

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GROUND-BREAKING LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO BATTLE CHILD TRAFFICKING

*Bi-partisan and NGO support advances new legislation to empower trafficking-scarred nations
to take significant steps to eradicate the crime*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Anti-trafficking advocates Representatives Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) today introduced legislation granting new authority for the U.S. Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP). The “Child Protection Compact Act of 2009” (CPCA) is aimed at eradicating trafficking in children in select “focus countries” that will receive multi-year assistance to build public justice systems that investigate crimes against children and prosecute perpetrators in numbers sufficient to deter and eventually eliminate the crime. The legislation also authorizes increased assistance for victim care.

An important feature of the new legislation is the requirement that “focus countries” and the United States agree on a “Child Protection Compact” that sets measurable objectives for rescuing and caring for exploited children and prosecuting perpetrators. The compact, an innovation used by the Millennium Challenge Corporation to encourage good governance and reform, will help build political will in beneficiary countries, accountability for the use of foreign assistance funds and sustainability of improvements made in local public justice systems.

Holly Burkhalter, IJM Vice President for Government Relations, praised Reps. Smith and Maloney, noting, “Representative Smith and Representative Maloney have been on the forefront of the fight against slavery for a decade. They are acknowledged by members of Congress and NGOs across the political spectrum as respected leaders in the movement to abolish modern day slavery.”

The act is the second major piece of trafficking-related legislation introduced in the past year; the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Act passed both houses of Congress unanimously in late 2008. However, Burkhalter notes that the bulk of the new policies enacted in that legislation related to domestic trafficking. “The new administration needs diplomatic tools to help countries where increases in child trafficking are outstripping means of combating it,” Burkhalter explains.

International Justice Mission urged Congress to consider new authority for the G/TIP Office because its funds are spread over so many countries and projects that deep, long-term investments in law enforcement, victim aftercare, and prevention haven’t been possible. The G/TIP office received a total of \$20.4 million for grant-making from Congress in the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act. President Obama’s request for fiscal year 2010 is \$16.4 million. The CPCA authorizes an additional \$50 million over three years for focus country investments.

The Child Protection Compact Act is supported by a broad coalition of anti-trafficking leaders and other NGOs. In addition to IJM, the Act is supported by World Vision, Sojourners, Equality Now, Not For Sale, Polaris Project, Amnesty International USA, the SOLD Project and Freedom House.

A summary of the legislation follows:

1. **Findings:** Findings include U.N. statistics regarding child trafficking and exploitation and the ILO’s definition and prohibition on “worst forms of child labor.”
2. **Declaration of Purpose:** The purpose of the bill is to increase protection of vulnerable children in selected countries by providing assistance to address institutional weaknesses within governments.

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3. **Authorization of Assistance:** The bill authorizes assistance, to be administered by the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP) for countries that meet certain eligibility criteria and enter into a compact. The bill authorizes \$50 million over three years for this purpose.
4. **Selection Criteria:** Countries are selected on the basis of demonstrated political will by the government to confront child trafficking, including by enactment and enforcement of law, cooperation with local and international NGOs, and treatment of victims in accordance with international standards.
5. **Child Protection Compact:** The compact is an agreement between the U.S. and the eligible country that contains specific objectives in a "national child protection strategy," and indicates benchmarks for measuring the achievement of them.
6. **Congressional Notification/Reports:** The executive branch shall consult with Congress prior to negotiating a compact with a country and shall notify Congress after entering into such compact. In addition, not later than 180 days after enactment and annually thereafter, the President shall submit a report on the achievement of objectives for each country for which a compact has been negotiated

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About International Justice Mission:

International Justice Mission is a human rights agency that secures justice for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM's multi-national staff work in 12 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to ensure that the global poor are protected from violent forms of oppression by their countries' own laws. Over the past decade, they have partnered with local authorities to secure lives of freedom for thousands victimized by slavery.

IJM's lawyers, investigators and social workers partner with local officials to respond to violent oppression by ensuring immediate victim relief; pursuing perpetrator prosecution; providing aftercare for victims as they navigate the complex process of rebuilding their lives. IJM's founding principle is the defense and protection of individual human rights for all people by bringing the law to bear on their behalf and by prosecuting perpetrators who violate local and international laws.

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