

SUMMARY

This chapter is concerned with the collective victimization of ethnic, religious, national and political groups by the state or its agents. Since World War II we estimate that at least 50 genocides and political mass murders have occurred. We contend, as scholars and observers of international policy, that these crimes against humanity are preventable. It is not only the lack of political will that puts people at risk, but also the lack of timely information about the threat, magnitude, and nature of impending humanitarian crises. This chapter aims to contribute to a better understanding of what causes contemporary genocides and political mass murder. In addition the chapter summarizes some results of a recent empirical study—one designed and directed by thus – whose purpose is to help policy planners in the United States and elsewhere identify countries and groups at high risk of genocide and politicide in the early years of the new century.