

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
HT-2 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee:

In 2023 Burmese people suffered the highest number of landmine and explosive-related civilian casualties in the world. The U.S., however, is not providing any assistance to address this humanitarian crisis. Therefore, we respectfully request that the Committee support \$1,000,000 for explosive risk education, victim assistance, and related programs in the USAID Economic Support Fund's Burma account.

Following decades of conflict, the 2021 coup, and the October 2023 offensive, Burma is densely contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). An estimated 1.8 million people are now at risk from ERW contamination across Burma. Before 2021, landmine and ERW casualty rates in Burma were already the fifth highest in the world, with accident rates increasing by 37% in 2022 and doubling again in 2023. This led to a total of 1,052 civilian casualties recorded nationwide in 2023. By comparison, there were 724 recorded civilian casualties from explosive hazards in Ukraine in 2023.

While there continue to be significant political hurdles to removing unexploded ordnance (UXO) and landmines in Burma, USAID can support explosive ordnance risk education, victim assistance, first aid training, and emergency supply kits for internally displaced persons to minimize the impact of these lethal devices. As implementing partners conduct this work, they can also gather information regarding the type and locations of explosive contamination, allowing a rapid clearance response should operators gain permission to remove explosives in the future.

Experienced U.S. partners are already conducting this programming on a small scale, but the U.S. is not currently providing any funding for these programs. A small investment would make a massive difference during this time of crisis. An investment of \$1,000,000 could provide risk education to roughly 70,000 people, provide victim assistance to roughly 80 survivors of mine accidents, distribute roughly 40,000 hygiene kits, and support 30 first aid education sessions. This programming would also support U.S. soft power in a country where China has re-engaged.

We therefore respectfully urge the Committee to include \$1,000,000 of program funding for the USAID Economic Support Fund's Burma account for *"Explosive ordnance risk education, victim assistance, and related programming."*

With these resources, implementing partners can help children and families stay safe, assist landmine survivors recover and regain their independence, and provide emergency relief in a time of enormous humanitarian need.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



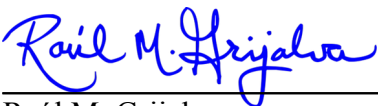
Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



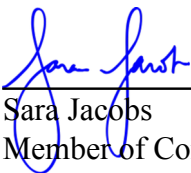
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress




Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
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Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
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Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress