

March 2016 Action

Write a Letter to the Editor, promoting the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act

Promoting our Best Practices in International Peacebuilding – and taking a stand to Prevent Genocide and other Atrocities – is what this action is about.

S. 2551 (GAPA) was introduced in February by Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD)

With a worldwide refugee crisis; and violent inter-religious, inter-ethnic, and international conflict raging around the globe; let's emphasize getting ahead of the curve! This bill would help prevent and transform such conflicts at the earliest stages.

Every paper has its own criteria regarding length and other considerations. For structure, please consider the "E.P.I.C." format – below, with some content ideas.

Basic Steps

1. Identify local daily newspapers. If you are not familiar with one, you can find a list here: http://bit.ly/find_newspapers
2. Find an article you can respond to, regarding a current conflict, refugee crisis, or diplomatic efforts involving another nation.
3. Look in the paper's letters to the editor, opinion, or editorial section to find submission criteria.
4. Read a few LTEs they have published to get an idea of how writers begin them.
5. Review the GAPA information on Page 2 of this sheet.
6. Write and submit your letter, using their criteria and the E.P.I.C. format below.
7. The more letters sent in, the more likely at least one of them will be published.

Please write unique letters. Read them aloud to others for inspiration!!

And remember to focus a little on the "tunnel," and a lot more on the "light"

The "E.P.I.C." Format

Engage:

To the Editors:

(Find and) reference an article about current foreign conflict, atrocity, or diplomatic effort, and your emotional reaction to it – perhaps grief, sadness, or anger – or yearning for more effective resources.

Problem:

What are the thoughts you have connected with the above feeling? Perhaps something about how we seem to be trapped in a cycle of stamping out some enemies and creating new ones. You might refer to some fact stated in the article you referenced above,

something which particularly bothers you about this situation. This is your sense of what is “wrong.”

Inform About Solution(s):

A bill has been introduced into Congress that would solidify and grow some of our best proven methods to break these cycles of violence. Please state in your own words, from your heart, why this is important. See below for explanation of the bill.

Call to Action: Ask Senators to co-sponsor S. 2551, ask House Members to support a House version, and urge fellow citizens to ask them, too!

Signing Off:

Under your signature mention that you are a volunteer with The Peace Alliance.

Overview: S.2551 - The Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2015 (GAPA)

The Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2015 would strengthen the US’ best practices in international peacebuilding, including:

1. **Authorize* The Atrocities Prevention Board.** The primary purpose of the interagency APB is “to coordinate a whole-of-government approach to preventing mass atrocities and genocide,” As it is credited in doing in Burundi over the past two years.¹ **The cooperative and comprehensive prevention efforts of the APB helped forestall another round of interethnic violence in Burundi, a country already wracked by genocidal conflict.**²
2. **Authorize* The Complex Crises Fund (along with an increase in funding from \$50 million - \$100 million).** In 2013, CCF allocated resources for **the swift and effective stopping of mass violence** in the Central African Republic through effective community peacebuilding practices.³ CCF has also been effective in dozens of other countries including Yemen, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Cote D’Ivoire, and Tunisia.
3. **Require conflict prevention and de-escalation training for all State Department Foreign Service Officers.**
4. **Affirm Atrocities Prevention as a US policy priority.**

***“Authorizing”** - These two entities – APB and CCF - currently exist because of Executive Orders. “Authorizing” them means they would be established by Congress, so their funding and continued existence would be far more secure.

¹ Credit and Thanks to FCNL, for their Atrocities Prevention Brief

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/06/11/we-predicted-burundis-crisis-is-the-response-working/>

³ <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/international/218272-assessing-the-state-of-us-atrocity-prevention-policy>