

TESTIMONY ON FY2023 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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Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Rogers, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of robust funding for peacebuilding at the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development in the Fiscal Year 2023 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill.

Since its founding in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, the Friends Committee on National Legislation has advocated for peace and sought a world free of war and the threat of war. Our historic Peace Testimony and the voices of hundreds of Quaker meetings across the country have guided our eight decades of work to inform and influence policies, which seek peaceful solutions to violent conflict and to address the root causes of war. These efforts are more urgent than ever as we witness the war in Ukraine unfold and its ramifications extend across the globe.

While military responses continue to consume most of the attention of Congress, our own experience, global history, and a growing body of research show that nonviolent approaches to addressing war and oppression are more effective at breaking cycles of conflict and reducing human suffering. They also advance democracy, promote justice, and reduce environmental harm.

Today I urge your support for robust funding in the FY23 appropriations bill for accounts that help to prevent and reduce violent conflict. These include \$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 each for the State Department and for USAID to conduct Atrocities Prevention Training. We are deeply grateful for the support this committee has previously demonstrated for these accounts, and we look forward to working with you to fund them generously in FY23 and future years.

These accounts and their methods are directly relevant to the war in Ukraine. While we greatly appreciate Congress' quick action in appropriating over \$32 billion in economic and humanitarian support to the people of Ukraine, we remain concerned about the heavy U.S. reliance on military aid and crushing economic sanctions, which could end up causing greater hardship for innocent civilians, while escalating, expanding, and prolonging the bloodshed.

We therefore urge you to invest in the non-violent tools of diplomacy and humanitarian aid, while promoting accountability and long-term security. The United States should be providing diplomatic, legal, and material assistance for nonviolent civilian resisters, peace activists, human rights defenders, civic leaders and unarmed civilian protection networks in Russia, Ukraine, and neighboring countries. The State Department and USAID should be contributing to a robust humanitarian response that includes access to education and health services, legal aid, and fair and efficient asylum procedures. Our programs and policies must promote respect for civil and human rights, prevent discrimination based on racial, ethnic, and religious identities, and reduce the exposure of vulnerable groups – including those with disabilities, women and children – to risks, such as sexual and gender-based violence. The State Department must continue, in

partnership with the Department of Justice and our international partners, to support the collection of evidence to contribute to international investigations of alleged war crimes in Ukraine. All of these efforts must be conducted in a way that centers those who are most directly affected by the violence and supports their leadership.

Beyond the need for an immediate humanitarian response, the war in Ukraine calls for long-term diplomacy and peacebuilding to reduce great-power conflicts, rebuild relationships, and promote mutual security. Now is the time to work multilaterally to establish a new cooperative security architecture for the 21st century that reduces the chances of war and prioritizes the safety, health, and wellbeing of people and the planet. Advancing nonviolent ways of resolving disputes and ending injustice is both a moral and financial imperative.

Fortunately, a number of important funding mechanisms and institutions do support violence prevention and peacebuilding – but many remain underfunded, and more need to be developed and brought to scale. A full list of current accounts is attached below, along with the levels of funding we recommend for the coming year.

When we wait to respond to a conflict until violence begins, the tools available are fewer, more expensive, and less effective. However, the seeds of many violent conflicts are sown years or decades in advance of the violence. Economic, social, and political marginalization and exclusion, unequal access to justice, environmental degradation, and poor governance are a few of those seeds. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention tools can identify opportunities to take corrective action before the seeds take root and sprout into violence.

One tool that helps USAID respond to the early warning signs of conflict is the Complex Crises Fund (CCF). The only account of its kind at USAID, the CCF provides rapid and flexible resources when unforeseen crises emerge or when sudden opportunities for peace arise. As such, the CCF's resources are consistently in high demand, having been applied in over 30 countries in the last two decades.

We urge not less than \$60 million for the CCF for Fiscal Year 2023. We greatly appreciate the inclusion of \$60 million for the Complex Crises Fund in the FY22 omnibus appropriations and urge you to maintain this level in FY23.

Another crucial tool that supports early warning, early response, and long-term conflict transformation is the Atrocity Prevention Fund. The Atrocity Prevention Fund enables the State Department to implement the recommendations of the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force and support local initiatives to prevent mass atrocities and genocide.

For example, in 2018 when violence began re-escalating and spreading to new regions of the Central African Republic, the Atrocity Prevention Fund supported efforts to equip and train remote communities on the use of high-frequency radios. This helped the communities share critical information on security threats from non-state armed groups moving throughout the region and coordinate non-violent responses.

In addition to helping the communities build communication networks, the program provided training on conflict resolution techniques, strengthening local capacity to address longstanding tensions between pastoralists, farmers, and different ethnic groups. For instance, community leaders used theater and peace messaging to sensitize pastoralist groups who were out of reach of traditional communications platforms. Over time, these networks exceeded their initial security aims as communities adapted them to also conduct teacher trainings in remote areas and support

economic development. By using the radios to share market prices for commodities, traders were able to make more informed choices and earn greater profits.

The Atrocities Prevention Fund is the State Department's only fund dedicated solely to the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide. Society-wide shocks, such as pandemics, famines, and political instability, are often preludes to mass violence and atrocities. We have seen these types of shocks occur with increasing frequency over the past two years as governments and societies struggle to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.ⁱ We have also seen growing evidence of atrocities in recent violent conflicts, including in Ethiopia and Ukraine.

Given the increased risk of mass atrocities following the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises, we ask you to appropriate no less than \$25 million for the Atrocities Prevention Fund.

Finally, we urge you to make available \$500,000 each for the State Department and USAID to conduct Atrocities Prevention Training for Foreign Service Officers. The first critical step to preventing mass atrocities and genocide is recognizing when these risks are rising so that remedial action can be taken immediately. As mandated in the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (P.L. 115-441), this training is designed to improve the ability of our diplomatic and development professionals assigned to countries experiencing or at risk of mass atrocities to recognize and respond to the early warning signs.

While peacebuilding programs, as well as aid and diplomacy more generally, deserve more resources, they also require reform. Too often U.S. assistance has been provided within a context or framework of racism, white supremacy and domination, in which local partners are dismissed, disregarded, delegitimized, and dehumanized. Our diplomats and development professionals work within a system that treats their own knowledge and experience as more valuable and more relevant than that of local leaders. Many of our processes foster distrust by excluding those most directly affected by U.S. programs from the information they need and the decision-making power they deserve.

We appreciate the important steps this committee has taken toward addressing some of these issues. For example, the FY22 omnibus supported diversity, equity and inclusion in the hiring, retention, and promotion policies of the State Department and USAID. But more work is still required to unravel the web of policies and practices that result in a highly militaristic U.S. foreign policy whose costs and burdens fall most heavily on people of color at home and abroad.

One important advance would be the implementation of USAID Administrator Samantha Power's commitment to deliver 25 percent of USAID's funding to local partners over the next four years. USAID's funding pledge both acknowledges the current disparities, including the fact that only about 6 percent of the agency's budget currently goes to local partners, and aims to begin redressing this imbalance. By listening to local partners' priorities and investing in locally led solutions, not only will the results be more sustainable, but more just. I urge your active support for these efforts by providing USAID with the flexibility it needs to carry out these changes.

The growing catalogue of human catastrophes clearly demonstrates that failing to invest in prevention and peacebuilding is too costly a choice, in dollars and in lives, as well as for the environment and natural resources. Conflict remains the largest driver of forced displacement. As of June 1, 2022, according to UNOCHA, the largest humanitarian appeals have been

prompted by war, including Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Ethiopia.ⁱⁱ Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has only added to this suffering and increased the urgency to invest in peacebuilding and violence prevention.

It is past time for the United States to begin investing in the world we all seek – a world free of war and the threat of war. It is time for Congress to invest in and prioritize peace.

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Rogers, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, I thank you for your work to build peace and for giving me the opportunity to testify.

Account Name	FY22 Enacted	FCNL 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	\$60,000,000	\$60,000,000
Conflict Stabilization Operations	\$3,500,000	\$15,621,000
Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities	\$1,498,614,000	\$2,577,000,000
Contributions to International Organizations	\$1,662,928,000	\$1,658,239,000
Democracy Fund, USAID	\$125,250,000	\$125,250,000
Human Rights and Democracy Fund, State Department	\$215,450,000	\$215,450,000
Prevention and Stabilization Fund	\$125,000,000	\$200,000,000
Multi-Donor Global Fragility Fund	\$25,000,000	\$25,000,000
Reconciliation Programs	\$25,000,000	\$30,000,000
Transition Initiatives	\$120,000,000	\$120,000,000
United States Institute of Peace	\$54,000,000	\$54,000,000

ⁱ Ferguson, Dr. K. (2020). *Atrocity prevention and COVID-19 Opportunities and responsibilities*. Protection Approaches. <https://protectionapproaches.org/ap-and-covid>

ⁱⁱ UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service, *Appeals and response plans 2022* Retrieved June 1, 2022 from <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/overview/2022>