

TESTIMONY ON FY2022 STATE DEPARTMENT, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND
RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

*Prepared for the House State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations
Subcommittee*

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Madame Chair Lee, Ranking Member Rogers, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in support of robust funding for peacebuilding in the FY2022 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill. The Friends Committee on National Legislation, or FCNL, was founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers. From our early days – amid the Second World War – until today, we have advocated for peace and sought a world free of war and the threat of war. In pursuit of these ends, we strongly support robust funding for accounts that prevent and reduce violent conflict in the FY 2022 SFOPs appropriations bill, including \$60 million for the Complex Crises Fund at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), \$25 million for the Atrocities Prevention Fund at the State Department, and \$500,000 for Atrocities Prevention Training at the State Department and USAID.

The challenges the United States faces around the world today cannot be resolved with bullets and bombs. In order to draw down and end our country’s endless wars, FCNL urges an increased investment in peacebuilding, development, and diplomacy.

One percent of humanity – 1 in every 97 people ⁱ – is now forcibly displaced from their homes, including over 80 million who were forced to flee persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations.ⁱⁱ Meanwhile, climate change is worsening resource scarcity and natural disasters, pushing fragile states beyond their abilities to cope or adapt. In the past decade, the number of water-related conflicts and violence has increased by 270 percent.ⁱⁱⁱ Over the next three decades, an additional 1.5 billion people are expected to face food insecurity.^{iv}

Compounding these issues, the COVID-19 pandemic has spared no country—large or small, industrialized or developing, resilient or fragile. The pandemic has exacerbated the drivers of conflict and fragility around the world, leading to rising violence and decimated economies that will far outlast the virus itself. In fact, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation found that the COVID-19 pandemic has set back an important measure of global development by “about 25 years in about 25 weeks.”^v

In particular, FCNL is deeply concerned about the early warning signs of new violence resulting from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Advanced data modeling by the Josef Korbel School at the University of Denver shows that as result of the pandemic, 13 more countries will likely experience conflict over the next two years, a more than 50 percent increase over their pre-pandemic prediction.^{vi}

However, the virus need not be followed by violence.

Right now, peacebuilders are working around the world, on the frontlines of the pandemic to ensure that the public health responses are conflict-sensitive and support sustainable peace.^{vii} Peacebuilding provides an indispensable tool in responding to and recovering from this pandemic by both preventing immediate outbreaks of violence and healing fractured societies over the long term. With focused and dedicated assistance, the United States can be a powerful force for peace and development during this global crisis.

The full list of accounts that support peacebuilding, conflict prevention and violence reduction efforts is attached below, along with the levels of funding we recommend. I would like to highlight three of these accounts.

The Complex Crises Fund (CCF) enables USAID to respond to early warning signs and escalating crises before violence erupts. It is the only account designed to fill immediate, short-term needs during emergent crises. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the CCF was in high demand—having directly supported initiatives to prevent violence and conflict in 29 countries over the last decade.^{viii} The CCF has enabled urgent peacebuilding programs that have disseminated essential information, facilitated dialogue, and promoted civic engagement in order to defuse rising tensions and strengthen communities’ resilience.

Now, with the pandemic further exacerbating conflict drivers, the flexibility that CCF provides USAID to respond rapidly to escalating crises is even more essential. **As such, we urge that you allocate \$60 million to USAID for the Complex Crises Fund.**

Additionally, we urge significantly increased support to the Atrocities Prevention Fund, which is the State Department’s only funding dedicated solely to the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide.

We know that society-wide crises, such as famines, pandemics, and political strife, too often become triggers or justifications for mass violence and atrocities. During such crises marginalized groups, especially migrants and ethnic or religious minorities, are often scapegoated and attacked. We have already seen rising levels of such identity-based violence around the world—including here in the United States against Asian-Americans.

Genocide is an extreme form of this identity-based violence, and without urgent and effective prevention efforts, the second order impacts of the pandemic could take more lives than COVID-19 itself.^{ix}

The Atrocities Prevention Fund enables the Department of State to undertake critical mass atrocity and genocide prevention efforts and to implement recommendations of the interagency Atrocity Early Warning Task Force. **Given the increased risk of mass atrocities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to appropriate no less than \$25 million for the Atrocities Prevention Fund.**

In tandem, we urge \$500,000 be made available for the State Department and USAID to conduct Atrocities Prevention Training for Foreign Service Officers in countries at risk of mass atrocities. As mandated in the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (P.L. 115-441), the

training improves the ability of our diplomatic and development professionals around the world to recognize and respond to the early warning signs of mass atrocities.

Madame Chair, Ranking Member, and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Genocide, mass atrocities, and other forms of violence against civilians are not inevitable. But the COVID-19 pandemic has sharply raised the risk of their occurrence. By supporting peacebuilding, conflict prevention and violence reduction efforts, the United States can be a powerful force for the protection of human lives, rights and dignity.

I thank you for your consideration and for working to build peace in this time of great tragedy.

Full Recommendations for FY2022 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations

Account Name	FY21 Enacted	FY22 FCNL Request
Atrocities Prevention Fund	\$5,000,000	\$25,000,000
Atrocities Prevention Training	\$500,000	\$500,000
Complex Crises Fund	\$30,000,000	\$60,000,000
Conflict Stabilization Operations	\$2,500,000	\$14,500,000
Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities	\$1,456,314,000	\$2,701,032,000
Contributions to International Organizations	\$1,505,928,000	\$1,595,928,000
Democracy Fund at USAID	\$100,250,000	\$100,250,000
Human Rights and Democracy Fund at State	\$190,450,000	\$190,500,000
Multi-Donor Global Fragility Fund	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000
Prevention and Stabilization Fund	\$100,000,000	\$200,000,000
Reconciliation Programs	\$25,000,000	\$30,000,000
Transition Initiatives	\$92,043,000	\$112,000,000
U.S. Institute of Peace	\$45,000,000	\$45,000,000

ⁱ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020). *Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2019*. <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2019/>

ⁱⁱ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020). *Mid-Year Trends 2020*. <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5fc504d44/mid-year-trends-2020.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Institute for Economics & Peace. (2020) *Ecological Threat Register 2020: Understanding Ecological Threats, Resilience and Peace*. https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ETR_2020_web-1.pdf

^{iv} *Ibid.*

^v Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (2020). *2020 Goalkeepers Report*.

<https://www.gatesfoundation.org/goalkeepers/report/2020-report/>

^{vi} Moyer, J. D., & Kaplan, O. (2020, July 6). Will the Coronavirus Fuel Conflict? *Foreign Policy*.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/06/coronavirus-pandemic-fuel-conflict-fragile-states-economy-food-prices/>

^{vii} International Alert. (2020). *COVID-19 peacebuilding response*. <https://www.international-alert.org/covid-19-peacebuilding-response>

^{viii} USAID. (2020, Oct. 1). *Complex Crises Fund*. <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/organization/bureaus/bureau-conflict-prevention-and-stabilization%20/complex-crisis-fund>

^{ix} Ferguson, Dr. K. (2020). Atrocity prevention and Covid-19 Opportunities and responsibilities. *Protection Approaches*. <https://protectionapproaches.org/ap-and-covid>