



Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act

Summary

[The Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act of 2017](#) (S.905) was introduced by Senators **Ben Cardin** (D-Md.), **Marco Rubio** (R-Fla.), **Jeanne Shaheen** (D-N.H.), **Bob Corker** (R-Tenn.), **Robert Menendez** (D-N.J.), and **Todd Young** (R-Ind.). A current list of co-sponsors can be found [here](#).

The bill enhances the ability of the U.S. to ensure investigation of and accountability for mass atrocities perpetrated by the Assad regime and its allies, and by ISIS and other armed groups. It calls upon the Secretary of State to assess appropriate mechanisms to address these atrocities. Highlights:

Sec. 5. Report on Accountability for War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, and Genocide in Syria. This section requires the Secretary of State to submit a report on war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria to the appropriate congressional committees, and programs undertaken to ensure accountability, including programs to train investigators; promote transitional justice; document, collect, preserve, and protect evidence; and assess the influence of accountability measures on efforts to reach a negotiated settlement.

Sec. 6. Transitional Justice Study. This section directs the Secretary of State after consultation with other appropriate federal agencies to complete a study of the feasibility and desirability of potential transitional justice mechanism for Syria (including a hybrid tribunal).

Sec. 7. Technical Assistance Authorized. This section authorizes support for entities performing various functions (such as identifying suspected perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide; collecting, documenting, and protecting evidence of their crimes; conducting criminal investigations; and protecting witnesses) and assistance to support the creation and operation of transitional justice mechanisms, including a potential hybrid tribunal.

Sec. 8. State Department Rewards for Justice Program. This section specifically directs the State Department's Rewards for Justice Program to target suspected perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria.

Sec. 9. Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. This section directs the State Department and the US Mission to the UN to advocate for the annual renewal by the UN Human Rights Commission of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria.