

Zimbabwe rejects State Dept health offer. By Ayodeji Adegboyega,
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Zimbabwe rejects \$350 million US health funding deal warns It threatens national sovereignty

[Ayodeji Adegboyega](#)

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Zimbabwe has withdrawn from negotiations on a proposed US\$350 million health-funding agreement after President Emmerson Mnangagwa instructed his government to halt the process, arguing the draft arrangement with the United States posed an unacceptable threat to national sovereignty.

Zimbabwe has pulled out of negotiations on a US\$350 million US-backed health funding deal after President Mnangagwa ruled the arrangement compromised national sovereignty.

- Government officials objected to Washington's push for access to national health data and linkages to critical minerals.
- The move also reflects Harare's refusal to endorse a bilateral health architecture outside the WHO framework.
- The decision comes as the US considers reducing humanitarian support to Zimbabwe and several other African countries.

The directive, conveyed through a December 23 letter from Ambassador A.R. Chimbindi, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade to senior finance and health officials, marks a decisive end to months of engagement between Harare and Washington under the America First Global Health Strategy, which the US had been promoting as its new mechanism for future support.

Harare objected to Washington's request for long-term access to national health data, viewing the provision as an intrusion that risked exposing sensitive population-level information.

"Please be advised that the President, His Excellency Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, has directed that Zimbabwe must discontinue any negotiation, with the USA, on the clearly lop-sided MoU that blatantly compromises and undermines the sovereignty and independence of Zimbabwe as a country," the letter said.

Negotiators were further unsettled by attempts to fold Zimbabwe's critical mineral ecosystem into the broader health arrangement, a move advisors feared would give the US a strategic vantage point over unrelated sectors central to the country's future economic leverage.

The government's resistance also shows a principled stance on global health governance. Officials argued that signing a bilateral health pact with Washington would contradict Zimbabwe's commitment to multilateralism, particularly after the US distanced itself from the World Health Organization during the Donald Trump administration.

Agreeing to a parallel health framework, they reasoned, would implicitly validate a retreat that Zimbabwe believes undermines the global health order.

Harare's rejection comes at a delicate moment. Even as Zimbabwe steps away from Washington's new funding model, the country also faces the prospect of reduced American humanitarian assistance.

With the downsizing of USAID and internal State Department communications hinting at a responsible exit from several African nations, Zimbabwe risks losing long-standing support for HIV treatment, nutrition programmes and other essential services previously categorized as lifesaving.

Despite the domestic blowback surrounding the draft MoU, Washington's health diplomacy continues to gain momentum elsewhere on the continent, with more than a dozen African countries already signing.