

Key Points on USAID

♥ February 14, 2025 ♥

We're doing something different with today's key points on USAID. We'd like to take a moment with you to celebrate the legal win achieved last night by brave implementing partners of USAID and their legal team (more on that below), and at the same time share an honest note of where we are right now. We also wanted to thank everyone for all that is being done to support continued foreign assistance and solidarity with USAID and our partners around the world.

The foundation of all our organizations is a community of human beings - and right now, along with many of you, we are struggling. We're grappling with the loss of our livelihoods and careers we have dedicated years to, the dismantling of projects that we know are making a difference in the world, and for so many of us, the core of who we are and how we want to live in service in this world. Our future is uncertain, but the solidarity expressed in so many ways over the last few weeks is cause for hope.

First, thank you...

- Thank you to the brave implementing partners risking so much to fight for foreign assistance while trying to continue the critical work they do every single day for the people we serve, and who for local partners, are their own communities.
- Thank you to all of you reading these key points and using them to advocate on the Hill, and engage with the press, with your own communities, and even with your friends and family that may think differently and need some help understanding what is happening.
- Thank you to those who met with their Members of Congress to advocate for foreign assistance over the last weeks, and to those who helped put together roundtables and hearings on the Hill this week to set the record straight.
- And finally, thank you to those who are working together under various groups, and especially those under OneUSAIDCommunity - the group behind these key points. We are a group of current (or recently let go) USAID staff, former USAID staff, implementing partners, and friends of USAID and believers in the power and criticality of foreign assistance, who came together to combine efforts and find some hope in this dark moment by channeling our various abilities toward something bigger.

We must celebrate the wins right now, even if they feel small, and to remember that we still have a ways to go. The immediate challenge facing us today is whether the Trump Administration complies with the orders of the judges who are making decisions in these cases. That will be the litmus test for our fragile democracy and what comes next. It will tell us what we are about to face, and where our energy will need to focus. This is bigger than USAID or foreign assistance. As we have been alluding to with many of our points over the last week and a half, USAID was just the beginning...the canary in the coal mine...the first domino to fall. We now see what Elon Musk's DOGE and President Trump have in mind for the U.S. government, and potentially American democracy as we know it.

At this moment we may begin to feel like it's all too much. We may begin to feel hopeless and be tempted to give up. But we need to stick together, lean on the communities - new and old - that give us strength, and continue to fight for what we know is right.

And now, on to the talking points...

Court Cases

Resources:

- [Just Security Litigation Tracker](#) - public resource tracking legal challenges to Trump administration actions
- Judge Orders Trump Administration to Resume Foreign Aid Spending ([NYTimes](#))
- Judge Extends Halt on Trump Plan to Dismantle U.S.A.I.D. ([NYTimes](#))

Summary of the ruling on the case brought by implementing partners:

- Judge Ali, a Biden appointee, issued a temporary injunction saying that the Trump Administration could not suspend, pause, or otherwise prevent the obligation or disbursement of foreign assistance through agreements (including contracts, grants, cooperative agreements or loans) that were formalized prior to Mr. Trump's inauguration, nor could it issue, implement or enforce terminations or stop-work orders in connection with any agreement in existence as of the same date.
- This ruling applies not just to those who were plaintiffs in the suit but all projects impacted by the stop work order. While it is not yet clear how the ruling will be implemented by the Trump Administration, the ruling in principle means the Trump administration would have to undo actions taken to date that stopped work or terminated programs without appropriate review.
- While this is a preliminary win for foreign aid/USAID, the ruling recognizes the Executive's prerogative to make changes that are consistent with the terms of existing contracts or grants, which means that specific and targeted modifications and terminations could be permissible.
- There will be a full court hearing scheduled on this, with the date TBD as of Friday morning, and the Executive must provide a status report by the 18th on implementation of the order.

Talking Points

- The courts have once again halted Elon Musk's incompetent and illegal attempt to destroy USAID.
- Let's be clear what this case is about: organizations who work with USAID, who are working to help the most vulnerable around the world, stepped up to fight a rich man attacking the world's poor.
- While every administration has the right and ability to review programs and make changes consistent with their priorities, what the Trump Administration did with their reckless stop work order jeopardized vitally needed programs, American jobs, and American security.
 - Terminations for national interests are rare and usually only occur when there is a significant issue with funding or a major global development--not when en masse with little rationale.
- The Trump Administration has four days to demonstrate how they are complying with this order. Right now, we have yet to see any actions taken that suggest they are complying with the order to resume these vital programs.

- There is also great concern about how they will be able to resume payments to comply with the order given damage done to the USAID payment systems and the lack of staff available to process them.

Consistent Top Line Message

The current process DOGE has undertaken to dismantle USAID is messy, wasteful, and breaking the broader foreign assistance apparatus. Foreign assistance is a good thing when done right.

- An effort from the Trump administration and Congress to reform and streamline U.S. foreign assistance is welcome, but the current approach is not a serious reform effort: it is an ineffective sloppy exercise that is – unintentionally or not – destroying the U.S. foreign assistance apparatus and depriving the us of a critical soft-power tool.
- The clearest example of this is the **faulty waiver process, where even those life-saving and critical national security projects that have been waived by Secretary Rubio are not able to receive funding** because hurried and careless efforts to alter USAID’s financial system (Phoenix) have left it non-operational, putting these critical activities at risk. This includes efforts to stem an Ebola outbreak that has already infected Americans, HIV prevention and treatment, and sensitive work in conflict zones.
- If the current efforts continue, **the United States will be left without the systems, experienced personnel, or partners necessary to responsibly and strategically implement foreign assistance.**
- During the House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on Thursday, there was broad consensus that foreign assistance is a powerful U.S. soft-power tool. For this reason, **Congress must halt these illegal actions by DOGE and instead implement a more strategic, sensible reform effort that restores its important oversight function.**

Media Highlights

- WMUR (New Hampshire local news): [NH organization that helps children with disabilities abroad faces bankruptcy after USAID freeze](#)
- The Modesto Bee: [Former Modestan and USAID senior adviser speaks out on importance of agency’s future](#)
- The Atlantic: [There’s a Term for What Trump and Musk Are Doing: How regime change happens in America](#)
- Washington Post: [The White House’s wildly inaccurate claims about USAID spending](#)
- Bloomberg: [USAID Really Does Protect Americans and Save Money](#)

Current Impact

American Economy and Jobs

- **Confirmed Job Losses:** 11,521 Americans have lost their jobs, been furloughed or placed on administrative leave. 54,575 jobs globally (non-American) jobs have been lost as of 2/14/25.
 - We have seen an exponential increase of the number of #opentowork banner on our professional networks given the immediate stop work order on USAID and its implementing partners. The image here was created in solidarity with those impacted around the world.



- From farmers in Kansas to NGO workers in North Carolina, the Foreign Assistance Stop Work order is hurting American workers and the U.S. economy. The loss of USAID means U.S. states will lose an estimated \$3.34b in direct economic benefit.
- American farmers supply over 40% of the food aid USAID delivers, and on average, the U.S. government purchases \$2.1 billion in crops from American farmers each year. This is now completely in jeopardy.

Fatalities

- A 71 year old woman, Pe Kha Lau, a refugee from Myanmar living in a displacement camp in neighbouring Thailand, died four days after she was discharged from a USAID-funded healthcare facility operated by the International Rescue Committee following the stop work order. ([Telegraph UK](#))
- In Umpiem Mai camp in Thailand, which is home to more than 10,000 people who fled the brutal civil war in neighbouring Myanmar, a resident and a health worker told ABC that multiple patients who were reliant on oxygen have now died. ([Telegraph UK](#))
- After the USAID funding freeze suspended work on their U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) orphans and vulnerable children program, one employee of the "Family Matters" subprogram committed suicide. ([Zambian Observer](#))

Health

- **Women's Health:** As a result of the stop work order, it is estimated that 130,390 women each day will be denied access to contraception, with 11.7 million women denied after the 90-day pause. That could result in as many as 4.2 million unintended pregnancies and more than 8,340 maternal deaths ([The Guardian](#))

Humanitarian Assistance

- **The waivers are not working.** On January 29 Secretary Rubio notified USAID that the stop work order would be waived for lifesaving programs. Despite this notice, implementation of the waiver has been stymied by inconsistent communication, lack of access to systems for staff managing those programs, and lack of clarity on how to request a waiver.
 - When programs are told to abruptly stop working, they do not restart easily. Stop work orders force organizations to make decisions like firing staff, breaking leases, and turning away people who rely on them for medicine or food. In many cases, starting again means finding new expert staff and rebuilding trust with communities.
- Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. Catholic Church's overseas relief and development agency and USAID partner, warned that with USAID programs paused, the effect is dire ([Detroit Catholic](#)):
 - Families in Ukraine will lose safe housing as home repairs and heating will stop amid Russia's continued attacks. Amid freezing winter temperatures, without heat or safe housing, children, older adults and people with disabilities are especially vulnerable to severe illness or even death.

- In Sudan, a country ravaged by war and ongoing famine, 18,000 families will face increasing hunger due to losing farming support ahead of the critical planting season.
- In Vietnam, nearly 8,000 people with disabilities and their caregivers will not receive therapy, equipment and support, endangering their health and directly impairing their ability to lead independent lives.
- In Guatemala, the stoppage of aid will prevent 10,000 families in Guatemala from receiving the tools, seeds and cash to prepare crops for the beginning of the April planting season. The aid suspension also stood to drive residents to migrate in the face of worsening food security and malnutrition.

National Security

- With the foreign assistance freeze, in just three weeks, [U.S. adversaries like China have stepped in to fill the void of USAID](#), this is often done through exploitative and dangerous loans versus grants that can lead to increased instability and economic collapse in the longer term:
 - China provided a grant to help a Cambodian project clearing unexploded bombs days after the freeze on payments by USAID had forced it to suspend work, per the head of Cambodian Mine Action Centre. ([Newsweek](#))
 - In Nepal, Chinese officials have reportedly signaled to the Nepalese government that Beijing is willing to step in to replace USAID's void with development funding of its own.
 - Despite its strategic importance to the United States in the Indo-Pacific, officials in the Cook Islands have said they expect the withdrawal of USAID from the region to provide an opening for China.
 - In Colombia, which received around \$385 million in USAID funding in 2024, non-governmental organizations that received USAID funding say the Chinese government is interested in putting up money to help fill the void.
- The dangerous rhetoric and misinformation spread by President Trump, members of his administration, and Elon Musk are putting USAID staff, USAID partners, and communities who have received USAID assistance in danger, at the exact time that USAID staff are working in locations where terrorist groups use the same type of language to threaten USAID staff, partners, and recipient communities.