

**Webster University Geneva
Centennial Speaker Series**

Open Wounds: A Century of Crimes against Humanity

In commemoration of Webster University's centennial anniversary, the Geneva campus is pleased to present its Centennial Speaker Series: "Open Wounds: A Century of Crimes against Humanity." This series will bring together the International Relations, Media Communications and Psychology departments who are invited to reflect and present on this common theme.

From prehistory up until today, civilians have been victims of atrocities and massacres. In the year 1915, when Webster University was founded, the First World War was devastating Europe and the Armenian genocide was being perpetrated. Since then, and over the next one hundred years, crimes against humanity did not abate, as we witnessed the Shoah, the killing fields of Cambodia, and the mass murders of Bosnia and Rwanda to name just a few.

In order to mark and to better understand these important historical milestones, including their lessons and legacies, Webster University Geneva invites scholars, experts, activists and witnesses to shed light on the subject of crimes against humanity. This Centennial Speaker Series will endeavor to look at other issues related to the aftermath of genocide and the long-term ramifications of such horrendous events, including justice and reconciliation.

This three-part speaker series will cover:

"Life After Genocide" – November 9 – 12, 2015

A photographic reportage on what life is like after genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda

"Open Wounds, Armenians, Turks, and a Century of Genocide" – November 12, 2015

A presentation on the post-genocide political history of Armenians and Turks

"Why Genocide?: Realities, Responses and Ramifications" – December 4, 2015

A one-day conference covering the key themes and impacts of genocide

The Centennial Speaker Series will be held on the Webster University Geneva campus and is open to the public free of charge.

Webster University, founded in 1915 in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, has a century-long tradition of providing first-rate education to students around the world. Webster University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and has campuses in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. The Geneva campus opened in 1978 and is the largest one outside of the United States, with approximately 500 students from 90 countries, studying towards either a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

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Life After Genocide

On Monday, November 9, Kristian Skeie, will open Webster's Centennial Speaker Series with a presentation of his photographic stories: "Life After Genocide."

Skeie will give an introductory lecture on his photographic exploration on what it means to survive genocide. He will share some of the individual stories he collected first hand from survivors of the massacres of Srebrenica in Bosnia and against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

While the photographs on display will cover both events, Skeie will focus on one particular story—that of Reverien Rurangwa a boy, who at the age 15, lost his entire family of 43 members. Reverien now lives and works in Switzerland, but returned to Rwanda to visit his village, 20 years after the genocide was committed. The photographer accompanied Reverien on this voyage, during which Reverien visits Janvier, a girl whom he met at the Red Cross field hospital when she was 11 years old and badly injured after having been thrown into a pit. Today, Janvier is paralyzed from the neck and down and unable to leave her bedroom, or even her bed.

Two photographs from the exhibit will be offered for auction in order to support a humanitarian initiative that can help Janvier and others like her. The Webster Humanitarian Association (a registered non-governmental organization) and Ibuka Suisse (Rwanda survivor organisation) in Rwanda are facilitating this fundraising effort.

Kristian Skeie is a Webster Geneva faculty member and photographer. Skeie has collaborated with a number of different media organizations, companies and non-governmental organizations in Switzerland and abroad. An extended version of this project was presented at the Foto 8 gallery in London. It has also been on display at the FIFDH Geneva International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights, and Nikon Pro Magazine recently selected part of this photographic story that was featured in the Winter 2014/15 issue. "Life After Genocide" has also been shortlisted by the Swiss Photo Award and has been put on display by Reporters Sans Frontiers and PhotoReporters/ Impresum in Zurich, Geneva and Lausanne.

The attached photographs and portrait of Skeie can be used to promote this particular event only, so long as credit is given to him.

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Open Wounds, Armenians, Turks and a Century of Genocide

On Thursday, November 12, Webster University Geneva will host a book event at which Webster faculty member Vicken Cheterian will talk about his latest publication: *“Open Wounds, Armenians, Turks, and a Century of Genocide.”* The book is published by Hurst & Co. in London and Oxford University Press USA in New York.

The book is a tour de force on the post-Genocide political history, bringing to the reader an entangled narration of Middle Eastern and international history of crime, denial, and return of memory. Cheterian argues that the annihilation of the Ottoman Armenians during the First World War is one of the founding moments of modernity, which heralded into contemporary practice the large-scale destruction of civilian population groups by their own state. The failure of the international community to acknowledge this crime along with its continuous denial by Turkey has created a culture of impunity that is pivotal to understanding the violent conflicts in the Middle East today.

The author will talk about how the idea of the book came about. He will also discuss the narrative techniques he used, weaving together scholarly research of literature and archival material, interviews with key personalities, and the use of travel writing as a source of primary evidence.

There will be copies of the book available for signing.

Vicken Cheterian, PhD, is a Webster Geneva faculty lecturer in both Media Communication and International Relations. He has worked as a reporter, publishing in media outlets such as Le Monde Diplomatique, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Agos, Al-Hayat, among others. His research has appeared in prestigious academic journals such as Nationalities Papers, Survival, Europe-Asia Studies, among others. He is an expert in violent conflicts, nationalism, media development, environment and security, Islamic movements, and area specialist with field experience in Middle East, North Africa, and post-Soviet republics. His previous book *“War and Peace in the Caucasus”* was published in 2009 by Hurst and Columbia University Press.

The photographs of the book can be only used with the mention: “© Oxford University Press, used with permission.” The portraits of Cheterian can be used freely without any copyright.

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Why Genocide? : Realities, Responses and Ramifications

Webster University Geneva will hold an international conference on Friday, December 4 on the theme of genocide. This event will be organized by the International Relations Department with the close collaboration and participation of the Media Communications and Psychology departments.

2015 marks the centenary of the first major genocide of the twentieth century, the beginning of the mass killing of the Armenians in 1915. It is also seventy years since the end of the Second World War and the Jewish Holocaust, forty years since the Khmer Rouge seized power in Cambodia and carried out their murderous policies, and twenty years since the Srebrenica massacres, the worst atrocity committed in Europe since the Second World War, which was part and parcel of a policy to “cleanse” Bosnia of its Muslim population.

The main purpose of the conference will be to shed light on different aspects of genocide, most notably, its root causes, its consequences, mechanisms established by the international community to prevent and punish genocide, and their efficacy. Moreover, the conference will look at other issues related to the aftermath of genocide and the long-term ramifications, including justice, reconciliation and healing. It will also attempt to assess critically the lessons learned and major events in the contemporary world that may have a direct bearing in this regard.

The conference will focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the four following general themes:

- Ideologies, intolerance and genocide
- Historical perspectives on genocide
- Prevention and punishment of genocide
- Justice, reconciliation and healing after genocide

In addition to the participation of Webster faculty members and students, other speakers and attendees will include members of other academic institutions, international organizations, diplomatic missions and non-governmental organizations. The conference will be held on the campus of Webster University Geneva, and will be open to the public.

For queries and further information, please contact Dr. Jubin Goodarzi, Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the International Relations Department, via email at goodarzi@webster.ch or by telephone at +41 22 959 8027.