

A judge extends the pause on Trump's plan to put USAID workers on leave. By Hansi Lo Wang, *Newsweek*, 13 Feb 2025

The Trump administration's controversial plan to put thousands of staffers for the U.S. Agency for International Development on paid leave will remain on pause at least through Feb. 21, a federal judge ruled Thursday.

U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols, who was nominated by President Trump, released the [court order](#) soon after holding a court hearing, which had been rescheduled from Wednesday because of a snowstorm in Washington, D.C.

The decision comes after the court temporarily blocked the administration last week from carrying out a push to shrink the workforce at USAID, an independent federal agency [created by Congress in 1961](#), and recall employees stationed abroad to the United States.

At Thursday's hearing, the judge said by next week, he plans to release another ruling on whether the ongoing pause will continue past Feb. 21, among other issues. Nichols has also asked Justice Department attorneys to provide the court with more information by Friday on how the Trump administration plans to ensure that the safety of overseas USAID employees who are put on leave would not be put at risk as well as what would happen to their regular non-salary benefits.

This lawsuit — led by the American Federation of Government Employees, a union representing foreign service officers and other USAID workers — is one of three ongoing legal challenges to efforts by the Trump administration to gut the agency and stop most foreign aid.

The attempt to shut down USAID has set off a scramble by U.S. government employees worldwide, including many in high-risk locations overseas, to prepare for an end to their work while not knowing how long they can keep accessing internal systems for email, payments and security warnings.