

Key Points on USAID

February 6, 2025

Today's Key Messages

The Cost of the Stop Work Order on American Farmers and Shipping Industry

- Title II emergency food and nutrition assistance, which constitutes the bulk of USAID's food assistance, is currently suspended. This suspension will drive more people into famine conditions, and impact the American farmers who grow the food, as well as the U.S. ocean freighters that ship these commodities around the world.
 - More than 475,000 metric tons of American food commodities—valued at more than **\$450 million**—are currently scheduled or in transit and at risk of being wasted. This food, grown by American farmers in the country's heartland, is enough to feed more than **36 million people** and includes corn and cornmeal, lentils, pinto beans, rice, sorghum, vegetable oil, wheat, and yellow split peas.
 - In addition, more than 29,000 metric tons of food commodities—valued at nearly **\$39 million**—are sitting on the floor in USAID warehouses in Houston, Texas, unable to be loaded onto waiting US-flagged ships for transportation to hungry people abroad. Food is also waiting to be loaded at ports in Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Lake Charles (LA), Miami (FL), Newark (NJ), New York (NY), Norfolk (VA), and Savannah (GA). A continued pause will hurt the American shipping industry which handles the majority of USAID food commodities.
 - [Senator Moran](#) (R-KS) is right: This aid must be distributed immediately. The scale of this disruption underscores the far-reaching consequences of the funding pause on global food assistance efforts.

The Human and Financial Costs of a Closing USAID

- On February 4, USAID staff overseas were told to return to Washington within 30 days. This directive will uproot thousands of families at enormous cost to the taxpayer.
- The decision to bring home all USAID Foreign Services Officers will functionally close all USAID Missions around the world prior to the formal Foreign Assistance Review. If the review determines some of these Missions and their programming are, in fact, critical, it will have been a massive waste of taxpayer dollars bringing everyone home only to re-deploy them.
 - Any formal closure of a Mission, like any organizational changes to USAID, requires Congressional notification and approval from Congress.
- One conservative estimate puts the cost of the forced repatriation of all American USAID Foreign Service Officers and their families **at more than \$925 million**.
 - There is no budget line item for a complex evacuation at this scale. Any reprogramming of taxpayer dollars to carry out this evacuation requires approval from Congress.
- The human cost of forced repatriation to USAID staff is immense:
 - Their children will be abruptly pulled out of school.

- Many USAID staff do not have homes to come back to in the United States. They could effectively be homeless upon their return, required to rely upon family and friends for housing — particularly given the ongoing housing crisis.
- USAID Missions are losing services such as cell phones and internet access because they cannot pay bills with the payment systems frozen, and making travel arrangements for the entire foreign service officer corps and their families to return home will be severely hindered as a result.
- Some of these USAID workers are in active war zones, like Ukraine, and have lost access to secure communications. Moreover, local staff who had been employed to provide security services are no longer employed making USAID workers even more vulnerable.
- This forced repatriation of USAID staff will halt all humanitarian and development programs, including lifesaving activities like PEPFAR and critical assistance approved under Secretary Rubio's waiver, issued on January, 28, 2025. Congressionally required oversight of these programs funded by American taxpayers will also come to a halt.

Current Impact

USAID's Structure and People

- There is grave concern about the complete hollowing out of USAID staff and that this will mean USAID will cease to exist. The plan is clearly now to pull it under the Department of State, but the loss of expertise and the damage done will make it difficult to bring back online in any capacity in the near future.
- On February 4, the entire USAID direct hire workforce globally was notified that they are now on administrative leave indefinitely, and all "non-essential" Institutional Support and Personal Service Contractors—approximately 3,000 people—were "terminated."
- USAID has more than 13,000 total employees worldwide, including direct hires (foreign and civil service), locally employed foreign service national staff, and contractors. This includes:
 - More than 1,900 American Foreign Service Officers (FSOs), who will now need to return home with their families
 - More than 1,600 American civil service employees, who have all been placed on administrative leave
 - More than 4,100 American contractors, most of whom were already furloughed, and now officially laid off
 - More than 5,000 locally employed foreign service national staff, who will now be out of work as Missions stop work and shutter
- USAID was founded by an executive order (EO) but was codified in statute by Congress and only Congress has the power to approve the modification/merger of USAID or its closure. This cannot be done unilaterally by the Executive Branch.

American Jobs

- Implementing partners, which include NGOs and development companies based across 42 states in the United States - will be facing mass furloughs or layoffs, and some may even have to close their doors entirely in the coming days and weeks.

- This is estimated to impact a total of 52,000 American jobs, with 10,270 American jobs (USAID and partners) already being confirmed to be lost, furloughed, or on leave with imminent fear of unemployment.

National Security

- USAID should be reformed to better align with an America First foreign policy agenda and adapt to a new era of strategic competition, but Elon Musk and Peter Marocco's actions are not doing this, they are robbing the United States of a critical soft power tool. Because many of those actions are sloppy, they are likely to end up costing U.S. taxpayers much more than an orderly reform process.
- In the absence of USAID leadership, vulnerable people will turn to others for help, not only China and Russia, but potentially violent extremist organizations.
- USAID food aid supports national security by maintaining a strong U.S.-flag merchant fleet, ensuring sealift capacity for military operations, and sustaining the domestic maritime industry.

American Democracy

- Today (2/6), [The New York Times](#) reported Musk and his team tried to gain access to the Treasury's payment system in order to freeze USAID payments. The report details how career staff at the Treasury raised concerns about the legality of using the system to halt payments that had been authorized and certified by the agency.
 - Personnel associated with DOGE eventually gained access to the sensitive payment system.
- Congress has lost control of the power of the purse and oversight of USAID through the actions of Elon Musk, DOGE, and the White House.

Humanitarian Assistance

- In Somalia, with the purging of USAID staff, there is more than \$400 million in USAID humanitarian funding that now lacks appropriate oversight, including for emergency food aid that is reaching over one million hungry people each month.
- In Bangladesh, food assistance for one million refugees is at a critical point, with full rations running out at the end of this month and a reduction of 50% for rations in March. By April, food assistance is likely to shut down if the freeze continues. That's mothers, fathers, and young children without food to thrive.
- In South Sudan, there is approximately \$200 million in emergency food aid (Title II) and \$100 million in Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funding on the way or sitting in Mombasa, Kenya, to feed an estimated five million people where 60 percent of the population is extremely food insecure. One in four children under five is suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

Health

- Cases of Ebola in Uganda are no longer being contained by American foreign aid and technical expertise. This disease can quickly spread to become another pandemic if

USAID is not present. USAID was responsible for containing the 2013-2015 Ebola outbreak, preventing a global pandemic from occurring, and saving millions of lives.

- The freeze on USAID's global health programs will shut down malaria spraying in multiple countries leaving close to 6 million people vulnerable to this disease.
- Bird flu, which has already killed an American in Louisiana, is no longer being monitored in 49 countries as a result of the stop work order. Without USAID, efforts to prevent this virus from mutating into a more dangerous strain will be significantly weakened.
- Without USAID's health and nutrition assistance, approximately 4.5 million children under the age of five are facing acute malnutrition in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country facing growing conflict and instability.