



September 18, 2014

Mr. Shaun Donovan  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. Jonathan Gandomi  
Director, Central African Affairs  
National Security Council  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Director Donovan and Director Gandomi:

Over a year after the NGO community warned of state collapse and impending mass violence in the Central African Republic (CAR), the country has been torn apart by violent conflict. Thousands of civilians have been killed, over 1 million displaced and 2.5 million remain in need of humanitarian assistance. Without sustained attention and investment by the international community, however, contributions to the humanitarian response, the deployment of MINUSCA and other efforts to address the crisis in CAR are unlikely to propel the country toward a better future.

Since 1997, thirteen regional and international peacekeeping operations have been deployed to end violence and protect civilians in CAR. Whether spurred by the political will to prevent mass atrocities or oversee a fragile peace process, each of these missions has made the same mistake: failing to pair short-term responses with longer-term problem solving and investments necessary to address the root causes of CAR's chronic insecurity. Time and time again, complex problems have been met with short-term solutions.

For the past ten months, the U.S. has invested significant humanitarian, diplomatic and security resources to stabilize the situation. However, we remain concerned that, while needed, emergency stabilization and response efforts are not being reinforced by longer-term funding mechanisms necessary to begin to address root causes of CAR's chronic insecurity. We welcome the resumption of operations at the U.S. Embassy in Bangui and would encourage that the Embassy be robustly staffed by both USAID and State Department personnel throughout Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016.

We believe this time can be different for CAR. As the administration develops its FY16 budget request, we urge you to support the following:

1. **Uphold U.S. commitments to funding MINUSCA.** We appreciate that the administration requested full funding for peacekeeping in the FY15 appropriations process and filed a budget amendment to pay for MINUSCA. The inclusion of funding in both the House and Senate FY15 State & Foreign Operations bills for the mission demonstrates Congress' strong support, but uses a combination of resources from transfer authorities and the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account to fund the mission. While we recognize that the continuing UN Peacekeeping needs globally have increased overall peacekeeping funding obligations, it is imperative that the FY16 CIPA account request include all anticipated costs of MINUSCA for the full fiscal year. This will send a strong signal to Congress on the importance the Administration places on full funding for the CAR mission through the appropriate account.

Additionally, we ask the U.S. government to urge troop-contributing countries to affirm their commitment to conduct pre-theater deployment training for peacekeepers on International Humanitarian Law, child protection, and the prevention of and response to gender-based violence.

2. **Build on and scale up locally-led peacebuilding gains.** There are dozens of local peace and dialogue processes underway, both ad hoc and those supported by international organizations. In January 2014, several INGOs, supported by the USAID Complex Crises Fund (CCF), created the "Social Cohesion Working Group," to coordinate local peace actions and to interface with the government, United Nations and others. However, CCF funding is set to end in January 2015. Gains made should be protected and scaled up over a multi-year timeline to address both the root and new causes of violence in CAR. Activating private-public partnerships or other multi-year funding mechanisms now will be critical to ensuring these relative peacebuilding gains were meaningful.
3. **Fill strategic gaps in the transition.** The Transitional Government, the Economic Community of Central African States and MINUSCA are leading a political dialogue process to support the eventual transition. The success of this transition process will depend upon the degree to which it is inclusive of the views of all Central Africans, including refugees, from across the political spectrum. Significant support is needed to connect the process with local and sub-national political restoration processes, rebuild partnerships across and between the various actors, and ensure robust and inclusive civil society engagement at all levels. The U.S. should help rebuild government capacity by identifying a priority sector where it has particular value-added among the international partners – for example, in supporting CAR's new special tribunal with investigations, witness protection, and expertise on prosecutorial strategies and due process that complement other international criminal investigations and build lasting expertise within CAR's domestic justice system. Support is also urgently needed to ensure that all Central African citizens can participate in an inclusive national dialogue, including refugees.
4. **Address protracted humanitarian needs.** The humanitarian needs caused by the conflict will require long-term, sustained and flexible engagement from the international community spanning across various geographies. Timely and ample funding remains critical, particularly as the number of people in need of food assistance will likely increase in the coming months due to

collapse of markets, reduced crop yields, and inability to reach some communities with assistance. Ongoing and longer-term needs will include providing life-saving humanitarian and multi-sectoral packages to internally displaced persons, host communities, migrants, and returning persons; ensuring access to basic services for returnees and other affected people; and addressing urgent health and sanitation needs. We hope to see generous IDA and MRA requests from the administration to support these needs.

5. **Activate early recovery funding mechanisms now, by explicitly requesting early recovery support through either Economic Support Funds or Development Assistance funding.** Chronic underdevelopment, economic stagnation and socioeconomic marginalization are among the key drivers of violence in CAR. Short-term emergency interventions will not address these systemic issues. Moreover, without bridges to early recovery and development, short-term programs can foster aid dependency, exacerbate corruption, and waste U.S. taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately, early recovery is often the hardest sector to fund. An explicit request from the administration for carefully sequenced, multi-year, multi-sector assistance to transition communities from relief to long-term development would help unlock procurement and management obstacles that implementing NGOs face. Particular emphasis should be paid to revitalizing agricultural livelihoods, natural resource recovery and management, rebuilding markets, and spurring youth entrepreneurship. Such efforts can counter the incentives of socio-economically marginalized combatants to remain armed and mobilized. Stimulating local livelihoods can support a much-needed national demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and reconciliation (DDRR) plan that reintegrates ex-combatants and engages them in livelihoods that benefit conflict-affected communities.

Each of the abovementioned investments can be strategically leveraged with those coming from the World Bank, European Union and other major donors to fill the most critical gaps in the response transition, and build foundations for immediate, mid-term and long-term recovery. Finally, we ask that these additional resources come not at the expense of other U.S. funding for humanitarian, peacebuilding and development activities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these issues and will follow up to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,

The Enough Project  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Jewish World Watch  
The International Federation for Human Rights  
International Rescue Committee  
Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry  
Mercy Corps  
The MENTOR Initiative

Oxfam America  
Refugees International  
The Resolve LRA Crisis Initiative  
Save the Children  
STAND: The Student-led Movement to End  
Mass Atrocities  
United to End Genocide  
U.S. Fund for UNICEF

Cc: Secretary of State John Kerry  
USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah