

HANDOUT 5: The Tragedy of Rwanda

The Hollywood film *Hotel Rwanda* and the tragic story of Canadian Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire told in *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* offer a glimpse into the tragedy that was lived upon over one million Tutsi and Hutu Rwandans. This activity will examine the events in Rwanda, the nature of genocide and the ineffectiveness of international law to prevent the brutal crimes against humanity.

Part A: Research Acts of Genocide in the 20th Century

Research one of the following genocidal events (except Rwanda) and report to the class. Your presentation must not be between five and 10 minutes in duration. You must provide an assignment or task for the class to complete following your presentation. You must submit a written assignment outlining each stage of genocide as explained in the document below (leave out the preventative measures). Your written report must be typed and must not be less than nine paragraphs: an introduction, a description of each stage and your concluding thoughts.

- Armenia (1915-1918)
- USA, Tulsa Race Riots (1921)
- Belgian Congo (1880-1920)
- Soviet Union (1932-1933)
- Nazi Germany and Occupied Territories (1933-1945)
- Nanking (1937)
- China (1958-62/1966-1969)
- Bangladesh (1971)
- Burundi (1972)
- Cambodia (1975-1979)
- Rwanda (1994)
- Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992)
- East Timor (1975-1999)
- Darfur, Sudan (2002-2005)

Stage	Characteristics	Preventative Measures
Classification	People are divided into "us and them."	"The main preventive measure at this early stage is to develop universalistic institutions that transcend... divisions."
Symbolization	"When combined with hatred, symbols may be forced upon unwilling members of pariah groups..."	"To combat symbolization, hate symbols can be legally forbidden as can hate speech".
Dehumanization	Dehumanization overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder."	"Hate propaganda should be banned and hate crimes and atrocities should be promptly punished."
Organization	"Genocide is always organized... Special army units or militias are often trained and armed..."	"To combat this stage, membership in these militias should be outlawed."
Polarization	"Hate groups broadcast polarizing propaganda..."	"Prevention may mean security protection for moderate leaders or assistance to human rights groups..."
Identification	"Victims are identified and separated out because of their ethnic or religious identity..."	"At this stage, a Genocide Alert must be called..."
Extermination	"It is 'extermination' to the killers because they do not believe their victims to be fully human."	"At this stage, only rapid and overwhelming armed intervention can stop genocide."
Denial	"The perpetrators... deny that they committed any crimes..."	"The response to denial is punishment by an international tribunal or national courts."

Part B: Shake Hands with the Devil

The Rwandan Genocide (1994)

In 100 days, between April 6 and July 16, 1994, an estimated 800,000 men, women and children were brutally killed in the tiny African country of Rwanda. The victims, many horrifically hacked to death with machetes, were Tutsi and the moderate Hutus who supported them.



One man was tasked by the United Nations (UN) with ensuring that peace was maintained in Rwanda – Canadian Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire. But unsupported by UN headquarters and its Security Council far away in New York, Dallaire and his handful of soldiers were incapable of stopping the genocide.

The Film

After viewing the film '*Shake Hands With the Devil: The Journey of Roméo Dallaire*, complete these questions:

1. What was Lieutenant-General Dallaire's mission and role in Rwanda?

2. Why did the UN authorize a peacekeeping mission in Rwanda?

3. Why were they not effective in keeping the peace?

4. What role did the Belgian forces play in the events of the spring of 1994?

5. Do you agree with Dallaire that Belgium had a special responsibility to assist with the problems in Rwanda? Explain.

6. Who are the Hutus? The Tutsis? What is the history of their relationship?

7. Who were the Interahamwe? What was their role in the genocide?

8. Why did the UN stand by and allow the genocide in Rwanda? Do you agree with Dallaire's view of the Western powers' indifference to the events in Rwanda?

9. Dallaire, among others in the film, suggests that nothing has changed with regard to the UN and its unwillingness to deal with conflicts like the one in Rwanda. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

10. Should Dallaire accept some responsibility for what happened in Rwanda? Explain.
