

Human Rights Shabbat
5781/2020



*"Let us now get up
and fight"* Genocide, Human
Rights and Hannukah

(Re)dedication

- 44 And Jonathan said to those with him,
“Let us get up now and fight for our lives,
for today things are not as they were
before.
- 45 For look! the battle is in front of us and
behind us; the water of the Jordan is on
this side and on that, with marsh and
thicket; there is no place to turn.
- 46 Cry out now to Heaven that you may be
delivered from the hands of our
enemies.”

1 Maccabees, Chapter 9

For all those suffering oppression, for all those in peril:
Know that we are coming,
Know that we hear
Your
Voice.

Human Rights Shabbat 2020 / Hannukah 5781

Cover image: USHMM #96553, a Hannukiah belonging to Rabbi Akiva Posner of Kiel, sits in a window, Hannukah 1932.



Introduction to the Resource

Welcome to René Cassin's Human Rights Shabbat Resource Pack for 5781 (2020). Human Rights Shabbat is always the closest Shabbat to December 10th, International Human Rights Day, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948.

Our namesake, Monsieur René Cassin, co-drafted the Declaration and was one of many Jews involved in establishing a post-war framework to ensure the horror of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust would 'never again' be repeated.

The human rights set out in the Declaration were the first expression of a global commitment to a set of norms underpinned by values of justice, freedom and fairness.

"Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind.... Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

From the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

However, 'barbarous acts' are not a thing of the past, and 'never again' has since happened again – In Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda – and is happening now to the Muslim Uyghurs in China, who are forced to deny their religion and culture in concentration camps set up by the Chinese Government.

As survivors of persecution – from the attempted genocide of Hannukah to the Holocaust - and as 'speakers by experience' who understand the need for empathy and solidarity, the Jewish community has a uniquely authoritative voice in speaking out against the persecution of others.

Outline of this resource

For this year's Human Rights Shabbat, we are focusing on the theme of Genocide and asking the question '**How can the Jewish experience and principles inform the prevention of genocide today?**'

With genocides still happening today, and this year's Human Rights Shabbat falling during Hannukah, this resource is designed as a source of knowledge and triggers for reflection to stimulate thought and explore our role in upholding the 'never again' legacy of human rights.

Sincerely yours,

Mia Hasenson-Gross

Executive Director, René Cassin



From the President of the World Uyghur Congress

Dear Reader,

The words 'never again', voiced by the founders of the United Nations in 1945 and embodied in the subsequent Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, signified a moral commitment to prevent atrocities like the *Shoah* from happening again. Over the past four years, however, we have seen a genocide unfold against the Uyghurs in their homeland, East Turkistan.

What is happening to the Uyghur people today highlights the importance of celebrating human rights, for they still cannot be taken for granted everywhere. In our efforts to end the suffering of our people, the support of the Jewish community has been of great importance to us. The many messages of solidarity we have received strengthen us and give us hope in our pursuit to give justice to the victims of the Uyghur genocide. As our shared experience brings our people closer together, we need to act today to end the Uyghur genocide.

Hope, solidarity, and justice, symbolized by the festival of Hanukkah, can provide the cornerstones of collaboration to ensure that it is indeed 'never again'.

Dolkun Isa

President, World Uyghur Congress

The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) represents the collective interest of the Uyghur people both in East Turkistan and abroad.

Established in 2004, The WUC strives to promote democracy, human rights and freedom for the Uyghur people through peaceful, nonviolent, and democratic means in order to determine their political future.

Visit www.uyghurcongress.org/en/ to learn more.



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How to use this resource

Although this document is intended to be read as a continuous whole, it can also be used in sections as an aid to individual reflection and group discussion. Educators may, in particular, want to make use of the Ten Stages of Genocide pages as either display material or prompt for discussion and learning. There are questions and triggers for discussion throughout to help you make the most of the resources as you approach and commemorate Human Rights Shabbat.

René Cassin can only operate with the generous support of our sponsors and supporters.

In particular, we thank the Little Butterfly Foundation, without whose support we would not have been able to produce this resource.



"The time has come to proclaim that, for the establishment of peace and human dignity, each of us must work and fight to the last."

Rene Cassin's Nobel Lecture, 1968



About René Cassin

We celebrate the timeless and universal nature of human rights laws and protections, which were shaped by the distinctive values and experiences of the Jewish people.

Our Vision

René Cassin's vision is of a world where everyone fully enjoys all their human rights as enshrined in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, and in which members of the Jewish community are actively engaged in promoting and protecting these rights.

Our Mission

Our mission is to promote and protect the universal rights of all people, drawing on Jewish experience and values.

As the Jewish voice of human rights, René Cassin works in two main ways.

Within the Jewish community, **building support for human rights values** among British Jews.

We also work in the wider community, **bringing the authority of a Jewish perspective to human rights debates**, especially on issues affecting marginalised minorities.

Our aims:

- **Remake a compelling case for human rights values**
- **Campaign for change in defined human rights areas**
- **Lead and grow a group of committed Jewish human rights advocates**
- **Maximise our capacity to work effectively**



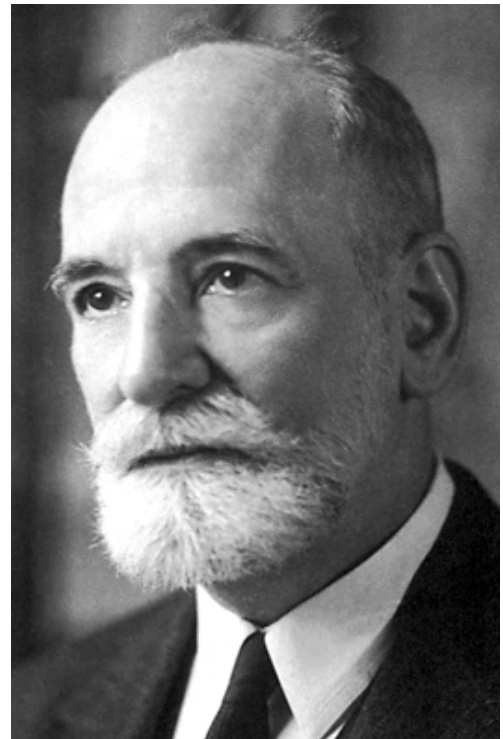
Our values

- Solidarity** *Human rights belong to us all, so we stand for the rights of everyone, everywhere.*
- Judaism** *We are inspired by Jewish values and experience.*
- Collaboration** *Our work is not isolated, but intertwined with the efforts of others, so we nurture and mobilise relationships.*
- Empowerment** *We turn today's Jewish activists into tomorrow's leaders*

Monsieur René Cassin (1887-1976) was a French – Jewish jurist and activist.

He co-drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. For that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968. Cassin was also a founder member and president of the European Court of Human Rights.

“There will never be peace on this planet as long as human rights are being violated in any part of the world”



We are determined to create a legacy worthy of our namesake.

Our thematic priorities

Breaking the Chains

Campaigning to end modern-day slavery and human trafficking

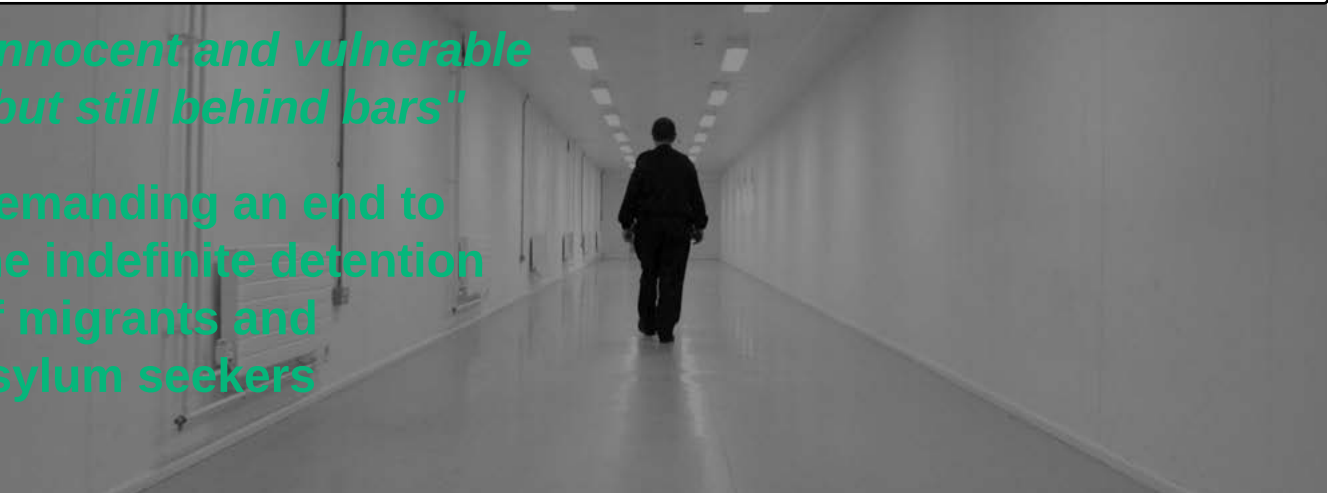


Campaigning to tackle hate crime

#CutItOut

"Innocent and vulnerable - but still behind bars"

Demanding an end to the indefinite detention of migrants and asylum seekers



Learning the Lessons of the Holocaust

Protecting human rights safeguards in the UK



'Never again' is happening again - ending the persecution of the Uyghurs



Tonight I light a candle for the festival of Hannukah, the "Genocide that nearly happened." The Greeks tried to wipe out your religion and culture as the Chinese Government tries to wipe out ours.

The Greeks made you eat pork as the Chinese Government forces us Uyghur Muslims to eat pork and drink alcohol. As the Greeks desecrated your temple, the Chinese Government desecrates our mosques and burial grounds. You fought against the Greeks and won your freedom. Now you are fighting for us and our freedom.

The candles of Hannukah burn as a symbol of light and hope that just as you won your liberation, we will win ours, with God's help and that of our Jewish and non Jewish friends around the world. *Hannukah Sameach!*

Rahima Mahmut

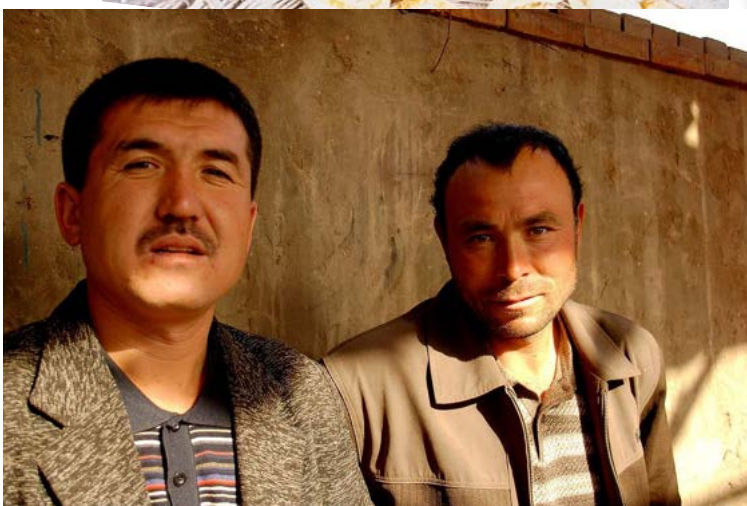
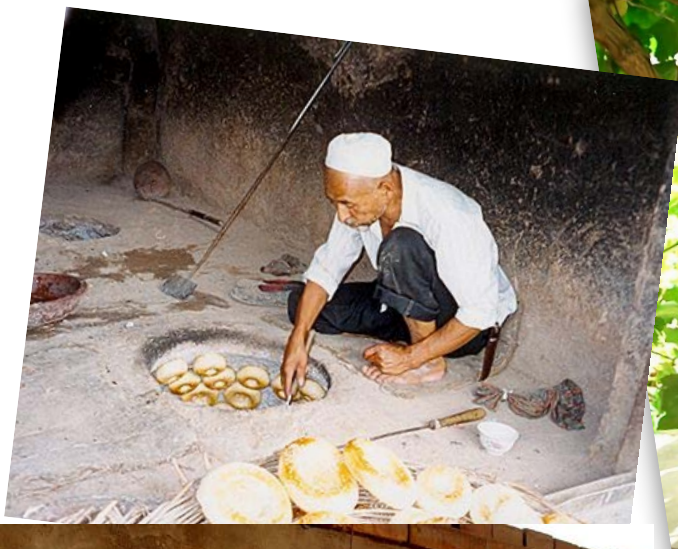
UK Project Director, World Uyghur Congress

Emergency: Uyghur Genocide

Who are the Uyghurs?

The Uyghurs are an ethnically and culturally Turkic people living in the areas of Central Asia commonly known as East Turkistan, or modern-day north-western Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China.

The Uyghurs have a rich cultural history going back almost 4,000 years. Before embracing Islam in the tenth century, Uyghurs believed in Buddhism, Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity. Today, Uyghurs practice a moderate form of Sufi Islam and lead predominantly secular lives.



Official estimates put the number of Uyghurs in China at 11.5 million, concentrated in Xinjiang. The global diaspora (in Central Asia, Europe, North America, Australia, Japan and Turkey) is approximately nine million.

Most Uyghurs do not regard themselves as "Chinese," as they have a different ethnicity, religion, and language. Many do not speak Chinese at all.

Image source: Gabriele Battaglia, Wikimedia Commons

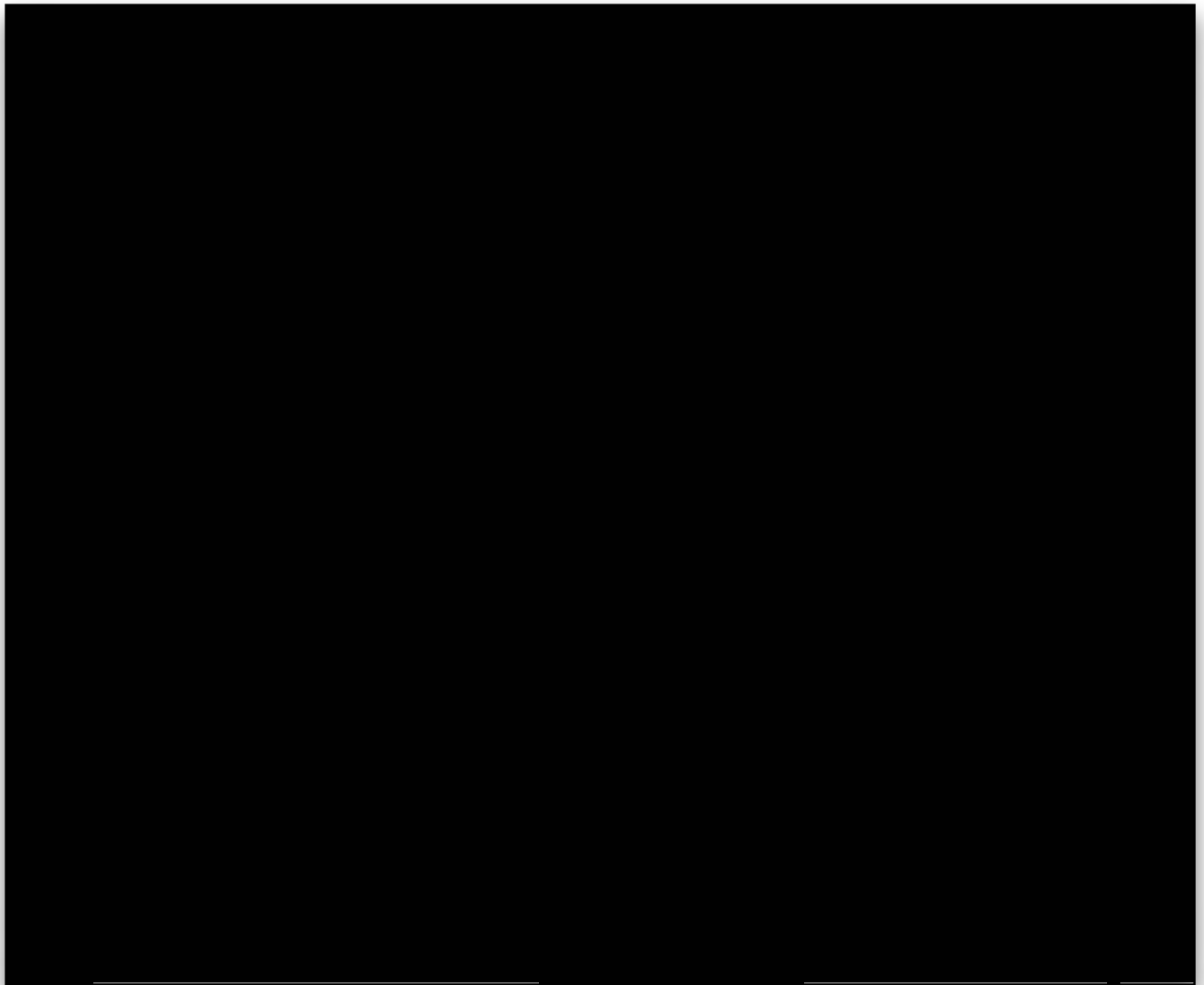
Emergency: Uyghur Genocide

Human rights abuses in Xinjiang

The Uyghur homeland has been part of the People's Republic of China since 1949. Decades of migration by Han Chinese combined with discriminatory policies toward the Uyghurs have led to tensions and sporadic violence.

In 2009, these tensions erupted into ethnic violence. The Chinese government launched a "strike hard and punish" campaign which saw many Uyghurs imprisoned.

In 2014, the "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism" campaign aimed ostensibly to tighten security, but in fact was just used to justify further restrictions on freedom of religion, with oppressive tactics growing in severity to an even greater extent after a change in Xinjiang's leadership in 2016.



Source: *The Guardian*

Emergency: Uyghur Genocide

Intensification

Citing security concerns, the Chinese government labelled the entire Uyghur community “a terrorist collective”. Any behaviour that challenged the Chinese Communist Party or the traditional Han Chinese way of life was seen as dangerous.

“... overly broad prohibitions make it possible for the authorities to arbitrarily impose punishments on any form of peaceful religious, or even non-religious, expressions.”

Human Rights Watch, 2018

In recent years, human rights organisations and western media have highlighted the Chinese government's suppression of religious freedom. Human Rights Watch has warned that the measures effectively outlaw Islam in Xinjiang.

In 2019, the New York Times released what it termed "The Xinjiang Papers" - more than 400 internal Chinese government documents on the measures against the Uyghurs and others in the region. The documents included speeches by senior politicians and scripts to be used in answering questions from concerned relatives.

1. 强化严打攻坚。继续挖存量、减增量、铲土壤，集中力量开展严打攻坚会战，采取一切措施和手段，把暴恐团伙和暴恐分子挖干净、抓干净、打干净，坚决消除现实危害。坚持应收尽收，有了就收，对重点人员和不放心人员集中办班培训，实施甄别审查、教育转化，坚决消除潜在危害，切实抓好“断代、断根、断联、断源”工作，精心组织各类专项斗争，坚决切断宗教极端思想的传承体系，切断宗教极端思想传播渗透的途径，切断“三股势力”内外勾连的渠道，切断“三股势力”袭扰破坏链条。

Extract from the Xinjiang Papers. Source: *The New York Times*.

"...Stick to rounding up everyone who should be rounded up [...] If they're there, round them up..."

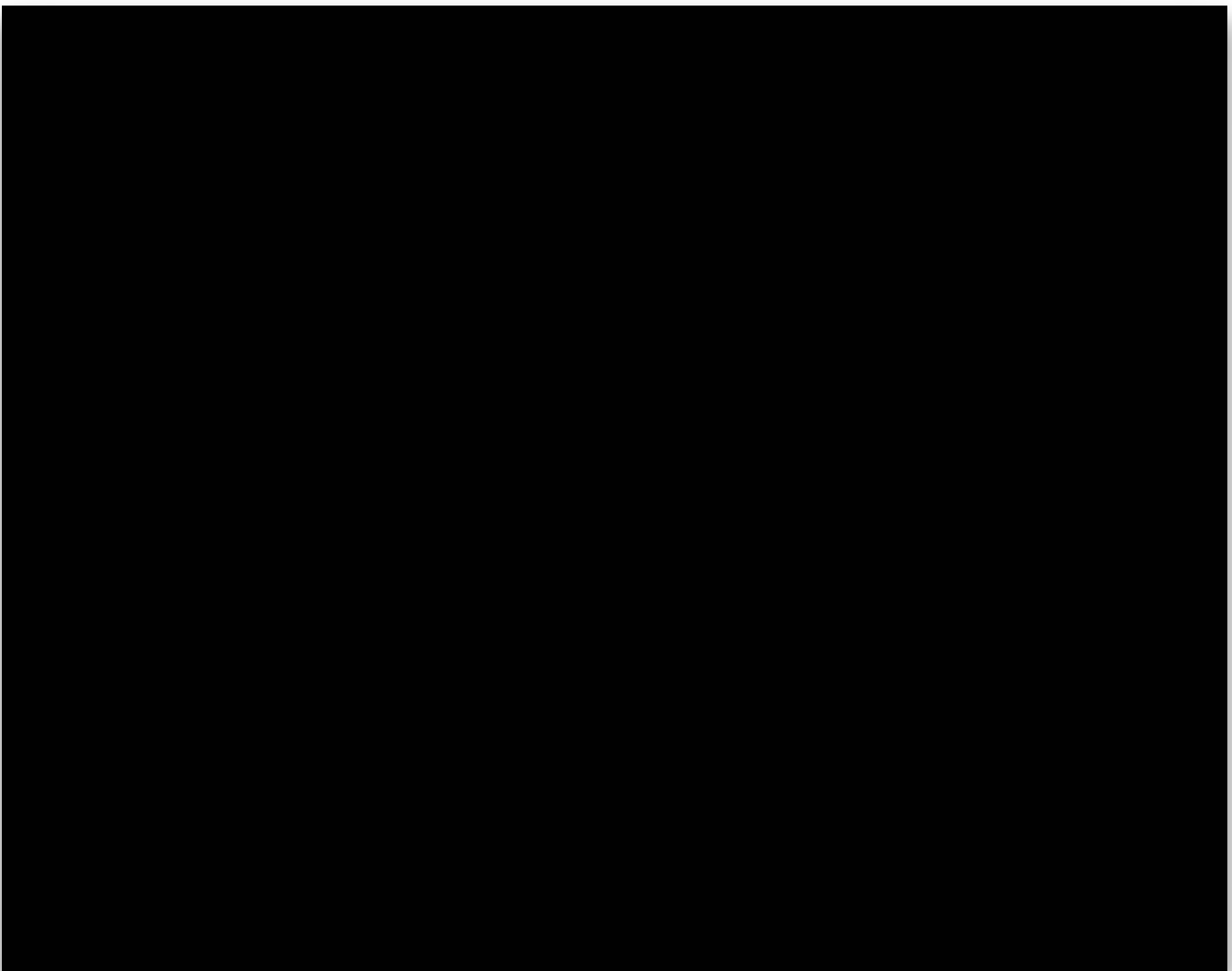
Zhu Hailun, security chief in Xinjiang, 2017

Emergency: Uyghur Genocide

What is happening right now?

Since 2017, the Chinese government has been constructing a network of what it officially calls "Vocational Education and Training Centers". These facilities have been compared to wartime concentration camps, although the Chinese government has called them "re-education" camps or "boarding schools".

A series of maps released in November 2019 showed a "Gulag Archipelago" of up to 500 labour camps, concentration camps and prisons.



Source: East Turkistan National Awakening Movement

It is estimated that up to three million Uyghurs and members of other ethnic groups have been incarcerated in these camps. Researcher Adrian Zenz terms it the largest-scale detention of a religious group since the Holocaust.

Emergency: Uyghur Genocide

Why are people imprisoned?

Leaked evidence reveals that people are detained simply for sporting long beards, wearing a veil, speaking the Uyghur language, or accidentally visiting foreign websites or using WhatsApp. Possession of a phone with WhatsApp installed has been sufficient cause for imprisonment. Refusal to cooperate with contraceptive and sterilisation policies has also resulted in imprisonment. At other times people are detained for no clear reason at all.

What happens inside the camps?

People who have emerged from the camps have given testimony describing a process of "forced political indoctrination and religious oppression." Survivors report torture, sexual abuse and violence.

"[The guards] told us that Uyghurs and Kazakhs are the enemies of China, and that they want to kill us, and make us suffer, and that there's nothing we can do about it."

"In 2017, just because I was an official worker in a school, they gave me a wider choice to have this IUD or sterilisation operation. But in 2019 they said there is an order from the government that every woman from 18 years to 59 years old has to be sterilised. So they said you have to do this now."

"For the first three days, water was cut off, they were not allowed to drink, and the temperature was over 37 [Celsius] at that time. More than 17 people died. Every midnight, the ambulance carrying corpses transferred away."



"They put five kilos of chains on me and I was interrogated for 24 hours (in the tiger chair) [...] So for 24 hours, my legs were tied with this chain and my feet got swollen. The chair was made of metal and it was squeezing me and when they opened the door, I couldn't stand up."

Emergency: Uyghur Genocide

Gendercide and Organ Harvesting

Imprisonment is just one aspect of the genocide being perpetrated against the Uyghurs.

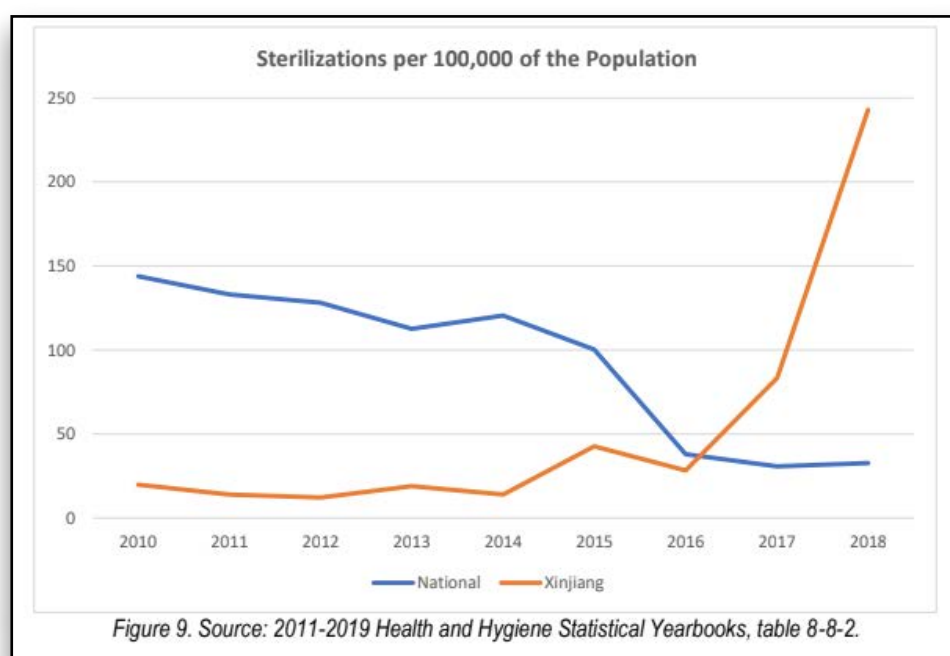
Family separation is routine, and people enquiring about missing relatives are fed standard responses with no information.

Forced sterilisation and compulsory contraception is also widespread, with the threat of imprisonment for women who refuse. Adrian Zenz has documented constant "intrusive state interference into reproductive autonomy" and a clear effect on demographics: population growth has slowed or come to an almost complete halt in Uyghur-dominated prefectures.

Reports of organ harvesting from imprisoned and subjugated people in China have been received since at least 1999. Studies have focused on the systematic medical checks undergone by prisoners and the implausibly high number of transplant operations carried out in China each year.

10. The coincidence of the mass internment in Xinjiang, ongoing rapid organ availability in Chinese hospitals, and blood and physical tests consistent with assessing organ health, is readily explicable by the exploitation of Uyghurs for their organs.

Source: Matthew P. Robertson, 'Organ Procurement and Extrajudicial Execution in China: A Review of the Evidence'. *Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation*, Washington DC, 2020.



Source: Adrian Zenz, *Sterilizations, IUDs, and Mandatory Birth Control: The CCP's Campaign to Suppress Uyghur Birthrates in Xinjiang*. The Jamestown Foundation (June 2020).

"...in 2019 they said there is an order from the government that every woman from 18 years to 59 years old has to be sterilised. So they said you have to do this now."

Emergency: Uyghur Genocide

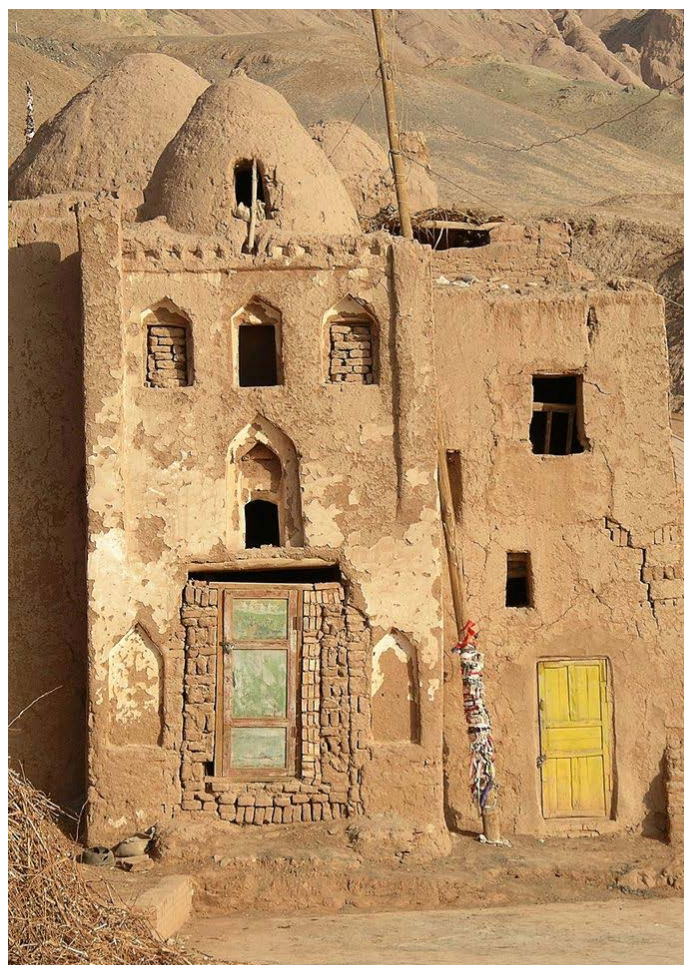
Cultural genocide

Measures against the physical and reproductive integrity of the Uyghur are the most horrifying aspects of the current situation. In addition, however, there is an effort to expunge not just the Uyghur people from the region, but their very memory.

Xinjiang has over 24,000 mosques listed, but studies by media outlets and NGOs show that sites have been razed to the ground. The damage is clearly visible in satellite images.

"If one were to remove these ... shrines, the Uighur people would lose contact with earth. They would no longer have a personal, cultural, and spiritual history. After a few years we would not have a memory of why we live here or where we belong."

Rahile Dawut, Uyghur academic, missing since 2017.



Mosque in Tuyoq (near Turpan), Xinjiang, China.
(T. Chu. CC.02)



*Before and after: the Jafari Sadiq shrine in 2013 and 2019
(The Guardian/Planet Labs)*

Bulldozing mosques: the latest tactic in China's war against Uighur culture

Rachel Harris

Emergency: Uyghur Genocide

Jewish Action

The persecution of the Muslim Uyghurs because of their ethnic and religious identity, serves as a chilling reminder to the horrors committed against the Jews in the Holocaust.

We must honour the victims and survivors of that genocide through our efforts to ensure it never happens again. The memory of the Holocaust lives on in our human rights framework, which gives the Jewish community both a particular authority and an acute moral duty to speak out against in protest when such atrocities are now happening to the Uyghurs.



Simple things you can do now

- **Write to your MP** to raise your concern about the persecution of the Uyghurs and the **forced sterilisation** of Uyghur women.
- Join the **Call to Action** to place pressure on clothing brands and retailers to end the use of **fabrics produced using Uyghur forced labour**.
- Join the **weekly demonstration** by members of the Jewish community outside the Chinese Embassy's cultural section in Hampstead (11 West Heath Rd., NW3 7UX)
- **Sign and share our pledge** to Stop the Uyghur Genocide.
- **Donate:** use "GoFundMe" to contribute to the Stop Uyghur Genocide campaign: help them demand the Chinese government ends its persecution.



Pledge to Stop Uyghur Genocide



Sign and Share our Pledge – Stop Uyghur Genocide

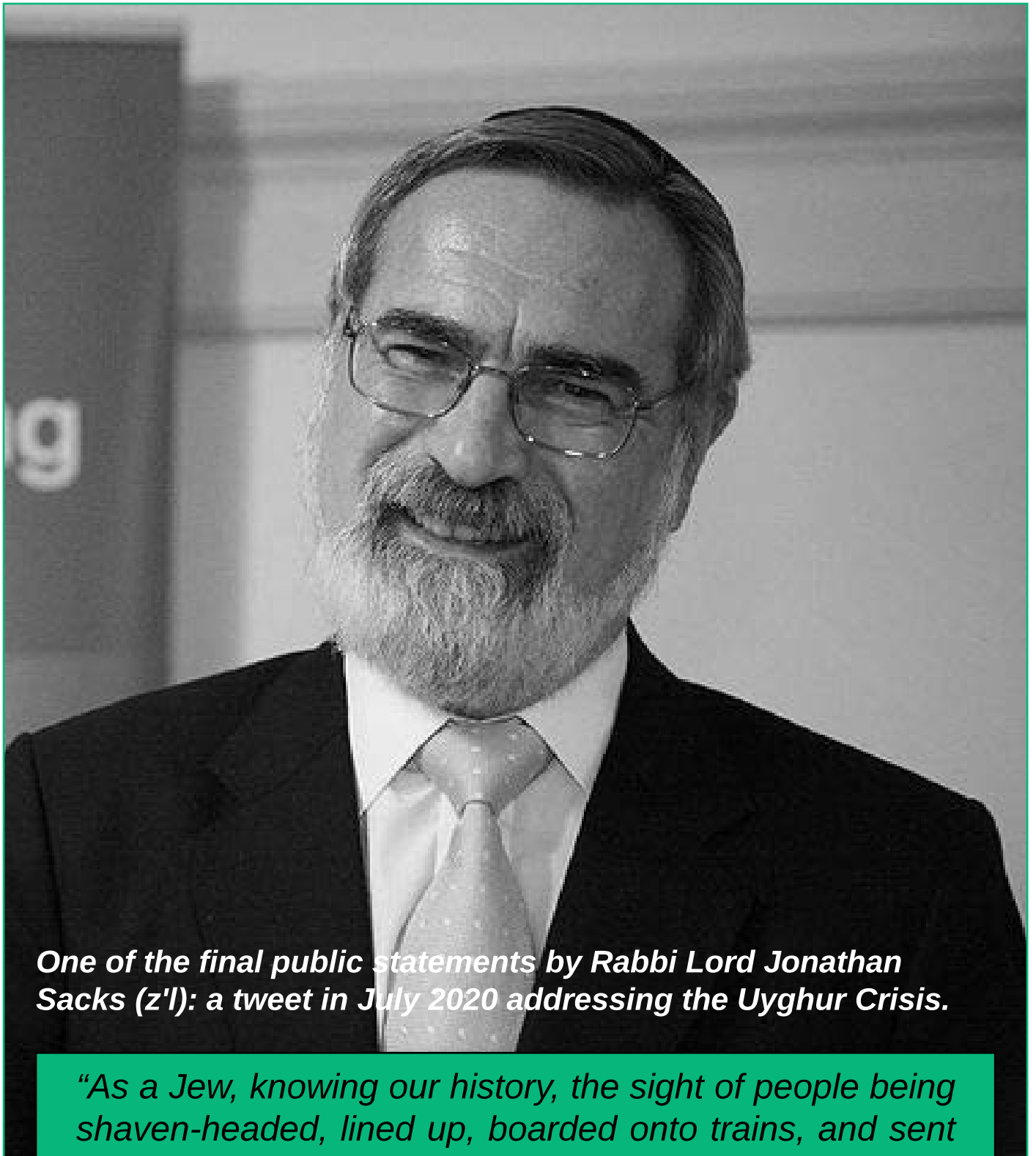
A human rights crisis is unfolding in China, where close to three million Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic groups in the Uyghur Region of China are suffering a grave persecution as part of a wide effort by the Chinese government to erase their culture and identity. Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide represent our world at its worst. Preventing them requires global leadership at its best. This is a calling to which the UK should aspire.

I therefore refuse to look the other way and I pledge to demand the UK Government to do the following:

- 1. Urgently request an independent United Nations mechanism to investigate, closely monitor and report annually on the human rights situation in the Uyghur Region, as called for by the UN's Special Procedures' experts.*
- 2. Commission an independent legal investigation into Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in the Uyghur Region.*
- 3. Hold China accountable, through of coordinated sanctions with allies and Magnitsky-style human rights sanctions against state and non-state perpetrators.*
- 4. Take action against companies and institutions facilitating the persecution of Uyghurs and require companies importing products or components from China to investigate their supply chains for the risks of sourcing from the Uyghur region and the use of Uyghur forced labour anywhere in China, or move their supply chains from China.*
- 5. Offer direct support to all Uyghurs fleeing persecution, including that available through the UK immigration system.*

Signed: **Date:**

Why are you signing?



One of the final public statements by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (z'l): a tweet in July 2020 addressing the Uyghur Crisis.

“As a Jew, knowing our history, the sight of people being shaven-headed, lined up, boarded onto trains, and sent to concentration camps is particularly harrowing. That people in the 21st century are being murdered, terrorised, victimised, intimidated and robbed of their liberties because of the way they worship God is a moral outrage, a political scandal and a desecration of faith itself.”



Hannukah and Human Rights

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah, Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue

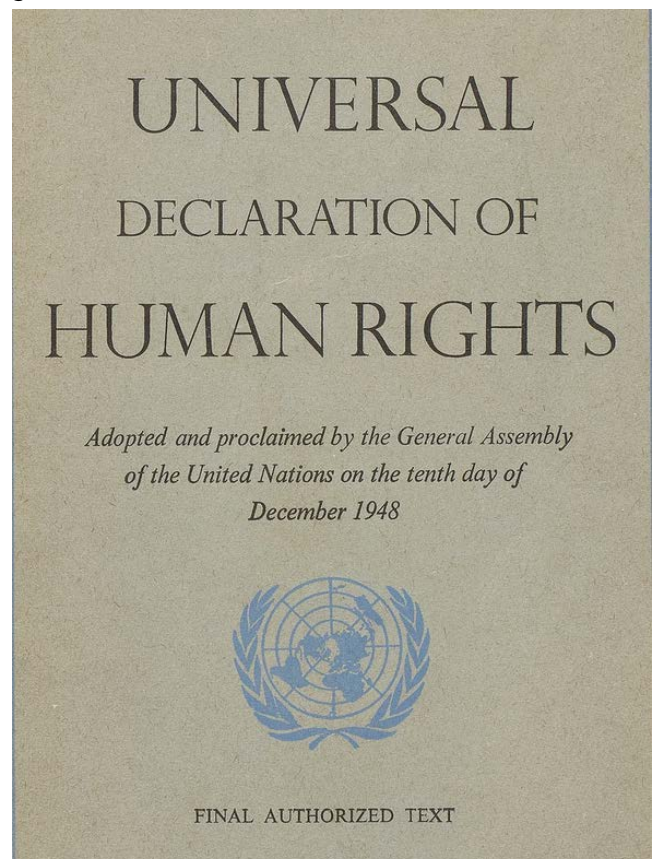
This year, Hannukah begins on the evening of 10th December, corresponding to the 25th of Kislev. Commemorating the rededication in 164 BCE of the Temple in Jerusalem desecrated by the Assyrian Greeks, Hannukah is a celebration of the triumph of hope. The Maccabean guerrilla campaign to re-establish an independent Jewish state continued for another 24 years, but this milestone represented a spiritual victory that marked a turning point in that struggle.

As it happens, 10th December is an important date in the secular calendar. The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations on 10th December 1948 in response to the horrors of the *Shoah* may also be regarded as a spiritual victory in the struggle against tyranny and persecution; a beacon of hope as the nations of the world came together and committed themselves to the goal of establishing peace and justice throughout the Earth. Moreover, just as Hannukah marked a moment and not the achievement of the final goal, so the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights marked a moment in the efforts to rid the world of tyranny.

The work of establishing universal human rights continues. For decades now the Shabbat nearest to December 10th has been designated as Human Rights Shabbat. This year it coincides with Shabbat Hannukah, giving us the opportunity to acknowledge the connections between Hannukah and human rights: the struggle for freedom, justice and peace.

This year the theme of Human Rights Shabbat is 'Genocide'. Over two decades before the annihilation of one third of the Jews of Europe, genocide made an early appearance in the 20th century with the murder of 1.5 million Armenians by the Turkish authorities between 1915 and 1918.

And then, despite the Universal Declaration, the 20th century continued to be marked by genocide. Two million Cambodians were massacred by the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979. At least 50,000 Kurds were massacred in Iraq between 1987 - 1989.



The term 'ethnic cleansing' entered the lectionary with the massacre of 80,000 Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina by Serbian forces between 1992 and 1995. Meanwhile, between 7th April and 15th July 1994, the Hutus of Rwanda massacred 800,000 Tutsis.

And genocide has continued in the 21st century. In 2003, the genocide of the people of Darfur became a central feature of the conflict in western Sudan. By 2005, the death-toll had reached 200,000. In 2014, ISIS forces initiated a campaign of genocide and enslavement against the Yazidi people in Sinjar, Iraq. 2016 saw the onset of a genocidal policy against the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar. Right now, China is engaging in a cultural genocide of the Uyghur Muslims that looks like full blown genocide in the making.

"...right now, China is engaging in a cultural genocide of the Uyghur Muslims that looks like full-blown genocide..."

The word 'genocide' is very specific. Article 6 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines the crime of genocide as "any acts that are committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnical or religious group". It includes "killing members of the group" and "causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group."

This Hannukah, let us stand in solidarity with all the victims of genocide in the 20th and 21st centuries

and dedicate our nightly kindling of flames to remembrance of those groups targeted by genocidal policies and actions since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10th December 1948.

As we remember these horrors, may the gathering flames rekindle within us the spirit of hope and inspire us to recommit ourselves - to *rededicate* ourselves - to the sacred task of *tikkun olam*, repair of the world.

Questions for reflection:

How many meanings can you think of for the word *dedicate*?

To what and to whom are you dedicated?

How could you choose to dedicate yourself differently in the year ahead?



Genocide, Hannukah and Jewish Sources

Rabbi David Mason, Muswell Hill Synagogue

Hannukah is a beautiful festival, it really is. We all look forward to lighting our Hanukkah lights over eight whole days, to consuming copious amounts of *latkes* and doughnuts, and having so much fun. We remember the miracle of the oil, and how it derived from the revolt of the family of Mattityahu Ha'Macabee of Modi-in in Judea in the second century BCE. There is such historical popularity in the festival of Hannukah, that an attempt to cease its existence listed in the Talmud, failed due to the importance of Hanukkah as a ritual to the Jewish people.

But if one looks at the legal code of Rabbi Moses Maimonides, written in the 12th century, many hundreds of years after the story of Hannukah, a different angle is described regarding the symbolism of Hannukah. Of course, the great Maimonides will talk about the laws of lighting the *Hannukiah*. But he starts in another place. Here are his words in his great work, the *Mishne Torah* as he opens the two chapters of Laws on Hanukkah:

'During the period of the second Temple, when the Greek kings were in power, they proclaimed decrees against the Jewish people, abrogating their religion and forbidding them to study the Torah or to perform the divine precepts. They laid their hands on their wealth and their daughters; they entered the Temple and broke through it, defiling the things that were pure. The people of Israel were sorely distressed by their enemies, who oppressed them ruthlessly until the God of our fathers took pity, saved, and rescued them from the hands of the tyrants. The Hasmonean great priests won victories, defeating the Syrian Greeks, and saving Israel from their power. They set up a king from among the priests and Israel's kingdom was restored for a period of more than two centuries, until the destruction of the second Temple.'

There are no references yet to any miracle connected to oil, rather a clear reference to the context for that miracle and the depth of persecution that the Jewish people in Judea were suffering at the hands of the Syrian Greeks. In fact, thinking from a 21st century perspective, it nudges us to think that what the Syrian Greeks were perpetrating on the Jewish people could be classed as genocide. In the words of Article II of the 1948 Genocide Convention:

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

What was radical about this definition, deriving from the critical work of the Jewish jurist Raphael Lemkin, was that committing destructive acts on part of a national grouping was also considered genocidal, even if there was no success in wiping out completely a people or nation. One did not need to look for what percentage of Bosnian Muslims were murdered in the vicinity of Srebrenica to understand that genocide was being perpetrated against them in the 1990's.

In his wonderful book *Wanderings*, Chaim Potok writes of Antiochus IV that 'The Syrian Monarch set out upon that rarest of pagan practices: religious persecution'. In fact, in common with many who undertake genocide, Antiochus took the few thousand religious Jews of Judea to be (again in Potok's words) 'conspiratorial philosophers'. After continuing resistance by pietist Jews, Antiochus forbade any worship of the Torah, on punishment of death.

- 56 And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they had found, they burnt them with fire,
- 57 And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death.

1 Maccabees, Chapter 1

The decree was only rescinded after the rebellion of the family of Mattathias - retaking the Temple, purifying it, and killing the leader of Antiochus's army.

So Hannukah became a festival of rejoicing at freedom from persecution. We often associate another historical festival, Purim, with persecution. Here, in Persia, the Jewish Queen Esther succeeds in turning her husband, King Achashverosh, against the plotting advisor Haman. But while Purim marks annual rejoicing at the averting of the decree before it was carried out, Hannukah celebrates the ending of actual persecution, during which many Jewish people were killed, injured, and raped for being Jewish and living an actual Jewish life.

As a religious Jew, I have always learned about the timeless nature of Torah, and that lessons and ideas communicated many centuries ago may still be relevant. It is, however, equally inspiring to look in reverse at historical persecution through the lens of the 1948 Genocide Convention. It helps us understand the historical episode of persecution of Jewish people in the second century BCE within the conceptual construct of genocide. Antiochus's conspiratorial-based hatred of Jews has itself been mirrored through the ages in so many other persecutions of Jews, as with other peoples and religions. Maybe when we light the candles this year, we can reflect on that, and on the debt we owe to one Raphael Lemkin.

Questions for reflection:

Legal scholars Leora Bilsky and Rachel Klagburn have defined cultural genocide as "the destruction of both tangible [...] and intangible cultural structures": how far did Antiochus's laws constitute cultural genocide?

Is it anachronistic to use the term "cultural genocide", or does it (as Rabbi Mason suggests) help deepen our understanding of both the festival and the present day?



Reflections by Candlelight

Jewish inspirations for Human Rights Shabbat

Jewish history and culture is rich in inspiring and thought-provoking texts on human rights themes. The next few pages are intended to prompt thought and discussion in connection with Human Rights Shabbat.

Torah

"You shall not kill."

לֹא תִרְצַח

Mechlita notes that "You shall not kill" is the first commandment on the second tablet: corresponding to the first commandment, "I am the LORD your God". ***Why might this placement be significant?***

"And it happened at that time that Moses grew and went out to his brothers and saw their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brothers. And he turned this way and that and saw that there was no man about, and he struck down the Egyptian and buried him in the sand."

Exodus 2: 11-12

"...Moses fled from Pharaoh's presence and dwelled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by the well. And the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them off, and Moses rose and saved them and watered their flock."

Exodus 2: 16-17

What is significant in Moses's two responses to injustice and suffering in the passages above? ***How do his decisions to intervene relate to the struggle against genocide?***

To identify with the victims of genocide is imperative: we must always remember that we are the successors to exiles, refugees and the persecuted. As Exodus (23:9) reminds us: "No sojourner shall you oppress, for you know the sojourner's heart". But any honest inquiry into Jewish texts and genocide must reckon with *Herem* - the "ban for utter destruction" found in Deuteronomy and Samuel. ***Why is it important to recognise that Jewish history and liturgy also includes these episodes where Jews took their turn as the oppressor?***

When the LORD your God brings you to the land to which you are coming to take hold of it, He will cast off many nations from before you - the Hittite and the Girgashite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Jebusite, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you. And the LORD your God will give them before you and you shall strike them down.

[...] Rather, thus shall you do to them: their altars shall you smash and their cultic pillars you shall shatter and their sacred trees shall you chop down and their images shall you burn in fire.

Deuteronomy 7: 1-2 and 4-5

Remember what Amalek did to you on the way and cut down all the stragglers, with you famished and exhausted, and he did not fear God. And it shall be, when the LORD your God grants you respite from all your enemies around in the land that the LORD your God is about to give you in estate to take hold of it, you shall wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens, you shall not forget.

Deuteronomy 25: 17-19

Thus said the LORD of Hosts: I am exacting the penalty for what Amalek did to Israel, for the assault he made upon them on the road, on their way up from Egypt.

Now go, attack Amalek, and proscribe all that belongs to him. Spare no one, but kill alike men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep, camels and asses!

1 Samuel 15: 2-3

There is an obvious conflict between these passages and the commandment to love the stranger. Maimonides argued that the instruction to destroy Amalek was a commandment to remove Amalek-like behaviour from the world rather than an injunction to destroy a group. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch argued that Jews were obligated to destroy "the remembrance of Amalek" rather than any actual people. ***How could you put these ideas into practice when engaging with the concept of genocide?***

The Talmud

The Talmud records a disagreement between Rabbi Akiva and Ben Azzai as to what the most important verse in *Torah* is:

Rabbi Akiva gives the answer: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Lev. 19:18)

Ben Azzai gives the answer: "These are the generations of Adam (Gen, 5:1) [which goes on to read] ...on the day God created man, in the image of God he formed him."

Talmud Jerusalem *Bereishit Rabbah*, 24:7

In his novel *Our Holocaust*, the Israeli novelist Amir Gutfreund writes of the sense of connection between the narrator (also called Amir) and Hans Oderman, a German researcher who, Amir learns, was one of the *Lebensborn* children stolen from their birth families by the SS. "I realise what his role is [...] He is my reflection [...] I can no longer say us and them. Every move I make, every line I draw, there will be a line on my reflection too."

How can the passages from the Talmud on this page help us to remember the humanity of the Other? What duty does this create in relation to human rights abuse and genocide?

GEMARA: The Sages taught in a *baraita*: From where is it derived that with regard to one who pursues another in order to kill him, the pursued party may be saved at the cost of the pursuer's life? The verse states: "You shall not stand idly by the blood of another" (Leviticus 19:16); rather, you must save him from death. The Gemara asks: But does this verse really come to teach us this? This verse is required for that which is taught in a *baraita*: From where is it derived that one who sees another drowning in a river, or being dragged away by a wild animal, or being attacked by bandits [*listin*], is obligated to save him? The Torah states: "You shall not stand idly by the blood of another." The Gemara answers: Yes, it is indeed so that this verse relates to the obligation to save one whose life is in danger.

Talmud *Sanhedrin* 73a:2

If asked to pick a word that summarised 2020, many people would choose *unprecedented*. But Ecclesiastes (1:9) also says that "Only that shall happen/ Which has happened,/ Only that occur/ Which has occurred;/ There is nothing new/ Beneath the sun!" The wealth of Jewish texts reminds us that oppression has been with us for millennia. This has in previous eras led to fatalism ("It can't be stopped") or stoicism ("This too shall pass").

How does the passage above help us to move beyond either fatalism or stoicism in the face of genocide and oppression?

Struggling with Faith in the Holocaust: Hannukah in time of persecution.



Moshe Flinker, aged 16, writes in his diary on 12 December, 1942 - just after Hannukah 5703. He was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

All our troubles, from the first one to this most terrible one, are multiple and endless, and from all of them rises one gigantic scream. From wherever it emanates, the cry that rises is identical to the cries in other places or at other times. When I sang *Maoz Tzur* for the last time on Hannukah, I sang with emphasis - especially the last verse. But later when I sat on my own I asked myself: "What was the point of that emphasis? What good are all the prayers I offer up with so much sincerity? I am sure that more righteous sages than I have prayed in their hour of anguish for deliverance and salvation. What merit have I that I should pray for our much-needed redemption?"

What excuse does a person have to question God and have his faith damaged by this prevailing suffering more than all the Jews who went through suffering in bygone times? Why should a person's faith become damaged now, if it was not damaged when he read descriptions of Jewish sufferings from antiquity to the present day in Scripture, the Talmud or Midrash? Those who say that suffering such as this has never befallen the Jewish people are mistaken.



Rabbi Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, writing at Hannukah 5703/1942 in the Warsaw Ghetto. He was murdered in 1943.

How do you think each of these diarists might have felt about the Hannukah blessings giving thanks for miracles (*v'al Hanissim*) during the festival in 1942?

What obligation might those historic miracles place upon us here and now?

I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must – at that moment – become the center of the universe.

**Elie Wiesel accepts the Nobel Peace Prize,
10 December 1986**



Photo: John Mathew Smith, 1996.

The Jewish experience of genocide has irrevocably marked Jewish consciousness. Jews understand that the destruction of culture and the destruction of life are two parts of the same crime. It was a German Jewish writer, Heinrich Heine, who wrote prophetically "Where they burn books, they will, in the end, burn human beings too." It is said that the crematoria of Auschwitz could be seen for miles around: pillars of flame by night, pillars of smoke by day, in an eerie and uncanny echo of Exodus (13:22): "The column of cloud would not budge by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people."

In the face of such things, even in the suspicion of such things, that Moshe Flinker should question the rituals of Hannukah was natural: that is one horror of genocide, that it devalues everything. Writing in secret as he worked in the *Sonderkommando* of Auschwitz, another witness, Zalman Gradowski, turned to the moon for solace because the flames lit his nightmares, "raging from the towering chimneys toward the sky". He feared that once those flames were extinguished, it would be the end of European Jewry. He saw the moon as a memorial candle for those who did not even leave behind mourners.

And yet. There are still flames at Auschwitz: the memorial candles lit by groups of visitors, testament to their journey and to Jewish survival. They burn, as Jonathan Wittenberg has described the Hannukah candles: "with the steadfast faith that overpowers armies". The same steadfast faith that sustained Gradowski sufficiently to address his manuscripts to a future he knew he would never see.

We must lend others that steadfastness in the face of cruelty and oppression. We must light the way for others to survival and renewal. We must, as Elie Wiesel enjoined us in his Nobel Lecture (delivered on the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) find those who need the light and make them the centre of our universe. Rabbi Jacob Emden, writing in eighteenth-century Germany, said that "A Jew with political responsibility has the obligation to rescue the oppressed from the hands of the oppressor by all means available to him, whether by direct action or through political effort, regardless of whether the oppressed is Jewish". The only question is how.

Who was Raphael Lemkin?



Above: Wołkowysk in the early twentieth century.

Right: Raphael Lemkin in the 1940s.

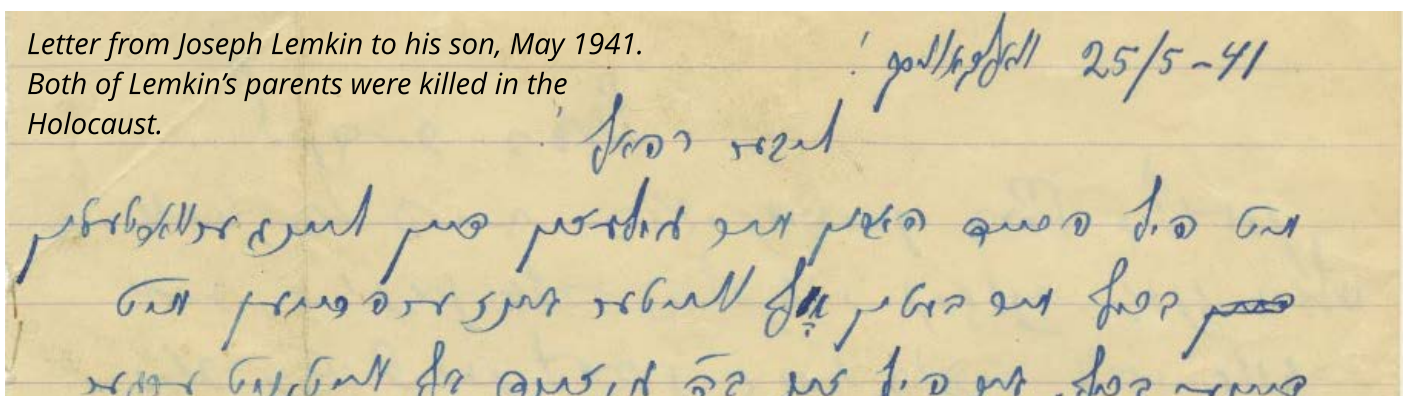
The Polish-Jewish jurist Raphael Lemkin was the originator of the term genocide. Beginning in the early 1930s, he developed ideas about the need to develop international law and protect both the physical integrity of ethnic, religious and national minorities and their cultural heritage.

He was born in the small town of Wołkowysk in 1900 and was a precocious child. Alarmed by a *pogrom* in nearby Bialystok, and inspired by reading the Polish author Henryk Sienkiewicz, he began to ponder the fate of minorities persecuted for their beliefs: "I was fascinated by the frequency of such cases, by the great suffering inflicted on the victims and the hopelessness of their fate, and by the impossibility of repairing the damage to life and culture."

Adam Jones, a prominent scholar of genocide, has termed Lemkin an exceptional example of the *moral entrepreneur*: "an individual or organisation that sets out to change the behaviour of others." Samuel Totten and Paul Bartrop have described his life as "a one-man crusade to see that genocide became a crime under international law." Though there remains work to do, his legacy is a vital one, and stretches wherever the cry of the oppressed is heard.

Letter from Joseph Lemkin to his son, May 1941.

Both of Lemkin's parents were killed in the Holocaust.

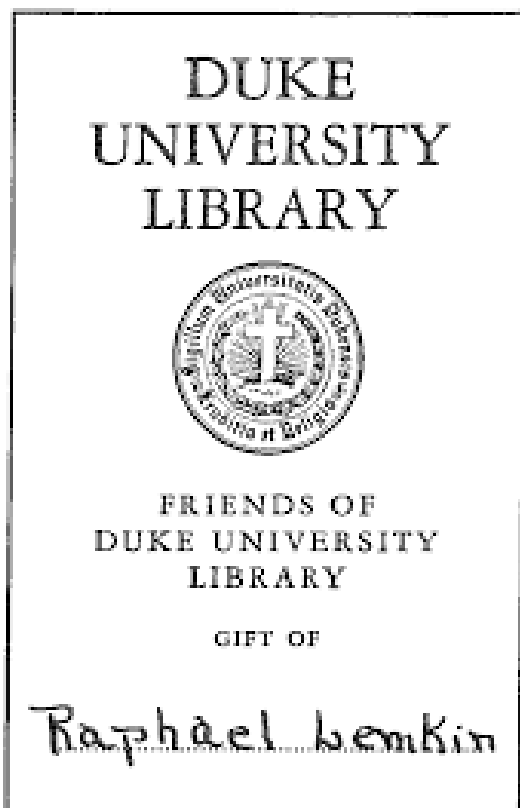


Lemkin studied at the University of Lwów (L'viv) and then practiced and taught law in Warsaw. He wrote several papers arguing for the law of war to be expanded.

In 1939 he escaped Europe to the USA, leaving his family in occupied Poland. After initially teaching law at Duke University, he joined the War Department as an analyst in 1942.



Lwów University Building



During this period Lemkin collected occupation decrees and other legal material documenting atrocities. One of his colleagues later spoke of his "tireless zeal" in this work.

The decrees collected by Lemkin were eventually published in 1944 as *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. In this book he coined the word **genocide**, taking the Greek *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *-cide* (killing).

For Lemkin, however, the crime had a very personal dimension. In 1945, Lemkin learned that 49 members of his family had been killed, including his parents. Only his brother Elias had survived. With his brother's help, Elias later settled in Canada.

Lemkin now began the task of ensuring that the deaths of ethnic groups could never again be dismissed as "a crime without a name". He moved from Washington to New York City so that he could lobby more effectively at the new United Nations Organisation.

First, though, he tried to have the word genocide included in the indictment of the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg (1945-1946), which tried 22 senior Nazis for their crimes during the war. As a way of dealing with the leadership of a defeated nation, the trial was unprecedented: as the US Chief Prosecutor, Robert H. Jackson said in his opening speech, it was "one of the most significant tributes that Power has ever paid to Reason."

For Lemkin, though, it was not a success. Although he wrote to many leading figures connected with the trial, the indictment preferred the concept of "crimes against humanity" developed by Hersch Lauterpacht.

Lemkin's passion on the issue can be easily seen in the letter he wrote to Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, head of the British prosecution team, in 1945:

"...the inclusion of Genocide in the judgement would contribute to the creation of a preventive atmosphere against repetition of similar acts of barbarity. We cannot keep telling the world in endless sentences: - Don't murder members of national, racial and religious groups; don't sterilise them; don't impose abortion on them; don't steal children from them; don't compel their women to bear children for your country - and so on. But we must tell the world now, at this unique occasion, - don't practise Genocide."

Lemkin's focus now became persuading the new United Nations Organisation to recognise the crime of genocide and incorporate it into international law.

in the next few years, his tall but stooped figure, with a battered briefcase full of documents, became a familiar sight. With his single-minded determination to enshrine genocide in law he acquired a reputation among diplomats as "an unmitigated nuisance".

In 1946, his lobbying bore fruit as he persuaded the delegations of India, Cuba and Panama to submit **Resolution 96(I)** to the General Assembly.

This resolution made a compelling statement and was approved unanimously.

Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings; such denial of the right of existence shocks the conscience of mankind, results in great losses to humanity in the form of cultural and other contributions represented by these human groups, and is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations.

While some countries (notably Britain) argued that this was sufficient, Lemkin argued that the crime was insufficiently clearly defined.

It took two more years of debate and drafting to agree a text.

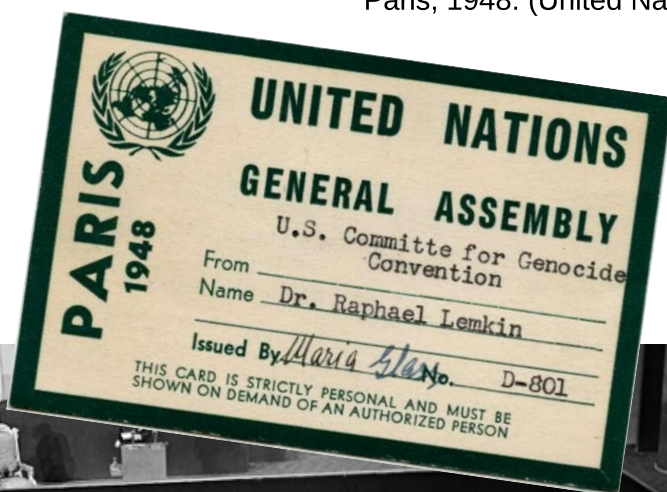
On **9 December, 1948**, however, Lemkin was present for the session in Paris where the Convention was adopted. He had prevailed, though he knew the task was not yet complete, nor would he abandon it.

Right: Lemkin's pass to the General Assembly in Paris at which the Convention was adopted. (Center for Jewish History)

Below: the UN in session in Paris, 1948. (United Nations)



Above: Lemkin (on the left) talks with Ricardo Alfaro of Panama at the General Assembly in Paris, 1948. (United Nations)



Raphael Lemkin: 'Crusader'

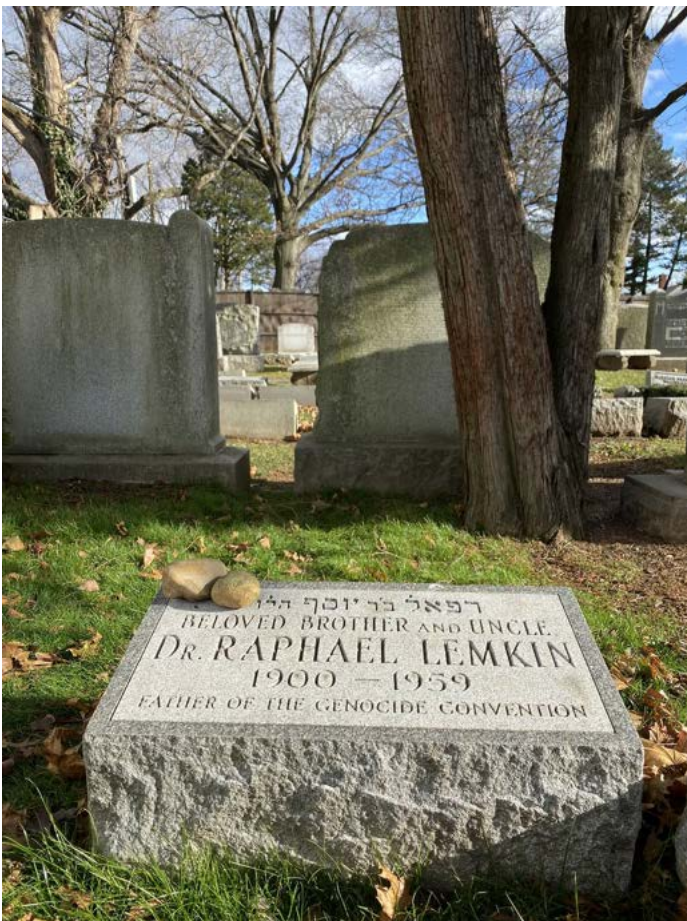
Diplomats of this and other nations who used to feel a certain concern when they saw the slightly stooped figure of Dr. Raphael Lemkin approaching them in the corridors of the United Nations need not be uneasy any more. They will not have to think up explanations for a failure to ratify the Genocide Convention for which Dr.

Above: an announcement of Lemkin's death in the New York Times, 31 August 1959

Although the Convention had been adopted, it needed to be ratified by twenty member states to become effective. Some countries took years to ratify the Convention: the USA did so only in 1988.

Other countries were faster, and the Convention entered into force in 1951. Lemkin was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize but ultimately overlooked.

Raphael Lemkin died alone of a heart attack in New York City in August 1959. Despite his achievements and his reputation, his funeral was not well attended. He is buried in the Mount Hebron Cemetery in Queens, where his tombstone describes him as "Father of the Genocide Convention".



Drafting the Genocide Convention, 1946-1948

The path to the adoption of the Genocide Convention proceeded in three stages: the initial Resolution 96 (I) of 1946; the proposed draft by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1947; and a redrafting of the ECOSOC definition by a range of countries in 1947-48.

Resolution 96 (1) “affirms that genocide is a crime under international law” but does not fully define what that means.

Drafting and debate in the Economic and Social Council, which presented a draft in 1947. This proposed a broad range of specific crimes and an international criminal court. Many countries were unhappy with this: the USSR described it as “much too wide”.

A draft written in April-May 1948 by a sub-committee of seven countries (the USA, USSR, China, France, Lebanon, Poland and Venezuela).

Version adopted in Paris, December 1948

Lemkin's initial definition of genocide

Lemkin's initial definition of genocide was not restricted to killing members of a group. Drawing on his earlier work on "vandalism and barbarity" he emphasised that attacking the cultural and social foundations of a group was a central part of the crime he sought to define.

In the April 1945 issue of the magazine *Free World*, he set out his ideas for a wider audience than that of *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*.

"More often, [genocide] refers to a coordinated plan aimed at destruction of the life of national groups so that these groups wither and die like plants that have suffered a blight. The end may be accomplished by the forced disintegration of political and social institutions, of the culture of the people, of their language, their national feelings and their religion. It may be accomplished by wiping out all basis of personal security, liberty, health and dignity. When these means fail the machine gun can always be utilized as a last resort."

This definition expanded and developed the ideas of "barbarity" and "vandalism" that Lemkin had explored in prewar Poland. In 1953, he reiterated (when speaking to an audience about the Ukrainian *Holodomor*) that murder was just one part of genocide: "the destruction not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation."

For many of the nations who had to adopt the convention into international law, however, the breadth of the definition raised concerns about their own treatment of national and ethnic minorities. In the same article in 1945, Lemkin argued that "Tolerating genocide is an admission of the principle that one national group has the right to attack another because of its supposed racial superiority."

The initial postwar enthusiasm for developing international law that had carried Resolution 96(1) unanimously in 1946, had begun to dissipate. The Economic and Social Council Secretariat of the UN presented a draft in March 1948 that made a wide range of crimes punishable and mandated the creation of an international criminal court to try offenders in cases where states were unwilling or unable to try them in domestic courts. States counselled caution, whether on their own behalf or as proxies for others. The Venezuelan representative, for example, argued that this was "a very delicate matter, which required careful, unhurried and profound study." Although, the Council created an *ad hoc* committee to develop text, there was little expectation it would report soon.

<p>117 (VI). Genocide <i>Resolution of 3 March 1948</i> <i>(document E/734)</i></p> <p><i>The Economic and Social Council,</i> <i>Taking cognizance of General Assembly resolution 180 (II) of 23 November 1947,</i> <i>Requests the Members of the United Nations which have not yet done so to transmit at the earliest possible date their comments on the draft Convention prepared by the Secretary-General (document E/477);</i></p>	<p>117 (VI). Génocide <i>Résolution du 3 mars 1948</i> <i>(document E/734)</i></p> <p><i>Le Conseil économique et social,</i> <i>Prenant acte de la résolution 180(II) de l'Assemblée générale, prise le 23 novembre 1947,</i> <i>Invite les Membres des Nations Unies qui ne l'ont pas encore fait à adresser le plus tôt possible leurs observations sur le projet de Convention (document E/447) élaboré par le Secrétaire général;</i></p>
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The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: 9 December 1948

Although it had taken a long time to agree language, in the end, the Convention was passed unanimously by those present. South Africa, in the throes of entrenching *apartheid*, chose to absent itself, and the United Kingdom changed its initial abstention to a vote in favour - after Lemkin organised pressure from nations which had already supported the Convention.

But it was just a beginning. Although the preamble to the Convention recognised that "in order to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation is required", Lemkin was aware this was just a first step. Passing the Convention, he said, was merely a "starting-point for a new conscience".

Article I

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

Article II

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

Article III

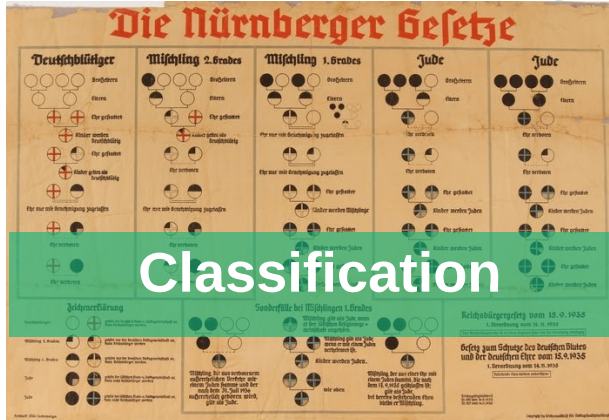
The following acts shall be punishable:

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

Article IV

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

The Ten Stages of Genocide



Classification



Symbolisation



Discrimination



Dehumanisation

Ostgebiete	420.000
Generalgouvernement	2.284.000
Bialystok	400.000
Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren	74.200
Estland	
- judenfrei -	
Lettland	3.500
Litauen	34.000
Belgien	43.000
Dänemark	5.600
Frankreich / Besetztes Gebiet	165.000
Unbesetztes Gebiet	700.000
Griechenland	69.600
Niederlande	160.800
Norwegen	1.300
B. Bulgarien	48.000
England	330.000
Finnland	2.300
Irland	4.000
Italien einschl. Sardinien	58.000

Organisation



Polarisation



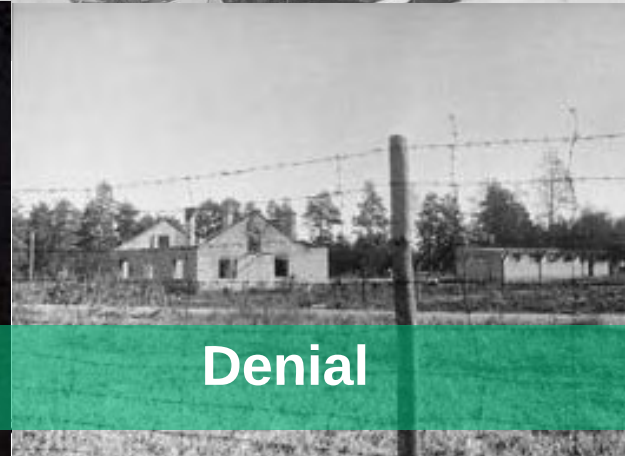
Preparation



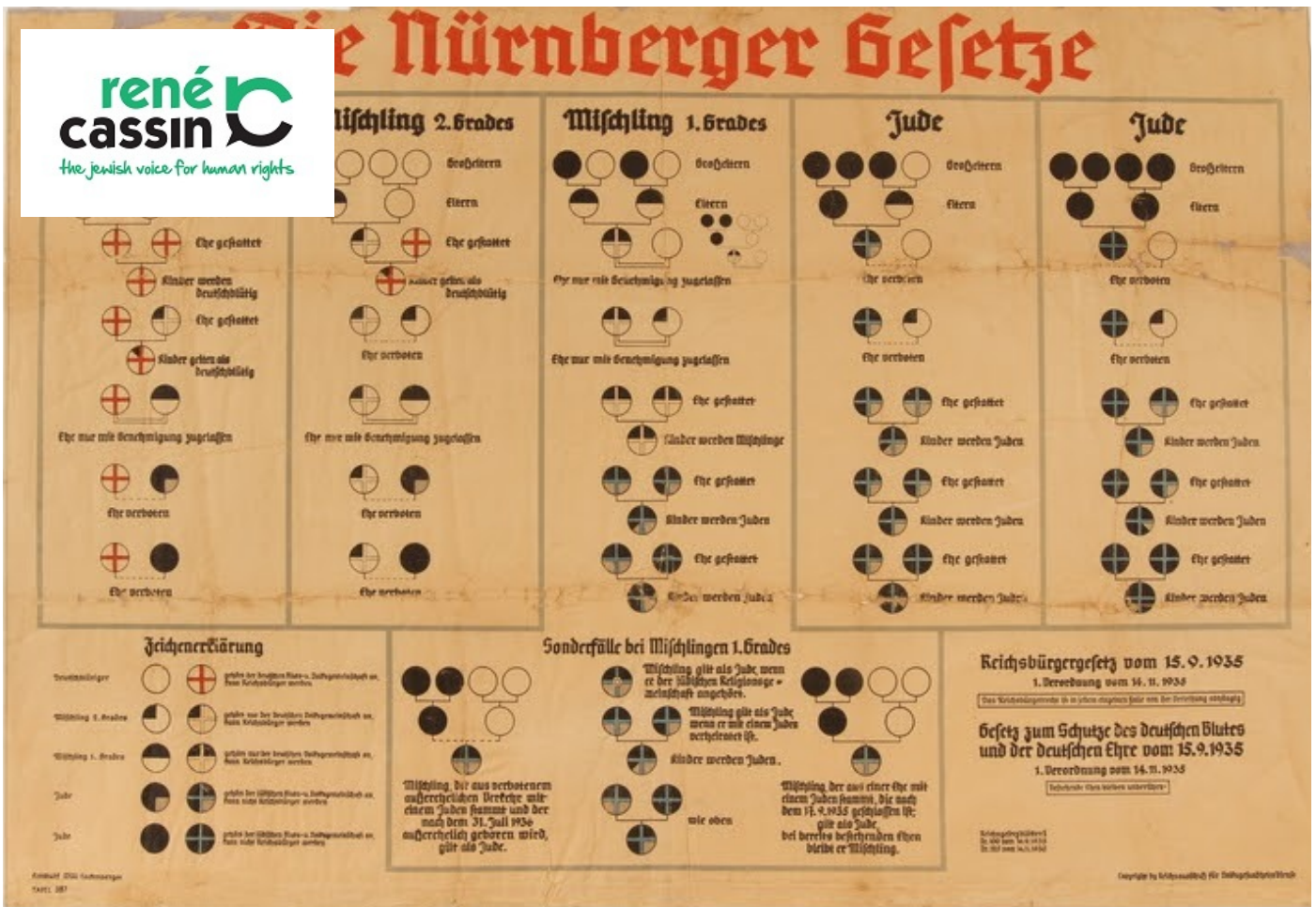
Persecution



Extermination



Denial



Classification

Above: a poster explaining the Nuremberg laws of 1935; Below, a Tutsi identity card from the Kigali Genocide Memorial.



Before genocide can be launched, the victim group must be designated and its membership defined. Both “us” and “them” must be created: bureaucratic and legal classifications entrench understandings of difference in documents and facilitate the designation of rights, duties, and even areas of habitation.

Ethnicity, race, religion and nationality have all been used to separate members of a single society, fracturing the whole into fragments. Passports and identity cards are used to regulate the movement and behaviour of target groups, and to identify them once the killing starts. These classifications are often alien to those subjected to them.

“You can hardly differentiate between Tutsi and Hutu. I myself can barely tell. That’s why they had identity cards!”

Vénuste Karasira talks to playwright J.T. Rogers for his 2006 play, *The Overwhelming*.



Symbols force individuals to assume the identities imposed on them by classification. They insist on the prime importance of one identity among many.

Combined with the legal impact of classification, symbols turn groups into **pariahs**, where outward symbols facilitate humiliation and a sense of shame or fear as a result of one's identity. Symbols also destroy the possibility of negotiating one's identity in the world. As long as you bear the symbol of the group, you **are** the group.

Symbolisation

"Other people wore red and white or yellow and white scarves, but weren't allowed to wear blue and white scarves. People from the Eastern zone would be known by their scarf. If you were wearing a blue scarf they would kill you."

Huy Rady, eyewitness to the Cambodian genocide.

Top: a piece of fabric from which Jews could cut out yellow stars, found in Terezin after liberation. Right: the remains of a scarf poke from a mass grave in the killing fields of Cambodia.





A woman relaxes on a bench marked "For Aryans Only" USHMM #763598. Such measures were common well before the Nuremberg Laws.

Discrimination

“We do not report discrimination against us as nothing ever gets done and the police do not treat us with respect.” (UK)

“I was called a Gypsy at the petrol station and driven out.” (Sweden)

European Agency for Fundamental Human Rights, ‘Roma and Travellers in Six Countries’ (2020)

Symbolisation and classification allow genocidal regimes to institute policies of discrimination. Laws, customs, and political power combine to exclude members of target groups from the main part of society.

At this point, unofficial and 'wildcat' measures can run ahead of official decrees. Members of the target group find themselves deprived of their rights and freedoms without right of appeal to law.

A Roma girl reaches through a window in Miercurea Ciuc, Romania.

Photo: Andreea Tănase, 2016.





As members of target groups are forced out of the everyday life of society, it becomes easier to depict them through caricatures and stereotypes which undermine previous bonds of loyalty and obligation.

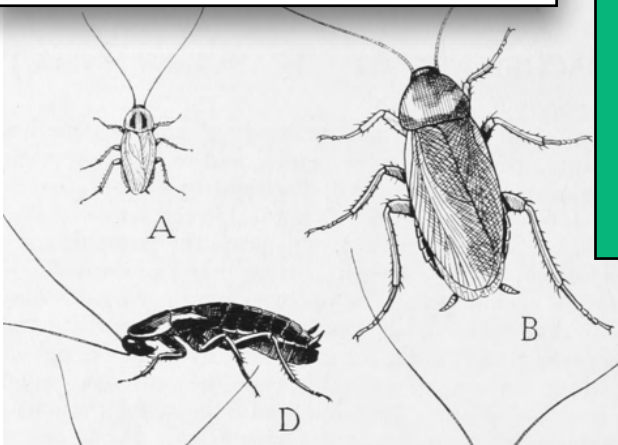
The target group is equated with animals, vermin, insects and diseases. Repetitive naming creates a web of associations. These associations make it easier for perpetrators to overcome their hesitation or revulsion at killing.

Dehumanisation

Above: a detail from the 1937 board game, Juden Raus! in which players had to "round up" Jews. From the collections of the Wiener Holocaust Library, by kind permission.

Something else which may be called "not allowing ourselves to be invaded" in the country, you know people they call "Inyenzis" (cockroaches), no longer call them "Inkotanyi" (tough fighters), as they are actually "Inyenzis". These people called Inyenzis are now on their way to attack us."

Leon Mugasera, speaking to the ruling Rwandan MRND Party, November 1992.





Ostgebiete	420.000
Gouvernement	2.284.000
	400.000
at Böhmen und Mähren	74.200
- judenfrei -	
	3.500
Litauen	34.000
Belgien	43.000
Dänemark	5.600
Frankreich / Besetztes Gebiet	165.000
Unbesetztes Gebiet	700.000
Griechenland	69.600
Niederlande	160.800
Norwegen	1.300
B. Bulgarien	48.000
England	330.000
Finnland	2.300
Irland	4.000
Italien einschl. Sardinien	58.000
Albanien	200
Kroatien	40.000
Portugal	3.000

Organisation

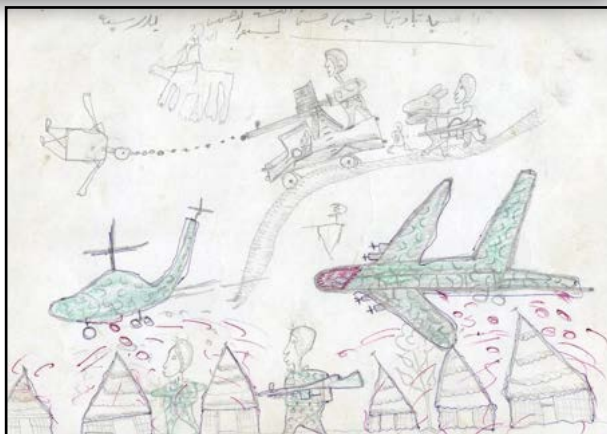
Above: a list of Jewish populations in Europe compiled by the Nazis for the Wannsee Conference of 1942.

Before killing can begin, a number of steps have to be taken. Target populations have to be identified geographically and are often concentrated in particular areas or regions. Perpetrators have to be organised and trained.

Genocide is always organised, though not always by government. Sometimes militias or mobs form in ways that are more spontaneous, while government does little or nothing to stop them.

A Child's drawing of a Janjaweed attack in Darfur

Source: University of South Florida, "Living a Genocide"



"I don't know how they were organizing and coordinating the troops, by phone or not, but on the day of an attack, hundreds of Janjaweed were coming to our camp in Kebkabiya, on horses and camels."

A former soldier in the Sudanese Army describes the organisation of genocidal massacres in Darfur. (Human Rights Watch, 2005)



Polarisation

Above: a teacher and a student during a "Racial Science" lesson in the 1930s. Teaching became one of the most Nazified professions after 1933.

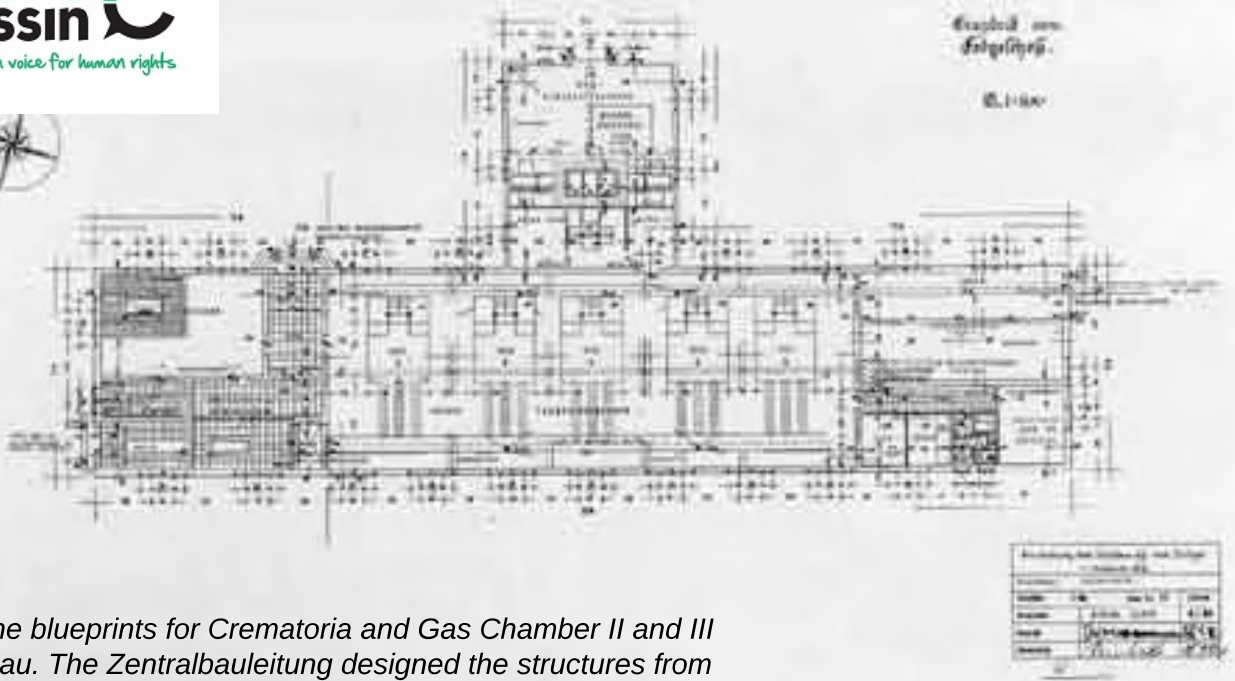
As classification, symbolisation and dehumanisation take hold, society becomes more and more divided. Propaganda reinforces dehumanising messages and tropes, and moderates in the perpetrator group are arrested or eliminated.

Education can be used to transmit degrading and dehumanising stereotypes, until the image of "them" is only composed of images and tropes sanctioned by the perpetrators.

"Before, we shared the good times and the bad... [Now] we hardly wish anyone a good day or good evening any more. Suddenly people have a different look about them."

A Bosnian Muslim woman recalls the breakdown of relations with Croat neighbours in the 1990s.





One of the blueprints for Crematoria and Gas Chamber II and III in Birkenau. The Zentralbauleitung designed the structures from Autumn 1941

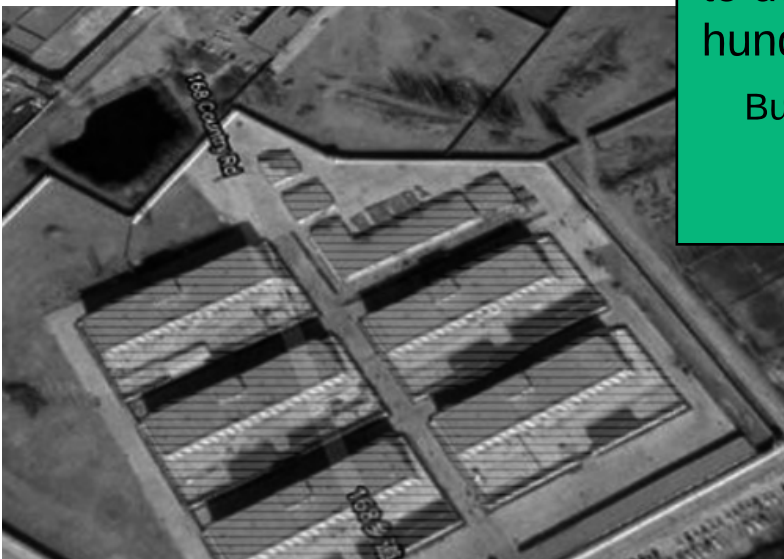
Genocides require preparation and design of the killing centres, as well as refinement and development of killing methods. Sites for the disposal and destruction of bodies have to be selected and prepared.

Even in genocides conducted by less developed means, the supply of arms is crucial. Weapons have to be bought and paid for, and distributed to potential perpetrators.

Preparation

"BuzzFeed News identified more than 260 structures built since 2017 and bearing the hallmarks of fortified detention compounds. There is at least one in nearly every county in the far-west region of Xinjiang [...] China has established a sprawling system to detain and incarcerate hundreds of thousands."

BuzzFeed News 'Built to Last' (August 2020)



An aerial view of one of the "Vocational Training Centres" in Xinjiang Province.



The Hechingen synagogue the day after Kristallnacht USHMM #87449

Persecution

"Three synagogues in Leipzig were fired simultaneously [...] all sacred objects and records desecrated or destroyed, in most cases hurled through the windows and burned in the streets."

An American diplomat describes *Kristallnacht* in a report.

In addition to killings, genocides often include torture, humiliation and killing to entertain. These can act as bonding rituals for groups of perpetrators or as ways to demoralise the target group.

Persecution includes prohibiting behaviour and destroying or desecrating places of worship.

Sexual violence and attempts to lower the birthrate of the target group are features of most genocides: diluting the ethnic makeup of the target group and further dehumanising them in the eyes of perpetrators.

Photos of Kashgar's Id Kah Mosque showing the removal of Islamic motifs from the front of the building.
Source: Radio Free Asia.





Extermination

In a genocide, killing is only a partial objective. The purpose is often not just to kill the target group but to *erase* it. Streets and towns are renamed, houses taken over, places of worship and assembly destroyed. The bodies and possessions of the dead are disposed of or recycled.

Language itself is twisted to obscure the acts perpetrated. Orders are given to solve questions, to “cleanse” or “pacify”. Victims are *obliterated*, and Perpetrators are bound in the silence of the secrets they keep.

"...do not await for the flood to abate, the sky to clear and the sun to begin to shine, for then you will stand amazed and will not believe what your eyes are seeing. And who knows whether, with the ebbing flood, those who could be living witnesses and tell you the truth will not also disappear."

Zalman Gradowski, one of the Auschwitz *Sonderkommando*, in a manuscript found after the war in the ruins of the Crematoria.

Top: two photographs taken in secret by the Auschwitz *Sonderkommando* in the summer of 1944. The task of the *Sonderkommando* was to take the bodies of the dead and dispose of them. Few survived.



Denial: hiding the evidence

After the crime, the perpetrators hope there will be silence. The killing sites are dismantled, the perpetrators go back to “ordinary” lives or their next assignment, in the hope that the earth will cover up their crimes. In this moment, the survivor and the witness carry not only their own trauma but the memory of those who can no longer speak for themselves.

Denial is also a stalling tactic employed by the perpetrators to try and avoid discovery and frustrate efforts at prevention and accountability.



"That's completely wrong. There is no such a concentration camp in Xinjiang. I think we discussed that before. With regard to that video clip, I will get back to you. You know, even if we are in the information age, there are all kinds of fake accusations against China".

Chinese Ambassador Liu Xiaoming on the *Andrew Marr Show*, 20 July 2020.

PC 7853
11 AUG 1942

DEPARTMENTAL No. 1.

BERNE TO FOREIGN OFFICE.

Mr. Norton.
No. 2851.

D. 4.48 p.m. August 10th, 1942.
R. 6.25 p.m. August 10th, 1942.

August 10th, 1942.

YJYJYJ

Following from His Majesty's Consul General at Geneva No. 174 (Begins).

Following for Mr. S.S. Silverman M.P., Chairman of British Section, World Jewish Congress London from Mr. Gerhart Riegner Secretary of World Jewish Congress, Geneva.

[Begins].

Received alarming report stating that, in the Fuehrer's Headquarters, a plan has been discussed, and is under consideration, according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 3½ to 4 millions should, after deportation and concentration in the East, be at one blow exterminated, in order to resolve, once and for all the Jewish question in Europe. Action is reported to be planned for the autumn. Ways of execution are still being discussed including the use of

Denial: refusing to listen

Denial can also mean refusing to understand or acknowledge the plight of the persecuted. Governments can try and ignore reports and pleas for help.

Organisations such as Genocide Watch, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty and the Early Warning Project all monitor global politics and try to warn of impending crises. Targeted populations can use their foreign diaspora to try and spread news of their persecution and suffering.

We have a responsibility to hear the cries for help and to demand action.

Above: the 1942 telegram from WJC representative in Geneva Gerhart Riegner to Sidney Silverman MP, reporting rumours of German plans.

Is it true that you have specific guidance not to use the word "genocide" in isolation, but always to preface it with these words, "acts of"?

American Reporter at a State Department briefing, 10 June 1994.

I just heard from Human Rights Watch, pleading that we oppose a quick UNAMIR pull-out from Rwanda. Human Rights Watch seemed to indicate that UNAMIR is protecting thousands (25,000?) Rwandans and if they pull out, the Rwandans will quickly become victims of genocide.

Is this true? If so, shouldn't it be a major factor informing high-level decision-making on this issue? Has it been?

*Classification: before genocide can be launched, the **victim group must be identified** and its membership defined.*

*Symbolisation: individuals **are forced to assume identities imposed on them by classification.***

*Discrimination: laws, customs, and political power combine to **exclude members of target groups.***

*Dehumanisation: use of caricatures and stereotypes **undermines previous bonds of loyalty and obligation.***

*Organisation: target populations are identified and **concentrated**; perpetrators are **trained** and equipped.*



"It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say."

Primo Levi

"For Uyghurs, in our current crisis, "Never Forget" and "Never Again" have a direct and profound meaning."

Omer Kanat, Executive Director, Uyghur Human Rights Project, speaking on Holocaust Memorial Day 2020.



*Polarisation: perpetrators and members of target populations are **separated**, eroding trust and solidarity.*

*Preparation: **killing sites** and **killing methods** are identified. Weapons are bought and distributed.*

*Persecution: **violence and abuse** of target populations is **encouraged** to bond perpetrators and debase victims.*

*Extermination: the target population is killed and its **memory is erased** - it is as though they never existed.*

*Denial: the perpetrators return to their lives, the killing sites are dismantled. **Silence** alone marks the killing fields.*

The Ten Stages of Genocide: a Caveat

“There was talk of killing people, but nothing like genocide. We had studied history, but we were surprised by the extent of the killings.”

RPF General Charles Kayonga, speaking after the genocide in Rwanda

The *Ten Stages of Genocide*, developed by Dr Gregory H. Stanton of Genocide Watch, have become a central part of education about genocide. Taken together, they are a powerful and concrete tool in understanding and recognising genocide.

The United Nations Convention on Genocide was a landmark in the development of human rights and international law. The recognition that "the attempt to destroy, in whole or in part" a national, ethnic, racial or religious group was a crime was a momentous step. Almost 75 years later, we are still trying to deliver the promise of that step and punish those who commit genocide.

This is because punishment, though vital, is an admission of failure. *Prevention* must be the goal and requires the understanding that tools like the Ten Stages must be used advisedly. Stages overlap and interact, occurring in parallel and out of sequence. We cannot demand of the unfolding present that it adheres to a timetable. The presence of *any* of these stages is of deep concern.

Nor should we try and reduce the question to numbers. Attempts to debate how many "acts of genocide" constitute a genocide miss that what is lost in *any* act of genocide cannot be replaced. To wait until there is "enough evidence" to *prove* that genocide is happening means there is already too much.

We cannot forget that every life is a world entire, and its loss can never be made good. For these reasons, the time to act is always now.

How can I learn more?

Genocide Studies

The study of genocide in its historical, anthropological and political complexity is a vast field. The following books are good (and thorough) starting-points:

Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Routledge)

Samuel Totten and Paul R. Bartrop, *The Genocide Studies Reader* (Routledge)

Dirk A. Moses and Donald Bloxham, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford)

Online, the NGO **Genocide Watch** (www.genocidewatch.com) has a full collection of writings by Gregory H. Stanton, the author of the 'Ten Stages of Genocide'.

On the Jewish contribution to the development of the concepts of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity, see Phillippe Sands, *East West Street* (Knopf, 2016)

Literature relating to specific Genocides:

Taner Ackam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*. Originally published in Turkish, this book outlines Turkish responsibility for the massacres of Armenians in the First World War.

David Chandler, *Voices from S-21: Terror and History in Pol Pot's Secret Prison*. A challenging look at the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Fergal Keane, *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey*. BBC correspondent Fergal Keane describes how he witnessed the 1994 genocide and its aftermath.

David Rohde, *Endgame: The Betrayal and Fall of Srebrenica, Europe's Worst Massacre Since World War II*. A detailed account of the 1995 massacre of more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys.

On the Uyghur:

Söyüngül Chanisheff and Rahima Mahmut, *The Land Drenched in Tears*. The autobiography of a leading Uyghur activist and her decades-long struggle to assert Uyghur nationhood.

David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier*. A scholarly account of the Uyghur and their struggle.

For more specific reports used in preparing this resource, see the "Editor's Note".

Note to Educators:

While it is vital to ensure that the lessons of the past are learned across the curriculum, educators should be especially careful in planning and delivering sessions relating to such complex and emotive topics as the Holocaust and genocide. There is the potential for real harm to learners if a session or scheme of work is launched without sufficient consideration of the broader issues. While there is a constantly evolving literature on Holocaust Education, the guidance and reflection in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance *Recommendations on Teaching and Learning About the Holocaust*, is a thorough and practical guide through the issues.

If you feel like you want to conduct an educational session around the issues raised in this resource, please consult the websites of the **Holocaust Educational Trust** (www.het.org.uk), **Holocaust Memorial Day Trust** (www.hmd.org.uk), and **National Holocaust Centre** (www.holocaust.org.uk) for further guidance, resources to teach safely and effectively, and CPD offerings. **The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education** (www.holocasuteducation.org.uk) offers superb CPD, with a more specific emphasis on pedagogy and teaching practice. **The Wiener Holocaust Library** (www.wienerlibrary.co.uk) as well as being perhaps the most comprehensive research collection in the world on the subject, also has a range of exhibitions and events which can help deepen your knowledge.

How can I help?

Keep in touch

You can explore and follow our work in the following ways:



Visit our website www.renecassin.org for news of our latest campaigns and events, and sign up to our newsletter.



Follow us on Twitter: [@Rene_Cassin](https://twitter.com/Rene_Cassin)



Like our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/renecassin/>

Get involved

We are a small charity, but we are effective and successful because of the commitment of our supporters. Add your voice to our call for human rights for all by getting involved in our work:

Volunteers

If you have specific skills – such as communications, IT, fundraising and design – and would like to volunteer with us, please contact us via info@renecassin.org

Interns play a vital part in our work. They research issues, write reports and contribute to the day-to-day running of the charity. In return, interns get invaluable practical experience of working in an organisation at the cutting edge of some of the UK's most pressing human rights issues. Find out more on our website:

www.renecassin.org/get-involved/internships/

Work experience placements for sixth-formers who want to help our work and gain useful insight into working in a small charity. A recent student said: 'There are so many groups whose human rights are being exploited. René Cassin helps these people and that's why I'm proud to have worked here.' Find out more on our website:

www.renecassin.org/get-involved/work-experience/

The René Cassin AJA Fellowship Programme



Some of the 2019 cohort

The Fellowship Programme brings together a cohort of exceptional professionals of all ages to explore human rights issues through a Jewish lens, developing their understanding and gaining skills and confidence to effect change. There is no age limit: all we ask is that you are **interested in increasing your knowledge of human rights issues** and Jewish visions of a just society, and are **passionate about turning that into concrete action**.

What are the programme's aims and objectives?

1. To **deepen and broaden participants' knowledge** and understanding of human rights principles and Jewish visions of a just society – through the study of Jewish experience and values and contemporary international human rights issues.
2. To **galvanise a movement of Jewish social activists** equipped with the knowledge and skills to promote social justice and human rights in the UK.
3. To create a group of deeply committed human rights advocates who are actively **involved in René Cassin's campaigning** and mobilisation work



For more information about the Fellowship Programme, please contact us via email: info@renecassin.org



René Cassin Human Rights Ambassador Programme



The René Cassin Human Rights Ambassadors Programme is a three months' initiative, which aims to equip Jewish youth activists with the knowledge and skills to advocate in support of marginalised communities, and to campaign for change in specific human rights areas which resonate with Jewish values and experience.

Pictured: some of the 2020 Ambassador cohort

Editor's Note

When researching a controversial, difficult and unfolding subject such as the Uyghur Genocide, it is important to remember that the information contained in news stories and briefings may rely on sources that are incomplete. Although more and more evidence and testimony is available, genocide is seldom something perpetrating regimes advertise. Much of the coverage of the crisis, therefore, relies on a relatively few important articles and reports that are listed below. The rapid pace of events also means that the date of writing is important to bear in mind - what may have been true at that time may, tragically, have been outpaced by oppression.

I have, wherever possible, traced quotations back to one of the source reports listed below, rather than relying on the reportage generated by news outlets - though the *Business Insider* website deserves to be mentioned for its coverage of the crisis, as does the *Guardian*. Where no named author is listed, the name of the organisation is used.

Biblical passages are taken first of all from Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (Norton, 2004) though I have also relied on Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (eds.) *Oxford Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford/JPS 2004) for some passages. My debt to Philip Goodman (ed.) *The Hanukkah Anthology* (JPS/Nebraska 2018) is also significant: the excerpt from Moshe Flinker is taken from there. The quotation from Rabbi Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira comes from the volume translated by J. Hershy Worch and edited by Deborah Miller: *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939-1942* (Aaronson, 2002). The quotation from Zalman Gradowski is taken from *From the Heart of Hell: Manuscripts of a Sonderkommando Prisoner, Found in Auschwitz* (Oswiecim 2018).

Images to illustrate the life of Raphael Lemkin are hard to come by: his family papers were lost in the 1960s in a house fire after his brother took possession of them after his death. There is no known image of his parents. I have relied on the website of the Center for Jewish History in New York and the Audiovisual Library of the United Nations for this section. The Wiener Holocaust Library and the Romanian photographer Andreea Tanase graciously allowed their imagery to be used.

Personally, I would like to thank Mia Hasenson-Gross for entrusting me with this task and to Moses Seitler for assisting in assembling the materials. The scholars and experts who responded to my calls for help on social media - Dirk Moses, Bill Niven and Catherine Baker especially - also deserve thanks. I would also like to thank my wife Naomi for her love, support and help in keeping my eyes on what is important, especially in these challenging times.

Jaime Ashworth,

Camden: Kislev 5781/November 2020

René Cassin, 'Never Again? Jewish action in solidarity with the Uyghurs in China' (January 2020)

Human Rights Watch, '*Eradicating Ideological Viruses*' *China's Campaign Against Xinjiang's Muslims*. (2018)

Matthew P. Robertson, *Organ Procurement and Extrajudicial Execution in China: A Review of the Evidence*. Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, Washington DC, 2020.

Nathan Ruser, James Leibold, Kelsey Munro and Tilla Hoja, *Cultural Erasure: Tracing the destruction of Uyghur and Islamic spaces in Xinjiang*. International Cyber Policy Centre at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (2020).

Adrian Zenz, *Sterilizations, IUDs, and Mandatory Birth Control: The CCP's Campaign to Suppress Uyghur Birthrates in Xinjiang*. The Jamestown Foundation (June 2020).

Support our work

We rely heavily on the commitment of our supporters for the funds to continue this vital work. Please help René Cassin protect and promote the rights of some of our most marginalised and vulnerable neighbours.

You can make a one-off or regular donation to René Cassin via our website at:

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