

**Written Testimony by Bishop David J. Malloy, Chairman,
Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to the
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
June 3, 2022**

On behalf of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I thank the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs for this opportunity to submit testimony on appropriations for FY 2023. Together with Catholic Relief Services, our overseas relief and development agency, we urge you to increase funding for the international poverty-reducing humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding accounts specified in the table below.

Agency	Appropriations Account	Amount in \$,000
USAID	Maternal Health and Child Survival	\$1,012,000
USAID	Nutrition	\$230,000
USAID	Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced)	\$35,000
USAID	Malaria, TB, Global Health Security & other NTDs	\$2,481,500
DOS/PEPFAR	HIV/AIDS (State Funding/PEPFAR)	\$4,850,000
USAID	Development Assistance (including water, education)	\$4,769,787
USAID/OFDA	International Disaster Assistance	\$4,900,000
DOS/PRM	Migration and Refugee Assistance	\$4,700,000
DOS/PRM	Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	\$300,000
USAID	Complex Crises Fund and Atrocities Prevention Board	\$85,000
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation	\$1,000,000
DOS/IO	Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	\$2,327,235
DOS/IO	Peacekeeping Operations	\$463,559
DOS/IO	U.S. Institute of Peace	\$45,000
DOS/IO	Green Climate Fund	\$1,600,000
DOS/IO	Combatting Trafficking in Persons	\$110,000

In his 2020 encyclical on fraternity and social friendship, [*Fratelli Tutti*](#), Pope Francis teaches, “The decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project. Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders...” (#69). Such aid is proof of our nation’s compassion and gives life to our values as a nation and as a world leader.

Our assistance cannot stop there. Pope Francis stated in his 2013 apostolic exhortation, [*Evangelii Gaudium*](#) (Joy of the Gospel), “The need to resolve the **structural causes of poverty** cannot be delayed...Inequality is the root of social ills” (#202). He adds that the growing inequality in the world “eventually engenders a violence which recourse to arms cannot and never will be able to resolve” (#60).

At a time when the United States continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important now more than ever that we continue to show our compassion to a world struggling to deal with this pandemic, the root causes of conflict, hunger, and unprecedented displacement. We commend efforts by the United States Government to address the root causes of conflict in

our world by passing, for example, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act in 2019. We also witnessed the passage of the Global Fragility Act (GFA) in 2019. In line with the GFA, the past Administration issued the Global Fragility Act Strategy (GFAS) in late 2020 and the current Administration adopted a Prologue to the GFAS to update it and to select the five countries and the region in which the Strategy will implement its programs. Our Committee was pleased to support the passage of both of these bills. We hope these laws and the processes they put in place will aid progress in preventing and resolving conflict and building peace.

We appreciate the enormous challenges before us as the U.S. government seeks to effectively implement this new strategy. We would like to raise some **strategic level issues and recommendations** on how the United States may rebalance and refocus its international diplomacy and assistance to better align with the problems and threats that our world faces. We ask that you consider this analysis as you draft report language for this appropriations bill. As the U.S. starts to implement the current GFAS, we strongly urge the United States to:

1. Re-Imagine How to Balance the GFAS with Existing International Priorities

GFAS raises some important dilemmas that the U.S. will now have to address overtly with subtlety and humility. First the U.S. is called to improve stability, democratic rule, fight corruption, end conflict, and build social cohesion for the common good over the interests of a corrupt, or an autocratic or worse, a predatory government. The U.S. must delicately balance a local government's sovereignty over its responsibility to provide for its people's peace and prosperity while preserving their civil rights and full participation in the political process. The Catholic Church in many fragile countries criticizes its local government for its corrupt or autocratic rule. She calls on the international community and on the U.S. in particular to pressure their local governments to uphold the common good and promote democratic rule of law.

For the GFAS to succeed, the U.S. must clearly be seen as a champion of the common good and of local civil society groups who struggle for civil rights and freedoms (See Section 3 below for more details). Second, the GFAS overlays a ten-year perspective where U.S. interests are best served through the long-term effort to build stable, democratic, peaceful and prosperous countries. Instability and fragility only benefit national and international actors who create and foster those conditions for their own political and economic interests at the expense of the wellbeing of their own people.

The GFAS raises conflict prevention and stabilization to a central policy objective along with the legitimate immediate political, economic, and diplomatic interests of the United States. The GFAS sets up a new coordination structure in Washington and in-country the U.S. mission must appoint a representative to be responsible for coordinating and integrating the full spectrum of GFAS activities across the country team. The U.S. Mission will also adopt a "compact style" country or regional partnership with local governments. These measures are legitimate approaches. They will only succeed if the Steering Committee, the Secretariat and the Mission GFAS representative exert the authority, leadership and ownership to fully integrate GFAS objectives and implementation into U.S. international relationships in fragile countries.

The U.S. will have to resist the tendency to overestimate security, economic and ‘big power’ rivalry concerns over the benefits of better governance and democracy. The U.S. will have to see its interests, the interests of local governments and most importantly, those of the people in fragile states as linked and integral to one another. Many observers believe that this will require a deep culture shift and institutional re-engineering in our international relations structures. In particular, how should in-country U.S. Missions in fragile countries be restructured to fully incorporate conflict prevention and stabilization into a whole of government approach? Congress and the Administration will have to remain committed to this and vigilant to ensure that GFAS meets its goals to build peace and prosperity in fragile countries.

2. Re-Imagine the Funding of the GFAS and Peacebuilding

State Department’s budget remains historically low in comparison to that of defense. In 1950, State’s budget was around half the size of defense. Today State receives less than 10% of what the Defense Department is allocated. State Department receives only 1% of the federal budget and of that, Peacebuilding funds to State Department and USAID (exclusive of funding to the UN) was \$570.7 million in FY 2021 for the entire world. Of that, the Congress enacted \$125 million (out of \$200 Million authorized by the GFA) to implement the GFA strategy in four countries across the world and also the five countries in the Coastal West Africa region.

The Peacebuilding funding consists of 11 different budget accounts split between various offices in State Department and USAID who partner with a myriad of US NGOs, contractors and foundations. These different budget accounts include the promotion of human rights and democracy, atrocity prevention, prevention and stabilization, Complex Crises Fund, Conflict Stabilization Operations, Transition Initiatives and Reconciliation.

The level and severity of conflict in the world is often depicted as a bell curve. It ranges from latent conflict and poor governance to failed states and outright warfare. In this complex world of different levels of conflict, it is unclear how the various U.S. programs match up with the needs of countries in conflict. The Foreign Assistance Dashboard (foreignassistance.gov) reveals that FY 2020 funding allocated to four of the six African GFA countries for the Conflict, Peace, and Security (CPS) sector is 1-2% of total in country investment and 6% and 12% in the other two. A review also shows that in five of the six countries between 87% and 100% of the CPS funding is Department of Defense funding and 10% in Mozambique. Clearly CPS is skewed towards funding security and defense related programs. The GFAS must address this issue.

The GFAS offers an opportunity to do a thorough review of the various Peacebuilding accounts to determine how they reflect the state of conflict in today’s world, how effective, flexible, and nimble they are in addressing conflict at its various stages and make appropriate adjustments. What is clear though is that the overall amount of funding to address conflict at all its stages in the world is woefully inadequate to respond to the alarming and growing level of violence.

3. Place a Greater Priority on Empowering Civil Society and Faith-Based Groups

One commonality in all fragile countries is the economic and political dominance of **government** institutions and **private, for-profit corporations**, while a **vast and varied array of**

private, independent civil society associations struggle to protect civil rights, fight corruption, and promote free and fair elections and justice.

Often **faith-based institutions** are some of the few civil society institutions remaining with enough credibility, authority, and institutional cohesiveness to stand up to corrupt and repressive governments. The local Catholic Church is often the biggest, most stable civil society organization in the country or region. Across Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia, the Catholic Church, along with other Christian and Muslim denominations, has echoed the prophets of old and denounced modern-day corruption, repression, defrauded elections, state violence and insurgencies, often at the risk of their own personal and institutional peril. U.S. Government representatives would do well to consult with them regularly. However too often we watch this critical constituency whose input and guidance are indispensable go neglected by U.S. leaders. The local Church has often organized peace and justice institutions, electoral monitoring teams, political mediation efforts, and negotiations between armed groups and the government. Their efforts are courageous, but often too small and under supported. Peacebuilding experts know it requires a generation or more to transform conflict. We urge you to use the opportunity presented by the GFAS to make a generational commitment to build local civil society organizations' capacity to defend the human and civil rights of people struggling to survive repression and violence. This funding must be long-term, flexible, and nimble while ensuring accountability and impact. This can be done through three-way strategic partnerships between USAID, American civil society institutions like Catholic Relief Services, and their local civil society and faith-based partners.

4. Address State Fragility and Conflict in Other Vulnerable Countries

GFA Strategy chose countries where armed conflict is currently latent (Benin, Togo, Ghana and Papua New Guinea), in the past (Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti), current (Guinea Conakry), or present in an isolated part of the country (Mozambique). As the U.S. moves to address fragility in coastal West Africa, it must remain keenly vigilant of how open conflict in the Sahel region has already sparked conflict in the coastal countries and is likely the most lethal threat to stability in these coastal countries. The U.S. must move aggressively to address the growing and out of control conflict in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria. To meet that objective a program to build Muslim-Christian collaboration to counter the allure of extremist groups and another program to promote regional herder-farmer conflict stabilization and prevention strategies are two legitimate and desperately needed approaches to better understand and address the conflict drivers of radical extremism and herder-farmer conflict. The United States spends hundreds of millions of dollars yearly to care for the victims of violence in the Sahel. The United States should also assist them to end the fighting and suffering.

In closing, we must also be clear that the U.S. Bishops strongly oppose any expansion of taxpayer funding of abortion as part of this appropriations legislation. The longstanding, bipartisan, and life-saving Helms Amendment policy must be included before this bill moves forward. The USCCB will oppose any bill that expands taxpayer funding of abortion, including any appropriations bill.