

# Identifying Patterns of Genocide

## Questionnaire

*Developed by Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, PhD*

Genocide is a *process*, not a single event. A key feature of the genocidal process is that it is a *patterned* form of attack on a group. This means that in the short-term we can often identify the emergence of intent at its early stages when genocidal patterns are played out in localized ways. The list of patterns below is meant to help guide the identification of “microcosms” of genocide as well as large-scale patterns of mass murder.

Although the Genocide Convention specifically lists four “protected categories” (“national, ethnical, racial, and religious groups”), history has shown that perpetrators define their target groups using a range of criteria and that their definitions and categories are very subjective, related more to perpetrator ideology and imagined threats and goals than to any objective criteria for group membership. Therefore, genocide can be and has been committed against political, social, economic, sexual identity and gender groups in addition to the four “protected categories.”

Perpetrators of genocide attack their target groups because these groups are seen to be existential threats. The genocidal process of destruction involves every member of the target group, regardless of gender, age, social status or occupation, but it affects different people in different ways. For example, some members may be killed while others are raped or tortured. Frequently such variation is intentional on the part of the perpetrator: People’s real and perceived positions in the target society are instrumentalized by perpetrators to cause maximal and lasting physical and psychic damage to group members and to institutions of group cohesion, especially the family unit. These crimes are a strong indicator of genocidal intent and potential genocide within wider social crises and conflicts.

Atrocities which, when considered alone, might constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity, are crimes of genocide if they are part of a wider pattern of attack that is deliberately aimed at destroying a group, particularly by undermining a group’s ability to reproduce itself biologically and culturally as active historical agents in the future.

### **1. Do you see evidence of specific perpetrator intent to destroy a group in whole or in part?**

- Did officials in a perpetrating government say anything?
- Did officers in a perpetrating military say anything?
- Did a political party publish ideological tracts or propaganda?
- Did leaders of an armed group issue directives to foot soldiers or say anything?
- Did foot soldiers say anything?
- Other?
- Locations:
- Sources:

### **2. Do you hear the use of derogatory language against a group (“hate speech”)?**

- Targeted Group Identity or Identities:
- Perpetrators of hate speech:
- Locations:
- Sources:

### **3. Do you see evidence of gender-neutral mass murder of a specific group?**

- Targeted Group Identity or Identities:
- Perpetrators of mass killing:
- Evidence of discrimination in killing:

- Were members of other groups not killed/tortured/raped?
- Were only the towns and villages of a specific group targeted?
  - How were they targeted?
- Were there house to house searches only of specific group?
- Were specific group members marked for their identity?
  - How were they marked?
- Were authorities asking individuals for group membership before killing them?
- Were authorities denying/negating individuals' group membership before killing them?
- Were authorities making discriminatory statements?
- Was there other discriminatory propaganda against a specific group or groups?
- Other indicators that perpetrators specifically targeted a group:
- Locations:
- Sources:
- Were both men and women within a group are murdered outright?
  - Sources:
- Were there large-scale massacres or killing programs involving slower death of men, women and children, through deprivation of food, water, shelter, medical care, etc. or through hard labor?
  - Sources:
- Were men and women, boys and girls treated differently in the process of killing? (For example, men may be murdered first and women may be raped before murder)
  - Describe all differences in treatment of men, women, boys and girls:
  - Sources:
- Were children killed alongside the adults?
  - Sources:
- Were children kidnapped to be absorbed by the perpetrator community?
  - Sources:
- Were children kidnapped to be used as sex slaves or child soldiers?
  - Sources:
- Were industrial technologies used that enable quick and indiscriminate murder at some distance from perpetrators? (For example, bombs or chemical attacks)
  - Sources:
- Was man-made famine or deprivation of medical care used to cause large-scale death?
  - Sources:
- Was environmental destruction used to cause large-scale death?
  - Sources:
- Were there small-scale massacres of single households, extended families, neighborhoods?
  - Identity of victims:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:

#### **4. Do you see evidence of sex-selective mass murder?**

- Were only men and boys killed?
  - Targeted Group Identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Men & Boys:
  - Estimated Number of Men & Boys:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were only women and girls killed?
  - Targeted Group Identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Women & Girls:
  - Estimated Number of Women & Girls:
  - Perpetrators:

- Locations:
- Sources:

## 5. Do you see evidence of mass murder of “battle-aged men” + rape/enslavement/killing/expulsion of women and children?

- Were men and boys are killed outright in massacres, as a means of “decapitating” the (perceived or real) patriarchal social structure?
  - Targeted Group Identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Men & Boys:
  - Estimated Number of Men & Boys:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were women and girls raped?
  - Targeted Group identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Women and Girls
  - Estimated Number of Women and Girls
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were women and girls kidnapped?
  - Targeted Group identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Women and Girls:
  - Estimated Number of Women and Girls:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were women and girls enslaved?
  - Targeted Group identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Women and Girls:
  - Estimated Number of Women and Girls:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were women and girls expelled from the territory?
  - Targeted Group identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Women and Girls:
  - Estimated Number of Women and Girls:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were boys kidnapped?
  - Targeted Group identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Boys:
  - Estimated Number of Boys:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were boys enslaved?
  - Targeted Group identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Boys:
  - Estimated Number of Boys:
  - Perpetrators:

- Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were boys expelled along with women and girls?
  - Targeted Group identity:
  - Estimated Ages of Boys:
  - Estimated Number of Boys:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were expelled persons deprived of necessities?
  - Deprived of Medicines:
  - Deprived of Clothing:
  - Deprived of Shoes:
  - Deprived of Necessary Food & Water:
  - Deprived of Vehicles:
  - Forced to Walk:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Was there a common pattern of atrocity across several communities? (for example, killing of men, rape of women, and then expulsion of survivors)
  - Describe pattern:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:

**6. Do you see evidence of the separation of men and women?**

- Group identity of people separated:
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:

**7. Do you see evidence that men and boys were raped or sexually violated?**

- Targeted Group identity:
- Estimated Ages of Men and Boys:
- Estimated Number of Men and Boys:
- How were they sexually violated?
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:

**8. Do you see evidence that prominent men and women were singled out for murder and/or rape, humiliation and torture?**

- Targeted Group Identity:
- Estimated ages of men and women:
- Rank/Status of men and women targeted (reason targeted):
- How were they targeted?
- Difference from the way other group members were targeted:
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:

**9. Do you see evidence of large-scale rape and sexual violence against a specific group?**

- Were large numbers of women and girls raped or sexually violated in a specific community?

- Women and girls within a single household?
- Women and girls within an extended family?
- Women and girls in a neighborhood?
- Women and girls in village/town?
- Women and girls in a collection of villages, towns, and/or cities?
- Women and girls in another geographic entity? (describe)
- Numbers of women and girls raped and/or sexually violated:
- Ages of women and girls raped and/or sexually violated:
- Targeted Identity of women and girls raped and/or sexually violated:
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:
- Were men and boys raped or sexually violated in a specific community?
  - Men and boys within a single household?
  - Men and boys within an extended family?
  - Men and boys within a neighborhood?
  - Men and boys in a village/town?
  - Men and boys in a collection of villages, towns, and/or cities?
  - Men and boys in another geographic entity? (describe)
  - Numbers of men and boys raped and/or sexually violated:
  - Ages of men and boys raped and/or sexually violated:
  - Targeted Identity of men and boys raped and/or sexually violated:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Was rape and sexualized violence used as a method of killing?
  - Describe method(s):
  - Sex and age of victim(s):
  - Targeted identity of victim(s):
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were women and/or girls forcibly impregnated?
  - Age of women and girls:
  - Targeted identity of women and girls:
  - Did the perpetrators say anything that demonstrates a plan to forcibly impregnate?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:

**10. Do you see evidence of ritualized cruelties, torture and humiliation of group members, especially families, households, and small communities (“life force atrocities”)?**

- Were there public rapes of group members by authorities?
  - Person or persons publicly raped:
  - Group affiliation of person(s) raped:
  - Sex and age of person(s) raped:
  - What happened after the rape?
  - Number and identity of perpetrator(s):
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were there public rapes of community leaders and high-status people and/or their family members?
  - Number of person(s) raped:
  - Leadership position(s) and/or family and community status of person(s) raped:

- Group affiliation of person(s) raped:
- Sex and age of person(s) raped:
- What happened after the rape?
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:
- Were family members coerced to harm one another?
  - Status of family members involved:
  - Nature of harm they were commanded to commit (rape, torture killing, etc.):
  - If they resisted, what happened?
  - Were all family members killed after the tortures?
  - Were some family members killed after the tortures?
    - If some were not killed, what happened to them?
  - What did the perpetrators say to the family members?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Were family members forced by perpetrators to watch the harm of one another?
  - Status of family members involved:
  - Nature of harm committed by perpetrators:
  - If they tried to defend one another, what happened?
  - Were all family members killed after the tortures?
  - Were some family members killed after the tortures?
    - Age and family status of members killed:
    - Age and family status of survivors:
    - Fates of survivors:
    - If no family members were killed, what happened after the torture?
  - What did the perpetrators say while committing the tortures?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:

### **11. Do you see evidence of specific harm to pregnant women?**

- Group membership of pregnant woman or women targeted:
- Age of pregnant woman or women targeted:
- Did perpetrators cut open/eviscerate pregnant women?
- Did perpetrators remove fetuses from pregnant women?
- Did perpetrators kill fetuses taken from pregnant women's bodies?
- Did perpetrators rape pregnant women?
- Did perpetrators stomp on pregnant women's stomachs?
- Did perpetrators make family members watch the torture of pregnant women?
- Did perpetrators make fun of pregnant women and her family members (especially husbands)?
- What did perpetrators say?
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:

### **12. Do you see evidence of specific harm to infants and young children? (rape, torture, mutilation, murder)**

- Group Membership of Child or Children Targeted:
- Age of Child or Children Targeted:
- Sex of Child or Children Targeted:
- Were children from one group transferred to another group?

- Were they particularly targeted for killing or torture?
- Were they particularly targeted for humiliation?
- Were they targeted in public?
- Were they targeted in front of other people? (describe whom)
- Were boys and girls targeted differently? (describe)
- Did perpetrators kill and cook children's bodies?
- Did perpetrators attempt to make family and/or community members eat children's bodies?
- What did perpetrators say?
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:

**13. Do you see evidence of specific harm to elderly people? (rape, torture, mutilation, killing)**

- Group Membership of Elderly person(s) Targeted:
- Ages of elderly person(s) targeted:
- Sex of elderly person(s) targeted:
- How were they targeted?
- Were they targeted in public?
- Were they targeted in front of other people? (describe whom)
- Were men and women targeted differently? (describe)
- What did perpetrators say?
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:

**14. Do you see evidence that LGBTQ people were targeted?**

- Group Membership of person(s) targeted:
- Ages of person(s) targeted:
- Sex/Gender of person(s) targeted:
- How were they targeted?
- Were they targeted in public?
- Were they targeted in front of other people? (describe whom)
- Were they targeted in a specific way because they were perceived to be LGBTQ? (describe)
- What did perpetrators say?
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:

**15. Do you see evidence of desecration of living bodies?**

- Group membership of person(s) targeted:
- Did perpetrators mutilate genitals?
- Did perpetrators mutilate breasts?
- Did perpetrators impale persons?
- Did perpetrators enforce nakedness?
- Did perpetrators enforce humiliating body searches?
- Did the perpetrators urinate or defecate on living bodies?
- Was the desecration in public?
- Was the desecration in front of other persons? (describe whom)
- Did perpetrators remove important symbols of identity (jewelry, clothing, facial hair, etc.)?
- Other forms of desecration of living bodies?
- What did perpetrators say?
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:

- Sources:

### **16. Do you see evidence of desecration of corpses?**

- Group membership of person(s) targeted:
- Did perpetrators mutilate genitals?
- Did perpetrators mutilate breasts?
- Did perpetrators impale persons?
- Did perpetrators enforce nakedness?
- Was the desecration in public?
- Was the desecration in front of other persons? (describe whom)
- Did perpetrators remove important symbols of identity (jewelry, clothing, facial hair, etc.)?
- Did perpetrators mark the bodies with symbols, urine, feces, etc.?
- What did perpetrators say?
- Perpetrators:
- Locations:
- Sources:

### **17. Did you see evidence of mass cultural destruction?**

- Did perpetrators destroy religious institutions?
  - Institution(s) destroyed or defaced:
  - What methods did they use?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Did perpetrators destroy cultural institutions?
  - Institutions destroyed or defaced:
  - What methods did they use?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Did perpetrators destroy monuments or historical sites?
  - Institutions destroyed or defaced:
  - What methods did they use?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Did perpetrators destroy religious icons or books?
  - Icons or books destroyed or defaced:
  - What methods did they use?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Did perpetrators destroy or deface cemeteries?
  - Headstones or other markers destroyed or defaced:
  - What methods did they use?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Did perpetrators destroy schools, hospitals, media offices or other places of collective life?
  - Institutions destroyed:
  - What methods did they use?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:



- Sources:

**18. Did you see evidence of ecocide (destruction of the natural environment)?**

- Describe destruction (burning crops, poisoning water, flooding towns, etc.)
  - What methods did they use?
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources:
- Is there evidence that the destruction was intended to destroy a group”
  - Identity of group:
  - Evidence of intent:
  - Perpetrators:
  - Locations:
  - Sources: