



Holocaust Memorial Day

*Learning from genocide
– for a better future*



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

'I resolved that
I would do my
utmost to help
create greater
harmony, mutual
respect and
understanding
amongst people.
It is a resolution
from which I have
never wavered.'

Sir Ben Helfgott

Honorary President,
Holocaust Memorial
Day Trust



What is Holocaust Memorial Day?

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) encourages remembrance in a world scarred by genocide. We promote and support Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) – the international day on 27 January to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of other people killed under Nazi Persecution and in more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The Holocaust threatened the fabric of civilisation, and genocide must still be resisted every day. Even in the UK, prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all.

HMD is for everyone. Each year across the UK, thousands of people come together to learn more about the past and take action to create a safer future.

Together we bear witness for those who endured genocide, and honour the survivors and all those whose lives were changed beyond recognition.



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY 27/1



THE HOLOCAUST: 1941-1945

The Holocaust was the systematic and planned attempt by the Nazis and their collaborators to murder all the Jews in Europe. From the time they came to power in Germany in 1933, the Nazis used propaganda, persecution and legislation to deny human and civil rights to Jews. They used centuries of antisemitism as their foundation.

Image: Auschwitz © Rodrigo Paredes

After occupying Poland in September 1939, Polish Jews were confined to ghettos (areas with appalling living conditions) and the concentration camp system was expanded, in a deliberate attempt to cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews. This approach was repeated across other countries they occupied.

In 1941, as part of the 'Final Solution', ghettos were liquidated, and Jews were transported from across Europe to concentration camps – the largest being Auschwitz-Birkenau. Jews were either sent to work in appalling conditions or they were sent straight to the gas chambers.

The Nazis and their collaborators murdered six million Jewish people in ghettos, mass shootings, concentration camps and extermination camps.



'Auschwitz was really a factory for killing, and human beings were used as fuel. I survived and promised myself, I will tell the world what happened.'

Lily Ebert BEM

Survivor of the Holocaust

Find out more: hmd.org.uk/holocaust

hmd.org.uk 



NAZI PERSECUTION: 1933-1945

In addition to singling out Jews for complete annihilation, the Nazis targeted for discrimination and persecution anyone they believed threatened their ideal of a 'pure Aryan race'. Nazi beliefs categorised people by race, and Hitler used the word 'Aryan' for his idea of a 'pure German race'. The Nazis believed Aryan people were superior to all others.

Image: Auschwitz I camp © Adam Jones

Their devotion to what they believed was racial purity and their opposition to racial mixing partly explains their hatred towards Jews, Roma and Sinti people (sometimes referred to as 'Gypsies') and black people. Slavic people, such as those from Poland and Russia, were considered inferior and were targeted because they lived in areas needed for German expansion.

The Nazis wanted to 'improve' the genetic make-up of the population and so persecuted people they deemed to be disabled, either mentally or physically, as well as gay people. Political opponents, primarily communists, trade unionists and social democrats, as well as those whose religious beliefs conflicted with Nazi ideology, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, were also targeted.

Hundreds of thousands of lives were destroyed because of Nazi Persecution.



'The children... bumped into me and called me names, that I was a dirty gypsy and much more.'

Otto Rosenberg

Sinti survivor of Nazi Persecution

Find out more: hmd.org.uk/nazipersecution hmd.org.uk 



CAMBODIA: 1975-1979

Under the leadership of Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge seized power in April 1975 and imposed an extremist programme to reconstruct Cambodia. They aimed to remove social classes and Western influences – creating a ‘Year Zero’. The population was made to work as labourers on collective farms. Inhabitants of towns and cities were forced to leave and people who refused or did not leave quickly were murdered.

Image: Tuol Sleng concentration camp

Ethnic minority groups were targeted and religion was outlawed – half the Cham Muslim population was murdered, as were 8,000 Christians. Buddhism was eliminated.

All political and civil rights were abolished. Children were taken from their parents and placed in separate forced labour camps. Factories, schools, universities and hospitals were shut down.

People from any profession were murdered, together with their extended families. It was possible for people to be shot for knowing a foreign language, wearing glasses, laughing, or crying. One Khmer Rouge slogan said 'to spare you is no profit, to destroy you is no loss.'

Civilian deaths in this period have been estimated at well over two million people.



'Five hours passed, one day, two days, three days... We realised by now that this was a trip without return.'

Var Ashe Houston

Survivor of the Genocide in Cambodia

Find out more: hmd.org.uk/cambodia

hmd.org.uk 



RWANDA: 1994

In 100 days in 1994 approximately one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered in the Genocide in Rwanda. The genocide took place following decades of tensions between Hutus and Tutsis, and a recent history of persecution and discrimination against Tutsis. On 6 April 1994 the plane carrying Rwanda's President was shot down.

Image: Kigali Memorial Center

Extremist Hutu leaders accused Tutsis of killing the President, and Hutu civilians were told by radio and word of mouth that it was their duty to wipe out the Tutsis.

Despite its colossal scale, this genocide was carried out almost entirely by hand, usually using machetes and clubs. The men who had been trained to massacre were members of civilian death squads, the *Interahamwe*. The State provided support and organisation – politicians, officials, intellectuals and professional soldiers incited the killers to do their work. Local officials assisted in rounding up victims and making suitable places available for slaughter.

Frequently the killers were people they knew – neighbours, workmates, former friends, sometimes even relatives through marriage.



‘My neighbours armed themselves and began killing the day after President Habyarimana’s plane was shot down.’

Sophie Masereka
Survivor of the Genocide in Rwanda

Find out more: hmd.org.uk/rwanda

hmd.org.uk 



BOSNIA: 1995

In 1992 Bosnia declared independence from Yugoslavia, but this was resisted by the Bosnian Serb population who wanted to be part of 'Greater Serbia'. Bosnian Serbs were prepared to achieve political domination by isolating ethnic groups and, if necessary, killing them.

Images: (left) Srebrenica Genocide Memorial © Julian Buijzen, (right) Hasan Hasanović © Kristian Skeie

Under the orders of the President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadžić, and the Bosnian Serb commander, Ratko Mladić, a campaign of war crimes, 'ethnic cleansing' and genocide was committed by Bosnian Serb troops.

In July 1995, Mladić led Bosnian Serb troops and paramilitaries to capture the town of Srebrenica. When they succeeded, the women and children were forcibly deported. Over several days 8,000 of the remaining Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) men and boys were murdered in and around Srebrenica. Many of their bodies were bulldozed into mass graves and concealed.

The genocide at Srebrenica is the largest incidence of mass-murder in Europe since 1945. The Bosnian War resulted in the death of around 100,000 people, and the displacement of over two million men, women and children.



'They didn't care that we were unarmed. Their primary concern was that we were Muslim, and they wanted us dead.'

Hasan Hasanović
Survivor of the Genocide in Bosnia

Find out more: hmd.org.uk/bosnia

hmd.org.uk 

An aerial photograph showing a village in Darfur, Sudan, with several traditional round huts. One hut is on fire, with bright orange flames and thick black smoke rising from it. The surrounding area is dry and dusty, with a few scattered trees. A purple banner with white text is overlaid on the image.

DARFUR: 2003 - PRESENT

Darfur is a region in the west of Sudan, bordering Chad, in north-east Africa. Before the conflict, Darfur had an ethnically mixed population of around six million black Africans and Arabs. In 2003, a conflict began in the region between the population of black African farmers and the lighter-skinned nomadic Arab population.

Image: Um Ziefa burning village © Brian Steidle

The Sudanese Government, led by President Omar al-Bashir, began to persecute the Black African population in Darfur. They supported and armed Arab militia, the *Janjaweed*, who have destroyed hundreds of villages and murdered thousands of people. These atrocities have been condemned as genocide by the International Criminal Court.

The conflict has led to the deaths of between 200,000 and 400,000 civilians, although estimates vary greatly and this figure could be much higher. International peacekeepers, aid agencies and media have struggled to keep accurate records, as many are denied the access they need in Sudan. Up to 2.6 million people have been forced from their homes into refugee camps in Darfur, with many more fleeing to neighbouring Chad. Some of those fleeing persecution have sought asylum in the UK.



‘The soldiers had killed my father. I learned that they had killed him because we belonged to the Zaghawa tribe. The Government said Zaghawa people didn’t belong in Darfur.’

Abdul Aziz Mustafa

Survivor of the Genocide in Darfur

Find out more: hmd.org.uk/darfur

hmd.org.uk 

What is genocide?



Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin first developed the concept of genocide in response to atrocities perpetrated against the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire (1915-1923).

After World War Two, the Nuremberg Trials of the most senior Nazis marked one of the most important developments in the history of international law.

On 9 December 1948, genocide became a crime under international law. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as:

‘any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- killing members of the group
- causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

The ten stages of genocide

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.

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1 | Classification | 6 | Polarisation |
| 2 | Symbolisation | 7 | Preparation |
| 3 | Discrimination | 8 | Persecution |
| 4 | Dehumanisation | 9 | Extermination |
| 5 | Organisation | 10 | Denial |

Learn more about the ten stages of genocide
on our website - hmd.org.uk/tenstages

Based on Dr Gregory H. Stanton's *10 Stages of Genocide*.

Holocaust Memorial Day around the UK










Each year thousands of local HMD activities take place across the UK, bringing people together from all backgrounds to learn more about the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and the genocides which followed.

Each activity provides a meaningful opportunity for attendees to consider how we can all make our society a better place today, free from hatred, prejudice and discrimination. We learn more, empathise more and do more.

In local authorities, workplaces, schools, universities, museums and many more diverse settings, people come together and learn from genocide to create a better future.

How you can get involved:

-  **Organise an activity** - visit hmd.org.uk for ideas and guidance. Let us know about your activity - hmd.org.uk/letusknow
-  **Attend an activity** - use our activity map to find an HMD event near you - hmd.org.uk/map
-  **Sign up to our newsletter** - keep up to date with announcements and ideas from HMDT - hmd.org.uk/newsletter
-  **Explore our free resources** - including school materials, films, poems and life stories - hmd.org.uk/resources
-  **Mark HMD online** - follow HMDT on Twitter and Facebook -
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Images: (left) Choir at HMD 2012 Ceremony, (middle) HMD 2017 event, National Assembly for Wales, (right) Lancaster and Morecambe HMD 2016
© Graham Wynne

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) is the charity, established by the Government, to promote and support Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK. HMDT encourages remembrance in a world scarred by genocide. Each year, thousands of people come together to learn more about the past and to take action to create a better future.

hmd.org.uk

enquiries@hmd.org.uk
020 7785 7029



**Holocaust Memorial
Day Trust is
supported by:**



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

PO Box 61074, London, SE1P 5BX

Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales Charity No: 1109348

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