

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 17, 2022

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
SD-127
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
SD-190
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Coons and Ranking Member Graham,

We appreciate increased support in recent years for the Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs account, Conventional Weapons Destruction (NADR-CWD) subaccount. However, additional resources are needed, and we are concerned about allocations to country-specific landmine and cluster munition clearance programs. Decreased levels of support proposed in this year's State Department Congressional Budget Justification will delay progress of life-saving demining and ordnance clearance programs for which U.S. support remains critical. Amid the conflict in Ukraine, additional funding is urgently needed to provide emergency explosive clearance support in-country, given the extensive contamination. Reducing support for addressing U.S. legacy ordnance in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia as a region also would contradict the United States' responsibility to clear deployed ordnance, and curtailing U.S. assistance to other programs would leave impoverished communities vulnerable to the dire consequences of landmines.

For the FY23 appropriation, we respectfully request that you consider including the following language in the appropriations bill or report:

The Committee supports \$290 million for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs, including humanitarian demining, and encourages country allocations at the following levels:

- *Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia allocated \$80,000,000 for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs (\$50,000,000 for Laos)*
- *Sri Lanka allocated \$10,000,000 for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs*
- *Angola allocated \$10,000,000 for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs*
- *Zimbabwe allocated \$4,000,000 for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs*
- *Afghanistan allocated \$30,000,000 for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs (of this, \$5,000,000 to be focused on improvised explosive device (IED) clearance)*
- *Nagorno Karabakh allocated \$2,000,000 for Conventional Weapons Destruction programs*

The recommendation also includes additional funds above the prior year level for increased demining activities in Ukraine.

Ukraine already contained significant landmine and explosive contamination in the eastern region before the recent conflict. Now, the country is facing far greater levels of unexploded bombs in major population centers that will threaten civilians for years to come. The risk will be particularly acute as civilians move throughout the country. Increased funding is urgently needed to enable the elimination of these deadly devices as soon as possible.

Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia remain heavily impacted by U.S. cluster bomblets and other explosive hazards. Laos is considered the most heavily bombed country in history, suffering an estimated 50,000 casualties from explosive remnants of war. Cambodia, which contains additional significant landmine contamination has suffered over 64,000 casualties from explosive hazards since 1979. In Vietnam, at least 105,000 casualties from explosive threats have been recorded. More resources are needed to remove these deadly items, demonstrate continued resolve to removing U.S. legacy ordnance, and strengthen diplomatic relations. An appropriation of \$80 million in FY23, with \$50 million for Laos, would expedite ongoing clearance efforts and demonstrate positive U.S. leadership in the region.

Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war ended in 2009. U.S. funding was crucial in jump-starting and continuing a demining capacity that allowed more than 200,000 displaced people to return home and rebuild schools, hospitals, roads, and railways. Thousands of people await clearance so that they can return to their land. An allocation of \$10 million is needed to keep Sri Lanka on track to be landmine impact free in the near future, a remarkable accomplishment for a country so recently at war.

When Angola's Civil War ended in 2002, it was the most mined country in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that over 80,000 civilians have been injured or killed by mines since 1975. U.S. assistance has directly cleared over 800 minefields and destroyed nearly 100,000 landmines since Angola's demining effort began in the 1990s. In FY23, funding for demining at a level of \$10 million is essential to saving the lives of its most impoverished people and supporting conservation-development efforts near the headwaters of the Okavango Delta.

Zimbabwe is one of the most highly-mined countries in the world. The former Rhodesian military laid unusually dense, unfenced minefields along the border with Mozambique and Zambia. Today, these minefields separate communities from hospitals and schools, devastate local livestock, and block access to valuable water sources. U.S. funding at a level of \$4 million is critical to supporting a nation-wide demining program that clears tens of thousands of mines per year and is on track to achieve mine-free status in the near future.

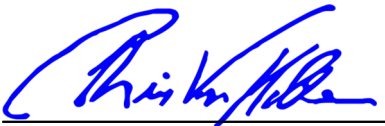
Afghanistan contains extremely high levels of explosive contamination, exacerbated by the recent fighting. Landmines, UXO, and, notably, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) all pose a significant threat to communities as they return to their livelihoods. An allocation of \$30 million, including \$5 million to support IED clearance, will help eliminate these deadly hazards, support security, and provide safe access for other forms of humanitarian relief. The Taliban has not blocked implementation of these programs in the past; the State Department executes the

programs through trusted NGO implementing partners and does not provide any assistance to Taliban authorities.

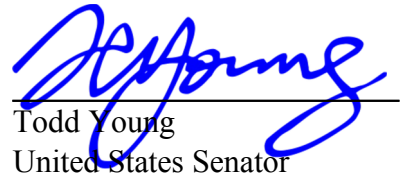
The recent conflict in Nagorno Karabakh resulted in enormous levels of contamination by cluster munitions, rockets, and other explosive ordnance. These hazards are still present near homes, and litter farms and streets – presenting a grave humanitarian risk. Further, the removal of explosives is critical to continuing to rebuild infrastructure decimated during the conflict. An allocation of \$2 million in FY23 will allow ordnance removal efforts activities to scale up and ensure families can return to their livelihoods without fear of explosive threats.

Continued U.S. leadership in demining will promote effective and efficient programs that save lives, promote economic development, facilitate stability, and expand American influence.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator




Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



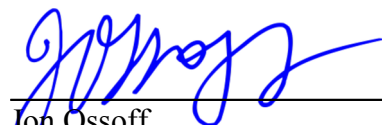
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



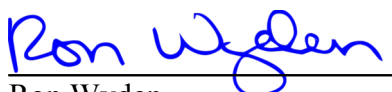
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



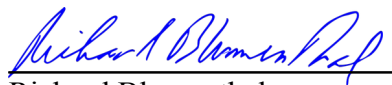
Jon Ossoff
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Ron Wyden
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Alex Padilla
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Richard Blumenthal
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Cory A. Booker
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Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



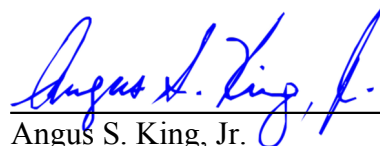
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Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
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Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



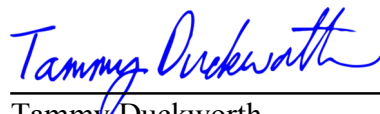
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



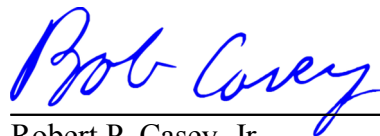
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



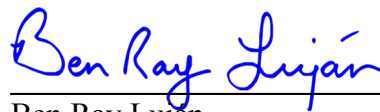
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



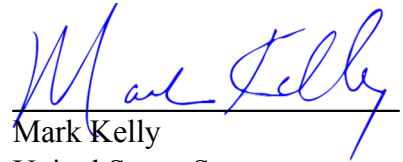
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



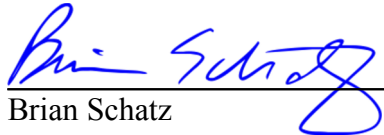
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



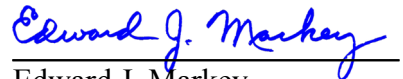
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



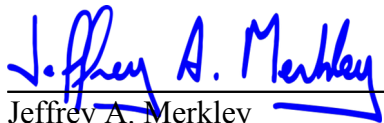
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United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
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John Hickenlooper
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