



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 27, 2023

Case No. FL-2023-00001

Benjamin Sisney
Senior Litigation Counsel
American Center for Law and Justice



Dear Mr. Sisney:

As we noted in our letter dated May 16, 2023, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State ("Department") has identified an additional eight responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined all eight records may be released in part.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each record. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact Bradley Silverman, Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (202) 252-2575 or bradley.silverman@usdoj.gov. Please refer to the case number, FL-2023-00001, and the civil action number, 22-cv-02581, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diamonece Hickson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Diamonece Hickson
Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

- (b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:
- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
 - 1.4(b) Foreign government information
 - 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
 - 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
 - 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
 - 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction
- (b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency
- (b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ARMSEXP | Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c) |
| CIA PERS/ORG | Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g) |
| EXPORT CONTROL | Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c) |
| FS ACT | Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004 |
| INA | Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f) |
| IRAN | Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505 |
- (b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information
- (b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product
- (b)(6) Personal privacy information
- (b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:
- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
 - (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
 - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
 - (D) disclose confidential sources
 - (E) disclose investigation techniques
 - (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual
- (b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions
- (b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

- NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

From: "Sherman, Wendy R" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Phee, Molly C (b)(6)@state.gov>;
McKeon, Brian (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Durakoglu, Naz (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Nuland, Victoria J (b)(6)@state.gov>;
George, Suzy (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
Zeya, Uzra S (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: top lines from HFAC Africa briefing 12/01
Date: Wed, 1 Dec 2021 21:18:14 +0000

Sounds like you did quite well- no surprise- and member statements were also no surprise! Thanks for doing Molly.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Phee, Molly C (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 1:28 PM
To: McKeon, Brian (b)(6)@state.gov>; Durakoglu, Naz (b)(6)@state.gov>; Sherman, Wendy R (b)(6)@state.gov>; Nuland, Victoria J (b)(6)@state.gov>; George, Suzy (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Zeya, Uzra S (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: top lines from HFAC Africa briefing 12/01

I briefed the HFAC Africa subcommittee this morning and (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5); (b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Sender:	"Sherman, Wendy R" (b)(6) state.gov>
Recipient:	Phee, Molly C (b)(6) state.gov>; McKeon, Brian (b)(6) state.gov>; Durakoglu, Naz (b)(6) state.gov>; Nuland, Victoria J (b)(6)@state.gov>; George, Suzy (b)(6) state.gov>; (b)(6) state.gov>; Zeya, Uzra S (b)(6) state.gov>

From:	"Zeya, Uzra S" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	Phee, Molly C (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC:	McKeon, Brian (b)(6)@state.gov>; Durakoglu, Naz (b)(6)@state.gov>; Sherman, Wendy R (b)(6)@state.gov>; Nuland, Victoria J (b)(6)@state.gov>; George, Suzy (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: top lines from HFAC Africa briefing 12/01
Date:	Wed, 1 Dec 2021 22:37:54 +0000

Thanks for representing us so well and this super helpful/fast readout, Molly!

Sent from my iPad

On Dec 1, 2021, at 1:28 PM, Phee, Molly C (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

I briefed the HFAC Africa subcommittee this morning and (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Sender:	"Zeya, Uzra S"	(b)(6)	state.gov>
	Phee, Molly C	(b)(6)	state.gov>;
	McKeon, Brian	(b)(6)	state.gov>;
	Durakoglu, Naz	(b)(6)	state.gov>;
Recipient:	Sherman, Wendy R	(b)(6)	state.gov>;
	Nuland, Victoria J	(b)(6)	state.gov>;
	George, Suzy	(b)(6)	state.gov>;
	(b)(6)		@state.gov>

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
CC:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Politico: Christian groups furious at Blinken for removing Nigeria from religious violence list
Date:	Wed, 24 Nov 2021 15:35:33 +0000

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks for flagging! We fully expect a robust FOIA on this decision and perhaps some Hill screaming as well...

Best,

(b)(6)

From (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 10:20 AM

To (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Politico: Christian groups furious at Blinken for removing Nigeria from religious violence list

Hi, (b)(6)

You probably saw this already, but just in case:

(b)(6)

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/11/23/christian-groups-blinken-nigeria-religious-violence-list-523258>

Sender:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Recipient:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
CC:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: HFAC Hearing Key Points and Summary
Date:	Thu, 2 Dec 2021 10:46:25 +0000

Thanks (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
 Public Affairs Officer
 U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
 (b)(6)@state.gov
 Mob: +251 93 000 4014
From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 8:49:56 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: FW: HFAC Hearing Key Points and Summary

Lots of stuff in here to flag. The commentary from Sherman was very provocative in particular.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 8:48 PM
To: AF-FO-Principals-DL <AF-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>; AF-DIR DEP-DL <AF-DIRandDEP-DL@state.gov>
Subject: HFAC Hearing Key Points and Summary



HEARING SUMMARY: FY 2022 BUDGET AND UNITED STATES – AFRICA RELATIONS

December 1, 2021

Overview

A/S Phee and USAID Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator Dr. Diana Putman testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights to discuss U.S.-Africa foreign policy priorities and the President's FY22 budget

request in Africa. Key issues related to Nigeria and Ethiopia featured prominently; criticism from Majority Members surrounding the Administration's COVID-19 vaccine strategy, the lack of an atrocity determination and references to genocide in Ethiopia, and the decision to suspend flights from Southern Africa were notable. Overall, the hearing was cordial and collaborative, and Members noted appreciation for the work of the Bureau and thanks for frequent outreach on key issues and excellent support during STAFFDELS to the region. The full hearing can be [viewed here](#) and a transcript will be available in the coming days.

Key Exchanges – Ethiopia

Ethiopia/Atrocity Determination

Rep. Omar: "When will the Secretary complete the legal review of atrocity designation with regards to Ethiopia? We've been waiting for months."

A/S Phee: "As I have discussed here today, our primary focus has been on trying to engage diplomatically in the many ways that are available to us to reach an end to the conflict which would obviously result in an immediate end to the atrocities. So, we have decided to refrain at the current moment from making a public determination in order to allow space and time to see if the talks that are currently underway can make progress. But I want you to know, we have undergone an active and dynamic determination process. It's ongoing as we continue to assess emerging reports of human rights violations and abuses. We remain committed to seeing what we can do to address the current events that have caused all of us such concern. We have also engaged Facebook and Twitter. I've spoken here today to ask the diaspora to consider how it discusses the situation and we are concerned as well by hate speech by the government and other elites in Ethiopia. We need to call on everyone to do better."

Ethiopia/Arms Embargo

Rep. Omar: "There is increasing concern that the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, China, and Iran are arming the Ethiopian government with drones and other weapons. Isn't it time to be pushing for an arms embargo? In the meantime, should we be pushing our allies to stop arming Abiy's government?"

A/S Phee: "Absolutely the issue of arm supplies to Ethiopia is a component of our diplomacy with regional and international allies. The issue of an arms embargo is one of the many elements of the discussion taking place in New York in the Security Council."

Ethiopia/AGOA

Rep. Bass: "I wanted to ask about AGOA and Ethiopia. I know we have a warning out to Ethiopia that we might suspend AGOA. What is the likelihood that might be?"

A/S Phee: "The legislation that governs AGOA is extremely well designed because it offers a notification period. That period expires in January. It allows the government to take steps to stop the termination of those trade privileges. What we're looking for specifically, in line with the statute, is action to end the conflict and expand humanitarian access."

Rep. Bass: "I don't know that the conflict will be suspended in the next few weeks. I really hope that the Administration reconsiders that because if we suspend AGOA, it's not going to impact the government. It's going to impact the poor women who work for AGOA. And it impacts our businesses. And I just don't know we get U.S. businesses to invest if they always have to deal with this threat. So, I am hoping that we will not do that."

Ethiopia/General

Rep. Smith: "Can you speak further to the Ethiopian crisis which is catastrophic and all of us are concerned about it."

A/S Phee: "On Ethiopia, this is a really good opportunity for me to make very clear what I think has been mischaracterized in general about U.S. policy. First of all, as we were discussing, the United States, the American people, have long had a relationship with all of the peoples of Ethiopia and with the Government of Ethiopia for decades. We strongly support the unity, the sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of Ethiopia. We are taking no sides in this conflict. We are doing our very best to end the conflict, which has had such devastating consequences, with hundreds of thousands of people displaced, the crash of the Ethiopian economy, and the risk to the stability of the state. We are working very hard in many diplomatic ways to try and arrest the conflict and to urge the parties to cease the fighting, to expand humanitarian access to all communities who are affected by the conflict, and to begin an inclusive national dialogue. So that's the focus of U.S. policy and it is simply not true to say that we favor any one side or another. We are quite concerned about atrocities and in looking at atrocities of course the first objective would be to end the fighting, which is perpetuating the atrocities. But a second concern is hate speech. There is a lot of hate speech among the diaspora in the United States and we would urge the diaspora to play a responsible role in helping promote a conclusion to the conflict rather than inflaming the conflict. We are also all conscious of the layers of ethnic hostility over the years that pre-date the current conflict but that are affecting our opportunities. So, thank you for letting me make that statement because it is important to clarify for all what U.S policy is toward Ethiopia."

Rep. Phillips: "Have you seen any change in behavior of malign actors since the Biden Administration has tried to respond with sanctions and visa restrictions? Any other tools available to us in Congress to affect the crisis and improve conditions?"

A/S Phee: "We have seen some changes in behavior but not adequate changes in behavior...At the moment, the conflict has intensified and moved out of Tigray...I am focused more on the negative side of the ledger in terms of the current conflict. We are working intensively to try and persuade the parties to reach a cessation of hostilities so they can begin the negotiations to move forward...Let me recap activities that are underway. You're aware that Special Envoy Feltman, working directly with the parties, with the TPLF and the OLA, we are working to support AU Envoy Obasanjo, we're working with partners in the region, discussions at the UNSC, the HRC...we are working bilaterally, multilaterally,

regionally. Congressional voice that U.S supports all people, the territorial integrity of Ethiopia...I think that would be helpful to have echoed by all of us."

Rep. Sherman: "What we're seeing is a genocide, or at least an attempted genocide, in Ethiopia. We've seen 20,000 soldiers of the Ethiopia army imprisoned months ago simply because of their Tigrayan heritage. We've seen a total media blackout in Tigray. We've seen Tigrayans referred to by top Government of Ethiopia officials as 'cancer,' 'weeds,' and 'rats' worthy of extermination. The Ethiopian and Eritrean governments have blocked humanitarian aid. Up to 900,000 face famine. Recently, over 30,000 Tigrayans in parts of Ethiopia outside of Tigray have been herded into concentration camps. Why aren't we getting them the food aid? Now, the trucks are blocked. So the first question is about air. We raised this with USAID and were told in part that USAID is airlifting relief supplies to Addis. The Ethiopia government seems bent on killing as many Tigrayans as possible so that aid is not going to get to the Tigrayan people. Why are we not flying aid directly into Tigray? Every plane can save thousands of people... [in response to witness] so you're afraid the Ethiopian government would shoot down American planes? Would they dare to do that? What would be our reaction if an American aid plane were fired upon by Ethiopian forces bent on killing as many Tigrayans as possible and killing Americans in order to do it?"

A/S Phee: "Obviously that would not be an acceptable response from a government that has historically been our partner."

Rep. Sherman: "Is the U.S. Air Force willing to protect American or UN planes as they bring critically needed supplies necessary to prevent this genocide by famine?"

A/S Phee: "That would be a decision that would of course be taken above my..."

Key Exchanges – Other Countries

Eritrea

Rep. Sherman: "I would hope that you would consult Secretary Blinken. I remember the Clinton Administration's reaction after Rwanda of wishing we had done more. And clearly, we can do more than we are. As to the trucks, it seems the Eritrean and Ethiopian military are determined to make sure trucks aren't let in...how many trucks have been let in by those two militaries in the last month? Have we even asked the Eritrean government to simply allow us to land food at Eritrean ports and to have our trucks go directly into Tigray?"

A/S Phee: "As you know our relationship with Eritrea is very negative at the moment given..."

Rep. Sherman: "But it would be nice to ask and have them say 'no, we would like to have blood on our hands. We want to see as many Tigrayans as possible die from famine. We will not allow our ports to be used.' Just to put it on the record so I don't seem that unreasonable when I say that maybe somewhere on the high seas a ship bound for Tigray should be asked to be turned around by a U.S. naval ship. The fact that Eritrea would use its military to intervene in order to commit a genocide on the Tigrayan people and what is obvious to all is to blockade a starving people...we may not have absolute proof of where

they deploy their soldiers, who are often out of their uniforms, but every Eritrean port is closed to food aid...To say that Eritrea should be able to carry out ocean trade with all the countries of the world while participating in this genocide and blockading those who are dying strikes me as unfair."

A/S Phee: "I want to flag the sanctions the United States has imposed on the Eritrean parastatals that are funding this conflict."

Rep. Sherman: "We often sanctioned entities that can't be sanctioned. Eritrea has little relationship with us. We don't give them much aid. So, then we announce we're taking away the miniscule or non-existent aid and we say we've done something. It's reminiscent of the sanctions we imposed on the Russian hackers involved in our election where we said we're not going to give them tourist visas. It's hard to identify a major economic impact of our sanctions to date on Eritrea whereas asking a single ship to turn around would send a hell of a signal."

Somalia

Rep. Omar: "Somalia has failed to have elections for over a year. What is the U.S position on trying to pressure the Somali government to engage in a process that allows for proper elections to take place?"

A/S Phee: "We agree with you that elections are critical. First to complete the parliamentary elections so the stage is set to move to the presidential election. That is a component of our engagement with the government, all parties in Somalia, and with the many regional and international actors who are also active in Somalia so that there is a unified message. We're also looking at how the AMISOM mandate can be reconfigured to support both the political process and the fight against al-Shabaab. It remains tough to convince the parties to move in the right direction/ There has been some progress in the parliamentary elections but there needs to be more, and it needs to be done more quickly to help Somalia get on a path to self-sufficiency."

Rep. Omar: "What mechanisms are we using to make sure Somalia understands what our position is and takes the proper course?"

A/S Phee: "One of the lessons I personally learned, and that Secretary Blinken learned from Afghanistan is that doing more of the same is not necessarily sufficient. There is a real effort to make clear to the Somalis that they cannot depend indefinitely on international assistance and that they need to play a role in leading and managing their own country."

South Africa/Omicron Travel Restrictions

Rep. Omar: "We recently announced a travel ban on some African nations. The South African president has called the decision 'completely unjustifiable.' We know that it was South Africa that sequenced this new variant and instead of lauding them for this achievement it appears that we are punishing them. How are you messaging this to the region and what responses are you giving to the president and how are you justifying the fact that we have not banned other countries outside of Africa that also have this variant?"

A/S Phee: "We value greatly our health partnerships with African countries, particularly South Africa, where we started the PEPFAR program in 2004, and where we continue to work closely, including through recent DFC investment, so South Africa can manufacture vaccines."

Rep. Omar: "I want to hear how you are talking to them about this. I know we value the relationship."

A/S Phee: "In the context of our engagement, Secretary Blinken called the Foreign Minister following this decision to make clear to her that the decision was taken out of an abundance of caution and to publicly praise the role of South African scientists."

Rep. Omar: "Why isn't that abundance of caution taken for the other countries outside of the African countries that also have the variant?"

A/S Phee: "That's an important question which I'm not best situated to answer as I'm responsible for countries in Africa specifically. We can take that back and thank you for raising it."

EU and Migration

Rep. Omar: "A [recent New Yorker article](#) reported that European countries are collaborating to send African migrants to detention centers in Libya. Many of us have spoken about modern day enslavement in Libya. In these prisons people are subject to severe brutality and some of them are being sold off. What are you doing to protect the human rights of African migrants in Libya? Are you engaging with our European allies and messaging to them that this is unacceptable and that they have to reverse course?"

A/S Phee: "We do remain in dialogue with the EU and, in fact, the EU Foreign Secretary will be here tomorrow. That's an opportunity for us to raise this important topic. My understanding is that we do have implementing partners in Libya that are working to address the conditions in those camps but I'm not in command of those details but I'm happy to provide them to you."

Coastal West Africa

Rep. Jacobs: "Could you talk through how you're approaching efforts for preventing instability, conflict, and violence in these countries, particularly as we're watching potential spillover from Sahel-based violent extremist groups. Which have you assessed at most at risk for increased violence?"

A/S Phee: "My first trip to the continent was to Accra and Ouagadougou to look firsthand at this issue. I think what's changed in recent years is coastal African governments and societies have expressed their concern that the terrorist challenge that Sahelian countries are facing will spill over. They are looking to the United States and international partners to help support them in that effort. Part of responding to that challenge is ensuring their own governance is inclusive and responsive to all the communities in their countries. Not, for example, we see in some countries a focus on capitals."

Guinea

Rep. Jacobs: "they recently had a coup and I'd like to know how you're approaching U.S. engagement in Guinea in terms of a risk of protracted political instability. What would you do to improve our engagement in a new strategy for the region?"

A/S Phee: "Yesterday I had the opportunity to meet the Ambassador from Guinea. I've also asked our Deputy Assistant Secretary Mike Gonzales to travel to Guinea this week. The purpose of both of these engagements was to talk to the transitional government about the importance of moving forward in the coming year to set an electoral calendar and to get Guinea back on track in terms of its return to democracy. We talked about the frustration the Guineans had with ECOWAS, that they felt ECOWAS had not done enough to help the previous government, and that contributed to the decision to lead a military coup. I made very clear in my meeting, I've sent a letter to the Prime Minister, that we want to help Guinea get back on track and we expect them to help us help them by setting an electoral timetable for the coming year. I said we would be willing to mobilize electoral assistance to help them conduct a credible election. They have an interest in revising their constitution and I said we would be willing to support that. We want to help them put roots down that show that a democratic system can respond to the concerns and demands of the Guinean people."

Mozambique

Rep. Jacobs: "I was hopeful to hear the United States is prioritizing human rights standards in the provision of security assistance...One of the drivers of extremism and terrorist recruitment is abuses or perceptions of abuses by security forces. How does the Department plan to work with the Department of Defense to ensure this attention is sustained and not overlooked in the name of short-term security?"

A/S Phee: "I want to reassure you of the Secretary's personal commitment to this issue. We've both had experiences in other theaters of conflict where it's clear that if security forces cannot act responsibly and maintain and win the trust of communities, that they cannot be successful in restoring longstanding and enduring stability in their countries. We see in Mozambique as we see in other countries, sometimes there is a primary focus on the capital with insufficient attention to provinces and border regions. So we're working with the government of Mozambique and with partner nations to try and help address the concerns that have given rise to the vulnerabilities in the northern part of Mozambique. This is an approach the Department of Defense, which I can't speak for, is committed to and we will continue to partner with them with that guiding principle."

South Sudan

Rep. Smith: "You served as our ambassador there under very trying circumstances. How are we doing? How are they doing, most importantly?"

A/S Phee: "I regret to tell you that subsequent to my assignment to South Sudan there was an effort to revitalize the agreement between the warring parties and there has been a lackluster attempt to implement the revitalized agreement. The humanitarian crisis remains

severe and I would say the situation...has not met our goals and expectations and continues to require our focus and attention."

Somaliland

Rep. Smith: "Dr. Putman, can you speak to Somaliland? I have met with a number of individuals...they are a de facto independent country, separate from the rest of Somalia, and yet all aid needs to go through Somalia. Is there a way to ensure...its one of the reasons we use NGOs...that when we have to bypass a government to get the benefits of humanitarian assistance without infringement?"

Uganda/Natural Gas

Rep. Meuser: "Biden Administration has restricted foreign assistance to natural gas projects even though natural gas is plentiful and have the carbons of other fossil fuels. The President of Uganda recently wrote an op-ed saying such restrictions leave many Africans with unreliable and expensive electricity...What's going on there? Do we have an agenda of green energy or are we trying to help these countries prosper?...Are we engaged in things that are important, stopping some of the word games about we don't want to replace China...what matters is the results...Are we just trying to look good? What is the State Department's view? Did you take notice, do you think he has a point?"

A/S Phee: "Thank you for highlighting this challenge. Given historic under development in Africa and the hungry desire, naturally, of people and governments to expand their infrastructure and provide the energy needs that would fuel development, this tension about how to manage moving towards a greener and safer world and the need for development is quite acute. When we were in Nigeria and Senegal, leaders raised the same concerns that President Museveni raised. It is a challenge we are going to have to grapple with. There are real efforts to look for offsetting actions that these governments can take. For example, in Nigeria, to cap methane emissions while Nigeria deals with its own gas transition. Senegal is also in a similar position on gas transition. I want to acknowledge that you're quite right and this is a challenge we'll have to manage."

Key Exchanges – Nigeria

CPC Designation

Rep. Smith: "I'd ask you to take back a very strong appeal by me and others that Nigeria be put back on the CPC list. I would note that Genocide Watch has called Nigeria a 'killing field of defenseless Christians,' USCIRF said it was 'unexplainable'...and from inside of Nigeria...the decision came as a 'rude shock'...One Bishop who I had a hearing a year ago said...'the mass slaughter of Christians in Nigeria's Middle Belt by every standard meets the criteria for a calculated genocide from the definition of the Genocide Convention...Please take that back because it could be re-designated tomorrow and I think that would send a very powerful message."

A/S Phee: "Your voice on religious freedom in Nigeria and in other countries is very important for U.S. policy. So thank you for your attention and focus on those matters. I will take back your concerns. I want to reassure you, I was with Secretary Blinken on his trip to Abuja, and he made very clear to the leadership that the United States remained committed to this fundamental value and that we expected the government to do more and that we will continue to make this part of our engagement."

Rep. Meuser: "A number of members of the Nigerian parliament were in Mr. Smith's office. It was concerning to say the least. They were in fear for their lives and the lives of their families. And yet last week the State Department removed Nigeria from the CPC. Please explain to us how that decision was made?"

A/S Phee: "The decision was made based on a legal determination that the government of Nigeria is not engaged in - the language of the statute is 'engaged in severe violations of religious freedom.' As you know, that doesn't mean that we're not concerned about the issue of religious freedom and that is something we have and will continue to emphasize. Nigeria is an enormous country with a population that is nearly equally divided between Christian and Muslim and has a long and proud history of religious coexistence. The country is under enormous stress right now with acute security challenges from Boko Haram and ISIS. They have enormous population challenges. They have enormous economic challenges. They are also affected by climate change. When Ranking Member Smith spoke about this he noted and acknowledged those challenges but said they weren't an adequate explanation for transgressions against religious freedom. We would agree that is an important concern that we need to continue to focus on. But I think it is helpful to understand the broad range of factors that constitute the complex country of Nigeria. I want to again emphasize our commitment to religious freedom."

Key Exchanges – Other Topics

Youth

Rep. Phillips: "60 percent of Africans are below the age of 25...how does the State Department and USAID plan to deploy the resources allocated in the FY22 budget towards empowering young leaders of tomorrow?"

A/S Phee: "I was recently in Khartoum and had the opportunity to meet with some of the resistance committees that have been organizing protests in Sudan. I think we have all been inspired by their role in standing up to the history of military dominance in Sudan. It was a great reminder to me of the important role that youth can play all across the continent in challenging outdated political systems and making them more responsive and accountable to the people. I can assure you...we prioritize meeting with youth, listening to their concerns, and that is something we emphasize in our public diplomacy. Secondly...the importance of commercial diplomacy...is to help African economies develop to absorb the youth bulge and make sure there are employment opportunities for them."

Prosper Africa

Rep. Issa: "How is the Biden Administration going to carry out this important program?"

A/S Phee: "I can tell you on our recent trip when I accompanied Secretary Blinken, it was made very clear to him the interest and appetite of African partners for greater trade and investment by the United States in Africa. I want to reassure you that Prosper Africa...activities under that umbrella are continuing. Everyone recognizes the value of that initiative. There are efforts underway...to try and mobilize and strengthen that important initiative. We also have a great tool in the Development Finance Corporation...generally speaking, I believe we would like to use U.S. comparative advantages. That would be green technologies, efforts to promote human rights standards and inclusion of women...our skill in setting commercial standards and regulatory environments that attracts and support U.S. investment..."

Vaccines

Rep. Malinowski: "I want to shift to an issue I'm quite on which I'm quite frustrated with all of us, including the Administration. Six months ago, dozens of Members of the House of Representatives wrote to President Biden urging him to launch in effect a moonshot effort to vaccinate the world against covid. We repeatedly reached out to the Administration indicating that we were willing to champion large amounts of funding in the Build Back Better agenda. We specifically wrote, again, six months ago, if you do not do this we are likely to see the emergence of variants in developing countries come back and hurt the United States and could potentially defeat the existing vaccines. We were not taken up on any of those offers. Here we are, today, dealing with a crisis that is on the minds of every single American. In your testimony you noted that the United States has donated 90 million doses of vaccine to Africa. I know you don't set global vaccine policy, but I want to start by asking, why do you think that is an impressive number?"

A/S Phee: "I don't know that I would characterize it as an impressive number. But it is a factual number of the effort to date. I think we all agree that it is inadequate, and I would note that Secretary Blinken said this week, it's very clear with omicron variant that it is now undeniable that if we don't take care of the whole world, we'll never be safe ourselves. That was also a theme on his trip. He made very clear that in health diplomacy, in health security, and global health systems, if Africans were not strong then we would not be strong. So I will take that and reemphasize your point."

Rep. Malinowski: "Just to get to 40 percent vaccination in Africa by the end of the year, which obviously we will not do, we would need about 800 million more doses. We have donated 90. I'm sure you know that more Americans have gotten their booster shots, their third shots, than the number of people who have gotten their first shot in the eight African countries subject to the travel ban right now. I trust you are not comfortable with that. But that is the result of choices our government has made. We have, effectively, an America first vaccination policy that has come back to haunt America, ironically. At current rates of effort, at what point do you think we will get to the 70-point target? End of 2022? 2023? ...You guys have been robbing Peter to pay Paul and Members of Congress have been

offering billions of dollars. And we would have provided billions of dollars in the Build Back Better Bill had the Administration simply asked for it. That bill is still in the Senate. There are still opportunities. What I want you all to take back, because I know the Secretary cares deeply about this, is that we have an opportunity in the next few days, if the president and the Secretary want to seize it, to try to get the funding to do this in the Build Back Better Bill. But they're going to have to say so."

AF Staffing

Rep. Bass: "I believe in your presentation you said that the...Africa Bureau specifically has staffing challenges and I wanted to know what you meant by that. Do we need to provide more resources and, if so, how much?"

A/S Phee: "We do have staffing challenges...we have 801 [positions] and at the moment we have nearly 15 percent which are vacant."

Rep. Bass: "...it wasn't a question of money but a question of people willing to take those assignments?"

A/S Phee: "That's true. About half of those posts are historically difficult to staff. It's particularly difficult insituations where officers cannot bring their families, where there isn't appropriate health or educational facilities, or there are security concerns...But we also have shortages in the Department and I think as you're all aware we have real shortages in our Chief of Mission positions. Right now we have 17 Embassies that are led by Chargés."

Rep. Bass: "Do you mean because the Ambassadors haven't been confirmed or the Ambassadors haven't been proposed? Are they being held up?"

A/S Phee: "...about 17 of which are Ambassadors to Africa. The Department has worked to put 14 forward for 2022 so we will see, assuming confirmation, we will see a big change in the leadership of our Embassies on the continent."

This is an unofficial summary and should be checked against the official transcript. For additional questions, please contact Nick Sadoski, Deputy Director for Congressional and Public Affairs, AF/PDPA.

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From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Fwd: HART Visit Report: Breaking Point in Central Nigeria?
Date:	Mon, 21 Mar 2022 17:43:51 +0000

In case you didn't receive directly

From: Caroline Cox (b)(6)@hart-uk.org>

Sent: Monday, March 21, 2022 1:14:40 PM

To: Caroline Cox (b)(6)@hart-uk.org>

Subject: HART Visit Report: Breaking Point in Central Nigeria?

Dear colleague,

I recently returned from a fact-finding visit to central Nigeria, where Islamist Fulani militia attacks continue to escalate against predominantly Christian victims.

Our Visit Report (attached) provides more information, including photos of destroyed villages and eye-witness accounts of the slaughter of women, children and the elderly. The violence has resulted in thousands of deaths and millions displaced across the Middle Belt – yet with virtually no support from the Nigerian Government or international community.

The report can also be accessed via the following link: https://www.hart-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Nigeria-Visit-Report_March-2022-web.pdf

I would be very grateful if you could share the Visit Report widely among your network. Please do be in touch should you require more information.

Best wishes,



The Baroness Cox

Independent Member of the House of Lords and Founder President of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART)

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From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Fwd: Christian groups furious at Blinken for removing Nigeria from religious violence list
Date:	Wed, 24 Nov 2021 01:46:07 +0000

FYSA. IRF sent me a note today with other reactions to their designations. I'm going to include this with the buckslip.

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From: (b)(6)@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 8:40 PM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: Christian groups furious at Blinken for removing Nigeria from religious violence list

I'm sharing this from POLITICO: Christian groups furious at Blinken for removing Nigeria from religious violence list



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To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	FW: Politico: Christian groups furious at Blinken for removing Nigeria from religious violence list
Date:	Wed, 24 Nov 2021 15:54:00 +0000

FYI

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 10:20 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Politico: Christian groups furious at Blinken for removing Nigeria from religious violence list

Hi, (b)(6)

You probably saw this already, but just in case:

(b)(6)

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/11/23/christian-groups-blinken-nigeria-religious-violence-list-523258>

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~~(SBU)~~ Nigeria: AF Recommendation to De-List Nigeria as a CPC with no SWL designation

(b)(5)