

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

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs Committee on
Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and
Related Programs Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 5, 2018

Dear Chairman Graham, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey:

As civil society organizations that work on a range of international humanitarian, human rights, peace and security issues, we urge you to continue to support strong U.S. leadership at the United Nations, including by honoring our financial commitments to the organization in Fiscal Year 2019, and to oppose any efforts to rescind UN funding agreed to on a bipartisan basis as part of the FY 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

With respect to FY'19, we hope that you will support full funding levels for the following State Department appropriations accounts: Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA), Contributions to International Organizations (CIO), and International Organizations & Programs (IO&P). These accounts support an array of critical multilateral initiatives that advance core U.S. national security objectives, promote our values, and ensure a collective global response to crises, lessening the financial burden borne by U.S. taxpayers and reducing the need for U.S. military intervention.

Chief among these are peacekeeping operations, which help to avert the collapse of fragile states, prevent civil wars from metastasizing into regional conflicts, reduce forced displacement and refugee outflows, and decrease the likelihood that dormant conflicts will flare-up again. They are also extremely cost-effective: a recent analysis by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), found that deploying a UN peacekeeping mission is eight times cheaper for U.S. taxpayers than deploying a similar U.S. force. Failing to fully fund our financial commitments to UN peacekeeping through the CIPA account undermines U.S. calls for reform of the UN, a key priority of the current Administration. In addition, the United States is over \$500 million in peacekeeping arrears, which results in delayed reimbursements to countries providing troops to increasingly dangerous and critical missions like those in Somalia, South Sudan, and DR Congo. This harms our bilateral relationships with many countries—including U.S. allies and partners like Jordan, Italy, Ghana, India, and Indonesia—who have no veto over Security Council decisions and collectively contribute thousands of troops and police to these missions.

We also request full funding for the CIO account, which covers U.S. assessments for the UN Regular Budget and more than 40 other international organizations, including NATO. The Regular Budget finances efforts to ensure international implementation and compliance with sanctions mandated by the Security Council against terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al-Qaeda and rogue states like North Korea. These types of activities are manifestly in the national security interest of the United States and are also—like peacekeeping—an excellent example of international burden-sharing: other UN member states pay 78% of their costs. In addition to the Regular Budget, CIO funds U.S. assessments for a range of UN specialized agencies. These include the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which plays a still critical role in verifying Iran’s nuclear program and the World Health Organization (WHO), which coordinates the global response to public health emergencies, like the current Ebola outbreak in DR Congo.

Finally, we request funding - consistent with the FY’18 Omnibus appropriations bill - for the IO&P account, as it supports a range of vital humanitarian, development, human rights, gender equality, and environmental matters. This account, with little justification, was eliminated in the President’s FY’19 request.

In addition to fully funding these accounts in FY’19, we would also like to flag a major issue related to FY’18 appropriations. As you know, the White House has already submitted a proposal to rescind unobligated funds from prior years, a package many of our organizations have already signaled strong opposition to in the past weeks. The White House has also indicated that it plans to offer a package of rescission proposals targeting funding appropriated within the FY 2018 Omnibus. While the contours of this proposal have not yet been revealed, we understand that the rescissions package could target international affairs programs, including UN-related accounts. We ask that you oppose such a package, should it be sent to Congress by the White House. Moreover, we are also concerned that the submission of multiple rescissions packages is meant to, in part, significantly delay FY 2018 funding - and prior fiscal year funding - from accounts such as Global Health, Peacekeeping, IO&P, Development Assistance and Economic Support Funds. Therefore, we request you call on the State Department to submit FY 2018 Operating Plans to Congress and direct OMB away from using the threat of rescissions to slow-walk funding that has already been appropriated by Congress.

We recognize that you continue to operate in a constrained budgetary environment, but we are concerned that underfunding or eliminating these accounts risks forfeiting our long-held position of leadership at the UN, potentially hollowing out UN programs and activities and empowering countries that do not share our interests.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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| 1. American Jewish Committee | 9. Friends of UNFPA |
| 2. American Jewish World Service | 10. Friends Committee on National Legislation |
| 3. American Public Health Association | 11. Girl Up |
| 4. Americans for UNESCO | 12. Human Rights Campaign |
| 5. Better World Campaign | 13. International Rescue Committee |
| 6. CARE | 14. Invisible Children |
| 7. CARE USA | 15. J Street |
| 8. FAWCO | |

- 16. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
- 17. Nothing But Nets
- 18. Operation USA
- 19. Oxfam America
- 20. Peace Action
- 21. Peace Direct
- 22. Rainbow/PUSH Coalition
- 23. Refugees International
- 24. Shot@Life

- 25. The Advocates for Human Rights
- 26. United Nations Association of the United States of America
- 27. Universal Access Project
- 28. Women Graduates-USA

