



## Genocide Prevention Fact Sheet

### Background

The past 20 years have been marked by several incidents of genocide committed against innocent civilians. These occurrences, including the situations in Rwanda, Yugoslavia and Darfur, brought renewed focus onto the global problem of **genocide**—the planned, organized and intentional killing of certain civilian groups—and the need to prevent it from ever happening.

The death toll over the last century from genocide has been very high. During the Holocaust, approximately 6 million Jews and others were exterminated; in Cambodia, between 1.7 and 2 million were people killed over four years in the 1970s. In the 1990's in Bosnia up to 200,000 were murdered and in Rwanda up to 1 million people were killed in just 100 days.

According to the US Government, over the last three years alone, mass killings have occurred in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sri Lanka. In his testimony to Congress in 2010, Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair stated that Sudan is the country in where genocide is most likely to occur in the near future. **The time for Congressional action to prevent genocide is now.**

In 2008 former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen issued a report entitled **“Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers,”** the culmination of efforts by former senior government officials and civil society. The report lays out a framework with step-by-step recommendations on how Congress, the Administration and *the average citizen* can contribute to the prevention of future genocides. The report brings together a comprehensive analysis of the failures of the U.S. Government in the past in order to aid prevention of future genocides around the world.

CGS, in cooperation with other like-minded organizations, has been working for months to draft genocide prevention legislation based on the recommendations of the Albright-Cohen report. This bill should help the U.S. government create a plan to prevent genocides before they can occur, including coordinating government action on genocide prevention, improving early warning and conflict prevention capabilities, and expanding our peacekeeping capacity. CGS is currently working with Senate and House offices to get this bill introduced, and we hope this will happen within the next month.

### Key Message Points

**We need to make the promise of “never again,” which has been repeated time and time again, a reality.** Too often in the past, genocides have happened because governments failed to heed warning signs and act in time to prevent genocides before they start. This has to change.

**“Preventing genocide is an achievable goal. When a state engages in atrocity it forfeits its sovereignty.”** These words were spoken by Vice President Joseph Biden in a recent speech. He added that “We’ve made the Responsibility to Protect—the simple but novel concept that states must shield their populations from atrocity—a core element of our national security strategy.” **The Obama administration has made its support for genocide prevention efforts clear. Now Congress needs to do its part.**

**Congress needs to act on genocide prevention, which has drawn broad bipartisan support.** In late 2010, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed S. Con. Res. 71, a non-binding anti-genocide resolution. This is a great first step, but **now we need both the House and Senate to pass a comprehensive genocide prevention bill.** It's time for the House and Senate to act on their unanimous resolution (in S. Con Res 71) to establish a “whole of government approach” to genocide prevention.

**During your lobby visits, you should ask congressional offices to:**

- **Support the introduction of comprehensive genocide prevention legislation** that adopts the recommendations of the Genocide Prevention Task Force. Specifically, it should:
  - Create an interagency task force and national strategy for genocide prevention;
  - Strengthen diplomatic, early warning, and conflict prevention capacities of the U.S. government; and
  - Expand international conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding capabilities.
  
- **Become an original cosponsor** of this legislation when it is introduced.