



April 21, 2021

Dear Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate Appropriations Committees:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to urge you to continue your strong commitment to supporting peace, recovery, and justice in the Central African Republic (CAR) as part of the FY22 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill.

Central Africans continue to experience mass violence and instability at the hands of armed groups, several of whom escalated their attacks significantly in December 2020 in an attempt to disrupt national elections. As a result of the ongoing crisis, the United Nations (UN) estimates that more than 1.5 million Central Africans—nearly one-third of the population—[have been displaced](#) from their homes, and [41% of the population faces acute food insecurity](#).

Despite ongoing and high levels of violence, the Government of CAR has taken important steps towards peace, including the establishment of a Special Criminal Court (SCC) in 2017 to prosecute grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed since 2003. This commitment was also exemplified by a landmark decision by Central African courts in early 2020 to sentence 28 militiamen involved in a 2017 massacre. The Government of CAR’s ability to hold independent and fair trials and to bring perpetrators of war crimes to justice is critical to advancing reconciliation, stability, and accountability, particularly in light of the recent electoral violence. The SCC operates on [a modest budget of \\$10-13.3 million](#) per year, [a tenth the annual cost](#) of other recent war crimes courts. Given the SCC budget, the U.S.’s contribution of \$3 million in FY20 and FY21 has provided critically important core funding and should be continued.

In addition, we believe the U.S. should provide support for critical peacebuilding, livelihood, and food security initiatives. Central Africans have expressed a deep commitment to peace, forming more than 1,000 community level peace committees. These committees resolve conflicts and rebuild economies disrupted by war through grassroots approaches and social cohesion initiatives that effectively engage marginalized communities. Increasing support to \$10 million in FY22 would advance proven community-based peacebuilding approaches and allow investments in underfunded sectors such as agriculture, which currently receives no U.S. funding.

**It is for these reasons that we urge the following language be included in the FY22 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill:**

SEC. 7042. (c) CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC. -

- (1) Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading “Development Assistance”, not less than \$10,000,000 shall be made available for programs to support reconciliation, peacebuilding, food security, and livelihoods in the Central African Republic.
- (2) Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading “Economic Support Fund”, not less than \$3,000,000 shall be made available for a contribution to the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic.

**Similar language was included previously in the SFOPs appropriations for FY19, FY20, and FY21, P.L. 116-6, P.L. 116-94, and P.L. 116-260 respectively.** On March 3, 2020, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed H. Res. 387 calling for U.S. leadership in supporting peace and accountability efforts in the country.

Finally, in order to maintain stability in CAR, we also ask that you fully fund U.S. commitments to UN peacekeeping operations and the UN Mission in CAR (known as MINUSCA). In recent months, MINUSCA has played a critical role in securing presidential and legislative elections and preventing non-state armed groups from taking over the capital. While the U.S. has repeatedly voted on the Security Council to renew the mandate of MINUSCA—and just supported an increase of nearly 3,700 military and police personnel—we are not currently paying our fair share to the mission in CAR or any other peacekeeping operation. Overall, the U.S. has amassed \$1.1 billion in arrears over the last four years. The continued accumulation of debt by the U.S. is unsustainable for UN peacekeeping, which separates warring parties, protects civilians, and facilitates the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance in conflict zones around the world, all at just one-eighth the cost of deploying U.S. troops. This debt also means that troop-contributing countries are not being fully reimbursed, which is especially troubling when the U.S. is voting for these missions and pushing for additional troops to be deployed. As such, we request that you include \$2.701 billion to the State Department’s Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account in FY22, as well as bill language lifting the statutory 25% cap that has prevented the U.S. from paying our UN peacekeeping assessments in-full. These actions would ensure full funding for MINUSCA, which is paramount in this volatile period.

We urge your continued commitment to the long-term sustainable peace for the citizens of the Central African Republic.

Sincerely,

- *Alliance for Peacebuilding*
- *Association of Central African Republic Families US-Canada (ACAR)*
- *Baptist World Alliance*
- *The Better World Campaign*
- *Christian Solidarity Worldwide*
- *Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)*
- *International Medical Corps*
- *Invisible Children*
- *Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry*
- *Peace Direct*
- *Refugees International*
- *Search for Common Ground*
- *URU Central African Republic*