

September 5, 2025

U.S. House of Representatives
House Foreign Affairs Committee
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee,

As State Department Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) implementing partners and supporters of demining programs worldwide, we write to express our strong support for language authorizing CWD programs in the 2026 State Department Authorization Act. The language included below is critical for ensuring the continuation of State Department demining, weapons security, and related activities, managed by the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Political-Military Affairs Bureau. These programs make the U.S. safer, stronger, and more prosperous while providing humanitarian benefit to some of the world's most vulnerable communities abroad.

We welcome authorization language that highlights the importance of demining efforts, as U.S. demining programs advance U.S. foreign policy by enhancing security and stability around the globe. These efforts save lives and enable populations displaced by conflict to safely return to their homes and utilize their land, including for agricultural and infrastructure. Demining facilitates recovery from conflict and creates conditions for increased business with the U.S., while risk education efforts help protect civilians while building goodwill. Efforts to remove explosive hazards also strengthen bilateral relationships, especially in strategic geopolitical areas.

The language below further authorizes weapons security programs with partner nations to prevent unplanned ammunition depot explosions and the diversion of weapons and ammunition from partners' weapons stockpiles to terrorists, insurgents, and other non-state actors. Authorizing activities including weapons disposal, training police and other government security officials, and enhancing security cooperation is essential to safety at home and abroad.

We also support the authorization of a CWD-related briefing and direction to the State Department to report on CWD program activities, outcomes, and partners, as these activities provide crucial opportunities to educate Congress on the breadth of these important programs and ensure oversight.

We are grateful to the Foreign Affairs Committee for its longstanding leadership and bipartisan commitment to these critical programs. And the support of many Committee Members helped ensure increased funding was allocated for CWD programs in the FY26 House State Department Appropriations report. By including language authorizing Conventional Weapons Destruction programs in the State Department Authorization Act, Congress can reaffirm the strategic and

humanitarian value of essential CWD programs, and ensure the U.S. remains the world's demining leader.

Therefore, we respectfully urge the Committee to include the following language in the 2026 State Department Authorization Act:

PURPOSES OF DEMINING AND CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS ELIMINATION OR SECURING ACTIVITIES.—

(1) DEMINING ACTIVITIES.— The purposes of the activities authorized, which shall advance U.S. foreign policy goals to improve security and stability through demining and weapons stockpile security, shall pursue —

(A) to save lives and ensure the return of affected populations to the safe access to their homes and land;

(B) to enable affected populations to safely and productively utilize land for agriculture – including and particularly in Ukraine, whose agricultural land is essential for global food security;

(C) to clear explosive threats from land to permit and encourage critical infrastructure and other development;

(D) to educate affected populations about the dangers of landmines and other unexploded ordnance as well as United States efforts to provide the lifesaving benefits of demining activities; and

(E) to advance U.S. business interests related to demining and weapons stockpile security; and

(F) to integrate demining and related activities with other assistance to ensure effective recovery from conflict; and

(G) to establish and strengthen peacebuilding partnerships with foreign allies in regions of geopolitical importance through demining, as the United States has successfully done through clearance of unexploded ordnance from the Vietnam war.

(2) CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS ELIMINATION OR SECURING ACTIVITIES.—The purposes of the activities authorized are—

(A) to ensure the safe securing of weapons, ammunition, and explosives in the stores of foreign partners, otherwise at risk of accidental explosions as well as proliferation to terrorists, insurgents, and other violent non-state actors;

(B) to support the security sectors of foreign partners to properly eliminate or manage weapons and ammunition stockpiles through Weapons Stockpile Security, and related programs;

(C) to educate local police and other officials and the wider population at the local level on safer and more secure weapons storage and salvage as well as United States efforts to provide the lifesaving benefits of conventional weapons elimination, securing, and management;

(D) to establish and strengthen cooperation in the area of conventional weapon elimination or security with foreign partners to reduce armed violence and instability in support of important United States national security and foreign policy objectives; and

(E) to integrate conventional weapons elimination and securing and related activities with other assistance to prevent armed violence and instability.”

(3) REPORTING AND BRIEFING—

(A) REPORTING— The committee directs the Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs to submit a report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate no later than December 18, 2026, on the following:

(1) A list of all programming related to demining, conventional weapons destruction, and weapon stockpile security activities conducted by the Department of State for the previous year as of the submission of the report;

(2) An assessment of programming, and the methods and outcomes in relation to achieving the objectives of the Department of State’s demining, conventional weapons destruction, and weapon stockpile security related programs and activities for the previous year as of the submission of the report;

(3) A list of all implementing partners utilized by the Department of State for demining, conventional weapons destruction, and weapon stockpile security related programming for the previous year as of the submission of the report.

(B) BRIEFING— The committee directs the Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs to provide a briefing to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives not later than December 18, 2026, and shall be provided on annual basis until December 18, 2028, in the areas described in subsection (A).

Sincerely,

Chris Whatley, Executive Director, The HALO Trust (USA)

Shari Bryan, Executive Director, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) U.S.

Sera Koulabdara, CEO, Legacies of War

Claire Yunker, Executive Director, PeaceTrees Vietnam

Hannah Guedenet, U.S. Executive Director, Humanity & Inclusion U.S.