

Addressing the Mass Termination of Foreign Assistance Programs

Ask: Urge the Administration to halt and reverse all terminations of active foreign assistance programs until a thorough and transparent review of foreign assistance programs is conducted and immediately resume the disbursement of Congressionally appropriated foreign assistance funds.

Background

On January 20, the Administration issued an executive order instituting a 90-day review of US foreign assistance programs to ensure their alignment with U.S. interests. On January 24, a State Department memo ordered all US-government foreign assistance programs to stop work during the review period, with limited exceptions. In court filings on February 26, State Department Director of Foreign Assistance, Peter Marocco, announced that USAID had completed its review in just 30 days and that **5800 USAID awards would be terminated, roughly 90% of all USAID assistance**. CRS and peer organizations have seen an influx of termination notices for programs across the globe. Lifesaving food assistance programs, PEPFAR programming, and lifesaving support for mothers and newborn children are among the programs terminated. Director Marocco stated that 500 USAID awards will remain. Mass project terminations are an affront to human life, especially during the backdrop of a Jubilee year – a Holy year of grace when the Pope has called on us to be signs of hope and *intensify* our efforts to uplift human dignity.

Highlighted impacts of project terminations

Widespread project terminations are an affront to Catholic values, especially the life and dignity of the human person:

- **Pregnant women and infants** have been cut off from lifesaving food and emergency health services, including in remote locations where families have no alternative for life-saving aid.
- **U.S.-grown food aid** intended to feed vulnerable families and expand markets for U.S. commodities will no longer support tens of thousands of people.
- **Activities that prevent the spread of violent extremism** have been shuttered, including those that support religious minorities.
- **The safety and security of humanitarian workers** are at elevated risk, as they are forced to break promises to host country governments, local partners, and program participants.

The power of foreign aid to advance U.S. interests

Any foreign aid review process must be transparent - and recognize the critical role foreign aid plays in advancing U.S. interests.

- **Foreign assistance makes the U.S. safer** - Foreign aid funding supports CRS' efforts in Asia to provide emergency shelter repair, water access, and other humanitarian aid to families affected by increasingly severe floods and typhoons. This work not only affirms our commitment to human dignity, but allows the U.S. to shape the trajectory of humanitarian crises in regions of strategic interest. **U.S. investments foster stability abroad and deny our adversaries the chance to exploit desperation.**
- **Foreign assistance makes the U.S. stronger and more prosperous** - Foreign aid funding supports the "Feed the Future" initiative, which helps countries develop their agricultural sectors and address the root causes of hunger. In FY23 alone, Feed the Future reached 33 million people across 40 countries with American expertise and generosity – a shining star of U.S. soft power. What's more, producers and firms supported by Feed the Future have reported more than \$30 billion in sales of agricultural products and services. **US investments boost local markets, put countries on the path "from aid to trade," and establish the US as a valuable partner.**

For additional information, contact: **David Cronin**, Government Relations manager, Catholic Relief Services at david.cronin@crs.org for questions related to foreign aid, budget and appropriations.