

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 3, 2020

The Honorable John Barsa  
Acting Administrator  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Acting Administrator Barsa,

We are writing out of great concern regarding the recent escalation of conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. There is an urgent need to address the humanitarian crisis brought on by the renewed outbreak in fighting and U.S. support for the removal of explosive hazards that threaten large numbers of civilians in Nagorno Karabakh is especially critical.

Bombings of cities with large populations including Stepanakert, Shushi, and Martakert have resulted in high levels of explosive contamination including rockets, missiles, artillery projectiles, and cluster munitions. Over 73,000 people either remain in or have been displaced from towns and villages which are now contaminated by explosive remnants of war. This is over half the population of the region prior to September.

Explosive ordnance pose a danger to people who remain, or are unable to leave, and will continue to present a risk when displaced families return. All unexploded munitions present a risk to civilians if moved or mishandled. Cluster munitions present a particular risk, as they are often present in large quantities due to high failure rates, can be especially sensitive to disturbance, and cluster munitions used in Karabakh with bright red ribbons attached are especially attractive to children.

Given the potential to protect civilian lives and contribute to efforts to stabilize Nagorno Karabakh, we strongly urge USAID to invest in humanitarian demining and unexploded ordnance removal activities and to provide additional humanitarian aid to help those in the conflict zone. Please give this request all fair and full consideration within all the applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Sincerely,



Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



Devin Nunes  
Member of Congress



TJ Cox  
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress



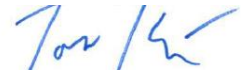
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