

Lesson 4

Genocide in Darfur: Is the World Doing Enough?

Rationale

The purpose of this lesson is for students to learn about the genocide in Darfur (Sudan), and to explore the reasons why the world has not interceded when at the end of Holocaust the international community said “never again.” Referring to the Genocide Convention, students debate the obligations of the international community to intervene in Darfur, and discuss the resistance of world governments to respond. This lesson is designed to teach students that ordinary citizens can make a difference by taking action and speaking out on behalf of genocide victims, even as leaders of the world stand by. The final part of the lesson empowers students to take action against genocide by implementing various student-led projects and humanitarian campaigns to aid Darfur.

[NOTE: Given the tasks students will be asked to engage in throughout this lesson, it is preferable for students to have gone through Lessons 1–3 of this unit, prior to implementing Lesson 4. Given the time-sensitive nature of this lesson, it is advisable to consult sources on the most recent events occurring in Darfur. A list of internet sources is provided in the attached handout, [Darfur: Internet Links & Sources](#). Should this lesson become outdated, it may also be used as a model for exploring a case of genocide that may be occurring currently (check www.genocidewatch.com for current details).

This lesson does not provide a full cultural or historical overview of Darfur (Sudan). For further information, you may wish to refer students to the following sources: (1) [Historical Dictionary of the Sudan](#), Vol. 85 of *African Historical Dictionaries*, 3rd ed., Richard Lobban, Robert S. Kramer, and Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2002) and (2) [The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars](#) of *African Issues*, Douglas Hamilton Johnson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).]

Objectives

- Students will learn about the violence in Darfur (Sudan) through fact finding, research and analysis of primary sources.
- Students will develop a greater understanding of international law.
- Students will analyze forms of global intervention and reasons for responsiveness to acts of genocide.
- Students will create an action plan to implement a humanitarian project in their school and community to aid citizens of Darfur.

Age Range

Grades 10–12

Time

2 hours or 3 class periods

Requirements

Handouts and Resources:

- [Peter Biro: A Journalist's Diary](#) (one for each student)
- [Darfur: The Facts](#) (one for each student)
- [Darfur: Internet Links & Sources](#) (one for each student)

Key Words

Amburu
 Arab
 Bahai
 Cariari
 Chad
 Civilian
 Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Darfur
 Decimated
 Dehydration
 Destabilization
 Displacement
 Doctors Without Borders
 Enslavement
 Ethnic
 Genocide
 Humanitarian
 Inhabitant
 International Rescue Committee
 Janjaweed
 Justice Equality Movement
 Malnourished
 Massacre
 Militia
 Millet
 Mosque
 Muslim
 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
 Refugees
 Re-hydration

- [United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#) (one for each student)
- [The Genocide Convention Fact Sheet](#) (one copy for each student)
- [Survivors of Rwanda Genocide, Nazi Holocaust Find Common Ground](#) (one copy for each student)
- [Darfur: Student Action](#) (one copy for each student)

Other Material:

- chart paper, markers, masking tape, journals (one for each student)

Key Words (cont.)

Sorghum
Sudan
Sudanese Army
Sudan Liberation Army
Suppress
Sustenance
UNICEF
USAID

Advanced Preparation

- Reproduce handouts as directed above.
- Write the following headings on four sheets of chart paper, one heading per paper, and set them aside: “Displacement”, “Devastation & Destruction”, “Delivery of Aide”, “Latest Developments” and “Questions we still have.” (See Part I #3.)
- Write each of the three quotes in Part II #5 on separate sheets of chart paper.

Techniques and Skills

analyzing maps, analyzing primary documents, brainstorming, building an action plan, connecting past to present, consensus building, cooperative group work, critical thinking, debate, forming opinions, large and small group discussion, media literacy, reading skills, research skills, social action skills, using the Internet, writing skills

Procedures

Part I (40 minutes)

1. Inform students that they will be working in pairs for the first part of this lesson. Once students have been paired, distribute the [Peter Biro: a Journalist Diary](#) handout, one to each student.
2. In pairs, ask students to read through the diary, and consider the following questions:
 - What is the time and place of Peter Biro’s diary?
 - Why did Peter Biro submit his diary excerpts from Chad’s northeastern border?
 - Do we know from reading Peter Biro’s diary why people left their homeland of Darfur?
 - What are some of the ways that the refugees from Darfur were targeted and attacked in their home towns?
 - What are some of the devastating effects experienced by the refugees as a result of the violence in Darfur?
 - Peter Biro writes extensively about the death of the livestock. Why is this particularly devastating for the Sudanese refugees?
 - What are the some of the forms of humanitarian aide mentioned in Peter Biro’s diary?
 - The last entry in Peter Biro’s diary is dated May 16, 2004, what is the situation in Darfur today? (Note: Assure students that they will have an opportunity to learn more about the situation in Darfur, should they not offer responses to this question.)
3. Post five separate pieces of chart paper with the following headers: “Displacement”, “Devastation & Destruction”, “Delivery of Aide”, “Latest Developments” and “Questions we still have.”
4. Hold a class discussion on the questions posed above, chart their responses or questions under the corresponding categories (i.e., responses about time, place, or ways that the Sudanese refugees were displaced would be charted under “Displacement”; responses about the devastating effects experienced by the refugees would be charted under “Devastation & Destruction”; questions not answered in the diary would be charted under “Questions we still have?”; and so forth).
5. Distribute a copy of the [Darfur: The Facts](#) handout to each student. In their same pairs, ask students to review the fact sheet and take note of any additional information not currently listed on the posted chart paper.
6. Remind students that events in Darfur develop with every passing day; therefore it is important to remember that the fact sheet on Darfur is a living document. Students should conduct further research using the various sources listed on the

[Darfur: Internet Links & Sources](#) handout to ensure they have the most recent information about the conflict in Darfur, and to answer any of the questions listed on the flipchart, "Questions we still have?"

7. Once students have had time to digest all of the facts on Darfur, ask students if they found additional information that should be added to the posted chart paper. Chart their responses on the corresponding chart paper.

Part II (40 minutes)

1. For the second part of the lesson, divide students into groups of 4–5.
2. Distribute copies of the [United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#) and [The Genocide Convention Fact Sheet](#) to each student.
3. In their groups, ask students to discuss the following questions using the Genocide Convention as a reference:
 - Based on the evidence, should the situation in Darfur be legally termed “genocide” by the United Nations and the world community?
 - Why or why not?
 - Has Sudan ratified the Genocide Convention, and what does this mean in terms of its legal commitments?
4. Once each group has had an opportunity to discuss the questions, ask each group to appoint a reporter to present the group’s argument on each of the questions above. Each group reporter should present their group’s position to the class.
5. Once each group has had an opportunity to present, post the following three quotes prepared in advance and ask three volunteers (one per quote) to read aloud to the class:

Quote 1: *U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell determined Thursday that the violence in Sudan's Darfur region, which has killed some 50,000 people and displaced more than 1 million, constitutes genocide. “We concluded that genocide has been committed in Darfur and that the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed (Arab militia) bear responsibility—and genocide may still be occurring,” Powell said in prepared remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.*

—Krishnadev Calamur, United Press International, Washington, DC, Sep. 9, 2004

Quote 2: *A U.N. commission investigating atrocities in Sudan has concluded that the government did not pursue a policy of genocide in the Darfur region but that Khartoum and government-sponsored Arab militias known as the Janjaweed engaged in “widespread and systematic” abuse that may constitute crimes against humanity.*

—Colum Lynch, *The Washington Post* Staff Writer, “U.N. Panel Finds No Genocide in Darfur but Urges Tribunals,” February 1, 2005

Quote 3: *...Call it civil war, call it ethnic cleansing, call it genocide, call it “none of the above.” The reality is the same. There are people in Darfur who desperately need the help of the international community.*

—Former U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Sept. 9, 2004 (quoted by CBS News Online, “The Genocide Convention,” September 20, 2004)

6. Ask students the following questions in reaction to these quotes:
 - a. Is it important that the United Nations did not find that the violence in Darfur constituted “genocide” [U.N. International of Inquiry on Darfur]? Why or why not?
 - b. Did the U.N.’s determination affect whether other countries responded or intervened in Darfur?
 - c. Considering the various reasons for global unresponsiveness discussed in Lesson 3, “Genocide and the Global Response”: Why would countries be resistant to intervening when mass atrocities have occurred in Darfur?
 - d. What are the different ways the world could intervene or respond in the case of genocide in Darfur?
 - e. Is not taking action a form of action?

7. **Journal assignment (can be assigned as homework):** Distribute a copy of [Survivors of Rwanda Genocide, Nazi Holocaust Find Common Ground](#) to each student. Ask students to read the article and write in their journals a 5–8 paragraph response to the following questions:

Ms. Murekatete says in the article, “The United Nations and other world leaders always say, ‘never again, never again,’ but so far it has continued to happen and it is up to each and every one of us to make sure that that phrase ‘never again’ is not just an empty phrase but a reality...”

- a. What are some ways that Mr. Gewirtzman suggests that each and every one of us can make sure that the phrase ‘never again’ is not just an empty phrase?
- b. Are there other ways that are not already mentioned by Mr. Gewirtzman?

Part III (40 minutes)

1. Brainstorm the following questions with students:
 - Does each and every one of us have a responsibility to respond to the situation in Darfur?
 - What are some ways we could respond?
 - Do you know of someone involved in a student project, or other forms of action to aid the victims in Darfur? If so, what action have they taken?
2. Inform students that they are going to have an opportunity to take action to aid Darfur. Distribute the [Darfur: Student Action](#) handout to each student.
3. Divide students into groups of 4–5. Ask for each group to review the various forms of action taken by students across the world, and to add any other ideas for ways to take action on Darfur in their school and/or community.
4. Inform each group that they should choose one project from the list to implement in their school and/or community. Ask each group to come to a consensus on which project they would like to implement.
5. Inform students that once their group has chosen their project, they will need to build an action plan that reflects
 - the specific goal of their group project to aid Darfur,
 - specific action steps they will take to achieve their project goal, and
 - a timeline that reflects when and where they will complete the action steps they have outlined.
6. Teachers should review the action plan of each group to ensure that each of the three questions listed above have been completed satisfactorily. Once each group’s action plan has been approved by the teacher, students may begin implementation of their project or campaign.
7. After students have had time to successfully complete their projects, ask each student to write a reflective essay on
 - a. the successes of their project or campaign,
 - b. challenges that may have arisen, and
 - c. their individual impression of the impact of their group project or campaign on their school and/or community.
8. Encourage students to continue their aid for Darfur by implementing an additional project listed on the [Darfur: Student Action](#) handout. For each additional project that students pursue, they should repeat Steps 5–7 in this part of the lesson to ensure students meet and reflect on their project goals.

Extension Activities

- Have students discuss their positions on different forms of justice for human rights abusers and perpetrators of genocide (Nuremberg trials, International Criminal Court, truth & reconciliation, international tribunals, and so forth), and debate which form of justice should be implemented for perpetrators of genocide in Darfur, Sudan.
- Have students read novels that offer first-hand accounts about the conflict in Darfur, such as [Emma's War](#) (Author: Deborah Scroggins, ISBN: 0375703772), [God Grew Tired of Us: A Memoir](#) (Authors: John Bul Dau and Michael S. Sweeney,

ISBN: 978-1426202124), [War Child: A Soldier's Story](#) (Author: Emmanuel Jal, ISBN: 978-0312602970) or [Six Months in Sudan](#) (Author: Dr. James Maskalyk, ISBN: 978-0385526517).

Peter Biro: A Journalist's Diary



May 8–16, 2004 Violent conflict has been raging in Sudan's Darfur region. Peter Biro, a 37-year-old Swede who works for the International Rescue Committee, was sent to Chad's northeastern border with Sudan to join the humanitarian organization's emergency response efforts to aid thousands of Sudanese refugees seeking safety.

Submitted from BAHAI, Chad – “More than 20,000 refugees have fled to Bahai and the nearby village of Cariari, a stone's-throw from the border with Sudan, and my colleagues estimate that 200 to 300 more are arriving every week. The influx has tripled the population of this remote place, stretching the resources of the already impoverished communities....

“I wake in the morning to a gust of wind, which brings with it the stench of hundreds if not thousands of decomposing donkeys, camels and goats. The putrid smell is everywhere, I soon learned; when the wind blows, it only gets worse.

“The refugees, most of them from families that have long been animal herders, all came here with their livestock. But now the animals are dying from hunger, thirst and exhaustion at an alarming rate. I spend the coming days with our carcass disposal team. Their rather unpleasant job is to prevent the outbreak of disease by collecting as many dead animals as possible, transporting them to a place in the desert away from any settlements and torching them...

“So at 7 a.m., with the merciless desert sun already beating down on us, we bring the creatures to a designated spot, and with the flick of a match, hundreds of dead animals, once the livelihood, sustenance and means of transportation for their former owners, explode in a sea of flames. Thankfully, we are wearing masks...

“Forty percent of the children coming to the International Rescue Committee's clinics are malnourished and there has been an alarming increase in diarrhea and dysentery. It's May 12 and Camilo [Dr. Camilo Valderrama] is attending to Hadiya Beshir Issa, 25, and her 15-month-old daughter Munira at an IRC [International Rescue Committee] health facility in Bahai. They are recent arrivals in a seemingly endless stream of refugees fleeing brutal attacks in Darfur, Sudan.

“Munira hardly has the strength to open her eyes and her skin is shriveled from dehydration. Camilo says the tiny girl is severely malnourished and he instructs Hadiya how to administer oral re-hydration solution and antibiotics.

“Hadiya is from a village near Kutum in northern Darfur, where the IRC is also providing humanitarian aid. She told me that a militia attacked her village last August and that her family fled to the town of Orshi, on the way to Chad.

“But that town was ransacked by gunmen last month and in the chaos, Hadiya became separated from her husband and the rest of her family. She told me that she has no idea if they are still alive. After an eight-day trek, she crossed into Chad with her baby, arriving in Bahai with 17 other families.

“As Hadiya recounted her story, Camilo continued to treat Munira. But in the next couple of hours, the little girl's condition rapidly deteriorated. We quickly took her to the hospital in Tine, two hours away, but doctors there couldn't even find the child's veins in order to administer intravenous liquid. She was beyond help...

“On Sunday, May 16, I drive to Cariari, an hour north of Bahai by car, where the IRC is working to dig wells and revive existing ones, amid severe shortages of clean water. Cariari, in spite of its forbidding landscape, is currently home to thousands of refugees who have to walk six hours in either direction to find drinking water...

“In the middle of this dry wasteland, I find my colleague Abdel Majid and his team of well-diggers...

“Sure enough, it took five men two days to dig one cubic meter (this is no easy task in sand). They had struck water just as I had arrived. It was cause for celebration...

“They invite me to share a meal under a makeshift shelter. On a charcoal bed in the sand the men have cooked a porridge made up of sorghum, a type of millet, and a thick sauce from tomato powder and nut oil. It’s surprisingly tasty...

“Dots of light fill the plain as thousands of refugees start fires for the night. I strike up a conversation with a group of people nearby who are seated around a flickering fire. They are part of a community of 300 people that crossed into Chad the previous day. They had come from the Sudanese village of Amburu, some 150 kilometres inside Darfur. It was attacked two weeks earlier, they said, by the government-backed Janjaweed militia.

“One man, who said his name was Muhammed Haroun, said heavily armed men riding camels and horses rode into the village and began shooting in all directions at the well. He said the Janjaweed killed villagers execution-style and raped several women. They all said their livestock was stolen.

“Next to him sat Hadiya Adem. She is in her forties and has a gunshot wound on her right foot, wrapped in dirty gauze. Hadiya told me that she and a girl from the village went to the well at night to get some water a few days before the big attack and was startled and frightened when they were confronted there by men from the Sudanese Army. The men seized the girl and shot Hadiya in the foot when she tried to stop them...And in spite of the thousands of people surrounding us, huddled around fires to keep warm in the chilly night air, you could have heard a needle drop.”



Excerpted and reprinted with permission from Peter Biro, “[Painful cost of Sudan relief effort](#),” CNN.com, July 22, 2004.

Darfur: The Facts

The following information covers the events in Darfur through February 2020. Students should conduct further research using the [Darfur: Internet Links & Sources](#) handout in order to obtain the most current information concerning the situation in Darfur.

Displacement

Since 2003, ethnic populations of Darfur (Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa), have been consistently attacked by Arab militias (*Janjaweed*), enlisted by the Arab-ruled Sudanese government to burn villages and homes, massacre civilians and children, torture inhabitants and rape both women and girls in an effort to “ethnically cleanse” Sudan of its ethnic population. Both the *Janjaweed* and the ethnic groups targeted are African Muslim, but the Arab militias have destroyed mosques and killed Muslim leaders in order to intimidate and destroy all aspects of the lives of ethnic peoples in Darfur.¹

The conflict between the ethnic and Arab groups dates back to the 1950s, but violence escalated in February 2003 when two ethnic rebel groups (the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice Equality Movement) sought to equalize power and economic access for ethnic people in Sudan—the largest country in Africa with a total population, at the time, of approximately 39 million, of which 52% are ethnic, and 39% are Arab. In an effort to suppress the actions of these two rebel groups, the Sudanese government waged a campaign of terror and violence specifically targeting civilian communities in the region of Darfur, leaving thousands murdered, and village after village decimated.²

Since February 2003, some 300,000 people are estimated to have died in Darfur, and approximately 2.7 million people have been displaced, including some 450,000 persons in 2014 and another 100,000 in January 2015 alone.³

Devastation & Destruction

Since 2003, thousands of civilians in the Darfur region have been killed or “disappeared” (kidnapped or stolen), millions have fled to refugee and internally displaced persons camps, land and villages have been ruined, and all sources of supplies, food and water have been pillaged or destroyed. Women and girls are highly at risk and have been systematically raped, attacked, beheaded or enslaved by the *Janjaweed* patrols (government militias).⁴

Most of the refugees and displaced persons from Darfur have lost whatever livestock or belongings they may have had before the government air strikes and the mass looting of the government-backed *Janjaweed*. Many have not survived the hundreds of miles it takes to reach a refugee or displaced persons camp.⁵

The Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum declared a “genocide emergency” in Sudan, indicating their warning was based on the following government actions⁶:

- A divide-to-destroy strategy of pitting ethnic groups against each other, with enormous loss of civilian life.
- The use of mass starvation as a weapon of destruction.
- Toleration of the enslavement of women and children by government-allied militias.
- The incessant bombing of hospitals, clinics, schools and other civilian and humanitarian targets.
- Disruption and destabilization of the communities of those who flee the war zones to other parts of Sudan.
- Widespread persecution on account of race, ethnicity and religion.

Delivery of Aide

Massive aide efforts began in 2004 by agencies such as UNICEF, Doctors Without Borders and USAID to provide food, water and medical supplies to the scattered camps located in Darfur and neighboring Chad. Their efforts succeeded in preventing massive deaths in 2005.⁷ By late 2005, humanitarian agencies were unable to access many affected areas due to violence and increasing obstruction by Sudanese government policies and practices. The government used these tactics to wage a starvation campaign. They restricted aid only to the areas they controlled, refusing aid to civilians in rebel-held areas.⁸ There is still severe malnutrition, poor sanitation, poor healthcare and a lack of shelter in the camps. In addition, the Sudanese government limited media and national press reports on the situation in Darfur to block information to the outside world community.⁹

Children in particular fall prey to high rates of famine and disease in the camps. In the wake of the war, a resurgence of diseases like polio, which was completely eradicated in Sudan in 2001, infected more than 10,000 Sudanese according to health professional estimates.¹⁰

As stated by representatives of USAID, “USAID has put over one billion dollars in humanitarian assistance into Sudan since 1989...On May 3, 2001, President Bush appointed USAID Administrator, Andrew Natsios, as the U.S. Special Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan. His main agenda has been greater humanitarian access for all of Sudan. In September, former Senator Danforth was appointed the U.S. Special Envoy for Peace to Sudan. In the initial phase of U.S. engagement under the Special Envoy, the humanitarian and political agendas have intertwined. The success of these efforts led to negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement on a comprehensive framework agreement for peace. It has also added to increased stability with international monitoring.”¹¹

Latest Developments

On September 9, 2004, United States Secretary of State Colin Powell declared the atrocities in Darfur a “genocide.” However, the international community had not applied maximum pressure on the Sudanese government to end acts of violence against civilian populations in Darfur.

A comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) was signed on January 9, 2005 in Nairobi between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) to end the North/South conflict, one of the world’s bloodiest. The agreement included a permanent cease fire, yet neither side agreed to disband their militias. Sudan President Omar Hassan al-Bashir was accused of organizing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. He emphatically denied the Sudanese government had any involvement in the genocide or connection to the *Janjaweed*.¹²

In 2009, President al-Bashir was charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur between 2003 and 2009. These crimes included acts of murder, extermination, torture, rape and more. A warrant for al-Bashir’s arrest was made by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on March 4, 2009.¹³ Against opposition and despite the warrants, President al-Bashir won two consecutive elections in 2010 and 2015. In the meantime, on July 9, 2011, South Sudan gained its independence following a January referendum in which 98.8% of voters chose to separate from Sudan.¹⁴ Africa’s largest country was now split in two.

Conflict continued in Darfur leading to a high number of casualties and many more persons being displaced from their homes. Political unrest increased. In response to the announcement of price hikes for fuel and bread, protests began in December 2018 nationwide. After months of protest, President al-Bashir was forced from office in April 2019, ending his 30-year reign over Sudan. A Sovereignty Council, a joint civilian-military-executive body, holds power as of November 2019.¹⁵

On December 14, 2019, Mr. al-Bashir was sentenced to two years in detention for corruption, possessing foreign currency and receiving illegal gifts. He was also charged in relation to the deaths of protesters during the demonstrations that led up to him being ousted. It is yet to be seen if Mr. al-Bashir will be extradited on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur.¹⁶

While fighting has lessened in Darfur, more than one million remain displaced and 3.1 million remain in need of humanitarian aid.¹⁷

Questions we still have?

Darfur: Internet Links & Sources

Use the following internet links to research the most recent events and news occurring in Darfur. For some resources, you may need to search the term “Darfur.”

Enough Project	https://enoughproject.org
The Guardian	www.theguardian.com
Human Rights Watch	www.hrw.org
International Crisis Group	www.crisisgroup.org
Jewish World Watch	www.jww.org
The New York Times	www.nytimes.com
Security Council Report	www.securitycouncilreport.org
UN News	https://news.un.org/en
United to End Genocide	http://endgenocide.org
USA Today	www.usatoday.com
USAID	www.usaid.gov

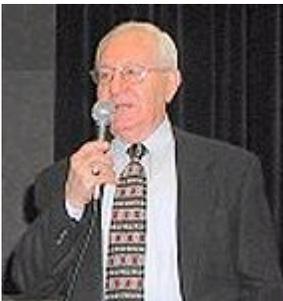
Survivors of Rwanda Genocide, Nazi Holocaust Find Common Ground

By Jenny Falcon, February 18, 2004



Their stories of survival are terrifying. But a young survivor of the 1994 Rwanda genocide and a Nazi Holocaust survivor are determined to tell youngsters about their painful past in the hopes of preventing such atrocities from happening again. In the process, the two have forged an unlikely friendship based on a bond of suffering.

For years, David Gewirtzman has talked to local students and community groups about his experience as a Jew in Nazi-occupied Poland.



A teenager at the time, Mr. Gewirtzman and his family barely escaped death. They survived after his father paid a Polish farmer to hide eight Jews in a small, filthy hole under a pigsty. They huddled there for close to three years.

"We came out of what we called the grave into one large cemetery," recalled Mr. Gewirtzman. "A cemetery in which six million Jews and five million non-Jews were massacred and buried all over Europe. In the town, my town, out of the 8,000 Jewish people who lived in the ghetto, 16 came back alive."

Mr. Gewirtzman, 75, often receives letters from students he addresses. But two years ago, the retired New York pharmacist received one that touched him deeply. It was from then-16-year-old

Jacqueline Murekatete, who had survived the 1994 massacres of minority Tutsis in Rwanda by the majority Hutus. She lost her parents, six siblings and scores of relatives.

Ms. Murekatete wrote: "Maybe I can make a difference in this world, if I try. And maybe I can do my part to make sure that no other human being goes through the same experience I did." Ms. Murekatete thanked Mr. Gewirtzman for sharing his story.

"I saw so many similarities, how he was going to school one day - a child, like myself - then he was dehumanized, called an enemy of the country, having to see people killed and losing relatives," she said. "I felt a bond and I felt that he understood me and that is how the friendship started."

Mr. Gewirtzman wrote back to Ms. Murekatete and they soon began working together.

They approach an auditorium of teenagers who are chewing gum and chatting happily with their friends. But it does not take long for the students to listen quietly.

"We would see people with torches and machetes and they would come towards the county [village] and every night our neighbors, our former Hutu neighbors, started following us and every night they came and killed people," she told the youngsters.

Ms. Murekatete describes her nightmare in detail. She was nine years old and was staying with her grandmother when machete- and gun-wielding Hutu mobs arrived at her parents' village. Ms. Murekatete eventually found refuge in an orphanage, but her grandmother was murdered.

After the killings, which left an estimated 800,000 people dead in 100 days, Ms. Murekatete learned that nearly all of her relatives had been butchered to death and were thrown in the river. "I did not understand, being nine years old," she said, "why they had died, why hundreds of thousands of Tutsis had been killed for no reason other than the fact that they were Tutsis."

She asked how the international community allows genocides to continue, from Cambodia to Rwanda, despite the post-Holocaust pledge to prevent any more mass killings?

"The United Nations and other world leaders always say, 'never again, never again,' but so far it has continued to happen and it is up to each and every one of us to make sure that that phrase 'never again' is not just an empty phrase but a reality," said Ms. Murekatete.

Mr. Gewirtzman says selfish motives compel him to keep speaking - he wants to make the world a better place for his six grandchildren. He says if he can influence one person to stick up for someone in need of help, then he has succeeded.

"When you see a bully in the corridor of your school beating up on somebody and that somebody is not a friend of yours, is not a relative of yours, instead of going away and saying, 'I do not want to get mixed up with that, you do something about it' because if you do not, neither your children nor my children will ever be safe," said Mr. Gewirtzman.



VOA photo | J. Falcon

Students giving David Gewirtzman and Jacqueline Murekatete a standing ovation.

The students, some of them stunned and teary-eyed, ask the survivors questions about their escapes. "Before the genocide," asks one, "did you have friends of other religions or ethnic groups and if so how did the genocide impact those relationships?"

While most of the students go on to their next class, several stay behind to talk to Jacqueline Murekatete.

Another student says, "It's upsetting that the world has let something like this occur and it helps you to think about what you can do about it."

During her talk, Ms. Murekatete begins to cry when describing the day she found out that her parents had been murdered.

David Gewirtzman says from the beginning, the two survivors understood each others' tears. "It did not matter whether she was from Africa, Asia, Europe, Jewish, Christian, it did not matter," he said. "All of a sudden, there was a blood bond between us. It was our pain that united us. I felt, my God, is that what it takes in order for her and me to unite. Can we not do it without going through the horror that we went through? She really is my sister. As close as other people are to me, as close as neighbors and friends are, they do not understand me the way she does."

Ms. Murekatete was adopted by an uncle in the United States, but Mr. Gewirtzman and his wife have taken on a role of grandparents. They invite her to their home for dinner and call to see how she is doing in school. Now a college student in New York, Ms. Murekatete is writing a book about her experience.



VOA photo | J. Falcon

David Gewirtzman, his wife, Lillian at a restaurant.

Reprinted from Voices of America, www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2004-02-18-26-survivors-67488242/386604.html.

Darfur: Student Action

The following are suggested forms of action taken by students across the world in an effort to aid the victims of genocide in Darfur.

- ➔ **Organize a table or host an event to bring awareness of coalitions.** The Save Darfur Coalition was an alliance of over 100 faith-based, humanitarian and human rights organizations whose mission was to raise public awareness and to mobilize an effective unified response to the atrocities that threaten the lives of two million people in the Darfur region. Building upon the legacy of this coalition is United to End Genocide. Go to <http://endgenocide.org/take-action/> for information on how you can show a film, hold an event, talk to policymakers or get the media to raise awareness about the crisis and violence in Darfur.
- ➔ **Put together a photo exhibit** featuring pictures from Darfur. Photos should include captions, which is often very helpful for educating others.
- ➔ **Invite humanitarian experts** who are working in Sudan to present at community centers, places of worship or civic institutions.
- ➔ **Meet with members of Congress** as a delegation to discuss the urgency needed for the US to help stop the violence in Darfur. Meet in congressional offices in Washington, D.C., or at local district offices.
- ➔ **Advertise in your school or community newspaper or write an Op Ed piece** to raise awareness about Darfur in your school and community.
- ➔ **Push your local community council to pass a proclamation** condemning the atrocities in Darfur and calling upon the US and UN to take further effective actions.
- ➔ **Write letters** to the U.S. President, your Congressional Representatives and your Senators to take action on Darfur.

Sample Letter to President:

President [Name of President]

*The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500*

Dear President [Last Name of President]:

I am deeply concerned about the tragic events in Darfur. We have watched with growing anxiety and dismay as our government failed to respond adequately to what was described as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Then, after the Congress, the Senate and the President identified these atrocities as genocide, we failed to stop them.

- *I call on you with great urgency to take whatever measures are necessary to stop the violence. I call on you to use our tremendous power and moral authority to create safety for the innocent men, women, and children, and to provide:*
- *Security – an immediate end by the Sudanese government of to the violence and the manipulative practices by which it is affecting the genocide*
- *Accountability – holding the Sudanese government officials and proxy forces responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity accountable for their crimes.*
- *Humanitarian Relief – sufficient aid to meet the basic needs of refugees and the displaced;*
- *Safe Return – establishment of conditions that allow the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of individuals to their homes and villages.*

You lead the most powerful nation in history. Your constituents want you to end the genocide and create the conditions for peace in Darfur.

Please take action today, and tomorrow, and the tomorrow after that, if necessary, to meet our shared moral obligation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[City, State Zip]