

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 26, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Samantha Power
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Blinken and Administrator Power,

The Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the ongoing conflict have killed thousands of civilians and soldiers, displaced millions of Ukrainians, and ravaged cities, towns, and infrastructure across Ukraine. The United States must continue to support the people of Ukraine as they defend their freedom and future against Vladimir Putin's unprovoked assault. Yet we must also look forward to the day when Ukraine is secure and take stock of factors that are a risk to Ukrainians today and that may present a challenge for eventual recovery and reconstruction.

Ukraine is now one of the world's most landmine-contaminated countries. The Ukrainian Government has stated that over 174,000 square kilometers of land in Ukraine, including more than 25,000 square kilometers of farmland, have been exposed to conflict and may contain explosives.¹ The widespread presence of explosives clearly pose a significant humanitarian risk and they also keep large swathes of farmland out of use – finding one mine in an agricultural area will render the land unsafe for cultivation until it can be cleared.

Future efforts at reconstruction, rebuilding, and recovery are further challenged when explosives line roads and block critical infrastructure or hide within collapsed and partially collapsed buildings – preventing safe access for construction and making rubble clearance and rebuilding extremely dangerous. Humanitarian demining efforts will be necessary for public safety, economic health, and future reconstruction.

The *REPO for Ukrainians Act*, included in the Ukraine supplemental signed into law on April 24, 2024, outlines that resources in the newly established Ukraine Support Fund shall be

¹ Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. (2023, April 20). Ukraine needs ten times more humanitarian demining specialists than it has now: Yuliia Svyrydenko. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/dlia-humanitarnoho-rozminuvannia-ukrainy-potribno-v-desiatky-raziv-bilshe-fakhivtsiv-nizh-ie-zaraz-iuliia-svyrydenko>

available to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to provide assistance to Ukraine for damage resulting from the Russian invasion. Further, it requires that the Secretary of State, in consultation with the USAID Administrator, submit to Congress “an assessment of the most pressing needs of Ukraine for reconstruction, rebuilding, and humanitarian aid” within 180 days of the bill’s enactment.

As the State Department and USAID prepares this assessment, we seek to draw attention to the prevalence of landmine contamination in Ukraine and inquire as to whether the Administration intends to include humanitarian demining as one of the most pressing needs for reconstruction, rebuilding, and humanitarian aid. If this is not being assessed as a most pressing need or is already determined not to be, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss your reasoning in advance of the release of the assessment in October.

We are grateful to the Administration for its ongoing support of Ukraine and your steadfast engagement with our partners and allies. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to continuing to work together to support Ukraine, including future reconstruction, rebuilding, and recovery efforts.

Sincerely,



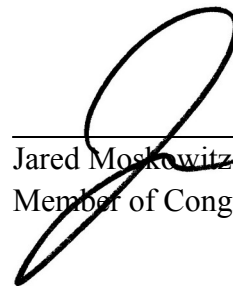
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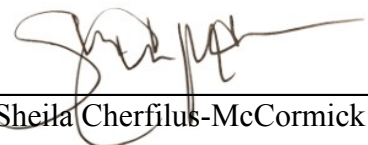
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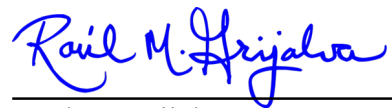
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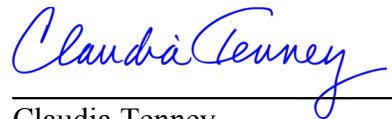
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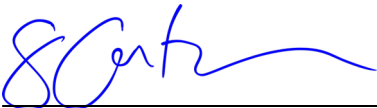
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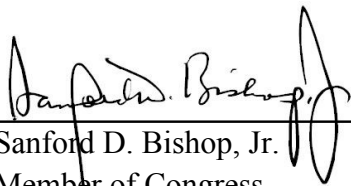
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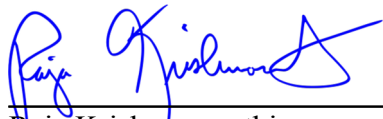
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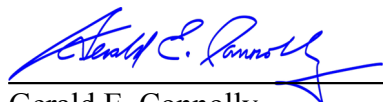
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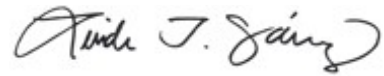
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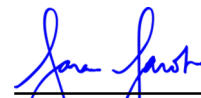
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