

## Remembering the Armenians

By Ellen J. Kennedy, Ph.D., Executive Director

'Race murder,' Henry Morgenthau, US Ambassador, called it – the extermination of all Christian Armenians by the Ottoman Empire government during World War I. And 'race murder' it was, with 1,500,000 men, women, and children dead of torture, starvation, and killing. Although this catastrophe was widely documented, there was no intervention to stop the slaughter.

The Armenian horror inspired Holocaust survivor Raphael Lemkin to coin the word 'genocide' and to write the United Nations Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide. Nevertheless, this tragedy became almost a footnote to history. In fact, Hitler, when asked about carrying out the extermination of all of Europe's Jews, infamously replied, "Who today remembers the Armenians?"

This year is the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

### Ending Impunity

When the war ended in 1918, Britain, France, and Russia (the Allies) wanted to prosecute German, Austrian, and Turkish leaders for violating the laws of war and the 'laws of humanity.' Government and military leaders were arrested. Military trials and at least six domestic trials were held. Despite public hatred for the previous regime, the response to these courts was lukewarm. On August 11, 1920, the Turkish government stopped all the court proceedings.

The first-ever international war crimes tribunal was also planned to prosecute the 'Young Turk' leaders of the Ottoman Empire and other leading perpetrators.

The British Foreign Office demanded that 141 Turks be tried for crimes against British soldiers, and another 17 tried for the crimes against Armenians during World War I.

### Failing to Find Justice

In the end, however, no tribunal was held. Some say there wasn't enough forensic evidence. Others assert that there were no international laws to use at the tribunal. However, there also was little interest. The Allies saw a large Turkish population waiting to modernize, a potential partner for trade



Armenian victims

and economic development. They didn't want to risk their long-term relationship with Turkey.

The British also wanted their prisoners of war back. In 1921, they released 145 Turkish perpetrators in exchange for 29 British soldiers. This ended any possibility of an international tribunal.

### Denying Genocide

Despite extensive personal testimonies, photographs, and court documents, today's Turkish government consistently denies that genocide occurred. However, 21 countries; 43 US states, including Minnesota; and leading scholars around the world recognize that what happened was, indeed, genocide.

The leading perpetrators were never prosecuted for their crimes. The survivors never received restitution for their losses. The victims' descendants never found justice for the terror inflicted on their ancestors. But we can remember those who perished and those who stood up against the violence.

In Minnesota, Texas, California, and New Hampshire, every April is designated as Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month. Six genocides are officially memorialized during April – Darfur, Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia, the Holocaust, and the Armenian genocide. This year, we will all remember. Attend an event, watch a film, or stage a reading of our play "Upstanders: Taking a Stand against the Armenian Genocide." Visit [www.worldwithoutgenocide.org](http://www.worldwithoutgenocide.org) for additional resources.

World Without Genocide, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, **educates** to raise awareness about past and current conflicts and **advocates** at local, state, and national levels for policies and legislation to protect innocent people, prevent genocide, prosecute perpetrators, and remember those whose lives have been affected by genocide.

# A World of Upstanders: Rescuers and Prosecutors

At Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, Israel, 25,271 people are memorialized as Righteous Among the Nations, non-Jews from 45 countries who saved Jews during the Holocaust.



Law students, genocide survivors, and World Without Genocide staff at the first meeting of the World of Upstanders Committee.

There has been no similar effort to recognize people who risked their lives to rescue innocent people since the Holocaust, during the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Guatemala, East Timor; in today's atrocity crimes in Myanmar, Congo, Central African Republic, Sudan; and many other places. Yet in every conflict, there are brave men and women who stood up to save others.

World Without Genocide will begin a program to recognize these 'upstanders' from around the world who have rescued others or who prosecuted criminals in genocides and atrocity crimes since the Holocaust.

Members of the public from around the world are invited to nominate those no longer living and those alive today. The narratives will be archived online for future research, education, and commemoration.

Nominations are due to [admin@worldwithoutgenocide.org](mailto:admin@worldwithoutgenocide.org) by February 15, 2015. Selections will be made by the World of Upstanders Committee and announced by March 15. Those chosen will be honored at the World Without Genocide Gala on May 19 in Minneapolis.

More information about *A World of Upstanders* and nomination forms are available at [www.worldwithoutgenocide.org](http://www.worldwithoutgenocide.org).

## Travel to Germany and Poland

### Commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War II and the Holocaust

World Without Genocide and Congregation Shir Tikvah, Minneapolis will host a ten-day trip to Germany and Poland to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II.

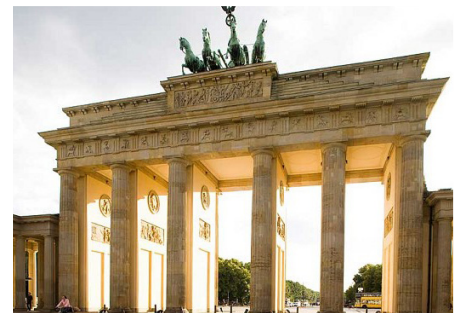
The trip will tour Holocaust sites, memorials, and Jewish heritage landmarks. Participants will explore famous cities, witness the rebirth of European Jewry, and meet Jewish leaders and community members championing human rights in Germany and Poland.

The trip will take place October 7-18, 2015. Rabbi Michael Latz of Congregation Shir Tikvah and Dr. Ellen J. Kennedy, Executive Director of World Without Genocide, will lead the trip.



Trip highlights include:

- Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, Nuremberg;
- Palace of Justice, site of Nuremberg Trials;
- Brandenburg Gate;
- Berlin Holocaust Memorial;
- The Reichstag;
- Book-burning Memorial;
- Checkpoint Charlie;
- Shabbat services and dinners with community leaders in Berlin and Warsaw;
- Lodz and Warsaw Ghettos;
- Auschwitz-Birkenau; and
- Oskar Schindler Factory Museum.



The Brandenburg Gate, Berlin, Germany

The program fee of \$3,600 includes accommodation, transportation, tour educators, train ticket from Warsaw to Krakow, and all breakfasts, one lunch, and five dinners. Airfare is not included. Registration is online by searching "Shir Tikvah" at [www.arzaworld.com](http://www.arzaworld.com).

# Fall Highlights



World Without Genocide associates advocated at the National Conference for State Legislators in Minneapolis for policies to end human trafficking and protect victims.



Dr. Guy Stern, former Ritchie Boy, and Dr. Ellen Kennedy at the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington, Michigan.



Students at the Summer Institute participated in a mock trial.



Participants at the 2014 Summer Institute for High School and College Students, *Twenty Years After the Rwandan Genocide: Preventing Hate Locally and Globally*.



Volunteers and interns at a film screening of *The Soap Myth*.



Summer Institute students assemble the *Tents of Witness: Genocide and Conflict* exhibit.



Speakers at *Religions and Genocide: From the Holocaust to ISIS*. (Back L to R) FBI Special Agent Jeffrey VanNest, James Petermeier, J.D., Dr. Ellen Kennedy, FBI Special Agent Christopher Langert, (front L to R) Victoria Dutcher, Christie Nicoson, and Brian Smith. Not pictured: Elizabeth Meske.



World Without Genocide supporters at St. Joan of Arc Church, Minneapolis. (L to R) Dave Saumweber, Dr. Ellen Kennedy, Father Jim Cassidy, Julie Madden, and Judy Saumweber.

# Promoting Human Rights in Burma/Myanmar



Burma, also known as Myanmar, has seen many positive reforms in recent years. The constitution was rewritten in 2008. In 2010, general elections were held for the first time in twenty years. Thein Sein, the prime minister under the former military junta, was elected president.

and the Yangon University Department of Law in the capitol of Burma. This will help students and staff exchange ideas and information about the practice of law in the two countries.

In order to deepen the connection between the schools, World staff and associates will travel to Burma this winter. They will connect Yangon law students with their peers in Minnesota. The team will also teach human rights and English at a Buddhist monastery.

There are currently over ten million people in the world who are considered stateless. They have no home, can't move freely, and often lack access to education, medical care, and legal employment. To promote human rights in Burma and support an end to statelessness, join the United Nations #iBelong campaign to ensure everyone has a right to a nationality. More information is at [www.ibelong.unhcr.org](http://www.ibelong.unhcr.org).

The new government has gradually emerged from international isolation and sanctions. Several US officials have visited, including President Obama and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

However, despite these promising signs, much work remains to be done. The country is in the bottom ten percent for press freedom and ranks 149 out of 189 on the Human Development Index. Many minority ethnic groups, including the Karen, Shan, and Karenni, suffer at the hand of the national army and extremist groups that act with impunity. Rohingya Muslims have been denied citizenship and are targets of execution, torture, rape, forced labor, and displacement. Approximately 140,000 Rohingya have fled their homes due to discrimination and violence, and over 240 have been killed. Many Rohingya are held in internment camps, where they suffer from a lack of adequate health care, education, water, and sanitation.

Over 7,000 refugees from Burma have come to Minnesota to escape torture and violence. Minnesota now has the highest population of Karen outside of Southeast Asia.

In spring 2014, World facilitated a Memorandum of Understanding between William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota



Refugees from Burma.

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## World Associates Receive Rotary Peace Fellowships



Christie Nicoson and James Petermeier, 2015 Rotary Peace Fellows.

Christie Nicoson, World Without Genocide Program and Operations Director, and James Petermeier, J.D., World Without Genocide associate, have been selected as 2015 Rotary Peace Fellows. They will both attend Uppsala University in Sweden next fall to pursue master's degrees in Peace and Conflict Studies.

The Peace Fellowship program funds students to study conflict resolution and peace at one of five international universities. Christie and James were nominated by Rotary District 5950 in Minnesota and are two of fifty individuals chosen from around the world. Rachel Beecroft, former World Without Genocide staffer, begins a Peace Fellowship at the University of Queensland, Australia this January.

More information about the Rotary Peace Fellowship can be found at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org).

# World News Update

## IRAQ AND SYRIA

The Islamic State, also known as ISIS, is fighting against Shiites and other religions and ethnic groups for control of the region. ISIS has captured oil wells, gas fields, and water dams in efforts to create a worldwide Sunni caliphate. The group imprisons and beheads international journalists and aid workers, commits public crucifixions, and performs mass executions of religious and ethnic minorities. In addition, ISIS abducts and sells women and girls into sex slavery. The US has formed a coalition of more than 60 countries in an attempt to defeat ISIS.



## NORTH KOREA

A United Nations committee has officially condemned North Korea's human rights violations by referring the nation's leaders to the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity. For years, the world has known about the regime's barbaric starvation, torture, rape, forced labor, and murder of its own people. In response to the UN's action, North Korea has issued threats of nuclear testing.



## SUDAN

Recent human rights reports have revealed mass rapes of women and girls by the Sudanese military in Darfur. The UN Security Council has asked that UN peacekeepers be given full access to investigate the allegations. The Sudanese government has requested that the peacekeeping force create an exit plan, expressing a failure to fulfill its goal of promoting peace and establishing security.



## MEXICO

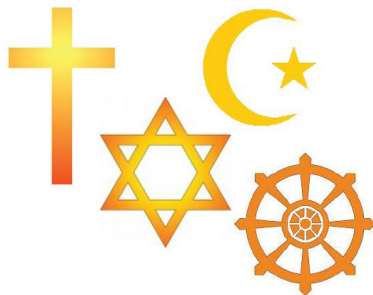
This September, 43 college students disappeared in Guerrero, one of Mexico's poorest states. The mayor of the city was found to have ordered the abductions and he was dismissed from his post. Later evidence found that he ordered a drug gang to murder the students. Social unrest has been growing in Mexico due to an increase in military clashes, a rise in the use of torture, and rampant poverty amidst years of drug-fueled violence.



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## Religions and Genocide

After the Holocaust, world leaders vowed 'never again,' never again would innocent men, women, and children perish based solely on who they are – their religion, race, ethnicity, or national origin. Laws and policies were put into place to deter and punish genocide and other atrocity crimes.



But 'never again' has meant 'over and over again' as genocides happened throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and now into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Today terrorist Christian and Muslim militias are pitted against each other in Nigeria, Mali, and the Central African Republic. Hardline Sunni Muslims are slaughtering

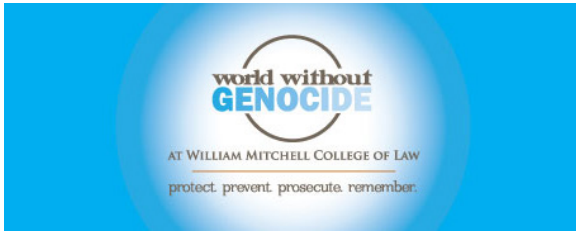
moderate Sunnis, Shiites, and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria. Radical Buddhists are targeting Muslims and Christians in Burma/Myanmar. And there have been more than 600 riots

against Jews throughout Europe and the US.

Media coverage labels these conflicts as 'sectarian,' as groups within a religious denomination lashing out against each other over ideology, or often as separate denominations fighting for religious supremacy in an area. But religion is only the surface issue, or the proximate cause, of these conflicts. At the heart of the targeting of innocent civilians is an effort to grab power, resources, and political control, the ultimate causes.

This year we examine the subject of religion and genocide through a number of talks, films, and in the upcoming 2015 **Summer Institute for High School and College Students**, at which we will look at crises from the Holocaust to the terror being perpetrated by ISIS. Our goal is to understand the ultimate causes and to support policies and laws that prevent these causes from erupting into atrocity crimes.

Learn more about these events and the Summer Institute at [www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/events](http://www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/events).



875 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105

# A WORLD WITHOUT GENOCIDE- *Making it our legacy.*

## WINTER - SPRING 2015 EVENTS

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|----------------|---|--------------|---|
| <b>January</b> | <i>The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz</i>   | <b>March</b> | <i>Rwanda: The Legacy of Genocide</i>   |
| <b>28</b>      | <b>Film screenings, <i>Numbered</i> and <i>Escape from Auschwitz</i></b><br>Wednesday, January 28, 7:00-9:00 pm   | <b>21</b>    | <b>Film screening, <i>Ghosts of Rwanda</i>, and talk</b><br>Saturday, March 21, 7:00-9:30 pm  |
| <b>March</b>   | <i>Exploring Human Rights</i>   | <b>April</b> | <i>Commemorating the Cambodian Genocide</i>   |
| <b>1-7</b>     | <b>Spring break study trip to New York and Washington, D.C.</b><br>Sunday, March 1-Saturday, March 7, 2015  | <b>11</b>    | <b>Film screening, <i>Between a Crocodile and a Tiger: Cambodia 1973-1979</i>, and workshop</b><br>Saturday, April 11, 7:00-9:00 pm   |
| <b>March</b>   | <i>International Women's Day</i>  | <b>April</b> | <i>The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide</i>  |
| <b>11</b>      | <b>Panel, "Ending Violence Against Women Globally and Locally"</b><br>Wednesday, March 11, 7:00-9:00 pm<br>The Woman's Club at Loring Park<br>410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403 | <b>15</b>    | <b>Talk by Dr. Richard Hovannisian, American-Armenian historian</b><br>Wednesday, April 15, 7:00-9:00 pm  |
| <b>March</b>   | <i>Art exhibit: Voice to Vision reception and film</i>  | <b>May</b>   | <i>World Without Genocide gala</i>  |
| <b>17</b>      | <b>Commemorating the Cambodian and Armenian genocides and the Holocaust</b><br>Thursday, March 19<br>5:30-6:45 pm reception; 7:00-9:00 pm film  | <b>19</b>    | <b>Recognition of Upstanders: Rescuers and Prosecutors</b><br>Tuesday, May 19, 7:00-9:00 pm<br>The Woman's Club at Loring Park<br>410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403 |

All events will be held at **William Mitchell College of Law Auditorium**, 875 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105, unless otherwise noted. All events offer **CLE credits** for lawyers, **POST credits** for police, **clock hours** for educators, and **PLP diversity credit** for Mitchell students.

Please confirm events at [www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/events](http://www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/events)