

# OneUSAID Community Updates

*February 28, 2025*

## Friday Feature: A Note From OneUSAID Community Organizers

The USAID story has always been one about people.

Yesterday and today, staff packed up their desks at the Ronald Reagan Building and bid farewell, as USAID's headquarters is now permanently closed. About 90% of USAID's workforce has been fired, furloughed, or put on administrative leave in just four short weeks, and many staff posted in locations around the world have returned. At the same time, many remain, waiting for reduction-in-force (RIF) notifications and orders to leave their posts. Over 5,000 locally employed staff, who are the true backbone of USAID's work, are left behind with futures unknown and their safety at risk.

Over the past month, we have emphasized the importance of American soft power to underscore why foreign assistance is essential to American security and prosperity. We have shared the impact on American job losses across all 50 states. We have emphasized the very real global health implications demonstrating that containing Ebola, bird flu, Mpox, and other diseases where they originate keeps Americans from getting sick.

And we have told story after story illustrating the devastating impact on the millions of people worldwide who will suffer—many of whom may die—because lifesaving programs were cut as a result of the Trump Administration's decision to rapidly and recklessly dismantle USAID. The 10,000 USAID and State Department programs the Trump Administration abruptly terminated on Wednesday to avoid taking responsibility in the courts represent a failure to keep their commitments to American workers and to the millions of people around the world the United States committed to assisting. In the best of times, these individuals needed support to leverage their skills and strengthen their communities, ultimately reducing their reliance on American taxpayers. In the worst of times, they depended on the United States and other nations to help save lives—whether from devastating floods caused by hurricanes or earthquakes that left people trapped under rubble.

Although the people of USAID—and the thousands of vital implementing partners without whom none of the work would be possible—understand how our work benefits Americans, we also do this work because we believe in humanity. We believe that every person, no matter who they are or where they live, deserves to live a safe and dignified life. We understand that USAID is not charity because we have worked alongside the people it serves and have witnessed firsthand how providing resources to support their skills leads to the best outcomes for everyone. Many of us have also experienced the impacts of natural disasters here at home and understand the importance of being there for others when disaster strikes.

While we have not given up on the power of USAID and the importance of foreign assistance, these last few weeks have been heartbreaking for USAID staff, implementing partners, and many of the people who know firsthand what USAID does for the world. **Elon Musk, President Trump, and Pete Marocco are now personally responsible for the impacts that dismantling USAID and making deep cuts to many other essential federal agencies will have on the American people and millions of others worldwide.** The story of USAID has always been about people, and when the time comes to rebuild USAID, it will be the people who make it happen.

## Key Updates

- In an attempt to skirt its legal obligations on Wednesday, **the Trump Administration abruptly cancelled over 10,000 USAID and Department of State programs** (8,644 USAID)—a potentially irreversible action cutting crucial and life saving work around the world.
- An [unreleased watchdog report](#) finding that the Trump Administration’s dismantling of USAID will put U.S. national security interests at risk is being hidden from Congress.
- On Wednesday, February 26, **the Supreme Court ruled that the Trump Administration [did not have to immediately pay \\$2B owed](#) to contractors** before the 11:59 pm deadline.
- **Keep Calling!** Call or email your senators and representatives, pick one of the programs that has been cut, and ask them to demand a specific explanation for why it has been cut. Members of Congress are reacting in large part to concerns by their constituents over the chaos and cuts unleashed by DOGE in the federal government.

More details below...

### **The Trump Administration Cancelled Thousands of USAID Programs—Including Hundreds of Life-Saving Activities—in an Attempt to Skirt Its Legal Obligations**

- The sudden termination of 8,644 USAID awards and contracts on February 26, **is a catastrophic blow to USAID’s implementing partners and the populations they serve, likely bankrupting many, and shuttering lifesaving programs forever.** ([ABC](#))
- The administration claims it has conducted a [“good-faith, individualized assessment of \[each\] contract or grant.”](#) However, the majority of staff required to undertake such a review have been put on administrative leave, terminated, or furloughed.
  - According to [Charles Kenny of the Center for Global Development](#): For the administration’s submission to the court that Secretary Rubio **“made a final decision with respect to each award, on an individualized basis,”** to be true, the Secretary would have had to review one award every minute and twenty seconds in the eight days between February 18 and February 26.
- According to a current USAID Contracting Officer, the termination of contracts, grants, and assistance agreements over the past two weeks, particularly the bulk of which occurred on the night of February 26, **were not conducted in compliance with federal laws, regulations, or established procedures.** In many instances, [terminations were not carried out by the authorized cognizant contracting or agreement officer of the awards.](#) Given that the terminations will not likely be upheld under legal scrutiny, implementing partners who have received contract terminations are advised to explore legal options. USAID staff who would manage internal mechanisms for such protests from implementing partners have been put on administrative leave or fired.
- **Some Republican Senators have joined their Democratic colleagues in expressing alarm** over the Trump administration’s foreign aid freeze and gutting of USAID. [Lindsey Graham \(R-SC\), Lisa Murkowski \(R-AK\), and Susan Collins \(R-ME\) wrote](#) to Secretary Rubio to express that they believe the State Department is not operating in accordance with the law by neglecting to notify and consult with Congress during the process.
- **Just Some of What’s Been Terminated:**
  - Contracts with U.S. factories in Georgia and Rhode Island that produce live-saving nutrient-dense and high-calorie pastes for the most malnourished children in the world, including for emergency response in Gaza and Syria.

- Work with American universities to strengthen global food security, including a project at Purdue University to reduce foodborne pathogens and improve food handling practices worldwide. This helps prevent the spread of foodborne diseases that can affect imported foods as well as American travelers.
- A project in the DRC that operates the only source of water for 250,000 people in camps for displaced people located in the center of current fighting.
- Almost all of the Global Health Supply Chain project, which helps lifesaving medical supplies reach countries and health facilities all around the world.
- A project in Sudan that runs the only operational health clinics in one of the biggest areas of the Kordofan region, cutting off all health services.
- The [NYTimes](#) has compiled a list of more Global Health programs that were cut.

### **Supreme Court Rules Trump Administration Does Not Have to Pay \$2B Owed to Contractors by Judge Ali's February 26 Deadline**

- After a D.C. Circuit Court rejected the appeal of the court's order to reimburse USAID partners, the administration filed an emergency motion with the Supreme Court on Wednesday night, arguing that the government is acting in "good faith" to comply, but would be unable to do so by the 11:59 pm deadline. Chief Justice John Roberts granted a temporary reprieve and set a deadline for responses by noon Friday. ([Politico](#))
  - The administration argued that a court order requiring the payments oversteps executive authority, asserting that, "the President's power is at its apex, and the power of the judiciary is at its nadir in matters of foreign affairs." This argument represents the latest infringement on Congressional power of the purse, and begins to set up the Trump Administration's effort to challenge the [Impoundment Control Act](#), which Trump officials have [said violates Trump's presidential powers](#).
- USAID owes these payments to contractors and non-profits for work already performed under legally awarded contracts, with many payments more than 30 days overdue, violating the [Prompt Payment Act](#) and accruing interest charges. All now face furloughs, layoffs, and financial instability. The payment freeze has left billions in aid undelivered and disrupted oversight processes, preventing proper closeout of awards and accountability for taxpayer-funded resources. Banks are devaluing government receivables, reducing contractors' access to credit and calling into question the bankability of U.S. Government commitments.

### **Congress Demands Withheld USAID Reports as Watchdog Fears Retaliation from Trump for Warning of USAID Withdrawal Risks: Ceasefire Collapse, Violence, and Humanitarian Crises**

- Since the abrupt firing of USAID's career civil servant Inspector General over a report on the impact of the dismantling of USAID ([CBS News](#)), the office has withheld two more critical reports on the impact of Trump's foreign aid freeze, fearing White House retaliation ([Washington Post](#)).
  - One report warns that funding cuts threaten the Israel-Hamas ceasefire, an agreement conditioned on humanitarian aid to Gaza. Investigators found that the placement of nearly all USAID employees on administrative leave has left few, if any, staff members to coordinate humanitarian aid or vet aid partners for terror links.
  - Ranking Democrat on the House Oversight Committee Rep. Gerry Connolly has yet to receive his requested copy, saying: ***"I requested this report because the American people — the entire world — needs and deserves to know what the inspector general***

*found ... This is exactly why we have inspectors general, and they must be free to do their jobs, respond to Congress and work on behalf of the American people without fear of retribution."*

- A separate, unpublished audit found that the administration's withdrawal of aid and mass repatriation of staff would incur security dangers, risks of widespread looting and disease, and tens of millions of dollars in new costs.
- [Former Inspector General Paul K. Martin](#) stated that: *"The fate of in-house, independent oversight is at a tipping point."*

## Consistent Topline Messages (Talking Points)

### Preserving Foreign Assistance as a U.S. Foreign Policy Tool

- 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 power grab that is—unintentionally or not—destroying the U.S. foreign assistance apparatus and depriving the U.S. of a critical soft-power tool. Foreign assistance keeps us safer here at home while demonstrating American generosity and saving millions of lives around the world.
- The clearest example of this is the **broken waiver process. Despite the Administration's claims, even those life-saving and critical national security projects that have been approved 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 and unable to process payments. This includes efforts to stem an Ebola outbreak that could infect 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.**
- Americans agree: foreign assistance is a powerful U.S. soft-power tool, and [89 percent](#) of Americans support spending at least 1 percent of our federal budget on foreign aid. For this reason, **Congress must halt these illegal actions by DOGE and instead implement a more strategic, sensible reform effort that restores the legislative branch's important oversight function.**

### USAID: The first, but not the last

- USAID is the playbook for President Trump and Elon Musk's plan for a **rapid and potentially illegal overhaul of the U.S. government**. This is being done without the Congressional approval and oversight required for those agencies codified by statute. Reform is welcome, but what DOGE is doing is not reform, it is taking a sledgehammer to destroy a vital tool of U.S. national security.
- Rep. Bacon (R-NE) underscored this in his comments to the Wall Street Journal: *"[USAID was] funding a lot of stupid stuff—that's a fact. But they're also doing a lot of good stuff too. So you don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Instead of taking a sledgehammer, let's get out the scalpel."*
- Instead of undertaking a reform effort—working closely with Congress as is required by law—DOGE has taken a "burn it all down" approach including mass firings and major infringements on Congress's power of the purse. This may work for tech firms, but it is a **dangerous approach for government institutions that must remain accountable to taxpayers,**

enforce and follow laws, and deliver public goods.

## Current Impact

### American Economy and Jobs

- **Confirmed Job Losses:** 13,604 Americans have lost their jobs, been furloughed, or placed on administrative leave. 57,502 jobs globally (non-American) have been lost as of February 27, 2025.
  - Details on specific USAID partners forced to make cuts, furloughs, and suspensions across their workforces can be found on [Devex](#).

### Health

- At a Cabinet meeting on February 26, Elon Musk said that DOGE restored USAID Ebola outbreak prevention and response efforts after they were “accidentally canceled very briefly.” Hours later, **the Trump Administration terminated at least four of the five contracts for Ebola-related work in Uganda**. The contracts funded Ebola screening at airports and protective equipment for health workers, and helped prevent transmission by survivors of the disease. ([NYTimes](#), [Washington Post](#), [NPR](#), and [WIRED](#))
- According to [UNAIDS](#), **critical layers of national AIDS responses are ineligible for U.S foreign aid freeze waivers, including many HIV prevention and community-led services for key populations and adolescent girls and young women**. In addition, data collection and analysis services have been disrupted in numerous countries. Reports from UNAIDS Country Offices note that these interruptions have eroded the overall quantity and quality of HIV prevention, testing and treatment services. Human resources for health at health facilities are facing increased workloads, and patients are experiencing increased waiting times to receive life-saving services ([ReliefWeb](#)). Country specific impacts include:
  - In **Kenya**, many civil society organizations engaged in the AIDS response are facing mass layoffs and closure. People living with HIV and key populations who access community-led services are being redirected to general healthcare services. The community-led monitoring project remains closed. Diagnostic services for TB and HIV programs and the broader network for sample collection and analysis have come to a standstill. As a result, viral load testing has been severely disrupted.
  - In **Botswana**, PEPFAR-supported drop-in centres and outreach services for key populations have been shut down. PrEP services have been severely impacted. Other severely impacted services include viral load services, tuberculosis screening, non-communicable disease diagnosis and referral, gender-based violence clinical response, and care and treatment programmes focused on orphans and vulnerable children.
  - In **Indonesia**, HIV prevention and linkages to treatment for about 30% of gay men and other men who have sex with men in Jakarta remain disrupted. Efforts to expand PrEP services and pilot the dapivirine vaginal ring are on hold.
  - In **Ukraine**, the supply chain for HIV-related commodities and antiretroviral drugs remains fragile. While stock levels for certain commodities appear stable in the short term, significant concerns remain for medium- and long-term sustainability.

### National Security

- Former Hawai'i House of Representatives Beth Fukumoto describes how **Americans do not**

**focus enough on how much our national security depends on diplomatic and economic engagement**, underscoring that USAID is a critical part of U.S. defense strategy in the Indo-Pacific, even if it's not as visible as the military bases on O'ahu. USAID plays a key role in fostering stability by providing humanitarian aid, economic development and infrastructure assistance. In many cases, these efforts prevent conflicts before they start by building goodwill and strengthening alliances. Fukumoto claims that is why the Trump administration's dismantling of USAID is such a problem — not just for the agency but for U.S. influence in the region. ([Honolulu Civil Beat](#))

### **Humanitarian Assistance**

- In **Sudan**, the Trump Administration's foreign aid freeze has forced mutual aid groups fighting famine in Sudan to halt their lifesaving work, while local volunteers providing humanitarian aid are facing increasing attacks against them by both parties to the conflict. Volunteers have been detained, harassed, and killed. ([The New Humanitarian](#))

### **Democracy**

- In **eastern Europe**, independent media are concerned by the funding gaps left by the United States' recent decision to slash foreign aid, with journalists and civil society fearing it will hasten democratic backsliding. ([Euractiv](#))

### **Media Review**

- Forbes: [Supreme Court Backs Trump In USAID Case: Here's Where Trump Is Winning—And Losing—In Court](#)
- The Guardian: [Fired USAID workers and HIV activists hold 'die-in' to protest Trump and Musk](#)
- USA Today: ['Least I can do': Supporters applaud as USAID employees given 15-minutes to clear out](#)
- Washington Post: [Musk claims DOGE 'restored' Ebola prevention effort. Officials disagree](#)
- NPR: [Why Dean Karlan, chief economist of USAID, resigned on Tuesday](#)
- NYTimes: [What Will Become of U.S.A.I.D.'s Funding? A Billionaire's Son Has Some Ideas](#)
- Forbes: [Who Is Ben Black? Trump Nominee—And Son Of Billionaire—Wants To Repurpose USAID Funds](#)
- Reuters: [These countries could lose the most, if U.S. stops aid](#)
- Axios: ["Donations can't fill the gap": Nonprofits support local partners through USAID upheaval](#)
- Caritas: [Caritas Deplores Slashing of Humanitarian Assistance: A Betrayal of Global Responsibility](#)

### **Additional Resources for Information and Messaging**

- [USAIDStopWork website](#) and [USAIDStopWork Bluesky](#)
- Friends of USAID: [Instagram](#), [X/Twitter](#), [YouTube](#)