The Rt Hon Dominic Raab
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

CC: HMA Pierce DCMG

26 August 2020

The Alliance for Peacebuilding, the leading global network working to end conflict and build sustainable peace worldwide, on behalf of its 120+ members in over 150 countries and the twenty undersigned organizations, are writing to express our appreciation of the role that Her Majesty’s Government (HMG) plays in supporting international peace, stability, and conflict resolution efforts. Our members in the United States of America and around the world read the Government’s announcement to cut £2.9bn from its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) this year due to the economic impact of the coronavirus crisis.

We write to underscore our deep appreciation for the invaluable leadership that the United Kingdom plays in supporting healthy, just, and safe societies around the world and request that you continue your leadership on these issues. As global peacebuilding, conflict prevention and stability actors, we have seen the tangible real-world impact of the United Kingdom's support for conflict prevention and stabilization programming and policies. Many of our member organizations who work in close partnership with the FCO provide critical international conflict prevention and stability development assistance. From Jerusalem to Mali to Burma, the UK’s commitment to these programs has played a vital and demonstrable role in improving the situation on the ground.

We appreciate HMG’s continued focus on international security and conflict matters as part of its vision for a Global Britain, working alongside partners in North America, Europe and in the multilateral system. However, we hope these efforts include continuing to direct 50% of general ODA to fragile and conflict affected states, preserving the Conflict Stability and Security Fund, and including both HMG, civil society, and academic experts in the Integrated Review process.

Roughly two billion lives are affected by fragility and conflict, and the numbers are increasing. Violent conflict is the leading cause of human suffering and will be the driving crisis of the next decade. In the context of peacekeeping missions that last for a decade or more, annually mounting humanitarian appeals, and continuing threats from violent groups, sustained commitment to conflict prevention and peacebuilding represents good value-for-money. At the end of 2019, there were an estimated 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, meaning 1% of the world’s population had been forced to flee their homes under threat of conflict or persecution, and half of which were children. With over 80% of the world’s displaced persons hosted in low- and middle-income countries, health systems are in dire need of help.
These numbers are exacerbated by the global COVID-19 pandemic which has yielded a process of ‘stabilization in reverse.’ Conflict-affected and fragile states are already highly vulnerable to shocks and the global pandemic is accelerating conflict dynamics, as well as seriously disrupting health, governance, economies, and food security systems. Women are disproportionately affected, and gender-based violence (GBV) has reached new levels. Research says ‘coronavirus-linked hunger is tied to 10,000 child deaths each month, many in conflict countries.’ In Yemen, the pandemic is worsening the effects of the war, as millions are facing famine and water shortages and lack of access to health care is exacerbating the pandemic. In the Sahel region, governments and communities are struggling to respond to the health crisis while already dealing with displaced populations and violent extremist threats. In countries like Venezuela and Cambodia, authoritarian-style leaders are using the pandemic as an opportunity to increase control and close civil society space. Political violence is on the rise. Further, COVID-19 could push over 435 million people back into poverty, with an additional 130 million sitting at the brink of starvation by the end of the year, putting these people at an increased risk to suffer from conflict and violence.

We are grateful for the consistent and steadfast support of HMG and the generosity of the British People in support of building peace throughout the world. Once again, we hope that HMG continues to sufficiently fund and prioritize fragile and conflict affected states. We welcome any opportunity to provide additional input or support.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Middle East Peace
Alliance for Peacebuilding
Center for International Policy
Center for Policy Analysis in Horn of Africa
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S Provinces
DT Global
Educators’ Institute for Human Rights
Generations For Peace
Institute of World Affairs
International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
Karuna Center for Peacebuilding
Movilizatorio
One Earth Future
Pax Christi England & Wales
Pax Christi Scotland
Peace Action, Training, and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR)
Peace Catalyst International
Peace Initiative Network, Nigeria
RAHO Somalia
Refugees International
Search for Common Ground
Young Adult Empowerment Initiatives