

Any Country

By Muna Hamzeh

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Death from torture. Death by a firing squad. Death from a landmine. Death from a tank shell. Death from a missile. The victims are infants, teenagers, young, middle aged, elderly. They are male and female. They speak Tibetan, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Pashto, Russian, Cambodian, Shona and Hindu. They used to exist but no longer do.

Human rights groups have published reports about them. They are statistics. They are numbers. They are parts of lists. The press has written about them. Heads of state have condemned the attacks that killed them. They are now on micro-film, in an archive, stored on a hard drive.

They are humans from any country. Their families mourn them. Their friends miss them. Their children are growing up without them. Their parents are crying over them. Their siblings are wearing the clothes they left behind.

The world does not remember them. The world does not know them. The world does not recognize them. The world has moved on. New deaths. New names. New victims. Fresh news item.

Help us God, if you exist. We are civilized savages.

(I was inspired to write this prose after watching *The Interpreter*, starring Sean Penn and Nicole Kidman)