

OneUSAID Community Updates

February 21, 2025

A Note from OneUSAID Community Leads

Thanks to all who are supporting OneUSAID Community's efforts to provide information and resources to a wide swath of people. You'll notice these will now come out as "updates" versus "key messages," on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to our broadcast channels on Signal.

Our aim is to arm our supporters with curated, factual information provided by USAID staff and partner experts as well as news media, so that you can more effectively engage with your communities, members of Congress, and others about what is happening to change the course of it. Our focus is on the impact of the stop work order and dismantling of USAID on staff and partners around the world as well as the need to maintain foreign assistance in some form, managed by experts in development and humanitarian assistance, and to sound the alarm on the fact that USAID was the first, but is not the last.

We are a community of USAID and implementing partner staff - current, former, furloughed, and laid off - who are trying to come together and use our networks for good in this painful moment. We remain anonymous for now because of this in-between status many of us face, but we are hundreds strong working on advocacy efforts at every level. With broadcast outlets on Signal now including over 1,700 people, we are so grateful for this community, and thank you for your continued support and efforts across the country to raise awareness and drive change.

Key Updates

Court Cases Related to USAID

- [Just Security Litigation Tracker](#) - public resource tracking legal challenges to Trump administration actions
- Devex: [Court filings underscore security risks to USAID staff abroad](#)
- Devex: [Lawsuit seeks to reinstate USAID contractors, claiming irreparable harm](#)
- AP: [Trump administration is flouting an order to temporarily lift a freeze on foreign aid, judge says](#)
- The Washington Post: [Trump comes close to the red line of openly defying judges, experts say](#)

Summary of the Latest on the Court Case Brought By Implementing Partners

- Last week, Judge Ali, issued a temporary injunction saying that the Trump administration could not suspend, pause, or otherwise prevent the obligation or disbursement of foreign assistance through agreements (including contracts, grants, cooperative agreements or loans) that were formalized prior to Trump's inauguration, nor could it issue, implement or enforce terminations or stop-work orders in connection with any agreement in existence as of the same date. This ruling applied not just to those who were plaintiffs in the suit but all projects impacted by the stop work order.
- During a follow-up hearing yesterday (February 20th), Judge Ali ruled that the administration did not comply with the temporary restraining order (TRO). **Because of**

this, past due invoices from before Trump's inauguration owed to USAID implementing partners have not been paid. These payments are critical for partners to be able to pay staff, and maintain operations that once shut down, may not be able to be re-started.

- The administration has blatantly maintained blanket freeze on payments while constructing post-hoc (after the fact) legal rationalizations submitted through testimony to the court.
- The TRO does not, however, prevent the administration from reviewing individual contracts and grants and modifying or suspending them *after appropriate review*, further complicating the situation facing implementing partners of USAID impacted by the stop work order.
- The judge extended the temporary restraining order until midnight on March 10th, and another hearing on the original suit will take place by March 4th.

The Trump Administration's memo on [Radical Transparency About Wasteful Spending](#) misleads the American public and fails to acknowledge that information on federal spending is already public.

- The Trump Administration and DOGE want the public to believe that USAID and other federal agencies are distributing funding with no accountability. In reality, **USAID spending is tracked—through detailed reports, audits, and compliance reviews—and this information is available publicly** on usaspending.gov and foreignassistance.gov. Inspector general reports are also publicly available at <https://oig.usaid.gov/our-work>.

Growing Job Losses from Musk's Sledgehammer Strategy

- USAID employees continue living with the uncertainty of when they may be laid off or have their contracts terminated. In the most recent round, over 250 USAID personal services contractors (PSCs), who are on mostly technical contracts directly with USAID, were terminated overnight with no notice in a blanket letter that did not even reference the individual contract numbers for each of these staff.
- The majority of the staff who were terminated in this round are directly responsible for working with implementing partners and providing oversight on critical humanitarian assistance. This action also further threatens the ability to continue this work under the waiver for lifesaving programs that is meant to be in place.
- Because they are contractors, the staff most recently terminated, have their contracts publicly available on federal websites tracking government contracts. These contracts with personal information have now been included on DOGE's website as part of the "receipts" they claim show waste, fraud, and abuse. This completely unproven claim based solely on the existence of an employment contract now leaves staff susceptible to doxxing and harassment.

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, the life-saving and critical national security projects that have been approved by Secretary Rubio are not receiving 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 laws, and deliver public goods.**

Current Impact

American Economy and Jobs

- [Confirmed Job Losses](#): 13,124 Americans have lost their jobs, been furloughed or placed on administrative leave as of February 19, 2025.
- American farmers supply over 40% of the food aid USAID delivers, and on average, the U.S. government purchases **\$2.1 billion in crops from American farmers** each year. This is now in jeopardy.
- **American generosity pays for itself.** For every \$1 spent on procuring American food commodities to feed hungry people around the world, an estimated \$1 is generated in additional economic activity for the U.S. (calculation made using [USDA](#) data with analysis from USAID experts). U.S. in-kind food aid is directly tied to legislation that benefits American farmers and the American maritime industry.

Health

- The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the recent suspension of U.S. funding for WHO and the disengagement of U.S. institutions is affecting the global effort to eradicate polio and respond to Mpox. ([Reuters](#) and [Health Policy Watch](#))
 - USAID funds to combat [Mpox](#) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain frozen, risking increased spread of the disease to other countries. ([The Guardian](#))
- In Myanmar, the WHO estimates that 60,000 people now have no access to life-saving health services as a result of the U.S. cutting funding for WHO. ([Health Policy Watch](#))
- In Nepal, at least 36 nurses serving in 18 federal and provincial hospitals across the country lost their jobs, as funds from USAID, which was used to hire those health workers, were suspended. ([Asia News Network](#))
- In Ghana, one patient with HIV in Accra expressed "I don't know what's going to happen to me." He is one of an estimated 150,000 individuals in Ghana who depend on USAID-funded antiretroviral drugs and doctors have warned of potential disruptions to supplies. ([France 24](#))

Humanitarian Assistance

- **The waivers do not work without funding.** On January 29, Secretary Rubio notified USAID that the stop work order would be waived for lifesaving programs. Despite this notice, implementation of the waivers is still stymied by inconsistent communication, purging of staff who would manage waiver processes, lack of access to systems for staff managing those programs, and a broken payment system after DOGE took over.
 - A new process was communicated on February 20, but it remains to be seen if this will rectify the issues facing the waivers.
- **Providing humanitarian aid isn't only the right thing to do, it supports national security objectives.** The Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET), which seeks to prevent famine and has saved over one million lives, is one of USAID's most efficient, data-driven, and impactful programs. The Trump Administration shut it down anyway. ([Wired](#))
 - **There is a correlation between food insecurity, displacement, conflict, and national security.** People will move to seek safety, food, shelter, and other basic needs. By shutting down FEWSNET, the U.S. Government will no longer have advance notice about a potential spike in people fleeing famine, including from places like Central America and the Caribbean where food insecurity and unrest have historically led to people seeking refuge in the United States. ([Wired](#))
- While lifesaving emergency food aid programs are eligible for waivers under the Trump Administration's foreign aid freeze, **non-emergency food aid programs that help chronically poor and vulnerable people reach a more stable situation are blocked.** Withholding this food aid 1) undermines U.S. foreign policy goals by making it more likely that these people will need emergency aid for longer when the next disaster strikes; and 2) increases the risks of instability and displacement if people can't get the aid they need.

National Security

- USAID has played a vital role in supporting Taiwan’s diplomatic allies through development aid, countering China’s economic coercion. Through the elimination of USAID, Washington is weakening Taiwan’s international standing and opening the door for China to further isolate Taiwan on the world stage. ([Global Taiwan Institute](#))
- As a result of the Trump Administration’s freeze on foreign aid, USAID-funded programs in the Amazon that work to combat cocaine production and trafficking to the U.S. are shut down. ([Context](#))

Democracy

- The USAID funding freeze stopped funding to health programs, anti-trafficking efforts, and safe houses for pro-democracy activists in Myanmar, undermining pro-democracy efforts and aiding the military junta. ([The New Humanitarian](#))

Media Review

- The Washington Post: [Many of Trump’s early actions are unpopular, Post-Ipsos poll finds](#)
 - *Only 38% of U.S. adults overall approve of “shutting down the agency that provides humanitarian aid in low-income countries”*
- NYTimes: [‘We’re Just Keeping Everybody Alive’: The Damage Done by the U.S.A.I.D. Freeze](#)
- NYTimes: [The Influence of Foreign Aid](#)
- AP: [The USAID shutdown is upending livelihoods for nonprofit workers, farmers and other Americans](#)
- WSJ: [WSJ Exclusive: Inspectors General Fired by Trump Speak Out](#)
- NPR: [DOGE released data about federal contract savings. It doesn't add up](#)
- Dayton Daily News: [Ohio farmers, ag research stand to lose from proposed USAID cuts](#)
- Chris Hayes Podcast: [The Uncertain Future of USAID with Jeremy Konyndyk](#)
- NYTimes: [Agent Orange Twisted Her Limbs. The U.S. Is Abandoning a Vow to Help](#)

Additional Resources for Information and Messaging

- [USAIDStopWork](#)