



TRUMP'S ATTACKS ON GLOBAL HEALTH

DEVASTATING IMPACTS ON LIFE-SAVING PROGRAMS AROUND THE WORLD

As Donald Trump continues his 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 implementers 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 had historically been the funding agency for most family planning programs, is gone, with thousands of employees fired or laid off. What little remains of the agency’s programs is now housed at the State Department.

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 FY2025, Congress appropriated \$607.5 million for international family planning, which the Guttmacher Institute estimates would have provided 47.6 million women and girls with access to modern contraceptives.

In addition to the dismantling of USAID, which managed US bilateral family planning assistance (\$575 million), the \$32.5 million US contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was officially cut. 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.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, before the funding cuts, an average of 130,390 women received contraceptive care each day through US-funded programs. They calculate that the original 90-day “pause” 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. 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,



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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 future decisions, but there is no way to easily repair the mechanisms that have been broken.

It is unclear whether 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 life-saving 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.

And 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*

Note: Congress also appropriated \$607.5 million for both 2025 and 2026. The 2025 funding was eliminated in a rescissions bill early in the year. It remains doubtful that the administration will use the 2026 funding in the manner Congress intended.