



GOATS AND SODA

Nearly 400 USAID contract employees laid off in wake of Trump's 'stop work' order

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By
Fatma Tanis



The front of the U.S. Agency of International Development headquarters in Washington, D.C. The agency funds projects that aim to alleviate poverty and disease and serve humanitarian needs around the world. Around of layoffs this week terminated nearly 400 contract employees.

J. David Ake/Getty Images

Hundreds of people were laid off today by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as the Trump Administration's stop-work order for foreign assistance goes into effect.

A USAID official with knowledge of the layoffs put the total at 390. The official spoke to NPR on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on behalf of the agency. The laid-off employees are all contractors based in the U.S., part of a workforce of some 10,000, the official noted.

NPR obtained a copy of a letter of termination of employment from a contractor who was laid off by Credence, one of the three main contractors that provides staffing services to USAID.

"Unfortunately, Credence received a Stop Work Order, and without the authority to proceed, we have no work for you to perform," the letter said.

"This blow to us as individuals and to the people we've served is unconscionable, but the bigger picture is much scarier," one laid-off employee told NPR. "It is a systematic dismantling of a longstanding agency in order to cause chaos. They are asking people remaining if they are loyal to Trump."

This person asked to remain anonymous fearing that any future employment could be jeopardized by speaking out.

NPR requested comment from USAID but has received no response.

The agency funds projects that aim to alleviate poverty, disease and humanitarian needs in countries around the world. People who were laid off spoke to NPR and said all departments within the agency were affected, including the offices that address HIV and AIDs, infectious disease and child health.

Employees told NPR that entire floors had been emptied out and the walls stripped of USAID-related photos – and forwarded photos of the bare walls.

The layoffs come a day after USAID put a number of senior officials on leave allegedly for taking actions "that appear to be designed to circumvent the President's Executive Order and the mandate from the American people."

On Inauguration Day, President Trump ordered a [90-day pause in almost all foreign aid](#) to give the administration a chance to ensure that it fits with its priorities.

"The United States foreign aid industry and bureaucracy are not aligned with American interests and in many cases antithetical to American values," the [executive order](#) read.

Then on Friday, the State Department issued a "stop-work" order for not only future aid projects but also existing programs, until a review determines whether they align with President Donald Trump's foreign policy agenda.

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