

SEC. 1232. SYRIAN WAR CRIMES ACCOUNTABILITY.

(a) REPORT ON ACCOUNTABILITY FOR WAR CRIMES, CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, AND GENOCIDE IN SYRIA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall submit a report on war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria to the appropriate congressional committees not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and another such report not later than 180 days after the Secretary of State determines that the violence in Syria has ceased.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The reports required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a description of alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide perpetrated during the civil war in Syria, including—

(i) incidents that may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide committed by the regime of President Bashar al-Assad and all forces fighting on its behalf;

(ii) incidents that may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide committed by violent extremist groups, anti-government forces, and any other combatants in the conflict;

(iii) any incidents that may violate the principle of medical neutrality and, if possible, the identification of the individual or individuals who engaged in or organized such incidents; and

(iv) if possible, a description of the conventional and unconventional weapons used for such crimes and the origins of such weapons; and

(B) a description and assessment by the Department of State Office of Global Criminal Justice, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Justice, and other appropriate agencies of programs that the United States Government has undertaken to ensure accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide perpetrated against the people of Syria by the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, violent extremist groups, and other combatants involved in the conflict, including programs—

(i) to train investigators within and outside of Syria on how to document, investigate, develop findings of, and identify and locate alleged perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide, including—

(I) the number of United States Government or contract personnel currently designated to work

full-time on these issues; and

(II) the identification of the authorities and appropriations being used to support such training efforts;

(ii) to promote and prepare for a transitional justice process or processes for the perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria beginning in March 2011;

(iii) to document, collect, preserve, and protect evidence of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria, including support for Syrian, foreign, and international nongovernmental organizations, and other entities, including the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic; and

(iv) to assess the influence of accountability measures on efforts to reach a negotiated settlement to the Syrian conflict during the reporting period.

(3) FORM.—The reports required under paragraph (1) may be submitted in unclassified or classified form, but shall include a publicly available annex.

(4) PROTECTION OF WITNESSES AND EVIDENCE.—The Secretary shall take due care to ensure that the identification of witnesses and physical evidence are not publicly disclosed in a manner that might place such persons at risk of harm or encourage the destruction of evidence by the Government of Syria, violent extremist groups, anti-government forces, or any other combatants or participants in the conflict.

(b) TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE STUDY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State (acting through appropriate officials and offices, which may include the Office of Global Criminal Justice), after consultation with the Department of Justice, the United States Agency for International Development, and other appropriate Federal agencies, shall—

(1) complete a study of the feasibility and desirability of potential transitional justice mechanisms for Syria, including a hybrid tribunal, to address war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide perpetrated in Syria beginning in March 2011; and

(2) submit a detailed report of the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1), including recommendations on which transitional justice mechanisms the United States

Government should support, why such mechanisms should be supported, and what type of support should be offered, to—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State (acting through appropriate officials and offices, which may include the Office of Global Criminal Justice), after consultation with the Department of Justice and other appropriate Federal agencies, is

authorized to provide appropriate assistance to support entities that, with respect to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide perpetrated by the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, all forces fighting on its behalf, and all non-state armed groups fighting in the country, including violent extremist groups in Syria beginning in March 2011—

(A) identify suspected perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide;

(B) collect, document, and protect evidence of crimes and preserve the chain of custody for such evidence;

(C) conduct criminal investigations;

(D) build Syria's investigative and judicial capacities and support prosecutions in the domestic courts of Syria, provided that President Bashar al-Assad is no longer in power;

(E) support investigations by third-party states, as appropriate; or

(F) protect witnesses that may be helpful to prosecutions or other transitional justice mechanisms.

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(2) ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of State, after consultation with appropriate Federal agencies and the appropriate congressional committees, and taking into account the findings of the transitional justice study required under subsection (b), is authorized to provide assistance to support the creation and operation of transitional justice mechanisms, including a potential hybrid tribunal, to prosecute individuals suspected of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide in Syria beginning in March 2011.

(3) BRIEFING.—The Secretary of State shall provide detailed, biannual briefings to the appropriate congressional committees describing the assistance provided to entities described in paragraph (1).

(d) STATE DEPARTMENT REWARDS FOR JUSTICE PROGRAM.—Section 36(b)(10) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2708(b)(10)) is amended by inserting “(including war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide committed in Syria beginning in March 2011)” after “genocide”.

(e) INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC.—The Secretary of State, acting through the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, should use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States at the United Nations to advocate that the United Nations Human Rights Council, while the United States remains a member, annually extend the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic until the Commission has completed its investigation of all alleged violations of international human rights laws beginning in March 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic.

(f) EFFECT OF SECTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to violate the American Servicemembers’ Protection Act of 2002 (22 U.S.C. 7421 et seq.).

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations; the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

(2) GENOCIDE.—The term “genocide” means any offense described in section 1091(a) of title 18, United States Code.

(3) HYBRID TRIBUNAL.—The term “hybrid tribunal” means a temporary criminal tribunal that involves a combination of domestic and international lawyers, judges, and other professionals to prosecute individuals suspected of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide.

(4) TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE.—The term “transitional justice” means the range of judicial, nonjudicial, formal, informal, retributive, and restorative measures employed by countries transitioning out of armed conflict or repressive regimes—

(A) to redress legacies of atrocities; and

(B) to promote long-term, sustainable peace.

(5) WAR CRIME.—The term “war crime” has the meaning given the term in section 2441(c) of title 18, United States Code.