

Trump administration

Rubio says 83% of USAid programs terminated after six-week purge

Surviving aid to be administered by state department in radical narrowing of definition of US national interest



📹 In court filings the state department had claimed it was killing 90% of USAid programs. Marco Rubio gave no explanation for why his number was lower. Photograph: J Countess/Getty Images

Joseph Gedeon in Washington and agencies

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The **Trump administration** has taken an axe to US foreign aid, eliminating 83% of programs run by the US Agency for International Development (**USAid**) in a sweeping six-week purge that has done away with entire categories of development work that took decades to build up.

Secretary of state **Marco Rubio** announced the massive cuts on Monday, posting that roughly 5,200 of USAid's 6,200 global programs have been terminated. The surviving initiatives - less than a fifth of America's previous aid portfolio - will be absorbed by the state department.

“Our hard-working staff who worked very long hours” alongside [Elon Musk](#)’s so-called “department of government efficiency” (Doge) teams deserve credit for this “overdue and historic reform”, Rubio wrote on X, using his personal account.

The mass terminations follow [Donald Trump](#)’s 20 January [executive order](#) freezing foreign assistance for review that he claimed pushed forward a liberal global agenda.

This abrupt dismantling also overturns decades of bipartisan consensus that humanitarian and development assistance serves American security interests by stabilizing fragile regions, fostering economic growth, and building diplomatic goodwill - and were backed by Musk’s unofficial government efficiency unit.

Timeline

Trump’s cuts to USAid

Show

“Tough, but necessary. Good working with you. The important parts of [USAID](#) should always have been with Dept of State,” Musk responded on X following Rubio’s announcement.

The New York Times [reported last week](#) that there had been serious cut-ups between Musk and Rubio at a recent cabinet meeting over proposed cuts to the state department.

During that meeting, Trump reportedly defended Rubio for doing a “great job” and said that Musk’s team would be merely advising cabinet secretaries about future cuts. But Rubio’s apparent embrace of Musk’s objectives reveal the extent to which the billionaire Trump supporter wields power in the administration.

Rubio’s social media post on Monday said that review was now “officially ending”, with about 5,200 of USAid’s 6,200 programs eliminated.

Those programs “spent tens of billions of dollars in ways that did not serve, (and in some cases even harmed), the core national interests of the United States”, Rubio wrote.

“In consultation with [Congress](#), we intend for the remaining 18% of programs we are keeping ... to be administered more effectively under the state department,” he said. Democratic lawmakers and others call the

shutdown of congressionally funded programs illegal, saying such a move requires Congress's approval.

The state department did not respond to a request for comment on the criteria being used to keep alive the remaining programs and to respond to claims that cutting programs without congressional approval is illegal.

The [Trump administration](#) has given almost no details on which aid and development efforts abroad it spared as it mass-emailed contract terminations to aid groups and other USAid partners by the thousands within days earlier this month. The rapid pace, and the steps skipped in ending contracts, left USAid supporters challenging whether any actual program-by-program reviews had taken place.

According to internal documents [reviewed by ProPublica](#), top health officials at USAid had for weeks warned Rubio and other leaders about the potential death toll that would result from the cuts, along with one million children untreated for severe malnutrition, up to 166,000 malaria deaths, and 200,000 more children paralyzed by polio over the next decade if they carried out their plan.

Aid groups say even some life-saving programs that Rubio and others had promised to spare got the termination notices, such as emergency nutritional support for starving children and drinking water serving sprawling camps for families uprooted by war in Sudan.

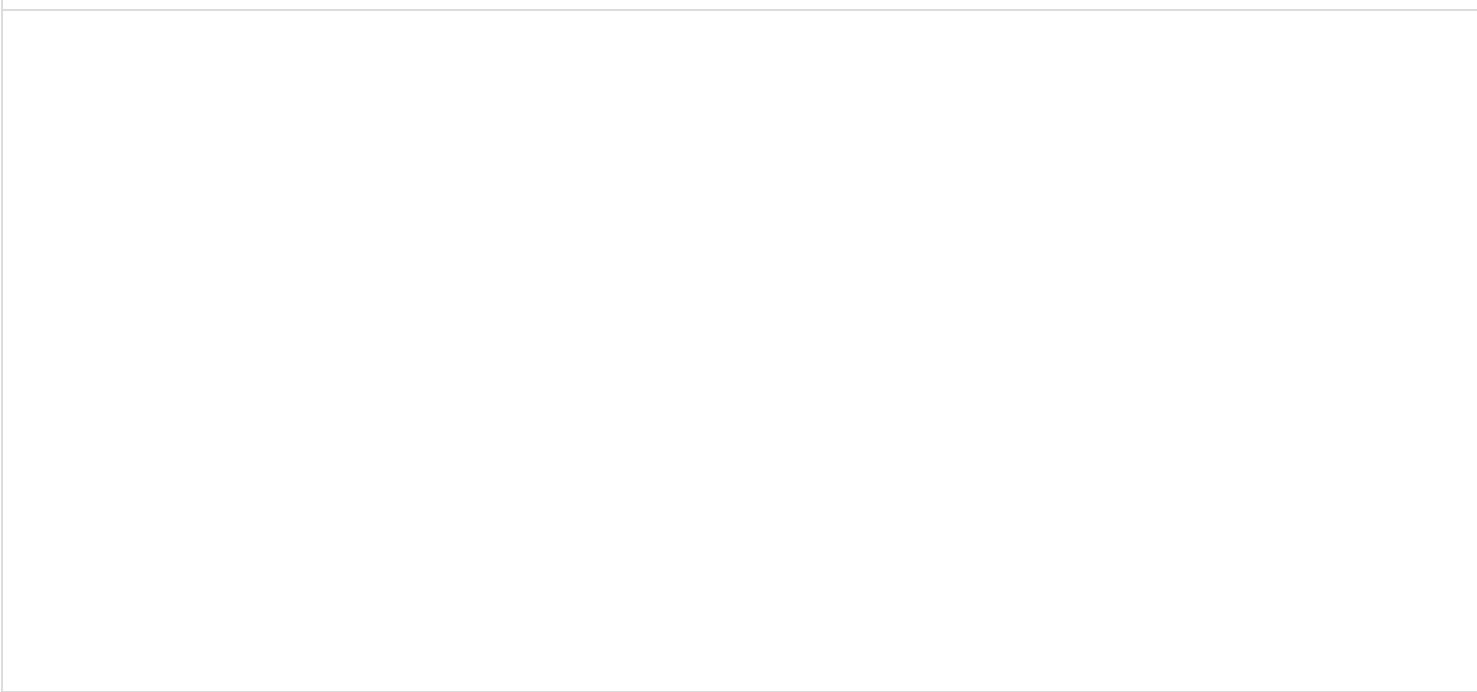
Republicans broadly have made clear they want foreign assistance that would promote a far narrower interpretation of US national interests.

The state department in one of multiple lawsuits it is battling over its rapid shutdown of USAid had said earlier this month it was killing more than 90% of USAid programs. Rubio gave no explanation for why his number was lower.

Contractors and staffers running efforts ranging from epidemic control to famine prevention to job and democracy training stopped work. Aid groups and other USAid partners [laid off tens of thousands of their workers](#) in the US and abroad.

Lawsuits say the sudden shutdown of USAid has stiffed aid groups and businesses that had contracts with it of billions of dollars.

The shutdown has left many USAid staffers and contractors and their families still overseas, many of them awaiting US-paid back payments and travel expenses back home.



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