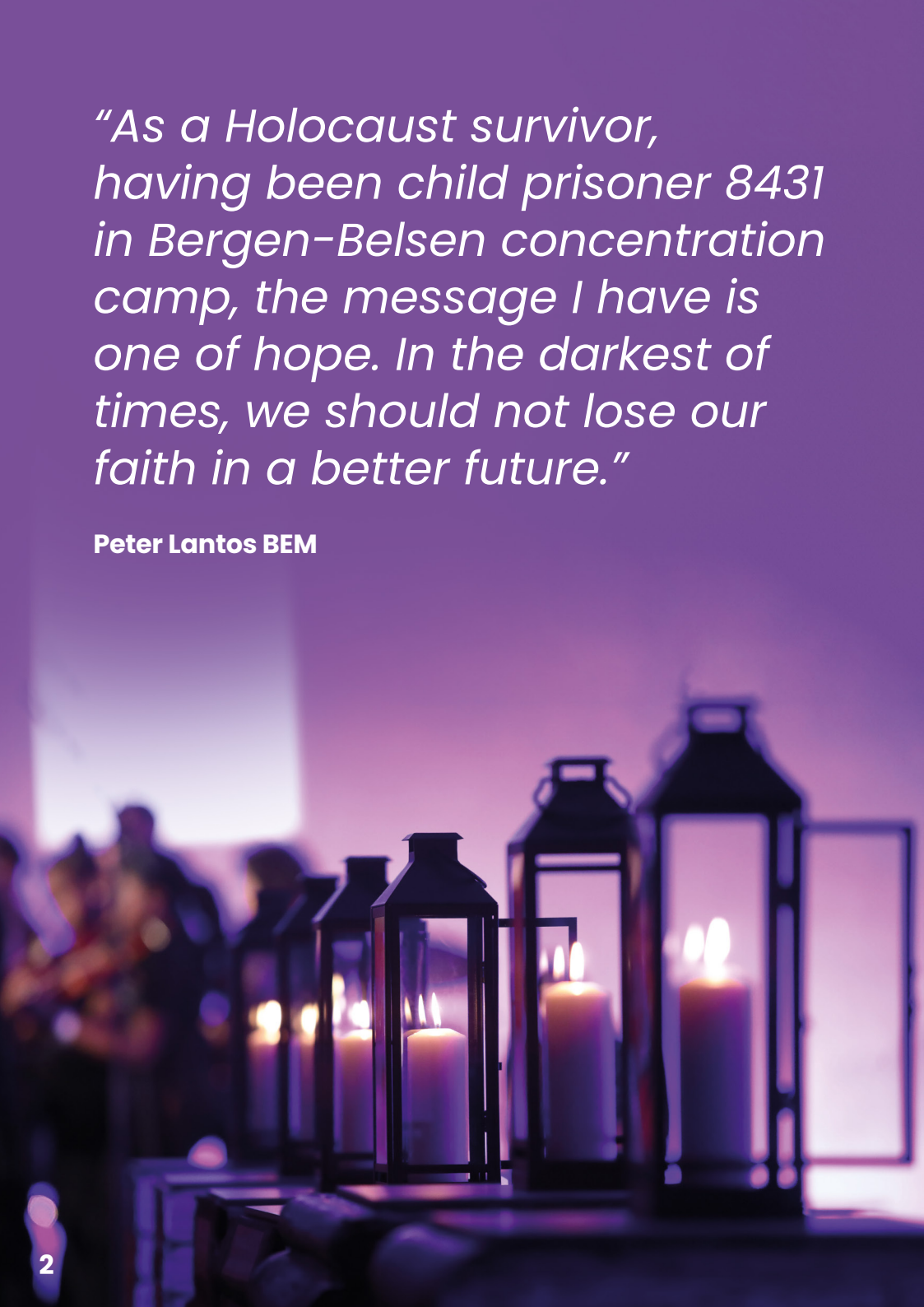




**DISCRIMINATION
TO GENOCIDE**



“As a Holocaust survivor, having been child prisoner 8431 in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, the message I have is one of hope. In the darkest of times, we should not lose our faith in a better future.”

Peter Lantos BEM

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Holocaust Memorial Day is commemorated annually on 27th January, the anniversary of the date on which the largest Nazi concentration and extermination camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated in 1945. It offers us an opportunity to remember those who suffered and died during the Holocaust in World War Two. Six million Jews were massacred, and millions of people from other groups who were seen to be a threat to the ideal of a ‘pure Aryan race’ were persecuted and murdered by the Nazi regime.

The Holocaust did not start with concentration camps and gas chambers. It began with stereotypes, discrimination, persecution and neighbours choosing to look away.

The Nazis set up a Ministry of Propaganda, newspapers were censored, the Nuremberg Laws removed the basic rights of Jews who, in addition to being issued with identity cards, were barred from many public places.

Holocaust Memorial Day also encourages us to reflect on and learn from more recent genocides in places such as Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

Many people, at home and across the world, still face prejudice and intolerance today. Each of us has a responsibility to challenge discrimination and hatred in society and to help build a future based on respect, empathy and inclusion.

TIMELINE



Adolf Hitler c.1932. Image © National Archives at College Park - Still Pictures identifier: 162121525.

January 1933

Hitler appointed German Chancellor.

March 1933

Dachau concentration camp established; initially for 'political prisoners', this was soon extended to include Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma and Sinti and gay men.

September 1935

The Nuremberg Laws were enacted, removing basic rights from Jews including German citizenship.



Ohel Yaakov Synagogue in Munich was one of over 200 destroyed during Kristallnacht. Image credit: CC BY 3.0 unknown author, form a private collection by permission of the collection owner.

November 1938

Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass) – a pogrom during which synagogues were burned, Jewish people were attacked, their businesses and homes destroyed and 20,000 people were taken prisoner and sent to concentration camps including Dachau.

May 1939

Eighty children and some adults arrive at the Refugee Resettlement Farm at Millisle, refugees from Nazi terror in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

September 1939

Germany invades Poland; having publicly promised, in May 1939, to support Poland if another country attacked her, France and Britain declare war on Germany.

October 1939

First Jewish ghetto established in Poland at Piotrków Trybunalski. The following month 380,000 Jews were contained inside the Warsaw ghetto, the largest in Europe; over 80,000 died as a result of the appalling conditions, overcrowding and starvation.



Jews being taken from the Warsaw ghetto for forced labour. Image © yadvashem.org.

April 1940

Heinrich Himmler orders the establishment of a concentration camp at Auschwitz. Over 405,000 prisoners were registered at the camp from 1940 – 1945; over 130,000 were women.

December 1941

Japan bombs Pearl Harbour to hinder United States response to planned Japanese operations. USA enters the war.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, 7th December 1941. Image © IWM OEM 21469.



January 1942

The Wannsee Conference and the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” Nazi leaders envisioned the annihilation of 11 million European Jews as part of the “Final Solution.”

April 1943

Originally opened in 1940 as a prisoner of war camp, Bergen-Belsen became part of the concentration camp system after being turned over to the SS.

January 1945

Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration and death camp, where over one million men, women and children were murdered, was liberated by Russian troops.

April 1945

Bergen-Belsen was liberated on 15th April by British troops who found nearly 55,000 prisoners, many of whom were seriously ill, surrounded by the corpses of those who had died in the weeks before liberation.

Approximately 32,000 prisoners at Dachau were liberated by United States troops on 29th April. Over 180,000 people had been imprisoned in the camp by the time it was liberated.



Bergen-Belsen sign erected by British troops, May 1945. Image © IWM BU 6955.

May 1945

Adolf Hitler committed suicide on 30th April in the Führerbunker as Soviet troops neared.

Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Western Allies on 7th May at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, Reims, France. Due to Soviet concerns, a second surrender was signed in Berlin the following day.

August 1945

Japan surrendered on 15th August following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States, and the Soviet declaration of war.

Campbell College J.T.C. Pipe Band leading the VE Day parade in Portrush, 8th May 1945. Image courtesy of Campbell College, Belfast, Archive & Heritage Collection.



COURAGE AND COMPASSION

During the Holocaust some people risked their own lives to save Jews from Nazi persecution, showing how individuals can make a profound difference.

During the Second World War, Irena Sendlerowa, a social worker in charge of the children's division of the Polish resistance group Żegota, rescued thousands of Jewish children from German occupied Warsaw.

With her dog trained to bark at soldiers, Irena smuggled children out of the ghettos hidden in her cart. She gave each child a new identity, keeping their real names in a sealed jar hidden in her garden so they could be reunited with their families after the war.

Arrested and tortured by the Gestapo, she did not betray the children or her collaborators and was freed by a bribe from the Polish underground just before she was to be executed.



Irena Sendlerowa, December 1944. Image in the public domain, unknown photographer.



Memorial of Nicholas Winton, by Flor Kent, at Prague Main Railway Station. Image credit: Luděk Kovář, CC BY-SA 3.0.

Nicholas Winton rescued 669 children from Nazi occupied Czechoslovakia. Working tirelessly with family and friends, he met the conditions imposed by the Home Office for bringing the children to Britain. Eight trains filled with children left Prague between March and August 1939, arriving in London to be met by their sponsors. A ninth train, due to leave on 1st September, was stopped by the Gestapo and most of the 250 children on board ended up in Auschwitz.



Oskar Schindler in Argentina after the Second World War. Image in the public domain, unknown photographer.

Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist and member of the Nazi party, employed Jewish workers in his factories in Poland and Germany. Through bribes and gifts to Nazi officials, he protected his workers from deportation and death, ultimately saving the lives of about 1200 Jews.

MILLISLE FARM

Over one million Jewish children were murdered in the Holocaust. Almost 10,000 escaped, mostly from Germany and Austria, through the 'Kindertransport' scheme, finding sanctuary in Britain.

The Belfast Jewish community leased Millisle Farm, a 70-acre derelict farm on the Ards Peninsula, to provide shelter for Jewish children who had fled the Nazis, mainly from Germany, Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The first children arrived in the early summer of 1939 and spent their first night in dripping wet tents. The following evening their accommodation was upgraded to a cow shed and stables. Work began to transform the derelict farm into a working farm with accommodation, a task overseen by the farm manager, Eugen Patriasz, and supported by the Belfast German Refugee Committee and local churches.

Refugees at Millisle Farm. Image © Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (N.I.)



There was work for everyone on the 70-acre farm, depending on age and ability. Crops were planted and livestock raised to make the community on the farm more self-sufficient. A tractor was purchased with donations from the Dublin Jewish Community. As 'enemy aliens', residents of the farm were restricted to designated areas and had to observe a strict curfew.

The children also continued their education, attending local schools where they learned English and became part of the local community. A trip to the cinema in Donaghadee was a special treat and news reel footage allowed them to follow what was happening in wartime Europe. For some, footage of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps may have brought the realisation that they were now orphans in a foreign country.

Millisle Farm closed in May 1948, having provided sanctuary to over 300 Jewish children and adults during the war years. Some settled in Northern Ireland, others moved to Britain, Canada and the United States.

The Safe Haven sculpture in the grounds of Millisle Primary School commemorates the safe haven which the farm, school and community of Millisle offered to Jewish refugees during the Second World War. Image © Wartime NI



REFUGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

A notice appeared in *Zionistische Rundschau* in August 1938, encouraging Jewish craftspeople to apply to work in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Irish government "is prepared to provide immigrants from Central Europe with as much support as possible if they can establish new industries in Northern Ireland or support existing ones in practical ways and thereby contributing to a reduction in unemployment..."

To support this new business venture during the introduction phase, the Northern Ireland Department of Employment is granting a weekly subsidy of 10 shillings per worker."

Maurice Komjat, a textile manufacturer, fled Budapest in 1938 with his wife and daughter. In January 1940, the Daintifyt Brassiere Company was

Jüdische Kunstgewerbler für Nord-Irland

Aus Sidney wird berichtet, daß zahlreiche Redner in der Irland ist bereit, Einwanderern aus Mitteleuropa die größtmögliche Unterstützung angedeihen zu lassen, wenn diese imstande sind, neue Industriezweige in Nord-Irland zu gründen, oder bereits vorhandene praktisch zu fördern und so zur Verringerung der Arbeitslosigkeit beizutragen. So hat sich die nord-irische Regierung bereit gezeigt, einem Juden aus Österreich bei der Einrichtung einer kunstgewerblichen Heimindustrie zu helfen. Sie hat ihm erlaubt, sieben Vbrarbeiter aus Österreich nach Belfast kommen zu lassen, die nun 70 Frauen und Mädchen unterweisen. Man hofft auf diese Weise 600 bis 700 Menschen Beschäftigung geben zu können. Zur Förderung des neuen Unternehmens gewährt das nord-irische Arbeitsministerium für die Zeit der Einführung einen wöchentlichen Zuschuß von 10 Sh. pro Arbeiter. Ansuchen um die Zulassung nach Nord-Irland zwecks Gründung von Industrien müssen an das nord-irische Handelsministerium gerichtet werden, welches die Gesuche sorgfältig, aber wohlwollend prüft. Es sei dabei erinnert, daß vor mehr als zweihundert Jahren Nord-Irland eine Zufluchtsstätte für französische Hugenotten war, die den Grundstein zu der weltberühmten Ulster-Leinenindustrie legten.

Notice published in *Zionistische Rundschau* in August 1938. Image courtesy of PRONI.



Limavady Daintifyt factory. Image courtesy of Chronicle & Constitution archives.

registered in Belfast, with Maurice Komjat and Lazslo Horvath, who had also fled from the Nazis, as directors. With a background in the textile and clothing industry they began production of 'corsets, brassieres, underwear and garments of all kinds' in Belfast. After the city was bombed in the spring of 1941 the factory moved to a garage in Cookstown. By 1945, larger premises were required and production demands led to the opening of new factories, including Limavady in the early 1950s. Within a few years three factories were employing over 1000 people, 95% of them women. As the war ended, Maurice Komjat received news of his father's death from Budapest; it is believed he was a victim of the Holocaust.



Edith Jacobowitz.
Image © IWM Doc 6478.

Fourteen-year-old Edith Jacobowitz and her younger brother, Gert, arrived in Northern Ireland in June 1939, having escaped Berlin shortly after their parents were arrested by the Nazis. Edith was sent to the Jewish refugee resettlement farm at Millisle, where she worked in the fields and helped look after the younger children. She later worked as a nanny in Belfast and her experience caring for children led to a career in nursing after the war. Edith lost both parents – her father, Wilhelm, died in Dachau and her mother, Else, perished in Auschwitz. Edith trained as a nurse in Ards District Hospital and a year after qualifying she moved to England to train as a midwife. She later worked as a health visitor in Kent where she settled with her husband and family.

BERGEN-BELSEN

Bergen-Belsen was initially opened as a prisoner of war camp designed to hold 10,000. It was redesignated as a concentration camp in 1943, holding thousands of Jews, Roma, political prisoners and POWs.

In the autumn of 1944, in response to the advance of the Soviet Army, the Nazis moved prisoners from other camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau, to Bergen-Belsen, leading to overcrowding, lack of shelter and starvation. Combined with poor sanitary conditions, disease was soon rife – typhus, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and dysentery ravaged the camp with more than 35,000 people dying in the first few months of 1945. Anne Frank, author of *The Diary of a Young Girl*, and her sister Margot arrived in Bergen-Belsen from Auschwitz in November 1944. Due to lack of food and the horrendous conditions, both girls contracted typhus and died in February 1945.

Large crowds watch the burning of the last hut at Belsen two days after the camp was evacuated. © IWM (BU 6674)





Frederick Linnet Peacock, Royal Army Medical Corps. Image courtesy of Robert Peacock.

When British troops of the 11th Armoured Division liberated Bergen-Belsen on 15th April 1945, they found over 60,000 people being held in horrendous conditions. The liberating soldiers were completely unprepared for what they found – thousands of starving, gravely ill prisoners, surrounded by the bodies of 13,000 people who had died in the weeks before liberation. Despite the desperate attempts to save them, in the weeks that followed thousands more inmates died, some from disease, and others whose emaciated bodies were unable to cope with food after prolonged starvation.

In the days after liberation, the Royal Army Medical Corps, assisted by 96 medical students from London, implemented measures to reduce the daily death rate. Inmates were moved to a nearby German military training school, which was converted into a hospital and displaced persons' camp. After the camp was evacuated the accommodation huts were burned to prevent further spread of disease.

Fred Peacock, a young RAMC officer, was among those who witnessed the horrific scenes. The trauma of what he saw never left him and many decades later, a tear could be seen in his eye as he recounted some of what he had seen to his young grandson.

COLERAINE BATTERY



After the war, Sandbostel was used as a civilian internment camp, to house Nazi war criminals and lastly as a displaced persons camp. Image courtesy of Coleraine Museum.

In late 1939, around 200 volunteers from Coleraine and surrounding areas were enlisted into the Coleraine Battery. This group of local soldiers served in Egypt, France, Belgium, Italy and other areas. They were deployed in the Normandy landings and later took part in the final advance into Germany in 1945.

As Allied forces advanced across Europe and Nazi concentration camps were liberated the horrors of the Holocaust were revealed. When Auschwitz-Birkenau

was liberated by Russian troops in January 1945, they found about 7,000 prisoners, left behind by the Nazis when they were evacuating the camp in the previous weeks.

The men of Coleraine Battery were assigned to security duties at the Belsen and Sandbostel concentration camps, which held Jews, Russian prisoners of war and other victims of Nazi persecution. Here, these local men witnessed first-hand the devastation of the Holocaust.

"To see a couple of thousand skeletons being thrown, heads to tails into a hole in the ground, covered in lime and then bulldozed over... You talked about it and tried to accept it. The only way to cope was to leave it behind when we returned home." A Battery member reflects on the horrors he witnessed.

Just over six years after they were mobilised, Coleraine Battery was stood down in October 1945.

Stalag X-B / Sandbostel Concentration Camp was liberated on 29th April 1945. British troops soon nicknamed Sandbostel "a miniature Belsen" after encountering horrifying scenes of emaciated prisoners and many piles of half-naked corpses. Image courtesy of the International Committee of the Red Cross.



GENOCIDES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Genocide is considered the gravest crime against humanity. The term was first used by Raphael Lemkin in 1944. Having witnessed the Holocaust, he campaigned to have 'genocide' recognised as a crime under international law.

Article 2 of the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, such as:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm 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.
- As defined by the UN Convention there have been at least three genocides and a number of others added since.
- Mass killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks between 1915-1920;
- The Holocaust when over 6 million Jews were killed;
- Khmer Rouge killing of 1.7million in Cambodia in 1970s;
- Rwanda, where an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and Hutus died in 1994;
- Massacre at Srebrenica, Bosnia in 1995.

CAMBODIA, 1975 – 1979

Civil war had existed in Cambodia from 1970. The Khmer Rouge, a communist group led by Pol Pot, seized control in April 1975. The regime believed people had been polluted by outside influences, especially Western capitalism. Religious groups such as Christians, Muslims and Buddhists were targeted. Professions including doctors, lawyers, military or police personnel were persecuted and re-education programmes introduced to encourage a commune lifestyle.



Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Phnom Penh. Tuol Svay Prey High School was taken over by the Khmer Rouge and used as a prison and torture chamber where prisoners were “interrogated” by Pol Pot’s security service. Image credit: Michael Gruijters, CC BY-SA 3.0

Those who refused to participate were killed in the fields surrounding the communes or in a prison camp at Tuol Sleng. The Khmer Rouge were removed from power in January 1979 when communist Vietnam invaded. Over the four-year period more than 1.7 million people were killed through overwork, starvation and torture.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, 1992 – 1995

The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the most violent following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, with three major ethnic groups, Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats competing to gain control of the area. In eastern Bosnia, Serbs tried to establish ethnically homogenous areas by targeting Muslims, culminating in genocide in the town of Srebrenica.

In March 1995, the President of the self-proclaimed republic of Srpska instructed Bosnian Serb forces to create “an unbearable situation... with no hope of survival for the inhabitants of Srebrenica”. The town was captured in July 1995 and up to 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were executed and efforts made to conceal their graves. Approximately 30,000 women, children and elderly people were forcibly removed from the enclave.

The International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia declared the events at Srebrenica as genocide. Over 20 individuals were prosecuted for their involvement, 16 of whom were convicted. In 2001, former Bosnian Serb General, Radislav Krstic unsuccessfully appealed his conviction claiming that the 8,000 killed was “too insignificant” a figure to be a genocide.

Gravestones at the Srebrenica Genocide Memorial Centre. Over 5000 of the victims of the massacre are now buried in the cemetery. Image credit: Michael Bükler, CC BY-SA 3.0



RWANDA, 1994



The Kigali Genocide Memorial in Rwanda is a place of remembrance, reflection and learning commemorating over 250,000 victims of the 1994 victims of the genocide against the Tutsi. Image credit: Yamen, CC BY-SA 4.0

In April 1994, the assassination of the Presidents of Burundi and Rwanda ignited a genocide of Tutsis, resulting in the massacre of more than one million people. After the collapse of the moderate Hutu leadership, a committee of Hutu military leaders assumed power. The genocide was marked by extreme sexual violence with the rape of up to 500,000 women. Hutu civilians were pressured into arming themselves with machetes, clubs and other weapons and encouraged to rape, maim or kill their neighbours and steal their property. Those who refused were branded sympathisers and murdered.

There had been long standing ethnic tension in Rwanda dating back many years, primarily between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes. In October 1990, the invasion by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), composed mainly of Tutsi exiles, led to the Rwandan Civil War. The signing of the Arusha peace agreements in August appeared to have brought the conflict to an end.

However, many opposed the government. Zura Karuhimbi, a traditional healer, was believed to have magical powers by the people in her village. Zura sheltered Tutsis, Burundians and Europeans in her small house, hiding dozens under the floor in her bedroom, in secret spaces in the roof and in holes she dug in her fields. Playing on her reputation as a witch, she bravely challenged all who came to search her home and land, warning them she would unleash evil spirits on anyone who entered or killed those in the house. Attempts to bribe her failed and she saved over 100 people.

Rwanda was the first genocide to be tried under the United Nations' 1948 Genocide Convention. Jean Paul Akayesu, the Hutu Mayor of Taba, was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity in September 1998. It also marked the first occasion an international court defined and applied the legal concept of genocide, explicitly recognising rape as a tool of genocide. Over 85 people were convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 29 on counts of genocide.



Zura Karuhimbi was awarded the 'Campaign Against Genocide' medal in 2006 by the Rwandan President Paul Kagame, one of the many she had saved years earlier. Image © Bene Rwanda

REMEMBRANCE AND LEARNING

As the Holocaust and other more recent genocides slip further into the past, there is a risk that memories may fade, become blurred, distorted or even questioned. Distortion and denial pose significant challenges – there has been increased denial of the Holocaust in recent years. It is important that the memory is preserved and carried forward and we can help do this by sharing stories that resonate with people today.

Genocide is the deliberate targeting and destruction of a specific group of people based on one or more defining characteristics. It does not begin with murder, but with discrimination, stereotypes, exclusion and the denial of human rights. Discrimination based on identity is still happening in many parts of the world today.

The entrance gate of Auschwitz with the Nazi inscription “Arbeit Macht Frei” – “Work Sets You Free.” Image © Bill Hunt.



Kigali Memorial Centre. Image © Andrew Sutton.

The past holds important lessons about prejudice, hatred and the cost of remaining silent. By reflecting on these lessons, we can better understand how prejudice, discrimination and intolerance continue to affect people in the world today. We can use the learning to help build a safer, fairer and more compassionate society for the future. We all share the responsibility to recognise the warning signs, to challenge hatred in all its forms and take action against injustice.

By remembering the Holocaust and other genocides, we honour the victims who were killed and recognise the suffering of the survivors. Preserving their stories reminds us of the consequences of hatred and prejudice. We have a shared responsibility to ensure these dark chapters of man’s history are never forgotten and to make certain that such atrocities never happen again.

THE TEN STAGES OF GENOCIDE



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

STAGE ONE

CLASSIFICATION

The differences between people are not respected. There's a division of 'us' and 'them', which can be carried out using stereotypes, or excluding people who are perceived to be different.

STAGE TWO

SYMBOLISATION

This is a visual manifestation of hatred. Jews in Nazi occupied Europe were forced to wear the yellow Star of David. In Cambodia the Khmer Rouge forced people from the Eastern Zone to wear blue scarves. From 1992, in north-west Bosnia, all non-Serbian citizens were forced to wear white armbands.



STAGE THREE

DISCRIMINATION

The dominant group denies civil rights or even citizenship to identified groups. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their German citizenship, made it illegal for them to do many jobs or to marry German non-Jews.

STAGE FOUR

DEHUMANISATION

Those perceived as 'different' are treated with no form of human rights or personal dignity. During the Genocide in Rwanda, Tutsis were referred to as 'cockroaches'; the Nazis referred to Jews as 'vermin'.



STAGE FIVE

ORGANISATION

Genocides are always planned. Regimes of hatred often train those who go on to carry out the destruction of a people. The Sudanese Government supports and arms the Janjaweed (Arab militia) in Darfur to carry out the violence and killings.



STAGE SEVEN

PREPARATION

Perpetrators plan the genocide. They often use euphemisms such as the Nazi's phrase 'The Final Solution' to cloak their intentions. Acts of genocide are disguised as self-defence if there is an ongoing armed conflict or civil war, such as in Bosnia.



STAGE EIGHT

PERSECUTION

Victims are identified because of their ethnicity or religion and death lists are drawn up. People are sometimes segregated into ghettos, deported or starved and property is often expropriated. Genocidal massacres begin.



STAGE SIX

POLARISATION

Propaganda begins to be spread by hate groups. The Nazis used the newspaper *Der Stürmer* to spread and incite messages of hate about Jewish people.



STAGE TEN

DENIAL

The perpetrators or later generations deny the existence of any crime. Evidence is destroyed and witnesses are intimidated. There has been an increase in Holocaust denial online in recent years.



STAGE NINE

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.

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. These stages may occur simultaneously or in a different order.

FIRST THEY CAME

First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out,
Because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out,
Because I was not a Socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out,
Because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out,
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me,
And there was no one left
To speak out for me.

Martin Niemoller (1892-1984), Lutheran Minister and early Nazi supporter who was later imprisoned for opposing Hitler's regime.