

House Approves Aid for Christian Genocide Victims

A bill to aid victims of Islamic State genocide in Syria and Iraq has passed the U.S. House of Representatives and now goes to the U.S. Senate.

The bill, known as HR (House Resolution) 390 or "The Iraq and Syria Emergency Genocide Relief and Accountability Act," passed the U.S. House of Representatives on the evening of June 6th by unanimous consent.

Authored by Rep. Chris Smith, , chairman of the House panel on global human rights, and co-authored by Rep. Anna Eshoo, , the bill provides much needed humanitarian assistance to groups targeted by Islamic State for genocide, as designated by former Secretary of State John Kerry. In addition, the bill also provides resources for organizations compiling evidence for future use against the perpetrators of these crimes in legal proceedings.

The bill now heads to the Senate where it awaits approval before being sent to the president's desk. Many, including International Christian Concern (), a Washington human rights organization that exists to help persecuted Christians worldwide, are hopeful that HR 390 will see final approval soon, as the need to assist these communities is vital before they are lost to the region.

Rep. Smith stated of the legislation, "President Trump and Vice President Pence have strongly, publicly committed the administration to providing relief to Christians, Yazidis and other genocide survivors, and ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice. HR 390 will help ensure that officials implement these commitments and is a blueprint for implementation."

Joining the 47 cosponsors in the House in support of the bill are a number of diverse civil society groups, as well as all former U.S. ambassadors-at-large for war crimes and international Christian concern.

Nate Lance, ICC's advocacy manager, said of the bill, "International Christian Concern is very pleased that HR 390 has passed this critical step in the legislative process.

"We are hopeful that this bill will be approved by the Senate and the president as soon as possible so that Christians, Yazidis and others in Iraq and Syria who have suffered because of ISIS' terror can receive much-needed aid. The future of these religious minorities is crucial to the religious diversity of the Middle East, as well as the future security and stability of the region and world.

"I wish to thank Representatives Smith and Eshoo, along with the other cosponsors and supporters of the bill who have made its passage in the House possible." {eo}

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