

# GENOCIDE & MASS ATROCITY: WHAT IS GENOCIDE?

There is not just one definition of genocide. Scholars around the world continue to debate what kinds of actions or targeted groups should be included in the definition. The most commonly cited definition for genocide is the legal definition as set out by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948):

**“ [G]ENOCIDE MEANS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACTS COMMITTED WITH INTENT TO DESTROY, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, A NATIONAL, ETHNICAL, RACIAL OR RELIGIOUS GROUP, AS SUCH:**

**(A) KILLING MEMBERS OF THE GROUP;**

**(B) CAUSING SERIOUS BODILY OR MENTAL HARM TO MEMBERS OF THE GROUP;**

**(C) DELIBERATELY INFLECTING ON THE GROUP CONDITIONS OF LIFE CALCULATED TO BRING ABOUT ITS PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART;**

**(D) IMPOSING MEASURES INTENDED TO PREVENT BIRTHS WITHIN THE GROUP;**

**(E) FORCIBLY TRANSFERRING CHILDREN OF THE GROUP TO ANOTHER GROUP.**

**”**

## DISCUSSION:

1. What sets the concept of genocide apart from the concept of murder?
2. This definition states that killing could be genocide if it is directed toward a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group. Are there other groups missing from the UN's definition?
3. Are you surprised by any of the acts? Do you think there are other ways of committing genocide?