

October 14, 2021

Ed Meier
Associate Director, National Security Programs
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Associate Director Meier:

As members of the Prevention and Protection Working Group, we welcome President Biden's commitment to diplomacy, development, and peacebuilding—particularly in facing the challenges of violent conflict, human rights violations, and mass atrocities. We appreciate the president's pledge, in his remarks to the United Nations General Assembly, to “continue to work with the international community to press for peace and bring an end to this suffering.” **To fulfill this commitment, we respectfully urge the inclusion of increased funding for peacekeeping, peacebuilding, atrocity prevention, and human rights-related accounts in the Fiscal Year 2023 President's Budget Request.** We greatly appreciate the president's inclusion of \$60 million for the Complex Crises Fund in his FY 22 Budget Request, and we hope the president will consider increasing this request in FY 23.

As a coalition of humanitarian, peacebuilding, human rights, and atrocity prevention experts and organizations, we are deeply concerned about new outbreaks of violence resulting from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and troubling early warning signs of more to come. Since the start of the pandemic, more countries have seen an overall increase of violence, especially mob violence, criminal violence, and gender-based violence.¹

The pandemic has spared no nation, leaving devastated economies and fractured societies in its wake, exacerbating the drivers of political instability, violence, and fragility around the world. In some countries, harsh enforcement of quarantines, and corruption in the management of COVID-19 relief and response, have eroded citizens' trust in institutions and governments' legitimacy. This has in turn benefited non-state armed groups, who have exploited these vulnerabilities and increased their influence by promising protection, offering financial incentives, and expanding their illicit economies. Governments have also seized the opportunity presented by the pandemic to infringe on human rights, expand state surveillance, and limit election processes and free press. Social cohesion also eroded during the pandemic as economic anxieties increased, intergroup interactions diminished, and rumors and misinformation targeted minority groups.² We know that society-wide crises, such as famines, climate change, pandemics, and political strife, too often become a trigger or justification for mass violence and atrocities.

Peacebuilding provides a critical tool in responding to and recovering from this pandemic by preventing sudden outbreaks of violence and healing fractured societies over the long term.

¹ Mercy Corps. 2021. A Clash of Contagions: The Impact of COVID-19 on Conflict in Afghanistan, Colombia, and Nigeria. Washington, D.C.: Mercy Corps.

² *Ibid.*

Peacebuilding also supports public health and humanitarian responses by ensuring they are conflict sensitive and do no harm. We therefore urge OMB to include in the FY 2023 budget request robust funding for accounts at the Department of State and the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) that prevent and reduce violent conflict.

Specifically, we encourage OMB to include the following in its FY 2023 International Affairs Budget Request:

Account Name	FY21 Enacted	PPWG FY23 Request
Atrocities Prevention Fund	\$5,000,000	\$25,000,000
Atrocities Prevention Training, State Department	\$500,000	\$500,000
Atrocities Prevention Training, USAID		\$500,000
Complex Crises Fund	\$30,000,000	\$75,000,000
Conflict Stabilization Operations	\$2,500,000	\$14,500,000
Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities	\$1,456,314,000	\$2,653,000,000
Contributions to International Organizations	\$1,505,928,000	\$1,662,928,000
Democracy Fund at USAID	\$100,250,000	\$100,250,000
Human Rights and Democracy Fund at State	\$190,450,000	\$190,500,000
Prevention and Stabilization Fund	\$100,000,000	\$200,000,000
Multi-Donor Global Fragility Fund	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000
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

In particular, we would highlight the following critical accounts:

1. Atrocities Prevention Fund: \$25 million

The Atrocities Prevention Fund enables the State Department to implement recommendations of the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force and to support programs that aim to prevent mass atrocities and genocide. It is the State Department’s only funding dedicated solely to the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide. Given the increased risk of mass atrocities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, **we urge OMB to include not less than \$25 million for the Atrocities Prevention Fund in its budget request.**

2. Atrocities Prevention Training: \$1 million

In tandem, atrocities prevention training funds support the instruction of officials serving in countries experiencing or at risk of mass atrocities. Such training focuses on the early warning signs of mass atrocities, and methods of preventing and responding to atrocities, as mandated in the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (P.L. 115-441). In FY21 only the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor received such funding, despite

the continued need at USAID. **We urge OMB to include not less than \$500,000 for both the State Department and USAID to conduct atrocities prevention training.**

	FY18 Enacted	FY19 Enacted	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	PPWG FY23 Request
Atrocities Prevention Fund	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$25,000,000
Atrocities Prevention Training <i>State Department</i>	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Atrocities Prevention Training <i>USAID</i>	\$250,000	--	--	--	\$500,000

3. Complex Crises Fund: \$75 million

The Complex Crises Fund (CCF) enables USAID to prevent and respond to early warning signs of mass atrocities and escalating conflicts. It is the only account of its kind, filling immediate, short-term gaps during emergent crises, and its resources are consistently in high demand. However, despite increasing violence and instability, CCF has remained at only \$30 million since FY16. We greatly appreciate the president’s inclusion of \$60 million for the Complex Crises Fund in his FY 22 Budget Request, however given the increase in global instability resulting in part from COVID-19, **we urge OMB to include not less than \$75 million for the CCF.**

	FY18 Enacted	FY19 Enacted	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	PPWG FY23 Request
Complex Crises Fund	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$75,000,000

4. Conflict and Stabilization Operations: \$14.5 million

The Conflict and Stabilization Operations account supports the work of the State Department’s Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO). CSO delivers technical expertise and advanced data analytics tools that help to prevent and resolve conflicts. CSO also deploys stabilization advisors and works alongside partners across the Departments of State and Defense and USAID. As such, **we urge OMB to include \$14.5 million for Conflict Stabilization Operations in its budget request –a slight increase over the president’s requested level for FY22.**

	FY18 Enacted	FY19 Enacted	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	PPWG FY23 Request
Conflict and Stabilization Operations	\$16,100,000	\$10,148,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$14,500,000

5. Prevention and Stabilization Fund: \$200 million

The Global Fragility Act (P.L. 116-94) authorized \$200 million annually for the Prevention and Stabilization Fund, which supports diplomatic and development efforts to stabilize conflict-affected areas and address the root causes of state fragility. In December 2020, the U.S. government released the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Violence and Promote Stability to guide the use of this account. **We urge OMB to include \$200 million for the Prevention and Stabilization Fund, and that such funds specifically include support for the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Violence and Promote Stability.**

6. Multi-Donor Global Fragility Fund: \$25 million

The Global Fragility Act (P.L. 116-94) also established the Multi-Donor Global Fragility Fund, which aims to catalyze global action among private sector, government, and multilateral partners to strengthen good governance and conflict resolution capacity in fragile states. **We urge OMB to include \$25 million for the Multi-Donor Global Fragility Fund.**

	FY20 Enacted	FY21 Enacted	PPWG FY23 Request
Prevention and Stabilization Fund	\$200,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$200,000,000
Multi-Donor Global Fragility Fund	--	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000

7. Unarmed Civilian Protection: \$25 million

Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) is an evidence-based strategy for the non-violent direct protection of civilians, the reduction of localized violence, and the development of local peace infrastructures in which unarmed, trained civilians work alongside local civil society in conflict zones. While UCP has not received a specific appropriation in previous fiscal years, Congress directed the Secretary of State, in consultation with the USAID Administrator, to provide funds for UCP in its Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (P.L. 116-260). **We urge OMB to include a specific request of \$25 million for the State Department for unarmed civilian protection.**

As you prepare the President’s Budget Request for FY 2023, we hope you will recommend these crucial investments in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and atrocity prevention. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to this vital work of the State Department and USAID that serves to prevent violent conflict, build peace, and save lives.

Sincerely,

- Alliance for Peacebuilding
- American Jewish World Service
- Better World Campaign
- Campaign for a New Myanmar
- Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
- Charity & Security Network
- Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
- Darfur Women Action Group
- Educators’ Institute for Human Rights (EIHR)
- The Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- International Campaign for the Rohingya
- Invisible Children
- Mercy Corps
- Minnesota Peace Project
- No Business with Genocide
- Nonviolent Peaceforce
- Peace Direct
- Saferworld (Washington Office)
- Search for Common Ground
- United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
- The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
- Win Without War