**Is There Genocide in Eastern Congo?**

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**Abstract**

After taking African history at the United World College, I become keenly interested in the Congo narrative. The Congolese people have suffered horrific atrocities as a direct consequence of human greed, a culture of corruption and above all the failure of leadership. Moreover, this country blessed with numerous natural resources in comparison to all the other African countries has been plagued by unfulfilled hopes and dreams. This narrative to a certain extent portrays the story of the continent as a whole. A pathetic story of a continent full of potential but yet, still remains one of the poorest places on the planet. So, I wanted a topic that would not be merely interesting but also a close to my heart.

Congo offered so much material to research but as soon as became aware of news media about the ‘silent genocide’ that was occurring in eastern Congo, I knew I had found the key area of research. I read reports of women being raped, limbs being cut off by gangs of youth, people being displaced from their homes and reports of mass killing taking place. I felt that there was a moral obligation for me to do my part in shading some light on the horrors that were taking place in eastern Congo. As humans we tend to have short term memories or amnesia of what genocide looks like and can, at times, miss the importance of helping the victims. The main theme of the research is to determine if what is happening in eastern Congo can be labeled as genocide. To achieve this I would have to begin by identifying a working model that will help clarify the definition of genocide.

I also wanted to indentify some of factors that help create an ideal breeding environment for genocide to occur or that in turn lead to appalling human rights abuse to occur. Are there warning signs and what are some of the ways that groups rationalize genocide or ethnic cleansing. Furthermore, what lessons can we learn from the Congo experience and what can be done to help bring practical solutions to the conflict? The paper will attempt to provide viable suggestions that need to be taken in order to end the mass and systematic killing of innocent civilians in this region. The collection of data will come from newspaper reports, articles, books and other primary sources such UN archives and eye witness reports. In addition to this, collecting valuable data from experts on the ground will offer accurate and relevant information. The conflict can be described as indicating that some genocidal acts have taken place, however currently one cannot really say that genocide in its fullest form has occurred. It is important to use the steps recommended which are designed to mitigate the causes of genocide if we are going to stop genocide from happening.

**Introduction**

The former secretary general of the United Nations Boutros Boutros Ghali once said “For us, genocide was the gas chamber - what happened in Germany. We were not able to realize that with the machete you can create genocide” (BBC). There had been a dominant school of thought arguing that the Holocaust occurred mainly due to the availability of modern technology which made it easier to eradicate a group of people. However, the subsequent genocides in Cambodia and most recently Rwanda dramatically altered this school of thought and illustrated that genocide could easily occur outside the context of modern weaponry. Simply defining what constitutes genocide is a complicated affair and there is always the danger for one to misuse the term in the hope of bringing some publicity to a certain conflict. However, it is also important not to avoid using the term, even though historically it has caused controversy for many nations. On the one hand some have a keen desire to avoid its usage because they are afraid of being held accountable for the genocidal atrocities by the world media. Likewise, the perpetrators do not want their crimes to be categorized as genocide or war crimes as they could possibly face prosecution in the future. The paper will look for a workable definition of genocide and examine whether one can really say silent genocide has occurred in eastern Congo. In addition to this, examine the root causes of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Are there any preventive measures that can be implemented to avoid genocide from occurring? Moreover, can one come up with viable solution to ending conflict once mass killing has already commenced.

**Understanding the Term Genocide**

The term "genocide" was created by Raphael Lemkin a polish Jewish legal scholar in 1944. “Lemkin settled upon a hybrid that combined the Greek derivative geno, meaning ‘race’ or ‘tribe’, together with the Latin derivative cide, from caedere, meaning ‘killing’ ” (Power, 42) . Moreover, in 1984 the “UN adopted the genocide Convention, which defines genocide as the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethic, racial or religious group based on discriminatory preconditions”(Payne, 61). Richard Payne argues that while originally genocide had not been officially declared as a crime under international law; there was a dramatic shift mainly due to the dreadful atrocities that the Nazis committed against the Jewish population in Europe. Payne also subjects that the main reason why countries are reluctant to define conflicts as genocide is because the Genocide Convention requires member countries to not only prevent but also to punish genocide (Payne, 62). This was clearly illustrated during the Rwandan genocide when the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher was visibly seen trying to avoid the categorization of the events on the ground as genocide. That is why finding a workable definition of what genocide entails is vital if one is going to claim that genocide is occurring in eastern Congo. When Lemkin was asked what good categorizing mass murder as crime would do, he responded by stating that “only man has law, and law must be built” (Power, 55). Therefore, he wanted to provide the international community with legal framework which would hold those who committed atrocities accountable. Moreover, he was not utopian in his thinking as he did not believe that violators would immediately stop committing crimes. He nevertheless felt that if the law was implemented, it would act as a punitive and preventive measure for future criminals. Lemkin also envisioned that the definition would be implemented by each member countries. Therefore, one can deduce that he did not believe the world was ready for an international court because it would have been seen as a drastic encroachment on state sovereignty. Samantha power agrees with this argument by writing, countries could try genocide suspects anywhere the killings were perpetrated (Power, 56). Lemkin wanted genocide to become everyone’s concern and to free mankind from a horrible curse (Power, 59). He also realized that adopting the term would be difficult, but enforcement would be even more complex (Power, 61).

Lemkin also articulated that the idea of ethnocide which can be defined as systematic destruction of a culture without slaughtering of its holders should be also be considered as genocide (Chalk, 10). In the book, *The History and Sociology of Genocide*, Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn state that the UN definition is both limited and possesses certain legal flaws that render it merely as having symbolic value but of no practical significance. According to these authors, one of the main reason why this is so is because the victorious nations wanted the definition to mainly apply to the losers of World War II and were willing to compromise on the wording of definition in order to avoid rendering the whole convention a sham. Another reason for its incompetence is the basic structure of the UN itself. They argue that it is composed of member countries that are willing to use it as a political stage, while opposing the creation of international regulatory and enforcement institutions that might undermine their own sovereignty. Moreover, since the “perpetrators of genocidal killings are usually sovereign states, it seems unlikely that the UN member countries would act against their one of their own” (Chalk, 11). The authors make a very interesting claim that the restrictiveness of the definition would mean that none of the genocidal killings committed after its adoption would be counted as genocide. This makes it difficult for one to call ongoing conflict genocide. Based on UN reports and countless eye witness accounts, it is clear that some form of mass slaughter of noncombatants is occurring in eastern Congo. In recent times there have been many authors who have recognized the importance of the UN definition of Genocide as a good starting point while also realizing the need for its clarification.

In the book *The History and Sociology of Genocide,* Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohnreject and resist the temptation of wanting to create an entirely new term mainly because the term genocide has now become ingrained in the international linguistic and legal definition. It would thereby be ill-advised and useless to completely offer a new definition. In their research they argue that, ”Genocide is a form of one sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator”(Chalk, 23). In this definition they emphasize that genocide is generally characterized as one sided, which indicates that there is no reciprocity on the part of the victims. They also argue that while the perpetrator’s intention is to wipe out the victim group, the latter have no plans to retaliate (Chalk, 23). Unlike the UN definition, the term mass killing would entail all the people of the member group that were deemed to be victims keeping in mind that historically exterminating 100 percent of a group is very rare. Furthermore, according to these authors there must be a clear distinction between the intent to eliminate all the members of a particular group and the ‘empirical methods’ that these acts may be achieved through (Chalk, 23). Therefore, one would have to exclude those cases of mass murder, slaughter or riots that had a ‘lesser aim’ no matter how disagreeably horrific these cases might be. They also state that in the one-sided mass killings of casualties in war, whether military or civilian are excluded from this definition. This means that when countries are at war, there are no actual innocent parties. While it is obvious that civilians are defenseless during such a war, they are still a part of the nation that is at war. In her book, *A Problem From Hell*, Samantha Power argues that “no genocide since the Holocaust has been completely black and white, and policymakers have been able to accentuate the grayness and moral ambiguity of each crisis”(307) Therefore, this is why it is extremely difficult to track claims of genocide during civil wars and ethnic conflicts. The implication of the last claim will open up a plethora of problems in defining the conflict in eastern Congo but having a clear working definition will to some extent mitigate these problems.

**Causes of Genocide**

To understand the conflict in eastern Congo one has to examine some of the root causes of genocide. After the holocaust most people were amazed at how one could deliberately in a systematic manner decide to exterminate a whole group of people. The first root cause of genocide is the dehumanization of a group simply because of who they are. According to authors Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, genocide occurs when the victim group is preserved to be subhuman by the perpetrator group. We see this clearly in the case of the Rwandan genocide where the Tutsis were called cockroaches. Moreover, the people who want to create a genocidal mindset among the populace usually indoctrinate the masses into thinking that the victim group is less than human, evil and worthless (Chalk). This indoctrination is done through propaganda using medium such as radio, text-books and government policies which are created to emphasize differences among groups in a particular society. One clear example is when the Nazis started to segregate the Jews by placing them in ghettos or in communes. Once this separation happens, it then becomes easier for people to accept the victim group as foreign. One can then deduce that some form of xenophobia has to be created in order to introduce seeds of hatred that has the potential to germinate into genocide or ethnic cleansing.

The second cause which is connected to the first is the idea of blind obedience to persons in authority. An excellent illustration of this is that when the Germany soldiers pledged allegiance to the *fuhrer* (Hitler) they were subsequently prepared to do whatever was requested by the Nazi leadership. Stanley Milgram asserts that if we were to examine mankind’s pathetic history, we would discover that the most horrific atrocities have been committed as a result of conformity to authority rather than rebellion (Kressel, 170). Drawing inferences from this argument, the notion that humans remain consistent in their moral actions and in the application of their values when subjected to external factors is inaccurate. Group think and blind obedience to authority have been cited as the main reason for most of the genocides that occurred in the 20th century which was the bloodiest century in human history. Psychological studies have shown that ordinary citizens were likely to agree to torture a stranger when placed under the supervision of someone they preserved to be in a position of authority. This point is illustrated by the following words “people obey because they enter an ‘agentic state’ in which they relinquish personal responsibility to an authority that they perceive as legitimate” (Kressel, 171). There is also a school of thought that contends that people obey evil demands depending on the situation they are exposed to, rather than because of the dispositional state of mind or moral character. However, researchers have discovered that the higher one is in the social structure or the more educated one is, the less likely to conform to the wishes of authority (Kressel, 235). This might explain why during the Cambodian genocide (1975 to 1979), those whom Pol Pot the leader of the barbaric Khmer Rouge regime deemed to be from the upper class or belonging to the intellectual group were executed. Therefore, the uneducated becomes easy target for manipulation and he/she becomes ruthless when dealing with those whom would have looked down on him during less chaotic times. Nevertheless; one can see that obedience to authority can have a tremendous influence on the one who is asked to carry out the killings during the time of Genocide, especially if he/she is uneducated or poor.

The third cause of genocide is the existence of an impoverished population. Antoine Rutayisire who served as a Commissioner on the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in Rwanda said that “at the root of every conflict there is a human need that is not satisfied”( Rutayisire). When basic needs are not being met it is the ideal breeding ground for hatred to arise as there is a relationship between poverty and extreme actions. Neil Kressel states that, “Terrible poverty prevails in many societies where mass hate has erupted and many more where it threatens to strike in the future” (Kressel, 272). Antoine Rutayisire also argued that hatred usually caused by anger or some form of bitterness which in turn is caused by frustration with the status quo. This frustration can arise from unequal distribution of resources between different ethnic groups. It can also come when one group seems to hold most of the political power as this might increase the level of jealously. As stated before, this carries with it the assumption that affluent people are less likely to hold on to doctrines of hate. Thereby, the pioneers of genocide are likely to exploit existing inequalities as a way of convincing ordinary men to kill. This analysis would prove to be correct in the cases of Rwanda, Cambodia and Bonia to some extent. This is the idea that poverty was a major contributing factor to why genocide occurred in these countries. Does that mean that genocide cannot happen in a more affluent country? The answer to this question would have to be no because during recent genocides it was both the rich and the poor who were directly involved in extermination of fellow humans. In addition to this, it is important to note that it is the educated who are the ones who establish plans and methods to committee genocide. So no, genocide is not just a poor man’s curse but can affect the rich as well. However, this does not take away the fact that genocide is likely to occur in poor nations for reason already stated. This is not contradictory because even though a few rich educated people might plan the genocide, they will need a poor and angry populace to achieve their aims. Therefore one can deduce that genocide is instigated by a few rich intellectuals but carried out by the many uneducated poor.

Lastly, another main cause of genocide is the existence of political greed and a corrupt political climate. This deals with the lack of strong leadership that is needed to resist those advocating violence. People in powerful positions are able to use their influence to create fear so that they will remain in power. Fear is a very powerful motivator and can cause ordinary men to act in ways they wouldn’t normally agree with. This is different from simply grouping people; because in the case of corrupt political environment the leaders use the artificial groups created to manipulate people in thinking that the situation is kill or be killed. We saw this in the Rwandan genocide where the Hutu extremists announced on the radio that Tutsis were planning to slaughter all Hutus. This created fear and convinced many to carry weapons in the belief that they were saving their tribe. Pioneers of genocide also create nationalistic tendencies that paint non participants as traitors and as enemies of the state. It is difficult for an average citizen to commit genocide, so perpetrators usually know that they have to centralize power and organized mass killing in bureaucratic manner. The authors Frank Chalk and Kurt Johnassohn agree with this analysis by stating, “Given such reluctance for ordinary people in societies to carry out a mass slaughter of defenseless victims, it becomes clearer why the performance of a genocide has always required a high degree of centralized authority and quasi bureaucratic organization”(Chalk, 28). This organization makes it not only easier to carry out genocidal plans but also for it to be carried out in a rapid and efficient manner.

**Current Situation in Eastern Congo**

According to *Enough,* an advocacy group (under the umbrella of the Centre of American Progress) dedicated to ending genocide in Africa, the world’s deadliest war and numerous cases of mass rape continue to rage on in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. If one does not agree with this assessment, then the fact that more people have died in this conflict than any other conflict since the end of World War II should do the trick. A BBC report puts in these words, “The east of the country is still plagued by army and militia violence despite the end of the country's five-year war in 2003 in which more than five million people lost their lives - the deadliest conflict since World War II”. Moreover, for over a decade the population has been trapped in a constant cycle of violence committed by armed groups. These armed groups consist of foreign rebels from neighboring countries and the Congolese army. In addition, there have been accusations that these armed militias are able to terrorize civilians because they receive financial assistance from multinational organizations and foreign governments that want to have a share of the mineral wealth. These accusations have lead to a Canadian Company Anvil Mining being sued by victims of the conflict and investigated for its alleged involvement in this chaotic conflict. The executive director of Raid (Rights and Accountability in Development) Patricia Feeney stated that “the allegations contained in the lawsuit were the most serious against a multinational company that she had come across in the last 10 years of working in southern and central Africa”(BBC). Congo is extremely wealthy, abounding in diamonds, gold, copper, cobalt and zinc. The country also has supplies of coltan, which is used in mobile phones and other electronic gadgets, and cassiterite, used in food packaging (Shelly,1). The eastern part of the country holds the majority of these resources and that’s why it has become a centre of attraction for numerous adventurists.

Moreover, the resources have not benefited the people in this area as profit has been placed in personal bank accounts of violent warlords, greedy businessmen and corrupt government officials. Fidel Bafilemba who is a local operative working for the *Enough* project in the DRCaffirms this last statement by stating that “many of Congo’s government officials, their relatives” and commanders in the Congolese National Army have prospered while the country as a whole remains impoverished. He argues that a recent case which clearly demonstrated this increase in inequality was when the Congolese first lady presented a diamond worth $200,000 to the Belgium Queen, while civil servants were on strike protesting wages and poorly paid government soldiers had resorted to harassing civilians. John Prendergast core founder of the *Enough project* and Noel Atama field researcher for *Enough project* in the article *Eastern Congo: An Action Plan to End the Worlds’s Deadliest War;* argue that valuable minerals found in eastern Congo are not the cause of war but rather sustain armed groups and fuel slaughter. In agreement with this school of thought; Sara Egozi and Lisa Starr acknowledge in the article entitled *Your Laptop’s Bloody History,* “The U.N. Security Council has said that these minerals are one of the main factors fueling and exacerbating conflicts in the Great Lakes region of Africa"(Egozi). On the other hand, authors such as Shelly Whitman maintain that the minerals are the root cause of war and that the ethnic divisions are not the main causes of conflict but are instead manipulated by elites when it is to their political and economic advantage (Shelly, 1). If we accept Shelly’s hypothesis then we can quickly conclude that genocide is not taking placed in Congo, because from our working definition genocide is the systematic and intentional elimination of a whole group of people with the intent of wiping them all out because they belong to a particular ethnic group. So Shelly is arguing that the killings are meant to terrorize the population and to safe guard valuable mineral resources not necessary to wipe out one particular group of people. On the other hand, if we were to agree with the assessment of John Prendergast that states that the minerals are not the cause of the conflict, then we should find out what the root cause of conflict is. This will help us determine whether the events in eastern Congo can be classified as genocide.

**Problems with Applying the Term Genocide in Eastern Congo**

There are some scholars who say that there was only one genocide during the last century and that we should not categorize the Holocaust with other cases of mass killings. They also argue that what distinguishes the Holocaust from other cases is that it was the only time in recent history where the intent was to wipe out a whole group of people (Chalk, 323). One would then ask what about cases like Rwanda and Cambodia? The scholars would say these cases were an attempt to destroy an old enemy group, to win a war or to eliminate a culture by killing some of its possessors. This puts us in a dilemma because how can we recognize the holocaust as a horrendous event on its own and still argue that there were other events in the 20th century that to some degree can also be called genocides. Furthermore, would we be downplaying the significance of the holocaust if we were to label what is taking place in eastern Congo as genocide? Addressing this dilemma Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn offer some valuable insights by saying:

“We strongly believe that the Holocaust is a part of a larger category of genocide and that it must be compared with earlier cases of mass killings before its origins, its significance, and the measures needed to prevent its recurrence can be understood. Indeed only by comparing the Holocaust with other cases of genocide can we fully grasp the fact that the Holocaust was the most carefully conceived, the most efficiently implemented, and the most fully realized case of ideologically motivated genocide in the history of the human race”(Chalk, 323).

Therefore, we see that the Holocaust is significant in that it is the bases that researchers can look at in order to determine if genocide is occurring or not. Most significantly the lessons from the Holocaust are meant to motivate the international community to say “never again” (Power, 503). The Holocaust thereby shows a graphic and horrifying account of what happens during genocide. Bill Clinton as presidential candidate put it in these words, “the Holocaust had taught us the costs of silence in the face of genocide” (Powers, 482). The Holocaust also coveys the powerful message, that the human species should find ways to make sure that genocide is punished and prevented at any cost. Nearly the same amounts of people have died in the conflict in Congo, a number estimated to be at 5.4 million, in comparison to the Holocaust where 6 million Jews were slaughtered. Does this mean it is genocide? This raises the number problem, which suggests that it is difficult to determine how many people have to die in order for there to be genocide. Samantha Power in *The Problem From Hell,* articulates that there is and nor can there be an agreement on what number would constitute genocide. For starters if a certain number was required in order to be described as genocide, then it will give the perpetrators a lope hall to kill as long as the killings remain under an arbitrary number that would represent genocide (Power, 65). In addition, the law would be ineffective as a preventative measure if it could only come into effect when a group had been completely or mostly exterminated. Therefore, this is why the UN convention on genocide emphasizes that intent is vital when categorizing genocide, so that preventive action would not have arrived too late (Power, 65).

An accusation that critics often raise that can be problematic, deals with the way the term has been used since being adopted by the UN. The argument is that term genocide has been overused and at times misused to categorize all sorts of minor crimes or crimes that do not fulfill the genocide criteria. Some have argued that the term has become dangerously common place because human rights activists are quick to label any modern conflict as genocide to arouse international attention and reaction. Michael Ignatieff, director of the Carr Centre for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University, agrees, and states, “Those who should use the word genocide never let it slip their mouths. Those who unfortunately do use it, banalise it into a validation of every kind of victimhood” (BBC). There is thereby the danger of over sensationalizing the current events in eastern Congo in the hope of showing that the crime of genocide is happening. Therefore, this temptation should be resisted at all costs as it only serves to undermine the term. Samantha Power also warns that the misuse and trivializing of the term, without a legitimate international body dismissing unreasonable claims about genocide; means that the victims of genocide will find it difficult to differentiate themselves from “crimes against humanity, social marginalization and persecution” (Power, 478). One such example of misuse is when in 2004, a rogue commander captured the town of Bukavu in eastern Congo and said he did it to prevent a genocide of Congolese Tutsis ( Banyamulenge). It was a misuse because it later turned out that fewer than a hundred people had been killed in that town. This is not to say that the loss of life in this case was not regrettable, but that if we are to set legal precedence for genocide the facts have to fall under the working definition of what genocide is. Therefore, to simply label a conflict as genocide for the sake of arousing international condemnation and for the purposes of attracting world attention would be unjust to victims who have faced genocide and misleading to the victims in that particular conflict. Thus, any misuse of the term would nullify all “cognitive content and communicate nothing but the author’s disapproval” (Chalk, 3).

**Is There Genocide in Eastern Congo?**

While a few elites continue to prosper, the eastern Congo remains impoverished and is plagued by constant war, which some have argued has led to divisions appearing along tribal lines. Evidence of this can be found in the following words, “the natural riches have attracted rapacious adventurers, unscrupulous corporations, vicious warlords and corrupt governments who have divided the population between competing ethnic groups” (BBC). Furthermore, these divisions have been exploited by the warring groups as a modern day scenario of divide and rule or in this case divide and steal. However, there is another school of thought that argues that rather than the war causing ethnic divisions, it is Ethic hatred that caused war in the first place. Evidence of this can be found in the following words, “Ethnic hostility, fed by inter-group violence in Congo over the past ten years in addition to the impact of genocide and violence in Rwanda and Burundi, has produced an environment where groups fear their entire existence is under threat and engage in pre-emptive attacks”(USHMM). Therefore, there should be an analysis on the causal relationship between war and ethic hatred. Now, one might ask what the significance of answering this question is. It is important because if the slaughtering of innocent civilians has a direct link to ethnicity, then what’s happing in eastern Congo is genocide.

Most experts on the DRC believe that the current confusion was sparked by the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 as the Hutu extremists and other Hutu civilians fling from Rwanda crossed into eastern Congo (Egozi). The population increase led to ethnic hostility which eventually led to atrocities being committed in the name of one’s tribe (USHMM). In the book *The History and Sociology of Genocide,* Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn emphasize that genocide is generally characterized as one sided, which indicates that there is no reciprocity on the part of the victims. They also argue that “while the perpetrator intends to wipe out the victim group, while the latter have no such plans” (Chalk, 23). Romeo Dallaire who was the commander of UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda said that during the Rwandan genocide he saw that one ethnic group the Hutu, was exterminating civilians from another ethnic group those belonging to the Tutsi (Power, 350). Unlike Rwanda, the conflict in eastern Congo we see that there are a myriad of armed groups belonging to different ethnic groups committing this appalling violence. An example of a rebel group targeting innocent people based on the ethnicity is when a commander of the tribe of the Mai-Mai militia known as Lieutenant Colonel Mayale was arrested on suspicion that he led his rebel group on raids where 303 civilians were raped, 235 women, 13 men, 52 girls and 3 boys (AlJazeera). Therefore, one would have to say that in eastern Congo there is not just one group of perpetrators killing and raping but the violence can be blamed on more than one rebel group or one particular ethnic group. Does this then mean that genocide cannot occur because there is more than one group of perpetrators? The answer would have to be no, because innocent civilians who have no intention of revenge are being killed just because of who they are (Egozi).

As previously stated another key area which can help us categorize a conflict as genocide has to do with intent. In his book *Rwanda and Genocide in the 20th Century*, former secretary-general of Medecins Sans Frontieres, Alain Destexhe, says: "Genocide is distinguishable from all other crimes by the motivation behind it, as it implies an intention to completely exterminate the chosen group” (BBC). This idea that for genocide to exist there has to be clear intent to want to kill the whole group of a particular ethnicity, race or political group has been the subject of much debate. What do we do with cases where there are mass killings but there is no actual intent to destroy the whole group or how do we deal with cases were there was an intent to kill the whole group but only a small part of it was killed?Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn in the book *The History and Sociology of Genocide,* argue that such cases would have to be defined as genocidal massacres. They continue to argue that this categorization is not designed to allow the inclusion of every type of case of massacre or large scale violence but the cases of genocidal massacres should have significant characteristic that fit into the working definition of genocide (Chalk, 26). They also say that the term genocidal massacres can also be used in cases where there is a fusion of genocide and ethnocide that, is, there is no actual intention to exterminate the whole group but its disappearance is intended. Moreover, in these particular cases a part of the victim population would be killed for the sole purpose of terrorizing the reminder group into submission (Chalk, 26). Thereby, one can deduce that although not all the criteria of genocide have been seen in this case, there are still substantial incidents that can full under the genocidal massacres category. For example the use of rape as a weapon of terrorizing one particular ethnic group which is clearly taking place in eastern Congo would full under this label. But one would be right in stating that surely we would need more evidence of genocide for us to label the conflict as genocide.

There are various human rights groups alluding that atrocities in eastern Congo should be called genocide as opposed to mere genocidal Massacres. Organizations like Genocide Prevention have designated eastern Congo as an area of great concern and have called for the US state department to come up with a strategic plan that would stop mass atrocities. Moreover, visiting the Great Lakes Region, Hilary Clinton the Secretary of State said that the conflict in Congo was “one of humanity’s greatest atrocities” (Slevin). The most significant evidence to date of genocide came when a leaked UN report in August 2010 suggested that the Rwandan army in partnership with Congolese rebels of Tutsi origin committed genocide against the Congolese Hutus. Evidence of this can be found in the following words by Hui Min Neo a writer for the Sydney Morning Herald, “Rwandan troops and Congolese rebels may have committed acts of genocide, the UN said Friday, in a hotly contested report on massacres by foreign armies and rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo”. Bryan Mealer in his book *All Things Must Fight to Survive* agrees with these findings. He argues that to anyone who was knowledgeable about the Congolese conflict these findings were not a surprise, but only confirmed events on the ground (Mealer, 301). The report also added that the Rwandan forces in an attempt to hunt down Hutu militia which were pioneers of the Rwandan genocide, had financially supported rebel groups, and allowed them to recruit and smuggle weapons from Rwandan territory (Mealer, 301). The Rwandan justice minister has categorically denied these accusations labeling the claims as “rubbish” and has also tried to have the report suppressed (BBC). The Rwandan President Paul Kagame also warned that the desire for certain groups to advance this “double genocide theory” was unfortunate and could destabilize the region ( Hui Min Neo). The president argued that the accusations are unfounded and illegitimate because it was the RPF under his control that had stopped the Hutu genocide of Tutsis in 1994 (Hui Min Neo).

According to Navi Pillay, the UN high commissioner for human rights, “The report is intended as a first step towards the sometimes painful nonetheless essential process of truth-telling after violent conflict” ( Hui Min Neo). Truth telling allows the victims to gain some closure and gives them an opportunity to tell their stories. It is also valuable because the perpetrators and the general public who might be unaware that genocide happened need to hear the evidence presented. The report says that the attacks were premeditate and carried out in a systematic manner. Furthermore, there are allegations that in some regions check points were set up to indentify people of Hutu ancestry, thereby demonstrating that the attacks were deliberately orchestrated. The report was compiled after interviews with over 1000 witnesses, and also included more paragraphs explaining the difficulties of proving genocide legally (BBB). Therefore, it called for a full judicial investigation to be carried out to determine if the incidents amount to crime of genocide. Salil Shetty, secretary general of Amnesty International said that, “this means investigating and prosecuting those responsible for the horrific crimes perpetrated in the DRC and awarding reparations to the victims” (Hui Min Neo).Thomas Fessy a BBC analyst states that the report not only showed details of unresolved debate on whether alleged genocide of ethnic Hutu between 1996 and 1998, but also presents history documents that can be used as tools to pursue justice and identify those liable for the crimes(Fessy). If political maneuvering by the accused parties does not hide any details in the full report; then evidence in the report will clearly demonstrate that genocide did happen. There needs to be transparence because in the past we have seen genocide perpetrators denying any wrong doing. For example, when the Turkey was accused of committing genocide against Armenians, the government claimed that the reports were fictitious (Power, 10). One can then deduce that acts of genocide have happened in eastern Congo but it all depends on whether the full report will include all the incriminating evidence.

**Recommendation**

Genocide veiled under the cover of war can be tricky to identify but nevertheless when innocent people are dying just because of who they are it deserves are attention. Raising public awareness is the first step that needs to be adopted to begin the process of ending the atrocities in eastern Congo. As the public become more informed, they will not only pressure their governments to care but can also take an active role of advocating for peace and ending of all armed conflict in this troubled region of the world. The second step which is connected with the first step is educating people about the horrors of genocide and dangers of dehumanizing others. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn in the book *The History and Sociology of Genocide,* feel that it would be unwise to just educate children about the past history of genocide without linking it to the present (Chalk, 276). A clear message needs to be conveyed that mass hatred can happen anywhere and that its effects should be fully studied to avoid reoccurrence. In this case it would mean that the Congolese government and other NGOs would have to invest in educating the populous about the danger of fractionalization and dehumanizing of other ethnic group. Offering this education would prevent the uneducated being easily manipulated into hate. This then leads to the third step which is developing leaders with integrity and a servant attitude. However, from the information collected in this paper, we saw that eastern Congo is filled with corrupt and greedy leaders who are in it for themselves. Therefore this step is difficult because changing culture is always difficulty especially if a lot of people prospered under this culture of greed and corruption. Thus, it can only be achieved in the long run by educating the next generation of leaders in the importance of serving their communities. The fifth step is drawn from the realization that poverty is a great bleeding ground for hatred which in turn can lead to unimaginable bloodshed. This means that inequality between ethnic groups has to be addressed and people have to benefit from the mineral trade which depends on having responsible leadership. The basic needs of the population in eastern Congo have to be met in order of reducing the risk of people choosing violence as an expression of their frustration to the status quo. Finally all these steps will be less successful if the perpetrators of genocide are not prosecuted and punished under International law. The role that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has played and will continue to play, in holding violators of the genocide law should both be encouraged and celebrated. Moreover the ICC not only sets legal precedence for future cases but brings an end to impunity and removes any doubt that crimes against humanity will not be punished.

**CONCLUSION**

Raphael Lemkin always had faith that the world leaders would see the value of persecuting violators of the genocide law (Power, 479). Moreover, his coinage of the term genocide has done more good than harm as it has lead to the establishment of an international framework which not only calls for punishment for perpetrators but also brings justice to the victims of genocide. Additionally punishment that the ICC hands out may help stop future genocide (Power, 514). Whatever their motivation; those contemplating participating in crimes of mass hate should know that the international community will not give them a free pass. The paper was able to show that having a working definition of genocide helps us to examine whether genocide is happening or not. Upon analysis of this complex conflict, one can deduce that there are indications that some genocidal acts have taken place, however currently one cannot really say that genocide in its fullest form has occurred. Although the conflict in eastern Congo has some elements which fall under the UN definition of genocide, not all killings are genocide, because some people died as a result of war. Nevertheless, there is ethnic cleansing taking place and strong possibility that genocide will occur if solutions are not found. The six steps recommended are designed to mitigate the causes of genocide so that future genocide and current atrocities are stopped. Future research should compare the killings and rape in eastern Congo to the violence in south Sudan in order to discover if there any similar patterns that may emerge. Future research should also specifically examine the role played by foreign nations in fueling conflict in eastern Congo.

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