

**NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE  
115TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION**

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**HEARINGS**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS**

**FIRST SESSION**

—  
**JANUARY 3, 2017 TO JANUARY 3, 2018**  
—

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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S. Hrg. 115-413

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## NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2017

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:32 p.m., in Room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake presiding. Present: Senators Flake [presiding], Barrasso, and Booker.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF FLAKE, U.S. SENATOR FROM ARIZONA

Senator FLAKE. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today, the committee will consider the nominations of two experienced career Foreign Service Officers to be the U.S. Ambassadors to the Republic of the Congo, and Senegal and Guinea Bissau, respectively. I was pleased to meet with each of today's nominees in my office several weeks ago and to learn more about them and about their potential postings.

Thank you for coming by.

Senegal remains stable in a region often plagued with instability around, but it is one of the few countries in Africa to have never experienced a coup d'etat. We cooperated well with Senegal on counterterrorism and with other issues.

Our relationship with Guinea-Bissau has been strained on account of a near-constant stream of political crises, and the previous administration took some steps to try to make that relationship more positive.

The Republic of the Congo continues to present challenges for the United States with trade and investment ties. Trade and investment ties with Congo center on the country's energy resources, and for the region in which it is all too common for heads of state to try to alter or bypass congressional term limits so they can just hang on to power.

I thank both of you for your time and for sharing your expertise with us. I want to pass along our thanks to your family members. I am sure you will make some introductions. We appreciate the sacrifices that they make, and for all the good work that you do.

With that, I will recognize Senator Booker.

### STATEMENT OF HON. CORY BOOKER, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY

Senator BOOKER. I appreciate that. I want to echo my chairman's words today. This is a tremendous moment to be able to sit here

with the two of you, who have a very long, esteemed careers in the State Department and Foreign Service.

I have been in the Senate for a short time, a few years, and have been on this committee for short weeks, but I am very familiar with the important role you play for our country. I just want to thank you both for the service that you have rendered.

I want to say it clear, and I know that I speak for all the Senators on this dais, that your work, your safety, and your success is a priority for me and for us.

The countries to which you have been nominated to serve in have very important U.S. policy interests. Frankly, I think they have interests that are important to all of humanity.

Senegal was discussed by the chairman. They have their stability. They are a strong civil society with a relatively free press. It is a beacon of hope for Muslim-majority countries.

And for Guinea-Bissau and the Republic of the Congo, they continue to have grave concerns, concerns of poor governance, political conflict, and humanitarian challenges. I really do believe that all of us as Americans should be deeply concerned about the success of the people of those countries, and our role in that is critical.

It is a testimony to the two of you, this is something that is really exciting to me that we have President Obama and President Trump showing their accord. This is the vast territory on which they obviously agree on things. And that is really a testimony to the qualifications of the two individuals that sit before us.

So thank you very much. I look forward to your testimony. And I do want to say, as I said to you in the backroom, we are very, unfortunately, crunched for time, having to go see the President in regard to North Korea.

So we look forward to having a good hearing, cogent hearing, even if it is relatively brief compared to others.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Our first nominee Tulinabo Mushingi, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service who currently serves as U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso, a position he has held since 2013. This is the second time I have had the pleasure of being present for one of his confirmation hearings.

Mr. Ambassador, welcome back.

Our second nominee is Todd Haskell, who serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs. Prior to that, he was the Africa Bureau's director of public diplomacy and public affairs. Mr. Haskell joined the Foreign Service in 1985 and served in the Dominican Republic, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Israel, Egypt, and Mexico. I am trying to figure some nexus in all of that, but I have failed.

Senator BOOKER. They are all on planet Earth.

Senator FLAKE. They are.

So we have before us two very experienced diplomats. We appreciate you being here.

And, Mr. Mushingi, you may begin.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TULINABO SALAMA MUSHINGI OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU**

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you once again as President Trump's nominee for United States Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. I very much appreciate the confidence and trust that the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. I am equally grateful to receive this distinguished committee's consideration.

Allow me to thank my wife of 35 years, Rebecca, and our daughter, who have supported me through my career.

My work and travels across Africa, including as Ambassador to Burkina Faso, have provided me with the experience needed to foster strong ties between the United States, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau.

Senegal is one of our most reliable partners in Africa in our efforts to boost economic growth, promote good governance, fight terrorism, as well as counter the drivers of terrorism. For example, to strengthen our defense capabilities, in 2016, our two countries signed a defense cooperation agreement that gives the United States the ability to respond quickly to emergency situations in the region. Senegal also hosts one of the largest Peace Corps programs in Africa.

Turning now to Guinea-Bissau, its longstanding political impasse and weak governance not only threaten the country's own development, they also set a dangerous example for the region. If confirmed, I will strengthen our efforts to promote economic development, step up civilian governance to increase democracy, and counter drug trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea.

Mr. Chairman, I have been fortunate to work in public service, in particular on African issues, for over 27 years. If confirmed, I will work hard with our U.S. mission teams to advance U.S. national security interests, to reflect American values, to protect American citizens and interests, and to maximize the effectiveness of our cooperation in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Thank you very much for inviting me today. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[Ambassador Mushingi's prepared statement follows:]

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF TULINABO MUSHINGI**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. I appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. I am equally grateful to receive the distinguished committee's consideration.

Today, it is my privilege to present my wife, Rebecca, who honorably served our country working for the U.S. Peace Corps, and my daughter, Furaha. Both have supported me throughout my career in the Foreign Service.

My work and travels across Africa, including as Ambassador to Burkina Faso, have provided me with the experience needed to foster strong ties between the United States and Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Members of this committee and their staffs to promote and protect U.S. interests in both countries.

Allow me to first turn to our relations with Senegal, where a shared commitment to democratic values, security, and economic growth forms the bedrock of our partnership. Senegal's success in these areas sets a strong example for the region, advancing our core interests of reducing regional threats and promoting greater trade.

Through their democratic traditions, the people of Senegal have shown over and over again that they can and will hold their leaders to account by casting votes in democratically-held elections and exercising their right to free speech. Senegal's leaders have also shown that they respect the democratic rights and will of the people.

The United States supports the Government of Senegal's efforts to resolve the 34-year, low-intensity, separatist conflict in the southern Casamance region. A de facto cease fire has been in place there since 2013, I believe due in no small part to the success of our economic development and diplomatic efforts. This regular and sustained engagement with all parties to the conflict, has contributed to real change on the ground and the possibility of a lasting peace. If confirmed, I will make sure our effort to support the Casamance peace process remains a priority.

Senegal stands as one of our most reliable partners in Africa in the effort to promote good governance, fight terrorism, and counter the drivers of terrorism. Senegal is a member Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) and of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) programs and is a leading voice for using regional approaches to CT challenges. Senegal consistently ranks among the top ten troop and police contributors to UN peacekeeping missions. To truly understand Senegal's importance, one need, look no further than the instrumental role Senegal played in helping ensure the peaceful transition to power of a democratically elected president after 22 years of dictatorship in The Gambia, and the role it continues to play in supporting the Economic Community of West African States Military Intervention in The Gambia (ECOMIG).

In 2016, Senegal and the United States signed a defense cooperation agreement. This agreement gives us the ability to respond quickly to emergency situations in the region, while also supporting Senegal's capacity to fight terrorism. If confirmed, I will work with Senegal to continue to strengthen our common effort to fight terrorism in West Africa and beyond.

Senegal aims to be an attractive destination for investment—by its own citizens and by foreign investors. American entrepreneurs are finding new opportunities to do business in Senegal, and U.S. development assistance has already made critical contributions to the infrastructure the country must have for sustained economic growth.

In September 2015, Senegal completed a \$540 million MCC Compact focused on developing transportation and irrigation infrastructure in northern and southern Senegal, dramatically improving agricultural productivity and market access for farmers. In December 2015, the MCC Board selected Senegal as a candidate for development of a second five-year compact. The Government of Senegal is working closely with MCC to identify ways to alleviate the high cost of energy.

Lastly, our people-to-people relations have never been stronger thanks to robust public diplomacy exchanges and over 275 American Peace Corps volunteers placed in communities across Senegal, working on projects in agriculture, agroforestry, health, and community economic development. If confirmed, I will work to deepen the bilateral partnership through programs like these, which are aimed at helping Senegal become an even stronger partner for the United States.

Turning now to Guinea-Bissau, our efforts remain focused on promoting stable civilian governance to increase democracy, economic development, and counter drug trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea. Guinea-Bissau has seen five different governments in the last 15 months. This reflects deep divisions, driven in large part by personal grievances, which have hindered efforts by the United Nations and ECOWAS to bring about a resolution to Guinea-Bissau's long-standing political impasse.

Instability and weak governance not only threaten the country's own development; they set a dangerous example in a region where trans-national crime already thrives on porous, undefended borders and unpatrolled seas. Democracy and rule of law will flourish only if the President, the Government of Guinea-Bissau, the Na-

tional Assembly, and leaders of the main political forces work together to establish an inclusive, responsive, and an accountable government that serves all citizens.

In FY 2016, Guinea-Bissau received limited assistance in International Military Education and Training to support the professionalization of its military forces and more constructive and stable civil-military relations. The country also received aid to promote Rule of Law and support counter-narcotics projects. If confirmed, I will work with international organizations, such as the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and regional bodies such as ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, to support security and constitutional rule and to bolster economic growth.

Mr. Chairman, I have been fortunate to work in public service and particularly on African issues for many years. I am very familiar with the culture and peoples of West Africa and U.S. interests in the region. If confirmed, I look forward to working with our truly extraordinary U.S. Mission team in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, and, as Chief of Mission, working to ensure the safety, security, and of all U.S. citizens as we work together to advance U.S. interests in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Mushingi.  
Ambassador Haskell?

**STATEMENT OF TODD PHILIP HASKELL OF FLORIDA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Mr. HASKELL. If confirmed. [Laughter.]

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and with interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests and U.S. values in the Congo, and to help all Congolese achieve the bright future they deserve.

Accompanying me here today is my wife, Jennifer, who has traveled to be with us all the way from South Africa, where she serves as the management counselor at our Embassy in Pretoria, and two of my children, Michael and Jonah, who have come from Texas and New York, respectively. My third son is actually currently teaching English in China and cannot be with us.

Senator FLAKE. Raise your hand, will you?

Good. Thank you.

Mr. HASKELL. The Republic of the Congo, with a population of about 4.5 million people, sits in a strategically important position on the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. It is the fourth largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 500 U.S. citizens live in the Republic of the Congo, and U.S. businesses are active in the petroleum sector and other industries.

President Denis Sassou N'Gusso has played a valuable role as a mediator in regional crises. Under his leadership, Congo has deployed peacekeepers to the Central African Republic for more than a decade now, and is hosting approximately 35,000 refugees from that country.

Congolese troops deploying to the Central African Republic receive U.S. Government-sponsored training, and the Congo military also participates in the international military education and training program.

U.S. policy seeks to promote the development of democratic institutions and the long-term stability of Congo.

President Sassou has been in power for 33 of the last 38 years. He overcame constitutional term limits through a referendum in October 2015, and he was reelected President in March 2016. Our public statements at that time criticized the flawed electoral process and the arrests of opposition leaders following the vote, while praising the people of Congo for their active participation in the election.

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the need for good governance and effective institutions that serve the citizens of Congo.

The United States is one of many countries addressing a broad range of health issues in Congo, such as poor child nutrition, HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. And U.S. assistance in the health sector also focuses on identifying emerging infectious diseases such as Ebola.

Embassy Brazzaville coordinates with several U.S. Government agencies to assist Congo on natural resources management and the protection of Congo's flora and fauna, including lowland gorillas and forest elephants.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the collective experience of my 32 or so years in the Foreign Service to advance U.S. interests, to ensure the safety and welfare of all Americans and U.S. Government employees, and to strengthen bilateral relations with and promote the long-term stability of the Republic of the Congo.

I am looking forward to working with this committee in furtherance of these goals, and I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Thank you.

[Mr. Haskell's prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TODD P. HASKELL

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Congo (ROC). If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests and values in the Congo, and to help all Congolese achieve the bright future they deserve.

Accompanying me here today is my wife Jennifer, who has traveled to be with us today from South Africa where she serves as Management Counselor at our Embassy in Pretoria, and two of my three children, Michael and Jonah, who have come from Texas and New York respectively. My third son Seth is currently teaching English in Chengdu China.

The Republic of Congo, with a population of about 4.5 million people, sits in a strategically important position on the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. It is the fourth largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 500 U.S. citizens live in the Republic of Congo, and U.S. businesses are active in the petroleum business and other industries.

President Denis Sassou N'Guesso has played a valuable role as mediator in regional crises. Under his leadership, Congo has sent peacekeepers to the Central African Republic for more than a decade now, and is hosting approximately 35,000 refugees from that country. Congolese troops deploying to the Central African Republic receive U.S. Government-sponsored training, and the Congo military also participates in the International Military Education and Training program.

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If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the need for good governance and effective institutions that serve the citizens of Congo.

The United States is one of many countries addressing a broad range of health issues in ROC, such as poor child nutrition, HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. U.S. assistance in the health sector also focuses on identifying emerging infectious diseases such as Ebola. Embassy Brazzaville also coordinates with several U.S. Government agencies to assist the Congo on natural resource management and the protection of the Congo's forest and fauna, including lowland gorillas and forest elephants.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the collective experiences of my 31 years in the Foreign Service to advance U.S. interests, to ensure the safety and welfare of all Americans and U.S. Government employees, and to strengthen bilateral relations with and promote long-term stability in the Republic of Congo. I look forward to working with the committee in furtherance of these goals, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Thank you both.

Mr. Mushingi, with regard to Senegal, when we spoke in our office, we talked about U.S. business opportunities there. What can we do more to encourage U.S. businesses to locate and employ those in Senegal?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question. In fact, economic growth and economic development is one of our priorities in Senegal. If confirmed, of course, I will continue in that same vein.

For Senegal, as we discussed, we are happy to see the interest by American businesses, American companies that are now, that have been for a while, and continue to be interested in Senegal.

And Senegal has proven to be a welcoming nation. In fact, the hospitality they are known for called teranga is obvious when these companies start knocking on the door.

The list of companies currently in Senegal is actually impressive, more than 20, the last time I checked, including companies like Citibank. The latest, which is the NBA, it just started an academy in Senegal for the whole continent of Africa. We have Kosmos that is interested in oil and gas.

So now we have really an opportunity to increase this range of companies interested in Senegal, and we will work hard to continue advocating for American companies that are interested to come to Senegal.

Senator FLAKE. There has been a rift lately between Senegal and Israel. I have sponsorship of the resolution with regard to settlement activity, and it has caused Israel to actually take some measures with regard to economic aid that was promised. That might also affect our relationship.

What do you see as your role there?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. If confirmed, my role, Senator, will be to continue the dialogue that my predecessors have had with the Government of Senegal about our values and about our relations with all our friends, including Israel.

One thing, if I can make just a couple points on that resolution, it is good for us to note what the vote was, but also, we need to remember that Senegal as a member of the OIC, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, is one of the few that has maintained for a long time diplomatic relations with Israel despite pressure.

The second point I just want to make on that resolution is that it was a unanimous resolution. The United States will have ab-

stained, but it was 14 votes, all the countries on the committee voted for that resolution.

The final point I would make is that, as we speak today, the Embassy of Israel is still open in Senegal.

And, just to conclude, saying that really the discussion and the conversation continues between the two countries. And as outsiders, as partners, as friends, we can only continue to work with the Government of Senegal in making sure they know where American values stand and what our stand is in relation to the other friends.

Senator FLAKE. Just quickly on Guinea-Bissau, there are allegations that some of the military have been involved in drug trafficking. What cooperation can we have or do we have with the Government to ensure that that does not continue?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Guinea-Bissau, as we said earlier, is really going through this political impasse. But we have to note also that the current democratically elected government is trying to work with their equivalent of the national assembly.

On drug trafficking especially, I had my briefing, my consultation with a colleague from the Drug Enforcement Agency. I have had my meeting with the USAID, my meeting with DOD. All of us are working with the people of Guinea-Bissau, the Government of Guinea-Bissau, to make sure that they keep their attention focused on this issue of drug trafficking.

The U.S. Coast Guard was looking at their port security because most of the trafficking comes through the port. And with the professionalization of the military, we are trying to get a military, a Guinea-Bissau military, that is aware of these issues and try to counter this drug trafficking problem.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. We have agreed to try to do this in one round, so I will continue to go over my time limit, if that is okay.

Mr. Haskell, how many outside of your immediate family and the State Department know there is a Republic of the Congo and not just the DRC? [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. You do not have to answer that, but go ahead.

Mr. HASKELL. I am trying to think of something clever to say.

No, it is true. I think there is a bit of Congo confusion, but I think the relationship with the Republic of the Congo is very important in its own right.

Senator FLAKE. It is. I am grateful that we have put the importance on it.

Part of the problem that we have had in terms of a business environment in the Republic of the Congo has been the Government's unwillingness to settle its debt to contractors and individuals who have done work there in the past.

What role will you have, if confirmed, in trying to get them to address that issue?

Mr. HASKELL. Thank you for that question.

I think that if one just looked at Congo-Brazzaville neutrally or objectively, you would think that it would be a tremendous investment destination for U.S. investment. There is really significant



natural resources, the petroleum sector and mining and forestry. And yet we really do not see that.

We do see some U.S. companies that have invested there. Chevron is active in the petroleum sector. Seaboard, which is a Kansas-based food processing company, operates there. But not the kind of level that you would expect, given the resources that they do have.

That really has to do with a doing-business environment that is extremely difficult. On the World Bank's ranking of doing business in countries, I believe the Republic of the Congo ranks 177 worldwide out of some 190 or so nations, which is poor not just by worldwide standards but, frankly, poor even in terms of the neighborhood, which has not always been a great place to do business.

So I think it is really important to work with the Government to identify those issues. I think at a time of low oil prices, there is real interest in the Government in looking at diversifying the economy, about moving into entrepreneurship, about looking at other things. That is the kind of assistance and help that we can provide.

I also think that one thing, that one case we have to make, and we have made it over time but we need to continue to make it, is when you do have the kind of disputes that you referred to in your question, it is so important that the Republic of the Congo try to resolve these disputes in a transparent manner with the folks, with the businesses that they have disputes with, because that sends a signal to other investors about the possibility of going there.

So, if confirmed, I can assure you that I will be an advocate for U.S. businesses when they did get into conflicts, such as the one you described.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. You touched on, in your opening statement, but one of the important parts of our relationship is the preservation of wildlife, some that are only found in large numbers in the Republic of the Congo, lowland gorillas, forest elephants.

How important is our relationship there? And what are the biggest threats that we can help with?

Mr. HASKELL. I think our relationship is very important.

The Congo Forest River basin is the second largest tropical rain forest in the world. It is, as I noted, as you also noted, home to species which have really no other home or is particularly hospitable.

We have had actually reasonably good success working with the Government of the Republic of the Congo in training their rangers and in working in efforts to protect their natural parks. I think those are important efforts. They are not expensive efforts. They are efforts that there are other international partners with whom we can work in the region. We will continue down that line.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. I am grateful, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mushingi, thank you very much for being here. Again, grateful.

Your wife, I think she smiled. There she is. It is nice to have your family with you. That is tremendous.

I just want to ask you a little bit about Senegal stability. Obviously, it is seen as one of the more stable countries, but they still

seem to be working on reforms, and there were some reforms in 2016.

Can you just evaluate those reforms for me and let me know what you think about its sort of democratic trajectory overall?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Senegal really has proven in that region to have a commitment, strong commitment, to democratic values. It is one of the few countries where, in that region, where they have had a peaceful transfer of power between different administrations, from the opposition to the majority party. And that tradition has existed since independence, and it still goes on.

Now the one thing that, if confirmed, that we will have to continue working on is to see how we can strengthen the principles that have already been acquired, that they already have, and that they are doing in Senegal. I was discussing this with a colleague, and one thing that we have to do and we have to continue working on are three areas that we can focus on.

One, trying to strengthen the role of the civil societies, because they play an important role of kind of watchdog as far as the executive and the assembly, what they are doing. They have been vocal, they have proven their role in the society.

The second one is really the youth bulge that we observe all around Africa, how we can get the young people that make up the majority of the population, whether in Senegal, whether in many other African countries, to encourage their participation in the democratic process.

Nowadays, like we talk about the millennials, in some of those countries, we are talking about a generation of democracy. So that new generation, how we can get them to continue working in, participating in the democratic process.

The last one is the involvement of women, and women and their role in the democratic process, and also their participation in all aspects of running the Government.

So for Senegal, again, the basic principles of democracy, we share the same commitment for basic democratic rules, democratic principles. We just have to continue working on that.

Senator BOOKER. If I can, two quick follow-ups on that.

First of all, we just had a very fascinating hearing on Libya. We think of the role of U.S. strength often in terms of the military, but the people who were testifying were talking about the importance of the efforts we were doing to strengthen civil society.

So I worry about the U.S. investments, especially with some of the budget proposals that have already come out, about that being the important role that we can be playing in stabilizing or even strengthening a democracy.

Do you have any thoughts or advice, as an Article 1 branch of the U.S. Government that focuses on funding the State Department, about investing in those aspects of the State Department that focus on building civil society?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator.

Once again, what we are doing, what I did, for example, in Burkina Faso, was to make priorities with the resources we have. The budget is voted. We were given resources. We work within those resources.

So if confirmed for Senegal, again, to make those priorities clear.

Senator BOOKER. I am going to interrupt you. I appreciate it. I get your point, and you are being very good by not giving me your opinion on overall funding levels. I guess that means the chairman and I are going to have to do our work without your input there.

Let me ask you this last question on Senegal. Are there any concrete lessons that we can apply from Senegal in terms of other nations around, in terms of building a stable democracy?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator.

The concrete lessons that we can apply are that, like we observed during the last elections, one lesson was that, indeed, the participation of all members of the society, all the citizens, is important during an election to give legitimacy to the people elected.

So using civil societies, working with civil societies, including giving space to all the political parties, and also respecting the constitution of the country, all those were principles that were clear when Senegal was going through the last elections.

Senator BOOKER. I am going to press for maybe one more question, and then we have two other Senators who have arrived, and I want to give them ample opportunity.

But, Mr. Haskell, you have had a tremendous experience, especially I want to thank you. You have done incredible work as a Deputy Secretary over all of Africa, and I guess specific countries about the area in which you are going to be, God willing, the Ambassador.

I do just have the overall concern about—the chairman made an insightful use of sarcasm about the confusion of two Congos. I have an overall concern with just America's attention and focus on the subcontinent as a whole, especially with the economic opportunities that are there, especially with the challenges that we have, everything from terrorism to how they are playing a role in other global dynamics. We have heard already about Israel and the like.

I just wonder, for a guy who is new at this, you have been doing this for decades and focused at least on the subcontinent for some time now, do you have any wisdom that you would want to impart to myself and my colleagues here about ways to leverage U.S. influence in Africa for the good of humanity as well as American interests?

Mr. HASKELL. Thank you for that question. It is a great opportunity to talk about this.

I will note, and I think sometimes something that gets lost a little bit in the headlines when we look at what is going on around Africa, is the extent to which Africa has dramatically transformed in a positive way over the last several decades.

It was not that long ago where it was difficult to look at the continent and find too many democratic governments, or it was difficult to find economies that were thriving, to find places where innovation was occurring. Now we see it not everywhere on the continent but in a great many places where you have elections, where you have alteration of power between two different parties based on the results of elections, where you have economies, you have tech hubs in some places on the continent.

I do think that the picture of the continent as a whole is sometimes much brighter than taking a quick glance at the headlines

as they hit the paper. I suppose another good sign is the fact that occasionally Africa does make headlines in newspapers in a way that it really does not.

I will echo what Ambassador Mushingi said. I spent most of my career as a public diplomacy officer. That means I have been working a great deal with civil society. I have done the traditional diplomacy and the rest of it. But I have worked with young people. I have worked with women's groups. I have worked with disadvantaged groups. I have worked with civil society, certainly.

And I think that there is a lot to be said there for the advances that are occurring there, and we have made a tremendous difference. The United States has a role to play. And I think working with civil society, working with other international partners, working with like-minded governments, I think we can achieve even more moving forward.

So I guess the one thing that I think is sort of not understood as well as it should be about Africa is the extent as to how far it has come and, frankly, how bright its future is.

Senator BOOKER. Sir, thank you very much. And I look forward to continuing this conversation. I am concluding with my questions, but just yes or no question really quick. I think this is really important to Senator Flake and I.

Did you bring your two sons to support you or to try to intimidate Senator Flake and I? Because they are big guys, so I just need to know what their role here is. [Laughter.]

Mr. HASKELL. I kind of knew you would be nice to me if they were here. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Booker.

Senator Barrasso?

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Haskell, you keep using the words "civil society." I want to ask you, because I appreciate the Congo's willingness to assist in promoting regional stability. I have concerns about the human rights abuses that have been committed by the troops.

I was there with a number of Senators a couple years ago, including Cindy McCain, Senator John McCain's wife, who is really a ferocious advocate. I will tell you that the Republic of the Congo sent peacekeepers to the Central African Republic to serve in the African Union peacekeeping mission and in the United Nations peacekeeping mission. And the United Nations received allegations, as you know, of sexual exploitation and abuse against these Republic of the Congo peacekeepers in 2016.

So in addition, as you know, a mass grave was discovered linking the Congolese peacekeepers to torture and murder of civilians in 2016. The Republic of the Congo troops killed at least 18 people that we know of, including women and children, between December 2013 and June 2015.

On June 8 of last year, the Minister of Justice stated that the soldiers in question would face justice by the end of the year, and I want to ask you about that.

Unfortunately, I understand the investigation into the killings as well as the sexual exploitation and abuses were still pending at the end of 2016.

I think everyone in this room thinks it is unacceptable, it is outrageous, that the United Nations peacekeepers are inflicting such atrocities against the very people that they are sent to protect.

So as the largest contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping missions, the United States, I believe, must take action to prevent future exploitation of these vulnerable populations in conflict zones and to ensure individuals are held accountable for these crimes.

Under United Nations rules, the Government of the Congo is responsible for investigating and prosecuting the troops and the police that they contribute to the peace mission.

So can you bring us up-to-date, if you would know, on the actions that the Government of the Republic of the Congo has taken to prosecute the criminal conduct of these troops and if these soldiers have been brought to justice?

Mr. HASKELL. Thank you for that question. I think it is a very important issue.

I share your description of the things that have happened as outrageous and as unacceptable. It also has been a sentiment that has been echoed by our Embassy in Brazzaville over the years.

As you noted, the Republic of the Congo has had peacekeepers in the Central African Republic for more than a decade now. There have been incidents over that period of time, more than one, several, that are at an unacceptable level.

Since 2014, the U.S. has been providing training for troops before they go, through our ACOTA program. That training is filled with a human rights component. The effort is to make sure that soldiers understand these issues and the importance of them in moving forward.

Nevertheless, and I say with great concern, since the time that training began, we still have had another series of incidents that occurred. So this is of deep concern to us. We have raised it with the Government of the Republic of the Congo repeatedly. The Government has condemned these incidents when they have occurred. They have withdrawn the soldiers back from the Central African Republic and brought them back to Congo. And they have moved to have charges pressed against them.

But the truth is that action has not been taken. There can be several reasons for that.

One is that the Government of Congo does not have a military justice system, so cases are funneled into the normal civilian court system. Frankly, the normal civilian court system lacks the capacity to function effectively and does not function well.

But the second, frankly, and I have not been on the ground yet, but we have to wonder about the will in order to prosecute these cases. I can assure you that, if I am confirmed, this will be something very important to us. It is very difficult for us to continue to support peacekeeping operations to the extent that there is not any action taken on cases like this.

So let me echo your concerns, and I do, indeed, share them.

Senator BARRASSO. I appreciate it, because it leads to the next question. If you are confirmed, and I am encouraging that, as the U.S. Ambassador, then what steps, when you are on the ground, could you take to ensure their government—their government—

takes the crimes as seriously as we all do and holds the troops accountable?

Mr. HASKELL. Thank you, sir. I will say that, over the years, I have worked on a number of human rights issues. I find that different strategies work in different ways. I think it is important to get on the ground and figure out what is the most important approach.

But I assure you that this will be a top priority for me, if confirmed.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Ambassador, if I can visit with you for second about al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and related groups, they have threatened to attack Senegal. You are well-aware of the threats that are out there.

In February 2016, the chief of staff of Senegal's armed forces stated, "Terrorism can hit anywhere, and so we must protect ourselves."

So how would you characterize, currently, the Government's ability to respond and confront terrorist threats, which we know exist?

Ambassador MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

That falls directly into what our priorities are in Senegal. In addition to economic growth that we are pursuing and private investment, one piece that we are involved in, we are continuing to invest in it, is peace and security, working with our DOD colleagues, especially AFRICOM.

And as I said in my statement, in 2016, December 2016, we signed the defense cooperation agreement that gives us access to the law enforcement of Senegal, the security forces of Senegal, to work together and see how we can prevent, if not prevent, deter, if we do not deter, how we can respond, if it happens. So we are working in all those areas and strengthening the capabilities of the local security forces to respond to such acts.

Of course, I was in Burkina Faso when we had the terrorist attack in January 2016. A few months later, I was in Cote d'Ivoire. So the talk was that next will be Senegal. So because of that, everybody, the locals and us, the partners, we are mobilized to do everything we can to be ready, if it happens.

Of course, terrorism now is a global issue, and Senegal is aware, and we are aware of that as well.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

And thank you all. Again, we apologize for the shortened hearing. We just came under the time that we had for the Gorsuch hearings, I think, close to that. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. But we appreciate your service and the answers that you gave.

One thing that is heartening, as Senator Booker will learn on this committee, we are able to travel as well to Africa and run into people in other capacities in our Embassies that are then nominated for an ambassadorship or move from ambassador from one country to another, like Ambassador Mushingi. I just have learned to appreciate the expertise and the professionalism that our diplomatic corps, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, has.

It is wonderful on this committee to deal mostly with career Foreign Service Officers that really know their stuff. That certainly is the case here.

Again, thank you, and thank you to your family for the sacrifices that your families make for our country. Thank you.

The hearing record will remain open until Friday. We ask the witnesses to respond promptly, if there are questions submitted, so that they can be part of the hearing record.

Senator FLAKE. With the thanks of the committee, we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:12 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

## Additional Material Submitted for the Record

### RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO AMBASSADOR TULINABO MUSHINGI BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

*Question 1.* What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights has been a central theme throughout my 27 year career at the Department of State. Most recently as the U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso, I witnessed the country transition from a dictatorship to a democratically-elected government. During my tenure as Ambassador in Burkina Faso, despite risks to my personal and professional life, I became the consistent lone and loud voice to publicly advise against a proposed constitutional amendment to presidential term limits, designed to extend the time in office of an already long-sitting president. Additionally, I pushed the Government of Transition of Burkina Faso for timely elections during a sensitive time when some voices were considering a delay. Finally, following the free and transparent presidential election, Burkina Faso and its people witnessed the first-ever peaceful transition of power from one civilian government to another.

As the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ethiopia from 2009–2011, I encouraged the Ethiopian Government to allow civil society and opposition political parties to operate freely. Our Embassy efforts helped provide a path for opposition parties in Ethiopia to discuss their platforms, thus allowing a broader range of Ethiopian citizens to have a voice in their government, resulting in an increase in voter registration and participation. As the Management Counselor in Tanzania from 2006–2009, I participated in debates with Tanzanians, in which I promoted the rights of minorities, especially albinos. The debates were an important part of the Embassy's efforts to raise awareness of these vulnerable populations, which encouraged the Tanzanian Government to engage on minority rights issues. In Mozambique as the General Service Officer from 1994–1996, I participated as an international observer in the country's first-ever democratic elections and worked closely with the rest of the Embassy team to empower the Mozambican people as they freely elected their leaders for the first time.

Based on my support for the democratic transition in Burkina Faso, I was honored to receive several awards from the people and the Government of Burkina Faso. Additionally, based on my dedication to promoting and supporting human rights and democracy during my career, I am honored to have been selected for the American Foreign Service Association's Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy in 2017. This award is given to members of the Foreign Service, by their peers, for the promotion of U.S. policies focused on advancing democracy, freedom and governance through bold, exemplary, imaginative and effective efforts during one or more assignments.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

Answer. Senegal generally has a strong record on protecting human rights and the trend is encouraging. However, as the Department of State has highlighted in

its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, human rights issues still exist, including harsh prison conditions, lengthy pretrial detention, discrimination and violence against women, the forced begging of young boys, and widespread discrimination against LGBTI individuals. The United States has programs in place to promote human rights in Senegal, and our Embassy in Dakar remains engaged on these important issues. If confirmed, I will strengthen efforts already in place and will look for any additional opportunities to promote human rights and tolerance in Senegal.

Guinea-Bissau's human rights situation is adversely affected by the country's struggles with poverty and political instability. While the country does largely enjoy freedom of assembly, speech, and religion, many problems persist. Impunity and corruption, poor prison conditions, and violence, sexual exploitation, and discrimination against women and girls continue—as does the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). If confirmed, I will focus on strengthening Guinea-Bissau's democratic institutions and respect for human rights. I will continue our work with the Government of Guinea-Bissau and other partners on security sector reform and will press the Government of Guinea-Bissau to undertake necessary political and economic reforms.

I am optimistic that, by working closely with government and civil society in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to advance human rights and democracy, the United States can make a meaningful impact and improve the lives of millions of people in the region.

*Question 3.* If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

*Answer.* Senegal deserves praise for its longstanding tradition of democratic governance, including two peaceful transfers of power from the ruling party to the opposition since 2000. The country is home to a vibrant civil society that continues to operate freely.

The Government of Senegal continues to take significant steps to advance human rights, but more work remains to be done, in particular on protecting the human rights of vulnerable populations, including prisoners, women, children, and LGBTI individuals. Challenges arise from weak institutional capacity and limited resources. Additionally, cultural practices or beliefs sometimes encourage discrimination against LGBTI individuals and society often ignores harsh conditions faced by many young boys forced to beg on the street. Civil society groups in Senegal work tirelessly to combat these cultural practices and beliefs, and a number of NGOs, both national and international, monitor human rights issues in Senegal. Our Embassy in Dakar works with many of these NGOs and civil society groups. If confirmed, I will continue this cooperation and, where possible, expand our engagement with our Senegalese partners to address human rights issues.

In Guinea-Bissau, obstacles include corruption, lack of resources, training, and weak institutional capacity within the Government and the security forces. The prerequisite for improving the country's human rights situation is political stability and a shift in the culture of corruption and impunity that currently prevails. The United States and other donor nations support programs in place to assist in overcoming these impediments.

Finally, I believe that education plays a key role in promoting tolerance and improving human rights conditions, and, if confirmed, will work with the team at our Embassy in Dakar on effective public diplomacy strategies to engage with wide audiences in both Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to inform and generate debate about human rights conditions.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau? If confirmed, what steps will you take to proactively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

*Answer.* If confirmed, one of my most important goals will be improving respect for human rights in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, so that all Senegalese and Bissau-Guineans have the opportunity to exercise their fundamental freedoms and live their lives without fear. My efforts in Senegal will focus on improving prison conditions, reducing lengthy pretrial detention, and combating discrimination and violence against women, including rape and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), supporting the Senegalese Government's attempts to combat forced begging by children, and encouraging equal treatment under the law for all Senegalese, including LGBTI individuals. In Guinea-Bissau, I will focus on addressing issues of corruption



and impunity in the Government, improving prison conditions and combating violence against women and girls, including rape, sexual exploitation and FGM/C. Human rights organizations and other NGOs are critical to this work, and, if confirmed, I look forward to engaging with them in both Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

The Department of State vets all assistance to security forces in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau in accordance with the Leahy Law, without exception. If confirmed, I will ensure that our vetting continues to be comprehensive, thorough, and in full compliance with the Leahy laws, and that those who violate human rights are restricted from receiving any U.S. training or other assistance until the responsible actors are brought to justice. Furthermore, I will strongly urge the Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean Governments to hold any violators accountable for their actions.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Senegal and Guinea-Bissau?

Answer. If confirmed, and if necessary, my staff and I will raise our concerns about political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the Governments of Senegal or Guinea-Bissau. Thankfully, there are no political prisoners in either Senegal or Guinea-Bissau at this time, but the respective oppositions in both countries allege that certain individuals have been unjustly targeted for prosecution by their government. Our Embassy in Dakar continues to monitor these cases. If confirmed, I and my team will actively engage with the Government, opposition, and civil society regarding any cases in which individuals are unjustly targeted.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with Senegal and Guinea-Bissau on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. Promoting human rights, civil rights and good governance is a task that I take extremely seriously and, if confirmed, I will engage with the respective governments of Senegal and Guinea-Bissau on these matters.

*Question 7.* According to the Country Report for Human Rights Practices for this year, "Police are mandated to fight corruption but were ineffective and received minimal external assistance or support."

- What specific steps will you take to help police, and the Government more broadly to address corruption if confirmed as Ambassador? How will your actions to help combat bolster our efforts to address narcotics trafficking?

Answer. Weak governance and corruption in Guinea-Bissau have threatened U.S. interests through the facilitation of the illegal drug trade from South America to Europe. Supporting the Government of Guinea-Bissau's efforts to combat drug trafficking is one of our main policy objectives. We work closely with the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau and have provided \$780,000 to support a Bissau-Guinean inter-agency unit (the Trans-National Crime Unit), led by the Judicial Police, to investigate and combat drug trafficking and other organized crime, and to professionalize criminal justice services. The Drug Enforcement Administration has sent several Judicial Police officers for regional training at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Ghana.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure the effectiveness of such programs in strengthening Bissau-Guinean institutions to address corruption and combat drug trafficking and organized crime.

*Question 8.* According to the World Bank, "A successful transition towards a less fragile and more prosperous future will depend on the Government's ability to regain popular legitimacy by restoring basic state functions and providing key public services, and creating the basic conditions for shared economic growth."

- What steps has the United States taken to help in those areas since the restoration of democratic rule? What specific steps will you take if confirmed as Ambassador to further those goals?

Answer. The United States provides a modest amount of assistance to Guinea-Bissau. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) arrived in 2014 when Ebola was present next door in Guinea. CDC has made a multi-year commitment of up to \$5 million to build the capabilities of the country's health sector to fight infectious diseases. USAID also made a multi-year commitment of \$3 million to strengthen and build the country's capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats. The Department of State also provides security assistance through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) account, funded at approximately \$150,000 per year that includes a focus on civil-military relations. The United States, through its assessed contributions to the United Nations, also supports the efforts of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to find a way to political stability and oversee a broad array of programs to support the Bissau-Guinean people.

If confirmed, I intend to make the best use of U.S. taxpayer dollars in Guinea-Bissau by prioritizing resources that best advance America's interests, maximizing the effectiveness of our cooperation, and liaising with partner governments and the United Nations to ensure our assistance is well-coordinated.

*Question 9.* How would you assess Senegal's commitment to anti-corruption efforts? What explains the pardon of Karim Wade, son of Senegal's former president Abdoulaye Wade, who was serving a six-year sentence for the illegal accumulation of approximately \$200 million? Are there steps you will take if confirmed as Ambassador to enhance U.S. support for anti-corruption efforts?

Answer. Senegal has made progress in the fight against corruption. In 2012, when President Sall took office, he initiated several steps to improve Senegal's anti-corruption efforts. Among these, he approved the creation of an independent anti-corruption agency known by its French acronym as OFNAC (Office National de la Lutte contre la Fraude et la Corruption).

OFNAC has its own budget and seeks to promote transparency in government (by compiling and reviewing asset declarations of government officials), raise public awareness to report corruption, and initiate criminal investigations. Under the current head of OFNAC, who assumed her post last August, the anti-corruption body is focused on ensuring that the law is followed and that Senegal's anti-corruption efforts are durable, with an aim to prevent rather than react to corruption in Senegal.

Senegal has not only created this anti-corruption body but also has laws that require banks to report suspicious transactions, and has a capable financial intelligence unit which conducts follow up analysis of these suspicious transactions.

With regard to Karim Wade, former Minister of State and son of former President Abdoulaye Wade, as you noted, President Sall officially pardoned him on June 24, 2016. In total, he served half of his six year sentence. Immediately after Karim Wade's release, President Sall's office released a Communique confirming that Sall had pardoned Wade along with two co-conspirators—Alioune Samba Diasse and Ibrahim Aboukhalil (aka "Bibo Bourgi"). According to the Communique, the pardon released them from the remainder of their prison sentence but did not have any impact on the millions of dollars' worth of Wade's assets that had been seized or frozen, and which would not be returned. Observers generally agree the pardon was an attempt on the part of President Sall to soothe divisions within the Senegalese body politic.

If confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to promote the fight against corruption in Senegal and will leverage our bilateral relationship and assistance to press for enhanced transparency in government, increased public awareness of reporting mechanisms for corruption, and robust efforts to investigate and prosecute corruption.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO  
AMBASSADOR TULINABO MUSHINGI BY SENATOR JOHNNY ISAKSON

*Question 1.* There have been numerous reports about budget cuts and reorganization at the State Department and USAID. This week, a budget document dated April 6 shows that the administration is considering reducing foreign assistance to Senegal by \$57 million, which is a 50.5 percent reduction. The leaked plans include the elimination of Senegal's funding for development assistance and PEPFAR, and a reduction in USAID's Global Health Programs funding for Senegal. However, it does show that the administration is considering a \$20M increase to Senegal's Economic Support Fund account.

- What impact would such a proposal for funding have on the effectiveness of the U.S. Mission to Senegal? Does our progress in advancing U.S. strategic interests in Senegal merit a 50.5 percent reduction in our assistance there? Please explain why or why not.

Answer. The State Department and USAID support the President's goal of making government more efficient and accountable to U.S. taxpayers. If confirmed, I intend to make the best use of U.S. taxpayer dollars in Senegal by prioritizing resources that best advance America's interests, maximizing the effectiveness of our cooperation, and maintaining a robust diplomatic presence. We remain committed to a U.S. foreign policy in Senegal that advances the security and prosperity of the American people, as well as our most critical diplomatic and development objectives.

As for the FY 2018 request, I cannot speak to unconfirmed numbers in the press. The FY 2018 Budget blueprint that was released in March included the overall

funding level to be requested for the State Department and USAID programs. Beyond what is included in the Budget blueprint, we do not have additional details on what programs will be reduced as part of the FY 2018 request.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO  
TODD P. HASKELL BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

*Question 1.* What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

*Answer.* Promoting human rights and democracy has been a key part of my work on Africa, both in the field and in the Department. During my first tour in Africa, as a Public Affairs Officer in Burkina Faso, I identified key leaders in civil society and the human rights community, selecting them for exchange trips to the United States and organizing joint programs with them. Many of these leaders went on to play an important role in promoting democracy in that country. As a Public Affairs Officer in South Africa, I partnered with civil society leaders in programming that focused attention on human rights issues affecting marginalized communities, such as victims of gender violence.

Here in Washington, as the Office Director on Public Diplomacy, I emphasized exchanges on human rights and governance issues, bringing young Africans active in this sector to the United States. As Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs, I co-chaired an extensive human rights dialogue with the Angolan Government, and later helped moderate a discussion of human rights in Angola with both a human rights activist and an Angolan Government representative. In Lesotho, I coordinated a strategy that has gone a long way toward re-asserting civilian control over the military. In Zimbabwe, I have supported efforts to support the human rights community.

*Question 2.* What are the most pressing human rights issues in Republic of Congo? What are the most important steps you expect to take—if confirmed—to promote human rights and democracy in Republic of Congo? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions?

*Answer.* The most significant human rights problems include arbitrary arrests and the detention of political opponents and their supporters; and unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, and other degrading treatment of detainees by police. The welfare of internally displaced persons uprooted by the ongoing violence in the Pool region is also of serious concern.

If confirmed, I will continue the work of our Embassy in Brazzaville which closely monitors and documents human rights issues in the Republic of Congo, and which regularly attends events organized by NGOs focusing on human rights to show public support for their efforts. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will also make human rights advocacy a top priority, and will regularly engage with the Congolese Government to urge adherence to fundamental principles guaranteed by their constitution of 2015, which include freedom of speech and assembly, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention. We look to see the Congolese Government adhere to the protections enshrined in their constitution and to respect human rights.

*Question 3.* If confirmed, what are the potential obstacles to addressing the specific human rights issues you have identified in your previous response? What challenges will you face in Republic of Congo in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

*Answer.* The biggest potential obstacle to addressing human rights concerns is the climate of fear and the culture of official impunity perpetuated by the Government that intimidates civil society actors, political challengers, and independent media voices. The Government seldom takes steps to prosecute or punish officials who have committed abuses, whether in the security services or elsewhere in the Government.

While the 2015 Constitution guarantees the basic rights of free speech and assembly, in practice these guarantees are ignored. The legislative and judicial branches of the Government and other nominally independent institutions, such as the electoral commission, are heavily politicized and do not play a counter-balancing role.

These factors make advancement of human rights in the Congo difficult, but I intend to advocate as a priority for an improved human rights record.

*Question 4.* Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights

NGOs in Republic of Congo? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will meet with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations. I intend to ensure the Embassy will continue to advocate for the protection and defense of human rights, in concert with our local and international partners, and call for the Congolese Government to investigate and address credible allegations of abuse.

As Ambassador, I would make certain the Embassy continues to implement Leahy vetting to ensure that all U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities, including pre-deployment training to Congolese peacekeepers (PKO) in the Central African Republic (CAR) under the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, ensures that troops receive specific human rights training to reduce the risk of human rights abuses in CAR. I will do the same for civilian-military training with junior leaders of the Armed Forces and members of civil society.

*Question 5.* Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Republic of Congo to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by Republic of Congo?

Answer. In the ROC, several opposition leaders, including former presidential candidates and scores of their supporters, are currently imprisoned on serious charges that appear to be fabricated.

Generally speaking, respect for prisoners' rights, especially for those affiliated with opposition political parties, has been inconsistent with Congolese law. Prison conditions are harsh. Trials, if and when they are eventually held, can be subject to political influence.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue our advocacy for the respect of fundamental human rights to include the freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, as well as freedom from arbitrary disappearance and protracted detention. I will strongly advocate that any person detained be afforded their full constitutional rights regardless of political affiliation.

*Question 6.* Will you engage with Republic of Congo on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your bilateral mission?

Answer. I consider human rights advocacy to be a fundamental part of my job as Ambassador, if confirmed, and will certainly make human rights, civil rights, and good governance key elements of my engagement with the Congolese Government.

*Question 7.* This year's Country Report for Human Rights Practices references a joint U.N.-Congolese Government report which "cited indications that sexual violence toward women and teenage girls corresponded to the timing of security operations in the southern Pool region." The Country Report also says that "Human rights NGOs reported multiple instances of rape and sexual abuse by police."

- What specific steps can you take if confirmed as Ambassador to support accountability for security force abuses? What specific steps if confirmed as Ambassador can you take to more broadly to support efforts to combat gender based violence in Republic of Congo?

Answer. The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by police and security forces in the Republic of Congo is one that greatly concerns us all.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will impress upon the Congolese Government the need to condemn sexual violence, whether perpetrated by security or police forces, or generally by Congolese individuals, and to promptly investigate and prosecute alleged perpetrators. I intend to ensure the Embassy also acts proactively by continuing to support the increased professionalism of the security sector through training and exchanges with Congolese military and law enforcement forces. This engagement should ultimately lead to improved professionalism, respect for the rule of law, respect for human rights, including gender rights, and civilian security. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will also advocate steps Congo can take to strengthen the capacity of civilian courts to hold accountable those who commit acts of gender based violence.

*Question 8.* According to the Country Report for Human Rights Practices, while "the law provides for criminal penalties for corruption by officials; however, the Government did not implement the law effectively, and many officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity, despite the president's call for an end to corruption in his inauguration speech.

- What steps can you take if confirmed as Ambassador to encourage effective implementation of the law? Are there other steps you can take to support anticorruption efforts? What are they?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will ensure that the Embassy continues to support efforts to address the widespread corruption and lack of transparency that surrounds government financial practices and to encourage effective implementation of Congolese laws against corruption. I will continue the Embassy's work with existing Congolese anticorruption institutions to address, report and bring to justice those found guilty of corruption. These institutions include the National Agency for Financial Investigation, an anti-corruption unit that was initiated in 2008 under the auspices of the Central Africa Monetary Union, and the National Commission for the Fight against Corruption. I will consider appropriate ways we can help build the capacity of these institutions and the capacity of the judiciary through training and other opportunities.

Transparency can be an important deterrent to corruption. The constitution mandates that senior elected or appointed officials disclose their financial interests and holdings both before taking office and upon leaving office. The constitution and law also provide for public access to government information for citizens, noncitizens, and the foreign media; however, authorities did not effectively implement the law. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will advocate with the Government for the enforcement of these important protections.

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