

**OPEN LETTER FROM 28 FAITH ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING SUPPORT TO CONGRESSIONAL
APPROPRIATORS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2019 SFOPS BILL**

July 27, 2018

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs

Dear Chairmen Graham and Rogers, and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey:

As members of the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance, a network of over 50 faith-based organizations advocating for the world's most vulnerable people, we would like to thank you for your continued support in robustly funding life-saving humanitarian, peacebuilding, and poverty-focused international programs. Our community is committed to empowering those suffering from extreme poverty and food insecurity around the world, which is why we are appreciative of both the sustained and increased funding levels to these accounts within the International Affairs budget. Due to your hard work and support, the fiscal year 2019 appropriations mark for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs maintains a **topline of \$54 billion** in the House, and an additional \$400 million in the Senate.

As you know, these investments are yielding impressive results. Since 1990, the number of people living in extreme poverty—earning less than \$1.90 a day—has been virtually cut in half. Additionally, there have been extraordinary improvements in child and maternal survival rates worldwide, down from 532,000 deaths in 1990 to 300,000 in 2015. In the past two decades alone, the world has witnessed tremendous success in the eradication of preventable diseases. These successes are no accident, but rather the result of sustained leadership and investments from the U.S. government.

While we appreciate the value both chambers have placed on protecting foreign assistance programs, more work needs to be done. We remain especially concerned with the growing refugee and global food crisis that threaten the lives and stability of hundreds of millions of people. According to UNHCR, an unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world have been forced from their homes, over half of whom are under the age of 18. Conflict and insecurity are the primary drivers of food insecurity in 18 countries, where almost 74 million food-insecure people remain in urgent need of assistance.

As your committee looks towards conference negotiations for fiscal year 2019, we urge you to provide the maximum level of funding possible to these vital programs that work to alleviate suffering for people living in extreme poverty. Specifically, we ask that you provide no less than:

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- **\$8.79 billion for Global Health Funding, specifically \$3.1 billion for USAID Global Health and \$5.7 billion for State Global Health, as proposed by the Senate**
- **\$4.4 billion for International Disaster Assistance, as proposed by the Senate**
- **\$3 billion for Development Assistance, as proposed by both chambers**
- **\$3.4 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance, as proposed by the Senate**
- **\$1 million for Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance, as proposed by the Senate**
- **\$30 million for the Complex Crisis Fund, as proposed by the Senate**

The Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance will continue to promote the human dignity of each individual, recognizing that sustained and increased levels of foreign assistance funding is not only a smart investment, but also the morally right action to pursue. Thanks to the collective efforts of U.S. leadership, global partners, and the faith community, millions of people will no longer have to live a life of dealing with the consequences of malnutrition, food insecurity, and chronic disease. Undoubtedly, you and your congressional colleagues have played an important role in achieving this reality, and we hope to continue to work alongside of you to ensure these critical investments remain well funded in the future.

Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

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| 1. Adventist Development and Relief Agency | 15. Friends Committee on National Legislation |
| 2. American Hindu World Service | 16. IMA World Health |
| 3. American Jewish World Service | 17. Islamic Relief USA |
| 4. Bread for the World | 18. Islamic Society of North America |
| 5. Children's Medical Ministries | 19. Jewish Council for Public Affairs |
| 6. Christian Connections for International Health | 20. Leadership Conference of Women Religious |
| 7. Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice | 21. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns |
| 8. Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding and Policy | 22. Mennonite Central Committee, U.S., Washington DC Office |
| 9. Church World Service | 23. National Council of Churches |
| 10. Conference of Superiors of Men (Catholic) | 24. Presbyterian Church (USA) |
| 11. Disabled Children's Fund | 25. Sojourners |
| 12. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | 26. The Episcopal Church |
| 13. Faiths for Safe Water | 27. The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society |
| 14. Food for the Hungry | 28. United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries |

Cc: Members of the House and Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs