

OneAID Community Updates

March 5, 2025

A Message from OneAID Organizers

Thank you for your continued engagement and support for our collective efforts to advocate for foreign assistance and to support the broader community and architecture around it at this critical moment. OneUSAID Community is evolving to OneAID Community to emphasize that the USAID community encompasses the broader ecosystem and everyone in it. Every day we are heartened by this incredible community of USAID staff (current and former and every other status in between), implementing partners, local staff and partners, and other supporters. There is no USAID without all the vital members that comprise this community. We are also in the process of setting up a website – which will be pretty basic at first – but will include informative one pagers, staff and partner resources, legal information, and so much more. Our goal is to create a one stop shop for those supporting USAID and foreign assistance with links to partners and others who can be helpful - stay tuned. As we continue to evolve this effort, we hope you will continue to provide feedback and evolve with us. We are stronger together!

Key Updates

- **The Supreme Court denied the Trump Administration's request to continue to freeze billions of dollars in foreign aid approved by Congress** but stopped short of requiring immediate payment of the up to \$2 billion in past due foreign aid payments. The US District Judge must now clarify what obligations the government must fulfil—as most aid work remains in suspense.
- **Trump's cuts to USAID abandon America's allies in the Pacific Islands.** U.S. laws and decades-old agreements ([including COFA – the Compact of Free Association](#)) with these countries commit USAID to providing disaster preparedness and recovery for vulnerable island nations, but the Trump administration cancelled the programs essential to upholding these commitments.
- **Congressionally-established independent agencies are fighting back as the Trump Administration attempts to install Pete Marocco as the President of the Inter-American Foundation and the African Development Foundation**, following an [executive order](#) on February 19, 2025, demanding their closure.
- **Keep calling your senators and representatives.** Pick one of the life-saving programs that has been terminated, and ask them to demand a specific explanation for why it has been cut and when the U.S. Government will honor its contracts and pay its bills.

There are three major asks for Congress right now:

- Urge the Administration to **halt and reverse all terminations of active foreign assistance programs and immediately resume the disbursement of Congressionally appropriated foreign assistance funds**, in line with Congressional power of the purse.
- Make sure the payment system is functioning, and capable staff are in place, so that waived programs can be implemented and past-due funds can be disbursed.
- The Supreme Court has rejected the Trump administration's request to lift a lower-court order demanding the government quickly pay: **the**

Administration MUST pay back implementing partners for over \$2 billion in work completed. Without these steps, partners face bankruptcy and the international development sector will cease to exist imminently.

- **Upcoming events:** March 8 is [International Women's Day](#), with hundreds of [events and marches](#) planned across the country.

More details below...

Today's SCOTUS Ruling – A Small Win for Democracy but Significant Work Remains

- On March 3, the Trump administration urged the Supreme Court to excuse the government from immediately repaying the overdue \$2 billion in foreign aid bills, with its lawyer asserting that the government had “largely completed their individualized review of all funding awards and decided to retain thousands of awards, rendering respondents’ original challenge to the blanket ‘freeze’ moot.” ([Devex](#))
- Earlier today, in a 5-4 ruling the [Supreme Court rejected](#) the Trump Administration’s request to keep billions of dollars in foreign aid approved by Congress frozen. Although the order does not require immediate payment of the up to \$2 billion in past due foreign aid payments, it does pave the way for the district court to “clarify what obligations the government must fulfil to ensure compliance with the temporary restraining order.”
 - The Supreme Court justices ruled that US District Judge Amir Ali must [clarify what obligations the government must fulfil](#) to ensure compliance with the order. It seems that the order will drag on in the lower courts and offer a “potentially short-lived victory” for USAID and its implementing partners.
- [Steve Vladeck](#), CNN Supreme Court analyst and professor at Georgetown University Law Center, noted: *“The fact that four justices nevertheless dissented – vigorously – from such a decision is a sign that the Court is going to be divided, perhaps along these exact lines, in many of the more impactful Trump-related cases that are already on their way.”*
- Unfortunately, the significant damage President Trump and Elon Musk have done through the dismantling of USAID will make compliance extremely difficult while humanitarian crises continue to unfold, food remains rotting in warehouses, and the threat of diseases spreading increases.
 - Although the administration has reportedly turned the payment system back on, staff access to the system required to make prompt payments to implementing partners for Congressionally appropriated activities is limited and the lengthy approval process for disbursements is a significant impediment.
 - The waiver and payment process the Trump administration has implemented is inefficient, ineffectively, and unwieldy at best. Pete Marocco and Secretary Rubio could easily reverse the decisions that have hamstrung the system but they do not appear inclined to take concrete steps to enable administration compliance.
 - Although a few implementing partner payment requests have been approved and funds owed have been paid, the significant number of outstanding vouchers unpaid since November will require months to process at the current pace.
 - Some organizations have placed their staff on suspension rather than

termination to be ready to again serve people in need, however, many ran out of funds at the end of February and are now on life-support waiting for the administration to do the right thing.

- When Congressionally appropriated funding that implementing partners depend on to conduct life-saving operations is repeatedly turned off and back on again, the United States government becomes an unreliable partner.
 - The current uncertainty and lack of guidance with current unpaid bills calls into the question the US government's ability to be a trusted donor and actor on the world stage in its obligations to implementers

Trump Cuts to USAID Abandon America's Allies in the Pacific Islands

- USAID is mandated by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2024 and [Compacts of Free Association \(COFA\)](#) to provide disaster aid to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). USAID has used FEMA funding to respond to five major disasters since 2008.
- On February 26, the Trump administration [terminated USAID's disaster preparedness and response operations](#) in Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, leaving FSM without disaster preparedness support in the lead up to typhoon season and potential drought conditions, including for \$2 million in pre-positioned supplies.
- USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance experts in the Pacific region, civil-military coordination, logistics, emergency management, and supply chain have been abruptly terminated. Even if the administration's intent is to regroup and respond, the people that would be doing those jobs no longer are in place.
- The reckless and uninformed firing of staff and cancellation of programs essential to the implementation of the COFA bilateral treaty obligations is just one more example of the disingenuousness of DOGE's so-called review process. Terminating these staff and awards breaks agreements that took decades of lessons learned and negotiations to put in place.

Congressionally-Established Independent Agencies Supporting U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives Fight Back Against Illegal Closures

- On February 19, an [executive order](#) ordered the closure of the U.S. African Development Foundation (ADF), the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), the Presidio Trust, and the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), despite these being independent agencies established by Congress. Three of the four serve U.S. foreign policy objectives in different ways and their nimbleness and independence allows them to do things USAID and the Department of State cannot, often serving as a vital partner:
 - The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) is an independent U.S. foreign assistance agency created by Congress in 1969 that directly invests in localized community-led development across Latin America and the Caribbean.
 - The U.S. African Development Foundation (ADF) is an independent U.S. government agency established by Congress to invest directly in African grassroots enterprises and social entrepreneurs.
 - Congress founded the U.S. Institute of Peace in 1984 as a nonpartisan,

independent organization dedicated to protecting U.S. interests by helping to prevent violent conflicts and broker peace deals abroad.

- Over the last two days, the Trump Administration escalated its tactics to force their closure by installing the Director of Foreign Assistance, and USAID acting Deputy Administrator, Pete Marocco, as president of the IAF. The administration then terminated its bipartisan board of directors, appointed Marocco as the sole board member and chairman, and put all but one of the agency's staffers on leave, apparently via automated emails addressed to "Hi {First Name}". ([Guardian](#), [X](#))
- After this incident, DOGE and Marocco attempted to gain access to the African Development Foundation, which denied their entry as instructed by the ADF President out of fear of a repeat of what happened at the IAF the day before. ([Letter ADF sent to DOGE](#))

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 examples of this are both the **broken waiver process, which never functioned appropriately or had a clear standard operating procedure, and the cancelling of over 10,000 State and USAID contracts last week, some of which had received waivers.**
 - **Despite the Administration's claims, even those life-saving and critical national security projects that were approved by Secretary Rubio to receive waivers were not able to receive funding. This is due in part to** hurried and careless efforts to alter USAID's financial system (Phoenix) that 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.
- The Trump Administration's efforts to dismantle USAID have now **left the U.S. 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.”***
 - **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.
- 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 [Devox](#).
- In **Hawai‘i**, USAID cuts stopped research that could help American coffee growers. The Synergistic Hawai‘i Agriculture Council supports specialty crops, including coffee. A USAID grant to develop coffee trees resistant to the fungal disease coffee leaf rust has been halted. ([Hawai‘i Public Radio](#))

National Security

- Some U.S. government workers with top security clearances fired in mass layoffs were not given standard exit briefings and were not advised on what to do if approached by foreign adversaries. The lack of debriefs for workers could raise security risks as they dealt with secret information on everything from managing nuclear weapons to protecting the power grid from influence by adversaries and ensuring the safety of U.S. staff overseas. ([Reuters](#))
- Foreign adversaries including Russia and China have recently directed their intelligence services to ramp up recruiting of U.S. federal employees working in national security, targeting those who have been fired or feel they could be soon. The intelligence indicates that foreign adversaries are eager to exploit the Trump Administration’s efforts to conduct mass layoffs across the federal workforce. At least two countries have already

set up recruitment websites and begun aggressively targeting federal employees on LinkedIn. ([CNN](#))

Health

- The [latest KFF Health Tracking Poll](#) finds that a majority of the public expects that the dismantling of USAID will lead to increased humanitarian and health crises globally while somewhat fewer expect the move to alleviate domestic fiscal issues:
 - At least six in ten adults say that getting rid of USAID is likely to lead to more illness and death in low-income countries (67%) or more humanitarian crises around the world (62%).
 - Smaller shares – but still close to half – say getting rid of USAID will likely allow funds to be redirected to domestic programs (47%) or significantly reduce the U.S. budget deficit (47%).
 - Partisans are strongly divided on the impacts of cutting USAID, with Democrats more likely to anticipate negative health and humanitarian consequences globally and Republicans more likely to expect positive fiscal outcomes at home.
- The Trump Administration's cancelling of USAID funding for the Stop Tuberculosis Partnership could lead to a 32% increase in multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. ([Devex](#))
- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, an unidentified illness with Ebola-like symptoms has killed over 60 people and sickened more than one thousand since late January, occurring at the same time as an Ebola outbreak in neighboring Uganda and amid increasing political violence within the DRC. The dismantling of USAID has stymied the response to this unidentified disease, delaying further investigations and containment efforts of additional disease outbreaks. ([WIRED](#))
- In **India**, the first medical clinic for transgender people has shut operations in three cities, which catered to approximately 6,000 people and about 6% to 8% of the patients were being treated for HIV. ([BBC](#))

Humanitarian Assistance

- In **Afghanistan**, the Trump Administration's foreign aid cuts has resulted in the suspension of 188 health facilities across Afghanistan, significantly impacting access to lifesaving healthcare services for approximately 1.6 million people. ([ReliefWeb](#))
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, Oxfam reports that USAID cuts will have an immediate and life-threatening impact on the 500,000 people in eastern DRC, who are already in need of food, water, and shelter due to the spiralling conflict. ([ReliefWeb](#))

Democracy, Rights, and Governance

- The International Bar Association has raised concerns that dismantling USAID and the foreign funding freeze jeopardizes rule of law and human rights globally, emphasizing that China may take advantage of this opportunity – and it won't necessarily do so with the same requirement for aid recipients to adhere to human rights. ([IBA](#))
- In **Uganda**, USAID cuts have put individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ at even greater risk, with shelters underfunded, hundreds of individuals unemployed and many more facing discrimination and violence, while vital medical supplies remain scarce and LGBTQ+

individuals increasingly report feeling depressed or suicidal. In 2023, President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni signed a law that calls for life imprisonment for anyone who engages in same-sex relations in Uganda and up to a decade in prison for anyone who tries to. ([NY Times](#))

Media Review

- Reuters: [Trump administration official to brief Congress on USAID, sources say](#)
- MSNBC (Video): [Samantha Power: Musk's DOGE spreading 'lies' about USAID](#)
- CBS News (Video): [Ex-USAID worker talks about emotional toll of firings, impact on family](#)
- CBS News (Video): [USAID worker put on leave speaks out on DOGE cuts](#)
- ABC News (Video): ['This has been devastating, lives are being lost,' says fired USAID employee](#)
- CNBC (Video): [Former USAID official Dr. Gawande: The damage to the agency has already been done](#)
- Bloomberg: [Diplomats Decry USAID's Dismantling in Dissent Cable to Rubio](#)
- The Atlantic: [DOGE Gets a Foreign Ally](#)
- CNN: [Trump's funding cuts are taking a toll in North Carolina](#)
- Washingtonian: [Senator Andy Kim Began His Career at USAID. Now He's Speaking out Against DOGE Cuts](#)
- Christianity Today (Video): [USAID's Demise, Fighting Malaria, and Being the Church with Nathaniel Moller | Being Human](#)
- TIME: [Her Small Business Helps Disabled Kids Learn. USAID Cuts Have Pushed It Toward Bankruptcy](#)
- Chatham House: [First USAID closes, then UK cuts aid: what a Western retreat from foreign aid could mean](#)
- Basic Education Coalition (Video): [How does foreign assistance put America first?](#)
- Kentucky WHAS (Video): [USAID contractor from Louisville hit by federal layoffs; Kentucky DOGE bill advances in Senate](#)
- Minnesota KARE11: [Minnesota organizations feeling impact of USAID cuts](#)
- Portland Press Herald: [A Maine nonprofit is working to fill the void amid USAID cutbacks](#)
- Indy Star (Opinion): [DOGE fired me. I'll be fine, but America is in trouble](#)
- Chicago Daily Herald (Opinion): [I've seen firsthand how USAID aligns with Trump's, America's values](#)
- Courier Journal (Opinion): [My daughter is collateral damage in Trump's reckless war on USAID](#)

Additional Resources for Information and Messaging

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