

Hate Speech and Group-targeted Violence - The Role of Speech in Violent Conflict. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

May 2010

This report summarizes the findings from the Speech, Power, Violence Seminar convened by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in February 2009 and the publications produced as a result. The two-day seminar brought together academics, journalists, political analysts, policy professionals, and conflict analysts to examine the role speech acts play in genocide and related crimes against humanity. (...)

Hate speech and propaganda occur in all societies, to radically varying degrees. And while the 1948 UN Genocide Convention criminalized “incitement to genocide,” discerning precisely when speech rises to that level and the potential danger even of speech that does not rise to that level—as well as how to respond in either case—is fraught with contention (...)

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What exactly is the role of hate speech and propaganda in relation to extreme violence? Do words create a permissive environment? Do they direct violence? Do they move erstwhile non-violent people to commit acts of violence?

· Can violence be averted by punishing speech? When is this permissible and who is authorized to make such a decision? When does limiting speech constitute an infringement on free speech?

· What is the difference between hate speech and propaganda and actual incitement to genocide? How does the legal distinction help clarify situations? What does it leave unaddressed? (...)

Read full the executive summary [here](#)