

March 28, 2014

Re: FY2015 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Requests

Dear Members of the U.S. Congress:

As participants of the Prevention and Protection Working Group*, we urge appropriators to fully fund the President's FY 2015 budget requests for conflict prevention and civilian protection accounts. These funds invest in the fundamental building blocks of sustainable state and regional peace and security, a proven strategy to prevent violent conflicts, and ultimately reduce the number of lives lost and save the millions of dollars that would likely be spent on crisis response and humanitarian assistance.

2014 marks the 20-year anniversaries of two of the gravest atrocities of the 20th century: the 100-day Rwandan genocide, and subsequent two decades long crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The U.S. foreign assistance budget has been stretched thin addressing the crisis in Syria and its spillover across the region. Meanwhile, new episodes of mass atrocities have been committed against civilians in South Sudan, Central African Republic and Burma despite repeated warning signs of impending violence.

Moreover, the Director of National Intelligence's 2014 Annual Threats Assessment testimony before Congress stated "the risk of mass atrocities will probably increase in 2014 and beyond." Intelligence forecasting such as this illustrates the urgency of funding preventive mechanisms in order to avert violence against civilians.

The President's FY 2015 international affairs budget includes a number of modest but important investments that will preserve scarce resources by improving the U.S. government's ability to prevent and mitigate conflict. The initiatives outlined below represent relatively small investments that could save billions of dollars and thousands of lives by preventing crises from turning violent, stemming mass atrocities, and avoiding American boots on the ground. We therefore urge your support for the following:

- **Complex Crises Fund (CCF):** The CCF has quickly become one of the most highly demanded tools in the U.S. foreign policy toolkit. It has proven to be a crucial source of global, flexible funding, enabling USAID and the State Department to undertake rapid prevention, stabilization, and crisis response activities when stove-piped assistance funds otherwise cannot be reprogrammed to address new or emerging problems. The CCF currently funds conflict mitigation programming between host and refugee communities in Jordan and inter-communal peacebuilding in conflict-torn Central African Republic. The FY14 account is already almost fully expended, meaning that should another urgent crisis break out such as CAR, the CCF will not be able to adequately respond. **We urge an increase beyond the President's request to \$100 million for the CCF.**
- **Conflict Stabilization Operations:** CSO supports the Department of State's conflict and crisis-response efforts through locally grounded analysis, strategic planning, and operational support for local partners. In advance of the 2013 potentially volatile presidential elections in Kenya, CSO helped support locally-led peace networks and early warning systems in tense areas throughout the country. This bureau focuses on preventing deadly conflict by assessing and planning an effective response to countries struggling with or at risk from protracted conflict. **We urge you to fully fund the President's FY 2015 request of \$45.2 million for the CSO.**

- **Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) at USAID:** CMM provides cutting edge analytical and operational support to USAID missions, and supports development officers and program partners to better address the causes and consequences of violent conflict. Its people-to-people reconciliation supports community-based peacebuilding programs in some of the countries of greatest concern to the U.S., including many ESF countries. **We request no less than \$26 million for the Reconciliation Program Account and that the CMM operational budget meets growing conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding needs of USAID.**
- **U.N. Dues and Peacekeeping Operations:** Enhancing international cooperation at the highest levels is essential for building peace and resolving violent conflict. Consistent cooperation, particularly professional, well-equipped international peacekeepers reduce the burden on the U.S. by acting as a key stabilizing force at a fraction of the cost of U.S. armed intervention - a mere 12 cents to the dollar according to the Government Accountability Office. U.N. peacekeepers, including unarmed civilian peacekeepers, play a vital role in protecting civilians from harm, preventing displacement, restoring and maintaining rule of law and enabling post-conflict political and economic reconstruction, in places such as Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo. We therefore request:
 - Full funding of the President's request of \$1.5 billion for Contributions to International Organizations;
 - \$2.625 billion for Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA), an increase above the President's request, due to large shortfalls for Mali and S. Sudan missions in the FY14 omnibus;
 - \$501.65 million for the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account, a figure that includes \$165.5 million to pay U.S. assessed expenses associated with the UN Office for the AU Mission in Somalia (UNSOA), and
 - \$250 million for the Peacekeeping Response Mechanism, an increase above the President's request, to address unanticipated peacekeeping requirements that emerge subsequent to transmittal of the President's budget. This funding could be used to support a new UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), which the Security Council may vote to authorize in late March or April.
- **Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI):** USAID's OTI supports programs that help fragile or conflict-prone countries transition to peace and stability. It has developed a strong track record over the last 15 years in applying short-term assistance to leverage opportunities for advancing peace and mitigating violence. OTI currently operates in countries such as Tunisia, Libya, and Kenya. **We urge you to fully fund the President's FY2015 request of \$67.6 million for OTI.**
- **Africa – Pilot Programs – Crisis Response:** Embassy budgets often do not provide Ambassadors and Chiefs of Mission with the appropriate tools to prevent violent conflicts. Ambassadors have repeatedly reported feeling incapable of diffusing crises brewing unfolding before their eyes due to misallocation or insufficient flexibility of funds. **We therefore greatly welcome this FY2014 \$15 million pilot program and urge that it is maintained for FY2015. We request, however, that the title of the program be amended to “Crisis Prevention”.**
- **Leahy Law Implementation:** We urge you to direct \$4-5 million in Diplomatic and Consular Funds to the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) to implement Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act. In implementing this law, State/DRL is mandated to vet all

U.S. security assistance (from both 150 and 050 accounts) to ensure that funds are not going to forces that have committed gross human rights violations. The office carrying out this work is understaffed in trying to implement effective background vetting on approximately \$15 billion of U.S. security assistance (from 150 and 050 accounts) provided annually. In FY13, \$2 million was directed toward this task. In FY14, the State Department proposed \$2 million in D&C funds for this body of work, but Congress appropriated \$2.75 million. An increase to \$4-5 million in FY15 would allow the vetting capability to undergo steady growth. This increase in funds is particularly necessary given that Congress expanded the scope of Leahy vetting on Department of Defense-funded training was covered by the Leahy Law. DRL currently carries out vetting within ten days of receipt of all required information from US embassies. With the expanded workload created by the FY14 omnibus, the background checks will likely bog down unless more funds are provided to hire and train staff and provide necessary technology in DRL and in U.S. embassies.

In addition to supporting the above accounts, we also believe Congress must push the Department of State and USAID to be more efficient and forward thinking with its funds in some particular areas. Proposed report language on elections preparation, diplomatic presence in South Sudan and Central African Republic, civil society repression abroad, and integrating atrocities prevention within country planning are included in the Appendix.

Finally, we also urge that funding for conflict prevention and civilian protection not come at the expense of other effective humanitarian and development funding, which works together to serve the common goal of building a safer and more prosperous world. Poverty reduction and conflict prevention go hand in hand, and a loss in one corresponds to a loss in the other.

Civilian agencies and international partners must be well-equipped to respond flexibly and decisively to mitigate escalating crises before atrocities, violence or other abuses against civilians occur. We urge you to exercise your foresight, and fully fund these accounts in the interest of U.S. leadership and responsibility to promote global peace and security.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Peacebuilding
The Auschwitz Institute for Peace and
Reconciliation
Better World Campaign
Church of the Brethren, Office of Public
Witness
The Enough Project
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Humanity United
Invisible Children

Jewish World Watch
Mercy Corps
Oxfam America
The Peace Alliance
Saferworld
STAND
The Student Peace Alliance
The Resolve LRA Crisis Initiative
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness
Ministries
United to End Genocide

**The Prevention and Protection Working Group is a coalition of human rights, religious, humanitarian, anti-genocide, peace and other organizations dedicated to improving U.S. government policies and civilian capacities to prevent violent conflict, mass atrocities and protect civilians threatened by such crises.*

Appendix – Proposed Report Language

Africa – Regional -- 2015 elections – The Committee notes that preventive investments made by the U.S. in advance of the Kenyan 2013 national elections effectively reduced violence before, during, and after the elections as compared to Kenyan 2007/2008 elections. As elections can be flashpoints for violence across the world, including in Africa, and that 15 national elections will take place across Sub-Saharan Africa in 2015, the Committee directs the Department of State and USAID to prepare short reports to the Committee of Appropriations within 30 days enactment of this act shall any of these 15 countries require urgent reprogramming of funds to address new, complex challenges in conflict mitigation.

Justification. Scholastic and experiential research suggest that electoral violence is and shall not be perceived as isolated event but rather as a complex process involving the activation of many different factors and triggers over time. Short term efforts to prevent violence the day of or weeks leading up to elections, for example, are often unsuccessful. Strategic re-programming of funds to mitigate rising intercommunal or political tensions, promote tolerance and rule of law, and identify alternatives to violence have on the contrary been effective in reducing the propensity for actors to engage in violence. Examples include the Burundi 2010 elections, Kenya 2013 elections, and 2006 DRC elections.

Diplomatic and Consular Services – The Committee recognizes the dangerous environments within which many U.S. diplomats operate overseas. While the safety and security of U.S. diplomatic personnel is of the highest importance, U.S. national security requires diplomats on the front lines of complex crises advancing U.S. interests in promoting sustainable peace and security and ensuring stability. The Committee supports U.S. efforts to resume more robust diplomatic presence in South Sudan and re-open the Embassy in Central African Republic.

Justification. The limits of U.S. political engagement in South Sudan, including the absence of USAID staff, and lack of a U.S. presence in CAR creates coordination challenges for U.S. government implementing partners, inhibits effective information sharing between U.S. policymakers and key local, national and international actors in the conflict, and creates an impression of inconsistency in U.S. policy towards prevention of mass atrocities.

Development Assistance – Shrinking civil society space impedes democracy and threatens civilians from atrocity crimes. – The Committee welcomes USAID's new strategic foci on ending extreme poverty and promoting resilient, democratic states, but is concerned by shrinking civic space throughout the world, including in many countries prone to chronic poverty, conflict and atrocities against civilians. The USAID Administrator shall report to the Committees on Appropriations and Foreign Assistance within 90 days enactment of this act on the status of the agency's efforts to reform grant and contract portfolios, procurement policies, and modification processes to ensure that U.S. assistance adequately supports the protection of civic space and capacity building of local civil society organizations.

Justification. A democratic political culture requires a vibrant civil society sector, protection of basic freedoms and human rights, and an independent media to ensure that citizens are well informed about the actions and performance of government institutions and officials, and that citizens have the means to freely influence public policies. According to Freedom House,

governments around the world are intensifying their crackdown on civil society, as authoritarian governments grow more bold and sophisticated in stifling independent groups that monitor elections, expose corruption, share information, or otherwise give citizens a voice in how they are governed. One of the most troubling developments is a continuing authoritarian pushback against organizations, movements, and media that monitor human rights or advocate the expansion of democratic freedoms. Such movements are increasing with ferocity and no accountability across the Soviet Union, North Africa, East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Development Assistance – Mainstreaming atrocities prevention into all country planning strategies – In 2013, new episodes of mass atrocities were committed against civilians in South Sudan, Central African Republic, Burma, and North Korea despite repeated warning signs of impending violence. In January 2014, Director of National Intelligence warned that the overall risk of mass atrocities worldwide will probably increase in 2014 and beyond. The Committee directs the Atrocities Prevention Board Principals of the State Department and USAID to submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations and Foreign Relations within 90 days enactment of this act on the ways in which atrocities prevention information, analysis, tools and funding needs are integrated into interagency country planning strategies.

Justification. DNI James Clapper’ statement confirms: “The overall risk of mass atrocities worldwide will probably increase in 2014 and beyond. Trends driving this increase include more social mobilization, violent conflict, including communal violence, and other forms of instability that spill over borders and exacerbate ethnic and religious tensions; diminished or stagnant quality of governance; and widespread impunity for past abuses. Many countries at risk of mass atrocities will likely be open to influence to prevent or mitigate them. This is because they are dependent on Western assistance or multilateral missions in their countries, have the political will to prevent mass atrocities, or would be responsive to international scrutiny. Overall international will and capability to prevent or mitigate mass atrocities will likely diminish in 2014 and beyond, although support for human rights norms to prevent atrocities will almost certainly deepen among some non-government organizations. Much of the world will almost certainly turn to the United States for leadership to prevent and respond to mass atrocities.” Regional bureaus do not currently factor atrocities prevention adequately into country planning strategies. Thematic prevention staff and regional or country staff do not meet regularly or integrate in planning country strategies. This has resulted in missed opportunities to allocate funding or re-orient programming in order to prevent the onslaught of mass atrocities.