



Peace & human rights groups

A guided discussion

ECC Witness Circles

A conversation about the people
behind the numbers

everycasualty.org



You're welcome here

1

We'll hear one person's story.

2

We'll talk honestly.
Every question is welcome.

3

Nothing you say leaves this room.

4

You don't need to be an expert, or agree on politics.

A question to begin

How many people do you think were killed in armed conflict around the world last year?

Make a guess before we turn the slide.

Around 245,000 people

were killed in armed conflict in 2025 – the third-deadliest year since global records began in 1989.

1994 820,000+ the deadliest year on record



Rwanda – more than 820,000 people in a hundred days.

2022 300,000+ the second



More than 300,000 – driven largely by the war in Tigray, Ethiopia, and by Ukraine.

2025 245,000 the third



Estimates, Uppsala Conflict Data Program – read as scale and trend, not exact counts.

“One man's death is a tragedy. A million deaths is just a statistic.”

Attributed to Stalin

“If I look at the mass, I will never act. If I look at the one, I will.”

Mother Teresa

Everything in this conversation lives between these two sentences.

Why we go numb

When we file someone as 'other', the part of the brain we use to imagine another mind stays dark.

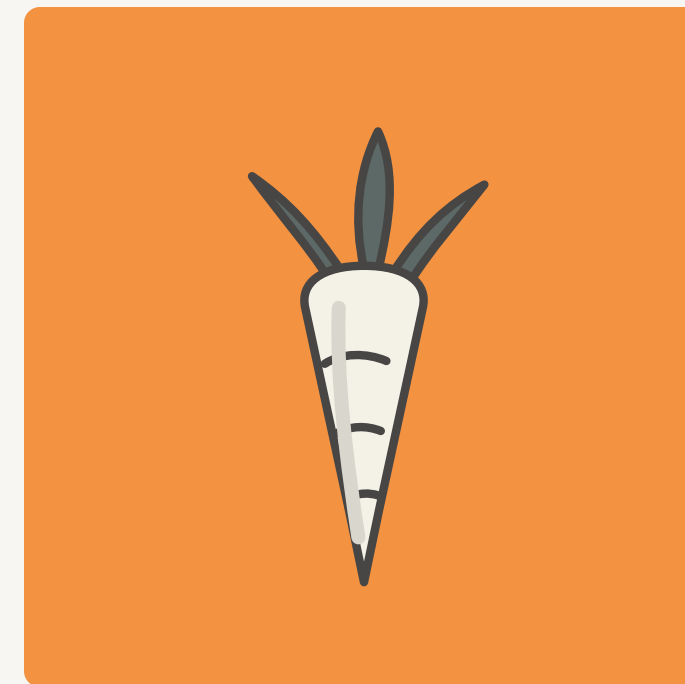
We process them the way we process objects. **Dehumanisation** is what makes killing possible.

Dr Lasana Harris, UCL

The reversal is almost absurdly simple

Ask: would this person prefer carrots, or broccoli?

You cannot wonder what someone wants for dinner without conceding they are a someone. One small act of imagination, and a thing becomes a person again.



CARROTS

or



BROCCOLI

Meet one person

Instructions

Choose one profile from ECC's Memorial
memorial.everycasualty.org

Read it aloud, slowly. Then hold a
moment of silence together.



Record. Recognise. Remember.

Casualty recording is the painstaking effort to document every death in a conflict – the name, the age, the place, the circumstances – one person at a time.

Done right, it is complex, including many overlapping facets.

Around the world, a network of local organisations does this heartbreaking work, often by interviewing surviving families, and often at personal risk.

It underpins accountability, legal cases, compensation – and the right of a family simply to know the fate of the person they lost.



Recording the dead is an act of dignity.



It protects the living

records can serve as evidence for accountability and justice.



It restores identity

ensuring every life matters, and is remembered.



It refuses the idea

that anyone is “collateral damage.”

War devalues human life. Casualty Recording is the work that restores that value.

Casualty recorders are human rights defenders

Somewhere right now, in a place where the hospitals have stopped functioning and the official records have ceased to exist, someone is writing down the name of a person who was killed – carefully, accurately, at real personal risk.

That person is doing human rights work. **Casualty recording is where witness and evidence meet.**

Instructions

Share a moment when a single name, face or story changed how you understood an issue you work on – or what first brought you to this work.



A grayscale photograph of a person holding a large document titled "THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF Human Rights". The document features the United Nations logo at the top left. The person is holding the document open, and the text on it is visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

“Everyone has the right to
recognition everywhere as a person
before the law.”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 6 (1948)

War tries to end that recognition. A record refuses to let it.

Witness and evidence: the same record

The record that says this person mattered is the same record that underpins war crimes investigations, truth and reconciliation processes, reparation claims, and a family's right to know what happened.

Witness without evidence fades into sentiment. Evidence without witness hardens into data.

Casualty recording is the discipline of both at once – for every life, on every side.



Let's talk

Instruction

One question at a time. Gentle and respectful voices – off politics, onto people and dignity. There are no right answers, and every voice should be heard.

Question 1

Did anything change for you when we read one person's story? How did you feel?

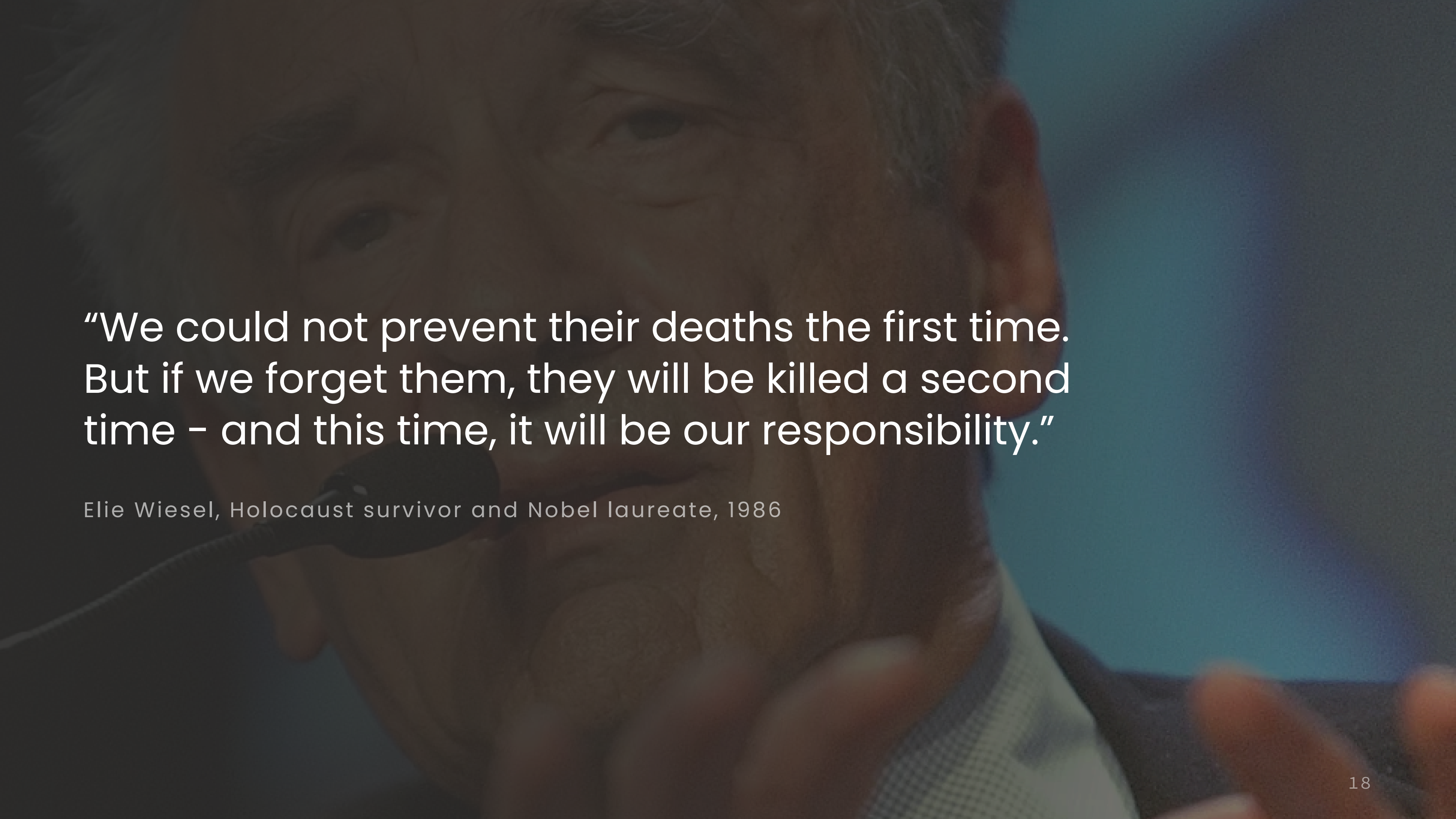
Question 2

Why does knowing someone's name and story matter?

Question 3

Life is precious.

What does that ask of us when the lives lost are strangers, far away, or “on the other side”?



“We could not prevent their deaths the first time.
But if we forget them, they will be killed a second
time – and this time, it will be our responsibility.”

Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate, 1986

We remember them by name

From mourning to hope and peace.

Instructions

We will read a handful of names from ECC's Memorial aloud, with a pause after each. As we read each name, choose one act of remembrance:

- 1 light a candle for each name
- 2 lay a stone in a bowl
- 3 hold a minute of silence



What will you do to ensure each life lost to war is remembered with dignity?

A small, personal commitment – to carry out of this room and into your own life.

Some people choose to

Lay a flower on Remembrance Day for someone whose name they learned

Light a candle on their birthday

Say a name aloud, and share their story with someone

Return to the Memorial when they are ready, and meet another person



Stay part of the circle.

1

Host it again

Bring this conversation to another circle – a branch meeting, a local Amnesty or CND group, a campaign network, a group of friends.

2

Join us in November

A new edition of ECC's Memorial is released this November, with a memorial event for all in London on Remembrance Sunday.

3

Join the Remembrance Collective

everycasualty.org/RC

and **sign up to the newsletter**, which keeps you close to the work. You can also support ECC's mission there.



Every life deserves recognition.

By honouring the losses of the past, we can build a more peaceful future for everyone.

Instructions

Let us close with a final moment of silence.

**EVERY
CASUALTY
COUNTS**

everycasualty.org