July 27, 2020

Dear Members of the Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs,

The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP), on behalf of its 120+ members, urges the U.S. Senate and the Senate Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs to include robust foreign assistance in the new COVID-19 supplemental funding package, in an amount no less than $20 billion, as well as specific funding for assistance focused on preventing and mitigating conflict.

As the Senate considers the next COVID-19 funding package, AfP reiterates the need for investment in the international response, which is essential to contain this virus that knows no borders – to protect American interests at home and abroad and to allow the U.S. to remain a global leader in foreign assistance. It is critical to mobilize new assistance now, rather than wait for future packages or the next fiscal year, when the destabilizing impact of the pandemic will be greater and more difficult to reverse.

AfP and its members working globally are regularly reporting on the exacerbating conflict dynamics, the decimation of economies, and longstanding peace processes being brought to a halt. COVID-19 has proven itself to be more than just a public health emergency – it is stabilization in reverse. Throughout Africa, the number of COVID-19 cases has been steadily increasing with countries at varied levels of risk based on factors such as government transparency, levels of displacement, and freedom of press. Fragile contexts are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic, but even in more democratic states the pandemic is taking a toll on civil society space, democratic institutions, human rights, and health systems. Latin America, which has become a hotspot for the virus, is suffering from exacerbated inequalities and is facing “the worst recession in the region in a century.” In Yemen, the pandemic is worsening the effects of the war, and millions are facing famine, water shortages, and lack of access to health care to address COVID-19 as well as other health concerns. Marginalized communities, such as women and youth, are particularly devastated by these secondary impacts, which is in turn increasing levels of violence and grievances in communities. In particular, violence against women has been increasing since the start of the pandemic, from Latin America to the Middle East. Local peacebuilders have been stepping up to address these rising levels of conflict but need increased support from the international community to remain effective.

AfP would like to express its gratitude for the Senate’s leadership and the foreign assistance provided so far. To avoid serious setbacks in international development and security, however, the next COVID-19 supplemental funding package must include an international response no less than $20 billion and be centered on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. AfP and its members are happy to provide additional information on this matter.

Sincerely,

Uzra Zeya
President and CEO