

## Genocide - the Global Concern

In recent times, ethnic minorities and political opponents have faced discriminations such as violations of their human rights, imprisonment or even death.

**Genocide: the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic group or nation**

### The Balkan Region

**Yugoslavia** was a country formed in 1918 when Serbia joined former regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When communism in Europe collapsed in 1991 the region broke out into bitter fighting.



**The main religious groups were:**

**Serbs: Orthodox Christians, Croats: Roman Catholics, Bosnians: Muslims**

The conflict began when Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence. Serbia attacked Croatia. Fighting then broke out between Muslim and Christian Serbs in Bosnia. Bosnian Serbs then began to ethnic cleanse Muslim civilians in Serbia. The massacres stopped when the United States and NATO countries sent in troops. Bosnia was divided into two regions, a Muslim and a Serb Republic.

In 2001, the President of Yugoslavia and Serbia, **Slobodan Milošević** was charged with crimes against humanity at the **International Criminal Tribunal**.

## Africa

### Rwanda and Burundi

Located in Central Africa, both countries have a **Hutu majority** and a **Tutsi minority**. In 1972 fighting broke out between the two groups. In 1994 Rwanda's Hutu President was killed when an explosion blew up his private airplane. The government media blamed the Tutsi people and demanded revenge. The United Nations estimated that close to 850,000 people, including half of the Tutsi population were killed in the fighting. The killing ended when Tutsi dominated forces gained control of the Rwandan government. The **International Criminal Tribunal** convicted two Hutu radio broadcasters and a newspaper editor for inciting the massacres.

### Somalia

In the 1990's the nation of Somalia suffered from a severe drought and famine. Fighting among local warlords prevented the United Nations relief convoys from reaching the millions of starving Somalians. In 1992 the United States and other nations sent troops to the region to restore order and ensure the supplies were delivered.

### Darfur

The Darfur region of Sudan is a region that often suffers from droughts. In 2003, local disputes for power and land saw the emergence of a government-backed militia called the **Janjaweed**. They were mostly Arab tribesmen who began to commit crimes against other ethnic groups. The Janjaweed burned villages, forced starvation, looted, stole possessions and polluted drinking waters. It is believed that over 300,000 people died and a further 2.7 million people were displaced.

In 2007 the United Nations declared the acts of the Janjaweed as genocide. The United Nations created an African Union army of 26,000 to be sent to Darfur to stop the killings. However, only 9,000 poorly equipped soldiers have been assigned to the region and the massacres still continue.



## Latin America

In recent years, many Latin American countries have violated the human rights of their people. They continue to imprison, torture, and execute political opponents.

Some of the regions are:

**Cuba:** under the rule of Fidel Castro

**Chile:** the military government led by Augusto Pinochet (1973 to 1990)

**El Salvador:** “Death Squads” (1990 to 1992)

**Argentina:** Military dictatorships ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983. When military rule ended in 1984, some 20,000 people had “disappeared” [desaparacidos]. An organization was formed called Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo consisting of mothers and relatives who have demanded information about their lost family members and the need for social reforms.

