

NEWS BACKGROUNDER



At-A-Glance Highlights Of Senator Patrick Leahy's Focus On Tracking Down And Trying War Criminals, And Helping Their Victims And Other Innocent Victims Of War

Senator Leahy has long been Congress's leader in facilitating justice for war criminals and in spotlighting and providing help for the innocent victims of war. Much of his work on these issues has been done on two key panels that he chairs, the State Department and Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee (the State Department's budget committee), and the Senate Judiciary Committee. He has supported efforts to track down Joseph Kony, and he sponsored funding in the budget of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to help Kony's victims. He will convene a hearing on Wednesday, March 14, on USAID's budget, during which he will discuss implementation of these Leahy-secured funds with USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah. Other examples of his leadership on war crimes issues include:

- In 1989 established the Leahy War Victims Fund for medical and related assistance for civilian victims of war, including landmine victims. To date the fund has provided more than \$100 million for projects in over 20 countries.
- Established separate funds of \$5 million to \$10 million to aid civilian victims of war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan.
- Wrote the law that conditioned a portion of U.S. aid for Serbia on the apprehension of Slobodan Milosevic and other war criminals. Milosevic was apprehended the day after the Leahy-mandated cutoff of aid took effect.
- In 1997 wrote the law, now known as the "Leahy Amendment," which prohibits U.S. aid to units of foreign security forces that commit gross violations of human rights. The law applies to all countries receiving such aid and requires human rights vetting of thousands of foreign military officers annually.

- Wrote the Anti-Atrocity Alien Deportation Act as part of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (P.L. 108-458). The law bars the entry of non-citizens to the United States if they have committed torture, extrajudicial killing or severe violations of religious freedom. The law also allows U.S. deportation of such persons. Two recent cases (cited below) illustrate the importance of this Leahy law in ensuring that human rights abusers cannot find safe haven in the United States, where they otherwise could end up living side-by-side with their victims:
 - Last month, on Feb. 7, an immigration judge found a Liberian militant deportable for having ordered the extrajudicial killing of seven of his own soldiers in Liberia. He also recruited child soldiers, an action that renders him deportable under another law that Senator Leahy strongly supported, the Child Soldier Prevention Act.
 - Also last month, on Feb. 23, an immigration judge found that a Salvadoran General can be deported from the United States for assisting in acts of torture and murder by soldiers that he commanded in El Salvador. The deportation is also made possible by the Leahy Anti-Atrocity Alien Deportation Act. Among the victims of the general's actions were four American Maryknoll nuns murdered in El Salvador in 1980.
- Wrote the laws that bar military aid to Guatemala, Nepal, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka until officers implicated in violating human rights are brought to justice.
- Wrote the laws conditioning military aid to the Philippines and Indonesia on investigations and prosecutions of crimes against humanity and other violations of human rights.
- Wrote the laws that condition a percentage of U.S. military aid to Mexico and Honduras on investigations and prosecutions of military and police officers implicated in violating human rights.
- Provided funding over many years for the war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda. Senator Leahy also includes \$30 million annually in the State Department budget bill for other assistance for the war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and for other such tribunals and commissions.
- Provided funding for the cleanup of sites in Vietnam contaminated with Agent Orange, and for related medical/disability programs for victims. More than \$40 million has been appropriated through Senator Leahy's efforts to date.
- Required report on efforts by the Government of Senegal to transfer indicted war criminal former Chadian President Habre to the International Criminal Court for prosecution.
- Required reports on efforts by the Government of Sri Lanka to investigate and prosecute war criminals.
- Required report on efforts by the Government of Kenya to investigate and prosecute members of the military and police involved in violating human rights.

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