



**One Hundred Sixteenth Congress**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

December 4, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 202320

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We believe that the Trump Administration's counterproductive decision to cut off U.S. assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras has damaged our standing in the Americas while also preventing us from addressing the root causes of child and family migration. We continue to call for the immediate and full restoration of funding, including \$48 million in outstanding FY 2017 USAID assistance and \$527.6 million in FY 2019 assistance.

At the same time, the Administration must be more transparent about the specific criteria used to justify restoring certain aid to the region while continuing to withhold crucial USAID development assistance and economic support funds. Since the President's March 2019 announcement eliminating assistance to the Northern Triangle, the State Department has failed to provide Congress with the necessary clarity on the rationale for halting or restarting U.S. assistance.

After eliminating \$405 million in FY 2018 U.S. assistance to the Northern Triangle earlier this year, on October 16<sup>th</sup>, the State Department announced that it would restore \$89.3 million in FY 2017 assistance to the region while also providing \$53.7 million in funding for additional fiscal years. This assistance – a total of \$143 million – is predominately law enforcement-oriented or related to implementing the draconian asylum agreements negotiated with the three Northern Triangle countries.

We are extremely disappointed that \$48 million in FY 2017 USAID funding remains frozen with no clear metrics in place for its future release. These funds are essential to help create opportunities in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador that will ensure children and families are not forced to make the dangerous trek north. Continued withholding of these funds further erodes the capacity of USAID to improve conditions on the ground – the very conditions driving people to leave for safer lives in the United States.

The Honorable Michael Pompeo  
December 4, 2019  
Page Two

We request the following information from the State Department regarding U.S. assistance to the Northern Triangle by no later than December 18, 2019:

1. The November 2019 Office of the Inspector General's *Inspection of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs* stated, "Following the President's March 2019 decision to suspend foreign assistance to the Northern Triangle countries, the bureau produced a plan, approved by the Secretary, specifying priority areas for cooperation from Northern Triangle government in order to reinstate foreign assistance." Please provide the Committee with this plan which was first requested on November 20, 2019 and any other criteria being used to make decisions related to the restoration of remaining FY 2017 and FY 2019 assistance to the Northern Triangle.
2. When will a decision be made on whether or not the Administration will restore the remainder of FY 2017 and all of FY 2019 assistance for the Northern Triangle?
3. Please explain why crucial FY 2017 development assistance and economic support funds for the Northern Triangle that were cut off have not been restored while International Narcotics and Law Enforcement spending and Foreign Military Financing from FY 2017 have been restored. How and why do metrics differ for the release of different streams of funding?
4. To what extent is remaining FY 2017 and FY 2019 funding for the Northern Triangle tied to asylum agreements with the Northern Triangle countries? Please explain specifically how funding is tied to these agreements and what metrics, if any, were used to identify the relevant funds.

Congress has come together in a bipartisan manner to reject the Administration's misguided effort to cut off assistance to the Northern Triangle. While certain aid has been restored, we must understand the rationale behind funding decisions which to date have been completely opaque and lacking any apparent rhyme or reason.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Chairman  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



ALBIO SIRES  
Chairman  
House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, and Trade

CC: USAID Administrator Mark Green