

OPEN LETTER FROM 28 FAITH ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING SUPPORT TO PROTECT BASE AND OCO LEVELS FOR FY2018 STATE-FOREIGN OPERATIONS BUDGET

November 8, 2017

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
U.S. Senate Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
U.S. House Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
U.S. Senate Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
U.S. House Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members,

As you work towards finalizing the budget for fiscal year 2018, we urge you to demonstrate bold leadership by supporting a State-Foreign Operations (SFOPs) bill that robustly funds and protects all humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance, and peacebuilding accounts. As a diverse group of national faith-based organizations, we are committed to saving lives and advancing the dignity of vulnerable and marginalized individuals and communities across the world.

Last year, the world witnessed a rise in global hunger for the first time in more than a decade. Up from 793 million in 2015, there are currently over 815 million chronically hungry people in nations all around the world—11% of the global population. In Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, and northeastern Nigeria alone, over 20 million people are on the brink of starvation due to famine-like conditions, and violent conflict, making it impossible to access food and safe drinking water. Additionally, 65 million people have been displaced from their homes—the highest number since World War II—putting an immense strain on resources worldwide.

We are concerned that a decrease below FY 2017 levels will limit America's ability to reach more people in need. However, we do appreciate the continued bi-partisan support that your committees have demonstrated for these life-saving initiatives. Because of the tremendous need of our neighbors around the world, we believe that robust funding for the SFOPs accounts is consistent with our faith traditions and the compassion of the American people. Accordingly, we request your support of the highest possible overall funding levels in the Fiscal Year 2018 SFOPs bill for humanitarian and development accounts, and request no less than:

- **\$8.71 billion for Global Health Programs, as allocated by the Senate, *including \$2.9 billion for USAID's Global Health Programs, as allocated by both chambers***
- **\$2.89 billion for Development Assistance, as allocated by the Senate**
- **\$3.11 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance, as allocated by both chambers**

- **\$3.13 billion for International Disaster Assistance, as allocated by the Senate**
- **\$50 million for Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance, as allocated by the Senate**
- **\$30 million for the Complex Crisis Fund, as allocated by the Senate**

In the midst of these crises, the U.S. cannot forget the important work of development programs that build sustainability by supporting critical health initiatives to fight disease and improve women's and children's health; helping family farmers increase their productivity; getting children to attend and learn in school; providing access to safe water and sanitation; supporting emerging democracies; promoting gender equality; and protecting girls and boys from violence and exploitation. As faith based organizations, we believe that ending extreme poverty and promoting the dignity of each human being is a moral priority. We look forward to continuing our work together with Congress for a world where all God's children can pursue a future reflective of great promise and opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. American Hindu World Service 2. American Jewish World Service 3. Bread for the World 4. Children's Medical Ministries 5. Christian Connections for International Health 6. Church World Service 7. Conference of Major Superiors of Men 8. Disabled Children's Fund 9. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 10. Faiths for Safe Water 11. Food for the Hungry 12. IMA World Health 13. International Orthodox Christian Charities 14. Islamic Relief USA 15. Islamic Society of North America | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Jewish Council for Public Affairs 17. Leadership Conference of Women Religious 18. Lutheran World Relief 19. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns 20. Mennonite Central Committee 21. Office of Social Justice; Christian Reformed Church 22. Presbyterian Church USA 23. Progressive National Baptist Convention 24. The Episcopal Church 25. Union for Reform Judaism 26. United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries 27. United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society 28. World Renew |
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Faiths for Safe Water



Islamic Relief USA
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Islamic Society of
North America



THE
Episcopal
CHURCH

