

The Trump Administration, through the U.S. Department of State, issued an immediate “stop work order,” freezing all existing foreign assistance programming and pausing any new aid with very limited exceptions. This action follows on the President’s Executive Order on Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid, mandating a review of U.S. foreign assistance programs.

This stop-work order halts critical, lifesaving global health programs funded by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and has devastating consequences for millions of people worldwide. This decision directly impacts some of the world’s most vulnerable populations, cutting off essential interventions such as maternal and child healthcare, polio vaccinations, HIV/AIDS services, and malaria prevention and eradication efforts.

Each day that these lifesaving programs remain paused and unfunded, decades of progress are undone, and the trust and leadership the U.S. has built with global partners are eroded. Beyond the humanitarian toll, this move threatens America’s reputation, global standing, and long-term health and economic security. Pausing these programs leaves a vacuum that will not only harm vulnerable populations but will allow adversarial actors to fill the void, destabilizing regions, and undermining U.S. influence. All of this makes our nation less secure.

While a review of foreign aid is appropriate to ensure that the generosity of American taxpayers is used efficiently and effectively, it should not come at the expense of existing, Congressionally-appropriated funding for these lifesaving programs that advance U.S. interests and provide significant return on investment to our country.

## **The stop-work order undermines America’s commitment to making our nation stronger, safer, and more prosperous.**

### Impacts of the Stop-Work Order

#### **Harmful Economic Impacts**

American foreign assistance programs are not charity. The investments the U.S. government makes in global health provide both economic and national security rewards and improve our standing throughout the world. Not only do these investments create jobs and bolster local economies through new contracts here in the U.S., but they also result in healthier populations around the world, which fosters economic growth and open markets for U.S. businesses. Yet, the stop-work order halts:

- Over \$1 billion in pharmaceutical donations,
- Global partnerships with U.S. biotech and health companies, and
- Research and data systems built with U.S. technology.

The stop-work order has been followed by the drastic reduction of USAID staff in the US and overseas, with the removal of leadership and technical staff in the global health bureau, bureau of humanitarian assistance, legislative and public affairs and at in-country Missions. It has also led to job losses among Americans working at NGOs that implement, monitor, and evaluate critical global health programs. These cuts don’t just impact individuals, they weaken the very infrastructure needed to respond to global health crises. As vacancies rise and expertise is lost, the effectiveness of lifesaving programs is compromised at a time when global health challenges are mounting.

#### **Increasing Threats to Health and National Security**

America’s global health leadership is a matter of national and global security. Pathogens know no

borders; if we don't track outbreaks abroad, we risk facing them at home. Early detection saves lives, prevents pandemics, and protects this country. There are ongoing and new threats, including some that have already landed on American shores that, without intervention, will spread further and result in the additional loss of lives. Active prevention and tracking of both new and re-emerging infectious diseases in Africa and Asia have ceased, leaving millions without protection from devastating health crises and increasing the risk that diseases will spread:

- Bird flu surveillance in 49 countries has been halted, even after an American has already died from the disease.
- The stop-work order has halted efforts to battle a deadly Marburg outbreak in Tanzania and an Mpox variant killing children in West Africa.
- Surveillance for drug-resistant tuberculosis worldwide will not be conducted under this order, even as we are in the midst of a tuberculosis outbreak in Kansas.
- The stop work order prevents U.S. response to the new Ebola outbreak in Uganda's capital city of 1.9 million people.

## Exacerbating Crises and Conflict

Stronger health systems mean fewer crises, fewer refugees, and more stability. All around the world, the U.S. stop-work order is leaving millions without essential care and is creating an environment conducive to instability:

- U.S. support is frozen for thousands of frontline health clinics and facilities that serve highly vulnerable populations in conflict zones. Hundreds of these clinics will be forced to shutter within a matter of days in places like Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Gaza.
- 600,000 displaced people in Sudan will lose access to food, water, and healthcare, leaving them vulnerable to disease outbreaks.
- 900,000 people in Syria face worsening conditions, fueling instability and leaving space for ISIS and other adversaries to step in.
- 1.2 million people in the Democratic Republic of Congo will lose lifesaving health and nutrition support.
- 15,000 people in Haiti will go hungry, fueling gang recruiting and instability.
- In Peru and Ecuador, nearly 100,000 refugees will lose services that help them stay, rather than migrate to the U.S.

While it appears that emergency food assistance is exempted from the freeze, all of the essential life-saving humanitarian activities that accompany food aid to prevent famine are currently suspended, including clean water and sanitation and medical interventions like treatment for cholera.

## Putting Mothers and Babies at Risk

The stop-work order halts medicine, supplies, and staff support, as well as other basic, life-saving health needs, that provide prenatal care, safe childbirth, and vaccines to 90 million women and children, including:

- **Millions of children who** rely on U.S.-funded vaccines, malnutrition treatment, and medical care. The stop-work order means they will not receive vaccinations against easily preventable diseases such as measles, polio, and tetanus nor will they receive treatment for deadly malnutrition. In addition, there will be no safe childbirth services for pregnant mothers.
- **Children affected by HIV in 23 countries** who rely on U.S.-funded programs for medical care, food, and education. The stop-work order suspends those services, abandoning the most vulnerable.
- **Maternal and child nutrition programs,** therapeutic feeding centers, and programs for pregnant and breastfeeding moms are being shuttered globally.

Examples of impact by country:

- **Afghanistan:** 191 health clinics, which are the sole source of lifesaving maternal healthcare in rural areas, will be closed.
- **Pakistan:** 62 health facilities located amid refugee villages will lose access to lifesaving maternal healthcare.
- **Ethiopia:** Almost 50,000 women and girls, including some who are pregnant and breastfeeding, will be at risk of potentially fatal malnutrition.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** 4.5 million children under the age of 5 face acute malnutrition without access to therapeutic feeding centers and support for their breastfeeding mothers.
- **Turkey:** 11 service units providing maternal healthcare will be forced to close, leaving 28,900 people without access to care.
- **Honduras and Guatemala:** More than 22,000 women and girls will lose access to services that protect them from domestic violence, tempting them to try to migrate to the U.S.

## Reversing Hard-Fought Progress and Causing Diseases to Rebound

The delay created by the stop-work order risks not just reversing decades of progress but also causing a resurgence of many diseases. Some of these were under control and others were close to elimination. All are in jeopardy of surging back under this order.

**Polio:** With the U.S. helping to lead the way, the world was close to eradicating polio. Now, with the stop-work order in effect and vital vaccination and tracking efforts brought to a halt, efforts to eliminate this paralyzing disease are on hold. Because a single case can spark an outbreak, delays could bring polio back to places where it was nearly eliminated.

**Malaria:** The stop-work order has halted critical malaria prevention campaigns just before peak transmission season. Malaria is preventable, but by missing this window, lives will be lost.

- The freeze on U.S. global health programs will shut down malaria spraying operations in coming weeks in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana, impacting close to 6 million people.
- In Kenya, 1.45 million people will be left unprotected.
- In Uganda, 3.2 million people will be at risk.
- In Ethiopia, 2.6 million people won't receive bed nets.

Seasonal malaria prevention campaigns for children, who are particularly vulnerable, have been disrupted. As a result, millions of young children in West Africa are now at greater risk of severe malaria and its life-threatening consequences.

**HIV/AIDS:** On January 28, 2025, the Secretary of State issued a waiver<sup>1</sup> for core life-saving medicine, medical services, food, shelter, and subsistence assistance. Though the waiver is slowly being implemented, however, not uniformly, critical services, such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), orphans and vulnerable children, and gender-based violence remain unfunded. This includes HIV testing and treatment for adults and children, as well as prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT). Without a clearly communicated directive from agencies to implementers, as well as a quick, efficient disbursement of funding to restart programs, the waiver cannot be implemented. Everyday these life saving services remain halted:

- More than 190,000 clinicians and other healthcare workers cannot provide HIV response services.

- Donated drug supplies are blocked for the more than 200,000 people living with HIV, 7,445 of whom are children under the age of 15, who rely on new supplies of antiretrovirals every single day. Even short cessations of these programs cause drug resistance, loss to follow-up, loss of life, and rising infections.
- Programs are stopped that support 6.5 million orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV in 23 countries are stopped.
- Services provided every day through the U.S. President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) are at a standstill, including:
  - 224,000 HIV tests are given and 4,374 new cases are identified; 10% of these cases are pregnant women attending antenatal clinic visits.
  - Care is provided for 17,695 orphans and vulnerable children.
  - 7,163 cervical cancer screenings are provided, leading to new diagnosis of 363 women with cervical cancer or precancerous lesions. In addition, 324 women with positive cervical cancer are treated.
  - Care and support is provided to 3,618 women experiencing gender-based violence, including 779 women who have experienced sexual violence.

The end of HIV/AIDS as a public health threat is within reach, but not without continuing these services.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/the-status-of-president-trumps-pause-of-foreign-aid-and-implications-for-pepfar-and-other-global-health-programs/>

## About GHC

Global Health Council (GHC) is the leading membership organization supporting and connecting advocates, implementers, and policymakers to advance global health priorities.

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