either directly resisted Germany's control or simply were occupying land that Germans wanted.

Many of the Herero and Nama people were removed from their land and sent to concentration camps where they were forced to perform hard labor with little food and water. The methods

of oppression used in these camps, as well as the racialized justification for violence and exploitation, were subsequently used by the Nazis in the Holocaust of the Jews thirty years later and were, in fact, led by many of the same perpetrators.

Response

Very little has been done in response to one of the most complete genocides in history. A significant portion of Namibia's land is still owned by the white descendants of German colonialists who perpetrated the genocide. Herero and Nama genocide descendants remain among the poorest and most disadvantaged people in Namibia.

Only recently, with Namibian independence in 1990, did the country begin grappling with steps for restitution. On April 28, 2021, Germany formally recognized the genocide and announced that it will pay Namibia over \$1.3 billion in reconstruction and development aid. While this is a positive step, Namibian activists and Herero cultural leaders rejected the deal. They have called for Germany to make more direct reparations and to return stolen land. There is also dissension between Herero and Nama descendants' organizations and the Namibian government regarding the rightful representation of the descendants' voices in the negotiations with the German government.

Updated 2021

The Armenian Genocide, 1915-1923

Where

The Ottoman Empire existed in the Balkans region, between Europe and the Middle East, from 1300-1923, and Armenians lived in the region since the 5th century. During the time of the genocide, the Ottoman Empire bordered Bulgaria and Greece in the west, the Mediterranean Sea in the south and southwest, the Black Sea in the north, Iraq and Syria in the southwest, and the Russian Empire in the east and northeast.



Ottoman Empire

When

Armenians, who were among the world's earliest Christians, were treated as second-class citizens in the predominantly Muslim Ottoman Empire. Although Armenians were allowed the freedom to practice their faith, they were often blamed for economic and political misfortunes that befell the Ottoman Empire, and mass persecution of Armenian citizens was a regular occurrence.

In 1908 a reformist, nationalist party called the "Young Turks" was founded, and in 1913 they overthrew the government with the aim of creating a united Turkish and Islamic empire.

The genocide of the Armenians occurred under this nationalistic, anti-Christian, anti-Armenian fervor. Most of the killing took place during World War I, 1915 to 1918, but it continued until 1923 when the newly-founded Republic of Turkey had become virtually free of all Armenians.

During the genocide, the majority of the Armenian people were either killed outright or "ethnically cleansed" (removed by force) from their ancestral homeland; others escaped to neighboring countries; and some remained in the newly-established Soviet Republic of Armenia. Laws were later enacted to prevent displaced Armenians from returning to their former homes.



Deportations of Armenians

How

By 1914, Ottoman authorities had created an empire-wide propaganda campaign in which Armenians were presented as a threat to Ottoman nationalism and state security. Armenian leaders and intellectuals were arrested, leaving the Armenian people without leadership, governmental representation, and with no defense against the radical nationalists. Armenians were discharged from military service, subjected to confiscation of their property and assets,

and then deported from their homes. The Ottoman military forced them to march for hundreds of miles without food or water into the desert of modern-day Syria. Hundreds of thousands of people died on these forced marches. People were massacred indiscriminately: men and women, old and young. Mass shootings occurred at random. Pillaging, persecution, torture, and rape and other sexual abuses were widespread.

Despite international recognition of these atrocities, there was no intervention to stop the genocide.

Response

Contemporary scholars estimate that as many as 1.5 million Armenians were killed in the genocide, nearly the entire Armenian population, along with approximately 500,000 Assyrians and 350,000 Anatolian Greeks. Thousands of Armenians who survived torture and death became displaced. The displaced survivors were largely unable to return to their former homes because their land and property had been seized and now belonged to the new Turkish government or to the Soviet state of Armenia.

To this day, the Turkish government's official stance is that the deaths of Armenians during their 'relocation' cannot be labeled 'genocide,' essentially denying the intentional nature of the atrocities. This denial has dramatically hindered Turkish foreign relations and is currently a factor in Turkey's restriction from membership in the European Union. Most scholars around the world acknowledge that the tragedy was, indeed, genocide, and many nations also have acknowledged the genocide. In the United States, fully 49 of the 50 states have designated the conflict as a genocide, as have both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

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The Ottoman Christian Genocide, 1915-1923

What

The Ottoman Empire, led by the radical nationalist 'Young Turks,' carried out a genocide between 1915-1923. While Armenians were the most affluent and widely persecuted group, perpetrators sought to purge the Ottoman Empire of all Christian minorities. This included Assyrians and Greeks. Scholars estimate that 1.5 million Armenians were slaughtered, but the total death toll is over 2 million people.



The term 'Assyrian' encompasses the Chaldeans, Nestorians, Syriacs, Arameans, and more. Before 1915, between 500,000 and 600,000 Assyrians lived in the Ottoman Empire. They were persecuted due to anti-Christian hatred and to their history of seeking independence from the Empire.

In 1821, the Greek War of Independence established a Greek state that was separate from the Ottoman Empire. This war, after decades of Greek revolts, turned many Ottoman Turks against the Greek people. At the dawn of the 20th century, nearly 2 million Orthodox Greeks remained in the Ottoman Empire. Religious and ethnic tensions escalated during Greco-Turkish conflicts in the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), leading many Turks to see Ottoman Greeks as accomplices to the runaway Greek state.

Where

In the 1500s, the vast Ottoman Empire spanned Asia Minor, much of the Middle East, southeastern Europe, and North Africa. However, by the 20th century, the Empire was experiencing a steady loss of territory to other regional powers. Christian minorities were publicly blamed for the Empire's decline and were persecuted as a result.

Before 1915, Christians, including the Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontic and Anatolian Greeks, were dispersed throughout the Ottoman Empire. During the genocide, the majority of their populations were displaced, either by forced deportations to the Mesopotamian desert or by mass exodus to escape persecution.

How

The genocide of the Assyrians was similar to that of the Armenians. Hundreds of thousands of Assyrians were deported to the desert in death marches, during which many died from starvation or disease. Women were raped and enslaved. Many villages or deportation convoys were massacred.

In the Greek case, Greco-Turkish military conflicts were used as a pretext for mass-deportations. During the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922), Turkish forces committed mass rapes and civilian massacres when they overtook Greek villages or cities.

Between 250,000 and 500,000 Assyrians and around 350,000 Greeks were killed during the Ottoman Christian Genocide. Hundreds of thousands more were displaced.



Christian deportation convoy

Response

After the genocide, the international community was largely distracted in the wake of World War I. It was not until the late 20th century that the Armenian genocide began to gain global recognition. The worldwide Armenian diaspora, a relatively cohesive group of about 11 million people, has successfully pursued advocacy to gain recognition.

In contrast, the Greeks and Assyrians have less organized international diasporas. As a result, only 9 of the 32 countries that recognize the Armenian Genocide have also recognized the persecution of other Christian minorities.

Ample documentation proves that all Christians in the Ottoman Empire were submitted to a systematic campaign of extermination. Still, Assyrians and Greeks struggle against false narratives, a lack of political interest, and international silence.

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The Holodomor, 1932-1933

What

The Holodomor was a man-made famine in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic that occurred between 1932 and 1933. Millions of Ukrainians died of starvation in a peacetime catastrophe unprecedented in the history of Ukraine.

In 1929 the Soviet Union had begun policies of mass agriculture and forced farm collectivization. These policies created a strong political backlash among the majority of land-owning Ukrainian farmers. Stalin enacted conditions designed to break the will of the Ukrainian protestors and to force them to accept collectivization. Stalin's strategies of forced starvation resulted in the deaths of over a million Ukrainians.



Where

Ukraine is a former Soviet republic that has been an independent country since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. For centuries Ukraine was an integral part of the Russian Empire and later of the Soviet Union. Ukraine's ties with Russia include language, religion, economics, culture, and geopolitics.

Control over Ukraine was key for the Soviet Union's development and expansion under Joseph Stalin, USSR dictator-leader from 1924 - 1953. Ukraine was known as the 'breadbasket' of the region for its rich farmland and productive harvests that were essential for feeding the Soviet people.

The Holodomor, through forced starvation of Ukrainian farmers, gave Stalin control over Ukraine that the Soviet Union held until its collapse in 1991.



Holodomor victims

How

Through the policies of forced farm collectivization, the Soviet government seized all privately-owned farmland and livestock in Ukraine. Fully 80% of the Ukrainians were traditional and independent farmers, and this had a devastating effect on them. These policies were met with resistance from a sizable proportion of Ukrainian farmers who had built their livelihood around privatized agricultural production.

Stalin saw the farmers' resistance as a political and economic threat to the Soviet Union. He doubled down on the policies, creating forced starvation to cement control over the region. Armed brigades of Soviet troops forcibly confiscated land, livestock, and other property, while evicting entire families from their homes and sending thousands by train to near-certain death in Siberia. Stalin also mandated that a certain percent of food produced in Ukraine be exported into the Soviet Union. Food was heavily regulated, and any farmers found taking food from the fields where they worked faced execution.

At the peak of the famine, about 25,000 Ukrainians died every day.

Response

For decades, under Soviet rule, Ukrainians could not openly acknowledge the national trauma of the orchestrated famine. However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine and over a dozen other countries have recognized the Holodomor as a genocide of the Ukrainian people carried out by the Soviet Union.

Ukraine has many memorials and events to commemorate the Holodomor and the millions of people that died during the famine. Although the United States has memorials in Washington D.C. and in Chicago, and Ukrainians in communities throughout the United States hold events on November 28, Holodomor Remembrance Day, many Americans remain unaware of the tragedy of the Holodomor.

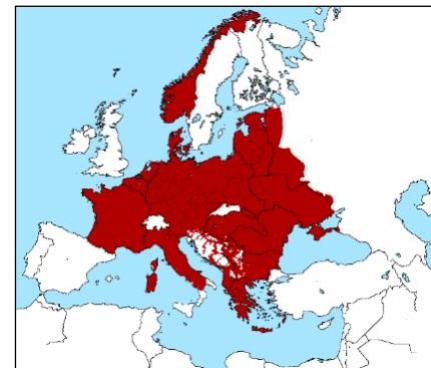
The 2019 docu-drama "Mr. Jones" is one of the first major films about the Holodomor. The film focuses on the true story of Welsh journalist Gareth Jones, who traveled to Ukraine in 1933 and attempted to raise global awareness about Stalin's man-made famine. His efforts were undermined by Walter Duranty of *The New York Times*, who received a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting about the Soviet Union. Duranty was influenced by a major Soviet disinformation campaign and he denied the famine in his reporting, effectively preventing any potential life-saving intervention. There have been many calls to revoke Duranty's Pulitzer Prize posthumously. *The New York Times* wrote that his articles denying the famine constituted "some of the worst reporting to appear in this newspaper."

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The Holocaust, 1933 - 1945

Where

The Nazi party came to power in Germany in January 1933. They targeted Jews and others in Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, and the USSR for extermination in an effort to expand 'lebensraum,' or living space available for people they designated as 'Aryans,' or true Germans. Ultimately the Nazis committed to the 'Final Solution,' a planned program to exterminate the nine million Jews of Europe.



Nazi-occupied territories

When

Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and almost immediately began enacting anti-Semitic laws aimed to eliminate Jews' rights. The Nazi party blamed the Jews for many of Germany's problems (a crumbling economy, the loss of World War I, costly reparations for that war), wanted land for German expansion (*lebensraum*), believed in the German master race (Aryan supremacy), and created a "Final Solution" – eliminating the 9 million Jews in Europe.

Jews were the primary targets of Nazi extermination, but the Nazis also targeted others because of their perceived "inferiority:" Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

World War II ended in 1945 when the Germans surrendered to the Allied Forces.

How

The devastation of World War I had taken a toll on Europe, leaving open wounds for a second world conflict. Germany's economy worsened. Hyperinflation caused money to become virtually worthless, and families even burned banknotes to cook or to keep warm. Hitler, appointed in 1933, was chosen as *Time Magazine's* Man of the Year in 1938 for his successful efforts in improving Germany's economy.

At the same time that the German economy was improving, the Nazis were enacting discriminatory and then exterminatory policies against Jews.

The Einsatzgruppen, which were mobile killing squads, murdered more than 1.5 million people in a 'Holocaust by bullets,' largely carried out against Jews in occupied areas to the east of



Children in a Holocaust concentration camp

Germany. The Einsatzgruppen marched victims to deserted fields, ordered them to dig massive graves, and shot them into trenches.

Jews throughout Nazi-occupied territories were concentrated together in large urban ghettos, where death by starvation and disease became rampant. More than 42,500 concentration camps were established at which Jews were used as forced laborers by the German government and by German companies, many of which are still active today.

Dr. Josef Mengele and other physicians conducted horrific medical experiments on prisoners at a number of concentration camps.

Nazi leadership met at Wannsee, Germany in 1942 and approved the ‘final solution’ to the Jewish problem, as it was called. The solution was to exterminate Jews in massive numbers by using Zyklon-B, a poisonous gas, and then to eliminate the bodies in large crematoria.

Jews were sent from throughout Europe, including from France, the Netherlands, Denmark, and other countries, to six extermination camps, among them Auschwitz and Treblinka. More than 1.1 million people were killed at Auschwitz alone, a million of whom were Jews.

Fully one-fourth of all Jews who were murdered, meaning 1.5 million people, were children.

In the last months of the war, SS guards forced prisoners on “death marches” to hide the living evidence of the camps, and the Nazis destroyed thousands of pages of documents.

It should be noted and remembered that everything that the Nazis did was legal. Laws were passed at every level, from the smallest of cities to the national government, making these heinous and inhuman practices legal under the laws of the time.

Germany surrendered to the Allies (France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on May 8, 1945.

Response

After the Allies liberated the concentration camps, many prisoners were unable to return home because of the devastation that had occurred throughout Europe, ongoing antisemitism, or conditions that left them unable to travel. Millions of survivors were held in displaced persons (DP) camps for several years. The camps transformed into centers of culture and community. Hundreds of thousands of Jews eventually emigrated to Israel, Argentina, Australia, the United States, and other countries after the war.

The Holocaust utterly devastated Jewish communities throughout Europe. Six million Jews, almost two out of every three Jews in Europe, were murdered, their cultures, families, talents, and lives gone forever.

Nuremberg Trials

About

Nuremberg Trials refers to the International Military Tribunal that was held following World War II by the Allied Forces to prosecute German officials most responsible for the Holocaust and other war-time atrocities. The trials took place between November 20, 1945 and October 1, 1946 in Nuremberg, Germany. Judges and prosecutors represented four countries, all victors of the war: The Soviet Union, Great Britain, the United States, and France.

Indictments were brought against 24 major war criminals and seven criminal organizations. These indictments included charges for participation in a conspiracy for crimes against peace, planning and waging wars of aggression, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Of the 24 accused, 12 received the death penalty (two of whom committed suicide), four served 10-20 years in prison, three received lifetime imprisonment, and three were acquitted.

There were hundreds of additional trials after the war. Prosecutions continue today as aging perpetrators are found in countries around the world.

The trials ultimately yielded the Nuremberg Principles which defined war crimes. The trials set precedent for the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Abolition of the Statute of Limitations on War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, and the Geneva Conventions.

These trials set precedent for the later UN tribunals and the International Criminal Court to prosecute perpetrators of genocides and crimes against humanity.

Statistics

- 24 accused
- 19 convicted
- 3 acquitted



Nuremberg Trials

Ben Ferencz, Past and Present

Ben Ferencz, at age 27, prosecuted the worst perpetrators of the Nazi Einsatzgruppen, the mobile killing squads responsible for the deaths of 1.5 million Jews. He received convictions for every one of the accused. This was the first trial of his life.

These prosecutions occurred at what are known as the Subsequent Nuremberg Trials, a dozen additional military trials administered at Nuremberg only by the United States.

Mr. Ferencz went on to a lifetime of advocacy for measures that would enhance security for innocent people around the world, bring restitution to those whose lives were grievously affected by evil, and to end impunity for perpetrators. He was a lifelong supporter of efforts to create the International Criminal Court, formed by the Rome Statute of 1998 and operating since 2002 to enhance justice around the world.

Mr. Ferencz gave the final remarks for the prosecution at the International Criminal Court's first case in 2002, harkening back to his words in 1946 that convicted the worst of the Nazis and realizing his dream of a permanent international tribunal.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "The moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice." Ben Ferencz has helped to bend that arc.



Ben Ferencz

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The Genocide of the Roma, 1933 – 1945

What

The ‘Porajmos,’ which translates to ‘the devouring,’ is the term used by the Roma to describe the Holocaust. During World War II, Roma people across Nazi-occupied Europe were subjected to a systematic campaign of genocide. Today, the Holocaust of the Jewish people is widely commemorated, yet the plight of the Roma is much less discussed.

The Roma, also called Travelers and derogatorily called ‘Gypsies,’ are a nomadic people with origins in northern India. They are traditionally craftspeople and performers. Roma have faced centuries of discrimination in Europe based on ethnicity, stereotypes of criminality, and poverty.



Nazi-occupied territories

When

After Hitler’s rise to power in Germany in 1933, the Nazi regime used propaganda to amplify existing negative stereotypes of the Roma. They categorized Roma as ‘subhuman’ and ‘unworthy of life.’ During the mid-1930s, the Nazis banned Roma from certain jobs, subjected them to forced sterilization, and forbade inter-marriage between Roma and other Germans.

Before 1939, between 1 and 1.5 million Roma lived in Europe. Nazi idealogues saw this as a ‘plague’ on Aryan society. In 1942, the Third Reich officially launched a campaign to exterminate the Roma, which continued until the end of World War II in 1945.

How

Nazi officers imprisoned, deported, and sent thousands of Roma to concentration camps. Many were murdered in gas chambers. At least 19,000 Roma were killed at the Auschwitz killing center alone. Others were murdered at random by the Einsatzgruppen, Hitler’s mobile killing squads. In total, roughly 500,000 Roma were killed between 1933 and 1945.



Roma women and children

Response

After World War II, Roma in Europe struggled to gain recognition for their persecution. The genocide of the Roma was not prosecuted at the Nuremberg Trials, and international attention was largely focused on atrocities perpetrated against the Jewish community. Germany did not officially recognize the genocide of the Roma until 1982.

Today, 10-12 million Roma live in Europe, and about 1 million live in America. They often struggle to access vital services such as education, housing, and safe drinking water. Roma are subjected to widespread discrimination and violence, which rarely makes the news. They enjoy little support from international watch groups or governments. In 2015, the United Nations launched global efforts to address the situation of the Roma and to protect and enhance their human rights.

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Guatemala, 1960-1996

Where

Guatemala is located in Central America and is roughly the size of Tennessee, with almost 2.5 times that state's population. It is bordered by Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. The capital is Guatemala City.



When

Coup d'état

In 1951, Jacobo Arbenz was democratically elected as president of Guatemala. He was politically liberal, and he initiated plans for indigenous people to have access to land. The Arbenz government's move to nationalize the United Fruit Company, a major American multinational corporation, was seen as a communist threat for failing to back American capitalist interests in the country. In 1954, U.S.-backed forces, led by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, ousted Arbenz from power and declared Castillo to be president of Guatemala. Castillo soon reversed land reforms that had benefited poor farmers and he removed voting rights for illiterate Guatemalans. That day marked a turning point in Guatemala and the beginning of bloody revolution across Latin America. Over the next four decades, hundreds of thousands of people were killed in guerrilla attacks, government crackdowns, and civil wars.

Military Rule

From 1966-1970, civilian rule was restored to Guatemala when Cesar Mendez was elected president. However, Mendez acted as a puppet of the military and was responsible for 10,000 civilian assassinations during his presidency. In 1970, Carlos Arana was elected, thus beginning a decade of direct military rule. During this time Guatemala was placed under a state of siege with increased military control, exterminations of opposing parties, and escalating violence.

In 1982, General Efrain Rios Montt seized power in a military coup. He annulled the 1965 constitution, dissolved Congress, and suspended political parties. At this time that the guerilla movement also formed the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Montt used various tactics, including a scorched-earth policy and the creation of brutal civilian defense patrols, to aid the military in reclaiming guerrilla territory. The extreme violence during this time led to over 200,000 deaths and 1.5 million displaced people. Over 80% of the victims were indigenous Mayans.

In 1994, peace talks between URNG rebels and the government began, and in December of 1996, President Alvaro Arzu and URNG leaders signed peace accords.

How

The military used murder, torture, eviction of people from their land, forced disappearances, and rape and other forms of sexual violence in their battle against civilians. The Guatemalan government targeted indigenous communities because the people were felt to be recruiting grounds for guerrillas. The government also forcibly 'disappeared' over 40,000 Guatemalans, including 5,000 children. Students, intellectuals, priests, leftists, and anyone who opposed the government or military was taken from their homes or right off the street, never to be seen again.

Response

In 2010, Guatemala elected Claudia Paz y Paz as attorney general. She was the first woman to hold the position and was responsible for beginning the justice process against perpetrators of the genocide, including indicting former dictator General Efraim Rios Montt on charges of genocide for his role in the 'scorched earth' campaign, getting rape to be charged as a war crime, arresting military officials and powerful gang members, and extraditing drug traffickers to the United States.

In 2014, the Constitutional Court forced Paz y Paz out of her position, marking a step backward for the country.

(She received the 2016 'Outstanding Upstander' award from World Without Genocide. See photos from the ceremony at <http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/programs/a-world-of-upstanders/claudia-paz-y-paz-2016>)

Guatemala has made some progress in prosecuting human rights and corruption cases with the help of the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). However, in 2019 the CICIG mandate was not renewed, thereby making it unclear as to whether the 60-plus current cases will continue to be prosecuted.

Currently, violence and extortion by criminal organizations remain a major problem in Guatemala, due to criminals' high level of impunity. Guatemala also has the world's third highest rate of femicide, and gang-related and other violence has forced thousands of Guatemalans, including unaccompanied youth, to seek asylum in the United States.



Rios Montt on trial

Burundi, 1972

Where

Burundi is a landlocked country in east-central Africa, bordered by Rwanda, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 1972, Burundi's population was estimated at 3.6 million. The country is composed of three ethnic communities: the Tutsis (14% of the population), the Hutus (85%), and the Twa (1%).

The Kingdom of Burundi dates back to the 1500s. Until colonization, Burundi's ethnic groups enjoyed relatively equal positions in society. In 1890, the country was colonized by Germany, before being occupied by Belgium in 1916. Belgian colonizers established an ethnic power hierarchy to facilitate colonial rule. The Tutsi minority held power over the Hutu majority.

After regaining independence from colonial rule in 1962, the Tutsi minority maintained political and social power. This structure inspired resentment among many ethnic Hutus.



Burundi

When

Hutu resentment of Tutsi rule became violent on April 29, 1972. Bands of Hutu radicals and Mulelists, Congolese exiles, led a Hutu uprising armed with poisoned machetes, clubs, automatic weapons, and gasoline bombs. Between 800 and 1,200 Tutsi civilians and some Hutu moderates were killed.

The Tutsi government, led by President Michel Micombero, reacted harshly to the insurrection. Within 24 hours, the government initiated a wave of brutal counterattacks. President Micombero called the violence a Hutu plot to exterminate all Tutsis, presenting a false death toll of 50,000 civilians. This was used to incite genocide by amplifying Tutsi fear that if they lost their dominant position in society, they would be exterminated by the Hutu majority.

How

In the four months following the Hutu insurrection, Tutsi government forces pursued a systematic campaign of genocide against all elite or educated Hutus. The leaders of the genocide were all Tutsi-Hima and part of the post-colonial ruling Parti de l'Union et du Progrès National.

These leaders sought to eliminate all Hutu threats to the Tutsi regime and to establish their power in the eyes of their rival Tutsi sub-group: the Tutsi-Banyaruguru. Their extermination campaign received support from the party's violent youth wing, the Jeunesses Révolutionnaires Rwagasore (JRR). Many Tutsi civilians also joined the violence.

Tutsi soldiers abducted or killed all educated Hutus they could find, even school children. Hutu university students were often beaten to death by classmates. Hutu religious leaders, school directors, teachers, civil servants, some semi-skilled workers, and all Hutu politicians were beaten, shot, or imprisoned.

Response

By August 1972, almost all educated Hutu were dead or had fled to neighboring countries. The genocide claimed between 150,000 and 300,000 Hutu lives.

The Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, and the United States have been criticized for failing to intervene and curb the violence. UN relief was provided to displaced persons, but much of it was provided after the atrocities had subsided.



People fleeing 2016 violence in Burundi

Today, few people know about the events of 1972. The atrocities were of little geopolitical interest to western powers, and Burundi's authorities made every effort to deny entry to journalists after the genocide. In cases where the genocide has been remembered, western news has often mischaracterized the atrocities. Some of the minimal academic literature on the subject is poorly researched or analyzed.

Nonetheless, the genocide contributed to lasting inter-ethnic distrust and to Burundi's 12-year civil war. Scholar René Lemarchand even links the genocide to the birth of the Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu (FNL); a radical party intent on stripping all power from the Tutsi minority. Today, Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world and has recently suffered massive human rights violations under the leadership of former Hutu President Nkurunziza. International watch groups have raised alarms about renewed ethnic violence and the potential for another genocide in Burundi.

Cambodia, 1975-1979

Where

Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia, bordered by Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. The capital is Phnom Penh. In the years preceding the genocide, the population of Cambodia was just over 7 million people, almost all of whom were Buddhists.



When

Cambodia gained its independence from France in 1953 and Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk took control of the country. When the Vietnam War began a few years later, Sihanouk maintained neutrality in the war by supporting both Communist North Vietnam and the Viet Cong as well as the South Vietnamese Army, which was aided by the United States.

In 1970, Prince Sihanouk was deposed in a military coup led by his own Cambodian Lieutenant-General Lon Nol. Lon Nol was made president of the new Khmer Republic, and Prince Sihanouk and his followers joined forces with a communist guerilla organization known as the Khmer Rouge.

The Khmer Rouge guerilla movement was originally founded in 1960. The movement's leader, Pol Pot, was an admirer of Maoist (Chinese) communism, and he envisioned the creation of a new Cambodia based on the Maoist-Communist model. He aimed to deconstruct Cambodia back to a primitive "Year Zero," where all citizens would participate in rural work projects and Western innovations and practices would be destroyed.



A victim of the Khmer Rouge

In 1970, the Khmer Rouge went to war with the U.S.-backed Khmer Republic, under Lieutenant-General Lon Nol. Lon Nol's government assumed a pro-Western, anti-Communist stance and demanded the withdrawal of Viet Cong forces from Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge guerillas deposed Lon Nol's government in 1975, and within days of taking power, the Khmer Rouge embarked on a mission to reconstruct (or deconstruct) Cambodia on the communist model of Mao's China.

Cambodians were forcibly removed from their homes to work in labor camps or collectivized farms. Those who could not make the journey, which occurred on foot and in the tropical heat, were killed on the spot, as were any who might oppose the system, including intellectuals, educated people (even anybody who wore glasses), professionals, monks, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese or Thai, and Cambodians with Chinese, Vietnamese, or Thai ancestry.

Cambodians who survived the purges and marches faced virtual slave labor, starvation, injury, torture, and disease. Those who became unable to work were killed as expenses to the system. Female members of ethnic minorities were targeted by widespread sexual violence. They were raped, sexually mutilated, and forced to marry ethnic Khmer partners against their will. The forced marriages represented an effort to increase the population, to exert maximum control, and to expand the Khmer Rouge numbers.

These conditions continued until Vietnam ousted the Khmer Rouge government in 1979. Civilian deaths totaled over 2 million people.

How

Lon Nol abandoned neutrality and established close ties with the US and South Vietnam. Cambodia became a battlefield. Up to 750,000 Cambodians were killed by American B-52 bombers in American-targeted bombing against the Viet Cong in Cambodia from 1970-1974. Cambodians became disenchanted with the West, and Pol Pot's communism brought images of hope, promise, and tranquility for Cambodia. By 1975, Pol Pot's force had grown to over 700,000, and within days of the Khmer Rouge takeover, extremist policies of collectivization, government confiscation of property, and communal labor were put into motion.



The 10th session of the ECCC Plenary

Response

At the time, the US was concerned with Cambodia only in relation to the Vietnam War, which had claimed American lives and created enormous domestic division. The US had little interest in the regime or the victims of the Khmer Rouge. When Vietnam took control in 1979, the US offered military support to Khmer Rouge forces in exile, who swore opposition to Vietnam and communism. When the Vietnamese withdrew in 1989, Cambodia was left in ruins, with a failed economy and no professionals, engineers, or planners left alive to reorganize the country.

The United Nations established the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) in 1994, a unique hybrid court that combined international law and international legal experts with Cambodian law and Cambodian experts. The jurisdiction of this court was to adjudicate only senior leaders accused of the gravest responsibility for the crimes. Trials began in 2007, nearly thirty years after the killings ceased. Finding justice has been difficult in part because the government remains largely made up of former Khmer Rouge members and considerable efforts have been made to protect them. In addition, because so much time has elapsed, many of the likely suspects are no longer alive or are unable to stand trial. Only three accused perpetrators have been convicted.

Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)

About

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) was established in 2001 in response to the allegations of atrocity crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge, the ruling government of Cambodia, also known as Democratic Kampuchea, between 1975 and 1979. The Cambodian government sought the assistance of the United Nations to bring perpetrators to justice through a hybrid tribunal that utilized both domestic and international law. The tribunal operates in Cambodia, though independently of both the Cambodian government and the United Nations. A domestic court with Cambodian legal proceedings, the ECCC is comprised of both Cambodian and international lawyers and judges who work to enforce both domestic and international laws.

The ECCC's jurisdiction is limited to Cambodian atrocity crimes committed between April 17, 1975 and January 6, 1979. The court agreed to try senior leaders of the Democratic Kampuchea and "those believed to be most responsible for grave violations of national and international law." Under Cambodian law, the ECCC jurisdiction includes cases of murder, torture, and religious persecution. Jurisdiction under international law extends to crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva conventions, destruction of cultural property, and crimes against internationally-protected persons.

Cases

The first investigation began in 2007 and nine individuals were accused.



Kaing Guek Eav

The first case completed at the ECCC was that of **Kaing Guek Eav**, known as "Comrade Duch" during his administration of the infamous Tuol Sleng prison and the Santebal, a branch of internal security for the Khmer Rouge. He was indicted in July 2007 and went to trial in September 2009. The indictment contained multiple counts of violations of Cambodian law and international charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes. He was convicted on all counts in July 2010 and sentenced to thirty-five years in prison and the sentence was later extended to life imprisonment.

Nuon Chea was Deputy Secretary to Pol Pot and in charge of Phnom Penh's S-21 torture and interrogation center. He is the highest-ranking official of the Khmer Rouge to be tried and is alleged to have played a crucial role in the genocide during his tenure. He was indicted in September 2010. In March 2019, he was found guilty on violations of the Geneva convention, crimes against humanity, and genocide of both the Vietnamese and Cham groups. This ruling was on appeal when Nuon Chea died later in 2019. After his death, the Supreme Court terminated his appeal. However, the status of his innocence and conviction remains unknown, as there is no precedent.



Nuon Chea



Khieu Samphan

Khieu Samphan's trial began in June 2011. Khieu was a high-ranking official and succeeded Pol Pot as leader of the Khmer Rouge in 1987. He was indicted in September 2010 on multiple counts of violations of Cambodian law and of international charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide. In March 2019, Khieu was convicted of crimes against humanity, violations of the Geneva convention, and genocide of the Vietnamese. He was sentenced to life in prison.

Ieng Thirith, the highest-ranking woman in the Khmer Rouge, was the Minister of Social Affairs. The wife of Ieng Sary and sister-in-law of Pol Pot, Ieng was indicted in 2010 on multiple violations of Cambodian law and on international charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide. She was found unfit to stand trial based on expert testimony that she suffered from dementia. She was released from detention on September 16, 2012. Victims' groups protested the decision to release her. She died on August 22, 2015.



Ieng Thirith

The four other individuals accused include Im Chaem, Yim Tith, Meas Muth, and Ao An. Im Chaem's case was dismissed in 2017 because it was determined that she was outside of the court's jurisdiction. Similarly, in Yim Tith and Meas Muth's cases, investigating judges have filed conflicting reports as to whether they believe each individual is within the court's jurisdiction. Due to these conflicting reports, a final decision regarding their trials and status has yet to be determined. Proceedings for the trial of Ao An were terminated in August 2020.

Laos, 1975-Present

Where

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR), or Laos, is a Communist state in Southeast Asia, bordered by Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Myanmar, and the Mekong River. It is rich with gold, silver, tin, gypsum, gemstones, and rubber. The population numbers about 7.6 million; the Lao are the majority ethnic group, composing 53% of the population.

The Hmong are the third largest ethnic group, composing 9% of the population.



Laos

In 1954, Laos gained independence from France and became a constitutional monarchy. Civil war soon broke out between right-wing royalists and the Communist Party, the Pathet Lao. The US wanted to prevent the Pathet Lao from taking control of the country, so the CIA trained and supported a small resistance force known as the 'Secret Army,' comprised mostly of ethnic Hmong. At its peak, the Secret Army had 30,000 soldiers.

In 1975, the Pathet Lao seized power and the U.S. military withdrew from Laos, leaving Secret Army soldiers defenseless. Up to a third of Laos's Hmong population fled to Thailand. The Pathet Lao imprisoned Secret Army leaders and soldiers in 're-education camps.' Prisoners faced forced labor, political indoctrination, and starvation.

Meanwhile, communist soldiers invaded Hmong villages, where they raped, arrested, and slaughtered civilians, sparing only those Hmong who had supported the Pathet Lao. Tens of thousands of Hmong, now known as the 'Jungle Hmong,' fled to the jungle and engaged in sporadic resistance against the government. They have lived in scattered groups and faced brutal attacks from the Lao military for over four decades.

How

Since the end of the civil war, the Laotian government has denied the existence of the Jungle Hmong while also giving military orders to shoot them on sight. To avoid being identified and massacred, the Jungle Hmong often stayed in temporary shelters for very short periods. They were therefore unable to grow crops or to have access to basic education, medical care, or sanitation. The media and the government characterize them as armed rebels, but the surviving Jungle Hmong are mostly starving women and children, estimated at 3,000-17,000, without the capacity for organized resistance.

Over the years, many Jungle Hmong have surrendered to Lao authorities. Many of them were arrested and held without charge in appalling conditions for months. Others attempted to flee

to Thailand and elsewhere. Hmong refugees in Thailand are treated as illegal immigrants and are kept in isolated refugee camps. Thousands have been forcibly repatriated to Laos, where they often are 'disappeared.'

Today

China and Laos share a border as well as Communist-style governments. Over the last decade, Chinese investment in Laos increased dramatically as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, a global infrastructure development project. China invested in a railway, a hydroelectric power plant, schools, roads, military hospitals, and mining and tourism projects.



Xaisomboun Province

The Lao government is seeking to develop natural resources around Phou Bia Mountain in the Xaisomboun Province of central Laos. This isolated region is inhabited by ethnic Hmong whom the government continues to distrust as a legacy of the Secret Army. The Congress of World Hmong People has accused the Lao government of uncompensated land grabs and forced displacement to make way for Chinese-funded development projects.

In 2021, the government sealed off the area around Phou Bia Mountain and launched a military clearance operation. A recent report by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) describes massacres, hunger, and many Hmong surrendering to only be 'resettled' in military-controlled camps. Upon arrival in the camps, men are often detained and interrogated for several months. Women report sexual slavery by law enforcement officers. Families lack safe drinking water and cultural rights, and they must barter labor for bare necessities.

The natural environment for the Hmong in the Phou Bia region faces significant degradation through the construction of the hydroelectric dam, the mining of precious metals, and logging.

Outside the country there is little information about the situation. The government blocks access for journalists and human rights groups. In 2020, nine UN Special Rapporteurs and the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances wrote a letter of concern over the situation to the government of Laos. There is increasing fear among the Hmong and the international community that the government is building to more exterminatory actions.



Hydroelectric Dam

Argentina 1976-1983

What

The genocide in Argentina, often referred to as the 'Dirty War,' was a targeted campaign by the right-wing Argentine government to wipe out leftist socialist dissidents and opponents. General Jorge Videla took control over Argentina in 1976, using the country's political instability and crumbling economy as a guise to grab power. He planned on reforming Argentine society to fit his ultra-conservative, militarized, conservative Catholic vision of what the country should be, and he began a war on those who opposed his regime. He targeted anyone with left-wing ideals or those who publicly questioned his rule. Between 1976 and 1983 Videla and his military dictatorship killed or forcibly disappeared roughly 30,000 Argentines who opposed the regime.



Argentina

Where

Argentina is South America's southeasternmost country and is bordered by Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the South Atlantic Ocean. It is the second-largest country in South America. The capital is Buenos Aires.

Background

In 1946, Argentines elected Juan Peron as President. He sought to industrialize the country while providing economic and social benefits for the working classes and the poor. However, he was ousted from power in 1955, ushering in decades of political instability and violence.



Jorge Videla

How

Videla's military regime set out to reform Argentine society through its Process of National Reorganization called *El Proceso*. This process focused on the elimination of perceived subversion to the regime. This subversion included guerrilla movements fighting the government and any form of dissent in the school, family, factory, arts, or culture. Students, trade unionists, journalists, artists, militants, Peronists, and anyone suspected of being a left-wing activist were targeted in the effort to build a new national framework free from 'subversives.'

Citizens were routinely arrested and tortured. Assassinations were carried out by torture and mass shootings. People were captured and put onto 'death flights' – trips on which they were thrown from airplanes to their deaths in the Atlantic Ocean or the Rio de la Plata below. Rape was commonly used against women. Bodies were cremated, buried in mass graves, or disposed of in rivers and the ocean.

The US supported Videla's efforts in what was perceived as a war against Communism.

Response

The international community largely failed to address Videla's seven years of violence as they were happening. **In 2019 the U.S. government finally acknowledged awareness of the human rights violations during this period.** Since the collapse of Videla's military dictatorship, Argentines have worked to repair the political and social damage caused by mass killings and forced disappearances.



The Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo

In 1977, the mothers and grandmothers of the disappeared formed an organization **called Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo and Las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo**, the mothers and grandmothers, respectively, of Plaza de Mayo. Every Thursday, continuing until the 2020 pandemic, they marched in silent protest around the plaza, the mothers seeking answers to what happened to their children and the grandmothers searching for the identities and locations of their stolen children and grandchildren. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they found safe ways to symbolize their search.

In 1987, the Abuelas began storing their DNA profiles in a newly-created genetic bank, hoping to find their missing grandchildren through DNA matching, and in 1992 the government created the National Committee for the Right to Identify (CONADI). The organization assists young adults in obtaining DNA analysis and in investigating documents that could link them to their birth families. As of September 2019, 130 children have been identified.

In 2018, the Abuelas were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Additionally, as of March 2019, Argentina's Attorney General's Office has charged 3,161 people of crimes committed during the 'dirty war,' and the country continues to pursue legal justice for the victims, the survivors, and the witnesses. This has been an on-again, off-again process over the decades, with the hope that justice will prevail.

Iraqi Kurdistan, 1987-89

What

From 1987 to 1989, Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government committed genocide against the Kurdish people in Iraq (the Iraqi Kurds).

The Kurds are a Muslim ethnic group indigenous to parts of present-day Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Armenia. For centuries, they have sought to establish an independent Kurdish state. Iraqi Kurds have fought on and off against the Iraqi government since the inception of independent Iraq in 1932.



Iraq

Where

Iraqi Kurds resided primarily in northern Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan). Dictator Saddam Hussein saw them as a threat to his control over the oil-rich region of Kirkuk. In the 1960s, he initiated a policy of 'Arabization' to secure the territory. This entailed the mass deportation of Iraqi Kurds from their northern homeland to the southern Iraqi desert.

In March 1987, Iraqi official Al-Majid –known as 'Ali Anfal' or 'Chemical Ali'– was given unlimited powers over military operations northern Iraq. Al-Majid led the formal Kurdish Genocide with a campaign of extermination codenamed 'Operation Anfal.'



Iraqi Kurdistan

How

The Kurdish effort for independence and the resources in their homeland motivated the 1987 genocide. The Iraqi government also retaliated against a military alliance between the Kurds and Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. Iraq responded to the alliance in 1983 by abducting and killing 5,000-8,000 Kurdish men in 1983.

On October 17, 1987, the Iraqi government conducted a population census. Al-Majid used the census to identify the Kurds, as well as some Christians and Yazidis, to be exterminated. Targeted regions in Iraqi Kurdistan were defined as 'prohibited.' Operation Anfal involved eight offensives to annihilate the population inside these regions.

Each attack followed a similar pattern. To begin, the military used mustard gas and a nerve agent to kill and terrorize villages and towns. Using these chemical weapons is illegal under international law. Next came conventional bombings, followed by ground assaults. Survivors were rounded up and divided into three groups: men were blindfolded and shot in mass graves;

women and children were transferred into prisons; and the elderly were taken to a prison on the border with Saudi Arabia. Hundreds of prisoners died from malnutrition and disease.

Not formally a part of Operation Anfal, the gassing of people in the town of Halabja on March 16, 1988, has come to represent the peak of the atrocities. Survivors describe people dying on the street, at the wheels of cars, and in the midst of daily life. At least 5,000 people were killed, and thousands more suffer long-term health effects.

The Iraqi government claimed that all Iraqi Kurds died during counter-insurgency measures. However, many atrocities were perpetrated after a ceasefire was signed between Iran and Iraq in the summer of 1988. The genocide was a product of meticulous and bureaucratic planning. Kurdish rebels found fourteen tons of documentation in 1991, which were transferred to the US and verified. The detailed documents use euphemisms like “purification” and “liquidation” for mass murder and refer to the Kurds as “saboteurs,” “criminals,” and “human cargo.”

Response

The genocide killed between 50,000 and 100,000 Iraqi Kurds. This number is even higher when accounting for enforced disappearances and undocumented deaths. Additionally, bombs

destroyed 90% of all Kurdish villages, many cities, and infrastructure. By September 1988, the Iraqi government declared the operation a success; all Kurdish men over 15 years old had been killed or had fled to Turkey, and resistance was entirely crushed. The violence ended in 1989.



Destroyed building in Iraqi Kurdistan

Anfal has had devastating impacts on Iraqi Kurds, including severe economic hardship and long-term health problems caused by the gas attacks. In 1997, the United Nations launched a “Food for Oil” Program, which failed to revive the economy in Iraqi Kurdistan and created a reliance on food imports.

Outside of Kurdistan, recognition for the genocide is rare. It was largely overshadowed by the Iran-Iraq war, and false narratives about the genocide are widespread. The U.S. government was also reluctant to accuse Iraq of the atrocities, because Iraq was an ally in fighting Iran.

Today, survivors have had no justice or compensation. The Kurdish people have no recognized state. In recent years, they have faced a risk of renewed genocide in the Middle East, most notably from Turkey, which has bombed and shelled Kurdish towns and has jailed many Kurdish journalists, activists, and politicians, claiming that these Kurds are ‘terrorist’ militant forces.

Somalia, 1991 - Present

Where

The Republic of Somalia is located in the Horn of Africa and is slightly smaller than Texas, with an estimated population of 10 million. In 1991, clans declared an independent Republic of Somaliland in the northwest. Puntland is a self-declared, self-governing state in the northeast Somalia.



When

In 1991, the Somali government was overthrown by opposing clans, which are ancestry-based groups that control politics, business, and the economy. The clans failed to agree on a replacement for the national leader, and Somalia plunged into turmoil, clan warfare, and lawlessness. Power struggles between clan warlords have displaced, wounded, and killed thousands of civilians.

In August 2000, a transitional government was appointed to reconcile warring militias, but little progress was made. During peace talks, a new parliament was established that elected a president to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia. The TFG was tasked with establishing a new Somali constitution. This administration was Somalia's fourteenth attempt since 1991 to establish a central government.

In 2006, militias loyal to the Union of Islamic Courts gained control of much of the south. Peace talks began in Sudan. The Ethiopian military backed the administration, fighting continued, and Ethiopia withdrew in 2009. The TFG mandate was extended and worked toward national elections.

In 2007 the United States carried out air strikes in southern Somalia against suspected Al-Qaeda forces. Though the strikes were supported and defended by Somalia's government, they ultimately killed innocent civilians.

In 2010, the African Union appealed to the UN for an air and naval blockade of Somalia, insisting that such an action was necessary to curb the flow of weapons to Islamist militants. The AU also called for an additional 12,000 AU peacekeeping deployment to Somalia, up from the current force of 8,000.



Somali child

How
 Somali insurgents, the transitional government's armed forces, and Ethiopian troops have destroyed the lives of tens of thousands of civilians throughout the country in what can be labeled crimes against humanity. These violations include bombings, indiscriminate attacks, killings, rapes, use of civilians as human shields, and

looting. More than 1 million people have been displaced, and aid agencies report that 4 million people – or about one-third of the population – need food aid. Increasing attacks on aid workers in past years have severely limited relief operations and contributed to an emerging humanitarian crisis.

The Aftermath

This conflict has involved a number of different international organizations and multiple countries that have intervened and attempted to resolve the conflict. Despite these efforts, the violence continues. Human Rights Watch reports, as of 2020, that 2.6 million people are currently internally displaced, with many living unassisted and vulnerable to abuse. Conditions remain very fragile, with ongoing armed conflict, a lack of state protection, continued inter-clan violence, attacks from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and military operations against Al-Shabab by the Somali government, African Union troops, and other foreign forces in what is a classic example of ‘internationalized intra-state conflict.’

Updated 2021

Bosnia, 1992-1995

Where

Bosnia, officially Bosnia and Herzegovina, is located in southeastern Europe. It was part of the former Republic of Yugoslavia along with Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, and Slovenia, a region known as the Balkans. The population is approximately 3.5 million people, with 48 percent identifying as Bosniaks (Muslims), 37 percent as Serbs (Orthodox Christians), and 14 percent as Croats (Catholics).



Bosnia and Herzegovina

When

The leader of former Yugoslavia was Josip Broz Tito, who died in 1980. He held the economy and the polity together across the six republics, and in the absence of that strong leadership and control, the economies and the political unity started to collapse with his death. From 1991-1992, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia declared independence from Yugoslavia. These declarations led to war in the region from 1992 to 1995.

The war had many horrific components that violated all principles of human rights and the laws of war.

Siege of Sarajevo

On April 7, 1992, Serb leader Slobodan Milošević blocked all roads leading to the capital city of Sarajevo and shut down the airport. Around 400,000 civilians were trapped and cut off from food, medicine, water, and electricity for the duration of the 1,425-day siege. Horrific violence and human rights abuses took place during this time, resulting in an estimated 200,000 deaths by the end of the siege, the longest siege of a capital city in modern times.

'Rape Camps'

Sexual violence was particularly heinous during this war and occurred in many places throughout the region, often alongside other atrocities.



Downtown Sarajevo, June 1992

An example is the tragedy that occurred in the city of Foča in 1992. Bosnian Serbs took control of Foča and began expelling Bosniaks. About 2,700 people went missing or were killed in Foča from 1992 to 1994. Men were sent to concentration camps and women and girls were taken to locations commonly described as 'rape camps.' Hundreds of Bosniak women and girls faced repeated sexual violence by Serb paramilitary forces in an estimated 20,000 rapes.

Srebrenica Genocide

In July 1995, Serbian General Ratko Mladic and his troops entered Bosniak-dominated territory that the UN had designated as a “Safe Area” in the town of Srebrenica. The Serb militia proceeded to separate the Bosniak women and children from the men and boys and then murdered approximately 8,000 Bosniak males. It was the single largest massacre in Europe since World War II.



Manjaca Camp, 1992

How

The death of long-time Communist leader Tito left a power vacuum, and politicians Slobodan Milošević of Serbia and Franjo Tuđman of Croatia competed for control by developing propaganda campaigns that incited nationalist rhetoric, hatred, and violence. Hundreds of concentration camps were established, mass killings were carried out, and Muslim mosques and historic sites were destroyed. During this period, violence was committed on all sides.

Response

U.S. officials became aware of the concentration camps as early as May 1992. In October 1992, the US proposed the “Vance-Owen” plan to organize Bosnia into a decentralized federation. Bosnian Serbs rejected this plan. In 1994, the US sought to back diplomacy with the threat of NATO air power to protect designated safe areas and UN peacekeepers. That year, a cease-fire between Bosnian Croats and Muslims was reached and peace talks began. In December 1994, the Serbs also agreed to a cease fire.



Dayton Peace Agreement

In December of 1995, the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed; the result was that 51% of the country was allotted to the Croat-Muslim Federation and 49% to the Serb Republic.

The country had been effectively divided and ‘ethnically cleansed.’

International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

About

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was created by the United Nations Security Council in February 1993 while the war was still ongoing. The tribunal adjudicated individuals accused of being in serious violation of international humanitarian law during the armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The ICTY jurisdiction included war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. The Tribunal heard charges against persons from the three groups – Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks - involved in the conflict.

The ICTY demonstrated a standard of international humanitarian accountability, showing that an individual's prestige or seniority is neither an excuse for war crimes and crimes against humanity nor a shield from justice.

The ICTY also set many precedents. **It was the first court to charge rape as a form of torture, hear a trial for sexual violence against men, prosecute sexual enslavement as a crime against humanity, and include rape as a major trial focus.** Jurisprudence from the ICTY expanded the body of international humanitarian and criminal law in areas such as joint enterprise and accomplice liability, commander and subordinate responsibility, and sovereign immunity.

Statistics

- 161 people indicted.
- Ongoing proceedings in 3 cases: 1 on appeal, 2 on re-trial.
- 158 concluded cases – 90 convicted and sentenced, 18 acquitted, 13 referred to national jurisdictions (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) for trial, 20 indictments withdrawn, 10 died before transfer to the tribunal, 7 died after transfer to the tribunal.

Notable Cases

Slobodan Milosevic was the former Serbian and former Yugoslavian president. Among other charges, he was accused of the murder of hundreds of Kosovar Albanian citizens, deliberate destruction of their property, and systematic sexual assaults against them, particularly women. He was accused of murdering hundreds of Croat civilians, routine imprisonment of thousands of Croat civilians under inhumane conditions, repeated torture of people in detention facilities, and deliberate destruction of their property. He died on March 11, 2006 and his case at the ICTY was terminated on March 14, 2006.

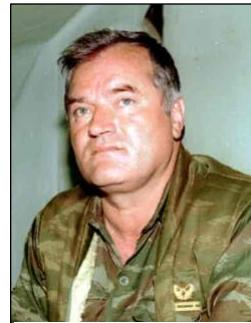
Ratko Mladić was Commander of the Bosnian Serb Army between 1992 and 1996. Most notably, he was accused of creating a campaign of sniping and shelling civilians in Sarajevo and of commanding the Srebrenica massacre, a mass killing of more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys in 1995 by the Army of Republika Srpska. His trial began in May 2012. He was



Radovan Karadžić

found guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes and was sentenced to life in prison.

Radovan Karadžić was a founding member of the Serbian Democratic Party and President of Republika Srpska (formerly the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and commander of its armed forces. He was charged with genocide, extermination, murder, persecutions, deportation, inhumane acts, and acts of violence to spread terror. He was found guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, and he was sentenced to forty years in prison.



Ratko Mladić

Updated 2021

Rwanda, 1994

Where

Rwanda is a landlocked country about the size of Maryland located near the center of Africa. According to the 1991 national census, Rwanda's population was 7.7 million people before the genocide, with 90% of the population identifying as ethnic Hutu, 9% Tutsi, and 1% Twa (derogatorily known as Pygmy).



When

Belgium had colonial control over Rwanda from 1919 until Rwandan independence in 1961. The Belgians had favored the Tutsis over the Hutus, giving them greater power despite the Hutu majority in the population. After independence, the Hutus gained control of the government and began treating the Tutsis as second-class citizens, in large part due to resentment that lingered from colonial preferences and a sense of 'payback.'

In 1985, Tutsis in exile in Uganda who had fled from Rwanda when Hutus took control formed an army, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The RPF demanded an end to discrimination against the Tutsis. **RPF troops in Uganda invaded Rwanda in 1990, starting a low-level civil war.** There were numerous unsuccessful attempts by regional and international leaders to broker a peace accord.

On April 6, 1994, Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana was returning from regional meetings in Tanzania when his plane was shot down by missiles from a still-undetermined source. He and others aboard were killed in the crash.

This was the trigger for the genocide, with blame placed onto the Tutsis for killing the Hutu president.

Most of the killing during the genocide was carried out by two Hutu radical militant groups: the Interahamwe and the Impuzamugambi. Armed, backed, and led by the government of Rwanda (MRND), the Interahamwe was comprised largely of young Hutu men influenced by "Hutu Power" ideology. The most unsettling co-perpetrators of the genocide, however, were Rwandan civilians who collaborated with and supported the genocide. Neighbors killed neighbors, students killed teachers, and teachers killed students. Hutus who sympathized with their Tutsi neighbors and resisted by defending, hiding, or providing aid to Tutsis were also killed.

In only 100 days, between April and July 1994, 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered in the genocide.

How

The path to genocide was paved by decades of discrimination, fear for a loss of power, economic collapse, and famine-like conditions from years of drought. The Hutu-led government provided arms, planning, and leadership for the militias. The government also funded RTLM “Hutu Power” radio broadcasts, the primary source of incitement for Rwandan civilians who took part in the genocide. This genocide was low-tech and personal. The machete was the primary weapon used to hack people to death, as it required no training to use – and it meant that **killer and victim were brought face to face**.

The genocide unfolded before the eyes of the national media, which covered the events live from Rwanda until violence escalated and foreigners were evacuated.

UNAMIR, the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda, was present on the ground throughout the genocide. UNAMIR had warned the UN in early 1994 about the Hutu militia’s plan for extermination of the Tutsis, but the US, France, and Belgium refused to send additional support for UNAMIR, and the UN Security Council denied UNAMIR’s request to intervene. In early April ten Belgian peacekeepers were murdered, and in response, the Belgian UNAMIR forces withdrew completely. Almost overnight, the 4,500 UNAMIR peacekeepers were reduced to only 260 people. In mid-May, the UN recognized that “acts of genocide may have been committed.”

The Tutsi-led RPF overthrew the Hutu regime in July, ending the genocide. UN intervention to protect and prevent further violence never occurred.

Response

Immediately following the RPF takeover in July, 2 million Hutus (perpetrators, bystanders, supporters, and resisters to the genocide) fled into neighboring countries to avoid potential Tutsi retribution. Thousands died of epidemics that spread like wildfire through overcrowded refugee camps. The refugee presence in Zaire, among other factors, led to the First Congo War in 1996 and to the formation of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) began proceedings in 1996. The Tribunal indicted 93 individuals and convicted 62 people of war crimes, rape, and genocide. It was the first court in the world to convict an individual of the crime of genocide and the first court to recognize rape as a weapon of genocide.

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

About

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was created by the Security Council in November 1994. Its mandate included the prosecution of crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes occurring between January 1, 1994 and December 31, 1994 in Rwanda; related crimes by Rwandan citizens in neighboring countries during that period; and crimes committed within Rwanda by non-Rwandan citizens. The Court was located in Arusha, Tanzania.

Due to the large number of alleged perpetrators involved in the Rwandan genocide, only the highest-level offenders were subject to the jurisdiction of the ICTR. Many alleged perpetrators were tried in domestic gacaca (village) courts in Rwanda or are being tried in national courts in Rwanda and in other countries.

Statistics

- 96 people indicted.
- 61 convicted and sentenced.
- 14 acquitted.
- 10 referred to national jurisdiction for trial.
- 3 fugitives referred to the UN Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals, the court process to adjudicate crimes after ICTY's official conclusion.
- 2 deceased prior to judgment.
- 2 indictments withdrawn before trial.

Notable Cases

Jean Kambanda was Rwanda's former Prime Minister of the Interim Government following the murder of President Juvenal Habyarimana. He was the highest-ranking former political leader who was charged. He was found guilty of genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, complicity in genocide, crimes against humanity (murder), and crimes against humanity (extermination). Kambanda pled guilty, the first time ever that a head of state pled guilty to genocide. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Jean Paul Akayesu was accused of genocide, complicity in genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, crimes against humanity (extermination), crimes against humanity (murder), crimes against humanity (torture), crimes against humanity (rape), and crimes against humanity (other inhumane acts). He facilitated and oversaw sexual violence, murder, and torture within the bureau communal in which he worked and made no attempts to stop the murder of over 2,000 Tutsis. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. In the *Akayesu* judgment, the ICTR provided the first interpretation of genocide as defined in the

Genocide Convention and affirmed that rape may be a tool of genocide and is thus an international crime.

Ferdinand Nahimana was the co-founder of radio station Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), where information was broadcast during the genocide to coordinate the killings and incite hatred toward Tutsi victims. He was found guilty of genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, crimes against humanity (persecution), and crimes against humanity (extermination). He was found guilty of direct and public incitement to commit genocide and crimes against humanity (persecution). He was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment.

Updated 2021

Democratic Republic of Congo, 1996-present

Where

The DRC (formerly Zaire, also known as Congo), the size of Alaska and Montana combined, has a population of almost 90 million people. Untapped raw mineral deposits in Congo are estimated to be worth US \$24 trillion, making Congo one of the richest countries below the ground – and its people among the world's poorest.



Democratic Republic of Congo

When

The violence in DRC is related to the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Spillover fighting from the genocide led to the First Congo War in 1996. The Second Congo War began in 1998 and officially ended in 2003, but eastern Congo continues to be extremely unstable. A proxy war between Rwanda and the Congolese government continued until 2008. Congolese Tutsi warlord General Laurent Nkunda waged a campaign to destroy Hutu rebels from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and he accused the Congolese government of backing the FDLR. Rwanda and Congo joined forces to combat the FDLR, but the conflict continues unabated. Congolese government troops and thousands of UN peacekeepers have failed to defeat the FDLR.

Most forces in the conflict are non-governmental militias, and disarming or controlling them has proven difficult. Conflict continues over the plentiful natural resources in the DRC. Violence is especially prevalent in the East, which is rich in minerals and timber. DRC has large quantities of gold, copper, diamonds, and coltan (a mineral used in cell phones and nearly all other small electronics and in the 'green energy' industry sector), which many parties desire to control for monetary reasons. Large-scale plunder and murder displace people from resource-rich land.

The Lord's Resistance Army has expanded its operations from Uganda into the DRC. The LRA is notorious for kidnapping up to 70,000 youth, forcing them to kill and maim innocent victims, and using young girls in sexual slavery. Attacks by the LRA spread fear and the threat of famine through northeast DRC as the LRA extends its cruelty across the region. It has brutalized communities since its inception in 1987. The US has designated the LRA as a terrorist group.



Refugee Camp for Rwandans

How

Several million people have died in Congo from conflict that began in 1996. Infant and child mortality rates are extremely high as a result of famine and malnutrition. Almost 7.5 million people are internally displaced or they are refugees in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Fighting continues in eastern parts of the country, destroying infrastructure and environment, causing physical and psychological damage to civilians, and creating human rights violations on a massive scale. The prevalence of rape and other sexual violence is the

worst in the world and contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS. The education, healthcare, and legal systems are in shambles.

Response

The UN's current mission in Congo, MONUC, is in its 21st year and will be withdrawn by the end of 2021. MONUC is the UN's largest and longest-lasting mission to date, yet with 18,000 troops, MONUC is spread thin in such a large region and is unable to halt attacks. Rebels kill and plunder natural resources with impunity. The international community's support for political and diplomatic efforts to end the war has been relatively consistent, but no effective steps have been taken for deterrence and accountability for the war crimes and crimes against humanity that are routinely committed in Congo.

Updated 2021

The International Criminal Court and Congo

About

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a permanent international tribunal located in The Hague, Netherlands, established by the Rome Statute, which defines the jurisdiction and administration of the Court. The ICC was created to prosecute the most serious international crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression, as perpetrated by individuals after the year 2002, the year the Court began operations.

While the ICC has the power to hear cases within its mandate, it operates on the principle of complementarity and will only exercise jurisdiction if national courts with jurisdiction either cannot or will not prosecute perpetrators of international crimes. The ICC may exercise jurisdiction if an accused is a national of a State Party, if a relevant crime occurs in the territory of a State Party, or if a situation giving rise to crimes within the Court's purview is referred by the UN Security Council, even if it occurs in a state which is not a party to the Rome Statute.

The Court has opened investigations into crimes in thirteen situations: The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, the Central African Republic, Darfur (Sudan), Kenya, Libya, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Mali, Georgia, Burundi, Myanmar/Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Palestine.

There are 123 signatories to the Rome Statute; the United States is currently not a signatory (as of 2021).

Statistics

- 30 cases
- 13 situations under investigation
- 9 ongoing preliminary examinations
- 13 defendants at large

The ICC and Congo

The situation in Congo was referred to the ICC in April 2004 by Congolese President Joseph Kabil. The Prosecutor charged six people with committing crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court in Congo, each with multiple counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The trial of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo was the first to be completed before the ICC. Lubanga, who had been in custody in Kinshasa, DRC for murdering UN peacekeepers, was surrendered to the ICC in March 2006. Lubanga was convicted in March 2012 for conscripting and using child soldiers in the hostilities for the Patriotic Force for the Liberation of Congo and was sentenced to fourteen years in prison.

Bosco **Ntaganda** turned himself in to the American Embassy in Rwanda in March 2013 and was extradited by the US to the Court. His trial began in September of 2015. He was convicted and sentenced in November 2019 to thirty years in prison.

Germain Katanga (alleged leader of the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri) and **Matthieu Ngudjolo Chui** (alleged leader of Nationalist and Integrationist Front) were tried together beginning in November 2009. In 2012 Ngudjolo was acquitted of all charges. In 2014 Katanga was convicted and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment.

Calixte Mbarushimana was released from ICC custody after the Court declined to confirm the charges against him. **Mudacumura** remains at large since his warrant was issued in July of 2012.

Updated 2021

Afghanistan, 1996-Present

Where

Afghanistan is a South Asian country that borders Tajikistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, and China. Over 85% of Afghanistan's population are Sunni Muslims. There has been longstanding tension between the Sunnis and the Shia minority.

The Hazaras are a Shia ethnic minority in Afghanistan, and they have faced discrimination for centuries. Before the 19th century, Hazaras made up nearly 67% of Afghanistan's population. After decades of state-sponsored persecution, they now represent about 9 percent.

The Taliban terrorist organization in Afghanistan practices a radical version of Sunni Islam. Taliban members do not believe in women's rights and persecute intellectuals, activists, political dissidents, and Shia Muslims. They reserve a special hatred for Hazaras due to Hazaras' ethnicity, religious practice, and perceived progressive culture.



Afghanistan

When

The Taliban was founded in the early 1990s and was backed by the CIA to fight Soviet occupation. The organization became popular based on promises to impose stability and law after years of conflict. It controlled most of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, backed financially by Pakistan.

On September 11, 2001, Al-Qaeda perpetrated the 9/11 attacks on the United States. Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was presumed to be in Afghanistan. President George Bush authorized force against those responsible for 9/11, which led to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan to search for Bin Laden – who was ultimately found in Pakistan and killed. The U.S. invasion dislodged the Taliban from power and helped to install a civilian government.

For the next two decades, the U.S. tried unsuccessfully to quell Taliban resistance. Over 47,000 civilians, 6,000 U.S. troops, 1,100 NATO troops, 73,000 Afghan troops, and tens of thousands of Taliban fighters, were killed in the war. The Taliban persevered because of massive revenue streams from poppy cultivation, heroin trafficking, extortion, the mining of minerals and precious stones, and foreign funding. The Taliban earns anywhere from \$300 million to \$1.6 billion annually, money used for weapons and military support.

Taliban attacks on civilians increased significantly in 2020. Nevertheless, the Trump administration signed a preliminary peace deal with the Taliban. President Biden restated the U.S. intention to pull out of Afghanistan after the 2020 presidential election and committed to withdrawing all U.S. troops by September 11, 2021.

How

The Hazaras have long faced state-sanctioned persecution in Afghanistan. They have been subjected to ethnic cleansing, slavery, land grabs, looting, and the pillaging of homes. Since the inception of the Taliban, the Hazaras have faced an acute threat of annihilation.

The most marked event in the Taliban's persecution of Hazaras was the massacre in Mazar-i-Sharif. On August 8, 1998. The Taliban captured the city, which had a large Hazara population. Invading troops did not discriminate between armed forces and innocent civilians. Taliban forces shot everything that moved. Over the next few days, Taliban fighters systematically persecuted ethnic minorities in the city. Hazaras were targeted most intensely. They were slaughtered, raped, sold into slavery, or forcibly converted to Sunni Islam. Estimates of the death toll range from 2,000 to 20,000.

Taliban terrorists have killed thousands of Hazaras in attacks over past decades. Hazaras have been massacred at schools, weddings, mosques, and hospitals across the country. In 2016, 85 unarmed civilians were slaughtered at a peaceful Hazara protest. In 2017, 41 civilians died in the bombing of a Hazara neighborhood in Kabul. In 2021, 90 students were killed in an attack on a Hazara girls' school.



Hazara Children

Hazaras have also been persecuted by other groups. The Islamic State's affiliate in Afghanistan has declared war on Shia Muslims since 2014. The Afghan civilian government of 2001-2021 failed to protect Hazaras from terrorist attacks. They made the cold calculation that Hazara lives are expendable and not worth the cost of security efforts. Government-linked warlords are even behind some of the assaults.

Today

In 2021, the situation for Hazaras in Afghanistan is increasingly perilous. The country is facing COVID-19, drought, a dire economy, and destruction from the U.S. war. Now, the Taliban is again in control of Afghanistan's government and institutions.

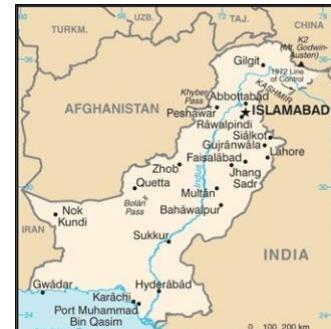
When U.S. troops began to withdraw, the Taliban launched an aggressive offensive. They quickly took control of every major city in the country. China is likely to recognize the Taliban's leadership and to replace U.S. influence in Afghanistan. A Taliban government with close ties to China could represent a major issue for U.S. foreign policy. Another imminent threat is that the Taliban could offer increased protections for Al-Qaeda and other similar groups in Afghanistan as a launching point for international terrorism.

With the Taliban in power, intellectuals and activists are being persecuted. Women face a life without education, employment, or autonomy. Hazaras are at risk of annihilation. Thousands of civilians are desperate to flee the country, yet many states have closed their doors to the refugees. Civilians are in grave danger and require immediate humanitarian aid.

Pakistan, 2000s-Present

Where

Pakistan is a country in the Middle East bordered by Afghanistan, China, India, Iran and the Arabian Sea. Balochistan is the largest but least populous of Pakistan's four provinces. It has strategic access to the port city of Gwadar and is rich with natural resources. Pakistan's other provinces profit from these resources, while Balochistan remains deeply impoverished. Some areas lack clean water and reliable electricity. Economic inequality between provinces has fostered resentment and polarization. Balochistan houses many terrorist organizations and is plagued by ethnic and religious violence.

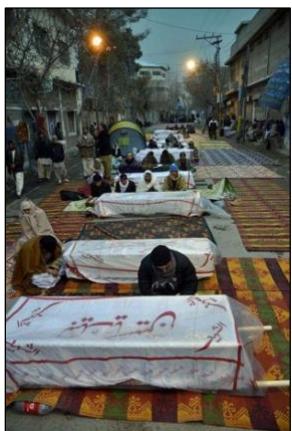


Pakistan

What – Shia Muslims and Hazaras

Pakistan's Muslim majority is split between two sects with different interpretations of Islam: Sunnis (85-90%) and Shias (10-15%). Sunni terrorist groups have threatened and attacked the minority Shias since the 1980s. Pakistani Shias face online and offline hate speech and extremists have hosted popular anti-Shia in-person rallies, where they incite violence and slander Shia 'infidels.'

Hazaras are an ethnic minority within the Shia sect. Since the early 2000s, Hazaras have faced hundreds of deadly attacks by Sunni militants in Pakistan. Hazaras' religious affiliation, small ethnic community, and facial features that are said to resemble those of people from Mongolia make them uniquely vulnerable. The Taliban terrorist organization has also exported radical anti-Hazara sentiments to Pakistan through close ties with Pakistani terrorist groups. Members and leaders of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and Sipah-i-Sahaba fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan's National Commission for Human Rights reports that Sunni terrorists have killed over 2,000 Pakistani Hazaras since 2004.



**Hazara victims,
Quetta**

Most Pakistani Hazaras live in Balochistan's capital city, Quetta. They number about 500,000 and live in two heavily-guarded enclaves at either end of the city: Hazara Town and Alamdar Road. The enclaves are guarded with high walls, barbed wire, military personnel, and security checkpoints. Hazaras are relatively safe in these zones, but their restricted movement has led to economic hardship, curtailed education and employment, and limited access to healthcare. Outside of their enclave, Hazaras are at a constant risk of attack.

The Pakistani state has failed to intervene or prosecute perpetrators. Some activists believe that the attacks on the Hazaras are used to divert attention away from the Baloch separatist movement. Others point to

how the government has used Sunni militants as strategic assets to fight India in Kashmir and to repress the Baloch. There are also discriminatory attitudes among members of government against Hazaras and Shias.

What – The Baloch

The Baloch are an ethnic group representing less than 4% of Pakistan's population, but 52% of the population in Balochistan. They have sought to establish an independent state since the inception of independent Pakistan in 1947. Radical groups lead an armed insurgency against the government, yet most Baloch citizens are not active in the fighting. Many are peaceful advocates for greater autonomy within the Pakistani constitution.

The Pakistani government and military have repressed Baloch citizens since the early 2000s. Security forces persecute not only insurgents, but also Baloch leaders, human rights groups, journalists, activists, and civilians through enforced disappearance, torture, and extra-judicial killings. The Pakistani Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances reported 5,000 enforced disappearances in Balochistan from 2014-2019. Local human rights groups say the number is up to 20,000 enforced disappearances, 2,500 of whom have been found dead.

Baloch militants have also committed grave crimes, including attacks on ethnic Punjabi civilians. However, the violence remains highly asymmetrical.

BRI Investment

Recently, attacks and forced relocations of the Baloch have escalated due to regional infrastructure projects. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the biggest project under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a foreign investment and infrastructure program. Pakistan has used billions of dollars in Chinese loans to build a road from the Gwadar Port in Balochistan to China's Xinjiang region, to expand the Gwadar Port, and more. The CPEC is key to China's goal of connecting and expanding trade between Asia, Africa, and Europe.



Gwadar Port

The Baloch have been treated as an obstacle, rather than stakeholders at every stage of the CPEC. Terrorist groups who attack development sites are used to portray all Baloch civilians as dangerous radicals. A military presence around peaceful settlements, harassment, and disappearances have increased during the Gwadar Port expansion. Local populations are being displaced by an influx of Chinese citizens.

The international community remains largely unaware of the situation. Balochistan is essentially an 'information black hole;' journalists are blocked from key areas and have been killed in the region on many occasions.

Darfur, 2003 - Present

Where

Darfur is a three-state region in Western Sudan that encompasses an area roughly the size of Spain. The population of Darfur is estimated at 6 million people.

When

Following independence from Britain in 1956, Sudan became embroiled in two prolonged civil wars for most of the remainder of the 20th century. Oil was discovered in western Sudan and the Sudanese government and international contributors became increasingly interested in the land in Darfur. The genocide in Darfur began in 2003 and continues today, driven by conflict between largely Arab grazers and non-Arab farmers over access to land and increasingly-scarce water.



Government militia in Darfur

Who

Government-supported Arab tribesman (Janjaweed) systematically raid non-Arab villages in Darfur, killing and terrorizing the people and burning the villages. The goal is to remove the non-Arab farmers from the land to create a pan-Arab state.

How

Attacks on Darfuri villages commonly begin with Sudanese Air Force bombings followed by Janjaweed militia raids. All remaining village men, women, and children are murdered or forced to flee. Looting, burning of food stocks, enslaving and raping women and children, and stealing livestock are common. Dead bodies are tossed into wells to contaminate water, and entire villages are burned to the ground.

In 2004, the United States declared the on-going conflict in Darfur to be genocide. In 2006, President George W. Bush asked for the number of international troops in Darfur to be doubled. British Prime Minister Tony Blair called upon the members of the European Union for a unified response to the crisis.

In 2008, the UN issued a hybrid United Nations-African Union mission (UNAMID) to maintain peace in Darfur. A UNAMID force of 26,000 troops was authorized to use force to protect

civilians, but despite this mandate, too few troops were sent, and they lacked equipment to carry out their mission.

In 2009, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Bashir for crimes against humanity and, in 2010, added a warrant for arrest on charges of genocide. Bashir has since been ousted from power and is currently in prison in Sudan on charges of corruption. The government of Sudan has yet to turn him over to the Court but has pledged to do so when his domestic sentence has been completed. Violence in the Darfur region, however, remains unabated.

China and Russia, both permanent members of the Security Council, blocked many United Nations resolutions to try to resolve the crisis. China and Russia are both long-term trading partners of Sudan. Sudan's military is supplied by Chinese-made tanks, fighter planes, bombers, rocket launch propelled grenades, and machine guns. Russia is Sudan's strongest investment partner and political ally in Europe.

According to the United Nations, more than 2.7 million people are internally displaced and more than 350,000 are refugees in neighboring Chad and elsewhere. More than 400,000 people have been killed. The rivalry over land continues to be exacerbated by the 'force multiplier' of the climate crisis and ongoing drought, pitting farmers and grazers into competition for livable land for themselves, their crops, and their livestock.

Updated 2021

The International Criminal Court and Darfur

About

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a permanent international tribunal located in The Hague, Netherlands, established by the Rome Statute, which specifies the Court's jurisdiction and operations. The Rome Statute was adopted in 1998 and the Court began operating in 2002. The ICC was created to prosecute individuals for the most serious international crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression, carried out after the year 2002.

While the ICC has the power to hear cases within its mandate, it operates on the principle of complementarity and exercises jurisdiction if national courts with jurisdiction either cannot or will not prosecute perpetrators of international crimes. The ICC may exercise jurisdiction if an accused is a national of a State Party, if a relevant crime occurs in the territory of a State Party, or if a situation giving rise to crimes within the Court's purview is referred by the UN Security Council, even if those crimes occur in a state which is not a party to the Rome Statute.

The Court has opened investigations into crimes in thirteen situations: The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, the Central African Republic, Darfur (Sudan), Kenya, Libya, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Mali, Georgia, Burundi, Myanmar/Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Palestine. There are 123 signatories to the Rome Statute; the United States is currently not a signatory (as of 2021).

Statistics

- 30 cases
- 13 situations under investigation
- 9 preliminary examinations
- 13 defendants at large



Omar al-Bashir

The ICC and Darfur

In March 2005, the UN Security Council referred the situation in Darfur, Sudan to the ICC and investigations began in June 2005.

Arrest warrants were issued in February 2007 for **Ahmad Muhammad Harun** (Former Minister of State for the Interior of Sudan, currently Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs for Sudan) and **Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman** (known as Ali Kushayb). Harun is alleged to have used his position to coordinate, fund, and direct the activities of the Janjaweed. As leader of the Janjaweed, Kushayb has been charged with 22 counts of crimes against humanity and 28 counts of war crimes. Ali Kushayb surrendered in 2020.

Abdel Raheem Muhammad Hussein, Minister of National Defense and formerly the President's Special Representative in Darfur, was charged with multiple counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity in March 2012. He remains at large.

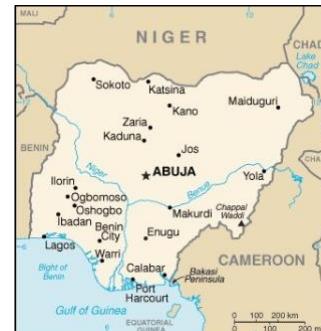
In March 2009, the Court issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, charging him with multiple counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. A second arrest warrant was later added in July 2010, adding charges of genocide. The allegations against Bashir accuse the leader of directing and causing the atrocities committed in Darfur by his government and by government-backed militias. In April 2019 Bashir was finally ousted from power. In February 2020, the Sudanese government officially agreed to hand al-Bashir over to the ICC to face war crime and genocide charges. As of spring 2021, that has yet to happen.

Updated 2021

Nigeria, 2009-Present

Where

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is bordered by the Gulf of Guinea, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. It is the richest country in Africa due to its petroleum resources, most of which are owned by major multinational corporations such as Shell. These corporations have degraded the environment along Nigeria's coastline with oil spills, gas flaring, and intrusive extraction. Local communities have not been compensated. In fact, Nigerian civilians rarely see the profits of oil extraction. Government corruption and mismanagement has squandered much of Nigeria's oil revenue.



Nigeria

The country has faced longstanding ethnic, political, and religious divides. Today, Nigeria's rapidly-growing population is experiencing severe effects of climate change: fertile lands are shrinking; droughts and floods are more frequent and longer; and clean water sources are increasingly scarce. In 2021, Nigeria has almost 3 million internally displaced persons as a result of conflict and climate crises. Nigeria faces two major conflicts.

What

Boko Haram

Boko Haram, which translates to "Western education is forbidden," is a jihadist terrorist group that operates in northeastern Nigeria. They launched large-scale military operations against Nigeria's National Security Forces (NSF) in 2009.

Boko Haram-related violence peaked in 2014 and 2015. Since then, the NSF has pushed Boko Haram out of several territories. Military conflict is now largely confined to the Borno Province on Nigeria's northeastern border. The group also operates across the border in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Terrorists frequently abduct and execute civilians who refuse to conform to their radical brand of Islam.

Fulani Herders

Muslim Fulani herders and Christian farmers coexisted peacefully for centuries in Nigeria's Middle Belt. In the early 2000s, the region's population was growing, and arable land was shrinking due to desertification from persistent droughts. Herders began coming into conflict with farming communities over grazing pastures and water sources. Islamist extremism in the region also heightened anti-Christian sentiments among Fulani Muslims, overlaying resource competition with identity issues.

This tension escalated into widespread violence in 2015. Fulani militias carried out deadly attacks on Christian farmers in central Nigeria. They arrived in trucks with AK-47s and

massacred entire villages. These genocidal massacres led to some retaliation by Christian villagers, but the violence remains highly asymmetrical.

How

Boko Haram

Boko Haram's crimes of murder, abduction, rape, sexual slavery, torture, and more have been extensively documented in the media and by governments. They target political groups, local police, the military, other religious groups, and Western education. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, more than 37,500 people have been killed in attacks or military conflict with Boko Haram since 2011. Elderly people are particularly vulnerable, as many are unable to flee Boko Haram-occupied territories.



Outrage against the Chibok Kidnapping

Boko Haram has destroyed at least 1,400 schools and has abducted thousands of schoolchildren, who are often recruited as child soldiers, subject to forced marriage, or sold into sexual slavery. In 2014, the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from the Chibok Government Girls Secondary School sparked international outrage. These kidnappings fueled parents' concern about sending their children to school, which advanced Boko Haram's campaign

against Western education. According to UNICEF, over 10.5 million Nigerian children aged 5-14 are currently not enrolled in school.

Members of the NSF, the government forces, have also committed atrocities. Soldiers have repeatedly failed to distinguish between terrorists and civilians when they overtake villages perceived as supporting Boko Haram. They have killed, raped, and arrested unarmed villagers. Boko Haram militants who are accused and arrested face extrajudicial killings, torture, and ill treatment causing thousands of deaths.

Fulani Herders

In Nigeria's Middle Belt, Christian civilians are targeted indiscriminately. Hundreds of churches have been destroyed, and religious leaders are intensely persecuted. According to Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, the conflict resulted in over 6,000 deaths between 2015 and 2019, and a thousand more in 2019. The violence has exacerbated poverty, internal displacement, and food shortages. Disinformation on social media is often used to fuel identity-based killing.

Criminals and bandits in the region have capitalized off the conflict by kidnapping, raiding villages, and rustling cattle. This rise in criminality has amplified the climate of fear and violence.

Response

Chief Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, conducted a preliminary examination of Boko Haram's actions in Nigeria. On December 11, 2020, she declared that there was a reasonable basis to prosecute Boko Haram and splinter groups for crimes against humanity and war crimes. She noted that members of the Nigerian Security Forces have also committed atrocities. The next step towards prosecuting perpetrators is a formal investigation, which has yet to be launched. Currently, thousands of alleged Boko Haram fighters are awaiting trial in Nigerian prison. Others have been sentenced with little evidence during internationally-criticized mass trials.

The attacks by Fulani herders have featured less prominently in international news. The Nigerian House of Representatives declared the atrocities a genocide in 2018, yet Christian civilians have received no additional protection from their government and no justice.

Updated 2021

Côte D'Ivoire, 2010-Present

What

In November 2010, incumbent Laurent Gbagbo faced challenger Alassane Ouattara in a long-delayed election.

From November 2010 to May 2011, the Ivory Coast (Côte D'Ivoire) faced tremendous violence throughout the country when both candidates in the 2010 election both claimed electoral victory.

Ivorians' votes were divided sharply across regional and ethnic lines, with Gbagbo getting votes from the south and west regions and Ouattara getting votes from the north. Ultimately, Ouattara, the challenger, won the election, and outside observers deemed the results to be free and fair. However, incumbent Gbagbo refused to give up his office or to recognize the election as legitimate.

During the standoff after the results were announced, militias supporting each candidate launched attacks throughout the country. These attacks were usually targeted at ethnic and regional groups that represented the respective candidate.

It is estimated that over 3,000 people died in the conflict, hundreds of women were raped, and many more people were forced to seek refuge in neighboring Liberia.

In 2020, Gbagbo's successor Ouattara violated constitutional law himself and pursued an illegal third term in office. He won the election, which many are saying was illegitimate and rife with fraud, and he has another five years in office. Ouattara follows the lead of his predecessor and illegally holds onto power at present.

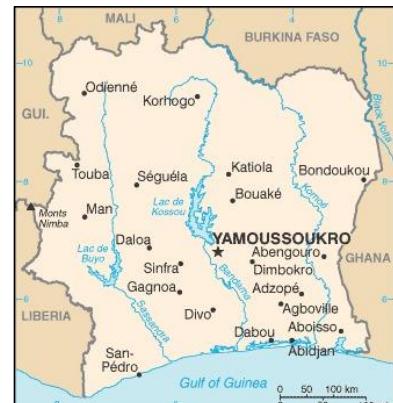
Where

Côte D'Ivoire (The Ivory Coast) is located in Western Africa. The country was colonized by the French and gained independence in 1960. The country shares a border with Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ghana.

How

Côte D'Ivoire's 2010 election and its violent fallout can be explained in part by resource competition. Power in the Ivory Coast is connected to who has control over the country's diamond and cocoa resources.

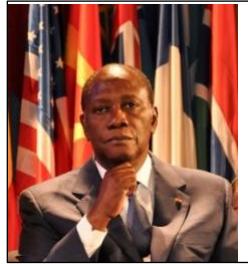
Almost half of the world's cocoa used in chocolate comes from Côte d'Ivoire, making this African country the biggest producer of cocoa worldwide. The global demand for Côte d'Ivoire's



Côte D'Ivoire

cocoa has resulted in the widespread use of child laborers on the country's cocoa plantations, who are typically between twelve and sixteen years old, although some are as young as nine.

A 2015 U.S. State Department report highlights that approximately 15,000 child slaves work on cocoa, cotton, and coffee plantations throughout Côte d'Ivoire. Control over the country's physical resources is key for both the underground and legitimate economy and critical to the consolidation of wealth for the Ivorian elite, making it key to the political conflict that emerged from the contested 2010 election.



Alassane Ouattara Hugo



Laurent Gbagbo

Response

By May 2011, Ouattara had successfully ousted Gbagbo and consolidated power. He then began to investigate and seek justice for the atrocities committed during the previous months of political violence. However, this justice was not impartial, and prosecutors sought convictions only for pro-Gbagbo supporters who had committed crimes, even though atrocities were committed on both sides. This one-sided justice, which continued into the following years, created a corrupt judicial system that further divided Ivorians.

Former president **Laurent Gbagbo** and former militia leader **Charles Blé Goudé** were put on trial at the International Criminal Court in 2016 for crimes against humanity during the 2011 conflict. They were acquitted in 2019 due to insufficient evidence.

The ICC also indicted Simone Gbagbo, the former first lady, but the Ivorian government denied transferring her to The Hague, where the Court is located, for trial. Instead, Ivorian courts indicted her for crimes against humanity and war crimes. Human rights groups refused to participate in the trial due to its blatant biases and flaws. She was sentenced to 20 years in jail for crimes against humanity but in 2017 she was acquitted and then pardoned under an amnesty by President Ouattara in 2018. She served a total of three years of her 20-year sentence.

Fallout from the 2020 election is ongoing, with opposing sides citing different numbers for casualties and deaths after violent clashes broke out following the fall vote. The failures of Côte d'Ivoire to sufficiently address the 2010 dispute have meant a relapse into post-election violence in 2020.

Iraq, 2014

What

The Islamic State –also known as Da’esh, ISIS, and ISIL—perpetrated a brutal genocide against the Yazidis in Iraq between June and August of 2014.

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization adhering to fundamentalist Islam. Its goal is to establish a worldwide caliphate, an Islamic state led by a religious ruler known as a caliph. ISIS combines the use of modern technology and social media for recruiting and publicity with the medieval practices of beheading, slavery, and crucifixion to terrorize and execute perceived enemies.



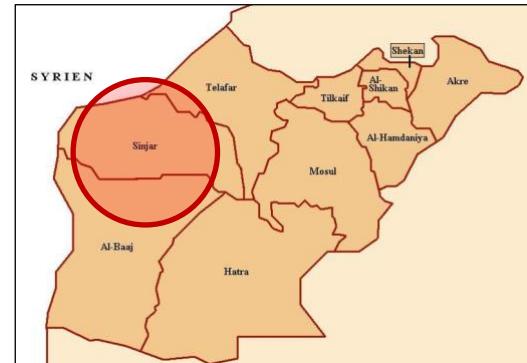
Iraq

The Yazidis are a Kurdish ethnic group who practice a religion with elements of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They have faced centuries of persecution for their often-misunderstood religion. ISIS perceives the Yazidis as devil-worshipers who are unworthy of life. In the summer of 2014, ISIS fighters abducted, forcibly converted, enslaved, and massacred tens of thousands of Yazidis. Hundreds of thousands more were displaced.

Where

At the dawn of the 21st century, the world’s Yazidi population lived primarily in the Sinjar District in northern Iraq and numbered around 500,000.

The Nineveh Governorate, which includes the Sinjar District, was Iraq’s most ethnically diverse region prior to 2014. It was also under-resourced and under-protected.



Districts of the Nineveh Governorate, Sinjar District

The Islamic State’s assault on the region began in June 2014, when members attacked the city of Mosul and surrounding villages. ISIS advanced through northern Iraq until August. People who did not support ISIS’s fundamentalist version of Islam were subjected to extortion, expulsion, forced conversion, or violent repression.

ISIS committed crimes against humanity against many religious minorities in the area, including Shia Muslims, Assyrian Christians, and Yazidis. Militants destroyed religious sites, killed men, and forced women and children into slavery.

ISIS aimed to annihilate the Yazidi religion. Yazidis were given two options: convert to Islam - or die. The persecution peaked on August 3, 2014, when ISIS fighters invaded Sinjar. Between 3,000 and 5,000 Yazidis were killed in the initial attack and 6,000 to 7,000 were abducted into sexual slavery, domestic slavery, or forced military service. Over 200,000 more fled to Mount Sinjar.

ISIS forces quickly encircled the mountain, trapping about 50,000 Yazidis without food, water, or medical care. On August 14, the Kurdish and U.S. militaries came to their aid. Kurdish ground forces, supported by U.S. airstrikes on ISIS fighters, secured an evacuation route to Iraqi Kurdistan. Nonetheless, the old and sick, unable to make the journey, had to be abandoned.

Response

Today, about 100,000 Yazidis have returned to the Sinjar region, yet they still lack access to healthcare, education, and other essential services. Hundreds of thousands more are living in refugee camps, thousands remain missing, and many mass graves have yet to be exhumed. At least 3,000 Yazidi women and children are still being held by ISIS as slaves.

The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) has documented significant evidence of the genocide against the Yazidis, including identities of perpetrators.

Universal jurisdiction is being used to prosecute several accused perpetrators in European courts. Notably, Taha Al-J, an ISIS member, is facing charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, human trafficking, and war crimes in a German court. However, national trials are limited in number, scope, uniformity, and accessibility to the victims of atrocity. Attention to this issue will be key to improving justice for the Yazidis.



Yazidi refugees in Syria, 2014

Yemen, 2015-Present

What

Yemen's civil war has produced the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, according to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

As of July 2019, it is estimated that roughly 24.1 million Yemenis need humanitarian assistance, 3.3 million people are internally displaced, and 20 million people are food insecure. Human Rights Watch estimates that 14 million people in Yemen are at risk of starvation and death. These numbers stand to increase because the conflict in Yemen shows no sign of ending.

The conflict is impacting children at a dramatic rate. In 2019, a child in Yemen died every 11 minutes and 54 seconds. If the conflict continues through 2022, UNDP estimates that 43% of Yemeni children will be without access to schools, 331,000 Yemeni children under the age of five will have been killed, and a Yemeni child will die every 7 minutes.

Where

Yemen is a Middle East country at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula. It shares a border with Saudi Arabia and Oman.

The country was formerly split into two states, the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen). The states were unified in 1990 as the Republic of Yemen. **Rebel groups known as the Houthi in Northern Yemen opposed the new leadership of unified Yemen, who they believed consistently sidelined Houthis in Yemeni politics.**



Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi

How

Throughout regime changes and bursts of armed conflict, Houthi rebels continued to feel as if their demands for equal political dialogue were not being met. Conflict escalated to the point that the president of unified Yemen, Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi, fled to neighboring Saudi Arabia in 2015.

Hadi's departure led to steep escalation in the conflict and resulted in Saudi Arabia's military involvement on behalf of Hadi's government. Saudi air strikes against Houthis have persisted since 2015, leading to massive civilian casualties in a brutal civil war. **Saudi Arabia's impact on the conflict and the resulting food insecurity has been devastating.**



Yemen

While Saudi airstrikes ostensibly target combatant Houthi and other anti-government forces in Northern Yemen, civilians have been killed, injured, or cut off from food and potable water in indiscriminate bombing. The United States has been complicit with the Saudis in providing weapons for the relentless attacks on the civilian population, with the likelihood that the US has been committing war crimes in Yemen. **After consistent support for Saudi bombing by the previous administration, President Joe Biden pledged in February 2021 to stop supporting the Saudi military coalition responsible for mass civilian suffering in Yemen.**

Response

Support from Yemeni civil society, outside the Houthi movement, has been largely ineffective. The infrastructure of Yemeni civil society has been decimated and the citizenry faces widespread famine. Yemeni activists, journalists, lawyers, and rights defenders worry about arrest, harassment, and targeted violence by the Saudi-led coalition, according to a 2019 Human Rights Watch report.

International efforts at brokering a ceasefire by the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab League, and the United Nations have been ineffective. Efforts to deliver humanitarian aid are routinely blocked by coalition restrictions on imports and by Houthi confiscations of food and medical supplies.

Updated 2021

Myanmar, 2017-Present

What

Myanmar's military is accused of "ethnic cleansing" and genocide due to major mass atrocities committed against the Rohingya, a Muslim minority population living on the western border of Myanmar. The Rohingya were rendered stateless by the government in 1982 and have become **the most persecuted people on earth**, according to the United Nations.

Until 2011, Myanmar was under the rule of an oppressive military junta. In 2011, some power was transferred to civilian control, but the military maintained significant power and autonomy. In January 2021, the military instigated a successful coup – reclaiming absolute power over Myanmar's government.

The military had long persecuted the Rohingya, the Karen, and other ethnic minorities in Myanmar, but in 2017, persecution of the Rohingya escalated.

In just three months, over 675,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar as their homes were burned by military officials. Those who stayed behind faced summary execution, severe torture and rape, forced labor, extortion, and continued marginalization. Today, over 1 million Rohingya have registered as refugees in neighboring Bangladesh.

Where

Myanmar is the second-largest country in mainland Southeast Asia. The country is bordered by China, Laos, Thailand, Bangladesh, and India. The country was known as Burma until 1989, when the name was changed to Myanmar.

The Rohingya are concentrated in Rakhine state, a region on the western coast of Myanmar sharing a border with Bangladesh. Rakhine state also connects Myanmar to the Bay of Bengal, and control over the region is important for Myanmar's international trade, for China's Belt and Road Initiative, and for oil and gas resources.



Myanmar

How

The Myanmar army targets the destruction of crops and resources to starve and kill minority groups without drawing the international community's attention. Once the Tatmadaw, the state army, gains control of an area, the military uses forced labor to build bases from which they can attack and burn surrounding villages and plant landmines in the razed areas to discourage returns. Rohingya people have been routinely subjected to forced labor, human trafficking, and child labor, with a significant escalation taking place in 2017.

Additionally, Myanmar's civilian government, which has since been removed from power by the military, was silent in response to the genocide of the Rohingya. The majority of Myanmar's Buddhist population see the Rohingya as illegal immigrants and refers to them as Bengali Muslims, insinuating that they do not belong in Myanmar. This broad disdain for the Rohingya has enabled the continued persecution that has resulted in over a million displaced people.

Response

Myanmar's foreign relations, particularly with Western nations, are severely strained due to ongoing human rights abuses. The United States and the European Union previously placed bans on new investment by U.S and E.U. firms, an import ban, and an arms embargo on the country. The US lifted its sanctions under the Obama administration to pursue economic opportunities with Myanmar.

Additionally, international courts have begun seeking justice in response to the genocide of the Rohingya. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has begun investigating crimes perpetrated against the Rohingya. The court's investigation is limited to crimes perpetrated in Bangladesh, as Myanmar is not party to the Rome Statute (the Court's foundational document) and to the Court's jurisdiction.

Human rights lawyers in Argentina have opened a case in Argentina's national court using the legal principle of universal jurisdiction. The case holds military and political leaders in Myanmar accountable for planning and executing the genocide of the Rohingya. Universal jurisdiction allows for the prosecution of crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity anywhere in the world, regardless of where the crimes occurred or the nationality of victims or perpetrators, because the crimes are so heinous.

Finally, in November 2019, The Gambia filed a case against Myanmar in the United Nations International Court of Justice (ICJ) for Myanmar's violation of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Canada and The Netherlands have joined The Gambia in the case. This is only the second time that a case about genocide has been brought before the ICJ.

All three cases are ongoing as of spring 2021.

China, 2017-Present

What

The Xinjiang region in western China is home to one of the most significant enactments of human rights violations in the 21st century: the genocide of the Uyghurs. Millions of Uyghurs are being sent to concentration- camp- style re-education camps for no reason other than their status as a Turkic Muslim minority with a cultural and religious identity viewed as different from the majority Han Chinese people. In these detention camps, Uyghurs are subjected to arbitrary killings, forced organ harvesting, forced sterilization, torture, and political indoctrination. Uyghur families are monitored and separated in Xinjiang, while thousands of Uyghurs are exiled from their home cities and are performing forced labor throughout China. Uyghur children are forcibly removed from their families and are forced to live in boarding schools and to abandon their culture, their language, and their religion.

The Chinese government is attempting to eradicate the Uyghurs and their way of life in a genocide that continues today.



Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China

Where

The Uyghurs are a Muslim Turkic minority living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of western China. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) claimed control over the territory from the 1950s but only began exercising political and social control in response to Uyghurs' growing calls for independence in the 1990s. Since then, the Chinese government has introduced a policy of forced in-migration of Han people to dilute the percent of Xinjiang's population that is Uyghur. The Han people make up 95% of China's total population. This strategy, along with violent repression, has cemented the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) rule over Xinjiang and the Uyghurs.

Xinjiang holds the vast majority of China's oil and coal reserves, and it is the center of China's massive economic and geopolitical development project - the Belt and Road Initiative. The region's resources and strategic geographic placement for continued Chinese economic expansion mean that it is likely that the CCP will continue to suppress the Uyghurs to maintain control over Xinjiang.

How

China has built a system of mass surveillance. This system uses facial recognition technology, internet monitoring, and mass security personnel to track the movements of Uyghurs in

Xinjiang. The surveillance informs security to determine if a Uyghur is to be imprisoned or sent to a re-education camp.

Uyghurs are sent to these camps to “transform through education.” This stated goal of the camps differs greatly from the realities highlighted by survivors. While outside human rights observers have not been permitted inside the camps, there is clear documentation of rampant physical and psychological abuse, forced sterilization, forced organ harvesting, and political indoctrination.

It has also been widely documented that Uyghurs are subjected to forced labor in factories and farms in nine provinces throughout China to produce goods and products for global consumption by Chinese and multinational firms. There are significant efforts to pressure companies to investigate their supply chains and for states to prohibit importation of goods from companies known to be complicit in this practice.

Response

Very little global action has been taken to prevent the continuation of Uyghur genocide. No individual country has taken action against China beyond offering critical statements. This is due in part to China’s economic power and its role at the United Nations. UN Human Rights Chief Michelle Bachelet demanded that UN monitors be allowed to access Xinjiang internment camps, drawing a hostile response from China and little global traction. China’s global economic hegemony provides impunity against international action. However, both individual nations and human rights organizations are calling for a multilateral investigation into Chinese camps and sanctions for Chinese trade.

Updated 2021

Ethiopia, 2020-Present

Where

Ethiopia is an African nation bordered by Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. Its population of 111 million is composed of several ethnic groups, including Oromos (35%), Amharas (28%), Tigrayans (7%), Somalis (3%), and others. The country has long suffered violent territorial and political disputes between ethnic groups.

Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa. It was ruled by an emperor until 1974, when a Marxist-Leninist military junta seized power and slaughtered political opposition. The regime was toppled in 1991 by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which established a democratic government where a fair amount of power was given to ethnic regional governments.

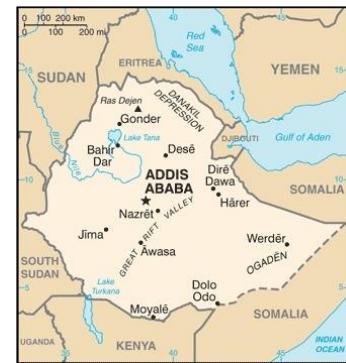
The EPRDF was a coalition government representing four regional parties: the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP), the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM).

The TPLF, which ruled the northern region of Tigray, dominated this coalition despite representing a small percent of the population. Their government fostered rapid economic growth and relative stability across Ethiopia. However, it was criticized for human rights abuses, corruption, and inequality. In 2018, the prime minister stepped down due to popular protests.

The Parliament appointed Abiy Ahmed, an ethnic Oromo who quickly won a Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating an end to longstanding territorial conflicts with neighboring Eritrea in the Tigray region. In 2019, Abiy merged the EPRDF coalition into the single 'Prosperity Party' in the hopes of bridging ethnic divisions, liberalizing politics, and centralizing Ethiopian governance. The TPLF refused to join Abiy's party but remained in control of Tigray's regional government. They resented Abiy's deal with Eritrea and Tigrayans' loss of power in his new government.

What

Political tensions between Abiy's Prosperity Party and the TPLF persisted into 2020 – a federal election year for Ethiopia. Abiy received Parliamentary approval to postpone elections due to the onset of the coronavirus, which meant that he would remain in power unopposed until new elections would finally be held. The TPLF accused him of an authoritarian power grab and held regional elections in Tigray as an act of defiance. Abiy declared the Tigrayan election illegal and cut funds to Tigray's government.



Ethiopia



Tigray Region

On November 4, 2020, anger and polarization turned to violence. TPLF forces overran an Ethiopian military base, allegedly to steal weapons. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered swift military retaliation. Ethiopian armed forces, aided by ethnic Amhara regional militias and troops from neighboring Eritrea, launched an offensive against the TPLF in Tigray within days.

There have been credible reports of crimes against humanity and civilian massacres perpetrated from all sides of the conflict against ethnic Tigrayan, Oromo, Amhara, Somali, and Gedeo civilians. Human rights groups are particularly concerned about a genocide of the Tigrayan people.

How

It has been difficult to gather information about atrocities in Tigray because of early telecommunications blackouts and severe restrictions on media access. Widespread disinformation wreaked havoc on international narratives. In 2021, credible reports began to emerge with evidence that the Ethiopian military and its allies were systematically eradicating the Tigrayan people. Media reports cited increasing hate speech and incitement to violence, referring to Tigrayans as 'daylight hyenas' or 'unfamiliar others.' The patriarch of Ethiopia's Orthodox Church, Abune Mathias, smuggled a video out of the country in which he declares the ongoing violence to be a genocide.

As of May 2021, thousands of Tigrayans have been massacred and over 2 million people have been internally displaced. More than 500 women or girls have reported that they have been victims of rape in Tigray, which is an extremely low estimate given the lack of available health services and the stigma surrounding rape in the region. Survivors describe being drugged, held hostage, and gang-raped by Amhara, Eritrean, and Ethiopian forces, who tell them that they are 'cleansing the Tigrayan bloodlines.'

Tigrayans have also been cut off from essential services for over six months. There is a severe impending famine due to forced displacement, the destruction of essential infrastructure, and the government's denial of access for food and other humanitarian aid to the region. The United Nations estimates that 4.5 million out of Tigray's 6 million civilians are in need food aid.

Response

By 2021, tens of thousands of refugees had fled to Sudan. The Sudanese government is now struggling to acquire sufficient resources to accommodate the influx of refugees. In Ethiopia, violence has spread to the Oromia, Amhara, and Benishangul-Gumuz regions. Armed militias are increasing their attacks on minority communities across the country.

The international response to the genocide has been woefully insufficient. Both the UN and the African Union have failed to intervene to prevent or mitigate the violence. The complex and fluid nature of the conflict makes relief efforts difficult and dangerous. The escalation of atrocities will only stop with increased international attention and action.

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