

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 20, 2018

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
123 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
Committee on Appropriations
HT-2 of The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Foreign Operations
Committee on Appropriations
HT-2 of The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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

As you work to develop a final Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations bill, we write to urge you to use funds made available through a budget cap increase to provide not less than the FY17 funding levels for International Disaster Assistance (IDA).

We are greatly alarmed by the rising needs of displaced and other vulnerable populations affected by prolonged conflict, economic distress, chronic hunger and the ongoing risk of famine resulting in immense human suffering. Today, the world confronts one of the largest food insecurity crises in decades. An estimated 815 million people are food insecure worldwide. From South Sudan, to Yemen, to Bangladesh, the needs are urgent and dire. Those living in or fleeing from conflict are among the most vulnerable in the world.

The good news is that USAID and its partners funded by IDA have provided lifesaving assistance to many—saving millions of lives. For example, the World Food Program (WFP) helped feed 80 million people last year alone. America's support for WFP honors our humanitarian principles and serves our national security interests.

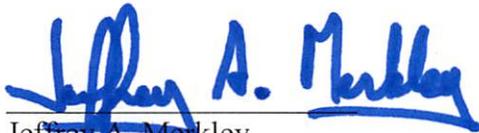
The bad news is that—due to insufficient funding—many whom we could have helped went without food. In Bangladesh, WFP estimates an urgent need of \$55 million to support one million Rohingya in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps. Distressing reports note the reduction of calorie intakes due to funding shortages. In Yemen, WFP feeds 7 million people, but only distributes 60 percent of the ration because of lack of resources. This is tragic and heartbreaking—and need not be the case.

Robust funding would allow WFP to deliver the nutrition necessary to keep many more people alive and healthy. As the leading humanitarian organization fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience, WFP remains a strong and effective partner to the United States. The United States is a leader in humanitarian assistance, and lifesaving organizations like WFP are able to leverage U.S. contributions to motivate additional donations from other countries. The U.S. should continue to serve as the world leader in humanitarian assistance.

In places like Yemen, we have worked to remove impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Now, we must ensure partners like WFP have the resources they need to deliver food to all of those who urgently need it.

For these reasons, as Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee that oversees multilateral institutions and multilateral development, we urge you to use available resources to save millions of lives.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator

Johnson

Johnson, A.