



February 7, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
United States Senate
S-221 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20010

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
S-230 The Capitol
Washington DC 20510

Dear Leaders:

On behalf of the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance (IWGFA), a coalition composed of dozens of faith-based humanitarian organizations, **we urge you to maintain humanitarian aid in any supplemental package.** The IWGFA only works on assistance to those in need - in supporting the proposed humanitarian aid, we do not intimate an opinion on other matters contained in the proposed legislation. In particular, the IWGFA supports the following Senate text:

- \$10 billion in humanitarian assistance to provide food, water, shelter, medical care, and other essential services to civilians in Gaza and the West Bank, Ukraine, and other populations caught in conflict zones across the globe:
 - \$250,000 for the World Bank International Development Association
 - \$5.6 million in general funds for International Disaster Assistance plus \$850 million for the Western Hemisphere
 - \$3.4 million for Migration and Refugee Assistance
- \$2.33 billion to continue support for Ukrainians displaced by Putin's war of aggression and other refugees fleeing persecution
- \$7.8 billion dollars (\$50 million for food insecurity for Ukraine) for the Economic Support Fund

In conflict, innocent civilians are the most victimized – particularly those with less ability to express personal agency, like children and the elderly. We urge you to focus your attention and US Government resources on these populations in particular. Further, we urge you to prioritize humanitarian funding to areas that have been extraordinarily impacted. The Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance would like to highlight the following areas:

- **Sudan and surrounding nations** – The civil war in Sudan has doubled the number of internally displaced persons, which now numbers over 7.2 million, and has driven 1.8 million refugees to bordering nations (IOM).

- **Armenia** – Over 100,000 ethnic Armenian refugees have been forced to flee from the Nagorno-Karabakh region since the conflict intensified (UNHCR).
- **Democratic Republic of Congo** – 5.5 million people are internally displaced and 1.1 million have become refugees due to ongoing conflicts (UNHCR).
- **Horn of Africa** – Due to multiple conflicts, “[t]he East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region is currently hosting 4.99 million refugees,” and the region has 11.71 million internally displaced persons (UNHCR).
- **Yemen** – Due to the ongoing war, 17 million are food insecure and “3.5 million pregnant/breastfeeding women and children under 5 are suffering from acute malnutrition” (WFP).

We ask you to **maintain critical humanitarian aid in the Emergency Supplemental language**. As faith groups, we stand in solidarity with one another centered around our common value of recognizing our shared humanity and upholding one another's humanity. We strive to build peace and prosperity in the way we help prevent and respond to global crises.

May God give us all wisdom and guidance at this critical juncture.

Sincerely,

Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance