



## Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of

March 14, 2018

Christopher Turpin  
Acting Senior Vice President for News and Editorial Director  
National Public Radio  
1111 North Capitol Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Sent by email to [cturpin@npr.org](mailto:cturpin@npr.org)  
CC by fax to (202) 513-3329

Dear Mr. Turpin,

We are writing on behalf of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, DC (RPCV/W) with a formal request of NPR to air, in full, and without further delay, the original two-part investigative news report on mefloquine. Prior to its cancellation, this news report was intended to air in November 2017 on NPR. It's our understanding that this report was fully, editorially vetted and approved for a Sunday and Monday *All Things Considered* broadcast.

RPCV/W was founded in 1979 to foster a community of RPCVs and friends in the Washington D.C. area that embody the spirit of the Peace Corps. Many returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) return to the United States and settle in Washington D.C. making RPCV/W one of the largest and most active member organizations of its kind in the world. Our membership represents more than 3,500 RPCVs, PC staff, families, and supporters.

Health is a widely discussed aspect of most Peace Corps volunteer experiences; it's unlikely you will find one among us without a tale about stomach bugs, tropical diseases, or mysterious ailments that become cocktail party fodder for years to come. Unfortunately, some of those health issues are more serious. The US. Government Accountability Office 2012 congressional report indicated that 1,400 volunteers (approximately 20% of active volunteers) received health care benefits under the FECA program from 2009-2011; the most common medical conditions being mental, emotional, and nervous conditions; infectious or parasitic diseases; or other/non-classified diseases.

Since March 1961, more than 230,000 volunteers have served in Peace Corps in 141 host countries with 64% serving in Africa and Latin America. While Peace Corps countries of service

[www.rpcvw.org](http://www.rpcvw.org)

1629 K St NW, #300, Washington, DC 20006  
501 (c)(3) Fed ID: 52-1194965

change, we know that mefloquine is prescribed in more than 30 African, Latin American, and southeast Asian countries. Although RPCV/W does not directly address the health of RPCVs, our members have shared personal anecdotes about the use of mefloquine during their service and asked about Peace Corps' use of mefloquine in town hall sessions. In support of our members, we believe it is important to bring national attention to the Peace Corps experience, including both positive and negative subjects.

RPCV/W recognizes the difficult circumstances and concerns surrounding the decision to cancel the initial airing. The allegations of sexual harassment against Daniel Zwerdling are very serious and RPCV/W does not condone his actions. Our members have a strong history of advocating on behalf of women, specifically, in our Women Empowering Women initiative, as well as, legislative advocacy on Capitol Hill in support of the Kate Puzey Act that mandates reforms for Peace Corps' sexual assault policy and victim advocacy.

We are coming to you with this request as NPR expressed support of the eventual airing of the piece. This report includes survey feedback from more than 2,000 individuals and several dozen people were interviewed. Several members of the local RPCV community, including a member of our executive board, also participated in the interview process.

We recognize that our request, to air this story, in full, and without further delay, may conflict with NPR editorial policies. However, this report was fully vetted and approved by NPR and we believe that, given the chance, NPR's ombudsman would support us in airing the story, without delay, despite the lead investigator being unable to respond to comments about the broadcast. These men and women, who served their country, deserve the opportunity to have their voices heard as part of promoting a better understanding of the Peace Corps experience.

As time is of the essence, we, the executive board of RPCV/W, thank you for your urgent consideration of our request on behalf of our entire board and membership.

Sincerely,

Natalie Rico	Chelsea Milko	Rachel Branaman	L. Ganti
Uganda 07-09	Uganda 10-13	Namibia 09-11	
President, RPCV/W	Vice-President, RPCV/W	Secretary, RPCV/W	Treasurer, RPCV/W
<a href="mailto:president@rpcvw.org">president@rpcvw.org</a>	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@rpcvw.org">vicepresident@rpcvw.org</a>	<a href="mailto:secretary@rpcvw.org">secretary@rpcvw.org</a>	<a href="mailto:treasurer@rpcvw.org">treasurer@rpcvw.org</a>