

# COUNTERACTING THE RESUSCITATION OF “HISTORICAL TRAUMA” AS A MOTIVE FOR COMMITTING GENOCIDE

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**Abstract** - Historical trauma has been given active attention since the 1960s, when clinicians became alarmed by the number of children whose parents had survived the Holocaust. Historical trauma is the cumulative emotional and psychological pain over the course of a person's life and generations as a result of massive group trauma. Historical trauma can have a variety of consequences for individuals and groups, which may include: unresolved trauma or grief, depression, high mortality increased alcohol abuse, child abuse, and domestic violence.

Historical trauma and the historical memory associated with it are equally present in most peoples who have previously been in conflict (national, religious, interstate wars, etc.). This issue must be approached with great caution and assistance must be given to ensure that the wounds caused by conflicts heal over time, but in no case do not renew the bleeding and give rise to a sense of revenge among the parties to the conflict.

**Keywords:** genocide, crime, trauma, memory, motive, prevention, punishment.

## INTRODUCTION

In the modern period, the UN, by summarizing law enforcement practice and proposals received from member states, presents recommendations aimed at effectively countering: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Thus, since 2001, the UN has adopted ten thematic resolutions directly aimed at preventing genocide. The resolutions are the result of significant progress made by the international community, including within the UN system, in developing appropriate mechanisms and methods for preventing and punishing the crime of genocide, which contributes to the effective implementation of the 1948 Convention.

A distinctive feature of genocide is its target orientation towards a specific group of the population, sometimes with a series of mutual violent actions by certain communities. Therefore, an approach aimed exclusively at preventing conflicts at an early stage is needed. This recommendation is of fundamental importance, as it follows from the title of the text of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article 2. The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocol I thereto.

As recommendations for preventing genocide, the UN pointed to early signs indicating an impending genocide. These include:

- massive, serious and systematic violations of human rights, outbreaks of systematic discrimination and prevalence of hate speech against persons belonging to national, ethnic, racial or religious groups, especially when such language is used in the context of actual or potential violence;
- increasing number of dangerous acts of violence against women and children or creation of conditions conducive to the commission of acts of sexual coercion against these groups, including as an instrument of terror;
- destruction of historical monuments, memorial sites, including at the sites of crimes or atrocities, works of art or places of worship that constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples. The risk of these atrocities increases significantly if the conflict occurs within a state with a repressive regime. The UN recommendation notes that in order to prevent genocide, significant attention should be paid to compensation for harm to victims in countries where armed conflicts have recently occurred and the likelihood of their resumption is highest.

The main reasons that continue to hinder the effective prevention of genocide are:



- lack of political will;
- inability to take prompt and timely measures in response to emerging warning signs of pre-conflict;
- disjointed or fragmented knowledge and experience in conflict prevention.

Even if there is a huge amount of knowledge on the issue of preventing conflicts that contribute to genocide, this information is scattered across different areas, subjects and spheres of practical activity and, accordingly, is rarely applied within the framework of a generalized, systematized and multidisciplinary approach. The UN is further recommended on the need to:

- strengthen the independence of the judiciary and introduce effective civilian oversight of the security forces;
- implement various strategies for maintaining law and order at the community level and ensure the development of processes to strengthen social cohesion of the population, which in many cases play a crucial role as a means of preventing atrocities;
- the inadmissibility of various forms of simplistic approaches to the creation of early warning systems for crimes “in the form of atrocities”. An organized, prepared, strong and representative civil society and free, diverse and independent media capable of freely operating are required to significantly reduce the risk of committing “brutal crimes”. It has been noted that the potential for “brutal crimes” is the deprivation of entire groups of access to economic benefits, to promote changes in society, cultural attitudes and worldviews of people in a spirit of tolerance, solidarity and respect for others. To shape such attitudes and worldviews, a strategy is needed that is designed for a longer term than is currently being done.

The main focus of the UN recommendations is on the use of various means to help eliminate the root causes of violence and genocide: hatred, intolerance, racism, tyranny and dehumanizing public statements that deny entire groups of people their dignity and rights, cooperation between international organizations and civil society.

Archives, oral testimonies and other evidence concerning genocide and serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law must be preserved in order to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of knowledge and the investigation of such violations, as well as to provide victims with access to effective remedies in accordance with international law<sup>1</sup>.

A serious shortcoming in the UN's preventive work on the crime of genocide is that huge resources are spent in response to crises, rather than on preventing genocide crimes.

Although the UN recommendations under consideration cover measures aimed at preventing genocide to the maximum extent, in our opinion it should be noted that in the process of law enforcement practice on crimes of genocide, as well as crimes against humanity, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing, serious violations are allowed in practice that, in their essence, do not contribute to the suppression of the crimes in question, but, on the contrary, to the commission of new crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, terrorism, murders on ethnic grounds, destruction of property, etc., by reviving historical wounds, which are ultimately aimed at renewing past conflicts.

In addition, the UN does not provide a causal relationship between the entities involved in historical conflicts. In addition, contrary to the recommendations of the UN and the requirements of the Genocide Convention, revisionist activities to assess the tragic historical past (conflicts) of a number of countries and the adoption of parliamentary resolutions on this basis, qualifying the actions of the state as genocide, have become widespread in the parliamentary practice of the Council of Europe and a number of states. Such decisions are taken with a gross violation of the requirements of the Genocide Convention, without a decision of a competent court, and also contrary to the gross violation of the national legislation of the states initiating such decisions.

At the same time, one of the parties to the conflict, sometimes for political reasons, is recognized as a victim of genocide. As a rule, outwardly the initiators of such resolutions are citizens, diasporas, having their own ethnic roots and ties to the state, whose ancestors, in their opinion, were subjected

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the UN Secretary-General “On the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies” S/2004/616. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g06/117/07/pdf/g0611707.pdf>

to “genocide”; in fact, behind each such decision, the geopolitical interests of states are manifested, which, ultimately, destabilize international relations. The most depressing impact of such an approach by parliamentarians is the lack of understanding and awareness of the tragic consequences that such a broad interpretation of historical events can lead to, contrary to the requirements of the Genocide Convention<sup>2</sup>.

The widespread practice of using the term genocide too often and inappropriately, without a decision by an authorized court, has been repeatedly criticized in legal literature. The term “genocide” is sometimes incorrectly understood as any example of a mass violation of human rights and is used for purely political, ideological or dogmatic purposes<sup>3</sup>. Despite the narrowness of the legal definition, the word “genocide” is often used not only in the parliamentary practice of individual states, but also in the media, the rhetoric of public figures and officials. The views of certain authors who propose to consider all mass murders of unarmed people as genocide also contribute to the spread of this erroneous opinion<sup>4</sup>. In this case, the fundamental focus of genocide against the groups clearly listed in the 1948 Convention is violated.

In her doctoral research on the nature of the origins of genocide, M.S.Gibert points out that “genocide - unlike other forms of political violence, mass murder, or gross violations of human rights - is the result of a particular “permissive” political culture and a crisis in the society concerned, in which the group of victims is viewed as a dangerous “enemy within” whose mere physical existence, the ideologists of genocide believe, poses a mortal threat to the continued dominance of their community and therefore requires physical elimination”<sup>5</sup>. In her other work, M.S.Gibert rightly notes: “Genocide is not only a horrific phenomenon, but also an extremely complex phenomenon that occurs in a wide variety of times and places and includes “includes various types of collective actors (perpetrators, victims, witnesses, accomplices, rescuers, etc.) and a number of different variables, structures and processes that do not fit neatly into simple, generalizable models”<sup>6</sup>.

### 1. Political speculation around tragic events of historical memory

Unlike most other major human rights treaties, the Genocide Convention does not establish a monitoring mechanism - no UN committee monitors countries' compliance with their obligations under the Convention. Let us give an example from practice. On June 18, 1987, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on a political solution to the Armenian question. With the same text of the resolution, the European Parliament petitions the Council of Europe to obtain recognition from the Turkish government of the Armenian genocide of 1915-1917, which, in the European Parliament's opinion, would allow for the establishment of a political dialogue between Turkey and representatives of the Armenian people.

The proposal to adopt the resolution in question was made by the representatives of the Socialist Group of the European Parliament, the report of the Political Affairs Committee, the resolution of the Minister responsible for Culture and the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, including outside the territory of the Council of Europe, approved at the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 13 November 1986. Since the Turkish state rejects this accusation as unfounded and refuses to recognize the genocide of 1915, thereby, in the opinion of the Council of Europe, the Turkish state deprives the Armenian people of the right to their own history.


<sup>2</sup>Салимов К.Н. Международно-правовые проблемы геноцида // Вестник Бакинского университета. Серия социально-политических наук, 2009, №3, с. 89.

<sup>3</sup>Bartrop P.R. Genocide and the Defeat of Memory // Genocide Studies International, Vol. 14, no. 1, 2022, p.17.

<sup>4</sup>Toward a generic definition of genocide. In Andreopoulos, George (Ed.), Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, p.75.

<sup>5</sup>Maureen S. Hiebert, The origins of genocide: Political culture, crisis, and the construction of victims. PhD. Department of Political Science, University of Toronto, 2007, p.3.

<sup>6</sup>Hiebert M.S. Theorizing Destruction: Reflections on the State of Comparative Genocide Theory. Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal: Vol. 3: Issue. 3: Article 6. 2008, p.310.



The resolution categorically states that the “Armenian genocide of 1915” allegedly committed in Turkey is a historically proven fact, but it has not yet been the subject of political condemnation and has not received due compensation. According to the resolution, Turkey's recognition of the “Armenian genocide” should be considered a deeply humane act aimed at moral rehabilitation in relation to the Armenians, which can only bring honor to the Turkish Government. Then the Resolution states in an affirmative form (without reference to the decision of the International Criminal Court or other judicial body) that the tragic events of 1915-1917 involving Armenians living in the territory of the Ottoman Empire constitute genocide within the meaning of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by resolution 260 (III) of the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1948. Further, the resolution, among other issues, provides for:

- condemnation of the violation of individual freedoms committed in the Soviet Union against the Armenian population;
- strongly condemns any violence and any form of terrorism committed by criminal groups; (no explanation is given of what kind of terrorism is being discussed, what criminal groups committed acts of terrorism, etc.)
- calls for reconciliation between Armenians and Turks;
- undertakes to make a significant contribution to initiatives to encourage negotiations between the Armenian and Turkish peoples.

Let us briefly analyze the Resolution of the European Parliament of 18 June 1987 “On a political solution to the Armenian question” and determine to what extent it complies with the norms of international law and the Genocide Convention. Is the European Parliament resolution under consideration aimed at preventing genocide and other crimes or at inciting new conflicts?

The resolution categorically states that the “Armenian genocide” allegedly committed in Turkey in 1915 is a historically proven fact, but it has not yet been the subject of political condemnation and no one has been paid due compensation. At the same time, the text of the resolution itself does not provide justification for such an assertion. The resolution does not contain references to the decision of the International Criminal Court or any other competent judicial body. There is also no international expert opinion from historians who could have come to such a conclusion, since we are talking about events that took place 73 years ago. This issue was not discussed in advance at a meeting of the relevant committee of the European Parliament and the Turkish side was not even notified of the document being prepared.

The resolution states the “demands of the Armenian people”, while at the same time ignoring the fact that a significant number of the Muslim population also suffered as a result of this conflict.

According to documented data from the Ottoman government, between 1910 and 1922, 523,000 Turks were killed by Armenian armed forces, which were distinguished by their particular cruelty towards the unarmed civilian population, with the support of the enemy army<sup>7</sup>. Studies of the total losses of the Muslim population, based on personal data from the state archives of the Ottoman Empire, show that out of 1.5 million of the Muslims who migrated from the Caucasus to Anatolia during the war, only about 700,000 managed to reach Anatolia. From 1915 to 1920, the number of Muslims killed by Armenians was 530,000. In 1912-1922, 1,200,000 Turks were forced to migrate. During the war of 1914-1918, 600,000 Turks died. Although the Turkish government was accused of committing genocide against the Armenians, these indisputable facts were somehow ignored. The General Directorate of the Archives of the Prime Minister of the Ottoman Empire documented that 523,955 Turks and Muslims were killed by Armenian gangs in Anatolia alone between 1910 and 1922.

Of particular concern is the fact that the Turkish side's arguments were not presented in such a serious accusation, which were not invited at all when the document was prepared. The Resolution does not mention that the issues under study took place during the First World War, on the territory

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<sup>7</sup>Halaçoğlu Y. Sürgünden Soykırıma Ermeni İddiaları. Babıali Kültür Yayıncılığı. ss. sf. 46, İstanbul, 2015.



of Ottoman Turkey. More than 73 years have passed, but not a single historiographer has been invited to conduct a detailed study of the essence of the historical events that took place.

A resolution of the European Parliament is not a legally binding document. According to the practice of the European Parliament, a resolution as a working document is used to express a political position on a topic related to the EU's areas of activity. Such documents only establish political commitments or positions - which are not provided for in the treaties. Therefore, they have no legal force. The resolution is an incentive for further research into the subject and the extent to which action is desirable and possible. It can also be a starting point for the immediate development of regulations or an action program. A resolution may concern any issue. As a rule, resolutions do not contain specific rules and do not lead directly to actions. At the same time, being an official document of the European Parliament, its content must comply with the norms of international law or the obligations assumed by the participating states on the issue under study.

Since the European Parliament in its resolution of 18 June 1987 recognized that the massacres of Armenians that took place from 1915 to 1923 constituted genocide within the meaning of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, subsequently many countries, including Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia and Sweden recognized and condemned this as "Armenian genocide". Currently, the number of countries that have recognized the "Armenian genocide" of 1915 is 33.

The resolution categorically states that the Armenian side regards the events that took place in Turkey in 1915 as a planned genocide.

The most important fact that calls into question the objectivity of the said resolution of the European Parliament is that it was adopted in gross violation of the requirements of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of December 9, 1948, where Article VI states that "persons accused of genocide or other acts enumerated in Article III shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international criminal court as may have jurisdiction over those Parties to the present Convention that have recognized the jurisdiction of such court". The European Parliament subsequently invited all States to:

- Join in the commemoration of the Centenary of the Armenian genocide in the spirit of European brotherhood, solidarity and justice;
- Consider that the denial of genocide and other crimes against humanity, as well as acts of racism, xenophobia or religious hatred, constitutes a clear violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and must be condemned as such;
- Called on EU Member States, together with the EU institutions, to promote the recognition of the Armenian genocide by members of the international community, and reiterated its call on Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide;
- Stressed the importance of taking the necessary legislative measures to prevent the denial of the Armenian genocide;
- Proposed the establishment of a European Day of Remembrance of the genocide to once again recall the right of all peoples and all nations throughout the world to peace and dignity;
- Paid tribute to the memory of the innocent victims of all genocides and crimes committed against humanity;
- Called upon Turkey to respect and fully implement its legal obligations, including those provisions relating to the protection of cultural heritage, and in particular to conduct in good faith a comprehensive inventory of the Armenian and other cultural heritage destroyed or destroyed in the last century.

To its greatest regret, with the adoption of the said Resolution, not only did not cease, but on the contrary, immediately resumed large-scale interethnic clashes between the Turkish and Armenian peoples, accompanied by ethnic cleansing, murders and other serious crimes. Acts of Armenian terrorism motivated by historical revenge have increased significantly, and the terrorist groups themselves are part of the policy traditionally directed against the Turkish population<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup>Wilkinson, P. "Armenian Terrorism" / The World Today, Vol. 39, no. 9, 1983, p.344.



The said Resolution served as a pretext for the resuscitation of “historical trauma”, contributed to the emergence of a sense of revenge for historical grievances inflicted on ancestors, in interethnic conflicts, and led to the resumption of extinct regional conflicts. This time, these clashes began to be observed not on the territory of Turkey, but on the territory of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, and were directed against the indigenous population of these regions - Azerbaijanis, who belong to the representatives of the Turks peoples.

Thus, by its corresponding decision, the European Parliament renewed the trauma of generations, known as historical, intergenerational or transgenerational trauma, which is a cycle of traumas that historically remain in the minds of the participants in the events. The transmission of intergenerational trauma occurs through biological, psychological and social means<sup>9</sup>. O.V.Golovashina rightly notes that “traumatization does not occur instantaneously, but is constantly reproduced. Through various social practices (days of remembrance of the deceased, annual or even more frequent commemorations of tragic events for the nation/community), a return to the situation of traumatization occurs even for generations that do not have direct experience of loss. Trauma, being the present, acts as a source of the future - the history of the community grows out of the trauma and serves as the basis for its future existence”<sup>10</sup>.

Despite the tragedy of 1915 and the battles between the Turkish and Armenian armies in 1918-1920, relations between the two peoples continued without facing serious problems until the 1960s. However, in the dynamics of the “cold war”, the issue of the “Armenian genocide” was revived. Bitter memories and grief of the Armenian side were regularly used. This circumstance provoked radicalism among some nationalist Armenian groups and became the reason for violent actions against the Turks. Terrorist acts, which all Turks remember with pain, served as a means of attracting the attention of the world community to the Armenian issue. In the 1970s, such nationalist fervor led to a campaign of terror that killed 31 Turkish diplomats and their families, as well as 43 people of Turkish and other nationalities, and wounded many others<sup>11</sup>.

Turkey's official position was that using the events of 1915 as a justification for hostility towards Turkey and turning this issue into a subject of political conflict was unacceptable<sup>12</sup>.

## 2. The historical memory and the historical trauma

These issues have not been studied in relation to the Genocide Convention. In this regard, one of the main tasks set in this study is to develop recommendations for the prevention of “genocidal” revenge, not addressed in the fundamental UN documents on the prevention of genocide. This is the problem of historical trauma. What is historical or, as it is often called, intergenerational trauma in relation to genocide and what tragic consequences can it lead to in the event of a violation of the requirements of the Genocide Convention? What needs to be done to develop measures aimed at eliminating the causes and conditions that contribute to the development of tragic events associated with the process in question?

Historical trauma has been given active attention since the 1960s, when clinicians became alarmed by the number of children whose parents had survived the Holocaust. These children had various

<sup>9</sup>Руководство МПК по психическому здоровью и психосоциальной поддержке в условиях чрезвычайной ситуации. Женева: Межведомственный постоянный комитет, 2007, с.13.

<sup>10</sup>Головашина О.В. Trauma studies: постановка проблемы и общая характеристика темпорального подхода к исследованию травм / Историческая память: травмы прошлого, противоречия настоящего, перспективы будущего / Под ред. В.Н.Сырова. Саратов: ИЦ «Наука», 2018, с.47.

<sup>11</sup>The Events of 1915 and the Turkish-Armenian Controversy over History: An Overview. [Electronic resource]. URL:[https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-events-of-1915-and-the-turkish-armenian-controversy-over-history\\_-an-overview.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-events-of-1915-and-the-turkish-armenian-controversy-over-history_-an-overview.en.mfa)

<sup>12</sup>The unofficial translation of the message of H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the then Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, on the events of 1915 (23 April 2014). [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-prime-minister-mr\\_-recep-tayyip-erdo%C4%9Fan-published-a-message-on-the-events-of-1915\\_-23-april-2014.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-prime-minister-mr_-recep-tayyip-erdo%C4%9Fan-published-a-message-on-the-events-of-1915_-23-april-2014.en.mfa)

psychological problems, especially those related to identity, as well as symptoms that resembled the consequences of real trauma, as if they themselves had survived the horrors of the Holocaust<sup>13</sup>.

A hypothesis was put forward that extreme trauma can be transmitted from generation to generation, with the second generation “appropriate” the trauma of their parents. For their part, the children of survivors, who themselves have never encountered the horrors experienced by their parents, have no idea what makes them suffer, although they associate their anxieties with the anxieties of their parents, as if they were “appropriating” part of their existence.

This phenomenon has been defined as the transmission of trauma from parents to children. Thus, in a study of the possibility of transmitting trauma from the second to the third generation, a higher percentage of manifestations of psychopathology (for example, depression, psychasthenia, hypochondria) was found in the third generation compared to the descendants of those who did not survive the Holocaust<sup>14</sup>.

Historical trauma is the cumulative emotional and psychological pain over the course of a person's life and generations as a result of massive group trauma. Historical trauma can have a variety of consequences for individuals and groups, which may include: unresolved trauma or grief, depression, high mortality increased alcohol abuse, child abuse, and domestic violence. Examples of historical trauma have been observed among the Lakota and other American Indian peoples, as well as among Jewish Holocaust survivors and their descendants. American Indians/Alaska Natives have experienced devastating collective, intergenerational massive group trauma and compounding discrimination, racism, and oppression<sup>15</sup>. The role of new generations who did not experience the event personally and their own interpretation of historical events are fundamental to understanding how intergenerational memory works<sup>16</sup>.

Historical trauma and the historical memory associated with it are equally present in most peoples who have previously been in conflict (national, religious, interstate wars, etc.). This issue must be approached with great caution and assistance must be given to ensure that the wounds caused by conflicts heal over time, but in no case do not renew the bleeding and give rise to a sense of revenge among the parties to the conflict. D.Stone notes that “for individual victims of genocide, traumatic memories are inevitable; for societies, genocide has profound consequences that are immediately felt, and people are called upon (and voluntarily choose) never to forget”<sup>17</sup>.

The politics of memory is a competition in which political forces fight to establish control and dominance. In this case, the idea that discussing the conflictual past leads to mutual understanding and reconciliation is replaced by an understanding of the politics of memory as a zero-sum conflict, in which it is important not to achieve mutual understanding, but to ensure the predominance of one's own position in the space of one's political control - that is, in one's national state, and ideally - in the international arena<sup>18</sup>.

The above can also be applied to the issue of the “Armenian genocide of 1915”. As a distant example of the use of the politics of historical trauma to incite interethnic conflict, events in Yugoslavia,

<sup>13</sup>Danieli Y. Families of survivors of the Nazi Holocaust: Some short and long-term effects. Research Perspective / International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma. London: Plenum Press, 1998, p.47.

<sup>14</sup>Майн Н.В. Индивидуальная и межпоколенческая психотравматизация кандидатов в замещающие родители. Дис.. канд. психологических наук. М., 2017, с.33.

<sup>15</sup>Heart B.M.Y.H., Chase J., Elkins J., Altschul D.B. Historical Trauma Among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: Concepts, Research, and Clinical Considerations/Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, Vol. 43(4), 2011, p.288.

<sup>16</sup>Navarro-Mana T. Historical Comparison of the Politics of Historical Memory in Germany and Spain // Revista d'Humanitats, no 5, 2021, p.112.

<sup>17</sup>Stone D. The Holocaust, Fascism and Memory: Essays in the History of Ideas. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.143.

<sup>18</sup>Миллер А.И. Введение Методологические проблемы изучения политики памяти - решенные, нерешенные и неразрешимые / Методологические вопросы изучения политики памяти. СПб: Нестор История, 2018, с. 7.



which were partly reflected in the decisions of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, testify.

During the period of instability, the country's leadership (mainly Serbian) begins to actively exploit the "memory" of the Battle of Kosovo, the capture and murder of the legendary Serbian Prince Lazar by Muslims during this battle. As a result, the Bosnian Muslims, with whom the Serbs had lived relatively peacefully as a single people of Yugoslavia for decades, became the culprits of all the troubles and the "legitimate" target of Serb hatred. Let us recall that the Battle of Kosovo took place on June 28, 1389! 600 years after this battle, the remains of the legendary Serbian Prince Lazar, captured and killed at Kosovo, were exhumed with the support of the official authorities. During the year before the "Serb-Bosnian" massacre, the coffin was transported from one Serbian village to another, and in each one a kind of burial ceremony took place. This seemingly harmless ritual caused a "time shift": the national feelings of the Serbs began to act as if Lazar had been killed yesterday. What happened is what is usually defined in psychoanalysis as a condensation of the sense of time, combined with a regression to earlier (historically) types of response. As a result, the Bosnian Muslims, and then the Albanians (also Muslims) began to be perceived as the culprits of all the historical ills of the Serbs, which "legitimized" any form of revenge: the Serbs began to kill, rob, rape - almost with medieval cruelty<sup>19</sup>.

The policy of "historical trauma" can be reflected not only at the collective level, but also at the individual level, although it finds its support among its compatriots. This is confirmed by the following example. The accused Gurgen Mkrtich Yanikian, a US citizen, an Armenian by nationality, was found guilty by the jury of the murder of two employees of the Turkish consulate, which occurred on January 27, 1973, at the "Santa Barbara Biltmore Hotel" in the USA. The court ruled that, although he admits that there is evidence of "mental disturbances... indicating a diminution of his capacity", he does not have "any evidence of manifest insanity"<sup>20</sup>.

The court established that G.M. Yanikian's motive for killing the two Turkish diplomats was the "historical trauma" associated with the Armenian-Turkish conflict of 1915, which the Armenians call the "Armenian genocide". This was the first of a series of Armenian terrorist attacks against Turkish diplomats around the world.

Such examples are not isolated. Historical trauma manifests itself among representatives of different nationalities. In this regard, we will cite the following example, which also occurred in the United States, where the motive for the murder is similar to the example we have described.

On June 5, 1968, U.S. Senator Robert F. Kennedy was shot and killed with multiple shots from a pistol by an American citizen, Palestinian-Jordanian Arab, Sirhan Bishara at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California. During his arrest, Bishara Sirhan told police that he did it for his country. In a report to the district attorney, psychiatrist Dr. Pollack stated that "Bashar Sirhan's mental illness was related to his act of murder because his paranoid beliefs went beyond those of the normal personality of the average citizen... This mental illness should be considered a significant mitigating factor in the question of punishment". Dr. Pollack also testified that the defendant believed it was "good" and "right" to kill Senator Kennedy, and that "as an Arab, he believed it was his duty, that the Arab world would respect him and that he would be considered a hero"<sup>21</sup>.

The above once again demonstrated how historical trauma can contribute to the commission of the most serious crimes. Such examples are not isolated. This problem is most clearly manifested in interethnic conflicts that took place in the historical past. Their peculiarity is expressed in the fact that the conflict is revived not only with representatives of the hostile side of the historical past, but also with related ethnically close peoples. Hatred spreads against those persons who, in the opinion of representatives of the "traumatized" generations, are naturally associated with events, facts,

<sup>19</sup>Oberschall A. The Manipulation of Ethnicity: From Ethnic Cooperation to Violence and War in Yugoslavia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 23 (6), 2000, p.990.

<sup>20</sup>Decision of the Santa Barbara County Supreme Court of Appeals (No. 98612) Judge John A., May 22, 1974, Case No. 24571.

<sup>21</sup>Supreme Court decision in *People v. Sirhan* (1972) 7 Cal.3d 710.





objects or phenomena reflected in the consciousness of the individual and fixed in his memory as a tragic event.

The problem of historical trauma is also relevant for Armenian society. Thus, on April 17, 2015, the Department of Social Psychology of the Faculty of Philosophy and Psychology of Yerevan State University held a scientific conference on the topic: "Pathopsychological and socio-psychological consequences of genocide". The conference was dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the "Armenian genocide" of 1915. The conference participants noted that any mental trauma leaves its mark on mental health and the occurrence or exacerbation of various diseases. Therefore, it is important to identify post-traumatic stress disorders in survivors of the "genocide" and their long-term consequences, expressed in various diseases. If the patient has been confirmed to have mental trauma, its consequences can lead to pathology. Pathology is a section of medical science that deals with the study and diagnosis of diseases. Clinical pathology includes the study of surgically removed organs, tissues (biopsy samples), bodily fluids and, in some cases, the entire body (autopsy). Pathology also includes the related scientific study of disease processes, which examines the causes, mechanisms and extent of the disease<sup>22</sup>.

This disease of unknown origin and purely ethnic nature is called Mediterranean familial fever. Foreign authors describe a family of Armenian immigrants in the village of Anchar in Lebanon, consisting of 52 members, of whom 22 suffered from periodic diseases in 4-5 generations<sup>23</sup>.

Mediterranean familial fever is a real memory of past suffering (psychological, physical), which causes a past "trauma" with a similar symbol of az-dak before the attack. These memories are expressed in the form of neuropsychiatric disorders (anxiety, depression, agitation, aggression, autoaggression, dysphoria, suicidal thoughts, fear, anxiety, low mood, grief, sense of loss, guilt, sense of impending danger, disorders that pass from the psyche to the body<sup>24</sup>). For Mediterranean familial fever, ethnic prevalence is most characteristic. Among the four most affected ethnic groups, scientists also indicate Armenians<sup>25</sup>.

Summarizing the above, Armen Nersisyan comes to the conclusion that long-term stressful situations have left their mark on the genetic memory of a person, family and nation as "traumas" that are passed on from generation to generation and are manifested through the phenomenon of "flashback". In stressful situations, the psychophysical danger threatening a person in the present symbolically reminds him of the stress experienced in the past. As a result of the weakening of psychological defense mechanisms, the entire psychopathology of genetic memory is reflected in the body (mental somatization) as "trauma"<sup>26</sup>.

Suzan Sargsyan notes the need to consider not only just memory, but also "genetic memory"<sup>27</sup>. A person receives information about the family's past from several sources: publications, historical sources, grandparents, parents. Important, dramatic events for the family are told and retold.

Another way of obtaining information is unconscious, the transfer from generation to generation, which is not talked about, is hidden. In this case, injuries, diseases, somatic problems occur. And

<sup>22</sup>Основы патологии: Учеб. пособие / Под ред. Е. Л. Казачкова, Л. В. Кривохижиной. М.: Издательский центр «Академия», 2012, с.6.

<sup>23</sup>Нерсисян А. Посттравматическое стрессовое расстройство у людей переживших геноцид и их потомков (на армянском языке) / Патопсихологические и социально-психологические последствия геноцида. Ереван: Издательство ЕГУ, 2015, с.21.

<sup>24</sup>Нерсисян А., Даниелян К., Назаретян Э. Средиземноморская семейная лихорадка и аффективные расстройства // Вопросы теоретической и клинической медицины, научно-практический журнал, том 9, №2, с. 18.

<sup>25</sup>Федоров Е.С, Салугина С.О. Семейная средиземноморская лихорадка (периодическая болезнь): история или реальная проблема // Современная ревматология, 2018, №3, с. 62.

<sup>26</sup>Нерсисян А. Посттравматическое стрессовое расстройство у первых геноцида и их потомков (на армянском языке) / Патопсихологические и социально-психологические последствия геноцида. Ереван, Издательство ЕГУ, 2015, с.19.

<sup>27</sup>Саргисян С. Трансгенерационная передача памяти: анализ случая (на армянском языке). / Патопсихологические и социально-психологические последствия геноцида. Ереван: Издательство ЕГУ, 2015, с.35.

what is not said is kept secret, “buried” in the unconscious, as an internal structure and becomes a real “ghost”, “haunting” a loved one suffering from inexplicable symptoms, recurring dreams indicating a secret<sup>28</sup>.

This transgenerational method studies the impact of such memories on suffering nations, victims of genocide and families. Frasuase Dolto notes that everything that the first generation keeps silent about, the second generation carries in its body<sup>29</sup>.

In Armenian society, the problem of recognizing the genocide is being introduced at a conscious level into the younger generation. As psychoanalyst Asbed Aryan notes, the function of mental health specialists is to help our patients privatize their present, have the opportunity to historicize their own past, build a sustainable philosophy of the future, be involved in the life of their society<sup>30</sup>.

Historical trauma, usually associated with past conflicts for a long time, leaves a deep hatred for the opposite side. Sometimes it is not uncommon to come across statements of this level about the conflict between the Turks and the Muslim part of the population that took place 100 years ago without any justification in scientific publications of scientists.

Conducting an empirical study allows us to establish the influence of the Holocaust on the social identity of Jews, to see the transformation of the identity of the Spaniards under the influence of memories of the events of the civil war, the relationship between historical memory and the ethnic identity of modern Armenians. The existence of such a conflict in the history of the people suggests that the descendants are forced to live in an uncertain situation: on the one hand, everything that happened did not happen to them and their contemporaries are not to blame for it, but on the other hand, these horrific memories cannot simply “go away” since they have not been processed, especially since the accused party does not recognize the fact of genocide. Perhaps, such a situation forms a “victim complex” in the consciousness of Armenians, which affects the development of non-adaptive compensatory mechanisms.

To this day, the genocide is one of the most discussed issues in the media of the Republic of Armenia, where at least two articles are published in newspapers every week, one way or another touching on this topic, and among Armenians, regardless of whether they live in Armenia or in other countries. The fact of its non-recognition by Turkey exacerbates the psychological experiences of several generations of Armenians. It is obvious that this problem still has a huge impact on the self-awareness of Armenians. Presumably, the memory of the genocide acts as a psychological transmitter of trauma across generations, having a transformative effect on the identity of Armenians<sup>31</sup>.

The above-mentioned authors point out that historical trauma is closely related not only to psychological problems. Unfortunately, it leads to serious disorders of human mental activity. Thus, Gagik Petrosyan argues that genocide, as a historical fact, leads to a distortion of reality, hinders self-knowledge, and is capable of provoke pathogenic changes in the human psyche<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>28</sup>Саргисян С. Трансгенерационная передача памяти: анализ случая (на армянском языке). / Патопсихологические и социально-психологические последствия геноцида. Ереван: Издательство ЕГУ, 2015, с.36.

<sup>29</sup>Дольто Ф. На стороне ребенка. М.: Издательство У-Фактория, 2003, с.332.

<sup>30</sup>Арян А. Социально-психологические последствия геноцида (на армянском языке) / Патопсихологические и социально-психологические последствия геноцида. Ереван, Издательство ЕГУ, 2015, с.40.

<sup>31</sup>Матевосян С.Н., Стефаненко Т.Г., Жмурин И.Е., Китаина О.М. Особенности этнической идентичности армян в условиях сохранения ими исторической памяти о геноциде / Патопсихологические и социально-психологические последствия геноцида. Ереван: Издательство ЕГУ, 2015, с.86.

<sup>32</sup>Петросян Г. Психопатогенные последствия геноцида (на армянском языке) / Патопсихологические и социально-психологические последствия геноцида. Ереван: Издательство ЕГУ, 2015, с.73.

### 3. Historical trauma as a motive for committing new hate crimes

Without dwelling in detail on the historical aspects of the Armenian-Turkish conflict, I would like to draw attention to the manifestation of historical trauma in the conflict that began in 1987, the beginning of the ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani part of the population in the Armenian SSR.

Suffice it to note that in the Armenian SSR in 1986, for the first time since the existence of the USSR, open pogroms began against the Muslim population of the Armenian SSR. At the same time, it is surprising that the compactly living Muslim population of Armenia did not give any reason for the start of the conflict. The Armenian question became acute in the post-Soviet space. The beginning of the collapse of the USSR, as in the past the collapse of the Ottoman and Russian empires, cruelly affected the situation of the Armenians of Transcaucasia. Unexpectedly for many Soviet citizens, the most acute interethnic conflicts broke out in the Soviet state. A wave of brutal armed clashes and pogroms swept across the Caucasus. It became obvious that the national question in the USSR had not been finally resolved<sup>33</sup>.

A significant role in inciting interethnic conflicts was played by nationalist publications of Armenian writers, where they gave their own analysis of historical events. Publications appeared that revived the historical trauma of the Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation in the past. An important role in this was played by the books of Armenian writers, in particular the author Zori Balayan "Ochag" Yerevan (1981), "Ochag" Moscow (1984) and others, emphasizing the historical belonging of Nagorno-Karabakh, Nakhichevan to Armenia. According to Thomas de Waal, Zori Balayan of the movement for the annexation of Karabakh to Armenia, asserting the existence of a pan-Turkic threat and the responsibility of Azerbaijanis for the Armenian genocide of 1915<sup>34</sup>.

And although the book was written in the pre-Gorbachev era, Z. Balayan called the Turks, including the Azerbaijanis, "enemies" of both Russia and Armenia<sup>35</sup>. In the book "The Resurrection of Our Soul" (in some quotes simply "Resurrection"), he confesses to the brutal murder of an Azerbaijani child during the war. In his works the author consistently defends the bloody past of the Armenian people, the genocide of 1915, the land forcibly taken away by the Turks-Azerbaijanis. In Armenian literature, a number of nationalistic biases can be traced from other authors, representatives of the Armenian creative intelligentsia. As a rule, the Turks were criticized, not only as close ethnic peoples, with the Azerbaijanis who were also guilty of the genocide of 1915. For example, S.M. Ayvazyan expresses the opinion that the main reason for the Armenian genocide in Turkey is the "anormal" national character of the Turks, their immanent desire to reject a culture alien to them, to destroy the indigenous peoples of Asia Minor they conquered<sup>36</sup>.

These publications trace the connection that not only the Turks, but also the Azerbaijanis belonging to the Turkic language group should bear responsibility for the so-called genocide.

As a result, the weakening of the central government of the USSR, and often the direct instigation of the party organs, the organs of the State Security Committee, etc. led to the activation of nationalist forces in the union republics. As a result, one of the first republics where mass attacks on the ethnic group - the Azerbaijanis, who historically lived in their historical homeland, appeared was the Armenian SSR. A significant part of the Azerbaijanis in Armenia lived in rural areas. The pogroms began in 1987, with the ethnic cleansing of the inhabitants of the Kafan district of the Armenian SSR. The methods of committing the murders were characterized by the following: beating to death, torture, burning alive, killing with a firearm, drowning in water, running over with vehicles, connecting to an electric cable, hanging. etc. Among the victims of the crime were old people, children, women.

<sup>33</sup>Ованесян В.Р. Армянский вопрос как предмет международных отношений: вторая половина XIX - начало XX вв. Дис... канд. истор. наук. Москва, 1999, с.143.

<sup>34</sup>Де Ваал Т. Чёрный сад. Армения и Азербайджан между миром и войной. М.: «Текст», 2005, с.45.

<sup>35</sup>Де Ваал Т. Чёрный сад. Армения и Азербайджан между миром и войной. М.: «Текст», 2005, с.178.

<sup>36</sup>Айвазян С.М. История России. Армянский след. М.: 2000, КРОН-пресс, с.478.

Professor Mark Saroyan in his article "The "Karabakh Syndrome" and Azerbaijani Politics" introduces the term "Karabakh Syndrome" to denote the specifics of this conflict<sup>37</sup>. And although in his 1990 article he uses this term exclusively to characterize Azerbaijani policy, as was correctly noted in the report of the Department of East European Studies of Uppsala University (Finland) on this conflict, this term is useful for explaining the general situation not only in Azerbaijan but also in Armenia<sup>38</sup>. It is known that the term "syndrome" implies something with a medical context, pathological. And indeed, the form in which the activities of Armenian nationalists developed was pathological, as were the atrocities they committed at all stages of the conflict. In the case of this conflict, pogroms and localized ethnic unrest in Armenia led to an escalation of the political conflict, which gave this conflict a mass character compared to other conflicts in the post-Soviet space and the former Yugoslavia. Stuart Kaufman correctly points out that in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenians were easily mobilized by ethnic prejudices - long-standing stereotypes of Azerbaijanis as oppressors aiming at eventual genocide against Armenians, plus emotional hostility towards any group with such supposed goals. These relations were intended to support a long-standing nationalist ideology that promoted a simple solution to all their supposed problems: transfer to the jurisdiction of Armenia. These relations and ideological views existed throughout the Soviet period; all that was required for their expression was the political space provided by Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost policy<sup>39</sup>.

In 1987-1989, another deportation of Azerbaijanis from their historical and ethnic lands - from Armenia - took place, as a result of which 250 thousand Azerbaijanis became refugees<sup>40</sup>.

A notable phenomenon was the book "Armenian Genocide. Armenocide" by the director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, published in Turkey, dedicated to the analysis of the Armenian genocide in the light of the concept of a "genocidal state". A number of scientific works by Armenian authors called on Turkey to "overcome the "forgetfulness syndrome" in order to educate people responsible, if not for the past, then for the future of Turkey"<sup>41</sup>. In this regard, the "short memory" of the Armenian authors themselves is astonishing in their oblivion of the atrocities committed in the 19th-20th centuries by Armenian nationalists against thousands of defenseless civilians solely because of their ethnic origin. In the post-Soviet period, according to Armenian researchers, "the main problem of the Armenian Question has not yet been resolved - the lives of Armenians as bearers of a certain ethnic culture are still threatened by dangers that have long-standing historical and cultural-psychological roots"<sup>42</sup>. According to their approach, the "Armenian question" includes the problems of Nagorno-Karabakh, stabilization and normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations<sup>43</sup>.

It was precisely at the instigation of Armenian nationalists that a new stage of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict began, which was associated with Armenia's territorial claims to part of the territory of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh. The conflict was finally ended in 2024 with a 44-day war between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia and ended with the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. The immediate resuscitation of historical trauma in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is evidenced by the publications of American psychiatrists who were in Armenia during the 1988 earthquake.

<sup>37</sup>Saroyan M. "The "Karabakh Syndrome" and Azerbaijani Politics" in Problems of Communism, September/October 1990. Vol. XXXIX, p.14.

<sup>38</sup>Cornell S.E. The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. Report no. 46, Department of East European Studies, Uppsala University, 1999, p.29.

<sup>39</sup>Kaufman S.J. Ethnic Fears and Ethnic War in Karabakh, University of Kentucky (October 1998) p. 35.

<sup>40</sup>Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://president.az/en/pages/view/azerbaijan/karabakh>

<sup>41</sup>Акопян С.Ю. Этнополитические и международно-правовые последствия геноцида армян в Турции. Дис... канд. полит. наук. Ростов-на-Дону, 2006, с. 17-18.

<sup>42</sup>Ованисян В.Р. Армянский вопрос как предмет международных отношений: вторая половина XIX - начало XX вв. Дис... канд. истор. наук. М., 1999, с. 159.

<sup>43</sup>Ованисян В.Р. Армянский вопрос как предмет международных отношений: вторая половина XIX - начало XX вв. Дис... канд. истор. наук. М., 1999, с.5.

On December 7, 1988, a devastating earthquake occurred near the Armenian city of Spitak, taking the lives of 25 thousand people. On December 12, 1988, an IL-76 plane flew from Azerbaijan to Armenia to provide assistance to Armenians affected by the earthquake. However, near the city of Gugark in the Spitak region, the plane crashed. As a result, 76 of the 77 Azerbaijanis on board died<sup>44</sup>. Armenians refused en masse to accept blood donated by donors as humanitarian aid from Azerbaijan. The reason for this is that by the time the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict began and ethnic cleansing began in the Armenian Republic, the indigenous Azerbaijanis were associated with the Turks, who, according to the majority of the Armenian population, were guilty of the “Armenian genocide” of 1915. For this reason, many wounded Armenians refused to accept blood donated by Azerbaijanis after the earthquake<sup>45</sup>.

American doctors, including psychiatrists V.D.Volkan, G.Ast, W.F.Greer Jr., noted the inadequate reaction of many Armenians to providing assistance to the victims. In their report, they stated that the tragedy actually strengthened ethnic sentiments, including resistance to “mixing blood” with the enemy<sup>46</sup>.

During the active phase of the First Karabakh War problems, anti-Turkic hatred was especially clearly manifested in the Khojaly tragedy. On the night of February 25-26, 1992, the armed forces of Armenia, grossly violating the norms and principles of international law, with the participation of the 366th regiment of the former Soviet army stationed in Khankendi, attacked the city of Khojaly and committed an unprecedentedly cruel massacre of the civilian population. During the Khojaly genocide, 613 people, including 106 women, 63 children and 70 old people, were killed with incredible brutality only because they were Azerbaijanis, 487 civilians were seriously injured, 1,275 people were taken hostage.

It is indisputable that the motivation for this brutal crime, like the murder of Turkish diplomats, was the historical trauma of the “Armenian genocide” of 1915. The main problem is that by artificially planting the idea of the “Armenian genocide”, the organizers of these actions are actually counteracting the establishment of peace between the Turkic and Armenian peoples, the healing of historical wounds that occurred more than 109 years ago. In this regard, one cannot but agree with Makus Schulze-Kraft, who in his study “Education for Peace through Historical Memory” correctly notes that “Work with historical memory should be more tuned to long-term processes of healing and overcoming traumas in order to promote the emergence of multiple, agonistic memories compared to single, antagonistic ones. An attempt to shed light on as much truth as possible about past violence and injustice is essential in this endeavor”<sup>47</sup>.

According to a statement made by the chief psychiatrist of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia Samvel Torosyan in 2005, “today every fourth Armenian is subject to stress, various mental disorders and mental deficiencies of varying severity. Tens of thousands of mentally ill people can be found on the streets, none of whom are registered with a special registry”<sup>48</sup>. “The report, prepared based on the results of research conducted by the Yerevan UN office, emphasizes that “the catastrophic increase in the number of mentally ill citizens of the republic is explained mainly by the following: an extremely low standard of living, the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh problem, as well as pseudo-national imperatives”<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>44</sup>Чудовищный теракт армян против отправленных на помощь в Спитак азербайджанцев: 18 октября 2022 г. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://report.az/ru/proisshestviya/chudovishnyi-terakt-armyan-protiv-speshashih-na-pomosh-v-spitak-azerbajdzhancev/>

<sup>45</sup>Volkan V.D., Ast G., Greer W.F.Jr. Third Reich in the Unconscious. Transgenerational transmission and its consequences. London, Routledge, 2002, p.9.

<sup>46</sup>Volkan V.D., Ast G., Greer W.F.Jr. Third Reich in the Unconscious. Transgenerational transmission and its consequences. London, Routledge, 2002, p.9.

<sup>47</sup>Schultze-Kraft M. Education for Sustaining Peace through Historical Memory (Memory Politics and Transitional Justice). Palgrave Macmillan. (February 13, 2022), p.41.

<sup>48</sup>Мархулиа Г., Нуриева Ш. «Многострадальная Армения»: мифы и реальность. Баку, 2011, с.319.

<sup>49</sup>Мархулиа Г., Нуриева Ш. «Многострадальная Армения»: мифы и реальность. Баку, 2011, с.319.






## CONCLUSION

The theory of collective memory and social trauma, developed by sociologists, examines the legal aspects of the modern attitude to history in general and to historical memory in particular. Modern universal, regional and national social traumas are distinguished, which can be prevented or overcome with the help of legal instruments. In this regard, a huge role is given to such areas of sociology as “official memory policy” and “memorial laws”. Unlike national legislation, which contains value judgments regarding past events, international law largely plays the role of a restraining principle in relation to the revision of the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal, the establishment of certain limits in the interpretation of historical facts, the growth of conflicts on the basis of different assessments of the historical heritage. In addition, with the help of international legal institutions, the positions of states concerning historical issues are consolidated.

The above also indicates the need to prepare and adopt a special UN resolution stipulating the inadmissibility of the use of historical trauma in the system of international relations. We believe that such an approach will contribute to the effective implementation of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

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