

MODULE #2 HANDOUT: RISK FACTORS, WARNING SIGNS, AND TRIGGERS OF MASS ATROCITIES

Macro-Level Risk Factors¹

COMMON FINDINGS	VARIED FINDINGS
Large-scale instability	Deep-seated hatreds
Armed conflict and regime change	Government capacity
Exclusionary, nationalist, or transformative ideology	Authoritarianism
Prior discrimination or unpunished violence against a particular group	Economic causes

Warning Signs²

Tension and polarization among groups
Apocalyptic public rhetoric by leaders
Labeling civilian groups as the “enemy”
Development and deployment of irregular armed forces
Stockpiling weapons
Emergency or discriminatory legislation
Removing moderates from leadership or public service
Lack of punishment for past crimes

Triggers³

High-level assassinations
Coups or attempted coups
Change in conflict dynamics
Crackdowns on civilian protests
Symbolically significant attacks against individuals or physical sites

¹ Scott Straus, *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention* (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016), 31. Please note that these lists of risk factors, warning signs, and triggers are not exhaustive.

² Straus, *Fundamentals*, 76.

³ Straus, *Fundamentals*, 83.