

May 9, 2017

I write to offer my strong, unreserved support for the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2017. This bill crucially strengthens the capacity of the U.S. government to anticipate and respond to mass atrocities. It promotes our core values and protects our national security by preventing the massive crimes that can destabilize whole regions and create breeding grounds for terrorism.

The bill has four essential components: 1) A Mass Atrocity Task Force that establishes a focal point for interagency coordination on atrocity prevention; 2) Enhanced training of Foreign Service Officers on atrocity prevention to provide our diplomatic corps with the tools needed to anticipate these crises; 3) Reporting by the Director of National Intelligence to promote better executive-legislative branch information sharing; and 4) Establishment of a Complex Crises Fund to enable the executive branch to respond rapidly to emerging atrocity situations.

I offer these views from my experience working on atrocity prevention inside and outside the U.S. government. From 2009 until 2015, I served as the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice. From 2007 to 2009, I served as the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. From 2001 to 2007, I served as Senior Trial Attorney and then Chief of Prosecutions at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. I understand the crucial role that Congress can play in such matters having previously served on committee staff in the US Senate.

As mass atrocities continue to be committed across the globe, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2017 would ensure that the highest priority be given to building the additional capacity the U.S. government needs to prevent massive crimes.

I encourage the speedy adoption of this important legislation.

Stephen J. Rapp