

LESSON PLAN: THE HOLOCAUST AND SUBSEQUENT GENOCIDES



This lesson plan is aimed at secondary school students in all year groups, aged 11-18.

*This lesson will introduce your students to the genocides which occurred after the Holocaust: Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2014 is **Journeys**, and by looking at **Journeys** undertaken during these genocides your students will gain a better understanding of them.*

Before you teach this lesson, it is recommended that you read through the entire lesson plan. You should identify which elements and options are more appropriate for your students, or choose to split this plan over two (or more) lessons. You may choose to focus on just one of the genocides rather than all of them, or you could devote a whole lesson to each of the genocides.

Please read through this plan in advance so you can tailor the lesson to your students depending on their age, aptitude, ability and interest. There is an accompanying PowerPoint presentation; you may wish to edit the presentation.

This resource is designed to be an inspiration or a starting point for you that can open the door for further learning and that can link into the wider curriculum; suggestions are given at the end of this plan.

What you need:

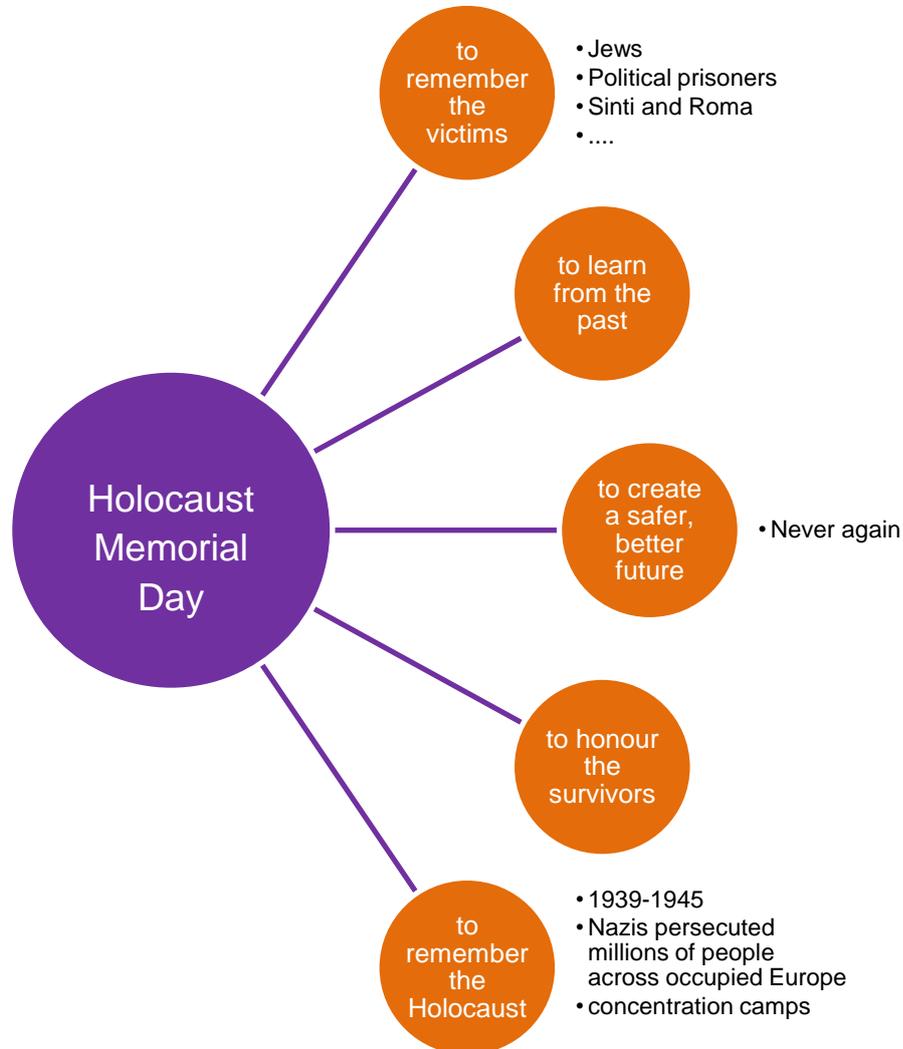
- a computer/laptop, projector and screen. It is recommended that you download the PowerPoint in advance
- a whiteboard or flipchart and pens
- these notes
- the students will need writing equipment, paper, pens etc
- access to the internet
- luggage tags (optional – these could be purchased from a stationary shop, you could print these out from the PowerPoint presentation, or your students could create them themselves)

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Establish existing knowledge

27 January is Holocaust Memorial Day. Find out what your students already know about this day and what it represents. You could do this by creating a spider diagram on the whiteboard or a flipchart, focusing on the words Holocaust Memorial Day, for example:



A blank version of this has been included on slide 3 if you wish to use it with an interactive whiteboard.

Try not to prompt your students but probe to gently establish what they do or don't know, for example if they mention the victims, ask them who the victims were. This will then help you to shape the rest of the lesson.

Inform your students that the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2014 is **Journeys**, and so we will be discussing different **Journeys** that people were forced on, and went on during genocides.

Now we will try to fill in any gaps your students may have revealed in Activity 1. You can choose from the relevant activities below.

Knowledge of the Holocaust

Introduction:

If your students demonstrated a solid understanding of the Holocaust, or you are already aware that they know about the Holocaust, you may wish to skip this step and discuss the lessons from the past (below). If, however, your students are not familiar with the Holocaust, it is important to ensure that they have some knowledge of it, before discussing subsequent genocides.

Here is a definition of the Holocaust (also on slide 4), that you may wish to share with your students, even if they already have some knowledge of the Holocaust:

Definition:

Between 1941 and 1945, the Nazis attempted to annihilate all of Europe's Jews. This systematic and planned attempt to murder European Jewry is known as the Holocaust.

From the time they assumed power 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. By the end of the Holocaust, six million Jewish men, women and children had perished in ghettos, mass-shootings, in concentration camps and extermination camps.

Further resources:

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has provided a lesson plan that you may wish to use as a starting point to teach the Holocaust. You could select activities from the lesson plan, depending on what your students already know about the Holocaust. You can find that lesson plan here: **hmd.org.uk/lessonplanholocaust**

If you would like an even deeper definition of the Holocaust for yourself, please go to the HMD website where we have two podcasts by the renowned historian, Professor David Cesarani, on the Holocaust: **hmd.org.uk/holocaust**

Lessons from the past?

The debate:

Holocaust Memorial Day is a day 'to learn lessons from the past and create a safer better future'. Ask your students if they think we should focus more on the past, or on the future? Split the class into two groups (or an equal number of groups). Your students are going to have a debate. Task half the class with preparing arguments as to why Holocaust Memorial Day should focus on the past; the other half should discuss amongst themselves arguments for focusing on the future. After giving the students sufficient time to prepare, arrange the debate. Each side is given time to present their case, and then the floor can be opened for questions.

Alternative activity: What are the lessons?

You could additionally or alternatively have a debate as to what the lessons are that we can learn from the past, and how can our future be safer/better? Half the class (or half the groups) should suggest what lessons we can learn from the past and the other half should present their ideas for a better future.

For older students: stages of genocide

You might like to discuss the stages of genocide. Ask your students to try to work out the correct order of the eight stages of genocide and then match the stages to their definition (slides 5-7; the correct order is on slide 8). The eight stages of genocide and the definitions have also been included as an appendix to this lesson plan so you can print them off and distribute them to your students if this is easier than using the PowerPoint. They could then cut them out and put them in order.

Cambodia

HMDT has a podcast of an interview with Var Ashe Houston, a survivor of the Genocide in Cambodia. It is over an hour long, so it is not recommended that you listen to the entire podcast in one lesson. You may wish to listen to it yourself in advance of the lesson and then select a segment to play to your students. The podcast has been included in the PowerPoint presentation, slide 9 – click on the photograph of Var to listen to the podcast. You can also find the podcast and a transcript here: hmd.org.uk/varashehouston

A concise version of Var's story is presented here. You should share this with your students to inform them of the Genocide in Cambodia. **Please note that Var's story is more suited to older students; you know your students best.**

Var Ashe Houston's Story

Var was born in Cambodia and was 26 years old when the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975. The Khmer Rouge believed that Cambodia should be returned to 'Year Zero', when the land was cultivated by peasants and the country would be ruled for, and by, the poorest amongst society. Here is an extract from Var's story, in her own words. You could display this for your students to read aloud (slides 9-12), or you could print it off and have the students read it to themselves.

The date, April 17th, 1975, would stay in the minds of millions for years to come. It marked the beginning of almost four years of terror as the Khmer Rouge turned Cambodia into a vast concentration camp.

A few hours later, our misery started. The Khmer Rouge ordered us to leave the city "for three hours only" and to carry nothing with us... I left my house with my mother, my two daughters, three sisters and two brothers.

Two million people were forced out of the city and on the road. A general air of misery hung over the whole crowd as we trudged along. Our entire fabric of life had been torn apart... I had never seen the streets so packed with people before.

Five hours passed, one day, two days, three days.... We realised by now that this was a trip without return. The Khmer Rouge fired machinegun rounds in the air to force us to advance under the intense heat of the scorching sun.

After about a month, completely exhausted, we stopped in a village where the Khmer Rouge started to integrate arriving city-dwellers like us into the life of the rural inhabitants. My family were assigned to dig irrigation canals, ponds, dams, and cut trees in the forest and the jungle. We were then forced to attend brainwashing sessions between 9 and 11 o'clock. The Khmer Rouge used to keep us on the move from village to village so that we couldn't organise an insurrection. We usually travelled on foot or by oxcart, but on one occasion we were sent by train.

My family were evacuated, from the south of Cambodia, to the north of Cambodia. The train was packed like sardines, altogether 3,000 of us in one train. And it took three days...that was a nightmare in itself. People die[d] on the train, and they

wouldn't stop for us to bury the dead, eventually they started to smell and we had to throw them through the window of the train.

Pause after your students have read the story so that they can absorb what they have just heard/read. Allow them the opportunity to ask any questions they may have (which is why it will be helpful to you if you have read Var's full story)

Questions:

Ask your students to consider the journeys that Var went on.

- What was the purpose of the journeys?
- Why would the Khmer Rouge move so many people all around the country?
 - Think about the psychological connotations – moving people out of their comfort zone, to unfamiliar territory.
 - Think about the physical impact – people died on the journeys – were the journeys used to kill people?
- What effect would the journeys have on those forced to go on them?

Use the map (slide 13) to help your students when discussing Var's journeys. Var escaped over the Thai border and was eventually able to come to the UK.

Additional activity: feelings

Ask your students to think about how Var would have felt when she arrived in the UK, what would have been her first thoughts or actions. This is an opportunity to be creative: students could write a poem/song or create a piece of artwork or a dance. If time is limited, ask them to call out words that they think are appropriate to how Var would have felt at the time. Once your students have created their piece of work, share with them this quote from her book (also on slide 14):

My memory is absolutely clear about our arrival in England. As we approached Heathrow Airport, I looked down first at the green fields and then at the rows of houses and larger buildings that made up London...
As we walked out of the airport terminal, the sense of freedom became very real to me. I felt like doing a little dance and shouting, "We're free!"

Is this what you were expecting Var to have felt/said?

With older students: feelings

Ask your students if they think Var was really free now?
As it happened, it was only in 1981 that she found out the fate of her husband. Until she knew what had happened to him, could she be truly free?
And even then, her memories would always stay with her... is it possible to ever move on from experiencing a genocide?

Resources:

If you wish to look at the rest of Var's story, please see her full life story on the HMD website: hmd.org.uk/varlifestory

Bosnia

Safet Vukalić's story

Safet Vukalić is a Bosnian Muslim and survivor of persecution in Prijedor, Bosnia. His father and brother were imprisoned by the Bosnian Serb Army in concentration camps. A six minute video interview with him is included in slide 15. **Please note that the video is not suitable for younger students.**

Click on the photograph of Safet to play the video. Afterwards, allow them time to reflect and ask any questions they may have.

Questions

The last paragraph of Safet's testimony is displayed on slide 16. Show this to your students and ask them to read it for themselves.

Ask them what Safet is asking of them, of all of us. What journey can we go on to achieve this? What does he hope that we have learned from his story? Is there hope?

Leave the slide up while the students discuss this.

Hasan Hasanović's Story

A summary of Hasan's story is presented here. You should share this with your students either by printing a copy for them to read for themselves, or by displaying slides 17-20. There is lot of text to read, so it may be best to ask one student to read each slide aloud to everyone. Ensure that your students have time to process each slide before moving on to the next slide.

Hasan Hasanović was a 19 year old Muslim when the town of Srebrenica fell to Bosnian Serb forces in July 1995. He endured a 100 kilometre march through hostile terrain to escape the massacre of over 7,000 Muslim men and boys that took place there.

'It wasn't going to be an easy journey, but we had no other option. We wanted to live.'

Hasan and his family were forced to move to a Muslim-held enclave around the town of Srebrenica after the Bosnian war started in March 1992, and Bosnian Serb forces attacked towns in the east of Bosnia. The Srebrenica enclave was captured by Bosnian Serb forces and Hasan, his father and twin brother decided to flee as the Serbs wanted to kill all the Muslim men.

Between 10,000 and 15,000 Muslim men, mostly unarmed civilians, set out on a gruelling 100 kilometre march towards the Muslim-held town of Tuzla; Hasan and his father and brother were among them. The terrain was mountainous and littered with minefields, and many Serb soldiers lay between Hasan and safety: *'It wasn't going to be an easy journey, but we had no other option. We wanted to live.'*

'We weren't soldiers who had prepared for this kind of journey' says Hasan. 'We were just ordinary men.'... Days of walking had turned his feet into a blistered mass of agonizing pain. He wanted to lie down and sleep but another man told him, 'if you sleep now, you'll sleep forever'.

Hasan was one of only 3,500 who survived the march; his father and brother did not, and Hasan still does not know how and where they were killed.

Hasan is now married and has a young daughter. He works as a Curator at the Memorial Centre, where he shares his story with visitors from all over the world on a daily basis. He sees this as both his duty to those who were murdered and a cathartic experience for himself. 'I want to speak to people, and share my story because my heart speaks. And now, finally, someone is listening.'

Questions

Safet and Hasan had very different experiences of the same genocide. Ensure that your students know that each genocide is made up of individual stories, that everyone had a different experience.

At the end of his testimony Safet spoke of hope and understanding. How does the end of Hasan's story reflect that? Why does Hasan share his story?

Ask your students how they think sharing his story would make Hasan feel. Is it difficult to retell his story day in and day out?

What sort of journey is Hasan going on by retelling his story?

If your students have also looked at Var's story

Hasan chose to go on a journey – unlike Var who was forced on hers by the Khmer Rouge – does this make a difference?

You could suggest that Hasan was inadvertently forced on his journey – if he hadn't gone, he would have almost certainly been murdered by the Bosnian Serbs. Point out to your students that the perpetrators of the genocides dictate the journeys that those they wish to suppress must go on.

Resources:

A transcript of Safet's video can be found here:

<http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/stories/safet-vukalic>

Hasan's full life story is available on the HMD website here:

[hmd.org.uk/hasanhasanovic](http://www.hmd.org.uk/hasanhasanovic)

Rwanda

2014 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda. To commemorate this, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has produced a lesson plan and an assembly devoted solely to the Genocide in Rwanda.

There are activities, video clips and images in these resources and you may wish to share some of these with your students to teach them about the Genocide in Rwanda.

You can find these resources here:

hmd.org.uk/lessonplanrwanda

hmd.org.uk/assemblyrwanda

Darfur

The next three slides show images of the Genocide in Darfur. Show these slides to your students as an introduction to the Genocide that occurred there.

The accompanying text:

Slide 21 & 22: Darfur is a region in Sudan, in north-east Africa. In 2003, a civil war began in the region between the farmers and the nomadic population, who were supported by the Sudanese Government. There was a systematic campaign to destroy black Darfuris by burning their villages.

Slide 23: This civil war has led to the deaths of between 200,000 and 400,000 civilians, although reporting varies greatly, as it is difficult for the international peacekeepers to keep accurate records. Up to 2.5 million people are still displaced in Darfur. They have been forced to flee their homes to makeshift refugee camps in Darfur or Chad run by international aid agencies.

Report on the Genocide

Explain to your students that this genocide has happened in their life time! Ask them if they have heard about it before? If not, why do they think that is the case? If they were going to tell people about the Genocide, how would they do so?

This is an opportunity to be creative: ask your students to write a newspaper article or to prepare a news report about the Genocide in Darfur. Do they think this would receive sufficient news coverage to draw the world's attention to it? Which newspapers or television channels would they send it to?

For this activity they should only use the information you have given them so far.

Mukesh Kapila's Story

Mukesh Kapila was Head of the United Nations in Sudan and he witnessed the start of the Genocide there. No one would listen to him, so he took his story to the BBC. ***Click on the photograph of Mukesh to play the video*** (slide 24).

Give your students the opportunity to amend their news articles. Why would they change them? Why does the extra information strengthen their reports? Encourage them to think about the benefit of having an eyewitness whom they can quote. Did having Mukesh's information help the news story when it broke?

Resources

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has produced an assembly devoted to commemorating the Genocide in Darfur. This is recommended for post-16 students only. You may wish to use it in this lesson and you can find it here:

hmd.org.uk/assemblypost16

You can also read Mukesh's full life story here: **hmd.org.uk/mukeshkapila**

Reflect

Wordle

It is possible that your students will be overwhelmed by all the information that you have given them this lesson (or over the course of several lessons), especially if you have examined more than one genocide. Allow your students time to reflect on the lesson. Ask them to write down a few words to sum up Holocaust Memorial Day to them. Collect these words and turn them into a 'Wordle'; a toy for generating 'word clouds' from text that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. Go to **wordle.net** to create a word cloud. You could do this in the class with all the students reading out their words, or you could collect their words and produce the Wordle for the next lesson.

We have made a Wordle using the stages of genocide, in slide 25. You can show this to your students, particularly if you discussed the stages of genocide (above), and it may inspire your own Wordle.

Alternative activity

Repeat the 'establish existing knowledge' activity to see if your students' perception of Holocaust Memorial Day has changed. Ask them why different words/ phrases have appeared on the new diagram that you create together. What has changed and why?

Take a Step

Explain that we have been learning about just some of the multitude of journeys that people were forced to undertake, in fear of what would be found at the end. What can your students do to **take a step** on their own journey to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day?

Options:

- Ask them what they would like to do!
- They could (under your supervision) light a candle.
- Perhaps they would like to create a poem/dance/map/song/piece of artwork. In which case please allow them time to do this.
- Whatever action they choose to take, they can share their action with everyone else who has **taken a step** for Holocaust Memorial Day through a special website: **journeys.hmd.org.uk**
- The logo for 'taking a step' is a luggage label. You could purchase luggage labels from a stationary shop, or use the last slide in the PowerPoint presentation to print a luggage tag for each student. Ask each of your students to write the step they will take on a luggage label. These can then be displayed in your classroom, as a reminder to everyone to take their step, or

can be made into a display for an assembly. If you choose this option, please take a photo of your display and send it to HMD; this can be the step you take! hmd.org.uk/letusknow and journeys.hmd.org.uk

Closing Stages

Leave time at the end of your lesson for your students to ask any questions, or to reflect on what they have learnt.

Ask them to think about three things they have learned in today's lesson.

Remind them that the purpose of Holocaust Memorial Day is to learn lessons from the past to create a safer, better future. By **taking a step**, however big or small, on their own journey, we will be able to create that future.

What step (or steps) are they going to take?

Below are suggestions as to where you can go next and what books to read if you'd like to know more about the Holocaust or any of the genocides covered in this lesson plan.

Where Next

- Please let us know about your classroom activities: hmd.org.uk/letusknow
- You may have already planned for this plan to work across two or more lessons. Certain activities will lend themselves to that particularly well, such as ending one lesson by collecting the student's words, and beginning the next lesson by presenting them with their own Wordle, and discussing it.
- However, if you were planning just one lesson but did not have time for all the activities above, you could devote some time in the next lesson(s) to these activities.
- If you are interested in finding out more for yourself, you may also wish to read through the life stories/ listen to the podcast/ watch the video featured in this lesson plan if you have been unable to do so,
- There are additional lesson plans and assemblies available on the Holocaust Memorial Day website which you might wish to explore.
- Encourage your students to take their next step. If they create something, perhaps they wish to share it with the rest of their school, by forming an exhibition or hosting an assembly.

Suggestions for further reading:

The Holocaust:

- A whole section of the HMD website is devoted to life stories. These include survivors of genocides, those who witnessed genocides, and those who have suffered prejudice, racism and hate crime. You can read these here: **hmd.org.uk/lifestories**
- *Kindertransport* by Diane Samuels (NHB Modern Plays: 2008). See also <http://www.dianesamuels.com/index.php/theatre>
- *Living with the Enemy: My Secret Life on the Run from the Nazis*, by Freddie Knoller (Metro Books, 2005)
- *Desperate Journey: Vienna-Paris-Auschwitz*, by Freddie Knoller (Metro Books, 2002)
- *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*, by Mark Jonathan Harris, Deborah Oppenheimer, David Cesarani (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2000)
- *The Holocaust*, by Martin Gilbert (HarperCollins; 1989)

Cambodia:

- *From Phnom Penh to Paradise*, by Var Hong Ashe (Hodder and Stoughton, 1988)
- *To the End of Hell. One Woman's Struggle to Survive Cambodia's Khmer Rouge*, by Denise Affonço (Reportage Press, 2007)
- *Voices from S-21: Terror and History in Pol Pot's Secret Prison*, by David Chandler (University of California Press, 2000)

Bosnia:

- *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, by Steven Galloway (Atlantic Books, 2009)
- *Zlata's Diary*, by Zlata Filipovic (Puffin, 1995)
- *Srebrenica Record of a War Crime*, by Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both (Penguin Books, 1997)

Rwanda:

- *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, by Gil Courtemanche (Canongate Books Ltd, 2004)
- *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families*, by Philip Gourevitch (Picador, 2000)
- *Baking Cakes in Kigali*, by Gaile Parkin (Atlantic Books, 2009)
- *Speak Rwanda*, by Julian R. Piere (Picador USA, 2000)

Darfur:

- *Against a Tide of Evil: How One Man Became the Whistleblower to the First Mass Murder of the Twenty-First Century*, by Mukesh Kapila and Damien Lewis (Mainstream Publishing, 2013)
- *Darfur: A New History of a Long War (African Arguments): A Short History of a Long War*, by Julie Flint and Alex de Waal (Zed Books, 2008)
- *The Translator: A Tribesman's Memoir of Darfur*, by Daoud Hari, (Penguin, 2008)
- *The Devil Came on Horseback. Bearing Witness to the Genocide in Darfur*, by Brian Steidle and Gretchen Steidle Wallace (PublicAffairs, 2008)
- *Tears of the Desert: A Memoir of Survival in Darfur*, by Halima Bashir with Damien Lewis (One World, 2008)

CLASSIFICATION

SYMBOLISATION

DEHUMANISATION

ORGANISATION

POLARISATION

PREPARATION

EXTERMINATION

DENIAL

Definitions:

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

This is a visual manifestation of hatred. Jews in Nazi occupied Europe were forced to wear yellow stars to show that they were different.

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

Genocides are always planned. Regimes of hatred often train those who are to carry out the destruction of a people.

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

Victims are identified based on their differences. At the beginning of the Cambodian genocide, the Khmer Rouge seperated out those who lived in cities and did not work in the fields. Jews in Nazi Europe were forced to live in ghettos.

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.

The perpetrators or later generations deny the existence of any crime.