

WHAT MIGS DOES

Founded in 1986 to develop and manage major research programs focused on the prevention and prosecution of genocide and crimes against humanity, educate comparatively about genocide, and help survivors and their children escape their isolation by building bridges to other survivors of genocide and mass atrocity crimes, MIGS organizes innovative workshops and conferences, sponsors lectures, issues reports, prepares books and articles, and trains students specializing in genocide studies at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels. MIGS works locally, nationally, and internationally to educate members of the public, the media, and government. Its partners include the Aegis Trust in Britain, the Documentation Centre of Cambodia, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, the Genocide Prevention Working Group, and the International Campaign to End Genocide.

WHO WE ARE

MIGS combines the multidisciplinary talents of Concordia faculty members and graduate students from Communications, English, Geography, History, Political Science, and Sociology/Anthropology, as well as colleagues from McGill and the University of Quebec in Montreal, backed up by General Roméo Dallaire (Ret.), MIGS Senior Fellow, a Board of Directors, and an Academic Advisory Board of distinguished international experts from Ireland, Europe, and North America. MIGS collaborates closely with Concordia's Canada Research Chair in Public History, the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, and the Centre for Ethnographic Research in the Aftermath of Violence based in the Concordia History Department. Through its work with graduate and undergraduate students, its fellows, and interns, MIGS has trained the largest group of genocide specialists in Canada.

THE W2I TEAM

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DONATING TO MIGS

You can support the work of MIGS and receive a tax-receipt by making a donation at: migs.concordia.ca/Donate.html

GRADUATE STUDIES

MIGS faculty direct graduate studies on genocide and atrocity crimes at the master's and doctoral levels. Graduate degrees may be accomplished in the Department of History (M.A. and Ph.D.), the SIP program (M.A. and Ph.D.), and the Ph.D. in the Humanities program. For more information visit the MIGS web site and also see: www.concordia.ca/info/futurestudents/graduate

INTERNSHIPS

Volunteering as a MIGS Intern:

We are often able to use additional interns as new projects develop and Media Monitoring and the Will to Intervene Project evolve. If you would like to volunteer, please send your c.v. to Nadav Aigen at: naigen@live.concordia.ca

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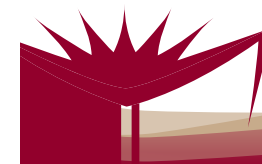
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MOBILIZING THE
WILL TO INTERVENE

Yes, we can prevent mass atrocities!



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ABOUT THE WILL TO INTERVENE PROJECT

- Mobilizing the Will to Intervene, the W2I report, recommends practical strategic measures to government officials, legislators, civil servants, non-governmental organizations, advocacy groups, journalists, and media owners and managers in Canada and the United States to raise their capacity to prevent mass atrocities overseas.
- The report was produced by the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS), a research center of Concordia University, in co-operation with Lieutenant General the Honorable Roméo A. Dallaire (Ret.). The principal funders of the project are the Simons Foundation of Vancouver, James Stanford of Calgary, the family and friends of Aaron Fish of Montreal, Lieutenant-General Roméo A. Dallaire (Retired) Incorporated, the Tauben Family fund of Irwin and Sara Tauben, and several offices at Concordia University, especially the Office of the Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies, the Office of Research, and the Office for Advancement.
- MIGS started the Will to Intervene project on February 5, 2008. It launched its recommendations to the Government of the United States at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, DC on September 21, 2009 and its recommendations to the Government of Canada at the National Press Gallery on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on September 22, 2009.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The key to mobilizing international support to prevent mass atrocities is to garner domestic support. This was a central argument of The Responsibility to Protect (R2P), the 2001 report prepared by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. The W2I Project is designed to operationalize R2P principles in Canada and the United States. Strong prodding from civil society organizations and the news media is essential when governments do not implement the “responsibility to protect” on their own.

The case for the prevention of mass atrocities once rested largely on moral imperatives and upholding international treaties and conventions. Despite the UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Geneva Conventions and their subsequent protocols, treaties to which the U.S. is a signatory, arguments based on morality and legal

obligations have not carried sufficient weight to overwhelm the cold statecraft calculations that traditionally inform government notions of the “national interest.” One of the most frequently voiced arguments for explaining the international community’s failure to halt the Rwandan Genocide derived from government assessments that deeper involvement was not in the national interest and risking the lives of soldiers would diminish electoral support.

A modern understanding of the national interest requires a greater emphasis on the prevention of mass atrocities by leaders. In today’s unstable and interdependent global environment, the traditional national interest approach to foreign policy is no longer effective. The combined impact of poverty and inequality, rapid demographic growth, nationalism, and climate change drives deadly violence and threatens international peace and security. These underlying structural factors increase the risks of mass atrocities, and the chaos resulting from those atrocities poses credible dangers to Canadian and American national interests at home and abroad. If we continue to deal with looming genocides and other mass atrocities in a reactive manner, we will confront more than just the moral failure to save lives; inevitably, Canada and the U.S. will face threats at home to their own national security and prosperity.

KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

- The Prime Minister make preventing mass atrocities a national priority for Canada
- The Prime Minister appoint an International Security Minister as a senior member of the Cabinet
- The Government of Canada support and promote public discussion on Canada’s role in preventing mass atrocities
- The Parliament of Canada convert the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity into a standing joint committee
- Parliamentarians exercise individual initiative and use their existing powers and privileges to advocate the implementation of R2P as an international norm and a vital part of Canada’s foreign policy
- The Government of Canada create an interdepartmental Coordinating Office for the Prevention of Mass Atrocities

- The Coordinating Office for the Prevention of Mass Atrocities create standard operating procedures for disseminating intelligence concerning the risks of mass atrocities throughout the whole of government
- The Government of Canada establish a Canadian Prevention Corps
- The Government of Canada increase its diplomatic and development presence in fragile countries
- The Government of Canada continue enhancing the Canadian Forces’ capabilities by increasing its force strength and developing operational concepts, doctrine, force structure, and training to support civilian protection

KEY MESSAGES

- Mass atrocities, with their chaos and mass loss of life, produce shock waves which reverberate throughout the rest of today’s global village—seismic wrecking balls destabilizing and destroying social, economic, health, and political infrastructures. This is a cardinal lesson of the Rwandan Genocide. The front lines of our defenses against terrorism and piracy, pandemics, and lost access to strategic raw materials and trade are in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the very regions which fell off our radar screens after the end of the Cold War in the 1990s.
- In the coming decade, the leaders of Canada and the United States should redefine our countries’ vital national interests to include the prevention of mass atrocities, not just for humanitarian reasons, but in the self-interest of our own citizens.
- Generating the international political will necessary to prevent mass atrocities remains one of the central challenges of the 21st century. The United Nations and other international institutions are made up of national governments whose primary concern is to retain the political support of their core domestic constituencies. We must recognize that the key to mobilizing international support to prevent mass atrocities is to first garner domestic political support.