

# Support for the Robust International Response to Pandemic Act (H.R.6581)

The letter below, signed by **over 100 U.S. organizations**, supports the ***Robust International Response to Pandemic Act*** ([H.R.6581](#)), introduced by Rep. García, Schakowsky, and Takano, and co-sponsored by Reps. Bass, Cicilline, Engel, Jayapal, Khanna, Lee, McGovern and [others](#).

The signatories below urge Congress to include H.R.6581 in the new coronavirus response. This global public health crisis, and deepening world recession, together could kill millions of people, and have devastating ramifications for American workers. Congress should ensure the U.S. government allows **a very large global financial assistance package from the International Monetary Fund**. This would be entirely from the IMF and **not financed in any way by U.S. taxpayers**.

H.R.6581 authorizes a major issuance of IMF Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), an emergency financial tool used as recently as 2009. The IMF [issued SDRs in 2009](#) in response to the global financial crisis, helping ease the impact of the crisis on developing economies. We believe it's time to do this again -- swiftly and on a large scale.

**Signatories include** (full list beneath letter below):

AFL-CIO  
Amnesty International USA  
Bread for the World  
Church World Service  
Jubilee USA Network  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns  
Oxfam America  
Partners In Health  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Save the Children US  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
Union for Reform Judaism

Thank you very much for your attention.

Dear Representative:

As COVID-19 triggers public health and economic crises in countries around the world, we, the undersigned organizations, urge you to co-sponsor the ***Robust International Response to Pandemic Act*** ([H.R.6581](#)), introduced by Representatives Jesus "Chuy" García, Jan Schakowsky, Mark Takano, and [13 other original co-sponsors](#). **We believe Congress must enact H.R.6581 as part of forthcoming coronavirus legislation to ensure that developing countries will be supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international financial institutions with the resources they need to confront this unprecedented global crisis.**

*H.R.6581:*

1. **Debt Relief:** Instructs U.S. representatives to the international financial institutions to support a suspension of debt payments to those institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. **Protection of Public Health Spending:** Instructs U.S. representatives to the international financial institutions to oppose programs that undermine countries' ability to respond to COVID-19, such as those that encourage cuts to public health spending;
3. **Needed Resources:** Instructs the U.S. representative to the IMF to support issuing 3 trillion in "Special Drawing Rights."

The United Nations World Food Program [estimates that](#), as a result of the pandemic, 265 million people could face starvation by the end of the year. A [report](#) published by the United Nations University has found that half a billion people could be pushed into poverty. **Bold, concerted international action is urgently needed.**

One key measure that economists, development experts and humanitarian organizations from around the world are calling for is a major issuance of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs). A [special international reserve asset](#) created by the IMF, SDRs are distributed to central banks of countries in proportion to their IMF quotas. Countries can exchange SDRs for freely usable currencies when they are in weak financial positions. They are similar to the Federal Reserve's swap arrangements, which have primarily benefited wealthy nations, whereas SDRs are distributed to all IMF member countries. Congress should support this costless and effective currency lifeline for the rest of the world.

The IMF last [issued SDRs in 2009](#) in response to the global financial crisis and thereby helped ease the impact of the crisis on developing economies. Because SDRs are issued to each country roughly in proportion to the size of its economy, economists project that an issuance of

three trillion SDRs will ensure that significant help can reach Latin America, sub-saharan Africa and other regions that face major economic and public health emergencies.

An issuance of SDRs for COVID-19 recovery has been endorsed by IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, the Secretary General of the UN, most G20 countries, the New York Times and the Financial Times. Former World Bank Chief Economist Joseph Stiglitz asserts that in order to help developing economies, “Full use must be made of the International Monetary Fund’s Special Drawing Rights.”

Another important measure to help developing countries during the pandemic is a moratorium on debt service payments to the IMF, World Bank and other international financial institutions. Low and middle income countries owe their creditors an estimated \$2.7- \$3.4 trillion in foreign currency debt service over the two years 2020-21.\* Across 46 countries, debt payments for this year are currently projected to be 400% of their health budgets.

H.R. 6581 supports both a major issuance of SDRs and a moratorium on debt to international financial institutions, two vital measures that provide developing countries with critical financial support as they battle the pandemic.

**We ask that you contact [alex.campbell@mail.house.gov](mailto:alex.campbell@mail.house.gov) in Rep. García's office to cosponsor H.R.6581 and urge House Leadership to adopt this lifesaving and urgently needed proposal in the next coronavirus spending package.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Action Corps  
Action Corps Florida  
ActionAid USA  
AFL-CIO  
Africa Faith and Justice Network  
Alianza Americas  
American Friends Service Committee  
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain  
Amnesty International USA  
Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (USA)  
Avaaz  
Baltimore Nonviolence Center  
Baltimore, MD Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter Veterans For Peace  
Baltimore Peace Action  
Bread for the World  
Brooklyn For Peace

CASA, Maryland  
Center for Economic and Policy Research  
Center for International Policy  
Central Florida Jobs With Justice  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Chicago Area Peace Action  
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America  
Church World Service  
Coalition for Peace Action  
CODEPINK  
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
Concerned Citizens For Change, NY  
Concerned Families of Westchester  
Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
Congregation Rodeph Sholom  
Demand Progress  
Faiths for Safe Water  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Florida Immigrant Coalition  
First Unitarian Church Des Moines  
Freedom Forward  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Global Exchange  
Global Justice Clinic of NYU School of Law  
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition  
Growing Hope Globally  
Health Alliance International  
Helping Hand for Survivors  
Historians for Peace and Democracy  
Iglesia Episcopal Jesus de Nazaret  
Indivisible South Bay LA  
Iowa Interfaith Power and Light  
J Street  
Jobs With Justice  
Jubilee USA Network  
Just Foreign Policy  
Justice Is Global  
Knowdrones[.]com  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
MADRE  
Maine Episcopal Network for Justice  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Maryland Peace Action  
Maryland United for Peace and Justice  
Massachusetts Peace Action  
Mauritanian Network for Human Rights  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Methodist Federation for Social Action, Iowa Chapter  
MoveOn  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
New Jersey Peace Action  
NYC-DSA Anti-War Working Group  
Oxfam America  
Partners In Health  
Partnerships for Trauma Recovery  
Pax Christi USA  
Peace Action  
Peace Action Maine  
Peace Action New York State  
Peters Partnership Organization  
Physicians for Social Responsibility Iowa Chapter  
Plymouth UCC Peace Committee, Des Moines, IA  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Prevent Nuclear War/Maryland  
Project Blueprint  
Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture, NY  
RootsAction[.]org  
Save the Children US  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York  
Social Friends of the World Social Forum  
STAND: the student-led movement to end mass atrocities  
The Hunger Project  
The Peace & Justice Program of All Souls NYC  
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
US Labor Against the War  
Washington Global Health Alliance  
WESPAC Foundation  
Western New York Peace Center  
Win Without War  
Women Against War  
Women's Refugee Care  
Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation

## Yemeni Alliance Committee

\*This communication does not purport to represent the institutional views, if any, of New York University.