

History of Genocide

“Genocide” as a legal term



Fill out the heading of your notes

TOPIC/OBJECTIVE: History of Genocide as a Term	NAME:
	CLASS/PERIOD:
	DATE: DD/MM/YY
ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What circumstances occur or are created to build a climate where genocide can take place?	

“Why was killing a million people
a less serious crime than killing a
single individual?”

—*Raphael Lemkin*

Genocide Etymology

“Genos”

Greek for “race” or
“tribe”

“Cide”

Latin for “killing”

The origins of the word “genocide”



- **Term coined in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin - Jewish Polish lawyer**
 - Began working toward a concept of genocide as a crime in the 1920s after learning about the Armenian genocide
 - Lost 49 members of his family in the Holocaust
- Saw the Nuremberg Trials as only a partial success
 - Nazi perpetrators were indicted for “crimes against humanity,” but the motivation of the crime (identity-based violence) was not emphasized
- **Worked from 1944 until the passing of the UN Genocide Convention in 1948 to define genocide as int’l crime**

CIRCUMSTANCES OF GENOCIDE

- **Genocide never “just happens”**
 - There are always circumstances which occur or are created to make an environment where genocide can happen
- Identifying these circumstances can help prevent genocide at its earliest stages

What is “Genocide”?

The United Nations defines genocide as any of the follow acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, as such:


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

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Process Your Notes:

- Highlight/underline **three key words**
-  **Comment two things** you notice or wonder
- **Write one connection** or event you have heard of that is described here

05:00

Reflection

Despite the existence of the Genocide Convention, **the crime of genocide has continued to be perpetrated**. Since the convention was entered into force in 1951, genocides have occurred in Cambodia, in Rwanda, in Bosnia, in Darfur, and in other places around the world.

Each genocide is unique, but does the persistence of genocide suggest anything generally about the limitations of international law in preventing this crime? What other tools could be used to prevent genocide? What should happen when such crimes are not successfully prevented?

Partner/Group Share

To prevent
genocide we
should...

When genocide
is committed,
international
community
must...

Closure: Process Your Notes



Connections: Look back at article 2 of the United Nations Genocide Convention (UNCG). What is one example you have seen in what we have studied in our class so far?



Changes: Why is it important to create and give a name to a specific crime?



Questions: What questions do you have about genocide or the motivation for committing genocide?