

KEY DEFINITIONS

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Crimes Against Humanity - Crimes against humanity are defined as “any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population.” The acts include murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape (and other gender-based or sex crimes), group-based persecution, enforced disappearance, apartheid, and “other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.” [1998 Article 7, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court]

Dehumanization - The process of depriving a person or group of positive human qualities; a stage of genocide, where perpetrators no longer see their victims as human.

Deportation - the action of forcing someone to leave a country, or area of a country, by public and/or state authorities. Processes of deportation have been historically linked to forced displacements and forced migrations. Deportation is also sometimes referred to as expulsion.

Discrimination - treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics (note: this is not a legal definition). [source: Ontario Human Rights Commission]

Equity - fairness, impartiality, even-handedness. Equity involves recognizing differences between and within groups of individuals, and using this understanding to achieve substantive equality in all aspects of a person's life. Equity does not always mean treating individuals equally, but in ways that account for their differences and varying needs.

Ethnic Cleansing - the forced removal of an ethnic group from a territory. A United Nations Commission of Experts investigating the former Yugoslavia defined it as “rendering an area ethnically homogenous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area.” Unlike crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes, ethnic cleansing is not recognized as a standalone crime under international law. However, the practice of ethnic cleansing may constitute genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes. [source: USHMM].

Genocide - an internationally recognized crime where acts are committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. These acts fall into five categories:

- Killing members of the group
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

KEY DEFINITIONS

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Human Rights - rights that all people have by virtue of being human beings. They are outlined in various international, national, and local declarations and laws, such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, or the Ontario Human Rights Code. Rights span economic, ecologic, social, cultural, religious, and political spheres. These rights are considered essential and necessary to ensure the dignity and safety of each person.

Identity - the qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, and/or expressions that characterize a person or group.

Prejudice - negative prejudgment or preconceived feelings or notions about another person or group of persons based on perceived characteristics. [source: Ontario Human Rights Commission]

Reconciliation - In Canada, the process of reconciliation is tied to the federal government's relationship with Indigenous peoples. The term has come to describe attempts made by individuals and institutions to raise awareness about colonization and its ongoing effects on Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation also refers to efforts made to address the harms caused by various policies and programs of colonization, such as residential schools. For some, the word represents an opportunity to reflect on the past, to heal and to make right. For others, however, current gestures of reconciliation are merely performative and lack meaningful action to address the harms done by colonization. [source: The Canadian Encyclopedia]

Settler Colonialism - a type of colonialism in which the Indigenous peoples of a colonized region are displaced by settlers who permanently form a society there. In Canada, settler colonialism is an ongoing system of power that perpetuates the genocide and repression of Indigenous peoples and cultures.

Tolerance - the ability or willingness to tolerate something, in particular the existence of opinions or behavior that one does not necessarily agree with.

Us vs. Them - the tendency of individuals to view the social world in terms of an ingroup ("us") and an outgroup ("them"). Consequently, people often prefer to associate with those who are similar over those who are different, preferentially allocate resources to similar others, and hold more positive beliefs about similar others [source: APA dictionary of psychology].

War Crimes - War crimes are serious violations of international humanitarian law and occur in the state of armed conflict. The Rome Statute lists numerous acts that may constitute war crimes, including attacks on civilians, forcibly recruiting and using child soldiers, and the destruction of educational and religious institutions [source: USHMM]