

# Physical and Cultural Genocide of Various Indigenous Peoples

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## Introduction

The indigenous peoples in the world today have been described as “victims of progress” (Bodley, 1990) and who as people have had to face “colonization, genocide, and a constant struggle for cultural and physical survival” (Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, 1987, p. xi). Indigenous peoples are small-scale societies that frequently have been dealt with harshly by the governments and citizens in the states in which they live. Some see them as being particularly vulnerable to genocidal acts because of their small group sizes, cultural distinctiveness, occupation of remote areas, and relative technological and organizational simplicity (Kuper, 1985, p. 301; Burger, 1987, p. 38; and, Amnesty International, 1992a, pp. 61–62).

Sometimes called aboriginals, native peoples, tribal peoples, Fourth World peoples, or “first nations,” these populations have suffered from mistreatment, discrimination, and lack of equal opportunity in employment for centuries. This was especially true from the time of colonial expansion into Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the New World (International Labour Office, 1953; Wolf, 1982). As Burger (1987) notes, “When the indigenous population did not encounter direct genocide,

they faced instead enslavement, forced labor, and menial work" (p. 38). Over the past 500 years literally millions of indigenous peoples have had to cope with destruction of their lifeways and habitats, disease, dispossession, and exploitation (Bodley, 1990).

Substantial numbers of indigenous peoples have been the victims of gross violations of human rights. These violations have ranged from genocide to large-scale massacres of entire groups and from extrajudicial executions of individuals and torture to intentional starvation. According to one non-government organization concerned with indigenous rights, a conservative estimate of the annual deaths of indigenous peoples by violent means is around 30,000 (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1988, p. 1). In many cases worldwide, these deaths are attributable directly to state actions and to the unwillingness of non-indigenous agencies and individuals to assess the impacts of their policies on indigenous societies. A critical problem is that although international human rights standards pertaining to indigenous peoples exist, these standards frequently are ignored.

Several major factors have been responsible for the threats to the lives and well-being of indigenous peoples in the twentieth century. The first is competition for resources, the second is that a number of indigenous groups have sought self-determination in the face of efforts on the part of governments to assimilate them, and the third is the opposition on the part of some indigenous groups to the plans and policies of political elites and development agencies. Genocides of indigenous peoples occur, as Kuper (1985) notes, "in the process of struggles by ethnic or racial or religious groups for power or secession, greater autonomy, or more equality" (p. 155). Many indigenous groups have suffered from the depredations of governments, private companies, and individuals bent on taking their land and resources forcibly or through quasilegal means such as treaties and agreements (DeLoria, 1969, 1985; World Bank, 1982; Burger, 1987, 1990; Bodley, 1990; Durning, 1992, pp. 21–23; Amnesty International, 1992a, pp. 34–41).

Indigenous populations frequently have been denied the right to practice their own religions and customs and to speak their own languages by nation-states, a process described as



"cultural genocide" or "ethnocide" (Kuper, 1981, pp. 31, 41; Burger, 1987, p. 31; Heinz, 1988, p. 75; Bodley, 1990, p. 40; and, Chalk and Jonnasohn, 1990, pp. 9, 23). For purposes of this chapter, ethnocide will be distinguished from genocide as it refers to the destruction of cultures rather than people *per se*. Ethnocide ultimately may have a significant impact on the well-being of indigenous societies since it sometimes results in people becoming so dispirited as to lack the desire to survive.

This essay centers on issues relating to the physical and cultural genocide of various indigenous peoples. We deal first with the question of the characteristics of indigenous peoples. Next, we focus on the issue of the definition of genocide as it relates to indigenous populations, and we examine the various typologies that have been presented which incorporate indigenous peoples as victim groups. We follow with a discussion of the contexts in which genocides of indigenous groups occur, and we conclude with some recommendations for ways in which to protect indigenous peoples from the horrors of genocide.

## Who Are Indigenous Peoples?

No single agreed-upon definition of the term "indigenous peoples" exists. According to the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues (1987), four elements are included in the definition: (1) pre-existence, (2) non-dominance, (3) cultural difference, and (4) self-identification as indigenous (p. 6). The term "indigenous peoples" is usually used in reference to those individuals and groups who are descendants of the original populations residing in a country. In the majority of cases they are ethnic minorities, and in general they do not control the governments of the countries where they live. The term "indigenous" sometimes applies to non-European groups residing in regions that were colonized by Europeans.

There are different approaches among analysts to the issue of defining indigenous peoples. The International Labour Office (1953) uses the phrase "tribal and indigenous peoples" (pp. 3-5), while the World Bank and the United Nations prefer

"indigenous peoples" (Swepston, 1989, p. 260; Martinez Cobo, 1987; World Bank, 1991). As The World Bank's Operational Directive on Indigenous Peoples (1991) notes, no single definition is appropriate to cover the diversity present in these populations (p. 1).

Indigenous peoples generally possess ethnic, economic, religious, or linguistic characteristics that are different from the dominant groups in the societies where they exist. In many cases, they tend to have a strong sense of cultural identity and social solidarity which many group members attempt to maintain. There are instances, of course, in which indigenous peoples try to hide their identity in order to avoid poor treatment or racial prejudice. Most indigenous peoples prefer to reserve for themselves the right to determine who are and are not members of their groups.

Forty percent of the world's countries (72 of 184) contain peoples defined as indigenous. As shown in Table 1, there are over 350,000,000 indigenous people representing some 5,250 nations. Together, these populations comprise about 6.4 percent of the world's total population. Some of these groups are found in a number of different states. The 95,000 Bushmen, for example, are found in six countries of southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), while the Kurds of the Middle East reside in five countries (Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Iran, and the former Soviet Union). Inuit are found in the United States, Canada, Greenland, and the former Soviet north. Indigenous peoples represent the majorities in several states, as is the case in Papua, New Guinea (87 percent); Bolivia (77 percent); and Guatemala (55 percent).

Table 1. Estimated Numbers of the World's Indigenous Peoples

Region	Number of Groups	Overall Population
North America	250	3,500,000
Indians (Canada)		1,500,000 (633 bands)
Indians (United States)		2,000,000 (515 tribes)
Latin America and the Caribbean	800	40,000,000
Ache (Paraguay)	400	
Mapuche (Chile)		600,000
Miskito (Nicaragua)		75,000
Yanomami (Brazil, Venezuela)		15,000
Former Soviet Union	135	40,000,000
Saami (Russia)		2,000
China and Japan	56	67,000,000
Ainu (Hokkaido, Japan)		26,000
Shui (Guizhou, China)		280,000
The Pacific	750	2,000,000
Papuaans (New Guinea)		1,300,000
South Asia	700	70,000,000
Adivasis (India)		63,000,000
Tribals (Bangladesh)		1,200,000
Southeast Asia	500	30,000,000
Orang Asli (Malaysia)		71,000
Penan (Borneo)		20,000
Thailand Hill Tribes		484,000
Australia and New Zealand	100	550,000
Aboriginals		300,000
Maaori (New Zealand)		250,000
Africa	2,000	50,000,000
Batwa (Pygmies)		200,000 (7 countries, central)
Bushmen (San)		95,000 (6 countries, southern)
Eyle (Somalia)	450	
Hadza (Tanzania)	1,000	
Maasai (Tanzania/Kenya)		500,000
Tuareg (Tamacheq)		3,000,000 (5 countries, west)
Grand total	5,290	357,000,000

Note: Data obtained from a map entitled "Earliest Residents," *The World Monitor* 6(3): 11 (1993) as well as Burger (1990), IWGIA (1992); Durning (1992); and Hitchcock (1993).

Particular problems arise in defining people as indigenous in Africa and Asia. In many parts of Africa, it is difficult to determine antecedence since a variety of populations have moved in and out of local areas over time. Most African countries are multiethnic entities that contain a sizable number of different societies. Nigeria, for example, has at least 160 ethnic groups within its borders. African governments are often reluctant to disclose what percentage of their population is indigenous, taking the position, as Botswana has recently, that all the people in the country (with the exceptions of Europeans and Asians) are indigenous. Individual Africans, on the other hand, frequently identify themselves as members of specific tribal or ethnic groups which they tend to see as indigenous. Even if some people claim to be indigenous, the countries where they live may not recognize them as aboriginal. The government of India, for example, maintains on the one hand that there are no indigenous groups within the country, but on the other hand designates tens of millions of its citizens as "tribals" (Adivasis, "Scheduled Tribes").

African and Asian countries tend to take one of two different positions on the issue of indigenous populations: (1) they claim that there are no indigenous peoples whatsoever within their boundaries, or (2) they state that all groups in the country are indigenous (Martinez Cobo, 1987, p. 5; Sanders, 1989, pp. 417–418). Some countries, such as Botswana, prefer not to differentiate specific groups as targets of assistance, in part because they do not wish to be seen as practicing a kind of *apartheid* or separation on the basis of ethnic identification, as seen in neighboring South Africa. On the other hand, a number of states do not want to admit to having indigenous peoples because they do not want to have to respond to queries or submit to investigations by the United Nations and other agencies on behalf of indigenous peoples. Some of them, such as Tanzania, also do not want to meet the demands of indigenous populations for compensation or rights to blocks of land and resources.

Indigenous peoples are united in their desire to maintain their identities and to seek better standards of living and fair treatment. In some cases, these desires have led to efforts on

their part to resist the attempts of states or other groups to change them. Some ethnic groups have been successful in their attempts to seek self-determination and sovereignty, as seen, for example, in the case of the people of Eritrea, which became Africa's newest nation in mid-1993.

While there is tremendous diversity among the world's indigenous peoples, they have a number of socioeconomic features in common. Many indigenous peoples have strong ties to the land and its resources. Their economies are subsistence-oriented, although many of them do engage in market activities and raise cash through sales of goods and services. Some indigenous peoples derive a significant portion of their diet and material requirements from hunting and gathering. Others are pastoralists who graze their domestic animals in savannas, deserts, temperate zones, and mountain environments. The vast majority of indigenous peoples are farmers who not only raise crops but also engage in various off-farm activities and rural and urban wage sector employment. Although many of these groups occupy remote areas, they are not isolated.

Some analysts suggest that contemporary indigenous groups are among the world's most disadvantaged populations (Heinz, 1988; Bodley, 1990). A large percentage of the world's indigenous people live below the poverty line. In Namibia, for example, three out of four Bushmen are poverty-stricken, while 95 percent of the Semang of Malaysia have incomes below \$200 per year. Infant mortality rates among them tend to be high while health and nutritional standards generally are low. Unemployment rates are high, with some Native American groups having 50–70 percent of their populations without a job. Most indigenous peoples do not own land, and most groups have experienced dispossession or reductions in their ancestral territories. Educational and literacy levels are generally low, although some groups, such as Australian Aborigines, Mohawks, and Ju/'hoansi Bushmen in Namibia have started schools with curricula geared to their specific needs.

Racism is a fact of life for indigenous peoples throughout the world. They are usually at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale of the countries where they live, and they are marginalized politically and legally. Indigenous groups have had difficulty



getting redress for crimes committed against them, and they have often been treated negatively by courts when they have been charged with illegal activities. Often, the sentences that they receive are more severe than is the case for non-indigenous individuals. Members of indigenous communities tend to be overrepresented in the prisons of states such as Australia and Canada. Sometimes charges against indigenous groups are trumped up in order to remove them from lands which others want, as was the case with the Triqui Indians in Mexico in 1984–1985 and with the Penan in Malaysia in 1988–1989. Indigenous leaders argue that they have paid a terrible price for their interaction with non-indigenous societies.

## Genocide among Indigenous Peoples

Many researchers, human rights workers, and journalists have deemed the ways in which indigenous peoples have been dealt with in the twentieth century to be genocide (Lewis, 1969, 1974, 1976; Munzel, 1973, 1985; Arens, 1976, 1978; Souindola, 1981; Clay, 1984; Mey, 1984; Steingraber, 1986; Morris and Churchill, 1987; Legters, 1988; Barta, 1987; Tatz, 1991; Churchill, 1991; Jaimes, 1992; Totten and Parsons, n.d.). It is clear from a critical review of the literature on indigenous peoples that most writers use a fairly broad definition of the concept of genocide. While some researchers see genocide as a set of acts committed with the intent to destroy groups in whole or in part, as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, others extend the concept to include such actions as intentional prevention of ethnic groups from practicing their traditional customs; forced resettlement; denial of access to food relief, health assistance, and development funds; and destruction of the habitats utilized by indigenous populations.

Sometimes victim groups label actions as genocidal in order to bring about greater condemnation of the agencies responsible for mistreating them. Describing all negative actions affecting indigenous groups as genocidal in intent or practice is problematic since such a strategy potentially could limit action

against perpetrators. Defining genocide too narrowly, on the other hand, could have the effect of allowing authorities to overlook actions which are destructive and which eventually could result in the extinction of indigenous populations. As Totten and Parsons (n.d.) point out, if we are to develop sound conventions and warning systems to prevent genocide from occurring, then we need to have a comprehensive understanding of what does and does not constitute genocide (p. 3).

Genocide, in the eyes of a number of social scientists, is the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, social, religious, or cultural group by the state (Horowitz, 1980; Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990). One problem with this approach, however, is that it may not cover those acts that are committed by individuals or groups considered separate from the state (e.g., settlers and miners in the Amazon, or private companies involved in the implementation of development projects). Clearly, in order to cover the diversity existing in cases of annihilation of indigenous peoples, it is necessary to use a definition which incorporates the full array of target groups and perpetrators and which specifies intent.

Fein (1990) defines genocide as "sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or indirectly, through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members, sustained regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim" (p. 24). This definition is useful in that it excludes single massacres and accidental deaths. It includes mass or selective murders that are aimed at physically destroying group members selected on the basis of their being part of a collectivity. At the same time, it implies that the perpetrator is an organized agency or unit but does not specify whether the actions of the perpetrator were authorized specifically by the state.

It is important to note that genocide is by no means a simple or unified phenomenon. Genocide represents systematic efforts to destroy collectivities, many of which are minorities. Cases of physical genocide include those in which the killing of members of a collectivity threatens the survival of the group as a whole. In practice, however, genocidal acts usually do not result in total annihilation of the population. Groups which have been

subjected to genocidal treatment often end up being victimized in other ways as well; they are sometimes raped, enslaved, deprived of their property, and forcibly removed to new places. Some groups have died out as a result of indirect impacts of genocide, including starvation and disease.

Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) use the term "genocidal massacre" in reference to those cases in which a combination of genocide and ethnocide was employed (p. 26). In these instances, "There is no intent to kill the entire victim group, but its disappearance is intended" (Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990, p. 26). The distinction between physical and cultural genocide is by no means clear-cut. According to Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) assimilation policies on the part of the United States, combined with differential legal treatment of Indians, had major impacts on the well-being of Native Americans (pp. 195–203). In America, Australia, South Africa, and other settler societies, most indigenous peoples suffered and died from disease, starvation, and related physical and cultural stresses (Wolf, 1982; Barta, 1987; Bodley, 1990, pp. 38–41, 78–93; Tatz, 1991).

While the U.S. government generally did not openly espouse extermination policies, it did engage throughout its history in cultural modification programs that led to the destruction of Indian societies. It is not surprising, therefore, that Native American writers tend to describe American government policy as genocidal in intent (see, for example, DeLoria, 1969; DeLoria, 1985; Churchill, 1991). Most non-Native Americans would reject the suggestion that they are part of a genocidal society (for a discussion of this concept, see Barta, 1987, pp. 237–240). The fact is, though, that while the U.S. government employed ethnocide as its major indigenous peoples' policy, it was always ready to resort to genocide if it was deemed desirable (DeLoria, 1969; DeLoria, 1985; Legters, 1988; Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990, p. 203; Jaimes, 1992). Examples of genocidal actions against Native American populations include the massacres of over 200 Minnecojou and Hunkpapa Sioux at Wounded Knee in 1890 and the systematic extrajudicial killings of dozens of Oglala Lakota in and around the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in the 1970s (Weyler, 1982; Matthiessen, 1983; Crow Dog and Erdoes, 1990, pp. 115–116).

Forced relocation, education of Native American children in Euro-American concepts rather than Native American ones, destruction of the subsistence economies of indigenous groups, and imposition of new forms of sociopolitical organization all were implemented by American governmental agencies. It was not until 1924 that Native Americans even received U.S. citizenship rights, and it was another decade before the government lifted its ban in Native Americans' practice of their traditional religious activities (Amnesty International, 1992b, p. 7). Native Americans in America today are still seeking religious freedoms, which have been compromised by a series of court decisions.

Cultural genocide takes place under conditions of state imposition of educational programs, modernization efforts, and nation building. Throughout the world, indigenous peoples have been coerced or cajoled into giving up their cultural traditions. Sometimes this is done in the name of "national reconciliation" after decolonization. States as diverse as Turkey, Somalia, and Russia have required their citizens to learn national languages. Even countries with positive human rights records, such as Botswana, have implemented programs aimed at getting indigenous populations to settle down and take part in a national education system which fails to instruct indigenous students in their own customs and languages (Hitchcock, 1993). Ethnocide also occurs in situations where non-native religious organizations promote their views and seek actively to discourage the practice of indigenous traditions. It is important to note, however, that although ethnocidal policies are practiced widely, they have not necessarily led to cultural disintegration. A cultural resurgence or a kind of ethnogenesis process is occurring among a sizable number of indigenous peoples (Burger, 1990; Bodley, 1990, pp. 152–178; Durning, 1992, pp. 37–46).

Genocides of indigenous peoples in the twentieth century have occurred in a number of different contexts, ranging from ones in which there is competition over resources and land to multiethnic settings with socioeconomic stratification and cleavages among the various groups. In the past, a significant proportion of the genocides of indigenous peoples occurred



during the course of colonial expansion, a process seen in the twentieth century primarily in the movements of settlers, companies, and government agencies into frontier zones. The expansion of miners and settlers into the interior of Brazil, for example, led to the destruction of a number of indigenous groups, some of whom were killed by Indian agents of the government's Indian protection agency (Davis, 1977; Price, 1989). Invasions of Yanomami land by miners, with the complicity of the government and the army, has resulted in killings and environmental devastation (American Anthropological Association, 1991; Albert, 1992). Indian agents, settlers, and miners have also been responsible for both purposeful and accidental introduction of diseases which had terrible impacts on tribal populations.

"Indigenous peoples are killed simply for who they are," according to Maya human rights activist and anthropologist, Victor Montejo (n.d., p. 2). Indigenous peoples increasingly are protesting the human rights abuses they suffer at the hands of governments, development agencies, and multinational corporations. They note that they face many forms of persecution. Organized political killings and "disappearances" of indigenous leaders and members of opposition groups are common in countries such as Guatemala and Peru (Carmack, 1988; Manz, 1988; Amnesty International, 1992a). In South and Southeast Asia, the Amazon Basin, the Middle East, Africa, and the Pacific, entire communities of indigenous peoples have been massacred (Anti-Slavery Society, 1984; Burger, 1987; IWGIA, 1988, 1991, 1992; Gurr and Scaritt, 1989; Tatz, 1991).

In Brazil, more than eighty Indian tribes that came in contact with the national society were destroyed between 1900 and 1957, and the indigenous population dropped from approximately a million to less than 200,000 (Davis, 1977, p. 5). Worldwide, in 1984, some 200,000 indigenous peoples lost their lives (Clay, 1984 p. 1). As Clay (1984) notes, "There probably have been more genocides, ethnocides, and extinctions of tribal and ethnic groups in this century than any in history" (p. 1). From the standpoint of indigenous peoples' survival, the twentieth century has been brutal.



Indigenous peoples have been the victims of genocidal and ethnocidal acts in part because of the ways in which they have been represented by dominant societies. In many cases, members of indigenous communities have been described as "primitives," "subhuman," "savages," "vermin," or "nuisances." They have been subjected to these and other negative stereotypes for generations. The images of indigenous peoples have reinforced the tendencies on the part of governments to establish destructive and oppressive racial policies. Efforts on the part of states to vilify indigenous groups are frequently preconditions for genocidal action. This is especially true in those situations where states are concerned about the possibility of indigenous groups supporting opposition movements, as has been the case in Guatemala and Somalia (Menchu, 1984; Carmack, 1988; Manz, 1988; Africa Watch, 1990).

It is extremely difficult to obtain reliable information on genocidal actions and/or outright genocides of indigenous peoples. There are several reasons for this. First of all, most contemporary indigenous groups that are victimized tend to be located in remote places or in conflict zones where it is difficult to gain access. Second, most governments and agencies that come in contact with indigenous groups tend to downplay or deny the severity of their treatment of those peoples. Third, many of the indigenous groups that have been the victims of genocidal acts have members who do not read or write; consequently, written records of what happened to them are rare. Fourth, members of indigenous groups speak their own languages but not necessarily national languages which people doing interviews tend to speak; the result is that translation becomes something of a problem. Not surprisingly, there are relatively few first-person accounts of genocide of various indigenous peoples (Totten, 1991, pp. 311–319).

In the twentieth century, indigenous groups have disappeared at an unprecedented rate (Clay, 1984, p. 1; Durning, 1992, p. 9). This loss of cultural diversity is a product of both physical and cultural extinction. Table 2 contains a summary of twentieth-century cases of physical genocide of various indigenous peoples. The reports from which the data is drawn include the *Urgent Action Bulletins* (UAB) of the non-government

organization Survival International, published sources, and personal communications. It is evident from the data presented here that a variety of indigenous peoples in a number of different countries have been the victims of genocidal actions. Indigenous hunter-gatherers, who Kuper (1981) sees as victimized groups that are perpetually at risk, have been particularly hard hit (p. 158). The treatment of foraging societies is extremely difficult to monitor, in part because they tend to be mobile and often reside in out-of-the-way places. Because of the tendency of hunter-gatherers to have fewer links with the larger society and their small numbers, the plight of these groups often goes unnoticed (Kuper, 1981, p. 158; Kuper, 1985, pp. 201–202; Hitchcock, 1985, pp. 457–459).

Table 2. Twentieth-Century Cases of Genocide of Indigenous Peoples

Group Name	Country	Date(s)	Reference(s)
South America			
Ache	Paraguay	1966–76	Munzel (1973); Arens (1976, 1978); UAB
(1988a)			
Arara	Brazil	1992	UAB (1992a)
Cuiva	Colombia	1967–71	Arcand (1972)
Mapuche	Chile	1986	UAB (1986a)
Nambiquara	Brazil	1986–87	Price (1989)
Nunak	Colombia	1991	UAB (1991a)
Paez	Colombia	1991	UAB (1992b)
Pai Tavytere	Paraguay	1990–91	Grumberg (1991)
Ticuna	Brazil	1988	UAB (1988b)
Waorani	Ecuador	1986–92	UAB (1987a, 1990a, 1992c)
Yanomami	Brazil	1988–89, 1993	AAA (1991); Ramos Albert (1991, 1992)
Central America			
Indians	Guatemala	1968–93	UAB (1987b); Menchu (1984); Carmack (1988); Amnesty Intl. (1992a)
Indians	El Salvador	1980–92	Chapin (1986)
Miskito	Nicaragua	1981–86	Dodds (1986); State Department (1986); Dunbar Ortiz (1986)

Table 2. (cont.)

Group Name	Country	Date(s)	Reference(s)
<b>Africa</b>			
Barabaig	Tanzania	1990-92	UAB (1990b); Lane (1993)
Bubi	Equatorial Guinea	1969-79	Kuper (1985:133-134)
Bushmen	Angola	1980-88	Souindola (1981)
Dinka	Sudan	1992-93	Sudan Human Rights Org.
Herero	Namibia	1904-07	Bridgman (1981)
Hutu	Burundi	1972, 1988	Lemarchand (1992)
Isaak	Somalia	1988-89	Africa Watch (1990)
Karimojong	Uganda	1979-86	Dyson-Hudson (pers. comm.)
Nuba	Sudan	1991-92	UAB (1992d)
Tuareg	Mali, Niger	1988-90	Mezhoud (1992)
Tyua	Zimbabwe	1982-83	Hitchcock files
<b>Asia</b>			
Agta	Philippines	1988	Fay (1987); Headlands (n.d.)
Armenians	Turkey	1915-18	Adalian (1991)
Dadrian (1986)			
Atta	Philippines	1987	Fay (1987); UAB (1987c)
Auyu	West Papua, Indonesia	1989	UAB (1991b)
Cham	Kampuchea	1975-79	Kiernan (1991)
Dani	Papua, New Guinea	1988	UAB (1988c)
Higaonan	Philippines	1988	UAB (1988d)
H'mong	Laos	1979-86	Morris and Churchill (1987)
Kurds	Iraq	1987-present	Middle East Watch and PHR (1993); Saeedpour (1992)
Nasioi	Bougainville,	1990-91	IWGIA (1991)
Papua N.G.			
Penan	Sarawak, Malaysia	1986-89	UAB (1986b, 1987d, 1989a, b)
Tamil	Sri Lanka	1983-86	Amnesty International (1986)
<b>Tribals</b>			
	Chittagong Hills Tracts, Bangladesh	1977-present	Anti-Slavery Society (1984); Chowdhury (1989); Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (1991)

## Typologies of Genocide Relating to Indigenous Peoples

Researchers have presented a number of typologies of genocide which include categories relevant to indigenous peoples as victim groups (Dadrian, 1975; Kuper, 1981, pp. 46–54, 88, 158; Kuper, 1984, pp. 32–33; Kuper, 1985, pp. 151, 200–202, 211–212; Smith, 1987, pp. 23–25, 30–32; Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990, pp. 22–29, 195–222, 412–414; Fein, 1990, pp. 28–30, 79–91). Of five categories of genocide identified by Dadrian (1975), one of them, which he called utilitarian genocide, was aimed at obtaining control of economic resources. Examples of this kind of genocide include the Ache of Paraguay and the Indians of Brazil (Dadrian, 1975).

Smith (1987) sees genocide as an aspect of (1) war, and (2) development, and he notes that in the past it appeared in a variety of contexts, including conquest, religious persecution, and colonial domination. Smith (1987) distinguishes five different types of genocide, one of which he also calls utilitarian genocide (pp. 23–25). This kind of genocide, according to Smith (1987), occurred especially in the sixteenth- to nineteenth-century period when colonial societies came in contact with indigenous peoples in the Americas, Australia, Tasmania, and Africa (p. 23). It has continued in the twentieth century as the Indians of Paraguay, Brazil, and Peru have been destroyed, as Smith (1987) puts it, “out of cold calculation of gain, and, in some cases, sadistic pleasure” (p. 23). The basic objectives of twentieth-century genocides of indigenous peoples have been, according to Smith (1987), Indian land and resources and labor (p. 25).

Like some other analysts of genocide, Smith (1987) rejects the hypotheses of population surplus and political crisis as being primary causes of the destruction of indigenous peoples, arguing instead that “They are being killed because of a combination of ethnocentrism and simple greed” (p. 25). He goes on to suggest that the basic motivation behind utilitarian genocide is that some people must die “so that others might live well” (Smith, 1987, p. 25). Smith adds that one of the reasons that this kind of genocide claims fewer lives today than in the past is because earlier

genocides were so effective and contemporary indigenous populations are so small (Smith, 1987, p. 25). In Smith's view, genocidal actions against indigenous peoples are not simply accidental or unpremeditated events but are acts done purposely to achieve economic objectives.

Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) classify genocides according to the motives behind them (p. 29). They distinguish four types of genocide which they see as being done (1) to eliminate a real or potential threat, (2) to spread terror among real or potential enemies, (3) to acquire economic wealth, and (4) to implement a belief, theory, or ideology. The genocide most relevant to indigenous peoples is that aimed at acquiring economic wealth. That said, genocides also occur in order to terrorize indigenous peoples into subservience (Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990, pp. 29, 36–37). Substantial numbers of killings of indigenous peoples occurred in the context of European expansion into the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific and were a result of campaigns by frontier settlers. Sometimes these actions were opposed by governments, but, as Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) note, efforts to protect indigenous peoples were feeble at best (pp. 36–37).

An equivalent category to the utilitarian genocide suggested by Dadrian (1975) and Smith (1987) and that of genocide aimed at acquiring economic wealth suggested by Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) is what Fein (1984) refers to as developmental genocide (pp. 8–9). This kind of genocide generally is preceded by the movement of development agencies, governmental organizations, or individuals into frontier zones where indigenous groups reside and make their living. There was significant variation in the ways in which encroaching individuals and agencies dealt with resident groups. In some cases the outsiders attempted to negotiate with local people; in other cases, they took their land and resources away from them without their permission; and in still other cases they tried to annihilate them (Fein, 1984, p. 8; Bodley, 1990, pp. 24–93).

Harff (1984) and Gurr and Harff (1992) differentiate between genocides and politicides, the former referring to extreme repression aimed at destroying groups defined on the basis of their membership in particular ethnic, religious,



national, or racial groups, and the latter referring to victims defined in terms of their political position (e.g., classes or political organizations opposed to the state or dominant group). Politicides, they contend, are more numerous and just as deadly as genocides (Gurr and Harff, 1992, p. 169). Worldwide, a number of indigenous peoples are caught up in conflicts between governments and local insurgent organizations. Of the 105 armed conflicts ongoing in 1992, 74 were between states and people within their borders (Durning, 1992, p. 14). Some indigenous groups, such as the Bushmen of Namibia and Angola, have been described as some of the most heavily militarized people in the world in the sense that they have had a large proportion of the adult male population trained as soldiers and used in counterinsurgency operations (Gordon, 1992, p. 2). In South America, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa, many of the instances of genocide of indigenous peoples have occurred in the context of armed conflicts in which either the government forces or the opposition groups or both have targeted local people for their support of one side or the other or solely for being in the region where military actions occur.

It is possible to distinguish specific types of genocide involving indigenous populations. The first type, which can be termed *socioeconomic genocide*, comes about in the context of colonization or exploitation of resources in areas occupied by indigenous groups. The perpetrators of socioeconomic genocide range from government organizations established ostensibly to assist indigenous peoples to settlers who receive subsidies from the state and from large landowners to peasant farmers. Multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have been responsible for the destruction of indigenous populations through funding projects in the Chittagong Hills of Bangladesh (Anti-Slavery Society, 1984; Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, 1991), the Kalahari Desert region of Botswana (Hitchcock, 1993), and the islands of Sumatra, East Timor, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan of Indonesia where the Transmigration Program, a large-scale resettlement effort, is being implemented (Burger, 1987, pp. 142–147; Bodley, 1990, p. 92). Survival International, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and other non-

government organizations have attacked the World Bank in particular for its failure to undertake comprehensive social and environmental impact assessments and to implement adequate compensation and resettlement programs.

A second type of genocide in which indigenous peoples are victims is *retributive genocide*, in which actions are taken against collectivities that are perceived as threats or as representing opposition to state ideology and interests. This kind of genocide occurs in contexts in which (1) there is civil conflict, or (2) there are challenges to the legitimacy and authority of a dominant class or group. Indigenous peoples in a number of countries have been the victims of retributive genocide in the twentieth century, including the Hereros of Namibia, the Maya of Guatemala, the Nuba of Sudan, the Kurds of Iraq, the Nagas of India, and various tribal groups in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. Data on these and other cases has been provided by governments, non-government organizations, opposition groups, anthropologists, and indigenous people themselves. This information has sometimes resulted in further investigations into the treatment of indigenous groups (see, for example, Anti-Slavery Society, 1984; American Anthropological Association, 1991). The problem, however, is that the findings of these investigations have not always led to improvements in the situations facing indigenous populations.

It is useful, as Kuper (1984) points out, to draw a distinction between "domestic" genocides, those arising from internal divisions within a society, and genocides resulting from international warfare (p. 32). The majority of cases of genocides among indigenous peoples fall into the category of domestic genocides. Chalk and Jonassohn (1990) note that it is new states or regimes which are trying to impose ideological conformity that are especially likely to commit genocide (p. 18). Fein (1984) points out that the structural relationships most conducive to genocide are ones based in ethnic stratification in which state power is not constrained effectively by internal or external checks (p. 6). The victims of genocide are often ones not fully incorporated into the state system, middleman minorities, or opposition groups.

## Protection of Indigenous People and Prosecution of Perpetrators

Human rights organizations have argued that specific cases of genocide should be followed up on and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. This can be done in part through the application of archaeological and forensic techniques aimed at determining the causes of death and identities of individuals, as was done, for example, in the case of the Kurds killed during the Anfal Campaign of the Iraqi government and army in 1988 (Middle East Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, 1988). The evidence for genocide should be presented at a newly created permanent international tribunal which can try cases of human rights violations.

Organizations established at the national level to provide assistance to indigenous peoples have been relatively unsuccessful in ensuring the long-term survival of the people they are charged with protecting. The National Foundation for the Indian (FUNAI) in Brazil, for example, has engaged in pacification programs and has facilitated the process whereby Indians have been removed from their lands (Davis, 1977; Bodley, 1990, pp. 67, 85; Albert, 1992). In the Philippines, the tribal peoples' agency known as the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN) has been involved in carrying out resettlement programs that have had devastating effects on indigenous peoples. FUNAI, PANAMIN, and other national indigenous peoples' organizations have sometimes worked closely with international development agencies and multinational corporations in their efforts to establish projects that have had deleterious social and environmental impacts. Some of these projects have been accompanied by the intentional killings of indigenous residents of the areas being developed (Bodley, 1990, p. 173; Survival International, 1990b, 1991b, 1992c). Responses of indigenous groups to intensified pressure and genocidal actions have ranged from peaceful protests and appeals to governments and human rights agencies for help to the establishment of grassroots political movements and armed resistance (Burger, 1987; Bodley, 1990; Durning, 1992).

Given the prevailing attitudes toward indigenous peoples, it is not surprising that in the vast majority of instances the people responsible for killing them were never brought to justice. Very few cases of human rights violations against indigenous people by agents of governments have resulted in punishment of the offenders. According to Amnesty International (1992a), the phenomenon of impunity, or tacit protection from prosecution, is one of the crucial factors contributing to the continuing pattern of genocidal acts and human rights violations against indigenous peoples (p. 71). After several centuries of genocide, it was only in the latter part of the 1980s that the Brazilian government actually brought federal charges of genocide against individuals. In 1988, five men were accused of intending to "exterminate or eliminate an ethnic group or race" for their murder of a number of Xacriaba Indians (Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990, p. 414). Other countries in South America (Colombia, Bolivia) and Southeast Asia (Malaysia) are also considering trying people for these crimes.

Agents of governments accused of genocide of indigenous peoples have been quick to deny the charges. When accused of genocidal acts against the Ache Indians of Paraguay, the country's Defense Minister argued that, by definition, genocide was not perpetrated. In doing so, he made the assertion that:

Although there are victims and victimizer, there is not the third element necessary to establish the crime of genocide—that is "intent." Therefore, as there is no "intent," one cannot speak of genocide. (Lewis, 1976, p. 63)

A similar defense was presented by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations in 1969, who argued that crimes committed against Brazilian indigenous populations could not be seen as genocide because (1) they never eliminated Indians as an ethnic or cultural group, and (2) the actions were committed for "exclusively economic reasons" and therefore lacked "the special malice or motivation necessary" to be characterized as genocide. (United Nations Human Rights Communication No. 478, 29 September, 1969, cited in Kuper, 1984, p. 33). Taken to its logical extreme, this argument would mean that practically none of the actions against indigenous



peoples that are obviously genocidal in nature could be described as genocide.

Over the past several decades, efforts have been made by a wide variety of agencies, groups, and individuals to promote the interests of indigenous peoples and to educate the public about their situations (Sanders, 1989; Swepston, 1989; Burger, 1990; Bodley, 1990, pp. 174–207). These efforts have included the documentation of human rights abuses, working directly with people whose rights have been violated to try to obtain legal redress, bringing pressure to bear on governments and agencies involved in activities deleterious to indigenous peoples, and providing funds and technical assistance to indigenous groups seeking to improve their lives. The work of these organizations has been constrained by lack of funds and political support.

The activities of indigenous peoples' rights organizations have not been without controversy. In the 1970s, for example, the London-based non-government organization Survival International stated that the government of Paraguay had committed genocide against the Ache Indians (Munzel, 1973; Arens, 1976; Survival International, 1988a, 1993). These allegations were rejected not only by the governments of Paraguay, the United States, Britain, and West Germany, but also by Cultural Survival, an American indigenous peoples' support organization (Maybury-Lewis and Howe, 1980). The denial of the occurrence of genocide of indigenous groups was based in part upon a definitional question relating to whether or not there had been a "planned or conscious effort on the part of the government of Paraguay to exterminate, molest, or harm the Ache Indians in any way" (Survival International, 1993, p. 5). Clearly, definitional issues are of major importance in the discussions concerning physical and cultural genocide. Equally as clear is the fact that the protection of indigenous groups from genocide would be enhanced if there were greater cooperation and coordination among the various organizations involved with indigenous peoples' welfare.



## What the Genocides of Indigenous Peoples Have Taught Us

Many countries have made rhetorical commitments to enforce laws with respect to freedom of association, access to fair and impartial judicial procedures, and elimination of discriminatory treatment of minorities. In practice, however, numerous countries have engaged in repressive actions against their citizens. Most states, along with the United Nations, have been reluctant to criticize individual nations for their actions on the pretense that this would constitute a violation of sovereignty. They have also tended to accept government denials of genocides at face value. As a result, genocidal actions continue.

In the twentieth century dozens of indigenous peoples have been the victims of physical and cultural genocide. The lack of teeth behind the rhetorical commitment to the protection of indigenous peoples' rights has been, and continues to be, a tremendous problem. If the gross violations of human rights of indigenous peoples are to be stopped, then efforts must be made to enforce existing international human rights law and to impose sanctions on those countries, institutions, agencies, and individuals responsible for genocidal actions. Attempts must also be made to develop genocide early warning systems and to determine the preconditions for genocide (Kuper, 1985, pp. 218–219; Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990, p. 4).

A lesson learned from the experiences of indigenous peoples harmed by development projects is that detailed social and environmental impact assessments and careful consultations with local people must be carried out prior to the implementation of any projects. It is also evident that development agencies must provide for the legal protection of the lives and assets of people affected by projects. Failure to do so should result in the cutting off of all financial support for those agencies.

The protection of indigenous peoples from genocide at the international level has generally been ineffective. Few cases of genocide against indigenous peoples have been brought before the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations. Those who have brought complaints to the United Nations have

learned that the international agency does not provide redress for alleged human rights violations. In addition, they have discovered that the United Nations does not have the capacity or, according to some, the commitment, to provide direct protection from perpetrators of human rights abuses. Thus, one of the lessons gleaned from the experiences of indigenous groups is that the United Nations must improve its performance in the human rights arena. A second lesson is that humanitarian intervention can and should be considered in cases of genocides and gross human rights violations. If this is to be effective, however, substantial efforts will need to be made to gain detailed knowledge of the situation on the ground before such interventions are attempted.

The failure to prevent genocide of indigenous peoples is the result of a combination of factors, including government inaction, bureaucratic inefficiency, lack of enforcement of international human rights law, racism, and outright greed. Experience has taught us that genocide cannot be prevented unless the perpetrators perceive that the costs of their actions will outweigh the benefits. Without efforts to document cases of genocide and to impose penalties on those governments and agencies responsible, killings and disappearances will be commonplace occurrences not just for indigenous groups but for many of the world's peoples.

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## EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

Physical and Cultural Genocide of  
Various Indigenous Peoples

It has proved to be exceptionally difficult to obtain reliable and detailed information on genocides of indigenous peoples. This is particularly true when it comes to locating first-person accounts of genocides involving such groups. One reason for this situation is that many contemporary indigenous groups who have been subjected to genocidal treatment tend to live in out-of-the-way places which are often inaccessible for environmental or political reasons. Documentation of genocidal events against indigenous communities is also rare since those groups residing in remote locations tend to be illiterate or have limited exposure to educational opportunities. Concomitantly, language proficiency of individuals visiting indigenous communities is often limited at best.

Gathering data on genocides of indigenous peoples is also difficult because in many cases the gross violations of human rights are ongoing. Individuals are reluctant to talk for fear of reprisals. It is not uncommon for people to express deep concern that those responsible for the genocidal acts would retaliate against them and their families for their having revealed what transpired. They therefore are often unwilling to provide information such as their names, identities of relatives, places of residence, and any other data that could be used to determine who they are.

During the course of interviews of indigenous people who have been the victims of atrocities, a number of them address the topic of violence only indirectly or in careful terms. Some of them emphasize that they find it extremely difficult to put into words all that had happened. They describe their experiences in culturally appropriate ways, which means that one has to be reasonably familiar with the languages and cultures of the societies of which they have been a part in order to get at the full meaning of what they are saying.

One of the difficulties faced by anthropologists and others investigating genocidal acts is that most of the existing accounts

are not from indigenous groups but rather come from the government, the military, or other agencies who have come in contact with those groups. Fortunately, indigenous peoples themselves are recording their experiences and telling their stories more often now than has been the case in the past. This is sometimes done in autobiographical form, as is the case with Nobel Prize recipient Rigoberta Menchu, a Guatemalan Quiche Indian woman who has described the suffering of her family and Indian peoples generally in a country that has expended considerable energy oppressing its indigenous populations.

One type of oral testimony obtained from indigenous peoples consists of statements made to investigators, some of whom are human rights workers such as those from Africa Watch, Survival International, or Cultural Survival. An advantage of these oral histories is that they sometimes are obtained not long after the genocidal events occurred, thus ensuring that the effects of gradual memory loss are minimized and reducing the chances that subsequent reports have influences on individual perceptions.

Another type of oral testimony on genocides of indigenous peoples is that obtained during the course of interviews designed to get other kinds of information such as life histories of individuals. In these cases, the genocide is not the object of the discussion and is only alluded to in passing. Once genocidal actions are mentioned, additional details are sought. The difficulty in these situations is that so little is known of the general context in which the genocide occurred that it is not easy to ask appropriate and detailed questions. Under these kinds of conditions, it is hard to assess the efficacy of the testimony provided.

Clearly, there is a tremendous need to obtain additional first-person accounts of genocides of various indigenous peoples. Having more detailed information on genocides will facilitate the process whereby genocide early warning systems can be developed. Analysis of the case material can also contribute to a better understanding of the conditions under which genocides of indigenous peoples occur.

The oral testimonies presented here have been chosen to illustrate the types of information available on genocides of

various indigenous peoples. The accounts are drawn from Guatemala, Somalia, and Zimbabwe. The first account is taken from the autobiography of Rigoberta Menchu (*I, Rigoberta Menchu, An Indian Woman of Guatemala*, edited and introduced by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray and translated by Ann Wright. London: Verso Editions, 1984). The second set of first-person accounts is drawn from a report by Africa Watch (*Somalia, A Government at War with Its Own People: Testimonies about the Killings and Conflict in the North*. Washington, D.C. and New York: Africa Watch, 1990). The third oral testimony is one obtained by Robert Hitchcock from a Tyua Bushman man in western Zimbabwe in June 1989.

## I. The Indians of Guatemala by Rigoberta Menchu

Rigoberta Menchu is a 36-year-old Quiche Indian woman from the village of Chimel in the province of El Quiche in Guatemala. Like other Indians of her country, Ms. Menchu was a victim of genocidal actions which resulted in the deaths of her mother, father, and brother. Her book describes these and related events in strong detail, and it illustrates some of the ways in which indigenous peoples in Guatemala responded to the pressures exerted upon them.

Guatemala, as Burger (1987) has noted, is a country where the political persecution of indigenous peoples is unparalleled in the contemporary world (p. 76). The treatment of Indians in this Central American country has been decried by indigenous peoples' groups, human rights organizations, and anthropologists and other social scientists (Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, 1987, pp. 84–87; Burger, 1987, pp. 76–85; Carmack, 1988; Manz, 1988; Amnesty International, 1992a, pp. 11–13, 20–22, 43–44). Tens of thousands of Indians, the vast majority of them non-combatants, have been killed during the course of counterinsurgency operations of the Guatemalan military beginning in the 1960s and 1970s and continuing to the present. Leaders of grassroots Indian groups, labor organizers, and critics of Guatemalan government policy have disappeared in substantial numbers over the past thirty years (Manz, 1988, p.

30; Amnesty International, 1992a, p. 12). As a result of the repressive policies, hundreds of thousands of Guatemalan Indians were displaced, many of them ending up in refugee camps in other countries (Manz, 1988).

Rigoberta Menchu was a witness to many of these events. In her book, she writes of genocidal massacres such as the one at Panzos, Alta Verapaz, which resulted in the deaths of over 100 Indians. She describes in avid detail the murderous actions of the Guatemalan army and its supporters and the vilification of Indians by the government. Her discussion provides insights into the ways in which Indians were repressed in Guatemala, and it illustrates how indigenous peoples can become the victims of state policies.

I was ashamed to stay safely in my village and not think about the others. So I decided to leave. My father knew and he said: "Where you are going, you may not have control over your life. You can be killed at any time. You could be killed tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or anytime."

But before that, under Kjell,<sup>1</sup> there was a massacre of 106 peasants in Panzos, an area of Coban. It was the 29th of May, 1978. Panzos is a town where they discovered oil and began throwing peasants off their land. But since the peasants didn't know where to go, they all came down in an organised fashion with their leaders. They were Keckchi Indians and the army massacred them as if they were killing birds—men, women and children died. Blood ran in the main square in Panzos. We felt this was a direct attack on us. It was as if they'd murdered us, as if we were being tortured when they killed those people. It all came out in the newspapers. But nobody paid much attention, they were more interested in the government which had just come to power. So the story died. Nobody was interested in the death of all those peasants. The CUC condemned this act, and that's when it was recognized under the name of *Comite Unidad Campesina*, as an organisation defending peasants' rights. Our objectives were: a fair wage from the landowners; respect for our communities; the decent treatment we deserve as people, not animals; respect for our religion, our customs, and our culture. Many villages in El Quiche were unable to

perform their ceremonies because they were persecuted or because they were called subversives and communists. The CUC championed these rights. It came out into the open. Then the repression against it began. We held a huge demonstration to herald the CUC with the participation of Indian men, women and children, although the CUC also recognizes that it is not only Indians who are exploited in Guatemala but our poor ladino *companeros* as well. The CUC defends all peasants, Indians and ladinos. And within the framework of the organisation, we began having contacts between ladinos and Indians.

So the CUC comes into the open; it calls strikes, demonstrations and demands for a fair wage. We obtained a wage of 3.20 quetzals. That was the bare minimum, really. For a family which has to feed none or ten children 3.20 is not a fair wage. The finca owners said yes. They signed an agreement to pay a minimum wage of 3.20 quetzals. They agreed. It was a victory for us obtaining 3.20 but, in practice, the landowners didn't pay that. They kept on paying their peones the same: 1.20 quetzals. What the landowners actually did was to supervise the work more closely, raise the work quotas and, at the same time, charge for every tiny error the peasants make. Now we couldn't let even the tiniest fly alight on a leaf, or walk on it, because we'd have to pay for the plant. This was very hard for the peasants. We kept up our demands but we didn't know how to act. It was a bitter blow when our first *companeros* fell. But we carried on working.

It was in 1978, when Lucas Garcia<sup>2</sup> came to power with a lust for killing, that the repression really began in El Quiche. It was like a piece of rag in his hands. He set up military bases in many of the villages and there were rapes, tortures, kidnappings. And massacres. The villages of Chajul, Cotzal and Nebaj suffered massacres as the repression fell on them again. It fell above all on the Indian population. Every day new clandestine cemeteries, as they call them, would appear in different parts of the country. That is, they'd kidnap people from a village, torture them, and then some thirty bodies would appear in one place. On a hillside for example. Then they'd tell the people to go and get their relatives there. But they didn't dare look for the bodies because they knew they'll be taken away too.



So the bodies just stayed there. Then what they did was dig a pit for the bodies and put them all in: so it was a secret cemetery. . . .

On 9 September 1979 my brother was kidnapped. It was a Sunday, and he'd gone down to another village—he worked in other villages as well as his own. His name was Petrocinio Menchu Tum—Tum is my mother's name. Well, my brother had a job to do. He was very fond of organising work. So he went round organising in various places, and the army discovered him and kidnapped him. After 9 September my mother and the rest of us began to worry. At that time—and I still thank God they didn't kill all of us—my mother nonetheless went to the authorities to enquire after him. If they kill me because of my son, she said, let them kill me. I wasn't there at the time; I was in Huehuetenango when my brother was captured. They say that the day he fell, my mother was at home and my other brothers were not far away. Mother went into the village to find out where her son was, but nobody could give her any news of his whereabouts. However, he had been betrayed by someone in the community. As I said before, there are people who'll turn their hand to anything when you least expect it. Out of pure necessity, often they'll sell their own brothers. This man from the community had been a *companero*, a person who'd always collaborated and who had been in agreement with us. But, they offered him fifteen quetzals—that's to say fifteen dollars—to turn my brother in, and so he did. The army didn't know who he was. That day my brother was going to another village with a girl when they caught him. The girl and her mother followed along after him. From the first moment they tied his hands behind his back, they started to drive him along with kicks. My brother fell, he couldn't protect his face. The first part of him to begin to bleed was his face. They took him over rough ground where there were stones, fallen tree trunks. He walked about two kilometres [1.2 mi.] being kicked and hit all the time. Then they started to threaten the girl and her mother. They were risking their lives by following my brother and finding out where he was being taken. Apparently they said to them: "Do you want us to do the same to you, do you want us to rape you right here?" That's what this thug of a soldier said. And he told the *senora* that if they didn't go away they'd be

tortured just like he was going to be because he was a communist and a subversive, and subversives deserved to be punished and to die.

When we reached the village there were many people who'd been there since early morning: children, women, men. Minutes later, the army was surrounding the people who were there to watch. There were machines, armoured cars, jeeps, all kinds of weapons. Helicopters started to fly over the village so that the guerrilla fighters wouldn't come. That's what they were afraid of. The officer opened the meeting. I remember he started by saying that a group of guerrillas they'd caught were about to arrive and that they were going to suffer a little punishment. A little punishment, because there were greater punishments, he said, but you'll see the punishment they get. And that's for being communists! For being Cubans, for being subversives! And if you get mixed up with communists and subversives, you'll get the same treatment as these subversives you'll be seeing in a little while. My mother was just about 100 per cent certain her son would be amongst those being brought in. I was still not sure, though, because I knew my brother wasn't a criminal and didn't deserve such punishments.

Well, a few minutes later three army lorries came into the village. One went a little ahead, the middle one carried the tortured people and the third one brought up the rear. They guarded them very closely, even with armoured cars. The lorry with the tortured came in. They started to take them out one by one. They were all wearing army uniforms. But their faces were monstrously disfigured, unrecognisable. My mother went closer to the lorry to see if she could recognise her son. Each of the tortured had different wounds on the face. I mean, their faces all looked different. But my mother recognized her son, my little brother, among them. They put them in a line. Some of them were very nearly, half dead, or they were nearly in their last agony, and others, you could see that they were; you could see that very well indeed. My brother was very badly tortured, he could hardly stand up. All the tortured had no nails and they had cut off part of the soles of their feet. They were barefoot. They forced them to walk and put them in a line. They fell down at once. They picked them up again. There was a squadron of soldiers there

ready to do exactly what the officer ordered. And the officer carried on with his rigmarole, saying that we had to be satisfied with our lands, we had to be satisfied with eating bread and chile, but we mustn't let ourselves be led astray by communist ideas. Saying that all the people had access to everything, that they were content. If I remember right, he must have repeated the word "communist" a hundred times. He started off with the Soviet Union, Cuba, Nicaragua; he said that the same communists from the Soviet Union had moved on to Cuba and then Nicaragua and that now they were in Guatemala. And that those Cubans would die a death like that of these tortured people. Every time he paused in his speech, they forced the tortured up with kicks and blows from their weapons.

No-one could leave the meeting. Everyone was weeping. I, I don't know, every time I tell this story, I can't hold back my tears, for me it's a reality I can't forget, even though it's not easy to tell of it. My mother was weeping; she was looking at her son. My brother scarcely recognized us. Or perhaps. . . . My mother said he did, that he could still smile at her, but I, well, I didn't see that. They were monstrous. They were all fat, fat, fat. They were all swollen up, all wounded. When I drew closer to them, I saw that their clothes were damp. Damp from the moisture oozing out of their bodies. Somewhere around half-way through the speech, it would be about an hour and a half, two hours on, the captain made the squad of soldiers take the clothes off the tortured people, saying that it was so that everyone could see for themselves what their punishment had been and realize that if we got mixed up in communism, in terrorism, we'd be punished the same way. Threatening the people like that, they wanted to force us to do just as they said. They couldn't simply take the clothes off the tortured men, so the soldiers brought scissors and cut the clothes apart from the feet up and took the clothes off the tortured bodies. They all had the marks of different tortures. The captain devoted himself to explaining each of the different tortures. This is perforation with needles, he'd say, this is a wire burn. He went on like that explaining each torture and describing each tortured man. There were three people who looked like bladders. I mean, they were

inflated, although they had no wounds on their bodies. But they were inflated, inflated. And the officer said, that's from something we put in them that hurts them. The important thing is that they should know that it hurts and that the people should know it's no easy thing to have that done to your body.

After he'd finished talking the officer ordered the squad to take away those who'd been "punished," naked and swollen as they were. They dragged them along, they could no longer walk. Dragged them along to this place, where they lined them up all together within sight of everyone. The officer called to the worst of his criminals—the Kaibiles,<sup>3</sup> who wear different clothes from other soldiers. They're the ones with the most training, the most power. Well, he called the Kaibiles and they poured petrol over each of the tortured. The captain said, "This isn't the last of their punishments, there's another one yet. This is what we've done with all the subversives we catch, because they have to die by violence. And if this doesn't teach you a lesson, this is what'll happen to you too. The problem is that the Indians let themselves be led by the communists." He was trying to convince the people but at the same time he was insulting them by what he said. Anyway, they lined up the tortured and poured petrol on them; and then the soldiers set fire to each one of them. Many of them begged for mercy. They looked half dead when they were lined up there, but when the bodies began to burn they began to plead for mercy. Some of them screamed, many of them leapt but uttered no sound—of course, that was because their breathing was cut off. But—and to me this was incredible—many of the people had weapons with them, the ones who'd been on their way to work had machetes, others had nothing in their hands, but when they saw the army setting fire to the victims, everyone wanted to strike back, to risk their lives doing it, despite all the soldiers' arms. . . . Faced with its own cowardice, the army itself realized that the whole people were prepared to fight. You could see that even the children were enraged, but they didn't know how to express their rage.

Well, the officer quickly gave the order for the squad to withdraw. They all fell back holding their weapons up and shouting slogans as if it were a celebration. They were

happy! They roared with laughter and cried, "Long live the Fatherland! Long live Guatemala! Long live our President! Long live the army, long live Lucas!" The people raised their weapons and rushed at the army, but they drew back at once, because there was the risk of a massacre. The army had all kinds of arms, even planes flying overhead. Anyway, if there'd been a confrontation with the army, the people would have been massacred. But nobody thought about death. I didn't think that I might die, I just wanted to do something, even kill a soldier. At that moment I wanted to show my aggression. Many people hurried off for water to put out the fires, but no-one fetched it in time. It needed lots of people to carry the water—the water supply is in one particular place and everyone goes there for it—but it was a long way off and nothing could be done. The bodies were twitching about. Although the fire had gone out, the bodies kept twitching. It was a frightful thing for me to accept that. You know, it wasn't just my brother's life. It was many lives, and you don't think that the grief is just for yourself but for all the relatives of the others: God knows if they found relatives of theirs there or not! Anyway, they were Indians, our brothers. And what you think is that Indians are already being killed off by malnutrition, and when our parents can hardly give us enough to live on, and make such sacrifices so that we can grow up, then they burn us alive like that.

## II. The Isaaks of Somalia

In 1988 the army of the government of Somalia attacked villages in the northern part of the country with the aim of destroying members of the Isaak clan, one of several clans in Somalia which they blamed for participating in rebellious actions against the state. The justification for these acts was state security.

The Somalia case illustrates a kind of "autogenocide" not unlike that in Cambodia perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge. The genocidal actions in Somalia, like those in Cambodia, were aimed specifically at exterminating members of one's own ethnic group (Africa Watch, 1990, pp. 1–2). Prior to the outbreak of



fighting in northern Somalia, members of the Isaak clan disappeared, some of the hands of the Somalia National Security Service and paramilitary forces whose task was to root out dissent.

An estimated 50,000 to 60,000 people, the majority of them Isaaks, died during the 1980s, most of them in the period between 1988 and early 1990. Civilians were targeted along with suspected insurgents. The Somalia government forces carried out sweeps of both urban and rural areas, and both massacres and extrajudicial executions occurred. Camel and goat-keeping pastoral nomads were victimized by the Somalia government because of the perception that they were providing economic support to the insurgents. The following oral testimonies were obtained from several people in the months following the 1988 attacks by Africa Watch and in 1990 by Robert Hitchcock.

The first oral testimony is from a woman named Monda Ahmed Yusuf, who lived in the Tuurta Turwa district of Burao in northern Somalia. She was interviewed by Africa Watch in London, England, on July 2, 1989.

Shelling with long-range weapons started on Sunday. It hit a neighbor's house, the Abdirahman family of seven people. Six of them died instantaneously. The only survivor was a little girl who had been sent to fetch sugar. The mother had just had a baby.

They were after civilians. Their scouts would direct them to those areas where civilians were concentrated and then that spot would be shelled. On Monday, the shelling intensified. Two houses behind ours belonging to my uncle were hit. Luckily, one was empty as the family had congregated in the other house. It hit that house too and his daughter, niece and sister-in-law were wounded. Our side was particularly targeted as it was one of the areas the SNM entered when they first came into town. When the bombing started, the sight of the dying, the wounded and the collapse of houses was too much to bear.

The second testimony was that of Khadija Sugal, who described how government forces intentionally separated Isaak clanspeople from non-Isaaks.

As soon as the fighting broke out, the government used loudspeakers to sort the civilians out into Darood and Isaak. They would shout, "Who is from Galkayo? Mogadishu? Las Anod? Garoe?" [Non-Isaak territory]. They appealed to the non-Isaaks to leave so they could burn the town and all those who remained behind. Most of the people from these towns left; the government provided them with transportation.

The artillery shelling began immediately after the non-Isaaks had been evacuated. Everything seemed to collapse or to be on fire. Whole areas of Burao seemed to be lit up with gunfire. Our suffering until then seemed of no significance compared to the impact of the shelling. The effect of the shelling is indescribable. The shock made people sick—many pregnant women went into early labor and, without any medical help, gave birth to premature babies. The shelling forced everyone, even the wounded and the very old, to flee.

On Tuesday, the aerial bombardment began. The smoke was overwhelming. You choked, and it felt as if you were inhaling poison. It left a sharp pain in your throat and burned your eyes. After Tuesday, the city seemed to be burning. There was smoke everywhere. By Wednesday, we became desperate. I left home without even a head scarf, with only one shoe on. I headed east with some other women. There were so many dead people spread out on the road; it seemed as if someone had laid a giant cloth on the ground.

Among the dead are: My brother, Suleiman, in his 30s, killed by soldiers as he fled; Mohamoud Jama "Ogleh," my children's grandfather, shot by soldiers. A friend of mine, Khadija Haji Abdi, a woman in her 50s, died when a bomb hit her home and the house collapsed on her.

The third testimony is that of Ismail Dualeh Mohamed, a seaman who was interviewed by Africa Watch in Cardiff on July 6, 1989:

If they [Somali government forces] had made any distinctions between SNM<sup>4</sup> fighters and civilians, there wouldn't have been so many casualties and there wouldn't have been so much suffering. What they wanted, to put it simply, was to wipe us out. A hail of bullets came at you from every direction. As we fled Burao, my wife was hit by a bullet and badly wounded. My mother-in-law

died when a bomb hit their house. My mother's niece was also killed. So many people have died in this war, including so many members of my own extended family. Only God can count the numbers.

The fourth oral testimony on Somalia is that of Jama Osman Samater, who had been a political prisoner from 1982 through 1988:

I had just come out from the mosque from Friday prayers when I heard the news of the SNM attack on Burao. It was lunchtime. At 2:30 a whistle blew, announcing a curfew. I went home. The next morning I learned that many businessmen and elders had been arrested. I saw soldiers herding people into cars. They were confiscating all vehicles, including taxis, because when the SNM attacked Burao, taxi drivers had helped the SNM. When they couldn't find the keys quickly enough, they punctured the tires and broke the windows. I understood immediately the gravity of the situation. The soldiers were looting food and medicines from the shops and loading them on to cars. The Gulwadayaal<sup>5</sup> were assisting the soldiers.

As a former political prisoner, I was in danger of being re-arrested. I had to disguise myself. I went into the back of our shop, shaved my head and dressed as a nomad. As I left, I saw two other men arrested. They were "Guun," and Abdillahi Khalif, "Ku Cadeeye," both elders. I don't know what happened to them.

I went towards my house. As I was about to board the bus, one of our shop assistants told me not to go home. Soldiers had just come to the shop looking for me and they must be on their way to the house. I went to hide at a neighbor's. That night, soldiers and NSS<sup>6</sup> officers went to my house. They took all valuables. One of my little sons screamed "faqash" at them and they slapped him across the ears. We learned later that his eardrum burst. I stayed a second night at a neighbor's house. Then, a friend and I hid ourselves in a big rubbish bin on the outskirts of Hargeisa for an entire day. The next night, the SNM attacked Hargeisa and we came back to town. On our way back, we passed a house near a military checkpoint belonging to Yusuf Elmi Samatar and saw soldiers and a tank on the move. We learned that 18 civilians, who had fled the city center and taken shelter there, had been

killed. They were robbed of everything and some of the women were raped.

We stayed in Hargeisa until June 8. My wife, mother, six children, two sisters and their children gathered in one house. After a few days, the shelling started. It was relentless. They shelled homes, even when no one was in the house. The objective was to ensure that no one escaped alive and no house left to stand. Volleys of artillery were being fired from every direction. There was burning everywhere. In front of my sister's house, a wooden house was hit and eight people, mostly women and children, perished. The shock was so overwhelming that we soon lost any sense of fear.

I realized that my suffering in prison was nothing compared to this. In prison, my pain had affected just me. Here everyone was a victim. The shelling did not discriminate. There were even dead animals, dogs and goats, everywhere. The first dead bodies I saw were two or three traders of Asian origin who had lived in Somalia for generations. I went to hide in a mosque. I couldn't walk fast as there were so many dead bodies on the road.

The fifth testimony is that of Khadra Muhumed Abdi, who spoke to Africa Watch in London on June 2, 1989:

On the Friday, I came to our hotel (Oriental Hotel), unaware, at the time, of the SNM attack on Burao. I learned that businessmen and elders were being rounded up. As a former political prisoner, I was nervous. NSS officers came to look for me. I escaped through a back door and hid in a store next door. Later, I asked a young boy to fetch me a taxi and I went to hide in my aunt's house in Dumbuluq district. I was afraid to go home for fear that they would be waiting for me.

The morning after the SNM attack on Hargeisa, I could see our district, Radio Station area, burning. It seemed as if the whole city was on fire. The government was going around with loudspeakers saying that "Four lice-ridden bandits on a suicide mission entered the town and we have now driven them away." They insisted that everything was back to normal and urged people to return to their homes. Unfortunately, many people believed them and were killed.

It was clear that the war was going on whatever the government said. I could not run because of the disability in my leg. [She limps in one leg.] My mother and my two children joined us on the third day of the fighting. A part of our house had collapsed and they tried to hide in the undamaged section. They left when it was no longer safe to stay there. A neighbor gave them shelter but the children had no milk and food was scarce.

We stayed another twelve days in my aunt's house. Soldiers came and took everything we had. What they couldn't take with them, such as trunks, they destroyed. When he sensed our tension, one of them turned around and said to me, "If I hear one word out of you, I will make you carry the heads of your children after I have cut them off." Fortunately, I made the two boys (one was a year and 3 months and the other was two years and 3 months) wear dresses, so they thought they were girls. If they had recognized them as boys, they would have shot them at once. We knew of so many boys, including babies, who had been killed. A neighbor of my aunt's, known as "Cirro," had five sons and two nephews in the house. Because of their ages, he wouldn't let them out of the house. When they ran out of food, he went to buy it himself. When he came back, all seven boys were dead—their throats slit. In that same neighborhood, in a house belonging to Abdillahi Ibrahim Aden, soldiers heard them listening to the BBC. They killed four boys with bazookas.

The shelling wouldn't cease, so we hid in another house. We tried to escape between the compounds of the 24th and the 11th sector of the army. We went to the dry-river bed, about 100 of us, but were driven away by soldiers. Then we tried to escape through a place called Meegaga but turned back when we saw soldiers again. Everyone then just fled—escaping in whatever way they could. I couldn't walk fast, let alone run, because of my foot. One of my cousins and I got lost. We hid in a hut and were found by another cousin who had come to look for us. I couldn't go on. My leg hurt too much. My cousins found a donkey cart for me. We reached Qool'Aday after three days. We found thousands of other people there. I had no idea what had happened to my children and mother.



The final testimony is that of Abdi Mohamed, who Robert Hitchcock interviewed in London in July 1990. Mr. Mohamed had gone to visit relatives in the countrywide southeast of Burao in Togdheer Region. His relatives, who were nomads, had been attacked from the air, their camp bombed and strafed by Somali government planes. They had also found their main water points poisoned, and most of their camels had died from thirst. His testimony indicates the degree to which pastoral nomads were victimized by the Somali government.

Several months before the army attacked Burao [May 27, 1988], I went to see my children who had been staying in the area outside Ainabo. Two of my sons had been arrested by soldiers and accused of being members of the Somali National Movement. The soldiers said that they and other nomads were giving food to the SNM. They beat them very badly in prison but my sons told the soldiers nothing. When they got out they sent word to me in Burao to join them. As I travelled there, I saw many *barkad* [water reservoirs] that had been blown up by the army. One of the soldiers on the truck said that the army destroyed the reservoirs to punish the Isaaks for helping the SNM. They also killed the camels and cattle of people so that they had to move in to the cities to get food. Land mines were placed around the *barkad* to keep people away.

When I got to my sons' camp I found that some of my relatives had been killed. They were shot by the army after some soldiers were hurt by a mine on one of the roads. At night I could hear explosions and gunshots. In the morning we would sometimes find the bodies of people and livestock in camps that had been destroyed by the soldiers. Some of the bodies were burned. I will never forget the smell.

There were so many people killed, nearly all of them Isaaks. The government in Mogadishu wanted to destroy the Isaaks ever since 1982 when a state of emergency was declared.

### III. The Tyua of Western Zimbabwe

The Tyua Bushmen of western Zimbabwe and northeastern Botswana are an agropastoral and fishing people who are former foragers. Numbering approximately 1,000 in the Tsholotsho and Bulalima Mangwe Districts in western Zimbabwe and 6,000 in northern Botswana, the Tyua were affected by dispossession as a result of land being set aside for white settlers, the establishment of national parks and game reserves, the imposition of hunting laws which prevented them from obtaining wildlife legally, and forced resettlement into "protected villages" during the Zimbabwean War of Independence (1965–1980). Today many Tyua work on the farms and ranches of other people, including Tswana, Kalanga, and Ndebele and they sell handicrafts, meat, salt, and beer to earn extra income.

In the early 1980s, after Zimbabwe achieved its independence, tensions continued to be felt, particularly in Matabeleland, where one of the major groups of freedom fighters, the Zimbabwe African Peoples Liberation Army, the military wing of the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), had its primary base of support. Some of the former guerrillas felt that they had not been treated appropriately by the new government, and tensions erupted into conflict in late 1980 and early 1981. Some of the former guerrillas returned to the bush and began what turned into a low-level insurgency. Beginning in 1982 and continuing into the mid-1980s, the Zimbabwe government carried out counterinsurgency operations against what they termed "dissidents." These operations included military attacks on villagers in western Zimbabwe, kidnappings of suspected terrorists, torture and murder of detainees, committing a wide range of atrocities against the civilian population, and restriction of the movement of food into the area.

The man who described some of these and other events occurring in the 1982–1985 period was an elderly Tyua who had been imprisoned during the Zimbabwe war for independence. Subsequently, he was detained by the new government on suspicion of having supported the dissidents. The interview was conducted by Robert Hitchcock in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe, on June 26, 1989. The man requested that his name not be used.

I was living in western Tsholotsho just south of Hwange.<sup>7</sup> I used to live in the game reserve but we were forced to leave by the whites. My father hunted elephants there but he was arrested and put in prison. I helped my mother and brothers and sisters by collecting salt at Sua. But then the war came<sup>8</sup> and the Selous Scouts<sup>9</sup> came to our village and beat us up. My brother was shot as we watched. They kept saying, "You are Bushmen. You should not support the black people."<sup>10</sup> I was glad when Smith<sup>11</sup> lost the war and we got a new government. I voted in the elections. I thought that everything would be good with a new government. The Bushmen would be treated like other people, not flogged with sticks like we were by the white farmers.

Then the killings began. At first it was white people, part of Smith's army, who came to Tsholotsho and shot people. I saw my best friend taken away by the soldiers in a truck. I never saw him again. Many people were taken away. The soldiers came at night. Sometimes they shot people in their beds. They were after Ndebele and Bushmen. They called us dissidents. But we were just people trying to make a living.

At that time the drought was very bad. There were no crops in the fields, and the wild fruits were very few. Even elands<sup>12</sup> were dying in the bush. Then the government said we could not get food. They stopped the trucks from coming to the stores. We were very hungry, and children and old people died of starvation. People even ate their skin blankets and shoes.

It was then that the soldiers in red hats<sup>13</sup> came to my village. They said that we should send women to help them carry water. Later we learned that the women had been raped. Two of the women from our village were shot by the soldiers. The army people would come to Tsholotsho and say that we were dissidents. They pointed to people and they were taken away. Later we heard they had been killed and their bodies dumped into old mines. There were many places where the bodies were left. We would sometimes find them when we were looking for lost cattle.

My close friend Khunou was arrested by the soldiers. They said that he had robbed stores and stolen cattle. I told them that he was innocent, but they said, "He is just a

Bushman. Bushmen are animals." That night they shot him. His wife and children fled to Botswana after the soldiers burned their houses and killed their chickens.

I was arrested by the soldiers in red hats and taken to an army base. They did not give us food or water. They tortured me by putting my head in water and hitting me on the backside. They kept calling me a "dumb Bushman." Some of the people in the camp with me died from the beatings.

Many innocent people died because of the army. We were just trying to make a living like we always have. But they felt we were just Bushmen. I wondered then why I voted for this government.

## NOTES

1. General Kjell Eugenio Laugerud Garcia, who became president of Guatemala in 1974 after the election of Christian Democrat Efraín Ríos Montt was stolen by the military.

2. General Romeo Lucas Garcia, who was elected president of Guatemala in 1978.

3. Guatemalan special forces, part of the military which had received special training in counterinsurgency techniques and methods of torture (see Montejo, n.d.).

4. The Somali National Movement, an opposition organization composed mainly of Isaaks, one of several Somali clans, that was formed to fight the government forces of President Siad Barre in northern Somalia.

5. The Gulwadayaal, also known as Victory Pioneers, were paramilitary forces, established in the early 1970s, who worked directly for President Siad Barre. They had extraordinary legal authority over and above the Somali police and could charge people with crimes and make arrests.

6. National Security Service, the national security organization of the government of the Somali Democratic Republic.

7. Hwange, formerly Wankie National Park, the largest national park in Zimbabwe.

8. The Zimbabwe war for independence, which lasted from 1965 to 1980. The time period he is referring to is the mid- to late 1970s.

9. Elite troops of the Rhodesian military.

10. The black people they were referring to belonged to the Zimbabwe African National Union, ZANU, which was made up of Ndebele, Kalanga, Tonga, and other groups and was headed by Joshua Nkomo.

11. Ian Smith, the Prime Minister of Rhodesia.

12. *Taurotragus oryx*, large antelopes that move in herds up to about 50 animals each and which are highly prized by Bushmen for food because of their high fat content.

13. The members of the Fifth Brigade, a North Korea-trained military unit that was under the Prime Minister's office rather than the regular Zimbabwe Army. It was this brigade which was said to have been responsible for the killings of as many as 20,000 people in western Zimbabwe in 1982-1983.