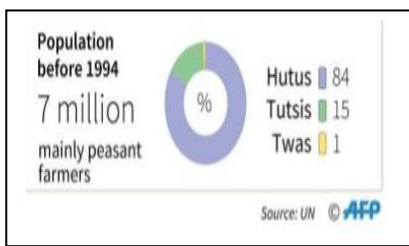


## Aim #17: How did genocide erupt in Rwanda and Darfur?



"the  
graves are  
not yet  
full"  
SLOGAN BROADCAST ON RTLM  
RADIO DURING THE GENOCIDE



### HOW PEOPLE WERE KILLED/ TORTURED

Guns, Clubs & Machetes		People being skinned alive
People being torched/cooked in vats of oil		Babies cut from the womb, fried and served
Dismembering Genitalia & Other Body Parts		Violent Raping of Women

Belgian colonialists believed Tutsis were a naturally superior nobility, descended from the Israelite tribe of Ham. The Rwandan royalty was Tutsi.

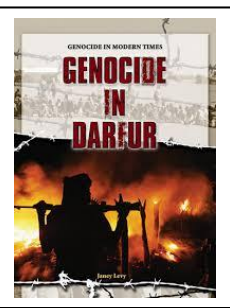
Belgians distinguished between Hutus and Tutsis by nose size, height & eye type. Another indicator to distinguish Hutu farmers from Tutsi pastoralists was the number of cattle owned.



NEVER AGAIN.	NEVER AGAIN.	NEVER AGAIN.	NEVER AGAIN.	NEVER AGAIN.
CAMBODIA	RWANDA	BOSNIA	DARFUR	U.N.

THIS BODY WILL STOP GENOCIDE WITH A VERY UNAMBIGUOUS PRESS RELEASE...

Source: Jack Ohman, The Portland Oregonian, December 2006



### Mini Lecture

- One of the smallest countries in Africa, **Rwanda** was the site of one of the worst genocides in modern history.
- Ethnic rivalry and hatred going back to the colonial era were behind the slaughter. Belgian colonizers had treated the minority **Tutsi** people better than the majority **Hutu** people. The Hutus resented all the power that the Tutsis enjoyed.
- When Rwanda won independence in 1962, the Hutu majority easily won control of the government and took revenge on the Tutsis by discrimination against them. In response, tens of thousands of Tutsis fled the country and formed a rebel army.
- In 1993, Tutsi and Hutu representatives in Rwanda began negotiations for a coalition government in which both ethnic groups would share power.
- The negotiations were cut short in 1994 when Rwanda's president, a Hutu, was killed in an airplane crash, supposedly shot down by rebel forces. The incident lit the fuse of genocide.
- Over the next 3 months, as many as 1 million civilians, mostly Tutsis and some moderate Hutus, were killed. Some sources estimate the casualties were even higher.
- International responses ranged from insufficient to callous. UN peacekeepers were instructed not to use force to restore order. There were also too few peacekeepers to make any real impact on the situation.
- Individual countries, including the U.S., evacuated their personnel from the country after Belgian peacekeepers were killed. UN peacekeepers and individual nations failed to evacuate any Rwandans.
- The **Rwandan genocide** focused attention on the lack of leadership in the international community. It became clear that the UN needed to think seriously about its role in violent conflicts if it wanted to effectively protect human lives and human rights.
- In 2003 another incident of genocide took place in **Darfur**, a region located in Western Sudan. The people involved were all Muslims, but some were nomads of Arab descent, while others were non-Arab farmers.
- The government of Sudan was controlled by Arab Muslims. Two Darfur rebel groups composed of non-Arabs took up arms against the Sudanese government in response to attacks from nomads.
- In response, the Sudanese government unleashed Arab fighters known as the **Janjaweed** on the region. Together with Sudanese forces, the Janjaweed attacked and destroyed hundreds of villages throughout Darfur, slaughtering more than 200,000 people, mostly non-Arab Muslim Africans.
- More than one million people were displaced, creating a refugee crisis that spilled into neighboring Chad. Charges of war crimes were brought against Sudan's president by the International Criminal Court.

### Review Questions:

1. What were the causes and result of the genocide in Rwanda?
2. What legacy did the Rwandan genocide leave?
3. What were the causes and results of the genocide in Darfur?

**Enduring Issue:** Conflict; Human Rights Violation

## What led to the Rwandan genocide? What human rights violations were committed during it? How did the international community react?

**Directions:** Watch [this video entitled "A VERY Short History of Rwanda"](#), and this [Overview of Genocide in Rwanda from the Baylor University Institute for Oral History](#), then fill in the basic information about the Rwandan genocide in the space below.

1. Where did the Rwandan genocide take place?
2. When did the Rwandan genocide take place?
3. Which groups were involved in the Rwandan genocide?

**Directions:** Using the information about [the Rwandan genocide from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) below contextualize the genocide by describing the geographic, economic, political, and historical circumstances of the event on a local, regional, and global scale.

1. What events took place outside of the country/region that led to the genocide?
2. What historical events led to the genocide?
3. Why was there conflict between the groups involved?
4. What events led the group in power to have power?
5. What events occurred close to the start of the genocide that sparked the conflict?

**Directions:** Using the information about [the Rwandan genocide from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) below, check off the articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights that were violated during this genocide.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 26. Everyone has the right to education.

**Directions:** Using the information about [the Rwandan genocide from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) below, answer the questions below pertaining to the genocide you are researching.

1. What brought the genocide to an end or lessened the intensity of the conflict?
2. How did the international community (other countries, the United Nations, international non-governmental organizations) react to the conflict? Did they act? If so, how? If not, why not?

### **BACKGROUND: Divided by Ethnicity**

In 1994, Rwanda's population of 7 million was composed of three ethnic groups: Hutu (approximately 85 percent), Tutsi (14 percent) and Twa (1 percent). From April–July 1994, between 500,000 and one million Tutsi and moderate Hutus were slaughtered when a Hutu extremist-led government launched a plan to murder the country's entire Tutsi minority and any others who opposed the government's policies.

There is a longstanding history of tension between the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups in Rwanda, even though they speak the same language, follow similar traditions and live side by side. During the colonial period in Rwanda, the ruling Belgians favored the minority Tutsis, and gave them a range of advantages over the majority Hutus. They further divided the groups by requiring all Rwandans to carry identity cards that classified people by their ethnicity.

A Hutu revolution in 1959, supported by the Belgians, forced as many as 300,000 Tutsis to flee Rwanda, decreasing their numbers inside the country even further. In 1962, when Belgium granted Rwanda independence, the country was governed by political parties associated with the Hutu majority. Under Hutu rule, the Tutsis faced discrimination and violence, and thousands more fled to neighboring Burundi. It is estimated that by the mid-1960s, half of the Tutsi population was living outside Rwanda. Within Rwanda, Hutu extremists among the country's political elite blamed the Tutsi population for the country's increasing social, economic, and political pressures. Civil war between Hutus and Tutsis broke out on October 2, 1990, when the Rwandan Patriot Front, the Tutsi rebel group, invaded Rwanda from the north. Hutu extremists accused all Tutsis of supporting the rebels operating outside the country.

Meanwhile, extremist Hutu leaders were secretly drawing up lists of Tutsi and moderate Hutu leaders to assassinate, and arming and training youth militias, who were responsible for some small-scale massacres. These killings were documented by local and international human rights organizations as well as by a special envoy of the UN Commission on Human Rights. The Rwandan government said the killings were spontaneous and uncontrollable, and no one was brought to justice. The international community classified the violence as part of an internal conflict.

This civil war officially ended with the signing of the Arusha Accords, a power-sharing agreement, in August 1993. While Hutu leaders signed the agreement, its terms angered Hutu extremists, setting the stage for future violence. During this time, the extremists disseminated messages through the media telling their fellow Hutus that the Tutsis were planning a killing campaign against them. Radio RTLM, a private Hutu-owned radio station, relentlessly condemned Tutsis and their supporters, characterizing them as subhuman and calling them cockroaches. In this climate, beginning in 1993, Hutu political leaders began to import large numbers of machetes and distributed the weapons to the militias that supported them, the Interahamwe ("Those Who Attack Together") and the Impuzamugambi ("Those Who Have the Same Goal").

## **VIOLENCE: Massacre of the Tutsi Minority**

In the evening of April 6, 1994, a surface-to-air missile shot down the plane carrying Rwanda's president, Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, as it was landing in Kigali, the Rwandan capital. It is still not known who fired the missile, but the assassination was taken by extremist leaders of Rwanda's Hutu majority as the signal to launch a carefully planned campaign to wipe out the country's Tutsi minority, as well as moderate Hutu leaders who might oppose this program of genocide. Political and other high profile leaders who might have been able to take charge of the situation were killed immediately, among them Agathe Uwilingiyimana, the moderate Hutu Prime Minister. Under the cover of war, Hutu extremists launched their plans to destroy the entire Tutsi civilian population. Violence spread with lightning speed through the capital and into the rest of the country, and continued for roughly three months. Between 500,000 and one million people, mostly Tutsis, were slaughtered in 100 days. Hutu militias, backed, trained and equipped by Rwandan government forces, were responsible for the majority of the killing.

As the level of violence became clear, groups of Tutsi—and Hutu who feared they might be targeted—fled to places that in previous times of turmoil had provided safety: churches, schools, and government buildings. Many of these refuges became the sites of major massacres. For example, during the first days of the genocide, more than 2,500 Tutsis sought refuge at a school, the Ecole Technique Officielle (ETO) in Kigali, where Belgian UN troops were stationed. When the UN withdrew its personnel from the school on April 11, 1994, following their orders to evacuate Americans and Europeans, members of the Rwandan armed forces and militias entered, and, reportedly within hours, killed most of Tutsis who were hiding there. The men, women and children who survived the ETO massacre were marched to a gravel pit near the primary school in Nyanza, where the remaining Tutsis were immediately killed.

In addition to mass killings, thousands and thousands of Tutsis and people suspected of being Tutsis were killed in their homes and in the street, especially at roadblocks set up across the country by militias to prevent them from escaping. Entire families were killed at a time. Women were systematically and brutally raped. Sometimes, Tutsis were murdered or attacked by their neighbors. It is estimated that some 200,000 people participated in carrying out the genocide, though there were also people involved in the killing who also helped rescue or protect those targeted. It was understood that those caught helping Tutsis could be targeted themselves.

The genocide ended when the Tutsi-dominated rebel movement, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), captured Kigali, overthrowing the Hutu government and seizing power. After the RPF victory, UN troops and international aid workers arrived to help maintain order and restore basic services. A new multi-ethnic government was formed on July 19, 1994, which promised all refugees a safe return to Rwanda. Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, was inaugurated as president.

Despite the power sharing agreement within the new government, many Hutus were afraid of retaliation, and roughly two million of them fled Rwanda, taking refuge in

## **RESPONSE: Pleading for Help**

In December 1993, four months before the violence began, General Roméo Dallaire, commander of the United Nations peacekeeping forces—known as the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda—warned his superiors that Hutu extremists were planning a campaign to exterminate Tutsis. In January 1994, he repeatedly requested a stronger mandate and more troops, but these requests were denied.

The international community largely ignored the Rwandan genocide, labeling it an “internal conflict.” The major powers at the United Nations discouraged international intervention. While there was an international media presence in Rwanda, journalists also largely portrayed the conflict as a civil war, and did not highlight the intentional killing of civilians. It was left to the human rights and humanitarian organizations on the ground to document and disseminate the vital information about civilian targeting to the public and policymakers.

After the killing started in April, General Dallaire again pleaded for more support from the United Nations, but his pleas were rejected. In fact, within days of the start of the genocide, the UN Security Council voted to reduce the UN peacekeeping force in the country from 2,500 to 270 soldiers. With limited personnel and equipment, a weak mandate, and no outside support, the peacekeepers were severely handicapped.

When the genocide began, members of the international community in Rwanda evacuated. Only a few international humanitarian aid organizations stayed on the ground, and these aid groups undertook heroic efforts to provide medical care.

## **AFTERMATH: Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice**

Many survivors of the Rwandan genocide lost their entire families—spouses, parents, children, extended families, and friends—and have suffered complex health problems, like HIV/AIDS, as a result of sexual violence during the genocide. Large numbers live in dire poverty. Many have developed long-term psychological problems as a result of their trauma. But survivors have also shown enormous strength by creating groups to help each other, preserving important sites as memorials, and rebuilding their lives—at times alongside the very people who perpetrated the genocide.

The post-genocide Rwandan government pursued a policy of “unity and reconciliation,” adopting a new constitution, creating programs to empower women, and increasing economic growth and stability. While credited with stabilizing the country, the government continues to face accusations of committing human rights abuses inside Rwanda against political opponents, and in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

With the flight of roughly one million refugees, including perpetrators of the genocide, the epicenter of violence shifted from Rwanda to the DRC (formerly known as Zaire). Beginning in 1996, the DRC turned into the battleground for continuing armed conflict between Rwanda's new government and the perpetrators of the 1994 crimes who fled there. It is estimated that more than five million people have died in the ongoing conflict in the DRC in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.

In October 2010, the United Nations released a report documenting human rights violations in the DRC in 1996 and 1997, asserting that invading Rwandan troops and their rebel allies killed tens of thousands of Hutus, including many civilians. Some of those accused are members of the Rwandan government, who have condemned the accusations. [Violence in the DRC continues today.](#)

### **Justice**

Seven months after the genocide began, the United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in neighboring Arusha, Tanzania, to bring to justice those accused of high level crimes. On September 2, 1998, the ICTR delivered its [first conviction for genocide](#) when it ruled that Jean-Paul Akayesu was guilty of inciting and leading acts of violence against Tutsi civilians in the town where he served as mayor. The Rwanda tribunals also included a landmark case that prosecuted three journalists for using the media to spread hate speech and directly incite violence during the genocide. Since the Nuremberg trials of the Holocaust, no perpetrator had been convicted for that crime.

In June 2006, human rights groups urged the tribunal to also address war crimes and crimes against humanity alleged to have been committed by the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Army during reprisals following the genocide. The suggestion of any crimes on the part of the RPF has been vigorously denied by the government of Rwanda, many of whose officials belonged to the RPF, including current President Paul Kagame.

The ICTR convicted 60 individuals and acquitted 14. The court has been criticized for some of these acquittals and light sentences for those convicted, as well as for its high cost and slow pace. The ICTR officially closed on December 31, 2015, but a number of its cases continued through the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (Mechanism). The Mechanism was established in 2012 to wind down the ICTR's active prosecutions and is in the process of wrapping up the open cases.

### **Gacaca**

In addition to the formal ICTR proceedings in Arusha, the government of Rwanda instituted an innovative adaptation of local justice inspired by tradition, called *gacaca*. The courts were set up to speed up the prosecutions of hundreds of thousands of those suspected to have participated in the genocide who were being held in overcrowded jails.

The gacaca process allowed communities to face the accused and publicly testify about what had happened; this form of community justice has been seen as a way to help with reconciliation. Close to two million people were tried by the courts, and roughly 65 percent were found guilty. Some of those found guilty through this process were sentenced to long jail sentences. Others were released and sent back to their communities.

### **Accountability**

The process of reckoning with the Rwandan genocide continues. In 2021, following a [report](#) ordered by French President Emmanuel Macron, the French government acknowledged its failure to help prevent the Rwandan genocide. The Rwandan government has welcomed France's recognition of its role in the genocide. The findings mirror those of a [600-page report](#) commissioned by the Rwandan government—also released in 2021—which concluded that France “did nothing to stop” the atrocity crimes of 1994.



## What led to the genocide in Darfur? What human rights violations were committed during it? How did the international community react?

**Directions:** Read the quote below and examine the image, then answer the questions that follow.

*"In just one day, I lost 21 men and 2 women from my immediate family. But a story never stands alone. My story is just one of many in a camp of more than 200,000 displaced people and those numbers are growing every day. I've now been living in Kalma since late 2003 after my village was attacked by the Janjaweed in the early morning hours. They set the entire village on fire and looted thousands of our livestock and valuable belongings. To this day, those who committed these horrific crimes were never held accountable."*  
-Abdul, a survivor of the genocide in Darfur speaking in 2013

1. Based on the quote and image above, what were the effects of the violence in Darfur, Sudan on Abdul's life?

**Directions:** Watch [National Geographic video on the genocide in Darfur](#), then fill in the basic information about the genocide in Darfur in the space below.

1. Where did the genocide in Darfur take place?
2. When did the genocide in Darfur take place?
3. Which groups were involved in the genocide in Darfur?

**Directions:** Using the information about [the genocide in Darfur from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) below contextualize the genocide by describing the geographic, economic, political, and historical circumstances of the event on a local, regional, and global scale.

1. What events took place outside of the country/region that led to the genocide?
2. What historical events led to the genocide?
3. Why was there conflict between the groups involved?
4. What events led the group in power to have power?
5. What events occurred close to the start of the genocide that sparked the conflict?

**Directions:** Using the information about Museum, below, check off the articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights that were violated during this genocide.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 26. Everyone has the right to education.

**Directions:** Using the information about [the genocide in Darfur from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#), below, answer the questions below pertaining to the genocide you are researching.

1. What brought the genocide to an end or lessened the intensity of the conflict?
2. How did the international community (other countries, the United Nations, international non-governmental organizations) react to the conflict? Did they act? If so, how? If not, why not?