



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

**THE RWANDA COMMEMORATION PROJECT: GENOCIDE IN OUR TIME
LESSON PLAN FOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES**

As part of its commitment to raise awareness about genocide and to end the genocide currently taking place in Sudan, the Center continues to support the *Genocide Teaching Project*, originally developed by American University Washington College of Law students.

The Project provides resources to teach about the legal concept of genocide in high schools, including a discussion of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, a brief overview of genocides that have taken place throughout history, and the types of behavior and actions which may lead to genocide. It is aimed at 10-12 grade students. Our two lesson plans include a 90-minute lesson on the genocide in Rwanda and a 45-minute lesson on the current violence in Darfur, Sudan. After the students learn about these two crises, the lessons conclude by having the students identify actions they can take - both as individuals and as a group - to impact the situation in Sudan and to ensure that genocide does not happen again.

The Center encourages high school teachers as well as advocates and practitioners to use this lesson plan to teach young people about the need to take responsibility for these egregious abuses. The lesson is available for free download on the Center's website. Teachers will want to download the 45-minute or 90-minute lesson, the four jigsaw exercise documents, and the resource page which should be distributed to students at the end of the lesson as a "take home" resource. In addition, teachers may wish to download and distribute copies of the Center's 8-page resource booklet, *The Rwanda Commemoration Project: Genocide in Our Time*, which is a valuable tool for classes contemplating further action or wanting to learn more about the events in Rwanda.

The lesson plan materials and resource booklet are available for free download at www.WCLCenterforHR.org/rwanda. The lesson was updated in January 2009.

For more information, contact the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at humlaw@wcl.american.edu or 202-274-4180.

Genocide Teaching Project
Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
American University Washington College of Law



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The Rwanda Commemoration Project: Genocide In Our Time

MODEL LESSON PLAN

Grade Level: 10 – 12

Time: 1.5 – 2 hours

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- ❖ Explain what genocide is
- ❖ Explain key events in Rwanda's history
- ❖ Explain the relationship between the Tutsis and the Hutus
- ❖ Tell the story of a young victim of Rwanda's genocide
- ❖ Explain the role of the international community in the Rwandan genocide
- ❖ Explain the issues that Rwanda faces in the post-genocide era
- ❖ Think critically about the responsibility of the US in preventing genocide
- ❖ Understand the basics of the current genocide in Sudan
- ❖ Identify actions that they can take to stop genocide

Procedure:

Anticipatory Set (10 minutes): Begin by asking the students to recall a time when they stood by silently while an injustice was occurring. Invite students to share a story.

Answers may include things like:

"I saw a guy beating up his girlfriend at the bus stop. I didn't want to get involved."

"I saw a homeless person on the street. I didn't know what to do."

"A friend of mine stole a bike that was sitting in front of a store. I didn't stop her."

Briefly explore the students' feelings and reactions with questions such as:

- ❖ Did you consider intervening to stop the injustice while it was happening?
- ❖ What prevented you from intervening?
- ❖ What did you feel as you witnessed the injustice?
- ❖ If you were in the victim's shoes, what would you have wanted from a bystander/witness?
- ❖ How did you feel afterwards? What did you do?
- ❖ If you could go back in time, what would you change about your reaction to the situation?
- ❖ How do you plan to respond to similar situations in the future?

Introduction to the Lesson (15 minutes): Explain to the students that they are going to learn about a fairly recent event in our history in which a horrific injustice occurred while the world stood by silently. April 7th marks the anniversary of the start of the genocide in Rwanda, when nearly one million innocent people were systematically slaughtered in a period of just under 100 days.

Before delving into the specifics of Rwanda, ask the students how they would define genocide. Write down on the board key words they use to define genocide.

Explain that genocide is the systematic extermination of a group of people on the basis of a defining characteristic.

Suggest that genocide has a few specific components [*write them on the board*]:

- ❖ Acts committed
- ❖ With the intent
- ❖ To destroy (in whole or in part)
- ❖ A group of people
- ❖ Based on a specific characteristic of the group (such as race, religion, ethnicity)

Now ask the students to name examples of genocide in the 20th century (answers may include: the Holocaust, Armenia, Cambodia, Bosnia). Ask whether they know of any countries today in which the threat of genocide loom (Sudan, Chechnya).

Explain that after World War II and the Holocaust in which 6 million Jews were systematically murdered in concentration camps by the Nazis, the international community decided that this should never happen again. They adopted the Genocide Convention in 1948 which gives a legal definition of genocide and which obligates the countries that sign the treaty to intervene to stop genocide when it is occurring.

The legal definition of genocide as defined by the Genocide Convention is:

“[A]ny 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;
- Creating living conditions of the group with the intent 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”

~ Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article 2

[You may wish to write this on the board or to have it pre-written on a piece of butcher paper which can be posted when you discuss the definition. Leave the definition posted throughout the remainder of the lesson.]

Introduce Rwanda: Rwanda is a small country in central Africa. It is the most densely populated country in Africa. It is populated by two major ethnic groups: the Hutus and the Tutsis. In 1994, after a long process of planning and preparation, the Hutu majority launched an intense period of systematic killings of friends, neighbors and schoolmates, murdering mostly Tutsis and some moderate Hutus. In less than one hundred days, nearly one million people were killed. That is nearly twice the entire population of Washington, DC.

Jigsaw Activity (40 minutes):

1. Have the students count off 1-2-3-4 and divide them into four groups. Each group should be given the appropriate packets of material. There should be one copy for each person in the group. Explain to the students that they will read the material to become “experts” on a particular aspect of the Rwandan genocide – the history of the Hutus/Tutsis, the reality of genocide in Rwanda, the international response, and post-genocide Rwanda. When the groups are rearranged, they will be asked to teach their classmates about the particular aspect of the genocide that they are studying in these small groups.
2. Give the students 15 minutes to read through the material and look at the accompanying pictures/maps/illustrations. *[Depending on the level of the students, you may wish to have the students read the packets aloud to one another, with each person in the group reading one paragraph]*
3. When they are finished reading, ask each group to discuss the Review Questions on the last page of their packets. This should take an additional five minutes. *[The teacher should circulate to each of the groups to make sure they stay on task and to answer any questions.]*
4. Now re-group into small quartets by having the members of each of the four large groups count off. Make sure that at least one student from each of the four large groups is now with one person from each of the other groups.

5. Using the “Talking Points” found on the last page of their packets as a guide, have each student teach the other students what they learned in their “expert” group. The order of the discussion, which will take about 20 minutes, should proceed as follows:
 - a. History of the Tutsis and Hutus
 - b. Valentina’s Story
 - c. International Response
 - d. Post-Genocide Era

Wrap-Up Discussion (15 minutes):

To begin the conclusion of the lesson, ask the students the following questions:

- ❖ What can we learn from the genocide in Rwanda?
- ❖ Have we learned these lessons?
- ❖ Has anyone heard about the situation in Sudan?

Give a Brief Overview of What is Happening in Darfur:

See the attached Background Sheet for more information about the conflict.

Summary:

- Sudan is the largest country in Africa. It is located in the northeastern part of the continent and bordered by nine countries including Egypt, Ethiopia and Chad;
- The conflict in Darfur started in February 2003 as a result of rebel violence against the Sudanese government, but government-backed militias (the *Janjaweed*) quickly moved against civilians in the region;
- The violence is ethnically based with the Arab Janjaweed fighting against the Black villagers – it is not religiously based as nearly everyone is Muslim;
- Over 400,000 people have been killed so far as a result of the violence in Darfur
- Over half of the villages in Darfur have been burned to the ground;
- Over 2.5 million people have been displaced within Darfur and 200,000 people are living in refugee camps in Chad;
- Rape has been used widely as a weapon of war with women and girls prone to sexual violence when they go out of the camps to look for firewood or fuel;
- In January 2009 the World Food Programme of the United Nations said that 3.5 million people in Darfur need food aid (over half the population);
- While there are international aid organizations helping displaced people (like Oxfam, CARE, the International Rescue Committee and the UN), not enough money has been received by these organizations to address the huge need in Darfur;
- The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened an investigation in May 2005 to try to bring the people who are responsible for the genocide to justice;
- The Prosecutor of the ICC has requested an arrest warrant be issued for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, finding him responsible for the genocide in Darfur.

Remind students of the definition of genocide.

The attacks by the Janjaweed and the Sudanese government have intended to destroy the Black population of Darfur by doing many of the acts outlined in the 1948 Genocide Convention, including

- *Killing members of the group;*
- *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- *Creating living conditions of the group with the intent to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.*

Tying Rwanda and Sudan Together – A Call for Action:

Now ask the students:

- ❖ Are there similarities between what is happening in Darfur today and what happened in Rwanda?

Possible answers may include:

- *“We know what’s happening but no one is doing anything”*
- *“Lots of people are dying just because they are a member of a different group”*
- *“Women are being raped as part of the genocide”*

- ❖ What lessons have we learned from what happened in Rwanda and how can they be applied to the current situation in Darfur?

Possible answers may include:

- *“Genocide happens when we don’t do anything to stop it”*
- *“Leaders need to call a situation genocide to get other leaders to join in and stop the killing”*
- *“Everyone can make a difference by choosing to act to stop genocide”*

- ❖ Write three terms on the board – “International”, “National”, and “Local”.
 - Ask the students for ideas about what can be done to stop the genocide on each level. Begin with international and end with the local level, and write their responses on the board.

Possible answers may include:

International

- *“Our leaders can be the first to act and get other leaders to do the same.”*
- *“Different countries can send people/troops to help make sure that things stay peaceful after genocide.”*
- *“All countries can learn from past mistakes and try not to make them again.”*

National

- *“The United States can donate money to groups working to end genocide.”*

- *“Leaders can make sure that students are taught about genocide in school so that they know what is going on.”*
- *“Leaders can listen to people who call or write about the genocide and they can also pass legislation to help stop genocide.”*

Local

- *“I could write an article about the genocide for the school newspaper and ask teachers to talk about it in class.”*
- *“Religious and community leaders can organize events to raise awareness and/or money to fight genocide.”*
- *“I could talk to friends and family and get them involved in trying to stop genocide.”*

- ❖ End the lesson by focusing on the local level. This is where the students can think critically about what they can do to make a difference. It is important to make students feel that they are not powerless and that they can do something. Mention writing letters to the editor, holding activities such as those listed in the accompanying resource page, getting involved in or starting a student group, etc. End your discussion by really encouraging them to take action and reiterating the importance of every person’s voice.

At the end of the lesson, distribute the Resource Pages to all students. Tell them that they can take specific steps to help prevent and stop genocide. Encourage them to learn more.

BACKGROUND SHEET ON THE CURRENT CRISIS IN DARFUR, SUDAN ***UPDATED JANUARY 2009***



Sudan is located in Northeastern Africa. It is the largest country in Africa. Sudan is bordered by nine countries, including Egypt, Chad and Ethiopia. The Darfur region is in the western part of Sudan. It is roughly the size of France.

For 21 years, a civil war raged between the North and the South of Sudan. This civil war ended with a peace agreement in December 2004. The current crisis in Darfur is not directly related to the civil war, but emerged as peace talks became serious and groups within the Darfur region felt marginalized in the newly proposed power sharing agreement.

The current conflict in Darfur started in February 2003 when two groups of rebels mounted a rebellion against the Sudanese government. In response, the government supplied militias called the *Janjaweed* with weapons, uniforms and air support to fight against the uprising. This fight, however, has been turned against the civilian population of the region and

has led to a campaign of violence where villages have been torched to the ground, people have been forced out of their homes, many have been murdered and more have been raped. More than half of the villages in Darfur have been completely destroyed. Over an estimated 400,000 people have died as a result of the violence and more than 2.5 million people have been driven from their homes. The Sudanese government is directly responsible for the actions of the militias because it continues to provide support to the Janjaweed.

The conflict in Darfur is not religiously based - nearly everyone involved is Muslim. But there is a racial and ethnic component to the violence because the largely Arab Janjaweed have targeted Black villagers. There are documented accounts of racial epithets being used against the Black villagers by the Arab Janjaweed while they were raping, killing or looting.

Because of the violence, over two million people in Darfur are now living in makeshift camps inside Sudan, and 200,000 are in camps across the border in Chad. They are living in extremely hot conditions in the desert, with little shelter and limited supplies of food, water and medicine. Conditions in these camps are very bad and there is not enough food, water, shelter, or protection to keep everyone healthy and safe. Many of the camps have even been targeted for attacks by the Janjaweed. Women who leave the camps to gather firewood or food are often raped.

On September 9, 2004 the United States government declared the situation in Darfur to be genocide. Under the 1948 Genocide Convention, this declaration obligates the U.S. and the international community to take action to prevent further bloodshed and to punish the perpetrators.

The attacks by the Janjaweed and the Sudanese government have intended to destroy the Black population of Darfur by doing many of the acts outlined in the 1948 Genocide Convention, including:

- *Killing members of the group;*
- *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- *Creating living conditions of the group with the intent to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part*

At present, the United States is the only country that has declared the conflict in Darfur to be genocide (although others have acknowledged “crimes against humanity” and “genocidal acts”).

In March 2005, after more than two years of violence, the United Nations Security Council took two important steps: they authorized sanctions to be imposed on individuals responsible for violating international law in Darfur and they referred the situation in Darfur to the new International Criminal Court (ICC).

The sanctions are designed to restrict those involved in the campaign from traveling and accessing any of their funds. The UN Security Council established a Sanctions Committee to oversee this process; however, it has proven to be ineffective thus far.

The referral of the situation in Darfur by the United Nations Security Council to the International Criminal Court (ICC) is unprecedented. This was the first time that a country had been referred to the ICC by the United Nations. The international community is hoping that the involvement of the ICC, the first permanent criminal court established by the international community, will bring the people responsible for the violence in Darfur to justice. An investigation of the situation in Darfur was opened by the ICC in May 2005 and three years later in July 2008, the Prosecutor of the ICC, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, filed an application with the ICC to issue an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir. Prosecutor Ocampo asserts that there are reasonable grounds to believe that President al-Bashir is responsible for various international crimes including genocide.

Although the Sudanese government has also announced plans to establish a special tribunal in Sudan to bring perpetrators of serious crimes to justice, this is widely seen as a symbolic last-ditch effort to try to avoid prosecution at the ICC.

The Sudanese government has also agreed to allow troops from the African Union, a regional body that seeks to provide cooperation and security in Africa, to serve as “observers” in Darfur. However, these troops do not have a mandate to actively protect civilians, only to serve as observers. Given the fact that this region is the size of France, experts estimate that for the troops to be effective, at least 40,000 need to be deployed. The United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) combined both AU and UN troops in Darfur, raising their troop level to 12,400 as of November 2008. UNAMID is still limited in resources, including troops and equipment such as helicopters and transport vehicles.

Many international aid organizations are operating in Darfur and on the border with Chad to help provide basic needs to the people whose villages have been destroyed and whose homes are unsafe. Yet while the UN is providing some assistance, the international community has not donated enough money to enable the UN and other aid organizations to buy food and supplies to help these people. A January 2009 report by the UN World Food Programme said that 3.5 million people in Sudan (more than half of its population) need food. Plus, where the international community has donated money, they often have not actually paid their pledges to provide the cash needed to buy and transport the food to Sudan.

African Union sponsored peace talks between the rebels and the government are ongoing in Abuja, Nigeria.



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What YOU Can Do To Help Stop the Atrocities and Reduce the Suffering of the People of Darfur

RAISE AWARENESS

Help raise awareness of the genocide in your school and/or local community:

- **Newspapers:** Write a letter to the editor or an article on the Darfur genocide and submit it to your school or local newspaper.
- **Bookmarks:** Create Darfur Awareness bookmarks and distribute them at your school or local library.
- **Displays:** Create displays and/or photo exhibits in school lunchroom or libraries featuring information and photos of the situation in Darfur.
For images/resources: <http://www.standarfur.org/photos.htm#essays>
- **Flyers:** Post informational flyers around your school to increase awareness and to urge classmates and teachers to take action.
- **Wristbands:** Wear green “Not on Our Watch” wristbands and distribute them with flyers explaining why it is important to draw attention to the situation in Darfur.
To order wristbands: <http://www.savedarfur.org>
- **Assembly:** Host a school-wide assembly and invite an expert on Darfur or one of the “Lost Boys of Sudan” as a guest speaker.
To invite a Lost Boy of Sudan: <http://www.lostboysofsudan.com/>
E-mail for recommended speakers: info@savedarfur.org
- **Video Screening:** Show a video on Darfur during class or at a club meeting.
To watch online or purchase video for screening: <http://hrw.org/video/2004/sudan>
- **Organize:** Organize a rally, vigil or demonstration in a park or public location calling for immediate action to stop the Darfur genocide.
- **Events:** Organize a poetry or literature reading with a human rights theme and educate your classmates and community about Darfur during the intermission.
- **Clergy:** Approach your religious leader about spreading awareness via sermons or religious activities or place an article in your congregation’s bulletin.

FUNDRAISE

Raise money toward Darfur relief efforts and donate to a humanitarian organization that is providing aid to the people of Darfur:

- **Sales:** Organize a bake sale, car wash, or sell green “Not on Our Watch” wristbands.
- **Donations:** Ask individuals or merchants to donate items to be raffled off, auctioned, or sold in a garage sale.
- **Events:** Organize a sporting event, a dance, or a battle of the bands with proceeds going to an organization working in Darfur.
- **T-shirts:** Buy T-shirts protesting the genocide in Sudan in bulk and sell them at your school to raise money for the cause.

T-shirts may be found at:

<http://www.cafepress.com/genocidetshirts> OR <http://www.studentsagainstgenocide.org/>

Organizations in need of donations may be found at: <http://www.interaction.org>

CONTACT LEADERS

Be an advocate and make your voice heard by communicating with your elected officials:

- **White House:** Contact the White House to express your concern for the people of Darfur and urge the President to take stronger actions to stop the genocide:

(202) 456-1111

1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

Washington, DC 20500

- **Congress:** Contact your Senators and Representative and urge them to adopt the most recent legislation aimed at stopping the Darfur genocide and holding perpetrators of genocide accountable:

To find your regional representatives: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

To find out how your Member of Congress voted on Darfur legislation: DarfurScores.org

A sample phone call dialogue can be found at:

ctsavedarfur.org/index.php?content=samples/20060312-congress_call

Examples and templates for effective letters may be found at:

www.globalsolutions.org/action/action_write_letter_president_bush_tell_him_you_want_justice_people_darfur

- **Local Officials:** Urge your local elected officials (Mayor, Board of Supervisors, etc) to pass a resolution calling for the end to the genocide. You can use the resolution to help raise awareness by writing about it in your school or local newspaper, etc.

Many of these efforts may be done individually, but are much more effective when conducted on a group level. We encourage you to create and/or join a student group aimed at ending genocide and promoting human rights.

JOIN OR START A STUDENT ACTION GROUP

- **STAND:** Students Taking Action Now for Darfur, a movement of high school and college students working to end the violence in Darfur. For information about STAND: www.standarfur.org
- **Amnesty International:** Raise awareness of human rights issues, attend meetings to advocate for human rights, write letters, and organize actions on behalf of victims of human rights abuses globally. For information about Amnesty International: http://www.amnestyusa.org/activist_toolkit/gettingstarted

For more information on the genocide in Sudan and activist opportunities

STAND: www.standarfur.org

MTV-U Activism: www.mtvu.com/activism

Save Darfur Coalition: www.savedarfur.org

Enough Project: www.enoughproject.org/

Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org

Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org

US Holocaust Memorial Museum Committee on Conscience: www.ushmm.gov/conscience

Passion of the Present Online Blog: platform.blogs.com

Genocide Intervention Network: www.genocideintervention.net/



Ideas for Continued Study/Homework:

The following are a variety of follow-up ideas that can be integrated into this lesson plan or which can be used in subsequent class sessions:

- ❖ Screen the video, “A Good Man in Hell” (13 minutes) and discuss
- ❖ Write an essay, examples of topics include:
 - From the Holocaust to Rwanda: Have We Learned Our Lessons?
 - What is the International Community’s Responsibility for Preventing Genocide?
 - Can There Be Reconciliation After Genocide?
- ❖ Assign a research paper. Topics may include:
 - A particular aspect of the Rwandan genocide (such as the use of the media to incite violence)
 - Other genocides of the 20th century (the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, the Cambodian Killing Fields)
 - Raphael Lemkin, the creation of the word “genocide” and his one-man crusade for the Genocide Convention
- ❖ Write a letter to victims of the genocide (like Valentina)
- ❖ Write letters to President Obama, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, other government officials about genocide and foreign policy
- ❖ Write an article about genocide for the school paper
- ❖ Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper