What is the Atrocity Prevention Board (APB)?

In 2012, the Obama Administration established the Atrocity Prevention Board, an inter-agency panel comprised of the National Security Council and comprised of senior representatives of the:

- Department of State, Defense, Treasury, Justice, and Homeland Security
- Joint Staff
- US Mission to the United Nations
- National Security Staff
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence
- Central Intelligence Agency
- Office of the Vice President
- US Agency for International Development (USAID)

What does the APB do?

The APB searches for signals and critical developments that may indicate an unfolding atrocity event or the potential risks of mass atrocities.

It seeks to assist early warning efforts to enable new efforts to guarantee that states do not have to face the consequences of a late or non-existent preventive strategy.

The APB meets monthly to assess threats and develop tools that the US and others can use to prevent or respond to ongoing atrocity situations.

What Important Events in History have affected the Development of the APB?

- Genocide Prevention Task Force recommends APB be set up in 2007
- Interagency Atrocity Prevention and Reporting Task Force established
- US President Obama announces the 2011 APB
- UN Security Council endorses the APB
- UN Human Rights Council adopts Resolution on Atrocity Prevention in 2013

How does the APB help the United States in fulfilling its R2P?

The APB aims to help the US enhance its capacity to identify and respond to mass atrocities by strengthening early warning signals and catalyzing development of new policies and tools. Some of these include:

- Dealing with elections
- Establishing early warning mechanisms
- Developing programs to address gender-based risks and foster social and economic inclusion
- Ensuring improved accountability and justice for survivors of human rights abuses
- Supporting efforts to prevent atrocities

How can Civil Society work with the APB to Prevent Atrocities?

Civil society can play a role in monitoring, advocating and taking action in response to ongoing crises. They can:

- Support the APB by providing reports and recommendations
- Work with the APB to identify and prevent atrocities
- Advocate for the prevention of atrocities

How can the APB be improved?

Throughout its brief history, the APB has faced criticism and many argue for improvements. Some of these include:

- Promoting greater engagement among the APB, the Congress, and the Administration.
- Enhancing transparency, understanding, and support for the APB and its work.
- Establishing relationships with international organizations to ensure effective prevention strategies.
- Granting the APB access to more funding.
- Requiring a report addressing the government's prevention efforts and providing recommendations for strengthening those efforts.
- Providing a platform for the APB to continue its work through the tenure of many presidential administrations to come.

What is the Genocide and Atrocity Prevention Act and how would it help the APB?

The Genocide and Atrocity Prevention Act was introduced in Congress in February 2017 in an effort to strengthen the efforts of the APB's many critics. If approved, the legislation would:

- Create a new office of the APB in the Department of State, Defense, Justice, or Homeland Security
- Establish a cross-agency working group to focus on early prevention efforts
- Set up a review panel to monitor the APB's performance
- Increase funding for the APB
- Require a report on the APB's performance
- Provide training for foreign service officials
- Authorize the APB to work with other international organizations

The act calls for Congress to report to the President by December 2019 with the report to include recommendations for actions that may be taken to prevent future mass atrocities.

For more information on the APB or the Genocide and Atrocity Prevention Act, click here or go to GenAtro.org

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