

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SELECT CASES OF GENOCIDE

## The Armenian Genocide

The Armenian Genocide: the systematic destruction of Armenian Christian people between 1915 and 1923 in the former Ottoman Empire (now represented by modern day Turkey). At least 664,000 and as many as 1.2 million Armenians were killed in massacres, individual killings, or from systematic ill treatment, exposure, and starvation by Ottoman authorities during mass forced deportations and death marches. Many others were subject to the confiscation of their wealth and property, forced religious conversion, and tens of thousands of Armenian children were also forcibly removed from families. Other minorities within the empire were also targets of extreme state violence, including Assyrians, Greeks, and Kurds. In total, approximately 2.5 million people were killed during this period. While many historians and countries (including Canada) recognize the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish government continues to deny that these atrocities constituted genocide.

## The Holocaust

The systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million European Jews by the Nazi German regime and its allies and collaborators throughout German- and Axis-controlled Europe between 1933-1945. The Holocaust was an evolving process that involved mass killings, forced relocations into ghettos, and deportations to concentration labour camps and killing centres. German authorities also targeted other groups, including the Roma/Sinti, persons with disabilities, Slavic peoples, Afro-Germans, sexual minorities and persons with different gender identities, and certain political and religious groups (communists, socialists, and Jehovah's Witnesses). Anne Frank wrote her diary while in hiding in the Netherlands. Frank and her family were arrested by German and Dutch police in August 1944 and Anne Frank died in early 1945 at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. The Holocaust ended when the Allied Powers defeated Nazi Germany in World War II. The spread of antisemitic ideologies and violence against Jewish communities and individuals still continues today around the world.

## The Cultural Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada

Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada: involved drawn-out processes of colonial violence, including fatal neglect, abuse, and suppression of Indigenous languages and cultures in state- and church-run residential and day schools, which ran between the 1870s and 1997 with the aim of assimilating Indigenous children into settler Euro-Canadian society; the forced removal of children from Indigenous families in the 1960s and 1970s (often referred to as the 'Sixties Scoop'); forced sterilizations of Indigenous women; and restricted access to basic necessities of life (including clean drinking water). Approximately 150,000 students attended residential schools. The 2015 Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission declared "the establishment and operation of residential schools [...] can best be described as 'cultural genocide'," and in 2019, the Canadian government also accepted the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry's conclusion that Canada committed genocide against Indigenous peoples. Physical, structural, and cultural violence against Indigenous communities in Canada continues today, and past atrocities (including mass grave sites) continue to be uncovered at residential schools across the country.