

# Confronting Genocide: Never Again?



THE  
CHOICES  
PROGRAM  
BROWN UNIVERSITY

## Copyright and Permissions

---

This document is licensed for single-teacher use. The purchase of this curriculum unit includes permission to make copies of the Student Text and appropriate student handouts from the Teacher Resource Book for use in your own classroom. Duplication of this document for the purpose of resale or other distribution is prohibited.

Permission is not granted to post this document for use online. Our eText Classroom Editions are designed to allow you to post individual readings, study guides, graphic organizers, and handouts to a learning management system or other password protected site. Visit <http://www.choices.edu/resources/e-text.php> for more details.

The Choices Program curriculum units are protected by copyright. If you would like to use material from a Choices unit in your own work, please contact us for permission.

**PREVIEW**  
**Not for Distribution**

## Acknowledgments

---

*Confronting Genocide: Never Again?* was developed by the Choices Program with the assistance of faculty at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, scholars at Brown University, and other experts in the field. We wish to thank the following researchers for their invaluable input to the written and video portions of this and previous editions:

**OMER BARTOV**

John P. Birkelund Professor of European History,  
Professor of History, and Professor of German Studies  
Brown University

**CHARLES T. CALL**

Associate Professor School of International Peace and Conflict  
Resolution, American University

**SUSAN E. COOK**

Executive Director, Center for African Studies,  
Harvard University

**MAGDALENA GROSS**

Assistant Professor of Social Studies Education and  
Curriculum Theory,  
University of Maryland, College Park

**CHARLES MIRONKO**

Non-Resident Fellow, Hutchins Center for African and  
African American Research,  
Harvard University

Samantha Power's book *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide* provided inspiration and many of the ideas found in this unit.

We wish to thank Langan Courtney who helped develop and write this curriculum unit.

All maps by Alexander Sayer Gard-Murray.

Front cover graphic includes images by the United Nations, the National Archives, and Justin Vidamo (CC BY 2.0).

## The Choices Program

---

Director

**Susan Graseck**

Curriculum Writer

**Susannah Bechtel**

Marketing and Social Media Manager

**Jillian McGuire Turbitt**

Curriculum Development Director

**Andy Blackadar**

International Education Intern

**Mackenzie Abernethy**

Manager, Digital Media Group

**Tanya Waldburger**

Professional Development Director

**Mimi Stephens**

International Education Intern

**Camisia Glasgow**

Administrative Manager

**Kathleen Magiera**

International Education Intern

**Lindsay Turchan**

# Contents

---

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Introduction: Never Again?</b> .....                                    | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Part I: Defining Genocide</b> .....                                     | <b>3</b>  |
| World War II. ....   | 6         |
| The Genocide Convention. ....  | 8         |
| After the Cold War. ....   | 11        |
| <b>Part II: Six Case Studies</b> .....                                     | <b>14</b> |
| The Armenian Genocide .....  | 14        |
| The Holocaust .....  | 19        |
| The Cambodian Genocide .....   | 22        |
| The Bosnian Genocide .....   | 27        |
| The Rwandan Genocide .....   | 31        |
| Genocide in Sudan .....  | 37        |
| <b>Options for U.S. Policy</b> .....                                       | <b>43</b> |
| Remembering History: U.S. Genocide Policy for the Future .....             | 43        |
| Options in Brief .....   | 45        |
| Option 1: Lead the World in the Fight to Stop Genocide .....               | 46        |
| Option 2: Stand with the International Community Against Genocide .....    | 48        |
| Option 3: Support Local Efforts Against Genocide .....                     | 50        |
| Option 4: Intervene Only When U.S. Interests are Directly Threatened. .... | 52        |
| <b>Supplementary Resources</b> .....                                       | <b>54</b> |

## Introduction: Never Again?

In March 2004, the international media was flooded with reports describing the murder, sexual assault, disappearance, and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in western Sudan. In reality, the mass killing campaigns in Darfur, Sudan began years before the media started reporting on it. Like violent conflicts throughout history, tensions had existed for years and had deeper roots than many in the international community initially recognized. The tragic events in Darfur were part of a long history of conflict in Sudan. In one of the most violent and deadly series of conflicts and mass murder, more than 2.5 million civilians in Sudan and South Sudan have been killed since World War II. Many more survived the violence.

The type of horror described above came to be known as “genocide” following the Nazi extermination of twelve million civilians (including six million Jews) during the Holocaust. When World War II ended and the Nazi concentration camps were liberated, the world was shocked and horrified by Nazi crimes. Pledging that such an event would never occur again, leaders worldwide signed the Genocide Convention.

More than seventy years after the Holocaust, the recent events in Sudan demonstrate that the promise of “never again” has been broken time after time. During the twentieth

century alone, more than 200 million people were killed by governments or political violence, 40 million of them in genocides. Recent conflicts and violence in places such as Sudan, Syria, and other places illustrate that the trend continues today throughout the world. Why is this? What are the root causes of genocide? How has the international community tried to prevent genocide? Why has it failed to keep the promise of “never again”? What is the United States’ role? What actions have local leaders and community groups taken to prevent mass violence? How do communities and individuals respond to and recover from genocide? What is the best way to prevent and respond to these atrocities?

In order to understand the causes of genocide and why it persists, it is important to understand how people have grappled with these questions throughout history and today. In the pages that follow, you will explore responses to genocide. Part I explores the history of efforts to deal with genocide. Part II examines six case studies of genocide and the local, international, and U.S. response to each case. Ultimately, you will deliberate and formulate your own ideas about how the United States should prevent and respond to genocide.

It is important to note that this reading focuses on one type of killing of civilians: genocide. Specifically, this reading focuses on

### Note to Students

During the twentieth century, governments and political violence killed more than 200 million civilians. This reading focuses on one type of killing of civilians: genocide. In its strict legal definition, genocide refers to widespread murder and other acts committed by governments or other groups with the intent to destroy—in whole or in part—a national, racial, religious or ethnic group. Scholars calculate that there were more than forty million victims of genocide in the twentieth century and are debating whether other acts of mass killing should be called genocide as well. Of course, there have been other kinds of killing as well. Civilians have been targeted for political reasons and during wartime, for instance. This text is not meant to ignore these other tragedies of history, but rather to focus on the particular issue of genocide and how the world has attempted to cope with this repeating problem. The six case studies discussed here focus on government-perpetrated genocide. Most genocides have been perpetrated by governments but it is important to note that government involvement is not necessary for genocide to occur.



# Confronting Genocide: Never Again?

## Teacher Resource Book



THE  
**CHOICES  
PROGRAM**  
BROWN UNIVERSITY

# Contents

---

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Note to Teachers . . . . .                           | 2             |
| Making Choices Work in Your Classroom . . . . .      | 3             |
| Integrating This Unit into Your Curriculum . . . . . | 5             |
| <b>Part I: Defining Genocide</b>                     |               |
| Study Guides and Graphic Organizers . . . . .        | 6             |
| The Genocide Convention: Five Case Studies . . . . . | 10            |
| <b>Part II: Six Case Studies</b>                     |               |
| Study Guides and Graphic Organizers . . . . .        | 19            |
| Genocide Reported in the Media . . . . .             | 23            |
| Survivors' Voices: Experiences of Genocide . . . . . | 38            |
| <b>The Options Role Play</b>                         |               |
| Organization and Preparation . . . . .               | 41            |
| Options: Graphic Organizer . . . . .                 | 45            |
| Debate and Discussion . . . . .                      | 46            |
| <b>Synthesis</b>                                     |               |
| Joining the Debate on U.S. Policy . . . . .          | 48            |
| Building a Memorial . . . . .                        | 53            |
| Key Terms . . . . .                                  | 58            |
| Issues Toolbox . . . . .                             | 59            |
| Assessment Guide for Oral Presentations . . . . .    | 61            |
| Supplemental Materials and Videos . . . . .          | <i>Online</i> |

## The Genocide Convention: Five Case Studies

### Objectives:

**Students will:** Examine the definition of genocide in the Genocide Convention.

Consider the possibilities for differing interpretations of the Convention and what constitutes genocide.

Assess historical events and cases of genocide around the world.

### Required Reading:

Students should have read the Introduction and Part I of the reading and completed “Study Guide—Introduction and Part I” (TRB 6-7) or “Advanced Study Guide—Introduction and Part I” (TRB-8).

### Choices Videos:

Short, free videos that you may find useful for this lesson are available at <[www.choices.edu/resources/scholars\\_genocide\\_lessons.php](http://www.choices.edu/resources/scholars_genocide_lessons.php)>.

### Handouts:

“Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” (TRB-12)

“Defining Genocide” (TRB-13)

“Case Studies” (TRB 14-18)

### In the Classroom:

**1. “The Wall”**—Begin the class by writing the word “genocide” in the center of the board. Give students 5-10 minutes to approach the board and write whatever comes to mind when they think of genocide—statements, words, questions, countries, etc. Instruct the class to do the exercise in silence. Encourage students to add to each other’s postings as well as write their own independent postings.

**2. Defining Genocide**—Distribute the Genocide Convention and Defining Genocide handouts. Explain that 2014 marked the 65th anniversary of the Genocide Convention, and today students will examine the convention’s resulting definition of genocide and the inter-

national law in place against the crime. Divide students into small groups and have them read Article I and Article II out loud within their groups. Have one member of each group record their group’s responses to the questions. After students have completed the worksheet, give them the opportunity to ask questions about any phrases or words that they do not understand.

Invite students to share their observations about the language of the Genocide Convention. What types of groups are protected? Do students think that parts of Article II are clearer than other parts? What reasons can students think of that the authors of the convention might have had for using ambiguous language? Why do students believe the convention does not specify things like numbers of deaths or define serious mental harm? Challenge them to think of advantages and disadvantages of using less ambiguous language in cases of international law. What do students think is the primary purpose of the Genocide Convention?

**3. Exploring Genocide’s Extent**—Tell students they are going to examine some case studies and use the language of the convention to determine if the cases are genocides. Place students in groups of four to six and distribute “Case Studies.” Assign each group at least one case to examine. Tell students to refer to Article II of the convention as they consider whether their case(s) should be considered genocide.

**4. Sharing Conclusions**—Have the groups share their findings from their case studies. What standards did students apply from the Genocide Convention to make their decision?

Explain that not all scholars agree that each of the cases may be defined as genocide. Ask students to consider why scholars would have differing viewpoints. What is at stake in identifying an event as genocide? Might this happen for political reasons? Would students change the language in the convention in any way? Would they protect additional groups? Ask students to remember what the purposes



of the Genocide Convention are. Is it possible to look at historical events and apply the term retroactively? Is it useful? Why or why not? Is it enough to recognize the scale of suffering of victims? Why or why not?

**Homework:**

Students should read Part II in the student text and complete “Study Guide—Part II” (TRB 19-20) or “Advanced Study Guide—Part II” (TRB-21).

PREVIEW  
Not for Distribution

## Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948.

### Preamble:

The Contracting Parties,

Having considered the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world,

Recognizing that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and

Being convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from such odious scourge, international cooperation is required,

Hereby agree as hereinafter provided:

### Article I

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and punish.

### Article II

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

### Article III

The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.

### Article IV

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

**Note:** The full text of the Genocide Convention can be found online <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CrimeOfGenocide.aspx>>.

## Defining Genocide

*Instructions:* The United Nations wrote the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide so that genocide could be legally treated as a crime subject to punishment. Read Articles I and II aloud in your group. Underline 3-5 phrases that you think are most important. Circle any phrases or terms that you do not understand. You will come back to these later as a class. Answer the questions below, and be prepared to share your responses with your classmates.

*Questions:*

1. According to Article I, what must be done in response to the international crime of genocide?
2. Who may be the victim of genocide? In Article II, genocide is defined as committing certain “acts with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part,” any of which four types of groups?
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.
  - iv.
3. How is genocide carried out? Article II lists five acts that may be committed as part of a genocide. In your own words, briefly describe these acts.
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.
  - iv.
  - v.
4. Does the convention define how many people of a group must be killed in order for an event to be called a genocide?
5. What do you think the phrase “conditions of life calculated to bring about...physical destruction” in Article II means ?
6. Does the wording of Article II of the convention make it difficult or easy to define genocide? Explain.
7. Who can be punished for committing genocide? According to Article IV, which three categories of people does the convention aim to hold accountable and punish for committing genocide?
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.

## Case Studies

*Instructions:* Read the case(s) assigned to your group and answer the questions that follow. Use your understanding of the Genocide Convention, particularly Article II, to answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

### 1. The Trail of Tears

One of the major questions facing the United States in its first century was how it would treat the native groups in North America. This included not only groups in the West, but also the thousands of native people that lived within U.S. borders at the time. In the early nineteenth century, the federal government supported a policy of assimilation. This policy encouraged native groups to become “civilized” by adopting Anglo-American customs, converting to Christianity, and attending government or missionary boarding schools. U.S. leaders forced native groups to give up their lands and become part of U.S. society.

The U.S. demand for land was strong. U.S. leaders were under pressure to open new lands for settlement quickly. Despite previous treaties with native groups in the southeast, U.S. leaders gave in to the demands of land speculators, miners in search of precious minerals, and white settlers. In 1830, President Andrew Jackson, a Southern politician who was a strong advocate of native removal, signed the Indian Removal Act into law. This act called on any native people residing in U.S. states or territories to move west of the Mississippi River.

There were many people in the United States, native people and non-native people alike, that voiced strong opposition to native removal. Some native groups appealed to the Supreme Court or refused to sign removal treaties with the U.S. government. The Cherokees, for example, worked to convince the U.S. government to grant them U.S. citizenship, a legal status not extended to native people at the time. The government refused, and in 1838 issued an ultimatum: if the Cherokees did not move west immediately, they would be forced to leave. In what became known as the Trail of Tears, federal troops forced Cherokee communities to leave their lands. In the dead of winter, they forced the Cherokee west of the Mississippi. Of the fifteen thousand Cherokee people who made the journey, more than four thousand died from disease, exposure, and malnutrition.

*Questions:*

1. Was the “Trail of Tears” a genocide? Explain your reasoning.
2. What standards from Article II of the Genocide Convention did you apply to answer question 1?
3. What additional information would you like to have about the Trail of Tears?



## Case Studies

### 2. King Leopold and the Congo Free State

The region that is today the Democratic Republic of the Congo became the personal possession of King Leopold II of Belgium in 1885. Leopold's top priority was to make money from his colonial venture, and the colony became infamous for its harsh abuse of the African population. The Congo Free State measured more than seventy-six times the size of Belgium. Its population of more than twenty million was diverse, with approximately 250 different ethnic groups. As many as ten million Congolese—about half of the total population—died in the first two decades of colonialism as a result of colonial abuse and violence.

Laws prevented Africans from traveling freely across provincial borders and from practicing non-European religions. Africans were also subjected to physical punishment for offenses as minor as disrespecting a European.

Africans in the rural areas were forced to collect ivory and rubber or grow crops such as cotton, coffee, and tea for export. Discoveries of precious metals and minerals such as cobalt, gold, copper, and diamonds led to the further extraction of Congo's resources for European profit. Many Africans were forced to work in the mines and labored under harsh working conditions. Colonial officials forced others to work for the Force Publique, a police force that maintained order by intimidating and abusing local populations. Members of this force were subject to poor pay, brutal working and living conditions, and violent abuse at the hands of their Belgian officers.

As the international community became aware of the abuses of the Congo's colonial system under King Leopold, public pressure forced Leopold to cede the Congo to the Belgian government, which reluctantly took control in 1908.

#### Questions:

1. Were Belgium's actions in the Congo a genocide? Explain your reasoning.
2. What standards from Article II of the Genocide Convention did you apply to answer question 1?
3. What additional information would you like to have about King Leopold and the Congo Free State?

## Case Studies

### 3. Tibet

Tibetans are a people best known for their devotion to Buddhism and to their land, which lies to the north of the Himalayan Mountains in what is today southwestern China. The Tibetans enjoyed autonomy for centuries, but in 1950 Chinese troops overran their homeland.

Chinese communist officials ruthlessly attempted to erase Tibet's distinctive culture during China's Cultural Revolution. After a rebellion in 1959, Chinese military forces killed and imprisoned hundreds of thousands of Tibetans. Thousands of monasteries, temples, and other Tibetan architecture were also destroyed. Since the 1980s, China's policies have been aimed at promoting the migration of thousands of ethnic Chinese to Tibet. As a result, Tibetans are now a minority in the region.

Since 2001, the Chinese government has centered its policy in Tibet on rapid economic development and strict control of dissidents. The Chinese government has launched a number of "Strike Hard" campaigns that it claims are aimed at reducing crime in the region. The government has arrested thousands of Tibetans and killed hundreds of others for engaging in "separatist" activities. When the Dalai Lama, whom many Tibetans recognize as their leader, visited President Obama in the White House, the Chinese government condemned the meetings. It believes the Dalai Lama seeks independence for Tibet from China. The Dalai Lama claims to only seek more autonomy from the central government. Since 2009, at least 140 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in protest of China's religious, cultural, and political repression in Tibet.

#### Questions:

1. Are China's actions in Tibet a genocide? Explain your reasoning.
2. What standards from Article II of the Genocide Convention did you apply to answer question 1?
3. What additional information would you like to have about Tibet?

## Case Studies

### 4. The Ukrainian Famine

Russia and Ukraine have been closely linked politically and economically since the eighteenth century, when the Russian Empire established control over much of what is today Ukraine. During the Soviet era (1917-1991), Ukraine was home to much of the Soviet Union's agriculture and developed a large industrial base.

In 1928, the leader of the Soviet Union—Josef Stalin—imposed a Five-Year Plan designed to industrialize the struggling Soviet economy. Stalin believed that the Soviet Union had to industrialize at all costs in order to compete against the threat of the capitalist countries of Europe and Japan.

The plan included ending small-scale farming and forcing the farmers, known as *kulaks*, to work on large-scale farms. This process was known as “collectivization.” When Ukrainian *kulaks* were told they would have to give up their land to the Soviet state and grow what they were told, they resisted. In response, Stalin announced in 1929 his intention to “liquidate [eliminate] the *kulaks*.” Hundreds of thousands were deported to forced labor camps in Siberia, the expansive northern Russian state known for its low temperatures and severe winters. Stalin's imposed changes to the agricultural system led to poor harvests and ultimately food shortages and famine. This was true in other parts of the Soviet Union, but Stalin saw the shortages in Ukraine as acts of sabotage by disloyal Ukrainians. The truth was that “collectivization,” not sabotage, had created the vast shortages and famine. Because Stalin saw the failures as a result of plots by Ukrainian groups resisting Soviet rule, he escalated the Soviet crackdown in Ukraine, worsening the famine. Many were killed, deported, and allowed to starve to death. Between three and five million Ukrainians died of starvation in 1932 and 1933.

#### Questions:

1. Were the Soviet Union's actions in Ukraine a genocide? Explain your reasoning.
2. What standards from Article II of the Genocide Convention did you apply to answer question 1?
3. What additional information would you like to have about the famine in Ukraine?

## Case Studies

### 5. The Conquest of the Desert

The country of Argentina gained its independence from Spain in 1816. Argentina's newly unified central government wanted to expand its control of land out from the coastal areas into areas inhabited by native groups. This was a way of increasing agricultural and commercial production and providing land to new immigrants of European origin. In addition, Argentina hoped to prevent the neighboring country of Chile from expanding its borders.

Continuing a long history of pushing native people off their land to expand its borders, between 1878 and 1885, the government began a military campaign in the regions of Pampa and Patagonia. General Julio Argentino Roca, the national minister of defense who became the president of Argentina from 1880-1886 and again from 1898-1904, started the campaign.

During this campaign, the army was authorized to execute prisoners, including women and children. Families of native groups were separated. Children were taken from their parents and relocated to "concentration camps" in different parts of Argentina. Some were brought back to the capital city as curiosities to sit in state fairs for urban white residents to observe. Native men and women were also separated and native women were often raped or forced into marriage with white soldiers. Native children were also frequently kidnapped or forcibly separated from their parents, and then forced to work as servants for wealthy Argentines. Argentines justified these separations by saying that they were bringing the children into the civilized world and Christianity. The Argentine government's actions killed at least one thousand native people and forced fifteen thousand from their homes. The government secured thirty-seven thousand acres of land for wealthy white investors.

#### Questions:

1. Were the Argentine government's actions a genocide? Explain your reasoning.
2. What standards from Article II of the Genocide Convention did you apply to answer question 1?
3. What additional information would you like to have about the "Conquest of the Desert"?