



## Genocide Warning Signs

### 1948 UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

Any of the following acts undertaken with the *intent to destroy*, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, 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.

### Genocide Risk Factors

1. Extent of Political Upheaval
2. Exclusionary Ideology
3. Prior Genocides
4. International Context: Economic and Political Interdependence of a State
  - Low level of interdependence
  - Low economic development and societal cleavages
  - Narrow ethnic base of ruling elite
  - Denial of previous genocide triples the chance of reoccurrence

### Warning Signs

#### ➤ Classification and Symbolization to Isolate and Separate the Other

##### Prevention:

- Get identifiers removed from official documents
- Protest marking symbols to target a group
- Use common languages to promote common identities
- Oppose racist or divisive politicians
- Protest use of racist words – especially in a cultural context

#### ➤ Dehumanization

##### Prevention:

- Protest dehumanizing words
- Deny visas and assets to perpetrators
- Prosecute hate crimes and incitement to violence
- Jam or shut down media outlets
- Provide positive programs in media and social settings
- Enlist religious and political leaders to speak out
- Organize inter-ethnic, interfaith, and inter-racial groups

### ➤ Polarization vs. Interdependency

#### Prevention:

- Protest laws or policies that segregate or marginalize groups
- Physically protect moderate leaders

### ➤ Preparation and Organization

#### Prevention:

- Treat genocidal groups as the organized crime groups they are
- Deny visas and assets of leaders
- Impose arms embargoes
- Declare a genocide alert
- Leadership by world leaders
- Prepare humanitarian relief
- Mobilize regional intervention force

## Shifting Our Approach

### ▪ Problem of “intent”:

Genocide means focusing on destroying a group. Rather than debating whether actions fit the legal definition we must ask: Are the patterns consistent with extensive, group-selective violence whose purpose is the destruction of groups under the perpetrator’s control?

Indicators of Scale (Peter Straus, Committee on Conscience, USHMM)

- ✓ Are substantial parts of a target group subject to violence?
- ✓ Is the violence organized, deliberate, and systemic?
- ✓ Is the violence spread out geographically?
- ✓ Is there a capacity to inflict large scale violence?

### Signals of Intent Can Be Implied

Potential perpetrators armed

Elites use hate propaganda to attack ethnic or political opponents

Disproportionate government repression

Authorities ignore isolated killings and abuse

Plans are made for a “Final Solution”

### ▪ Problem of sovereignty

“When, if ever, is it appropriate for states to take coercive action – and in particular, military action, against another state for the purpose of protecting people at risk in that other state?”

#### ✓ **R2P:** The Responsibility to Protect (2001)

“Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the responsibility to protect.”

#### ✓ “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” Martin Luther King