

Hundreds of US diplomats join letter to Rubio to protest dismantling of USAID.

By [Humeyra Pamuk](#), *Reuters*, March 5, 2025

- Cuts undermine US leadership, national security, they say
- Dismantling of USAID risks vacuums for China, Russia to fill

WASHINGTON, March 5 (Reuters) - Hundreds of diplomats at the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development have formally written to Secretary of State Marco Rubio protesting the dismantling of USAID, saying its dismantling undermines U.S. leadership and security and leaves power vacuums for [China](#) and [Russia](#) to fill.

In a cable filed with the department's internal "dissent channel," which allows diplomats to raise concerns about policy anonymously, the diplomats said the Trump administration's January 20 freeze on almost all foreign aid also endangers American diplomats and forces overseas while putting at risk the lives of millions abroad that depend on U.S. assistance. More than 700 people have signed onto the letter, a U.S. official speaking on the condition of anonymity said.

"The decision to freeze and terminate foreign aid contracts and assistance awards without any meaningful review jeopardizes our partnerships with key allies, erodes trust, and creates openings for adversaries to expand their influence," said the cable, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

The Republican president, pursuing what he has called an "America First" agenda, [ordered a 90-day pause](#) on all foreign aid on his January 20 return to office. The order halted USAID operations around the world, [jeopardizing delivery](#) of life-saving food and medical aid, and throwing [global humanitarian relief](#) efforts into chaos.

"The freeze on life-saving aid has already caused irreparable harm and suffering to millions of people around the world," the letter said, adding that despite statements on waivers being issued for life-saving programs, the funding remained shut.

The president tasked billionaire and adviser [Elon Musk](#) with [dismantling USAID](#) as part of an unprecedented push to shrink the federal government over what both say is wasteful spending and abuse of funds.

"Foreign assistance is not charity. Instead, it is a strategic tool that stabilizes regions, prevents conflict, and advances U.S. interests," the letter said.

A State Department spokesperson, when asked about the cable, said: "We do not comment on leaked internal communication."

In fiscal year 2023, the [United States](#) disbursed \$72 billion of aid worldwide, on everything from women's health in conflict zones to access to clean water, HIV/AIDS treatments, energy security and anti-corruption work.

Upon evaluating 6,200 multiyear awards, the administration [decided to eliminate](#) nearly 5,800 of them worth \$54 billion in value, a 92% reduction, according to a State Department spokesperson. USAID fired or put on administrative leave thousands of staff and contractors.

The cable said the government's failure to pay outstanding invoices to contractors and implementing partners has severe economic repercussions.

"The resulting financial strain not only undermines confidence in the U.S. government as a reliable partner, it also weakens domestic economic growth at a time of mounting global competition," the cable said.

The U.S. Supreme Court [declined on Wednesday to let](#) the administration withhold payments to foreign aid organizations for work they already performed for the government, upholding a district judge's order that had called on the administration to promptly release payments to contractors.