

March 22, 2022

The Honorable Barbara Lee, Chairwoman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Hal Rogers, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Chris Coons, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Dear Chairwoman Lee and Chairman Coons, and Ranking Members Rogers and Graham:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to urge you to appropriate robust funding of **no less than \$414 million** to support programs to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) globally in the FY2023 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill and to include related Committee report language to further assist in these efforts. Furthermore, U.S. leadership in GBV prevention and response globally requires maintaining the International Affairs Budget (function 150) at no less than the levels committed to in the FY 2023 President's Budget.

GBV is a practice affecting every country and community in the world. Globally, an estimated [736 million women and girls](#) – about [one out of every three](#) – have faced GBV at least once in their lives. This global issue is estimated to bear an [economic cost of USD \\$1.5 trillion](#), equivalent to approximately 2% of the global gross domestic product (GDP), or roughly the size of the entire Canadian economy. While GBV is widespread and generally underreported, data shows that –

- [1 in 5 girls](#) will be forced into child marriages before their 18th birthday. These numbers are even higher in times of conflict and humanitarian crisis. In fact, [9 out of 10 countries](#) with the highest child marriage rates are fragile or extremely fragile states.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated already high rates of GBV globally. An additional [31 million cases of GBV, 13 million child marriages, and 2 million cases of female genital mutilation/cutting](#) are estimated to occur between 2020 and 2030. This increase is set to reverse 25 years of progress.
- In humanitarian emergencies, an estimated [70% of women](#) experience GBV, including [1 in 5 women](#) enduring sexual violence and many more facing domestic violence ([sometimes up to 65%](#) of women in certain contexts).

Taking meaningful action to address GBV globally is critical to upholding human rights and dignity, advancing women's and girls' health and well-being, and fostering global development and security. The U.S. Government articulated this goal by prioritizing GBV in the new National

Gender Equality and Equity Strategy and by making commitments on GBV at the Generation Equality Forum in June 2021. As such, we urge you to ensure a robust American investment in programs and resources that root out the drivers of GBV and provide sustainable and impactful solutions.

As you begin to draft the FY 2023 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill, we ask that you consider funding levels and report language for the following programs important to preventing and responding to GBV and note that the proposed investments in addressing GBV should not come at the expense of poverty-focused development, global health, and humanitarian assistance:

GBV GLOBAL FUND (\$414 Million) - We ask for no less than \$414 million to support efforts to prevent and respond to GBV worldwide, including programs that address new GBV challenges such as climate change, online violence, and COVID-19 and support capacity and coordination for GBV prevention, mitigation, and response across sectors. This GBV Global Fund should represent new funding and should be centrally managed and dedicated to programs addressing GBV globally, including in humanitarian/emergency settings. The Fund should also include identified metrics and transparent accounting.

We request that this GBV Global Fund include the following allotments (additional requests and report language are included in the annex provided at the end of the letter):

- **U.S. STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GBV GLOBALLY (\$325 Million)**- We request no less than \$325 million for implementation of the interagency U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV Globally, as revised in 2022, including assistance to address GBV in humanitarian crises, such as through the Safe from the Start program.
- **ENDING CHILD, EARLY, AND FORCED MARRIAGE (\$30 million)** (increase) - We request no less than \$30 million be dedicated to the implementation of a coordinated and comprehensive effort to end child marriage and meet the needs of married girls globally in alignment with the United States Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls. This represents an INCREASE from the \$15 million enacted in FY21.
- **RESPONDING TO GBV AND COVID-19 THROUGH INCREASED FUNDING FOR THE UN TRUST FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (\$25 million)** - Given the dramatic increase of GBV as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we request no less than \$25 million to [support the global response efforts](#), like that of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, to the rise in violence against women and girls during the pandemic. There is an urgent need to continuously resource civil society organizations (CSO) and women's rights organizations (WRO), who are first responders during every crisis, and which provide essential support services for women and girls survivors of violence. This fund would support many of the CSO's and WRO's so that they can continue their essential work responding to the needs of women and girl survivors and at risk of violence.

- **REGIONAL/COUNTRY EFFORTS** – We request that, in developing appropriations levels for regional and country-based programs and initiatives, specific funding for addressing GBV be included in each region (e.g., South and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, etc.). This should include directives in every region and country, such as those related to Burma (Senate Sec. 7043(a)(1)(C)); Central America (Senate Sec. 7045(a)); and Afghanistan (House Sec. 7044(a)(2)).

We understand you face difficult budget choices and there are many priorities you must consider, but our nation must be a leader in providing these essential resources. We look forward to working with you and with Congress to secure the funding necessary to advance gender equality, which will not only support millions of women and girls, but will in turn promote sustainable development, strengthen national security, and reduce poverty around the world.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations (working list in progress)

Amnesty International

CARE

ChildFund International

Equality Now

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Futures Without Violence

Global Rights for Women

Heartland Alliance International

International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law (IANGEL)

International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

IPAS

Jewish Women International

Last Mile4D

Mina's List

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

PAI

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

The Episcopal Church

Together for Girls

Women Graduates USA

Women's Refugee Commission

Ujima Inc, The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community

FY 2023 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE FUNDING			
	FY20 Appropriation	FY21 Appropriation	FY23 Recommendation
Global Programs			
GBV Global Fund		\$ 380,000,000	At least \$414,000,000 to support efforts to prevent and respond to GBV worldwide, including programs that address new GBV challenges such as climate change, online violence, and COVID-19.
<p>BILL LANGUAGE:</p> <p>Sec. 7059 --</p> <p>(c) GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.—</p> <p>(1) Of the funds appropriated under titles III and IV of this Act, not less than \$414,000,000 \$200,000,000 shall be made available for the Global Gender-Based Violence Fund to implement a multi-year strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in countries where it is common in conflict and non-conflict settings.</p> <p>(2) Funds appropriated under titles III and IV of this Act that are available to train foreign police, judicial, and military personnel, including for international peacekeeping operations, shall address, where appropriate, prevention and response to gender-based violence and trafficking in persons, and shall promote the integration of women into the police and other security forces.</p> <p>REPORT LANGUAGE: <i>The Committee directs USAID, in collaboration with the Department of State, to implement the Global GBV Fund to centralize resources for global GBV programs and implement the interagency U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV Globally. The Committee notes that the U.S. Department of State and USAID Evaluation of Implementation of the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally highlights a series of recommendations essential for continued and successful implementation of this Strategy. Among them is expansion of GBV-related programming, including through stand-alone and multi-sector programs, enhancement of public awareness of all forms of GBV, and expansion of externally-facing tools and resources related to GBV. The Committee recommends the Department of State and USAID conduct activities to implement the 2022 updated Strategy.</i></p>			
GBV Global Fund allotment: GBV Strategy		\$250,000,000	No less than \$325,000,000 for implementation of the interagency U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV Globally, as revised in 2022, with a portion set

FY 2023 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE FUNDING

	FY20 Appropriation	FY21 Appropriation	FY23 Recommendation
			aside for GBViE programs in humanitarian crises.
GBV Global Fund allotment: Combating Child, Early and Forced Marriage	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$30,000,000 (including \$7,000,000 to the UNICEF/UNFPA joint program)

REPORT LANGUAGE: *The Committee recommends funding at not less than \$30 million for programs that reduce the incidence of **child, early and forced marriage** and to meet the needs of already married adolescent girls. The Committee encourages the continued implementation of policies and programs that empower adolescent girls through diplomatic, development, and humanitarian response efforts, as well as coordination of all relevant U.S. government agencies, including but not limited to the U.S. Department of State, USAID, Peace Corps and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, to ensure the empowerment of adolescent girls worldwide, as a critical component to combat child marriage across the humanitarian and development nexus..*

GBV Global Fund allotment: Ending Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting	\$5,000,000 for the UNICEF/UNFPA joint program to combat female genital mutilation/cutting	\$5,000,000 for the UNICEF/UNFPA joint program to combat female genital mutilation/cutting	\$5,000,000 for the UNICEF/UNFPA joint program to combat female genital mutilation/cutting and address the needs of those who have already undergone female genital mutilation/cutting.
--	--	--	--

GBV Global Fund allotment: GBV and Women and Girls' Political Participation and Community Engagement			No less than \$10,000,000 to help implement Advancing Women's and Girls' Civic and Political Leadership Initiative committed to empowering women and girls interested in politics while creating a more inclusive and safe environment for their representation.
---	--	--	--

REPORT LANGUAGE: *The Committee remains concerned about political violence perpetrated against women and adolescent girls as a means of discouraging their participation and engagement in civil society and the public sphere. The Committee encourages the Department of State to ensure that funds appropriated by this Act are utilized to address barriers to adolescent girls' and women's civic engagement and political participation, including gender-based violence, lack of access to quality primary and secondary education and harmful social norms; increase adolescents', particularly adolescent girls', civic and political knowledge and foundational skills and confidence; provide technical support and flexible, sustainable funding to girl-led and girl-focused civil society organizations; and ensure greater leadership, political participation and community engagement opportunities and empowering environments for women and girls.*

FY 2023 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE FUNDING

	FY20 Appropriation	FY21 Appropriation	FY23 Recommendation
GBV Global Fund allotment: GBV in Humanitarian Crisis			

REPORT LANGUAGE: Section 7059 (*Gender Equality*) - *The Committee recommends not less than the prior year level for programs to address gender-based violence in such settings including the Safe from the Start program.*

GBV Global Fund allotment: Regional/Country Efforts			We request that, in developing appropriations levels for regional and country-based programs and initiatives, specific funding for addressing GBV be included in each region (e.g., South and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, etc.). This should include directives in every region and country, such as those related to Burma (Senate Sec. 7043(a) (1) (C)); Central America (Senate Sec. 7045(a)); and Afghanistan (House Sec. 7044(a)(2)).
--	--	--	---

International Organizations and Programs (IO&P) Account

UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women - GBV and COVID-19			We request no less than \$25,000,000 to support the global response to the rise in violence against women and girls during the pandemic.
---	--	--	---

REPORT LANGUAGE: *Funds made available for gender-based violence should support the increased use of sexual assault evidence kits, and ensure that training and technical assistance is available for local healthcare workers on medical and psychological care and the collection of evidence following sexual assault. The Committee is concerned about the rise in gender-based violence as a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic and resulting economic lockdowns and recognizes that women in conflict and humanitarian situations are particularly vulnerable. The Committee recommends not less than the prior year level for programs to address gender-based violence in such settings including the Safe from the Start program.*

The Committee directs that, not later than 90days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the USAID Administrator, shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations

FY 2023 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE FUNDING

	FY20 Appropriation	FY21 Appropriation	FY23 Recommendation
<i>on the amount of funding and types of initiatives s focused on addressing gender-based violence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</i>			
Economic Support Fund			
Women and Girls at Risk of Violent Extremism	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$19,000,000

REPORT LANGUAGE: *The Committee directs that, not later than 45 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the USAID Administrator, shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations on programs supported by the Department of State and USAID on **gender-based violence, and women at risk of extremism** and the fulfillment of the requirements of this section. In addition, the report shall include the use of funds provided by this Act to support United States government efforts to empower women as equal partners in conflict prevention, peace building, transitional processes, and reconstruction efforts in countries affected by conflict or in political transition, and to ensure the equitable provision of relief and recovery assistance to women and girls.*