

# Proffesor argumentative essay example

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## **AMERICAN LEGACY OF GUILT OVER THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.**

Genocide is a saddening word in its description. The word did not exist before the year 1944. Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer, describes it as an intended and a coordinated plan of different actions such as killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm or imposing measures intended to prevent birth within a group with the aim of destructing essential foundations of life of a national, racial or ethnical group. (Funk, T. Marcus (2010) page 1) .

According to 1948 United Nations Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of Genocide article 2; genocide is an act done with the intention of destroying in part or whole of a group. About 174 million people lost their lives in the whole world: Germany, china, USSR and lately Africa in 20th century. The system of governance and widely shown political differences are to be blamed for the cause.

The US government failed to intervene on Rwandan Genocide which was a mass killing of people that took place in Rwanda in 1994, April 6th through mid July. This was after assassination of Juvenal Habyarimana and cyperian Ntaryamira. Conflict over political and leadership rivalry between the Hutu and the Tutsi led to the death of over 800000 people within a span of 100 days. Millions of people were left maimed while children got traumatized. Their houses were burnt down leaving them hopeless and homeless. The Hutu tribe had prominent leaders in the government. It was therefore a well planned action by the national government joining forces with the local military in order to carry out the bloody slaughter of the Tutsi group.

Rwandan Prime Minister Jean Kambanda revealed in his testimony before the International Criminal Tribunal that the genocide was openly discussed in cabinet meetings and that one cabinet minister said she was personally in favor of getting rid of all Tutsi; “ without the Tutsi,” she told ministers, “ all of Rwanda's problems would be over.”(BBC News March 28 2004) The government enabled the Militia to get access to sophisticated weapons such AK47 and grenades. Others were armed with machetes imported from China because Machetes were definitely cheaper than guns.

(Diamond Jared. “ Collapse” Penguin Books NY 2005, page 316)

Every person in the country was forced to have an Identity Card that showed the owners tribe; Tutsi or Hutu. During the mass killings, one feature that was used to easily identify the two different tribes was the skin color in addition to the Identity card. Lighter ones were known to be the Tutsi, the minority tribe while the darker were the Hutu, the majority tribe.

Over all this period, where was the USA? Were US leaders aware of the inhumane act happening in Eastern and central Africa? Were they turning a deaf ear and blinding themselves from the truth? Yes they did. For the case in the Rwandan Genocide, the United States did not want to be involved. Bill Clinton watched passively as the Tutsi were murdered in hundreds of thousands by the Hutu extremist regime. It was a clear indication that US did not want to involve in it. The US administration did not utter the word genocide since their utterance may oblige them to intervene. UK government also distanced itself. The French was in support of Hutu leadership. French kept insisting to the UN’s authorization of power to the Hutus. They felt that Tutsi would diminish Paris’s influence in Central Africa.

Much of the western world's public perception of Africa is filtered through cultural lenses and dominant political priorities. Africa's culture is often seen to be radically different from western Ideology. Continental tragedies and catastrophes are equally much. (Global shadows, James Ferguson, 2006 pg 33-34) Washington's policy approach with regard to black Americans and black indigenous Africans reveals some shocking similarities. There exists a bureaucratic nature of American policy not working well in Rwanda and the failure of the West to address this humanitarian crisis. (L. R Melverns's A people Betrayed, 2000 (page 24 ) The American policy paralysis was as a result of carefully calculated and highly politicized decision making process and also driven by some racial factors. The US saw the Hutu Tutsi war as a long historical, deep rooted fight since way back during colonization. The early European explorers of Rwanda and Burundi described the Tutsi as physically and intellectually superior to the Hutu. These were the primary factors that raised political and ethnic emotions between the two major tribes. The Hutus felt that they were they were there to be led as if they were the minority. (prunier 1995, page 5-9)

USA's lack of involvement in the prevention of continued killings in Rwanda was a great indicator that the whites were clearly neglecting the human rights and lives of Africans at that moment. Even a month after the violence, America was hesitant to conclude whether the conditions for the genocide have been met according to the Geneva Convention. They kept postponing immediate interventions on the grounds that there was no enough immediate evidence on the scale and the method of the massacre. The truth of the matter was that the Americans never saw the worth of sending its

troops to such a place with a primitive culture just for their troops to be killed by the Africans. The USA's earlier involvement in the war in Somalia was criticized by other officials in the government. They saw that it was wastage of resources for the America's troops to be involved in the war since US never had any interest in the region. Likewise the case in Rwanda was not an exception, hence the senior officers needed to take caution.

The Human Right activists should have been there. Cases should have been filed in the International Criminals court; perpetrators should have been sentenced so that justice is ultimately served. US had a role to play in ending the killings in time. It is the most powerful state and its presence would definitely ease the situation. Nevertheless, in Rwanda, policy gave way to silence and inaction allowing incitation of violence and slaughter of innocents. Had the American forces, U. N and French took actions of destroying Radio Transmitters; thousands of lives could have been saved. (Otunnu and Doyle; 1998 (page 98). The vivid real-life radio appeal to mass murder in Rwanda was the greatest cause of the genocide. The media had played a major role in inciting the continuation of the genocide. In the newspapers, for example, sketchy image of Tutsi ladies were drawn with a message indicating that Tutsi ladies were vulnerable object for Hutu men. This increased cases of mob raping. (Otunnu and Doyle 1998: (page 98) U. S, Britain and other western countries carry a legacy of guilt. The true cost of western inaction was laid bare in the mass graves. Hilary Clinton and his advisers such as Susan Rice have continued to mould America's policy towards Rwanda. The ending of genocide, was attributed to Paul Kagame who promised to take Rwanda back to where it initially was. Guilt drives

these western countries together with U. S to back Paul Kagame in his endeavors to rebuild Rwanda. Why call it a legacy of guilt? It is so because, few years after the genocide, the U. S joined hands with Kagame and his forces where they were directly and indirectly responsible for the killings of millions of people in Congo. The U. S never raised an alarm towards Paul Kagame on the fact that one crime does not justify the other.

The genocide in Democratic Republic of Congo was another worse experience where over six million people were killed. This time round, the U. S was involved. They intervened though their involvement only worsened the situation. The genocide occurred between 1996 and 2003 just after the end of genocide in Rwanda that ended in 1994. The perpetrators of war in Rwanda, Hutu fighters, fled to DRC. This made Rwanda and Uganda soldiers to invade Democratic Republic of Congo in pursuit of the genocide causers in Rwanda. Mobutu Seseko was overthrown and Laurent Desire Kabila, who led the rebellion, became president. This time round, the Americans and the United Nations were present but the crimes were still perpetrated by armed groups. United States of and British government supported Rwanda's invasion into Zaire and fighting the perpetuators of the genocide who were threatening to start another new genocide. Sadly most of the affected population was innocent children and women. During this period, cases of mass rape increased. America could not explain how 6 million people were killed. This is perhaps the world's worst conflict after World War II. Rwandan military together with Uganda and Burundi, there after began extracting valuable minerals from Congo's land. This was not part of the earlier plan and so, America should have at least stopped the vandalism. Guilt of not

involving itself in stopping the previous genocide makes US unable to make firm stand on dealing with Paul Kagame. U S stayed mum about the whole situation.

The U. S involvement policy was earlier seen as fighting communism and the influence of Soviet Union in Africa. Besides this, U. S was concerned with securing its own interest in the region than helping foster a stable, secure and future for the people of Central Africa. Zaire had valuable resources and it is strategically placed in the centre of the continent.(Global shadows, James Ferguson, pg 27) This explains why they were not involved in the earlier war in Rwanda and retreated from Somalia. A this moment it is clear that the U. S is seen as imposing its western capitalism Dogmatism. This is evident in the fact that they were entertaining Mobutu Seseko's dictatorship on his people with the aim of preventing spread of communalism from the influence of USSR.

In conclusion, it is evident that U. S failed to intervene on the genocide situation in Rwanda. After Paul Kagame , president of Rwanda, made an effort of ending the genocide and started focusing on the development of Rwanda, they come in driven by guilt prior actions to offer support. The U. S thereafter intervened in Congo war in support to Paul Kagame but they did more of destruction since over 6 million people were reported to have lost their lives.

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