



**United Nations**  
Office on Genocide Prevention  
and the Responsibility to Protect

2024

# **Policy Guidance Note**

# **PREVENTING ETHNIC GENOCIDE**



# Acknowledgements

This “Preventing Ethnic Genocide: Policy Guidance Note” has been written by Professor Kimani Njogu, the Director of Twaweza Communications, a linguist, literary critic and cultural scholar; and Professor Gregory Stanton, founding President and Chair of Genocide Watch. In 2000, Professor Stanton published a proposal to establish an Office for Genocide Prevention at the United Nations.

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# Foreword

The prevention of genocide is a solemn obligation for humanity. This policy guidance document, adopted in Rwanda 30 years after the genocide against the Tutsi, where one million lives were systematically extinguished in less than three months, serves as a stark reminder that no society is immune to the risk of genocide, especially when ethnic divisions are exploited for political or social gain.

This policy guidance acknowledges that human diversity, while historically a catalyst for development and cultural enrichment, can also be manipulated into a source of conflict. The challenge lies not in the existence of ethnic diversity itself—a fundamental feature of human society—but in how we manage and protect it within our social and political frameworks.

History demonstrates that genocide is not a sudden event but a process that unfolds over time. It begins with discrimination, progresses through the normalization of hate speech and the degradation of targeted groups, and escalates when institutional safeguards fail. This understanding presents both a challenge and an opportunity: while the path to genocide is clear, so too are the intervention points where we can prevent its occurrence. The prevention of ethnic genocide requires a comprehensive approach engaging all levels of society. While states bear the primary responsibility for prevention, civil society organizations, religious and traditional leaders, media institutions, and individual citizens play crucial roles in building resilient societies that can resist the forces of division and hate.

This guidance document draws from both tragic lessons and inspiring successes. Rwanda's journey from devastation to becoming a model for diversity management demonstrates that even after humanity's darkest moments, societies can rebuild and transform. Their experience underscores the importance of fostering a unifying national identity while acknowledging and respecting ethnic diversity.

The recommendations within this document are designed to be actionable and practical. They address the root causes of ethnic-based violence, outline early warning signs, and provide concrete steps for building preventive mechanisms at local, national, and international levels. Special attention is given to addressing systemic discrimination, ensuring equitable access to resources and power, and countering hate speech and incitement to violence.

As we navigate an increasingly complex global landscape where intolerance and division appear to be gaining ground, this guidance serves as both a warning and a roadmap. It reminds us that the promise of "never again" is not merely a statement of intent but a call to action requiring continuous vigilance and proactive engagement.

Our collective future depends on our ability to protect and celebrate human diversity while ensuring that ethnic differences cannot be manipulated into pretexts for violence. Through understanding, preparation, and decisive action, we can work to ensure that genocide—the gravest of crimes against humanity—remains firmly in our past, not our future.

The task before us is immense but not impossible. Let this guidance serve as a practical tool in our shared commitment to building a world where ethnic diversity is recognized as a source of strength rather than division, and where the promise of "never again" is upheld through concrete action and unwavering resolve.



**Alice Wairimu Nderitu**

Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on  
the Prevention of Genocide

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# Introduction

*This Policy Guidance for Preventing Ethnic Genocide is informed by ideas and opinions solicited globally. During the consultations, various stakeholders were invited periodically to review the draft and to make suggestions for improvement. The consultations culminated in a meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, in which further input to the document was provided and incorporated. The rationale for this policy is that prevention of genocide needs a strategic policy framework aimed at promoting and ensuring peaceful ethnic coexistence among all communities.*

The anchor to this Policy Guidance for Preventing Ethnic Genocide is the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The organizing principle is ethnic and racial inclusion which is the idea and practice of deliberately ensuring that people from diverse ethnic and racial groups resident in the nation or region are represented in employment, governance structures, planning, development initiatives, public deliberations, democratic arrangements and national educational institutions. This policy requires that international organizations, national governments, local or county governments, the private sector, civil society, communities, and individuals adhere to the principle of ethnic and racial inclusion in all affairs of life.

The Policy Guidance for Preventing Ethnic Genocide strongly recommends that national governments and various public and private institutions and companies develop their own context specific ethnic and racial inclusion policies. Proper implementation of this policy will assist in prevention of genocide by proactively mitigating conflict, building peace and ensuring cohesion and integration. The capacity building functions of the Office of the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG) will include support for the assessment of the extents of proper implementation of this policy as called for by various policy statements in this document. This document concludes with 69 recommendations that can be implemented to prevent genocide on the basis of ethnic identity.

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# Understanding ethnic genocide and violence based on ethnic identity

## 1. Definition of Terms

### Genocide

is defined in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and has become a norm of customary international law. Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (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.

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[1] Genocide, according to international law, is a crime committed against members of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. Even though the victims of the crimes are individuals, they are targeted because of their membership, real or perceived, in one of these groups. The ICTR held that ethnic groups are classified subjectively by their perpetrators, not objectively by lawyers or social scientists. Therefore, Tutsis were an “ethnic” group to their killers, even though some social scientists contend they are actually more like a “caste” within the Rwandan national group. When speaking about victims of genocide, this Policy will refer to them as “protected groups”.

## Crimes against humanity

encompasses acts that are part of widespread or systematic attacks directed against any civilian population.

## War crimes

are those committed against a diversity of victims, either combatants or non-combatants, and protected under international humanitarian law.

## National group

refers to a collection of people who are perceived to share a legal bond based on common citizenship, alongside reciprocal rights and duties.

## Ethnic group or ethnicity

refers to a group of people whose members claim a common heritage or common ancestry and usually speak a common language and may have some common cultural practices. In this policy, the term ethnicity or ethnic group is used in place of the derogatory term “tribe” which is associated with perceptions of ‘backwardness.’ The ethnic group of a person is often based on self-declaration and self-identification. Despite some elements of stability, ethnic identity is often malleable and fluid. Some people may choose to claim membership in more than one ethnic group or to identify themselves as multi-ethnic.

## Ethnic group or racial identity

of a person is whatever ethnicity or race that person indicates as the ethnicity or race that he or she belongs to. This self-identification will be applied for purposes of this policy even if the person indicates his or her ethnic or racial identity category as multi-ethnic or multi-racial.

## Ethnocentrism

is the term adopted in this policy guidance note to mean “ethnic or racial exclusion.” The term ethnocentrism has negative connotations. For this policy it is analogous to the negative term “racism.” Ethnocentrism refers to the practices in which individuals are favoured (if they belong to the “right” ethnic or racial group) or discriminated against (if they belong to the “wrong” ethnic or racial group) simply because of their ethnic or racial origin and without regard to merit. Ethnocentrism is most damaging when practiced by individuals in power.

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## Ethnic inclusion

is the idea and practice of deliberately ensuring that people from diverse ethnic and groups are represented in employment, governance structures, planning, development initiatives, public deliberations, democratic arrangements and national educational institutions.

## Race

refers to the broad classifications of human beings based on perceived differences in phenotypic characteristics, understood to have hereditary physical traits often associated with a geographical region. Some scholars think of race as biological and fixed, while others think of race as culturally and socially constructed.

## Racism

refers to the practices in which individuals are favoured or discriminated against simply because of their race or colour. Racism is most damaging when practiced by individuals in positions of authority.

## Religious group

refers to a group where the members share the same spiritual faith, religion, denomination or mode of worship.

## Hate speech

is defined in the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action as “any kind of communication in speech, writing, and behaviour that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person on the basis of their identity based on their religion, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender, language, culture or other identity factors.”<sup>[2]</sup>

## Hate crimes

are criminal activities motivated by hatred for members of a particular group because of their identity.

## Stereotypes

are generalizations about an entire group of people that are based on very limited evidence. Both positive and negative stereotypes are barriers to healthy ethnic relations. Stereotypes encourage people to be narrow in perceiving others and may lead to biased evaluations of individual persons on account of prejudice.

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<sup>[2]</sup><https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN%20Strategy%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action%20on%20Hate%20Speech%2018%20June%20SYNOPSIS.pdf>

They create conclusions that ignore individual merit.

### **Prejudice**

is a pre-judgment or bias in which someone holds a negative or positive opinion or feelings about another person or group or thing without adequate evidence for holding such an opinion or feelings. In human relations prejudice is usually negative.

### **Diversity**

refers to the co-existence of persons from different ethnic, racial or religious communities that have different cultures, values, and beliefs in a region, nation, county, city, or town.

## **2. Historical context and root causes of violence based on ethnic identity**

The prevention of genocide against protected groups advances human rights, inclusive development, and global peace and security. It is at the heart of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.[3] The protected groups in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide – national, ethnical, racial and religious – are characterized by relative social cohesiveness, homogeneity, and are assigned membership through social-cultural processes, stability and shared tradition. Membership is not assigned by individual choice. Historically, these protected groups have been targeted for harm on account of their membership. The membership in the protected group is relatively stable and uncontested by other group members.

The pursuit of self-identification and self-understanding in the context of diversity is a human attribute. Human beings have a universal desire to find meaning, belonging and identity. These associational linkages can take many forms: family, ethnicity, religion, nationality, race, gender, language, lineage, kinship, and other forms of identity.

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[3][https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocitycrimes/Doc.1\\_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocitycrimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf)

This Guidance Note addresses the associational linkage of ethnicity – a form of group identity based on shared language, culture and tradition - and how it intersects with genocide. While ethnic identity is permeable, fluid, and socially and culturally constructed, it does manifest aspects of ‘stability’ recognized by group members which gives them a sense of solidarity and uniqueness.

This notion of stability in ethnic identity is crucial because groups that share the same language and culture may self-identify differently on account of physical appearances, geographical location, sources of livelihoods or some other aspects other than language and culture.

While self-identification of a group in its associational linkages is a vital aspect of ethnicity, equally important is how the group is perceived by others. An ethnic group can be ‘othered’ through labels and stereotyping, and be denied opportunities, resources and access to power.

Ethnic group affiliation can also be expressed through clan identity and made a source of tension in the struggle for political power and natural resources. In countries that are ethnically homogeneous because of their shared history, language, culture, and religion such as Somalia, the most divisive group identities may be expressed through clan cleavages.

Within the ethnic group, there are also internal tensions that may be a consequence of power relations. Ethnic belonging is not gender blind. Women are positioned with subordinate roles and lower status than men in many ethnic groups because of their gender. In violent conflict, they are targeted differently from their male counterparts. Because of women’s universal role as child-bearers, genocidists target them for mass rape with the biological goal of changing the genetic identity of their offspring. Women in an ethnic group are targeted to change their reproduction. They suffer mass rape because genocidists intend to change the ethnic demography of a region or an entire country.

The fact that the world is populated by multiple ethnicities enriches the world with nearly infinite cultural diversity and creative potential. Interactions between cultures plant the seeds of new music, art, science, language, and literature.

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It gives the world cultural geniuses like Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, Wole Soyinka, Rabindranath Tagore, Pablo Picasso, Wolfgangus Mozart, Mahatma Gandhi, Shirin Ebadi, Dag Hammarskjöld, Wangari Muta Maathai, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr. The plural nature of global identities enriches human experience and human historical heritage. It provides new approaches in decision making and diverse dispute resolution processes. Ethnic diversity facilitates the transfer of wide-ranging knowledge and experiences harnessed over time to address a myriad of global and local challenges.

However, when not managed properly and instrumentalized by politicians to access power and resources, ethnic diversity can present significant challenges to peace and human unity. Incitement to violence that targets communities or individuals based on their identity, including ethnicity, can contribute to prejudices and hatred that could lead to genocide and crimes against humanity against members of other ethnicities. Ethnic nationalism poses a grave danger to minority ethnic groups. It is a warning sign and early indicator that genocide could occur.

### 3. Objectives of the Guidance Note

Ethnic diversity is both a source of cultural richness and a potential flashpoint for violent conflict if not well managed. Globally, there remain in many countries unresolved historical grievances resulting from ancient empires, colonialism, religious wars, economic inequalities, exclusionary citizenship, government tyrannies, political marginalization, and competition over natural resources. These divisions are now accentuated by climate change, exacerbating our struggle to live together on this earth, our only human home. These factors can all lead to extreme violence and genocide.

This Guidance Note has the following objectives:

- (i) Increase understanding of the root causes of genocide based on ethnic identity;
- (ii) Understand the cultural, social, and political processes that result in genocide;
- (iii) Explore the legal framework and institutions for the prevention of genocide;
- (iv) Share actionable strategies for the prevention of violence based on ethnic identity;
- (v) Provide policy recommendations on how violence based on ethnic identity can be prevented.

The policy recommendations for preventing ethnic identity-based incitement to violence that could lead to genocide are aligned with the mandate and strategic priorities of the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide (SAPG) based on the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) states that the Convention embodies principles which are part of customary international law. Therefore, all States, whether they have or have not ratified the Genocide Convention, are bound by the principle that genocide is a crime prohibited under international law. The prohibition of genocide is a peremptory norm of international law (*jus cogens*) and consequently, no derogation from it is allowed.

The SAPG is mandated by the Security Council to fulfil the following functions:

- (a) collect existing information, in particular from within the United Nations system, on massive and serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law of ethnic and racial origin that, if not prevented or halted, might lead to genocide;
- (b) act as a mechanism of early warning to the Secretary-General, and through him to the Security Council, by bringing to their attention potential situations that could result in genocide;
- (c) make recommendations to the Security Council, through the Secretary-General, on actions to prevent or halt genocide;
- (d) liaise with the United Nations system on activities for the prevention of genocide and work to enhance the United Nations capacity to analyse and manage information relating to genocide or related crimes.

In addition to the Genocide Convention and the SAPG's mandate, the legal framework for that mandate is drawn from the whole body of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, international criminal law, UN resolutions and the legal traditions of the whole human race.

The Note provides actionable recommendations to prevent incitement to violence against ethnic communities that could escalate into genocide. These recommendations are addressed to, among others, international organizations, UN Member States, academia, civil society, the private sector, media, and individuals around the world.

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## 4. Organizing Principle

The organizing principle underlying this Policy Statement is that ethnic and racial inclusion should ensure that people from diverse ethnic and racial groups resident in a nation or region are represented in decisions about employment, governance structures, planning, development initiatives, public deliberations, democratic arrangements, and national educational institutions.

## 5. Guiding Principles

In policy conceptualization, formulation and implementation, established UN policies such as those related to peace, security, inclusion, 'do no harm' and gender sensitive approaches and context specific interventions apply.

This Policy Note is informed by the following Guiding Principles:

### **5.1 Anchor international norms and standards related to peace and security to prevent genocide on the basis of ethnic identity**

Policy and programmatic interventions for prevention of genocide based on ethnic identity should be founded on international norms and standards including the 1948 Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and international human rights laws that apply to peace and security, rule of law, and development.

### **5.2 States and their agencies bear the biggest responsibility of preventing genocide within their jurisdictions**

Genocide can be prevented if states take structural, attitudinal and behavioral steps in governance practices. Lessons learnt from past atrocities show that state complacency and the participation of its agencies in ethnic crimes are precursors to genocide. States can prevent the occurrence of genocide if they take requisite steps in their countries.

### **5.3 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

Genocide based on ethnic identity is preceded by weaknesses in governance and justice systems, as well as practices of exclusion of certain groups in the affairs of

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the state. All ethnic groups should live without fear of violence and feel safe to undertake their activities and to live their lives freely.

**5.4 Integrate values of equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of historically marginalized groups in all policies and practices**

Societies that are driven by values that dignify all ethnic groups, abhor discrimination against any group, and protect their human rights are more peaceful and less likely to have genocide based on ethnic identity.

**5.5 Integrate inclusive land and resource governance practices as part of a strategy for prevention of genocide based on ethnic identity**

Land can be a root cause or trigger of genocide on the basis of ethnic identity. It can also be a factor for building and entrenching resilience and sustaining peace. Addressing land and resource related issues strategically and in a sustained manner is a preventive measure that can lessen opportunities for armed conflict.

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# Global policy and legal framework for protection of ethnic groups

The protection of ethnic groups from violence is grounded in international human rights standards, including the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

While Article 3 of the Genocide Convention prohibits ‘direct and public incitement to commit genocide’, Article 1 of the Economic Social and Cultural Covenant affirms that all ‘peoples have the right of self-determination.’ In view of that right, they are free to determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

The General Assembly in 1992 adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.[4] Article 1 of the Declaration calls on UN Member States to ‘protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.’ The rights of minorities are based on four pillars: protection of existence; protection and promotion of identity; equality and non-discrimination; and the right of effective participation.[5]

The jurisprudence of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) broadened the definitions of ethnicity in the context of genocide and how the rights of the protected groups could be secured.

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[4] <https://documents.un.org/doc/resolution/gen/nr0/025/02/img/nr002502.pdf>

[5] <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Minorities.pdf>



# Risk factors and precursors of genocide

To prevent genocide and other atrocity crimes, and foster stability and development, it is imperative to address risk factors for violent conflict based on ethnic identity. It is necessary to systematically implement strategies to promote inclusion and equity at all levels of society. It is equally important to identify, monitor and address the precursors of atrocity crimes, as well their risk factors.

The Office of the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect (OSAPG) sets out the most common risk factors and their indicators in its Framework of Analysis.

These risk factors include, the presence of an armed conflict or other forms of tension and crisis, widespread human rights violations against groups based on identity, including ethnic identity: discrimination, dehumanization, hate speech, impunity, and State institutions too weak to respond to these threats.

Processes leading to the commission of genocide as an identity crime feature many of these risk factors. They were manifested in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi ethnic group in Rwanda, the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica against the Bosniak ethnic group and the genocide against the Cham and Vietnamese in Cambodia in the 1970s.

In Myanmar gross human rights violations that may constitute genocide have occurred against the Rohingya ethnic group and in Sudan, against the Masalit, Fur, and Zaghawa ethnic groups in Darfur.

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# 1. Political exclusion, economic inequality, and social tensions

Violence based on ethnic identity can be an outcome of exclusion or marginalization in the arenas of political engagement, economic activities and socio-cultural life.

- **Political instability and conflict:** Prevention of genocidal actions is enhanced through democracy, the rule of law with an honest independent judiciary, governments freely elected by the people, religious liberty, and political and economic freedom. The security of populations is most viable through freely elected governments with universal suffrage. Through regular, transparent and fair elections governments gain legitimacy and populations are assured that their voices matter. Transparent, accountable and inclusive governments prevent extremist groups from rising to power and causing civil wars, political instability, and persecution of minority ethnic groups.
  - **Economic inequality:** Significant economic disparities between different ethnic or religious groups can create tensions and resentment, as well as a sense of competition for resources.
  - **Weakening of institutions:** The breakdown of the rule of law, the weakening and erosion of democratic institutions, and corruption among government officials can create a permissive environment for violence. By fighting corruption and strengthening governance institutions including the judiciary, violent conflict can be prevented or stopped.
  - **Historical grievances:** Past injustices, real or perceived, can fuel resentment and a desire for revenge against communities leading to cycles of violence. The resolution of the historical grievances through negotiation, mediation, arbitration and other forms of dispute resolution mechanisms can minimize tensions before they violently explode.
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- **Hate speech and propaganda:** The spread of hateful propaganda and incitement to violence targeting “other” ethnic groups can create intolerance, discrimination, dehumanization, organization of hate groups, polarization, planning of violence, persecution, crimes against humanity and genocide.
- **Ethnic displacement and deportation:** The systematic expulsion of national, ethnic, religious, or racial groups from a country or territory often signals an intent to marginalize or even eliminate them. Their expulsion may be aimed at the consolidation of political power, increased access to natural resources, economic investments, or national, ethnic, religious, or racial homogeneity, unity, or “purity.”
- **Arms proliferation:** The availability of weapons, particularly heavy weapons, can facilitate the commission of mass atrocities. But even the distribution of machetes to ethnic militias can be a dire warning of a coming genocide.
- **Nationalism and ethnocentrism:** Extreme nationalism and ethnocentrism can foster a belief in the superiority of one's own group, leading to hatred and intolerance towards others.
- **Dehumanization:** The portrayal of targeted groups as less than human makes it easier to justify violence and even genocide against them.

It is important to note that these risk factors often interact with each other, creating a complex web of causes that can contribute to genocide. Addressing these issues proactively is crucial for preventing such atrocities.

## 2. Genocide ideology and “ethnic cleansing”

Genocide ideology is expressed through behaviour, words, speeches, documents, broadcasts, newspapers, social media and other information sources whose aim is to incite populations to exterminate people on the basis of their ethnic group, national origin, region, color, physical appearance, sex, language, religion, or political opinion. Such incitement may be committed in times of peace, but it is especially powerful during war.

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The term ‘ethnic cleansing’ was first used in the 1990s to describe the genocidal destruction of ethnic groups after the disintegration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, the ethnic groups involved were the Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbs in the Krajina region of Croatia, and ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. The expression was later used for the persecution of East Timorese freedom fighters by Indonesia, after East Timor voted for independence in 1999.

The goal of “ethnic cleansing” is to create geographical areas that are ethnically homogeneous through forced displacement or deportation of people belonging to “othered” ethnic groups. “Ethnic cleansing” usually also results in the removal of physical signs and memorial markers of the targeted group through the destruction of churches, mosques, sacred sites, cemeteries, and monuments. Its most common meaning today is “deportation or forcible transfer of population” which is a crime against humanity under the Article 7(1)(d) of the ICC Statute.

Some scholars assert that the intent of “ethnic cleansing” is incompatible with the intent of genocide. They assert that the intent of “ethnic cleansing” is to establish ethnically homogeneous areas by driving out “others.” Genocide’s intent, in contrast, is to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. But treating these crimes as mutually exclusive has repeatedly been proven false by history.

Forced deportation and genocide usually go together. In Kosovo, for example, genocidal massacres were used to terrorize the Kosovar Albanian population into fleeing to Albania. In Bosnia, Serb militias used genocidal massacres to force Bosniaks to leave their villages. The same concurrence of genocide and deportation have occurred in Bangladesh, Darfur, Myanmar, Nigeria, and in Sudan. Perhaps the most graphic proof that the crimes are not mutually exclusive was the Holocaust.

Forced deportation is often a precursor to genocide. It involves the systematic expulsion of a specific ethnic or religious group from a particular territory, often through violence, intimidation, and terror. While forced deportation does not always culminate in genocide, it often creates conditions that make genocide much more likely.

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### 3. Ethnic genocide

The term 'genocide', the crime of identity-based group destruction, was coined in 1944 by Polish Jewish lawyer Raphaël Lemkin in his book 'Axis Rule in Occupied Europe' in response to past instances in history of targeted actions aimed at the destruction of groups of people based on their identity[6]. Lemkin combined two words – the Greek prefix 'genos', meaning 'race or ethnicity', and the Latin suffix 'cide', meaning 'killing' to create the word 'genocide'. Lemkin devoted his entire life to obtaining the recognition and condemnation of this crime. His efforts led to genocide first being recognized as a crime under international law in 1946 by the United Nations General Assembly in a dedicated resolution. It was codified in international law two years later as the 1948 Genocide Convention[7].

The Genocide Convention emerged from the determination of Raphael Lemkin to give a name to a new crime, define it, and make commission of it punishable. Genocide means the collective destruction of groups of people. The Convention recognizes "that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and that, in order to liberate humankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation is required."

The Genocide Convention defines genocide in its article II as certain acts when committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group. These acts are 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.

The jurisprudence of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda contributed to a deeper understanding of the elements of the protected groups, the concept of 'intent' to

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(6)Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposal for Redress* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944). Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., *The Origins of Genocide: Raphael Lemkin as a Historian of Mass Violence* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009).

[7] <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/1948-convention.shtml>

destroy the group, the notion of ‘in whole’ or ‘in part’ and the behavioral acts that are characteristic of genocide. The Tribunals sent the message that targeting any of the protected groups is punishable and there would be no impunity irrespective of the positions held by the perpetrators. The prohibition of genocide aims at preventing the extermination or attempted extermination of the protected groups.

Genocidal acts carry the perpetrators’ hatred against another group. Having identified and named the group for ‘othering’, the perpetrator proceeds to depersonalize and stigmatize it to justify its destruction and extermination. Ethnic genocide is against a group. For genocide to occur, it must be committed against individuals because they are members of a specific group. The victims must be targeted because of their membership in a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, not because of their individual identity. The perpetrator intentionally targets members of the group.

When the intent to exterminate an ethnic group, in part or in whole, is formed, language may be used against the group to intensify its ‘otherness’ and amplify its ‘being less’ than the perpetrator’s group. This linguistic marking has the effect of increasing the distance between potential victims and perpetrators of genocide. A tracking of language used to refer to ethnic groups targeted for acts of genocide would be immensely vital as a preventive measure. In interpreting such language, it will be essential to examine the context of use of the language and the acts it promotes. One crucial context is internal armed conflict, as happened in the case of Rwanda.

## 4. Hate speech and genocide

Hate speech is any form of expression that is hostile to an entire community. It is aimed at encouraging contempt, denigration, defamation, exclusion, or victimization of individuals belonging to that community.

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Ethnically polarizing speech and propaganda can use many media channels to incite hatred, intolerance, and violence. Hate speech often targets specific groups based on their ethnicity, religion, nationality, or other characteristics. By dehumanizing and demonizing these groups, hate speech can create a climate of fear and hostility that makes it easier to justify violence against them.

Risk factors indicate predictable processes that together may result in genocide. Genocide Watch notes ten processes that are necessary for genocide. The processes are not linear and are often simultaneous. They unpack the overall genocidal process into logical “stages.” Each process can be opposed by specific strategies.

**The Ten Stages of Genocide[8] are:**

1. Classification: “us versus them”
2. Symbolization: naming or marking
  3. Discrimination: exclusion
4. Dehumanization: threats to humanity
  5. Organization: hate groups
  6. Polarization: divisionism
  7. Preparation: planning
8. Persecution: murder, torture, starvation
  9. Extermination: genocide
10. Denial: genocide didn’t happen.

The Ten Stages of Genocide model has accurately predicted every genocide since 1989. It is the model most widely taught in courses on genocide. It is used by many governments. Along with its Framework of Analysis, it is used by the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.

In every stage in the process there are specific actions that can be taken to stop the process of “destroying in whole or in part” a group – including an ethnic group – that has been targeted for genocide.

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[8] <https://www.genocidewatch.com/tenstages>

# Case studies of genocide based on ethnic identity

## The Case of Rwanda

The seeds for the genocide in Rwanda were cultivated by Belgian colonialism through an ideology of ethnic classification, physical differentiation (symbolization), and discrimination which presented the Tutsi as aristocratic and superior to the Hutu intellectually, politically, and culturally. As a result, the Hutu were excluded from positions of power and authority.

German and Belgian colonizers took advantage of this hierarchical social system to rule Rwanda and Burundi indirectly. By adopting the Tutsi monarchy, they could rule their colonies with a minimum number of Europeans. Tutsi dominance was reinforced by European troops, civil servants, priests, engineers, and teachers.

The ethnic hierarchy was reinforced through the colonial educational system. Its ideology was based on the fictitious “Hamitic hypothesis” that expressed nineteenth century “scientific racism” and ranked human races from white to black. Adopted by Belgian colonialists, the Hamitic hypothesis held that the Tutsis descended from the lost Israelite descendants of Ham and were originally foreign to Rwanda and Burundi.

In the effort to entrench ethnic differentiation, Belgian authorities created a sense of permanence in ethnic identification by classifying the population into three ‘ethnic’ groups with Hutu as majority (84%), Tutsi (15%) and Twa (1%). They introduced identity cards on which one’s “ethnicity” was noted. This amplification of ‘otherness’ was made despite the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa speaking the same language - Kinyarwanda - and sharing similar historical and cultural experiences.

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Following guidance from the United Nations Trusteeship Council, the Belgian government opened more opportunities to the Hutu in government and education. In 1959, Hutus rebelled and massacred thousands of Tutsis. In 1962, Belgium granted Rwanda independence. Elections were won by the Hutu party. This shift in power resulted in thousands of Tutsi who were dissatisfied with Hutu governance and persecution to move to Burundi and Uganda. In 1990 the Rwandan Patriotic Front invaded Rwanda. The Arusha Accords to end the resulting civil war were signed in 1993. The Accords would have resulted in power sharing for all ethnic groups. A UN Peacekeeping Mission UNOMUR (later UNAMIR) was sent to Rwanda to oversee implementation of the Arusha Accords. Rejecting the Arusha Accords, and to consolidate their hold on political power, a “Hutu Power” elite, the Akazu, started planning a genocide of all the Tutsis in Rwanda.

The establishment of Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), in July 1993 and the emergence of Kangura newspaper saw an intensification of the rhetoric of discrimination against the Tutsi throughout the country. Their propaganda represented the Tutsi as ‘inyenzi’ [cockroaches] and ‘inkota’ [snakes] and portrayed them as anti-human enemies that had to be destroyed.

Some priests and academics, rather than speaking out against ethnic hatred and misinformation, denied any potential for genocide in Rwanda. During the 1994 genocide, a few priests even unlocked their churches for massacres by Hutu militias.[9] On April 9, 1994, Pope John Paul II urged Rwandans not to give in to hate.[10] Other priests gave their lives to protect Tutsis.[11] With a few exceptions, churches failed in their duty to actively teach love against hatred and to resist the genocide. The most notable exceptions were the Seventh Day Adventists and the Muslims of Kigali, who protected Tutsis from slaughter.

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[9]“[Ex-priest jailed for Rwanda genocide](#)”. NBC News. 13 December 2006. [Archived](#) from the original on 19 October 2013. Retrieved 30 September 2012.

[10] “[VATICAN - The Pope's anguished and repeated calls during the genocide in Rwanda: "Do not give in to the temptation of hatred and revenge. At this tragic stage of the life of your country, be builders of peace and love"](#)”. agenzia fides. Information service of the Pontifical Mission Societies. 6 April 2004. [Archived](#) from the original on 3 June 2022. Retrieved 3 June 2022.

[11] [Des Forges, Alison](#) (1999). [Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda](#) (Report). New York: [Human Rights Watch](#). ISBN 1-56432-171-1. [Archived](#) from the original on 18 February 2019. Retrieved 4 December 2016.

Hutu Power propaganda heightened Hutu fears that the Tutsi were planning genocidal attacks on Hutus and seizure of political power. This tactic is what genocide scholars call “accusation in a mirror.” Its goal was to increase fear among Hutus and provide justification for a genocide against the Tutsi as ethnic “self-defense.” The formation, training, and arming of Hutu ethnic militias such as the Interahamwe was supported by the Rwandan Presidential Guard. Five hundred thousand (500,000) machetes were allegedly shipped in and distributed to them in early 1994.

Rwandan government officials sharpened ethnic profiling, documentation, and surveillance of Tutsi and Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) sympathizers. In February 1994, there was increased ethnic violence as several moderate Hutu leaders were assassinated. On 6th April 1994, UN and regional leaders including President Habyarimana met in Arusha to discuss how the Arusha Accords should be implemented. On their flight back from the conference that same day, the aeroplane carrying the Rwanda President Habyarimana, and the Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down by a missile near Kigali airport, killing all those onboard.

For 100 days after the crash, the Rwanda Republican Guard, Rwandan Armed Forces, the Interahamwe militia groups, and armed Hutu civilians killed at least 1,000,000 people identified as Tutsi as well as any Hutu the killers viewed as sympathetic to the RPF. The hate radio, RTLM, moved from general denunciations of the Tutsi to naming specific people as enemies of the nation. If they were known to be traveling on a specific road or in a specific house, RTLM identified their location and incited Hutu militias to slaughter them. Media became a tool of fear, incitement to genocide, and specific directives to killers (DesForges 2007, 49). When the RPF defeated the Rwandan Armed Forces and took power in Kigali, over two million Hutu fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for fear of reprisals. For several years, ex-Rwandan Armed Forces and Interahamwe extremists continued to invade Rwanda from the Hutu refugee camps across the border.

In April 2004, ethnicity, as a form of identity, was outlawed. Rwandan law prohibited ethnic classification and “divisionism.” Old ID cards were abolished. New ones were issued without any notation of “ethnicity.” It is now a criminal offense to promote “divisionism.”

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## The Case of Srebrenica

The Srebrenica genocide occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1992-1995 Bosnian War. The genocide was a deliberate and systematic campaign aimed at eliminating the Bosnian Muslim population from every area inhabited by Bosnian Serbs. It was a campaign of “ethnic cleansing” (forcible transfer of populations) and a campaign of genocide.

During the war, Serbian forces carried out a series of acts of genocide, including mass killings, concentration camps, and as Slobodan Milošević dubbed it, “ethnic cleansing.” The ethnic dimension of the genocide was central to its nature and execution.

The genocide was underpinned by Serbian nationalist ideology that sought to create a Greater Serbia, a state that would unite all Serbs, regardless of their location.

This ideology was fueled by historical grievances dating back to the Ottoman Empire. These tensions were exacerbated by the collapse of Yugoslavia and the rise of Serb nationalism under Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who declared his desire to “cleanse” all areas inhabited by Serbs of non-Serbs.

Justified by this nationalist ideology, Bosnian Serb and Serb militias saw Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) as obstacles to Serbian unity. Bosniaks were targeted for their ethnic and religious identity.

Their presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina was viewed as an obstacle to the creation of a Greater Serbia.

The ethnic dimension of the Bosnian genocide was a crucial factor in its brutality and the extent of its devastation. It was both a crime against humanity and genocide that targeted a group of people based on their ethnicity and religion.

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## The Case of Cham and Vietnamese [12]

The political organization of the Khmer Rouge was known as the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK). The CPK endeavored to implement a rapid socialist revolution in Cambodia through a radical Maoist and Marxist-Leninist transformation program. To accomplish this transformation, the Khmer Rouge regime (also known as Democratic Kampuchea) reorganized society in all aspects, beginning with the de-population of urban centers. Counter to the CPK achieving its goals, vast proportion of people died from starvation, exhaustion, disease and execution. Children were taken from their parents, husbands were separated from their wives, and families were broken apart. Cities and towns were emptied, and throughout the country, people were forced to travel, often times on foot, to new locations. The regime instituted a system of forced labor under harsh conditions. In addition to defining the Party against imaginary “internal and external enemies” and to address the widespread failure of their radical policies, the Khmer Rouge established a robust security program which targeted anyone suspected of disloyalty to the CPK. Those suspected of disloyalty included all those associated with the former regime, intellectuals, people with wealth, and religious leaders. Many tens of thousands of people were arrested and many were summarily executed, while others were forced to languish in prison or re-education camps where they suffered and eventually died. Even the smallest perceived infraction could lead to one’s death.

During the Democratic Kampuchea regime, money, markets, and private property were abolished. Religious and cultural practices were prohibited, and public schools, pagodas, mosques, churches, and shops were closed or converted into prisons, re-education camps, or other government prescribed purposes. There was no public or private transportation, and leisure activities were severely restricted. No private farming or other entrepreneurial activities were allowed. Rather, the population was forced to labour in large scale cooperatives and massive work sites on irrigation and other projects.

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[1] This paper derives its information from the following sources: Christopher Dearing (ed). *Genocide and Mass Atrocities in World History: Overview for Cambodian Classrooms*. Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2019. pp. 29-45. (<https://www.dccam.org/homepage/education/genocide-and-mass-atrocities-in-world-history/>); Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, Trial Chamber, Case 002/02, Case File No. 002/19-09-2007/ECCC-TC, (November 16, 2018), [Summary of Judgment], [https://www.eccc.gov.kh/sites/default/files/documents/courtdoc/%5Bdate-in-tz%5D/E465\\_5\\_EN.PDF](https://www.eccc.gov.kh/sites/default/files/documents/courtdoc/%5Bdate-in-tz%5D/E465_5_EN.PDF).

People were deprived of their basic human rights, movement was restricted or even broken up, and religious practices were prohibited. Free speech was severely restricted with severe punishments, including death. Individuals who were accused of a violation would be punished with no legal process. To meet the CPK's goals regarding agricultural development and national defence, between late 1975 and January 1979, the regime sought to increase the population by forcing men and women to marry partners chosen by the authorities. These individuals were often wed in mass ceremonies devoid of Cambodian traditions. Afterwards, newly-wedded couples were forced to have sexual intercourse with their spouse. Couples who were found to have not had sexual intercourse were re-educated or threatened with being punished or killed. Women, children, and even the most committed members of the regime were subjected to torture and execution. Religious and ethnic minorities suffered. The Khmer Rouge were particularly attentive to Buddhists, Cham and anyone with a Vietnamese background.

The Cham are an ethnic minority within Cambodia who share a common language, a common culture and Islam as a common religion. They are concentrated in communities across Cambodia. When the Khmer Rouge arrived, they were forced to leave their homes and communities. Cham were prohibited from practicing their religion, speaking their language, and wearing traditional clothes or hairstyles. Massive numbers of the Cham were executed in the areas they were traditionally concentrated along the Mekong River. It is estimated that between 100,000 and 500,000 out of 700,000 Cham died during the Democratic Kampuchea regime.

The Vietnamese were also an ethnic minority population targeted by the Khmer Rouge. The exact number of Vietnamese in Cambodia is difficult to ascertain because of different definitions of nationality, but generally Vietnamese Cambodians were persons who identified as fully or partially of Vietnamese nationality. Most Vietnamese Cambodians tended to reside in southeastern parts of Cambodia bordering Vietnam or in areas surrounding the Tonlé Sap lake and Mekong river. Under the Khmer Rouge regime, the Vietnamese suffered discrimination, arrest, and mass murder.

The regime's terror did not end until Cambodian forces aligned with Vietnam and Vietnamese forces fought the Khmer Rouge in the latter part of 1978, ultimately leading to the capture of the Cambodian capital on January 7, 1979.

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From January 1979 and until 1998, the Khmer Rouge continued to survive as a guerrilla movement and they harassed and attacked the Cambodian people and the new government. It is estimated that 1.4 to 2.2 million people died during the Democratic Kampuchea regime.

The United Nations dispatched a team to research the acts committed by the Khmer Rouge, and from these findings, the U.N. and Cambodian government agreed to set up a U.N.-Cambodia court to investigate and prosecute allegations of genocide, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Convention. In 2003, the U.N. and the government of Cambodia entered into an agreement to establish the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). The ECCC is mandated to prosecute senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea and those most responsible for serious violations of international and domestic law that occurred between April 17, 1975 and January 6, 1979.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) is a UN-Cambodia hybrid court—recognized under both international and Cambodian law for purposes of prosecuting senior leaders and those most responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other crimes under Cambodian law that were committed under the Khmer Rouge (Democratic Kampuchea) regime (1975-1979). In Case 002/02, the ECCC Trial Chamber found that during the Democratic Kampuchea period, there existed a policy to target certain groups in order to establish an atheistic and homogenous society without class divisions by abolishing all ethnic, national, religious, racial, class and cultural differences. These groups were the Cham, Vietnamese, Buddhist, and former Khmer Republic officials (including civil servants and military personnel) and their families.

Regarding the Cham, the ECCC Trial Chamber found that they were targeted not as individuals but on the basis of their membership in the group. They suffered discrimination, restrictions on the practice of their religion, arrest, and death. The Trial Chamber found that the crime of genocide and the crimes against humanity of murder, extermination, imprisonment, torture, persecution on political and religious grounds, and the other inhumane acts through conduct characterized as forced transfer were committed with respect to the Cham.

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Regarding the Vietnamese, who were also an ethnic minority targeted by the Khmer Rouge regime, the ECCC Trial Chamber found that from 1975 until the end of 1976, there was a nationwide policy to expel people of Vietnamese ethnicity living in Cambodia.

There were specific instances of killings of Vietnamese civilians, for instance in Svay Rieng in 1978, Kampong Chhnang province in 1977, Siem Reap province and Kratie in 1978, among others. These deliberate killings occurred on a massive scale and were systematically organized and directed against the Vietnamese. In each case, Vietnamese were targeted not as individuals but based on their membership to the group and their perceived ethnicity.

Ultimately, the ECCC Trial Chamber found that the crime of genocide and the crimes against humanity of murder, extermination, deportation and persecution on racial grounds were committed regarding the Vietnamese. In addition, because there was an ongoing international armed conflict between Vietnam and Democratic Kampuchea from May 1975 and given the protected status of the victims, the ECCC Trial Chamber found that there were several grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions perpetrated against the Vietnamese persons that were held at a certain security center (i.e., prison), which included willful killing, torture, inhumane treatment, willfully causing suffering or serious injury to body or health, willful deprivation of the rights of a fair and regular trial and unlawful confinement.

linguist, quem ut, suscipit magna. Curabitur  
mattis, diam non laculis elementum, ex  
quam gravida massa, ut maximus justo  
pursus quis odio.

# Recommendations for prevention of ethnic genocide

As we have seen in the case of Rwanda, Srebrenica and Cambodia above, ethnic genocide does not happen overnight. It is a process preceded by many factors which, if addressed, can minimize its occurrence.

This section carries recommendations for the prevention of ethnic genocide. The recommendations advocate actions that can be taken by governments, militaries, the UN, religious leaders, educational institutions, NGOs, corporations, journalists, social media and technology companies to prevent violence, protect and assist targeted communities, build partnerships, and ensure that perpetrators are punished for their actions. As we have seen in the case of Rwanda and Bosnia above, ethnic genocide is not an event, it is a process that involves preparation.

The recommendations are aligned to the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

It is important to note that nothing in the recommendations below should be interpreted as implying for any state, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations.

Neither should the recommendations be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign or independent states.

They are meant to ensure the safety, security and well-being of the protected groups under the Genocide Convention.

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# 1. Recommendations to the United Nations and International Organizations

After the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust, the United Nations was created to prevent wars. The Genocide Convention was adopted to prevent and punish genocide. The UN's primary organs to fulfil these purposes are the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly. Due to vetoes by one or more of the Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council, the UN has often been paralyzed to fulfill its duties to prevent wars and genocides.

The UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) and the UN Human Rights Council have assumed increasingly important roles in warning of threats of genocide and documenting the facts of actual genocides.

In 2004, Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the UN Security Council created the mandate the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (SAPG). The Special Adviser is mandated to fulfil the following functions:

- (a) collect existing information, in particular from within the United Nations system, on massive and serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law of ethnic and racial origin that, if not prevented or halted, might lead to genocide;
- (b) act as a mechanism of early warning to the Secretary-General, and through him to the Security Council, by bringing to their attention potential situations that could result in genocide;
- (c) make recommendations to the Security Council, through the Secretary-General, on actions to prevent or halt genocide;
- (d) liaise with the United Nations system on activities for the prevention of genocide and work to enhance the United Nations capacity to analyse and manage information relating to genocide or related crimes.

The recommendations in this Policy Guidance apply to the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and other United Nations entities.

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1. **Adopt a holistic, structural and gender sensitive approach** to address root causes, overcome all forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnic identity and build solidarity and empathy with and between ethnic groups to enable their inclusion and full participation in activities that secure their dignity and livelihoods;
  2. **Mainstream and integrate the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups** including minorities, indigenous groups, women, and children at a global level and develop forums for them to effectively participate and be represented in international and transnational institutions for the protection of their rights;
  3. **Support Member State and non-State efforts toward legal, institutional and educational reforms and interventions** that address structural discrimination, violence and inequality that maintain underlying social norms and perpetuate discrimination;
  4. **Support the development of policies and interventions to address global inequalities** in the provision of education, employment, health and criminal justice systems;
  5. **Undertake preventive diplomacy to curb inter-state and intra-state conflicts** that could escalate to ethnic violence and disruption of economic development;
  6. **Enforce international justice instruments and pursue accountability of perpetrators of violence** based on ethnic identity and ensure access to justice and remedies for victims;
  7. **Recognizing that conflictual disputes within states can have serious international ramifications, support peacemaking efforts** as stipulated in the United Nations Charter;
  8. **Support peace enforcement efforts led by or with active involvement of regional organizations to ensure cease-fire agreements are upheld** by warring factions, take forceful action against provocateurs and agreement spoilers, and avoid escalation of violence by pursuing accountability;
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**9. Undertake peace building measures by identifying and supporting local initiatives and structures for the consolidation of peace and security** and advance the confidence and well-being of affected individuals and groups. These measures could include reforms of governance and security systems for inclusivity and accountability, training of security agents, monitoring political elections, supporting the protection of human rights, responding to human and security needs, reforming and developing the capacity of governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal process of political participation.

## 2. Recommendations to Member States

Member States have the primary responsibility to ensure that peace and security are protected within their jurisdictions, that all ethnic groups are protected, and that conflict between communities is prevented. The preventive measures may take many forms including developing policies that address the unequal ethnic structure in a country. Where ethnic groups are positioned unequally and hierarchically at the political, economic, social and cultural levels, they tend to compete for power and resources based on their ethnic identities. The inequality manifests itself in unequal political power, conditions of poverty, absence of access to education, poor housing conditions, residential segregation, poor health, and lack of occupational choices.[13]. Because ethnic structures are maintained by laws, customs, and practices, conflict preventive interventions should challenge hierarchical power imbalances through executive policy, legislative, and regulatory reforms.

Unequal access to resources of power, motivations to target an ethnic group, and exclusionary ethnic state control may lead to violence based on ethnic identity. United Nations member states need to adopt inclusive approaches to conflict prevention.

**1. To ensure evidence-based policy making, collect, analyze and publish data** on ethnic relations, opportunities and challenges to reveal inequalities experienced through ethnic discrimination and non-inclusive policies by establishing independent national institutions;

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[13] It is important to address the structural conditions, psychological consequences, behavioral trends and organizational factors that often lead to conflict between ethnic groups. Violence based on ethnic identity is a consequence of structural conditions and various levels of human interaction (Yang, Philip, 2000. *Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches*. New York. State University of New York Press).

2. **Develop and implement policies, laws and regulations that prevent and punish acts of genocide with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group** in line with the Convention of Genocide and international human Rights standards;
  3. **Develop policies, laws and regulations that recognize genocide on the basis of ethnic identity as a crime under international and national law** and take steps to ensure that it is prevented and punished whether committed in time of peace or in time of war;
  4. **Ratify, domesticate, and implement other human rights and humanitarian conventions, treaties and laws**, and develop national policy and legislative frameworks with effective and enforceable protection and punishment mechanisms;
  5. **Take appropriate steps to punish perpetrators, giving dignity and healing to victims**, and resettling displaced persons including women and children who may have been transferred to another group;
  6. **Develop, entrench, and implement national legislation to ensure punishments of the crime of genocide on the basis of ethnic identity**, including conspiracy to commit genocide on the basis of ethnic identity, direct and public incitement to commit genocide on the basis of ethnic identity, attempt to commit genocide on the basis of ethnic identity, and complicity to commit genocide on the basis of ethnic identity;
  7. **Develop and promote community-based justice models as legally recognized complementary justice systems** to national statutory mechanisms, recognizing that community justice systems can be effective, efficient and accessible, leading to faster adjudication, more accountability, and improved trust between the justice sector and communities;
  8. **Strengthen national institutions including the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, and human rights organizations through legal protection and provision of adequate financial and human resources and ensuring that they are independent and impartial;**
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9. **Initiate, build, and support strong institutions for national cohesion and integration, intercultural understanding and ethnic relations** to increase awareness and training about international human rights law to security agencies, non-State armed groups and other public safety institutions;

10. **Develop and fund independent security sector oversight mechanisms for accountability and protection of vulnerable ethnic groups;**

11. **Ensure inclusive participation in national decision-making structures** within executive, legislative and judicial systems through effective mechanisms that redress historic grievances;

12. **Promote equity and justice among all ethnic groups**, protect their political, economic, social, cultural, and linguistic rights and include them in positions of power, employment in State institutions and in key professions such as teaching, the judiciary, and the police;

13. **Recognize the multiple historical narratives of peaceful co-existence of ethnic groups in the construction of national narratives and celebrations of historical events.** This should include development of school textbooks and peace and civic education materials that recognize and celebrate diversity as a national resource;

14. **Encourage populations to recognize that nation states in which they live can be reformed to ensure equitable development and access to opportunities by all ethnic communities;**

15. **Criminalize and punish segregation, discrimination, and dehumanisation in policies and practices** by public and private institutions and ensure that they are reviewed and reformed;

16. **Develop and implement laws and software to deter and answer hate speech and hate propaganda** promoting intolerance, dehumanization, or incitement to crimes against ethnic groups;

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17. **Commit to deter and sanction political leaders who make statements claiming the superiority of an ethnic group, that dehumanize minority groups, or advocate crimes against an ethnic group;**
  18. **Celebrate the diversity of languages and cultures** that do not violate the rights of other groups to increase intercultural understanding and prevent genocide based on ethnic identity;
  19. **Create spaces for sharing of arts and cultures** by establishing and maintaining open museums, libraries, sports fields, parks and social halls for learning and shared recreational activities to promote inter-ethnic unity, build trust and solidarity between ethnic groups, and minimize risks of armed conflict;
  20. **Build mechanisms to ensure that the public service operates in ways that promote fairness, justice, equality of opportunity** in all matters, and equality of access to basic services for all people regardless of their ethnicity or race;
  21. **Develop institutions that encourage celebration of inter-ethnic dialogue and cultural diversity;**
  22. **Identify community leaders and enhance their capacities for dispute resolution, and build linkages among various religious, ethnic and racial communities;**
  23. **Ensure that organs of the state work together to combat the genesis of organized militias, to disarm and demobilize them, and to arrest and punish their leaders and members for their criminal activities. Create programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate members of organized militias into society.**
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### 3. Recommendations to Academic Institutions and Civil Society Organizations

1. **Undertake and encourage research and documentation** on the intersection of ethnic identity and violent conflict and suggest how ethnic diversity can be managed to protect communities from harm and how communities can heal their relationships after genocide and related crimes;
  2. **Publish research findings in user-friendly formats** that are accessible to different audiences including policy makers, religious leaders, media creators, community and civil society leaders, the general public, and others;
  3. **Provide training to community leaders and public officers** on human rights, prevention of violent conflicts, protection of vulnerable groups, and early warning indicators of genocidal processes;
  4. **Develop learning materials on how to ensure integration of minority groups** in political, economic, social and cultural life for use by public officers, religious leaders, teachers, journalists, NGOs, and other information sources;
  5. **Advocate for comprehensive policies, laws, regulations and administrative measures to combat discrimination on the basis of ethnic, racial or religious identity**, and monitor their implementation;
  6. **Advocate for effective participation of all members of society in public affairs** and in all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life, including for persons from minority groups;
  7. **Protect and amplify indigenous peoples land rights** as critical parts of cultural identity in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), their right of ownership, possession and control of community land, and enforcement of the principle of 'free, prior, and informed consent' to sale or other utilization of their land;
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8. **Protect and amplify indigenous peoples' rights against forced evictions and human rights abuses** resulting from large-scale land-based investments (LSLBI) by international and national business interests;
  9. **Advocate for respect and implementation of international human rights law and obligations covering protected groups** under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;
  10. **Support and finance educational and other institutions to develop ethnic and race relations policies** for the enhancement of cohesion, integration and inclusion;
  11. **Promote intercultural dialogue and understanding** through cultural exchanges and educational programs;
  12. **Build interethnic cohesion and trust** through joint community development programs, peace building initiatives and inclusion outreaches;
  13. **Monitor risk factors and early warning processes by collecting data and identifying trends** and calling for action to prevent violence based on ethnic identity.
  14. **Provide financing to support research and advocacy** by human rights and anti-genocide NGOs.
  15. **Undertake research on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms and promote conflict resolution processes that put communities at the center** and address the root causes of violence;
  16. **Undertake academic research on building shared national identity.**
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## 4. Recommendations for the Private Sector

The private sector stands to gain when there is peace and security. As a service provider in education, health, and infrastructural development the private sector has a vital interest in preventing violent conflict and genocide. It can play this role through poverty reduction and job creation, inclusive development practices, upholding human rights in its own employment practices, doing no harm while investing and doing business, contributing to strengthening governance institutions, supporting peace building efforts and adopting affirmative action in hiring ethnic minorities.

1. **Leverage technology including Artificial Intelligence (AI) to monitor risk factors and genocidal processes**, inform policy makers and the public about early warning signs, and improve communication in conflict resolution;
  2. **Develop Artificial Intelligence software to recognize, monitor, and address hate speech** that could lead to violence on the basis of ethnic identity;
  3. **Develop and use social media platforms to enhance interethnic dialogue**, promote mutual respect, and promote dialogue and discussion of ethnically sensitive topics;
  4. **Build and use online AI fact checking platforms to recognize, curb and address misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and hate ideology**;
  5. **Promote public-private partnerships** and engage the State on the value of developing and implementing policies, laws, regulations and administrative measures to enhance inclusive governance practices and to protect the security of private investments;
  6. **Ensure that investments and business ventures that affect public employment and land-based resources are undertaken according to laws to ensure corporate responsibility, respect for human rights, and protection of the rights of indigenous communities**;
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7. **Invest in infrastructural development and contribute to wealth creation** in areas that are vulnerable to violence by providing youth with dignified work to secure their livelihoods;
8. **Support peace building efforts** by providing expertise, capital investment, and equipment for reconstruction after violent conflict;
9. **Raise awareness about the devastating effects of violence on communities** and advocate for security sector reforms to uphold human rights;
10. **Undertake philanthropic activities to address structural inequalities and emergency needs during conflict and post conflict reconstruction.**

## 4. Recommendations to Media Owners and Practitioners

Media can play a major role in preventing violence based on ethnic identity by using their many platforms to inform and educate the public. In their news, features, analyses, documentaries, dramas, public service announcements, and current affairs shows, media practitioners can create spaces for inclusive voices, perspectives and human stories to influence social change, shift attitudes and shape public opinions about issues and social change. In performing their agenda setting and watchdog functions, media can debunk myths and stereotypes, monitor trends that could lead to violence, support dispute resolution efforts and demand accountability from leaders involved in hate speech, violence, and exclusionary governance practices. They can also participate in building trust between communities and enhancing peace and solution-oriented journalism through information sharing and training.

1. **Promote dialogue and understanding and build interethnic trust** through accurate, balanced, informative, educative, humanizing, and inclusive reporting;
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2. **Monitor and expose violations and abuses of power** by reporting torture, physical assault, arbitrary detention, corruption and other abuses of human rights and power and demand accountability and transparency in the use of public resources;
  3. **Support efforts to prevent and resolve inter-ethnic violent conflict by creating platforms offering spaces for dialogue, negotiation, mediation, trust building, and cooperation;**
  4. **Undertake research and media reporting to identify root causes of violence**, to share analysis of causes of violent conflicts and educate audiences on possible solutions and mobilize the public for the prevention of violence and promotion of peace;
  5. **Invest in peace and solutions journalism, fact checking, media literacy, and ethical and responsible reporting for social cohesion and integration**, as well as in entertainment-education media interventions in order to create resilience to hate incitement;
  6. **Develop and implement media policies and national laws to ensure the safety and security of journalists when they cover violent conflict;**
  7. **Train journalists to promote a shared national identity** and develop frameworks for their safety and security as they report on violent conflict;
  8. **Fight against hate speech and incitement to violence on social media** by working with social media and technology companies to strengthen their moderating processes to flag and remove hate speech, dehumanizing language, and direct incitement to violence in real time;
  9. **Promote counter-narratives to combat hate speech and ethnic discrimination.** Social media platforms should collaborate with influencers, civil society organizations, and governments to promote and disseminate through their algorithms counter-narratives that highlight the importance of tolerance, peace, and coexistence and fight against ethnic discrimination and hate;
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10. **Foster inter-ethnic dialogue and trust-building initiatives.** In fragile social and political settings, use social media to create spaces that encourage dialogue and mutual respect among diverse ethnic groups through moderated forums, live discussions, and events;

11. **Implement fact-checking measures to prevent misinformation, ethnic ideology and propaganda and support independent fact-checking organizations** to counter misinformation that could incite or perpetuate ethnic tension and hatred.

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**United Nations**  
Office on Genocide Prevention  
and the Responsibility to Protect