



## *Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act: S. 2551*

The Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act, S. 2551, is bipartisan legislation from Senators Cardin and Tillis, and seeks to improve the ability of the United States to proactively work to prevent genocide and mass atrocities by institutionalizing and strengthening existing efforts.

### Authorizes the Atrocities Prevention Board

The Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) is a high level interagency working group that includes representation from the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, State, and Treasury, as well as the Joint Staff, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), US Mission to the United Nations, Office of the Vice President, Director of National Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, and Federal Bureau of Investigation. The APB was created in 2010 by Presidential Study Directive 10 to coordinate an interagency approach to preventing mass atrocities, integrate early warning systems, oversee development and implementation of atrocities prevention strategies, and conduct atrocities specific planning.

The APB is credited for the unprecedented speed with which the US was able to respond and to mitigate further violence in the Central African Republic, including allocation of resources through the Complex Crises Fund. In Burundi, the APB was alerted to potential problems, and began a months-long review process that involved an expert interagency team traveling to Burundi to understand the likely drivers of conflict and identify opportunities to improve diplomatic engagement. The APB's engagement led to programs to facilitate local and national dialogue, deploy civilian conflict experts, and build resiliency. Although the APB has not been able to prevent all violence given the deliberate escalation of the political crisis, works has been done and is being done, thanks to the early engagement of the APB, to support actors working for peace and to reduce the escalation of tensions, and it is notable that atrocities, especially violence along ethnic lines, have not broken out.

The Atrocities Prevention Board has been a useful tool in improving the US Government's response to emerging conflicts and potential atrocities, and should be permanently authorized as a central element of US genocide and conflict prevention infrastructure.

### Authorizes the Complex Crises Fund

The Complex Crises Fund (CCF) provides unprogrammed money for the State Department and USAID to prevent and respond to unforeseen crises. In just a few short years, it has become one of the most highly demanded tools in the US foreign policy toolkit, allowing the State Department and USAID to make rapid investments in prevention, stabilization, and crisis response. In 2014, funds from the CCF have been used for conflict mitigation between refugees and hosts in Jordan, and community peacebuilding in the Central African Republic.

The CCF provides for prevention support, post-conflict support, or in countries/regions at high risk of conflict or escalation of conflict, with a goal of targeting the root causes of conflict. The CCF can also be used to support immediate responses by the CSO, in the past up to \$10 million.

The CCF was created in 2010 and has since provided critical support for programs in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Cote D'Ivoire, Tunisia, and Yemen. CCF provided a quick use of funds for civilian response programs that also involved the host government's participation. Since the Arab Spring, there has been a new focus on providing support for fledgling democracies at risk of conflict.

In today's world, highly responsive humanitarian and diplomatic assistance is often required to prevent and end conflict, and the CCF is an important tool to provide civilian and humanitarian response to potential atrocities, preventing the need for later military involvement. The lack of funding and availability of immediate funds for civilian response groups has often led to their ineffectiveness, creating a cycle of apathy towards their funding. This leads to an increase of funding and use of immediate military response, rather than investment in the less costly option of conflict prevention. The CCF is pioneering a new and much more responsive model of funding that has increased the effectiveness of US aid and diplomacy in the world.

## Trains Foreign Service Officers

The Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act requires that Foreign Service Officers receive, as part of their human rights training, training in recognizing patterns of escalation and early warning signs of potential atrocities or violence, including gender based violence, and methods of early action, prevention and response.

## Makes Atrocities Prevention the Policy of the United States

It is the policy of the United States—

1. to regard the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide as a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility;
2. to mitigate threats to United States security by addressing the root causes of insecurity and violent conflict to prevent—
  - A. the mass slaughter of civilians;
  - B. conditions that prompt internal displacement and the flow of refugees across borders; and
  - C. other violence that wreaks havoc on regional stability and livelihoods;
3. to enhance our Nation's capacity to prevent and address the drivers of mass atrocities and violent conflict as part of its humanitarian, development and strategic interests;
4. to create a Government-wide strategy to prevent and respond to the risk of genocide and mass atrocities by—
  - A. strengthening the diplomatic, risk analysis and monitoring, strategic planning, early warning, and response capacities of the United States Government;
  - B. improving the use of foreign assistance to respond early, effectively, and urgently in order to address the root causes and drivers of violence, systemic patterns of human rights abuses, and mass atrocities;
  - C. supporting international atrocities prevention, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding mechanisms;
  - D. supporting and strengthening local civil society, including human rights defenders and others working to help prevent and respond to atrocities, and protecting their ability to receive support from and partner with civil society at large; and
  - E. promoting financial transparency and enhancing anti-corruption initiatives as part of addressing a root cause of insecurity; and
5. to employ a variety of unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral means to prevent and respond to conflicts and mass atrocities by—
  - A. placing a high priority on timely, preventive diplomatic efforts; and
  - B. exercising a leadership role in promoting international efforts to end crises peacefully.