

What is genocide?

The term 'genocide' was first used in 1933, in a paper presented to the League of Nations by the Polish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin. He devised the concept in response to the atrocities perpetrated against the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire, between 1915 and 1918.

Genocide never just happens. There is always a set of circumstances which occur or which are created to build the climate in which genocide can take place.

Gregory H Stanton, President of Genocide Watch developed the 8 Stages of genocide which explains the different stages which lead to genocide. At each of the earlier stages there is an opportunity for members of the community or the International Community to halt the stages and stop genocide before it happens.

THE PATH TO GENOCIDE

Stage 1 Classification	The differences between people are not respected. There's a division of 'us' and 'them'. This can be carried out through the use of stereotypes, or excluding people who are perceived to be different.
Stage 2 Symbolisation	This is a visual manifestation of hatred. Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe were forced to wear yellow stars to show that they were 'different'.
Stage 3 Dehumanisation	Those who are perceived as 'different' are treated with no form of human right or personal dignity. During the Rwandan Genocide, Tutsis were referred to as 'cockroaches'; the Nazis referred to Jews as 'vermin'.
Stage 4 Organisation	Genocides are always planned. Regimes of hatred often train those who are to carry out the destruction of a people.
Stage 5 Polarisation	Propaganda begins to be spread by hate groups. The Nazis used the newspaper <i>Der Stürmer</i> to spread and incite messages of hate about Jewish people.
Stage 6 Preparation	Victims are identified based on their differences. At the beginning of the Cambodian genocide, the Khmer Rouge separated out those who lived in cities and did not work in the fields. Jews in Nazi Europe were forced to live in ghettos.
Stage 7 Extermination	The hate group murders their identified victims in a deliberate and systematic campaign of violence. Millions of lives have been destroyed or changed beyond recognition through genocide.
Stage 8 Denial	The perpetrators or later generations deny the existence of any crime.

Based on Gregory H. Stanton's 8 stages of genocide. www.genocidewatch.org