

February 27, 2020

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

On behalf of the undersigned organizations supporting peace, recovery and justice in the Central African Republic (CAR), we are writing to urge you to continue your strong commitment to supporting peace and justice as part of the FY21 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriation.

Since the overthrow of the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2013, Central Africans continue to experience mass violence at the hands of multiple armed groups targeting religious and ethnic communities. As a result of this ongoing crisis, the UN estimates that nearly 3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and an additional half million have fled the violence to neighboring countries. Despite ongoing and high-levels of violence, Central Africans have expressed their deep commitment to peace by conducting democratic elections in 2016, establishing a Special Criminal Court (SCC) in 2017, and creating more than 1,000 peace committees across the country.

This was exemplified in early 2020 by the country's landmark sentencing of 28 militiamen for a massacre that occurred in May 2017. The ability of the CAR to hold independent and fair trials and to bring perpetrators of war crimes to justice through the SCC is critical to maintaining this trend towards reconciliation, stability and accountability, particularly in light of the scheduled elections which increase the likelihood of conflict. 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 provides critically important core funding.

It is for these reasons that **we urge the following language be included in the FY2021 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill:**

- 1. Funds made available by this Act for assistance for the Central African Republic shall be made available for reconciliation and peacebuilding programs, including inter-faith, youth-led, and women-led activities at the local and national levels, and for programs to prevent crimes against humanity.*
- 2. Further, 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 Central African Republic.*

Similar language was included previously in the SFOPs appropriations for FY19 and FY20, P.L. 116-6 and P.L. 116-94 respectively.

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

Sincerely,

[List all organizations]