

# U.S. International Assistance Freeze

Placing America's Security, Economic, and Humanitarian Interests at Risk

## Situation Report

**U.S. international assistance is a critical part of America's ability to lead on the world stage – giving us the eyes, ears, and relationships necessary to protect our national security, secure markets for U.S. businesses and products, and prevent conflict and diseases from reaching our borders.**

But the recent freeze on international assistance put an abrupt stop to the vast majority of these effective programs, and waivers intended to allow some lifesaving programs to continue are not working in practice. The human, economic, and national security impacts of the continuing freeze are a clear and present danger to American lives and livelihoods and to U.S. strategic interests around the world.

## Endangering our National Security

### Ceding the Ground to America's Rivals

**America's greatest rivals – China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea – are already taking full advantage of this freeze to grow their global influence.**

The Chinese Communist Party has stepped in to provide support for demining programs in Cambodia – a strategic national security and economic partner to the U.S. – that have been defunded by the freeze, while Russia is supporting mobile laboratories and training disease specialists to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) detect and stop outbreaks. The DRC is home to one of the largest supplies of critical minerals in the world.

### Leaving Allies in the Lurch

**Support for many of America's closest allies and partners, including Jordan, has been suspended, risking greater instability in the Middle East with direct impacts on U.S. national security.**

## Taking our Offense off the Field

**The rapid drawdown in USAID personnel and suspension of support for trusted partner organizations is hindering access to intelligence and monitoring of extremist groups in high-risk environments like Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, and West Africa.**

**In Iraq, U.S. support for efforts to detect and halt the movement of terrorists across borders is at risk.** In Benin, a multiyear program to train the army for counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda-linked militants has been put on hold. In Somalia, U.S.-supported laboratories that analyze ballistics, DNA, bombs, and other evidence linked to extremist activity – and then pass that information onto the FBI – have been impacted.

## Opening the Door for Extremists

**Cutting off security assistance and essential services for vulnerable populations allows malign actors to undermine our national security**

**In Syria, the U.S. cut off support for nearly 900,000 people in desperate conditions,** turning America's back on Syria at a fragile moment after the fall of Bashar al-Assad and leaving a door wide open for ISIS and other malign actors to win the hearts and minds of those who are most vulnerable.

**In the Sahel, a fragile and strategic region of Africa, U.S. forces have largely withdrawn, leaving now-frozen humanitarian initiatives as the major U.S. presence in the region.** As one senior military official said in a recent Washington Post interview,

**"When you take that away, our ability to shape the environment is gone... And if nature abhors a vacuum, we know that predator nations will dive in."**

**The U.S. has frozen resources intended to support religious minorities such as Christians and Yazidis, who have been targeted by ISIS.** In Sinjar, an Iraqi town where thousands of Yazidis were massacred by the Islamic State, the freeze has cut off water and electricity, basic health care, school construction, and support for community centers as Yazidis are returning home after a decade in Syrian refugee camps

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In Somalia, a project to build and maintain bases for U.S.-trained Somali special forces was abruptly halted, leaving some of those forces in danger and forcing U.S. soldiers to quickly step in and take on the work.

In Kenya, the suspension of U.S. support that has helped Kenyan police secure the country's 430-mile border with Somalia is making a stalwart U.S. ally once again vulnerable to the threats of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and terrorist attacks.

## Undermining Efforts to Reduce Migration at America's Southern Border

### Taking Critical Tools Off the Field

The freeze on U.S. assistance has paused programs in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to address the root causes of migration.

Programs in Central and South America to combat transnational criminal organizations and drug trafficking have been halted, opening the door for more illegal narcotics, including fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, that are killing thousands of Americans.

Delivery of food and basic services has been suspended for at least 56,000 Venezuelan refugees and host community members across Colombia designed to encourage them to remain in place rather than attempt to migrate north to the U.S.

In Mexico, a program has been halted that helps thousands of children at risk of being recruited by gangs, organized crime, and human traffickers to stay in school and off the streets.

## Damaging the American Economy

### Hurting the Heartland

American farmers are facing catastrophic disruptions to their businesses. American farmers supply more than 40% of the food aid USAID delivers, and on average, the U.S. government purchases more than \$2 billion in crops from American farmers each year. This vital revenue is now at risk

On February 10, the USAID Inspector General reported that the halt on delivery of emergency food programs had put up to \$500 million of lifesaving food assistance that was already at sea, in ports, or in warehouses awaiting distribution at risk of spoilage.

A portion of the 500,000 metric tons of food in limbo has since begun to be delivered, but global food stocks are rapidly being depleted and no new U.S. food has been purchased since January 24 – hitting the pocketbooks of American farmers and putting more than 36 million people worldwide at imminent risk of starvation.

### Disappearing U.S. Jobs

An estimated 52,000 Americans across 46 states have lost their jobs as U.S. organizations have had to drastically cut their staff, with thousands more expected with new reports that 10,000 USAID and State Department awards are being terminated.

Very few partners have received waivers to restart lifesaving and critical national security-related activities, and they have been told they do so at their own financial risk with no guarantees of payment.

The U.S. government already owes an estimated \$1 billion to trusted American organizations and businesses for programs they were implementing before the aid freeze and stop-work orders.

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## Shrinking State Economies

U.S. states will lose an estimated **\$3.34 billion** in direct economic benefit from stopping international programs that support American jobs across the country.

## Innovation on Hold

13 American universities have had to stop their [Feed the Future](#) Innovation Labs – including Kansas State University, the University of Florida, Mississippi State University, the University of Nebraska, the University of Illinois, and Purdue University. These closures have halted development of cutting-edge innovations to save lives and, if sustained, will hand China a strategic scientific and market advantage.

## Risking Lives and Spread of Deadly Disease

### Pandemic Monitoring Turned Off

Monitoring of [avian flu](#) has been suspended in 49 countries as the virus continues to spread unchecked globally and has already resulted one U.S. fatality.

Surveillance has also been discontinued for drug-resistant [tuberculosis](#) – the world's top infectious disease. Without active U.S. surveillance programs to prevent, detect, and respond to biothreats, new disease threats are just a plane ride away from U.S. shores.

### Life-Saving Services Suspended

20 million people living with HIV across 55 countries have lost access to services through PEPFAR, the U.S. government's flagship global health program.

At least 328,000 HIV positive people across 25 countries at high risk of transmission have lost access to [HIV treatment](#) and testing to monitor their viral loads.

Ten countries have reported disruptions in HIV testing of newborns exposed to HIV and in preventative treatment for adolescent girls and young women, while nine countries report disruptions in treatment to prevent transmission from mother to child.

In Tanzania, a [clinic](#) treating hundreds of children with HIV has been struggling to cover the cost of antiretroviral drugs for HIV-exposed children, whose immune systems are particularly vulnerable without drugs to keep HIV at bay. These disruptions risk have increased spread of HIV and development of drug-resistant strains of HIV that will undo two decades of progress in stopping AIDS.

## Infectious Disease Program Pauses

Nearly 6 million people in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana will be impacted by stopping malaria prevention campaigns.

In Uganda, where the country is now fighting a new [Ebola](#) outbreak, health programs are under significant duress with supply chains halted due to the aid suspension.

Even short gaps in malaria prevention activities – like distribution of bed nets – can cause devastating effects. In Ethiopia, [malaria](#) cases surged between 2019 and 2024, from less than 1 million to more than 7 million cases.

In the middle of a deadly Mpox outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, testing and treatment services are being stopped at 73 testing sites and 92 health facilities that serve 200,000 people. The vast majority of Mpox vaccine doses pledged by the U.S. [are stuck](#) in a warehouse and can't reach those who need them.

## Emergency Assistance in Limbo

Despite waivers granted for emergency food assistance, many programs remained halted due to frozen payment systems and staffing shortages.

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1.25 million people have lost access to lifesaving food, health, and nutrition services in Sudan. Nutrition services have been stopped for over 250,000 people, leading the way for famine to take hold. More than 80% of community partners providing emergency food aid have closed, as well as 48 health facilities serving over 300,000 people.

Nearly 400,000 severely malnourished children are in danger of losing access to therapeutic food manufactured at U.S. factories in Georgia and Rhode Island because the U.S. government has not given them the go-ahead to manufacture and ship the product.

In Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar, more than 300,000 people impacted by recent cyclones and flooding have lost essential support for clean water, sanitation, and shelter. Malawi faces compounding risks, as they grapple with malnutrition and food insecurity alongside a shortage of health care workers.