

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 1: Polarization

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

1. Polarization

The process starts when a dominant or 'in-group' develops a heightened sense of self-identity, perhaps due to insecurity and a perceived need to protect itself. The in-group develops a narrative about a target group or 'outgroup', seeing them as outsiders. Perhaps as illegally present, not pure, or not 'real' nationals. 'The ingroup starts to blame the outgroup for ongoing social, economic or other challenges.

Examples:

- Since the outbreak of the April 2023 war, several local traditional administration leaders have aligned themselves along tribal or ethnic lines, such as in Darfur and the Nile River State.
- The pace of mobilization along ethnic or tribal lines has increased on the part of both the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), with civilians taking up arms for protection and combat.
- Divisive narratives have spread among the public through social media, political discourse from both warring sides, and calls for mobilization. Additionally, there have been calls for general armament and the establishment of an armed "popular" resistance throughout Sudan, from its southernmost to its northernmost regions, to fight alongside the army against the RSF.

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 2: Stereotyping

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

2. Stereotyping

Perpetrators use stereotypes to devalue the outgroup, using group characteristics based on bias and prejudice to paint a negative picture of the outgroup's identity. Stereotypes might be based on physical appearance, genetic traits, race, ethnicity, perceived cultural habits, history, or other narratives.

Examples:

- Considering light skin as a standard of female beauty or referring to dark-skinned individuals as "slaves."
- Describing light-skinned individuals as "Halab."
- Labeling groups from the Darfur region as "foreigners," "rebels," or "agents."
- Referring to people from northern Sudan as "Jalaba."
- Calling Darfurian Arabs "Janjaweed."

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 3: Scapegoating

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

3. Scapegoating

Once negative characteristics have been established, blame and scapegoating the outgroup become increasingly possible, reinforcing an "us versus them" narrative that over time is normalised by others in society. In this phase, the target group loses its ability to defend itself. Leaders in society are less able or inclined to speak out to defend the group.

Examples:

- One of the most prominent examples is the widespread rhetoric in videos shared on social media, blaming citizens from central, northern, and eastern Sudan for marginalization or referring to them as the "1956 state." Additionally, some blame the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) for igniting the war, while others accuse the Islamist movement (referred to as "Kizan") of being responsible for starting the conflict.

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 4: Discrimination & Demonisation

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

4. Discrimination & Demonisation

Next comes the exclusion or punishment of the targeted group from the rest of society, often through the definition of illegal statuses (such as 'illegal migrants') that then allow for the enactment of discriminatory laws, including segregation and the denial of basic rights and access to resources.

Examples:

"These people are not Sudanese citizens." , "Some groups live in their own separate neighborhoods." , "Most of the residents of South Al-Hizam and Al-Azba are like that."

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 5: Dehumanisation

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

5. Dehumanisation

This stage involves propaganda, code-naming, and hate speech that portray the targeted group as subhuman, inferior, or dangerous. Dehumanization desensitizes perpetrators and bystanders, as our moral framework allows us to accept violence against non-humans. For instance, during the Genocide in Rwanda, Tutsis were referred to as 'cockroaches'; during the Holocaust in the Nazis referred to Jews as 'vermin'.

Examples:

- Describing the Beni Amer tribes in eastern Sudan as foreigners or Eritreans.
- Labeling the youth during the December revolution as drug users who disrupt people's lives by blocking roads.
- Claiming that everyone from the Darfur region is affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and therefore deserves arrest, torture, or even killing.

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 6: Loss of Active Bystanders

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

6. Loss of Active Bystanders

Gradually, public leaders and figures no longer speak out and defend the rights of the outgroup because their demonised status has become accepted. They are stripped of their ability to defend themselves. The outgroup are less than human by now, often so marginalised that they can become invisible. This further enables violence and erosion of their rights.

Examples:

- As a result of conflicts and wars, the voices of leaders and human rights defenders have diminished due to accusations of betrayal and being labeled as agents or traitors.
- Some have withdrawn from advocacy due to a sense of futility in defending against injustice.
- Others believe that certain groups deserve what is happening to them, leading to a decline in efforts to stand up for their rights.

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 7: Repression

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

7. Repression

Limits on liberty or other forms of repression can occur at this stage, with isolated acts of violence being tolerated. Graffiti, public incitement of violence and name-calling are all visible. Raids on offices based on discriminatory laws are common.

Examples:

The arrest or assassination of a group of activists in emergency response rooms by both warring parties.

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 8: Persecution

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

8. Persecution

Repression and violence become more systematic and planned. Arrests and detention of members of the group become more frequent for perceived violations of discriminatory laws.

Examples:

- Organized violence against revolutionaries by the state.
- Violence against women.
- Violence against people from Darfur in Sudanese universities.
- Discrimination leading to the denial of education and healthcare rights for several population groups.

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 9: Organised violence and killings

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

9. Organised violence and killings

Targeted and planned violence is now seen on a widespread or systematic scale against the outgroup members. This can take the form of famines due to denial of access to humanitarian assistance, scorched earth policies forcing mass displacement, well as more direct forms of organised violence as seen with the gas chambers in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust, mass killings and sexual violence in Rwanda.

Examples:

- Sexual violence against women and the events in West Darfur, including the killing of the Massalit group.
- The conflict in Blue Nile between the Fung and the Hausa groups.
- The violence in East Sudan between the Hadendawa and Beni Amer, as well as between the latter and the Nubians.
- The events in Tulus and the organized violence against the revolutionaries of the December 2018 revolution.
- Other instances of organized violence against specific groups, including the Fur, Zaghawa, and Massalit.
- The most apparent examples are the events in Geneina and Ardamata (where the Massalit were targeted by the Rapid Support Forces during the ongoing war)

Genocide doesn't happen overnight. It's a process.

These are the 10 distinct steps that help us understand where we are in this process—and also that the process can be reversed.

Step 10: Denial

Based on 10 Stages of Genocide, outlined by Gregory H. Stanton, the President of Genocide Watch, and the work of Prof. Ervin Staub in 'The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and other Group Violence.'

10. Denial

The perpetrators or later generations deny the existence of any crime. For instance, Holocaust deniers, or for instance, the regime of Omar al-Bashir in Sudan denied any crimes in Darfur.

Examples:

- The denial by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of committing human rights violations, occupying citizens' homes, and stealing property.
- The current government's denial of committing violations during the ongoing war.