

choosing to act

STORIES OF RESCUE

The 2012 Days of Remembrance commemorate the actions of rescuers during the Holocaust. The stories of ordinary people who chose to intervene and help rescue Jews, despite the risks, demonstrate that individuals have the power to make a difference.

These posters highlight rescuers whose decisions to act during the Holocaust inspire us to counter indifference with vigilance and apathy with action.



A bishop
Greek Isle of Zakynthos, September 1943

BISHOP CHRYSOSTOMOS

When German officials demanded a list of the island’s Jewish residents, Mayor Karrer turned to local Greek Orthodox Bishop Chrysostomos for help. As the bishop negotiated for their lives, 192 Jews fled to remote local villages where non-Jewish locals hid them. When the Germans again demanded the names for deportation, Chrysostomos presented a list bearing only two names—his and the mayor’s. “Here,” he said, “are your Jews.” At war’s end, all 275 of Zakynthos’s Jews were still alive.

Left: Greek Jews walk down a street on the island of Zakynthos, 1940–1944. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Yitzchak Kerem*
Above: Portrait of Bishop Chrysostomos. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Central Zionist Archives*

**National
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A social worker

The Netherlands, 1942–1945

MARION PRITCHARD

Having witnessed a brutal deportation at a Jewish children's home in Amsterdam in 1942, social worker Marion (van Binsbergen) Pritchard engaged in rescue work throughout the war. Among the more than 150 Jews she rescued were Freddie Polak and his children. She placed them in hiding in a house in the country, lived with them as the children's caregiver, and even shot and killed a Dutch policeman who discovered the children when he unexpectedly returned to the house following a raid.

Marion Pritchard poses with a Jewish infant, Erica Polak, whom she rescued during the German occupation of the Netherlands, 1944.
US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Marion Pritchard



Scan this code for more about Marion Pritchard.

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A police commander
Switzerland, 1938–1939

PAUL GRUENINGER

In 1938, Captain Paul Grueninger, commander of the Swiss Border Police in St. Gallen Canton, chose to disregard orders to close the borders to most Jewish refugees. Not only did he turn a blind eye to fake visas, he also backdated entry visas to prevent the expulsion of recent Jewish refugees. He was terminated for defying orders and, after being convicted by a Swiss court for falsifying official documents, punished with a severe fine. Grueninger's actions saved between 2,000 and 4,000 Jews.

Paul Grueninger (left) poses with a fellow Swiss police officer on a balcony in St. Gallen, February 15, 1934.
US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Yad Vashem Photo Archives

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A housewife and her daughter
Ukraine, 1941–1944

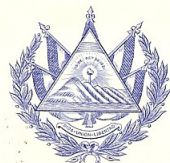
TATYANA AND ANIA KONTSEVICH

During the German occupation of Ukraine, Tatyana Kontsevich and her daughter, Ania, sheltered the family of Shimon Redlich. Shimon hid with his mother, aunt, and uncle in the attic and shed of the Kontsevich home in Raj. Ten-year-old Ania was in charge of bringing them food and water. At one point, when home alone, Ania dissuaded two German soldiers in search of straw from climbing into the attic, where they would have found the Redlich family.

Family portrait of Tatyana Kontsevich and her two children, 1940. US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Jewish Foundation for the Righteous

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CHOOSING TO ACT: STORIES OF RESCUE



CONSULADO GENERAL
DE LA REPUBLICA DE EL SALVADOR, C.A.
GINEBRA
SUIZA

Dos. S. 139/943



Certificat de Nationalité

Le Consulat Général de la République de Salvador
(Amérique Centrale) à Genève, confirme par ces présentes que

Monsieur SAMUEL Julien né le 10 octobre 1912 à Mulhouse (Ht. Rhin)

et son épouse :

Madame SAMUEL née Herrmann Vivette née le 21 mai 1919 à Paris

leur enfant mineure :

Mademoiselle SAMUEL Françoise née le 14 juillet 1943 à Limoges

sont reconnus comme citoyens de la République de
Salvador avec tous les droits et devoirs inhérents à cette
nationalité.

Si les intéressés voulaient envisager une émigration,
il leur appartiendrait d'aviser ce Consulat Général en temps
opportun de leur intention à ce sujet, en envoyant en même
temps une photographie de date récente pour passeport de chaque
membre de la famille.- Ces photos devraient porter chacune au
verso une certification légalisée par une autorité ou un offi-
cier ministériel.

Ginebra, 12 octobre 1943.



PREMIER SECRETAIRE
DU CONSULAT GENERAL.

A Monsieur et Madame Julien SAMUEL
33, rue de Liège,
LIMOGES (Hte Vienne) France.



A businessman
Switzerland, 1942-1944

GEORGE MANDEL-MANTELO

As First Secretary at the Salvadoran consulate in Geneva during World War II, Hungarian Jewish businessman George Mandel-Mantello, with the consent of the Salvadoran Consul General, Colonel José Castellanos, issued certificates of protection to thousands of European Jews, identifying them as citizens of El Salvador. Between 1942 and 1944, he sent notarized copies of these certificates via courier and other means into German-occupied Europe, saving many of the holders from deportation.

Left: Unauthorized Salvadoran citizenship certificate issued to Julien Samuel; his wife; and their daughter, Françoise, by George Mandel-Mantello, October 12, 1943. Above: Portrait of George Mandel-Mantello. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Enrico Mandel-Mantello*



Scan this code for more about George Mandel-Mantello.

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A sanitation worker

Poland, 1938–1944

LEOPOLD SOCHA

In 1943, Leopold Socha, a sanitation worker, discovered several Jews escaping the liquidation of the Lwów ghetto through the city sewer system. Using his knowledge of the system's canals, he suggested hiding places and, with his wife and a coworker, brought the hidden Jews food and news from the outside world. While the Sochas initially received payment for their efforts, they continued to help those in hiding even after the payments stopped. Ten of the 21 refugees in hiding survived.

Portrait of Leopold Socha, courtesy of Yad Vashem Photo Archives

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CHOOSING TO ACT: STORIES OF RESCUE



A businessman
Germany, 1938–1943

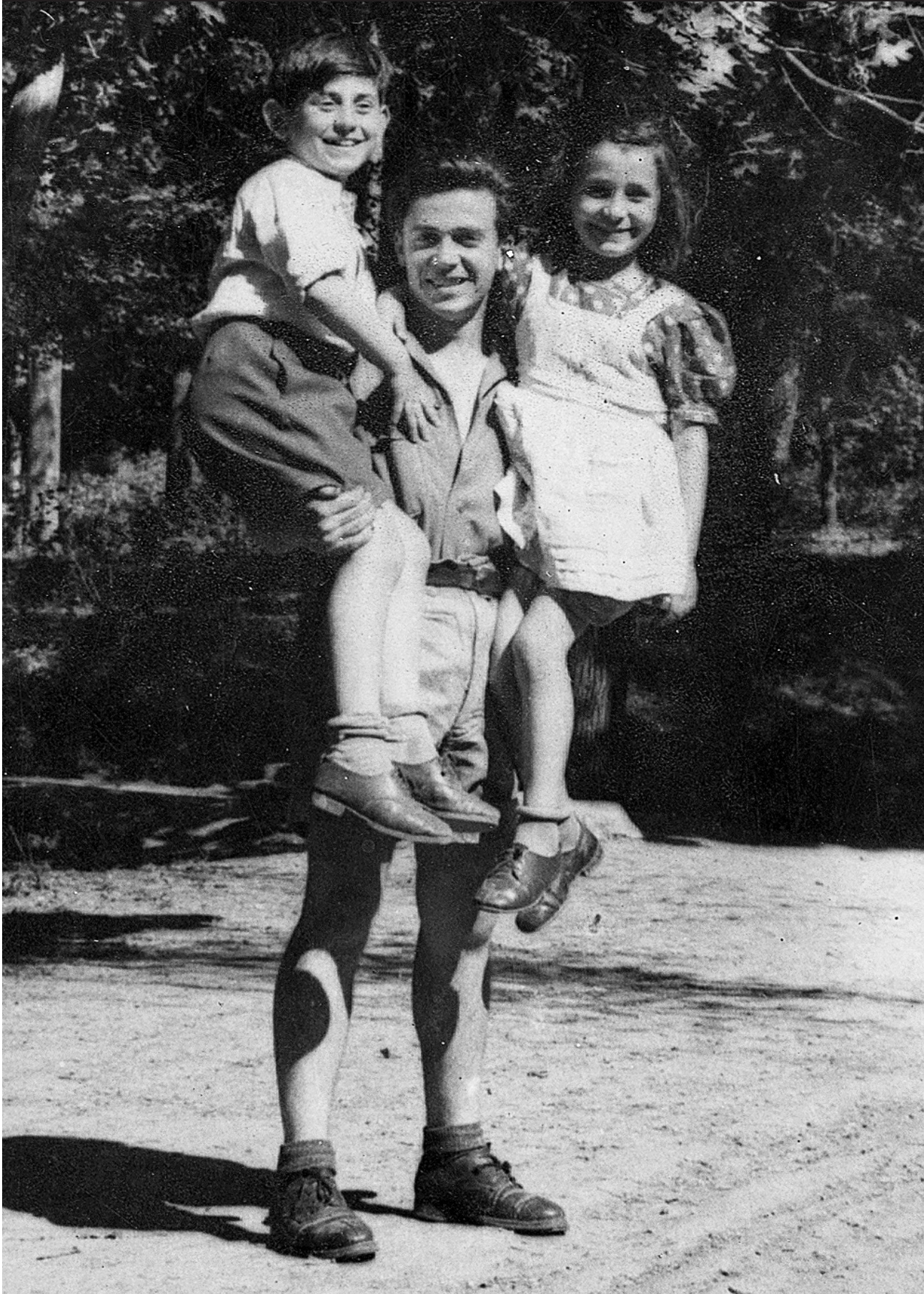
ALFRED ROSSNER

As manager of a confiscated Jewish textile factory in the Bedzin ghetto, Alfred Rossner produced goods for the German armed forces. To save the Jewish forced laborers working in his factory, he issued them work permits that exempted them from deportation. Rossner repeatedly warned Jews of impending deportations, even driving into the poorest parts of Bedzin to urge the inhabitants to ignore a summons that would lead to deportation. In 1944, the Gestapo arrested and executed Rossner for his actions.

Left: Studio portrait of Dora Rembiszewska and her four-year-old daughter, Mira, in the Bedzin ghetto. Dora worked in the laundry of Rossner's factory, April 1942. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Mark and Dora Reym.* Above: Portrait of Alfred Rossner, 1943. *Courtesy of Mira Reym Binford*

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A student

Albania, 1943–1944

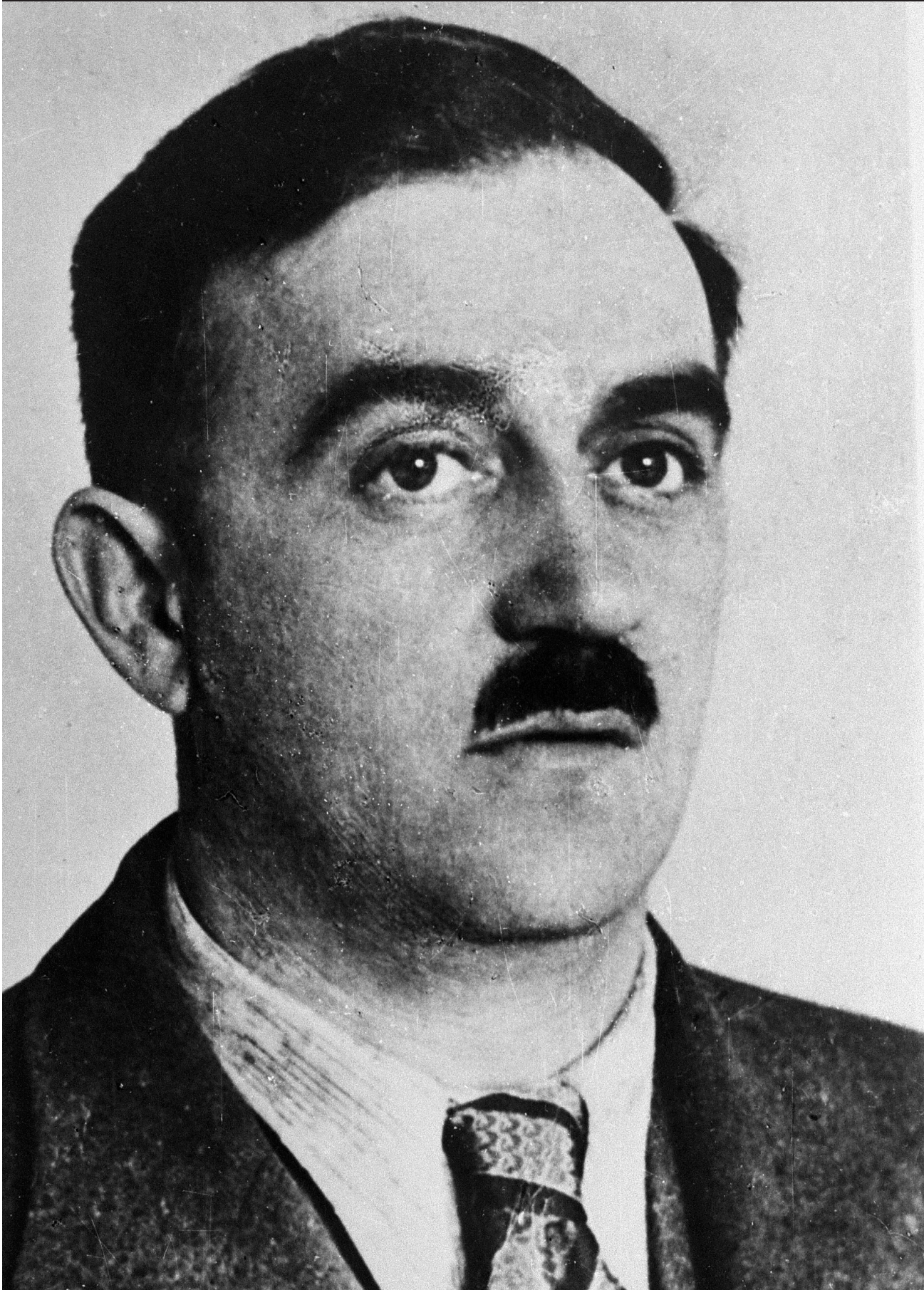
REFIK VESELI

After Germany dismembered Yugoslavia and occupied Serbia in 1941, the Mandils, a Jewish family from Belgrade, escaped to Albania. There, Mosa Mandil opened a photography shop and hired Refik Veseli, a 16-year-old Albanian Muslim, as his apprentice. When the Mandils were threatened by deportation after Germany occupied Albania in September 1943, Veseli convinced his parents to hide the family in their home village, Krujë. The Mandil children posed as Muslims while their parents hid in the Veselis' barn until liberation.

*Refik Veseli holds Gavra and Irena Mandil, the two Jewish children he sheltered for a year prior to liberation, circa July 1946.
US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Gavra Mandil*

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A soldier

Lithuania, 1941–1942

ANTON SCHMID

Drafted into the German army, Austrian-born Anton Schmid was stationed in Lithuania in the autumn of 1941. Appalled by the dreadful conditions of the Vilna ghetto and by German massacres of Jews, he used his access to resources to provide Jews with provisions, transport to safer areas, and forged papers. He also provided transportation and intelligence to Jewish resistance organizations. Wehrmacht authorities arrested Schmid for treason in 1942. Convicted by a military court, he was executed on April 13, 1942.

Portrait of Anton Schmid, circa 1930–1940. *US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Yad Vashem Photo Archives*

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A social worker and a minister
Western Europe, 1939–1945

MARTHA AND WAITSTILL SHARP

At the request of the American Unitarian Association, US citizens Reverend Waitstill Sharp and his wife, Martha, a social worker, traveled to Prague before the Germans occupied that city to assist refugees facing Nazi persecution. They established a network of relief and emigration assistance—registering refugees, distributing food, arranging prisoner releases, and facilitating travel to safer destinations. At risk of arrest by the Germans, the couple left Prague in the summer of 1939 but later established a way station for refugees in Portugal.

Martha and Reverend Waitstill Sharp depart for their mission to Czechoslovakia on February 4, 1939. Courtesy of the Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University



Scan this code for more about Martha and Waitstill Sharp.

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choosing to act DEFYING GENOCIDE

Whenever genocide has occurred, individuals have made the choice to rescue others. In 1994 in Rwanda, orphanage director Damas Gisimba, with the help of American aid worker Carl Wilkens, saved 400 people. Mile Plakalović, a Serbian taxi driver, transported the wounded to hospitals and delivered supplies to the needy throughout the siege on Sarajevo during the mid-1990s. Regardless, their acts of courage are still the exception.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO ACT?



Scan this code to find out more about the Museum's genocide prevention efforts and what you can do to help.