



**One Hundred Seventeenth 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)

July 27, 2022

The Honorable Samantha Power  
Administrator  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Ronald Reagan Building  
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Administrator Power:

We write to express our concern over the global food crisis caused by Russia's full scale and unprovoked continued invasion of Ukraine and the Administration's slow response to utilize emergency supplemental funds and prioritize this unprecedented humanitarian emergency. Before the war in Ukraine, 276 million people were facing emergency food insecurity around the world, nearly doubling since 2019. Putin's war in Ukraine, blockade of ports in the Black Sea, and continued shelling of farmland and grain silos is exacerbating this crisis, cutting off grain and fertilizer exports, decreasing future crop yields, and increasing food prices.

As a result, almost 70 million more people, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, will be plunged into severe hunger in the weeks and months ahead. Globally, 345 million people will soon be facing crisis levels of hunger or worse – and a staggering 50 million in 45 countries are just one step away from famine. This hunger crisis has already begun to devastate communities and destabilize countries. Protests over food and fuel prices have already occurred in Lebanon, Kenya, Tunisia, Indonesia, Cameroon, and in Sri Lanka, which resulted in protestors overthrowing the government. It is estimated that an average of one person likely dying every 48 seconds across Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia from catastrophic levels of hunger.

To address this global crisis, Congress has provided nearly \$8 billion in additional emergency humanitarian assistance to support the needs of the Ukrainian people and address global impacts of the war. We urge the Administration to accelerate efforts to allocate and obligate resources to the maximum extent practical before the end of the fiscal year. While we recognize that some carryover is necessary to address worsening food security projections for the fall, these emergency appropriations were provided to urgently respond to food security needs now, both in Ukraine and around the world.

Responsibly and effectively allocating and obligating this supplemental assistance must be a top priority for the Administration as well as rigorous monitoring, oversight and evaluation of all foreign assistance provided. We are concerned by reports of insufficient recruitment, allocation,

and prioritization of contracting staff assigned to the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) within the USAID's overall staffing footprint and urge USAID to increase staff within BHA both in Washington, DC and in the field to manage and oversee these supplemental resources. On average, their contracting officers are responsible for managing four times more than contracting officers at Department of Defense. A failure to devote appropriate staff to monitor, oversee, and evaluate these additional funds will result in wasted and misused taxpayer resources.

Additionally, the Administration must prioritize efforts to reduce all possible bureaucratic impediments and costs associated with urgently and efficiently providing these supplemental resources. Specifically, we urge the Administration to utilize the waiver authority provided by Congress in section 55305 of title 46, United States Code and temporarily waive the bulk cargo preference requirements for the purposes of the current global food crisis and global impacts of Russia's war in Ukraine. So far, in this fiscal year, USAID paid approximately 28 percent more per metric ton to ship commodities on U.S. flag vessels. In fact, if the Administration were to have waived cargo preference requirements in 2021, there would have been nearly \$31 million in cost savings, which roughly translates to approximately 16 million more people receiving critical food aid. Congress approved billions of dollars in emergency supplemental assistance to feed hungry people and save lives, not to be unnecessarily consumed by rising bulk shipping costs.

Finally, as Putin continues a global propaganda campaign to blame U.S. and international sanctions for the global food crisis, we urge you to better coordinate with the Department of State to provide these resources as a part of a whole of government strategy and public diplomacy campaign to address this looming humanitarian catastrophe and combat this misinformation. This includes clearly branding and marking U.S. assistance, in line with the 2019 Branding Modernization Act, and a robust public diplomacy strategy to make sure our partners understand that these resources are being provided by the generosity of the American people.

We stand ready to work with the Administration to ensure effective and efficient use of supplemental resources to meet the needs of the Ukrainian people and save lives around the world. We look forward to receiving a timely response to this letter.

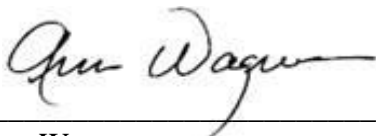
Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul  
Ranking Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Darrell Issa  
Member of Congress  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Ann Wagner  
Ranking Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



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Ken Buck  
Member of Congress  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



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Young Kim  
Member of Congress  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



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Dan Meuser  
Member of Congress  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



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Maria Salazar  
Member of Congress  
House Foreign Affairs Committee