

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2023

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
House Appropriations Committee
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
House Appropriations Committee
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee:

As you begin consideration of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill for Fiscal

Year 2024, we write to respectfully request robust funding for lifesaving humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

As we approach the 8th Anniversary of the Yemen War, the country remains stuck in a devastating cycle of conflict and humanitarian crisis that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. Yemen has the grim title of the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with over 4 million Yemenis displaced¹ and an estimated 80% of the country's 30 million people reliant on some form of assistance for their survival.²

Unfortunately, international appeals for assistance for Yemen have consistently fell short of their goals by large margins. In 2020, the Yemen Humanitarian Response only received \$1.9 billion of the \$3.4 billion required.³ In 2021, only \$1.7 billion of the \$3.85 billion was secured,⁴ and similarly in 2022, only \$1.3 billion of the required \$4.27 billion was pledged.⁵ Sadly this deadly decline has continued this year with only \$1.2 billion in funding of the required \$4.3 billion pledged.⁶ The continuous reduction in funding has greatly exacerbated the humanitarian suffering. The UN has had to close over 75% of its lifesaving programs,⁷ and the World Food Program (WFP) has been forced to cut or reduce food distribution to 8 million people, increasing the number of areas at risk of famine.⁸

Without a significant increase in American assistance (which we believe would incentivize other foreign nations to increase their support in turn), we fear that 2023 will be another heartbreakingly deadly year for everyday

¹ *Yemen*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (Apr. 1, 2022), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/yemen#:~:text=As%20of%20March%202022%2C%204.3,and%20face%20threats%20of%20eviction>.

² *Yemen: One of the world's largest humanitarian crises*, United Nations Populations Fund, (Feb. 27, 2023), accessed Mar. 16, 2023), <https://www.unfpa.org/yemen#:~:text=Yemen%20lays%20tragic%20claim%20to,water%20and%20adequate%20health%20services>.

³ *Yemen donor conference expected in March, aid sources say*, Reuters, (Feb. 14, 2021), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-aid/yemen-donor-conference-expected-in-march-aid-sources-say-idUSKBN2AE0J1>.

⁴ *Yemen: UN donor conference raises 'disappointing' funds*, Deutsche Welle, (Mar. 12, 2021), accessed Mar. 16, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/yemen-un-donor-conference-raises-a-disappointing-17-billion/a-56738853>.

⁵ *U.N. raises less than a third of \$4.27 bln sought for Yemen to avoid starvation*, Reuters, (Mar. 16, 2022), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-seeks-43-bln-yemen-avert-mass-starvation-funding-dwindles-2022-03-16/>.

⁶ *Donors pledge \$1.2 bln of \$4.3 bln sought for Yemen aid plan*, Reuters, (Feb. 27, 2023), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-seeks-43-bln-yemen-aid-global-crises-test-donor-coffers-2023-02-27/>.

⁷ *UN forced to cut aid to Yemen, even as virus increases need*, Associated Press, (Jun. 1, 2020), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/health-united-nations-yemen-ap-top-news-virus-outbreak-fdba754d75751ac232e2cb37b9d7da4b>.

⁸ *Countdown to catastrophe begins in Yemen as funding for food assistance dwindles*, World Food Programme, (Feb. 24, 2022), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://www.wfp.org/news/countdown-catastrophe-begins-yemen-funding-food-assistance-dwindles>.

Yemeni's. The UN has warned that without significant increases in assistance to Yemen the following year will see:

- 14.8 million people seriously food insecure, facing hunger, malnutrition and famine;⁹
- 540,000 children at risk of dying from acute malnutrition;¹⁰
- Over 4 million internally displaced people with woefully inadequate access to shelter, water, food, medical care and basic facilities;¹¹
- About 24 million dependent on humanitarian assistance for their survival;¹²
- Over 2.7 million children unable to access education.¹³

In FY22 the United States helped lead the world in getting humanitarian assistance to Yemen, with over \$1 billion in assistance supplied via USAID and other sources.¹⁴ This historic funding was in line with Oxfam's estimate for the United States' fair share of the humanitarian aid burden for Yemen of \$1.2 billion.¹⁵ Unfortunately that number plummeted to only \$172 million in FY23¹⁶ and appears set to fall well short of that lifesaving success yet again in FY24.

It is clear that the United States can and must do more to aid the people of Yemen. Failing to do so will lead to countless needless deaths, many children suffering from famine. We believe the current partial ceasefire provides a critical opening to not only help alleviate the suffering of everyday Yemenis, but to begin the process of rebuilding domestic Yemeni agricultural and economic capacity, lowering the humanitarian aid burden in the long run. Beginning this process of rebuilding is critical to breaking the cycle of violence that has gripped Yemen and alleviating famine conditions. Localized development aid is crucial for economic recovery, gender-inclusive programming, and building non-violent livelihoods to support conflict resolution. Long-term, localized development funding must be paired with humanitarian aid in order to protect and/or re-establish people's livelihoods and strengthen community initiatives for resilience to climate extremes and prevent future conflicts over resource scarcity.

In order to properly support the people of Yemen, we urge you to support the inclusion of the following priorities in the FY2024 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies bill:

1. Include the following report language:
 - a. *Of the funds appropriated under this Act, the Committee recommendation includes not less than \$1.2 billion dollars for humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts in Yemen, of which no less*

⁹ Yemen, Food Security Cluster, accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://fscluster.org/yemen/about>.

¹⁰ *More than 11,000 children killed or wounded in Yemen since 2015 -UNICEF*, Reuters, (Dec. 12, 2022), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/more-than-11000-children-killed-or-wounded-yemen-since-2015-unicef-2022-12-12/#:~:text=UNICEF%20estimates%20that%20almost%20540%2C000,country's%20health%20facilities%20are%20functional>.

¹¹ *Yemen: Internal displacement – a silent dilemma on World Refugee Day*, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, (Jun. 20, 2022), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/internal-displacement-silent-dilemma-world-refugee-day#:~:text=In%20Yemen%20alone%2C%204.3%20million,many%20experiencing%20displacement%20multiple%20times>.

¹² *Yemen Crisis*, United Nations Children's Fund, (Mar. 10, 2023), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis#:~:text=Yemen%20crisis%3A%20What%20you%20need%20to%20know&text=Yemen%20remains%20one%20of%20the,including%20almost%2013%20million%20children>.

¹³ *My Journey to the Education Sector*, Save the Children, (Jan. 24, 2023), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://yemen.savethechildren.net/news/my-journey-education-sector>.

¹⁴ *United States Providing \$431 Million In Additional Humanitarian Assistance For The People Of Yemen*, USAID, (Aug. 4, 2022), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/aug-04-2022-united-states-providing-431-million-additional-humanitarian#:~:text=The%20United%20States%2C%20through%20the,%241%20billion%20in%20FY%202022>.

¹⁵ *Funding the Humanitarian Response in Yemen: Are donors doing their fair share?*, Oxfam, (Oct. 2020), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/funding-the-humanitarian-response-in-yemen-are-donors-doing-their-fair-share-621083/>.

¹⁶ *Yemen – Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #5*, USAID, (Feb. 27, 2023), accessed Mar. 16, 2023, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-02/2023-02-27_USG_Yemen_Complex_Emergency_Fact_Sheet_5.pdf.

than \$565 million is for food security and agricultural development related programing, \$150 million for nutrition related assistance, \$120 million for educational programming and assistance, \$110 million for healthcare and public health programming and assistance, \$80 million for drinking water access, sanitation and hygiene programming and assistance, \$70 million for shelter and housing related assistance, and \$20 million shall be made available for humanitarian assistance to Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

2. Include the following report language:

- a. *The Committee urges the State Department and USAID to develop programming that directly invests in sustainably developing long term economic opportunities for Yemenis. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that whenever possible, such programming should prioritize providing support via Yemeni civil society organizations and community based initiatives.*

Again, thank you for your leadership on the Subcommittee and for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



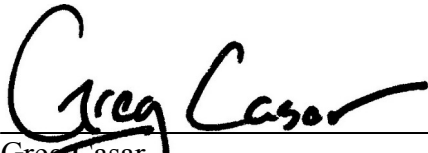
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress




Jeff Jackson
Member of Congress



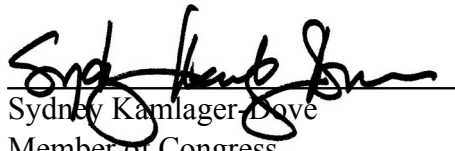
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



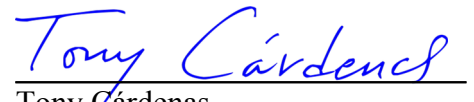
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Tony Cardenas
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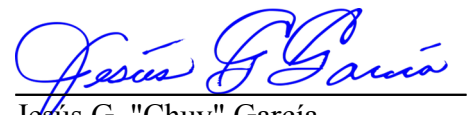
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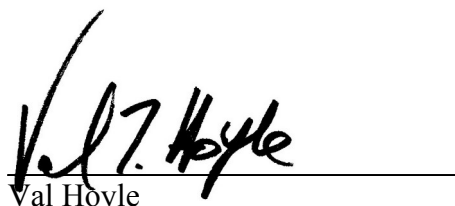
Debbie Dingell
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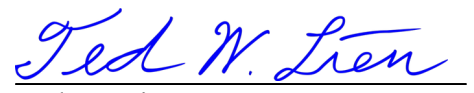
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
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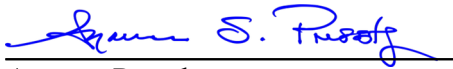
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



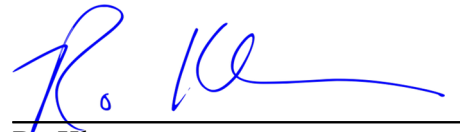
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Member of Congress



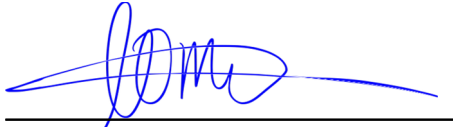
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Ayanna Pressley
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Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



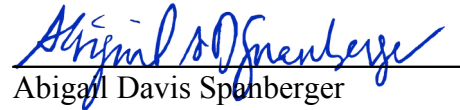
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



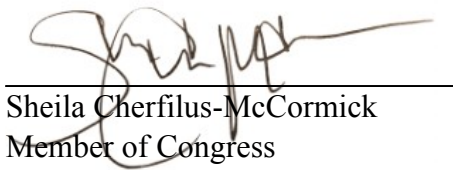
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