



TRUMP'S ATTACKS ON FOREIGN AID

DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON LIFE-SAVING PROGRAMS AROUND THE WORLD

As Donald Trump and Elon Musk continue their slash-and-burn rampage through the US government, perhaps no other set of programs has been as thoroughly devastated as foreign aid.

Only hours after taking office, Trump announced a 90-day “pause” on new aid commitments, claiming that all proposed programs would be reviewed to ensure they were compliant with his administration’s priorities. Days later, the implementors of existing programs began receiving “stop-work” orders requiring them to immediately suspend their operations.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio later issued a temporary waiver for existing “life-saving humanitarian assistance” programs, to include “core life-saving medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence assistance, as well as supplies and reasonable administrative costs.” However, despite the administration’s claims, experts in the field report that in most cases aid remains frozen.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has historically been the funding agency for most family planning programs, has been functionally dissolved, with thousands of employees fired or placed on indefinite leave and the agency’s headquarters closed. Additionally, in late February, the administration announced that its review of current programs was complete and abruptly terminated more than 90% of USAID contracts.

All these actions are at best legally questionable and at worst outright illegal. Thus far, however, Trump’s congressional allies have declined to rein him in, and, indeed, many continue to cheer him on. There are

multiple lawsuits pending before every level of the federal court system, but given the makeup of the Supreme Court, their outcome is uncertain—as is Trump’s willingness to abide by their rulings, should they go against him.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS?

In FY 2024, Congress appropriated \$607.5 million for family planning, including \$32.5 million for the US contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). That funding is estimated to have provided 47.6 million women and couples with access to family planning in 2024. The contribution to UNFPA has officially been halted. Though there has not been official confirmation on the fate of the rest of the funds, given this administration’s ongoing hostility to reproductive health and rights generally, it seems safe to assume it has been or will be canceled.

The loss of the UNFPA funding was expected. Every Republican president since 1985, including Donald Trump during his first term, has withheld the US contribution to the organization. The cancellation of other contracts, however, is unprecedented.

Advocates are still trying to quantify the scale of the devastation that will follow. According to the Guttmacher Institute, an average of 130,390 women receive contraceptive care each day through US-funded programs. Over the course of a month, that number rises around four million. They calculate that the original 90-day “pause” would have denied care to 11.7 million women and girls and resulted in 4.2 million unintended pregnancies and more than 8,000 deaths due to complications from pregnancy and childbirth.



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The full effect of a permanent loss of funding can't yet be calculated, though it will clearly be profound. The cancellation of other programs that particularly benefit women and girls—including HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs; and girls' education initiatives, to name a few—will only exacerbate the problem and increase the need for family planning and reproductive health services.

THE ROAD AHEAD

For family planning advocates, the way forward is uncertain. Lawsuits and public pressure may have some impact on the administration's decisions going forward, but there is no way to easily repair the mechanisms that have been broken.

It is unclear if other donor countries will be willing or able to make up the shortfalls caused by the abrupt cancellation of US funds. It is certain they cannot do so quickly enough to avert many of the disastrous effects outlined above. At a bare minimum, the disruption of services will have a profound negative effect on the people who depended on these lifesaving programs.

Foreign aid has historically accounted for less than 1% of the US federal budget. The tiny fraction of that amount spent on family planning has delivered outcomes that have improved the lives and wellbeing of millions of people. In the name of cutting costs, the Trump administration has acted with the sort of breathtaking recklessness we've all come to know and expect.

Women and families around the world will pay the price.

THE BENEFITS OF U.S. INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING ASSISTANCE

The United States invested \$607.5 million in international family planning and reproductive health programs in 2024. This resulted in:

- 47.6 million women and couples receiving contraceptive services and supplies
- 17.1 million unintended pregnancies averted
- 7.6 million unplanned births averted
- 5.2 million unsafe abortions averted
- 34,000 maternal deaths averted

EACH \$10 MILLION DECREASE IN FUNDING RESULTS IN:

- 1 million fewer women and couples receiving contraceptive services and supplies
- 362,000 additional unintended pregnancies;
- 161,000 additional unplanned births
- 110,000 additional unsafe abortions
- 718 additional maternal deaths

Source: Just the Numbers: The Impact of US International Family Planning Assistance, 2024