



Alliance for Peacebuilding

February 20, 2020

Dear Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations:

The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) is a nonpartisan network of 110+ organizations working in 153 countries to end conflict, reduce violence, and build sustainable peace. We are writing to thank you for your commitment to sustaining the International Affairs budget in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, as you have done year after year. The Administration's budget proposal to cut the State Department and USAID FY21 budgets by 22.4% from FY20 enacted levels would severely impede the ability of the United States to respond to global threats and prevent deadly conflict. We urge you to maintain strong funding levels in the FY21 International Affairs budget, at no less than enacted in FY 2020.

Not only does this budget cut foreign assistance overall by 22.4%, it cuts peacebuilding and conflict prevention accounts by 36% including the complex crisis fund and the human rights and democracy fund at the State Department. Such drastic cuts couldn't come at a worse moment. Deaths from organized violence globally have risen over 230 percent in the past 10 years, and displacement is at an all-time high, with more than 70.8 million people forcibly displaced from their homes. Just fifteen years ago, approximately 80% of humanitarian aid went to helping the victims of natural disasters, but today that ratio is reversed, with 80% of aid going to meet the needs of victims of violent conflict.

Additionally, this 22.4% overall funding cut would also hamper the efforts of the Department of State and USAID to implement the Global Fragility Act 2019 (GFA). The GFA is the first-ever comprehensive U.S. government strategy to tackle and prevent spiraling global conflict, which will reduce global instability, save lives, and American tax dollars.

Furthermore, slashing U.S. diplomacy and development assistance will undermine our national security, damage our economic interests, and weaken U.S. moral leadership in the world. These funding cuts are also being proposed at a time when China is boosting foreign aid, and Russia is exerting pressure in countries including Syria and Ukraine. Such measures would ultimately make Americans less safe, cost the U.S. taxpayer more in the long run, and put American lives at risk to respond to conflicts that development and diplomatic efforts could have prevented. We urge you to exercise your full oversight and appropriations authorities to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance is aligned with the American national interests and values.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the FY21 budget promotes American national security and values, builds economic prosperity, prevents violent conflict and extremism, and builds peace.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Uzra Zeya".

Uzra Zeya
President and CEO
Alliance for Peacebuilding