

Days of Remembrance 2014 Facts of the Day



**DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

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Day	Fact	Source
1	<p>Each year, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum leads the nation in the Days of Remembrance, established by the U.S. Congress to commemorate the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust as well as the millions of non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. The 2014 Days of Remembrance is April 27th–May 4th, and the Museum has designated <i>Confronting the Holocaust: American Responses</i> as the theme for the 2014 observance.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
2	<p>The Holocaust was the systematic persecution and murder of approximately six million Jewish men, women, and children by the Nazi regime. "Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were a threat to the German racial community.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
3	<p>During the Holocaust, German authorities targeted the Jewish population as well as other groups they perceived as racially inferior, such as Roma (Gypsies) and the Slavic people (Poles, Russians, and others). Additionally, other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, including communists, socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, people with disabilities, and homosexuals.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
4	<p>The history of the Holocaust raises difficult questions about our responsibility as a nation to offer refuge and rescue to persecuted people from beyond our borders. As we mark the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, we reflect on contemporary cases of genocide. Despite warnings of imminent violence made by General Roméo Dallaire, the head of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda, the world failed to act, and 800,000 people were murdered within 100 days. As long as genocide remains a threat, we must ask ourselves about the consequences of action—and of inaction.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>

5	<p>Nazi anti-Semitism linked negative and false images of Jews with modern pseudo-scientific beliefs. Among these stereotypes were those derived from centuries-old anti-Jewish thinking, which incorrectly presented Jews as murderers of Christ, agents of the devil, and practitioners of witchcraft. The Nazis linked these negative stereotypes to a “Jewish way of thinking” that they believed was based in genetics and, therefore, not subject to change. They used this belief to justify the discrimination, persecution, and, eventually, physical murder of Jewish people.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
6	<p>On the night of November 9, 1938, the Nazis destroyed synagogues and the shop windows of Jewish-owned stores throughout Germany and Austria (an event now known as the Kristallnacht or Night of Broken Glass). This event marked a transition to an era of destruction in which genocide would become the singular focus of Nazi anti-Semitism.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
7	<p>America’s traditional policy of open immigration ended when Congress enacted restrictive immigration quotas in 1921 and 1924. The quota system allowed 25,957 Germans to enter the country every year. After the stock market crash of 1929, rising unemployment caused President Herbert Hoover to order vigorous enforcement of visa regulations. The new policy significantly reduced immigration; in 1932, the United States issued only 35,576 immigration visas.</p>	<p>http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/american-response-to-the-holocaust</p>

8	<p>The term “genocide” did not exist prior to 1944. Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish lawyer, sought to describe Nazi policies of systematic murder of the European Jews. He formed the word “genocide” by combining <i>geno-</i>, from the Greek word for race or tribe, with <i>-cide</i>, from the Latin word for killing. Lemkin had in mind “a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.”</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
9	<p>From April to July 1994, members of the Hutu ethnic majority in the east-central African nation of Rwanda murdered as many as 800,000 people, mostly of the Tutsi minority. Begun by extreme Hutu nationalists in the capital of Kigali, the genocide spread throughout the country with staggering speed and brutality, as ordinary citizens were incited by local officials and the Hutu power government to take up arms against their neighbors.</p>	<p>http://www.history.com/topics/rwandan-genocide</p>
10	<p>The Center for the Prevention of Genocide works on three distinct fronts: bolstering the will of decision makers to prevent and respond to genocide and mass atrocities, strengthening the movement of organizations and experts with similar concerns, and shaping public attitudes so that citizens demand action to prevent genocide.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
11	<p>Despite a history of providing sanctuary to persecuted peoples, the U.S. grappled with many issues during the 1930s that made living up to this legacy difficult. These included widespread anti-Semitism, xenophobia, isolationism, and a sustained economic depression. For those fleeing Nazi persecution, such issues greatly impacted U.S. refugee policy, reinforcing an official and popular unwillingness to expand immigration quotas to admit greater numbers of people endangered by Nazi persecution.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>

12	<p>In December 1993, four months before the violence in Rwanda began, General Roméo Dallaire, commander of the United Nations peacekeeping forces, warned his superiors that Hutu extremists were planning to exterminate the Tutsis. In January 1994, he repeatedly requested a stronger mandate and more troops, but these requests were denied. The international community largely ignored the Rwandan genocide, labeling it an "internal conflict." The major powers at the United Nations discouraged international intervention.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
13	<p>Millions of ordinary people witnessed the crimes of the Holocaust. Across Europe, the Nazis found countless willing helpers who collaborated or were complicit in their crimes. What motives and pressures led so many to abandon their fellow human beings? Why did others choose to help?</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
14	<p>The assessment of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's role during the Holocaust is made difficult by the relative lack of documentation about his thinking. After the entry of the U.S. into the war in December 1941, Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill determined that the number one priority was to win the war, which would ultimately lead to the rescue of Jews and other victims of the Axis powers.</p>	<p>I Survived.org</p>
15	<p>The basis for Nazi anti-Semitism—prejudice against or hatred of Jewish people—was the Nazis' distorted worldview of human history as a racial struggle. The Nazis falsely considered the Jews to be a race. They incorrectly believed Jews had a natural impulse, inherited through generations, to strive for world domination and that this goal would not only prevent German dominance but would also enslave and destroy the German race.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>

16	<p>Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group: 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, or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
17	<p>The Israeli Parliament established Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Hashoah), to be observed on the 27th day of Nisan of the Hebrew calendar. The Hebrew calendar is a lunar calendar, so the date changes each year in the United States. Observances and remembrance activities occur throughout the week of remembrance, which runs from the Sunday before Holocaust Remembrance Day through the following Sunday.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
18	<p>The word anti-Semitism means prejudice against or hatred of Jews. The Holocaust is history's most extreme example of anti-Semitism.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
19	<p>Genocide does not occur spontaneously. While warning signs can vary from case to case, there are common indicators that suggest a growing potential for genocide. Some of these signs can be found within a society's history. The potential for genocide, however, increases when leaders decide to heighten tensions between groups and make specific plans to use violence.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
20	<p>The Holocaust was not an accident in history; it occurred because individuals, organizations, and governments made choices that not only legalized discrimination but also allowed prejudice, hatred, and ultimately mass murder to occur. Silence and indifference to the suffering of others, or to the infringement of civil rights in any society, can—however unintentionally—perpetuate these problems.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>

21	<p><i>“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”</i> — Elie Wiesel</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
22	<p>In 1948, the United Nations declared genocide to be an international crime; the term would later be applied to the horrific acts of violence committed during conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in the African country of Rwanda in the 1990s. An international treaty signed by some 120 countries in 1998 established the International Criminal Court, which has jurisdiction to prosecute crimes of genocide.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
23	<p>The work of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on genocide and related crimes against humanity is conducted by the Center for the Prevention of Genocide and guided by the Committee on Conscience, a standing committee of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Its mandate is to alert the national conscience, influence policy makers, and stimulate worldwide action to confront and work to halt acts of genocide or related crimes against humanity.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
24	<p>Remembrance obligates us to focus not only on memorializing those who were killed but also to reflect on what could have been done to save them. History teaches us that the Holocaust might not have occurred if governments and leaders had spoken out during the Nazi rise to power. Could more people have been saved if individual citizens had raised their voices to force their governments to act—if only to offer safety and refuge?</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>

25	<p>In 2013, President Obama signed legislation expanding the State Department's Rewards for Justice Program to give the secretary of state the authority to offer a reward for information leading to the arrest or conviction of anyone wanted by any international tribunal for genocide or other serious human rights violations. President Obama said, <i>"We have made unmistakably clear that the United States is committed to seeing war criminals and other perpetrators of atrocities held accountable for their crimes, and today's legislation can help us achieve that goal."</i></p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
26	<p>In 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, responding to political pressure, called for a conference to facilitate the emigration of refugees from Germany and Austria, and to establish an international organization to work for a solution to the refugee problem. Delegates from 32 countries met at the French resort of Evian. During the nine-day meeting, delegates expressed sympathy for the refugees, yet most countries, including the U.S. and Britain, offered excuses for not letting in more refugees. Only the Dominican Republic agreed to accept additional refugees.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
27	<p>More than six decades after the Holocaust, the horrors of Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur are sobering reminders that preventing future genocides and mass atrocities remains an enormous challenge. Yet genocide is not the inevitable result of ancient hatreds or irrational leaders. As we learn more from past genocides about the risk factors, warning signs, and triggering events of these crimes, we are also learning that they can be averted and that genocide can be prevented.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>

28	<p>The American public discovered the full extent of the Holocaust when the Allied armies liberated the extermination and concentration camps at the end of World War II. As historians struggled to understand what had happened, over time, attention has increasingly focused on America's response and what lay behind it. Today it remains the subject of great debate.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
29	<p>In May 1939, the St. Louis, a ship carrying 930 Jewish refugees holding legitimate landing certificates, left Germany for Cuba. During the voyage, the certificates granted by the Cuban government were invalidated. Only 22 refugees were allowed entry. President Federico L. Brú insisted the ship leave Havana. The refugees were refused entry into the United States. While en route back to Europe, several countries agreed to take in the refugees; however, as Hitler's armies invaded Western Europe, many of the refugees became victims of the Final Solution.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
30	<p>Looking back at the events of 1938, the signs of impending war and the Holocaust—territorial expansion, disregard for international law, persecution of people based on their identity—are undoubtedly clearer today than they were then. Why did so many countries and individuals fail to respond to the warning signs? And what can we learn from the few who chose to act, despite widespread indifference?</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>
31	<p><i>"... We remember all whose lives were lost or forever altered by the Holocaust. And we are challenged to think about what might motivate us to respond to warning signs of genocide today. History teaches us that genocide can be prevented if enough people care enough to act. Our choices in response to hatred truly do matter, and together we can help fulfill the promise of Never Again."</i> — U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/</p>

