

The National Council of Churches and 39 Christian signatories to Secretary of State Marco Rubio appealing for the preservation of USAID and foreign assistance and other programs, 14 Feb 2025

February 14, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20451
Dear Secretary Rubio,

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of State. This position comes with profound responsibilities, as you represent the United States to the rest of the world and are the highest-ranking member of the Presidential cabinet. Your efforts are especially important in an increasingly connected and interdependent world.

It is in this spirit of interconnectedness and moral responsibility that we, faith-based organizations and denominations representing tens of millions of people of faith from across the United States, write to you today with grave concern. The President's freeze on foreign aid and the recent apparent dismantling of USAID by the President's extra-governmental advisors threaten not only to harm millions of people around the globe but also to undermine decades of carefully cultivated alliances and diminish the United States' ability to effectively respond to crises around the world. These actions raise serious ethical concerns, conflict with constitutional principles, and pose significant risks to our country and our neighbors abroad.

The Christian faith teaches, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required, and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." (Luke 12:48, NRSVUE) Our shared values compel us to help and not hurt the most vulnerable in our midst, which includes our global neighbors. For the U.S. to abruptly relinquish its responsibility and renege on its commitments to the most vulnerable in the world, withholding life-saving food and medicine from children, the infirm and the elderly, is astounding and shameful.

Current efforts to dismantle government agencies have far-reaching consequences. They jeopardize the livelihoods of those who, like yourself, have dedicated their lives to public service and devastate the livelihoods of thousands of staff of non-governmental organizations that serve as the backbone of US development work around the world. Many of these organizations, including faith-based groups, will be severely crippled and

some may not survive these cuts.

People all over the world rely on the vital aid provided by USAID and through programs such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). It is likely that the chaos engendered by these cuts will result in more people getting sick, increased malnutrition and starvation, and the victimization of people under threat who can no longer seek refuge in the United States. The faith community has been the federal government's trusted partner in responding to those in need around the world. We have worked hand-in-hand, solving some of the biggest social and health problems that have plagued small villages and major metropolitan regions. How is it that aid to the sick and hungry is no longer aligned with US policy and priorities?

Additionally, eliminating foreign aid will weaken our ability to lead globally and threaten our own national security. By disengaging from the world's efforts on behalf of the poor and vulnerable, the US damages its desired reputation of being a beacon of freedom for the world and a steadfast partner to our allies. Retreating from addressing the world's needs does not make us safer. It only delays addressing dangers until they become threats on our doorstep.

We implore you to use your position to immediately restore foreign aid programs, reopen critical refugee resettlement programs, and fully reinstate USAID. Our common security is deeply tied to sustained and robust engagement with the people of the world, especially those who are crying out for our help.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists

American Baptist Home Mission Societies

American Friends Service Committee

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Church World Service

Community of Christ

Conference of National Black Churches

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Florida Council of Churches

Franciscan Action Network

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Hindus for Human Rights

Latino Christian National Network (LCNN)

Maine Council of Churches

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Metropolitan Interdenominational Church

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National African American Clergy Network
National Council of Churches
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
North Carolina Council of Churches
Obra Hispana, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sojourners
Swedenborgian Church of North America
The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
The International Council of Community Churches
The Ohio Council of Churches
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Trinity United Methodist Church-Knoxville
United Church of Christ
Virago Strategies