

Cultural Genocide

Global Genocides

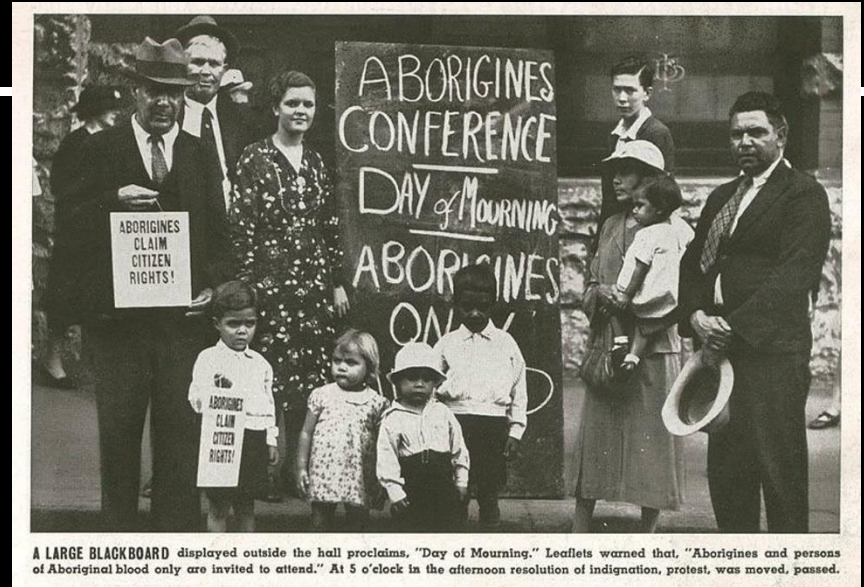


What is Cultural Genocide?

- “purposeful destructive targeting of out-group cultures so as to destroy or weaken them in the process of conquest or domination” (Davidson 2012: 1)
- “The destruction of a people’s cultural heritage amounts to the destruction of a people’s memory, its collective consciousness and identity. In other words it is ethnic cleansing by another name.” (Chamberlain 2014)

Cultural Genocide

- Colonialism
- Act of terrorism
- Warfare = war crime
- A form of ethnic cleansing



Australia Indigenous activists 1920s, 1930s



UNESCO: Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict

- **1954 Hague Convention:** ...any damage to cultural property, irrespective of the people it belongs to, is a damage to the cultural heritage of all humanity, because every people contributes to the world's culture...
- **2015 Resolution 2199:** to fight against international terrorism financing; prohibits the illicit trafficking of cultural goods from Iraq & Syria
- **2017 Resolution 2347** of the UN Security Council formally recognizes that the defence of cultural heritage is imperative for security

Defining Cultural Genocide

- Prohibiting the use of a people's language
- Destruction of heritage:
 - Literature and texts printed in this language and the prohibition of new publications;
 - Destruction of libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship, or other cultural institutions and objects of the (or preventing their use
- Forced exile or dislocation

Defining Heritage

- Tangible: culturally significant buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, artworks, literature
- Intangible: language, cultural practices, knowledges, skills, rituals transmitted between the generations



St Porphyrios Church



Cultural Landscapes

- World Heritage Organisation also recognises cultural landscapes
- Certain sites reflect specific techniques of land use that guarantee and sustain biological diversity. Others, associated in the minds of the communities with powerful beliefs and artistic and traditional customs, embody an exceptional spiritual relationship of people with nature
- <https://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/>

Wadi Gaza

- 2000: Wadi Gaza Nature Reserve declared a nature reserve
- 2012: Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetlands submitted for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage list
- 2021 waste treatment plant & UNDP Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetland Conservation and Development project



Wadi Gaza 1917 & early 21st century



Wadi Gaza Natural Reserve



Memory

- The past plays an important role in the creation of identity
- Material world an important tool for mediating people's relationship with their past



Hamam al Samra

Social Memory

- Group tradition/custom:
- The construction of a collective notion about the way things were in the past
 - Malleable: an active & on-going process
 - Created or represented materially



Mosaic St Hilarion Monastery

Enforced Forgetting

- “Statues, inscriptions, memorial stones, the names of streets – anything that might throw light on the past has been systematically altered”
- (1984, George Orwell)



Ruins of Great Omari mosque

Palestine: Cultural Genocide?

- Nakba (1948): the Palestinian Catastrophe
- National Naming Committee set up to replace traditional Palestinian place names with Hebrew names
- 2023-2025 war in Gaza



Ethnic cleansing to cultural genocide

Case Study: Canada Park

- Palestinian past is deliberately written out of history
- Canada Park: built over the ruins of three Palestinian villages abandoned after the Six-Day War
- Creation of a narrative of a barren land prior to the creation of Israel.



<http://www.imemc.org/article/60691>

Cultural Genocide in Gaza

- 200+ sites & monuments destroyed
- Libraries, schools & all 4 universities destroyed
- Destruction of National Museum, which housed over 3,000 rare antiquities
- Possible theft of antiquities



Remains of al-Aqsa University, Gaza

Cultural Genocide in Gaza

- “The nation of Palestine ceased to be. Its original inhabitants, the Palestinian people, were dubbed Arab refugees, sent regular food rations by the UN, and forgotten by the world” (
- Fawaz Turki 1972, 29)
- Gradually erasing Palestinian cultural heritage is to deny Palestinian people of their right to self determination over their cultural resources & by extension threatens their existence as a people

