Editors' Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

During the spring of 2008 Professor Anatase Shyaka, then Director of the Centre for Conflict Management (CCM) at the National University of Rwanda, broached the idea of producing a special issue of the *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies* on the subject of genocide. At the time I was a Fulbright Scholar serving as a Senior Researcher at CCM. I gladly accepted the invitation to serve as the guest editor, and set to work contacting various scholars whose work I respect.

In developing this special issue, I wanted to include articles that not only addressed a wide-range of critical issues vis-à-vis genocide, but issues that were, in one way or another, likely to be germane to the interests of readers in the Great Lakes region. Intuitively, I knew articles dealing with the 1994 Rwandan would be of particular interest to a vast majority of the readership. At one and the same time, I was keen to include articles that were original in concept and were likely to be thought-provoking.

In "The Rwandan Genocide: Why Early Warning Failed," Stanton essentially argues that reinforcement of the UN troops (UNAMIR) on the ground in Rwanda could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives, but "group-think" precluded consideration of direct military intervention by the US and allied forces, though they were near Rwanda and rescued their own nationals." Stanton's article is a clear indictment of the international community (particularly the United Nations and the U.S. Government) for failing to provide assistance to the Tutsis and moderate Hutus who literally faced extinction at the hands of the genocidaires.

In "Why Men Participate: A Review of Perpetrator Research on the Rwandan Genocide," Cyanne Loyle provides a fascinating and thought-provoking analysis of a segment of the fieldwork she has conducted in Rwanda over the past several years. A key goal of her ongoing research is to help contribute to a unified theory of participation in genocide (that is, who participates and why) that can be examined and applied across case.

In "The Release and Use of Imprisoned Criminals and/or Known Gangsters During the Commission of Acts Potentially Leading Up to Genocide: A Clear and Unmistakable Early Warning Signal of a Failed State -- Some Preliminary Thoughts," Samuel Totten explores how genocidaires over the past century have made use of convicted criminals to help with the dirty work of mass killing. As his title suggests, he believes the mass
release of incarcerated criminals into society is a clear and unambiguous sign that something is terribly awry in that society.

Herbert Hirsch, in "The Responsibility to Protect: Likelihood of Contributing to the Prevention and Intervention of Genocide," also touches on the 1994 Rwandan genocide, but ranges further a field as he examines the potential efficacy (or lack there of) of the relatively new concept of "the responsibility to protect. Following the 1994 tragedy in Rwanda and the debacle in Srebrenica in July 1995, the international community has attempted to come up with new ways to prevent genocide, and that is commendable. However, as Hirsch asserts, not all new ideas are all that new or even all that valuable.

Genocide denial has, unfortunately and sadly, become a major component of the field of genocide studies, and that is true for both genocidaires, their followers and, in many cases, their descendants, find it impossible, for various reasons, to admit genocide was perpetrated against innocents. In his article, "Genocide, Denial, and Domination: Armenian-Turkish Relations From Conflict Resolution to Just Transformation," Henry C. Theriault (a professor of philosophy and a genocide scholar) examines the complexities inherent in the denial of the Armenian Genocide and what it would take for a just transformation to occur as it relates to Armenian-Turkish relations. His unique perspective provides an important lens into not only the Armenian genocide but any genocide in which the perpetrators and their descendants deny the truth of their horrific and criminal actions.


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Guest Editor