

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,  
and Related Programs  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

August 8, 2019

Dear Chairman Graham and Ranking Member Leahy:

With the conclusion of the bipartisan budget agreement, we understand that the Senate will begin marking up fiscal year 2020 appropriations measures. As civil society organizations that work on a range of international humanitarian, human rights, and security issues, we are concerned by the current financial crisis at the UN and urge you to honor our financial commitments to the organization. Specifically, we hope that you will support sufficient funding levels for the following accounts: Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA), Contributions to International Organizations (CIO), and International Organizations and Programs (IO&P).

With respect to peace operations, UN peacekeepers are currently working in a range of locales all over the world to protect civilians, promote stability, and prevent flare-ups of conflict. Overall, according to a new book *Power in Peacekeeping*, which analyzes more than two decades of research, “United Nations peacekeeping has proven remarkably effective at reducing the death and destruction of civil wars.” The book goes on to argue that if “we want less terrorism, more burden-sharing, and lower U.S. costs for counter-terrorism, it makes sense to invest in peacekeeping.”

Despite the critical nature of the UN's work, it is facing major cash flow problems, due in significant measure to Congressional and Administration enforcement of an arbitrary 25% legislative cap on U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping operations. Congress has lifted this cap, first enacted in the 1990s, over a dozen times, but since FY'17, the U.S. has accrued \$776 million in peacekeeping-related arrears. The result is that countries who provide troops to peacekeeping missions—including U.S. partners like Bangladesh, Ghana, and India—are not being fully paid for their contributions, despite the inherent risks of increasingly complex and deadly operations. The State Department itself, in a June report to Congress, raised alarm about this state of affairs, noting that: “Accumulation of new peacekeeping arrears due to application of the 25 percent cap could impact U.S. influence and credibility at the UN, and further strain UN peacekeeping capacity at a time when the UN is engaged in a number of critical missions.”

While the House Appropriations Committee, in its own fiscal year 2020 State/Foreign Operations bill, generously provides funding to pay back a portion of these arrears, it does not lift the cap for either FY'19 or FY'20, ensuring that we will continue to accumulate arrears and shortchange troop contributing countries. As a result, we request funding necessary to pay our FY'20 peacekeeping dues at the current assessed rate of 27.89%, *a rate the U.S. agreed to last December during UN assessment rate negotiations*. As part of this request, we call for bill language lifting the peacekeeping cap, similar to what was done in past years under Republican and Democratic leadership.

With regards to other parts of the UN system, we also request fiscal year 2020 funding for the CIO account, which covers U.S. assessments for the UN regular budget and more than 40 other international organizations—including the World Health Organization (WHO), which is currently leading the international response to the Ebola outbreak in

DR Congo—at a level of at least \$1.52 billion in FY'20. In addition, in terms of this account, we are concerned about the Administration's decision to unilaterally withhold \$18.9 million from its regular budget contributions to express disapproval of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). OHCHR helps implement and coordinate international investigations into human rights abuses in a number of countries, including North Korea, Iran, Syria, Myanmar, and Yemen. These activities, which have long been supported by Congress, magnify the voices of human rights defenders and civil society organizations working on the ground and serve as a tool for applying pressure to repressive governments.

In terms of the International Organizations and Programs (IO&P) account, we hope that you will support it at a level of at least \$646.5 million. This account funds voluntary contributions to the core budgets of various UN agencies and programs that advance U.S. policy objectives on a range of humanitarian, development, global health, environmental, gender equality, and human rights issues, including UNICEF, the UN Development Program, the UN Environment Program, UN Women, and the UN Population Fund.

Finally, we must raise with you the Administration's ongoing attempts to rescind funding appropriated by Congress for international affairs programs. It is our understanding that the Administration is again considering a package of rescissions targeting unobligated FY'18 and FY'19 funds, including the accounts mentioned in this letter. If these funds are cancelled, it would exacerbate the UN's financial crisis and have a devastating impact on a range of Congressional priorities around security assistance, peacekeeping, and global health. We applaud your past leadership in opposing this end of fiscal year rescissions effort and request that you again assert Congress's Article I authority.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests and for your ongoing leadership on issues related to multilateral diplomacy.

Undersigned Organizations,

- ❖ Action Against Hunger
- ❖ Adventist Development and Relief Agency
- ❖ Alliance for Peacebuilding
- ❖ American Jewish World Service
- ❖ Americans for UNESCO
- ❖ Amnesty International USA
- ❖ Better World Campaign
- ❖ CARE USA
- ❖ Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
- ❖ Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
- ❖ EarthAction
- ❖ Faiths for Safe Water
- ❖ Freedom House
- ❖ Friends Committee on National Legislation
- ❖ Girl Up
- ❖ Global Health Council
- ❖ Global Water 2020
- ❖ Helen Keller International
- ❖ HelpAge USA
- ❖ Helping Hand for Relief and Development
- ❖ Human Rights Campaign
- ❖ Invisible Children
- ❖ J Street
- ❖ Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights
- ❖ Mercy-USA for Aid and Development
- ❖ National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
- ❖ Norwegian Refugee Council USA
- ❖ Nothing but Nets
- ❖ Peace Direct
- ❖ Refugees International
- ❖ Shot@Life
- ❖ SPOON
- ❖ The Advocates for Human Rights
- ❖ The Hunger Project
- ❖ The United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society
- ❖ UNICEF USA
- ❖ United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
- ❖ United Nations Association-USA
- ❖ 2020 Action