



## **Factsheet on Atrocities Prevention**

### **U.S. Department of Justice**

The Department of Justice (DOJ) employs a variety of tools to help prevent and respond to genocide and mass atrocities.

#### **A. Accountability Measures**

##### **1. Identifying Targets for Accountability and Deterrence Measures**

DOJ and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigate and prosecute human rights violators who committed atrocities overseas and then came to the United States seeking refuge or asylum. Through its Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section (HRSP), DOJ works with the FBI's International Human Rights Unit (IHRU) to enforce federal laws criminalizing serious human rights abuses including torture, genocide, war crimes, and the use or recruitment of child soldiers. DOJ also uses immigration and naturalization statutes and financial crimes statutes to hold perpetrators and enablers of mass violence accountable. DOJ's accountability efforts led to the 2008 conviction of Roy Belfast a.k.a. Chuckie Taylor, the son of the former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor, for torture. Belfast was sentenced to 97 years in federal prison. In 2014, DOJ successfully brought to justice Kefelegn Alemu Worku who immigrated to the US using a false identity, and became a naturalized US citizen while hiding his role in the torture and murder of political prisoners at a detention facility in Ethiopia during the late 1970s. After his conviction, a federal court stripped away his U.S. citizenship and Worku is serving 22 years in prison.

HRSP and the IHRU collaboratively work with the Department of State (DOS) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to keep human rights violators from entering the U.S. Investigators and prosecutors from these dedicated units focus on mass atrocities and the countries in which they occur. The country and regional expertise in these DOJ units help to identify human rights violators from former and ongoing conflicts. DOJ provides information on potential targets to DOS and DHS for international travel bans and for enforcement of U.S. laws and regulations barring human rights violators from obtaining visas or entering the U.S.

DOJ and FBI have created several mechanisms to encourage reporting on mass atrocities. DOJ and the FBI maintain hotlines through which the public can report

information about anyone in the United States or any U.S. citizen anywhere in the world who may have been involved in perpetrating human rights violations abroad (call DOJ at 1-800-813-5863 and FBI at 1-866-828-5320 or email [hrrtips@usdoj.gov](mailto:hrrtips@usdoj.gov)). In addition, DOJ has created an internal alert channel to allow its employees serving throughout the world to report to senior management risks of potential atrocities that come to DOJ employees' attention during the course of their work.

## **2. Tracking, Freezing and Seizing Assets Involved in Mass Atrocities**

Through DOJ's Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section, DOJ can monitor certain kinds of financial transactions and pursue forfeiture actions to seize or restrain assets linked to certain crimes prior to a trial in the U.S. Freezing or seizing assets can be a powerful tool to shut down the funding needed to fuel mass atrocities or render the material proceeds of mass violence inaccessible to the perpetrators.

### **B. Building Partner Nation Capacity to Prevent Atrocities**

DOJ's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) and its Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) work with partner countries to develop and strengthen fair, just, and accountable justice systems; to build strong international partners to combat serious crimes; and to enhance and foster the administration of justice and rule of law consistent with international human rights standards and best practices. ICITAP and OPDAT programs support U.S. policy goals and priorities by assisting foreign counterparts in building institutions and developing capabilities to prevent and respond to serious crimes, such as genocide and mass atrocities. ICITAP and OPDAT draw on Department of Justice resources and expertise to develop and implement assistance programs tailored to meet the atrocity prevention needs of partner nations. In close coordination with the United States Government interagency, ICITAP and OPDAT also collaborate with U.S. law enforcement agencies, with the international donor community, with multi-national organizations, and with relevant international experts.

### **C. National and International Coordination**

DOJ and FBI work with foreign and international partners through information-sharing arrangements where appropriate to combat impunity. DOJ and FBI components regularly communicate with such counterparts to support investigations and prosecutions of human rights violators worldwide.