

April 18, 2017

Dear Member of Congress,

As a constituent from New York and as the CEO of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, I write with deep concern about the proposed budget cuts to foreign assistance, especially as it relates to global conflict. At Tanenbaum, we identify and work with men and women driven by their religious beliefs and ready to risk their lives to end conflict around the world. These include deadly conflict, escalating violence and extremism that, over the past 15 years, has reduced world GDP by 13.3%.

U.S. foreign assistance is a vital tool for reducing violent conflict and the threat it poses to Americans. The Institute of Economics and Peace estimates that for every dollar we invest in peacebuilding now, the cost of violent conflict would be reduced by \$16 over time. However, despite its proven success, there is shockingly little investment in peacebuilding. Just 2% of U.S. spending goes to peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities (around one percent of the \$739 billion cost of conflict in 2015).

Despite minimal resources, peacebuilding practitioners offer a wide range of successful programs that reduce violence by addressing the root causes of conflict. One example is Tanenbaum's [Peacemakers in Action Network, which](#) reduces violence in many countries, including Afghanistan, Nigeria and Colombia. Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers* and so many other peacebuilders offer creative and impactful approaches to: land disputes, religious and ethnic conflicts, gang violence, gender-based violence, and extremism.

We need to invest in the preventive power of peacebuilding. The reductions for peacebuilding in the proposed budget will make us less safe while increasing the corollary military costs. **I therefore urge you to resist draconian cuts to foreign assistance that will destroy our ability to prevent and reduce violence globally.**

I look forward to hearing from you on how you are working to save lives and money through peacebuilding in the FY 2017 and FY 2018 budget processes.

Thank you,



Joyce S. Dubensky
CEO, Tanenbaum