

PROTECTING MINORITIES

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MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH NEEDED

Hatred is the root cause of genocide, while government provides the practical means by which to vilify, identify, disarm, segregate and kill members of the target group.

Research by JPFO found that civilian disarmament is an essential precondition for genocide, contributing to the deaths of 56 million people in the 20th century (see table).

The belief that one can evade punishment is also an important factor, while research by R.J. Rummel revealed that far fewer atrocities occur in democracies.

The first national gun registration scheme was introduced by a liberal German government in 1928 in response to public shootouts between Nazi and communist street gangs (it had no effect).

After the Nazis were elected to office in 1932 they misused the scheme to systematically disarm the general population, as they were afraid of a popular uprising when they ended democracy or started murdering trainloads of women and children, an uprising the German army

may have refused to put down or actively supported.

Laws that stop groups targeted by genocidal regimes accessing defensive arms are illegal (violate the Genocide Convention).

The UN has never authorized an invasion to stop a genocide despite member nations having an affirmative legal duty to prevent it, thus potential victims should not rely on outside assistance.

History shows that a genocide can occur



unexpectedly and quickly so potential victims should be well armed prior to any indication of an attack.

Government	Dates	Targets	Killed
Ottoman Empire	1915-17	Armenians	1-1.5 million
Soviet Union	1929-45	Political opponents	20 million
Nazi Germany	1933-45	Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, political opponents	20 million
Nationalist China	1927-49	Political opponents	10 million
Communist China	1949-52	Political opponents	20-35 million
Guatemala	1960-81	Indians, political opponents	100-200,000
Uganda	1971-79	Christians, political opponents	300,000
Cambodia	1975-79	Educated, political opponents	2 million
Rwanda	1994	Tutsis	800,000

ARMED VICTIMS FIGHT OFF GENOCIDAL TROOPS

The first Turkish atrocities against the Christian Armenians occurred in the 1890s and largely involved civilian proxies specially armed by the government.

The Armenians were slaughtered in the tens of thousands, but where Armenians were armed they fought back, and were quite

successful not only against civilian irregulars but against regular army troops as well.

Perhaps out of fear that civil war or prolonged disorders might provoke foreign intervention, the army recalled the arms from its proxies and ended the attacks, though the government

continued its policy of confiscating Armenian arms, facilitating the second genocide twenty years later.

The next massacres began in 1915 (up to 1.5 million died), though once again there were instances of armed Armenians warding off troops and escaping.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The centralization of power facilitates crimes against humanity.
- The diffusion of power is the key to preventing crimes against humanity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote the spread of liberal democracy.
- Democratize the armed forces via a Home Guard style militia.
- Extend the jurisdiction of the ICC so it can prosecute any leader.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Death by "Gun Control": The Human Cost of Victim Disarmament, A. Zelman and R.W. Stevens, Mazel Freedom Press, 2001.

FURTHER READING

Power Kills, R. J. Rummel, Transaction Publications, 1997.

