Rethinking Genocide, Mass Atrocities and Political Violence in Africa: New Directions, New Inquiries, and Global Perspective
(to be published in 2017-2018)

The editors of Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal solicit articles for an upcoming symposium on Rethinking Genocide, Mass Atrocities and Political Violence in Africa. Despite an overall decline in the number of violent conflicts and an increase in stable democratic governments, there are still substantial challenges facing countries and societies across Africa—from religious and ethnic conflict, and war profiteering to increasing inequality, human rights violations, massive flows of refugees, and large numbers of disaffected youth. This symposium does not assume that there is a form of conflict that is particular to the African continent. Rather, it is based on a recognition that conflict in Africa is often conceptualized through the lens of terms such as “genocide,” “civil war,” “mass atrocities,” “religious violence,” “ethnic violence,” or “terrorism.” These concepts focus our analytical gaze on society-wide or country-wide events and processes, but conceal both the finer-grain local dynamics of conflicts as well as the role of global economic systems and regional competitions. Within this context, the symposium asks whether the traditional paradigms of understanding violence and peace are still relevant to understanding conflict in African contexts.

The Special Issue will consist of 10 to 15 clearly written, analytical articles between 5,000 and 10,000 words. The editors welcome the submission of manuscripts in any of the categories below:

1. Recently the word “genocide” has been used to describe violence or the risk of violence in Sudan, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi.
   a. Has the application of the word “genocide” to frame the violence been more of a help or a hindrance to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in these countries?
   b. Has the word “genocide” over-emphasized the role of identity and ethnicity in conflict, concealing the role of powerful international actors or structural drivers of conflict? Or, has the word genocide highlighted identity-based dynamics of conflict that would otherwise have been concealed? Has the word “genocide” concealed conflicts over governance, and access to economic opportunities and resources? Or, has the word “genocide” highlighted the role of governance and inequality in the commission of mass atrocities?

2. The words “violent extremism” and “terrorism” have been applied in Nigeria, Libya, Tunisia, Somalia, and Mali, and other countries.
   a. Have these analytical frameworks been more of a help or a hindrance to peace efforts in these countries?
   b. Have these words focused our analytical gaze on religion or ideology, while concealing other important political and economic aspects of conflict? Or, have they been important for understanding such types of violence?

3. Over the last decade, terms such as “Atrocity Crimes” and “the Responsibility to Protect” were developed purposefully to downplay the implications of terms such as “genocide” and “crimes against humanity,” and shift political discourse from one of “prevention as intervention” to a positive discourse of “prevention as a responsibility.” How have these concepts shifted our frames of reference for African conflicts, in terms of practice, politics, and scholarship? And what has been the impact on Africa, if any, of this shift?

4. Have transitional justice and international criminal justice mechanisms helped build peace in Africa?

5. Have the R2P and Early Warning & Early Prevention movements helped build peace in Africa?

6. We welcome submissions that do not fall within the above categories, but are within the spirit of the Special Issue.

The Symposium will be published in 2017 or early 2018. Articles are meant to encourage research with an interdisciplinary expertise on topical issues that can advance scholarship, inform public policy and awareness, or provide practitioners and professionals in the field the opportunity to connect to an audience of scholars (and vice-versa). To participate in the symposium, please email the guest editors on or before October 15, 2016 providing your institutional affiliation, contact information, and a proposed abstract (about 150 words).

Papers will be formatted according to GSP guidelines and submitted electronically through the GSP website via the “Submit Article” link at http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/. After internal review, manuscripts will be sent for double blind external review. The contact information of symposium guest editors is:

- Wale Adeboye, University of Ibadan and West Africa Responsibility to Protect Coalition (r2pwestafrica@gmail.com)
- Laura Collins, George Mason University (lcollins2@gmu.edu)
- Terrence Lyons, George Mason University (tlyons1@gmu.edu).

www.genocidescholars.org http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/