

Marco Rubio - truth or lies? By Anna Gawel, *Devex*, 8 June 2026

To tell the truth

Journalists wrestle with whether to label certain Pinocchio-esque government statements as lies or falsehoods, especially now in an era of U.S. President **Donald Trump's** flagrant and infamous, umm, truth-benders (see I struggle with it too).

Some people say if the claim is egregious, journalists shouldn't shy away from calling it out as a lie, but for others, the word implies malicious intent and should be used sparingly.

We'll defer judgement on what to call certain claims made by Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** during his [marathon congressional hearings](#) last week, but my colleagues Michael Igoe and Elissa Miolene did reach out to various aid experts [to get a more nuanced](#) — and accurate? — take on his foreign assistance back and forth with lawmakers. Let's dive into a few of them:

Rubio rebuffed the suggestion that the Trump administration **has been unwilling to provide humanitarian aid to Sudan**; rather, he said, it's a distribution problem.

"Distribution is being threatened because we don't have conditions on the ground that allow for it. And so to allocate money towards something that we can't distribute is unwise until we have that in place," he said of the country where close to 20 million people face critical hunger levels, according to the [World Food Programme](#).

However, [International Crisis Group](#) analysts **Chris Newton** and **Joseph Tucker** point out that the U.S. has **slashed humanitarian funding to Sudan by about 75%** since 2024. And after the shuttering of USAID, [hundreds of locally run emergency kitchens](#) across the country closed.

"The argument that you shouldn't fund a response because of distribution and access challenges also doesn't hold up," they tell us. "**Without funding, what food convoy or medical team is ready to move** if the [Rapid Support Forces] or the [Sudanese Armed Forces] were to grant access tomorrow? The Trump administration itself is trying to negotiate a humanitarian truce that, if successful, could open up such access. So, what are you even negotiating for?"

On a subject that also raised eyebrows — aside from the secretary of state's highly contested **insistence that U.S. aid cuts have not led to a single death** — Rubio flat-out said the U.S. is "still the world's largest aid provider, and I mean by far. There isn't a close

second.”

The thing with statistics, you can easily cherry-pick them, so this one is a little more nuanced, although it’s still worth questioning its veracity.

“Preliminary OECD DAC figures published in April suggest **Germany overtook the US in Official Development Assistance (ODA)** in calendar year 2025 — that’s based on governments’ own reporting, including the United States’ — but the complete dataset isn’t available yet,” **Erin Collinson** of the [Center for Global Development](#) tells us.

So there’s your answer ... sort of.