

THE HUMAN COST OF USAID CUTS

Billionaire wealth and the
decimation of lifesaving aid



OXFAM

“

Disruption itself
isn't always bad.
But when it
happens suddenly
and without proper
planning, it can be
dangerous.

—

GABRIEL GITONGA MUNENE

An aid worker who works to support
families inside the Gambella refugee camp
in southwestern Ethiopia



A LOOK INSIDE

What you'll find in this snapshot of the USAID cuts.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHTS



INTRODUCTION

Long before billionaire Elon Musk and the Trump administration upended the global aid system as we know it, the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and Oxfam started working together. Our goal was to help South Sudanese refugees in the Gambella refugee camp in Ethiopia access clean water after fleeing conflict.

But since the closure of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the world's largest provider of lifesaving humanitarian aid, half of the project's budget has evaporated. "The cut has created a time of upheaval," says Gabriel Gitonga Menene, an aid worker supporting families in the refugee camp.

This kind of scenario—massive cuts to lifesaving aid amid rising billionaire wealth—is playing out over and over across the world. Estimates suggest more than 700,000 people have already lost their lives, and new Oxfam analysis shows that a child under five could die every forty seconds by 2030 because of the cuts to USAID.

In this e-book, travel around the world with Oxfam America to bear witness to the impact of these funding cuts on people's lives and livelihoods. We asked our partners and allies a simple question: What has happened to your lifesaving work?

Read their stories.

Listen to their voices.

And take action.

ABOUT OXFAM

Oxfam is a global organization that fights inequality to end poverty and injustice.

We offer lifesaving support in times of crisis and advocate for economic justice, gender equality, and climate action. We demand equal rights and equal treatment so that everyone can thrive, not just survive.

The future is equal.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Timeline of the USAID shutdown



20 JAN 2025

President Trump signs Executive Order 14169, which begins a 90-day pause on all U.S. foreign development assistance programs.



3 FEB 2025

Elon Musk boasts having fed USAID “into the wood chipper” after spending the weekend discussing the dismantling of USAID.

BREAKING NEWS:
OXFAM AMERICA
JOINS LAWSUIT
TO BLOCK TRUMP
ADMINISTRATION'S
ASSAULT ON

13 FEB 2025

Oxfam America joins a lawsuit to defend USAID and U.S. foreign assistance.



10 MAR 2025

Secretary of State Marco Rubio announces that 83 percent of USAID's activities have been cut.



13 MAR 2025

Judge Theodore Chuang, a U.S. District Court judge in Maryland, issues a preliminary injunction against the Trump administration's attempts to close down USAID.



21 APR 2025

Oxfam America publishes a report at the end of the 90-day U.S. foreign aid review illustrating the impact of the cuts.





3 JUN 2025

The Trump administration sends a rescissions package to Congress, beginning efforts to prevent \$31 billion of lifesaving aid from being spent.



25 JUL 2025

Oxfam America's lawsuit to stop the destruction of USAID is dismissed by U.S. District Court Judge Carl Nichols for lack of standing.





26 NOV 2025

Oxfam files an appeal, challenging the case's dismissal and that USAID's abrupt closure is unconstitutional.



29 DEC 2025

The US announces a \$2 billion pledge to fund U.N. humanitarian aid. The amount barely scratches the surface of global need.



**There is not a
single area of
development and
humanitarian
assistance USAID
has not been
involved in.**

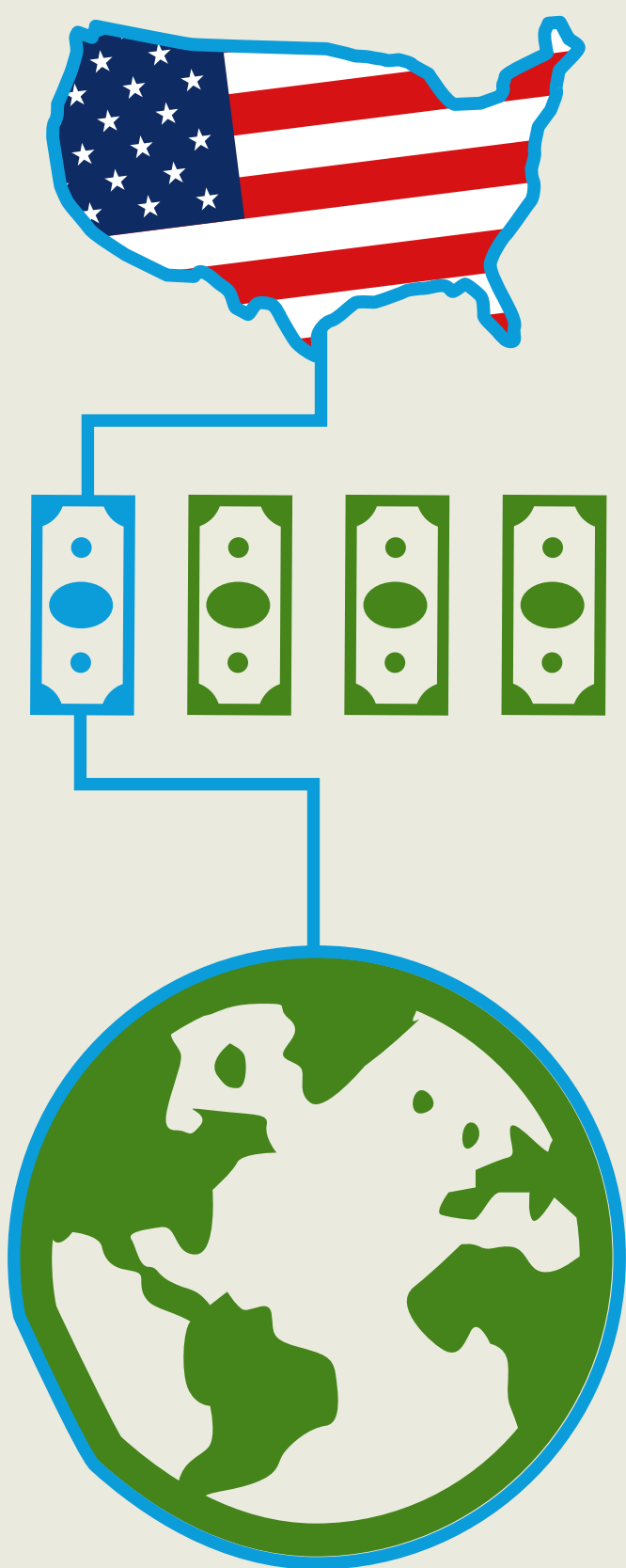


ABBY MAXMAN

CEO and President of Oxfam America

IN 2024-2025

THE UNITED STATES WAS THE LARGEST AID DONOR WORLDWIDE.



1 IN 4

dollars of worldwide
official development
assistance was distributed
by the U.S.

130 COUNTRIES

were reached by USAID
with funding and assis-
tance in sectors such
as health, humanitarian
relief, food security, and
governance.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

\$32 BILLION

of the \$68 billion the U.S.
disbursed in foreign
assistance was adminis-
tered by USAID.

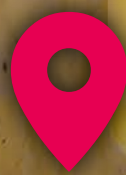
83%

**OF USAID SPENDING
WAS CUT**



LESS THAN 1%

of the total U.S. federal budget is
spent on aid.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

“

The consequences are very real. Distributions of essential items may stop; water systems could collapse, leading to the surge of cholera and monkeypox outbreaks; and mothers ... could lose a lifeline.

DR. MANENJI MANGUNDU
Country Director, Oxfam in the DRC

The Democratic Republic of Congo is facing a health crisis, armed conflict, and displacement of millions of people. Lifesaving aid was providing food, clean water, sanitation, and hygiene kits. But when USAID was dismantled, the country lost more than one-third of its funding. “This is turning into a full-blown humanitarian catastrophe,” says Dr. Manenji Mangundu, the country director for Oxfam’s office in the DRC.

**AS OF JUNE 2025,
MORE THAN 8,200
PEOPLE LIVING IN
THE DRC HAVE
LOST ACCESS TO
ANTIRETROVIRAL
TREATMENT.**



“The most urgent need for me is to find food and clean drinking water for my children. As long as we are stuck here, we will keep suffering.”

CHARMANTE MAHUWE

A mother living in a displacement camp who is fighting every day to provide for her children, a grim reality for many in the DRC.





THE SYSTEM OF PROFITS OVER PEOPLE

Tesla, a multibillion-dollar company, uses around 3 kilograms of cobalt in each car it produces. A Congolese cobalt miner earning the minimum wage of US\$5 per day would need to work for nearly two years to make what Tesla earns from just one electric vehicle.



ETHIOPIA

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It's a domino effect
across the entire
humanitarian
landscape in
Gambella. Critical
services are
vanishing.

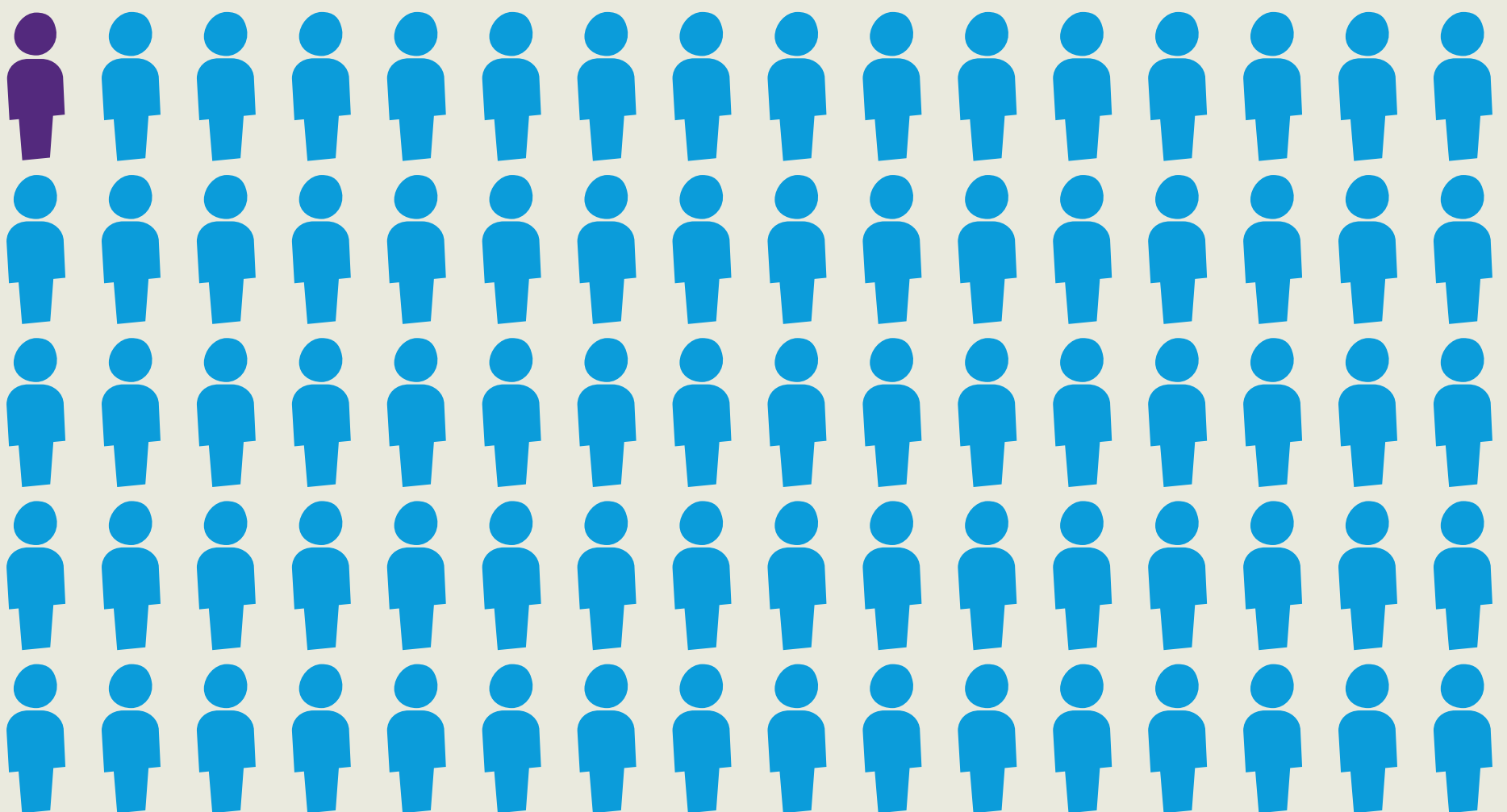
—

GABRIEL GITONGA MUNENE
UNHCR Program Officer

For more than a decade, Oxfam and the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has collaborated to help refugees from South Sudan survive after escaping conflict. But after the USAID cuts, the UNHCR was forced to reduce its project budget by 50 percent. Clinics that once offered primary care and essential drugs are now often empty, as supply pipelines and NGO health projects are disrupted.

**THE MUNICIPAL
WATER SYSTEM IN
GAMBELLA WAS
BUILT TO SERVE
5,000 PEOPLE.**

**TODAY IT MUST
SERVE ALMOST
450,000 PEOPLE.**



“We didn’t have food until we reached Gambella. Along the way, I lost my uncle, who was killed, and my first son, who passed away from illness during the journey. It was an incredibly difficult and painful journey.”

NGAKUTOTH BIEL

One of many women who fled their homes and resettled in Gambella, where they now face an uncertain future





THE SYSTEM OF PROFITS OVER PEOPLE

Africa's richest 5 percent hold nearly \$4 trillion in wealth—more than double the combined wealth of the rest of the continent.



UKRAINE

“

Local actors,
local NGOs like us,
were left trying to
pick up pieces with
fewer resources
and rising needs.

—

ALIONA PASHCHENKO

The Tenth of April, Oxfam partner

More than three years have passed since Russia launched a war in Ukraine. USAID funding was providing food and water, assisting those injured and displaced, and helping repair infrastructure destroyed during the war. But the funding cuts brought this help to an abrupt halt. One affected local organization is The Tenth of April, which helps asylum-seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons across 10 regions in Ukraine. Since the cuts, international NGOs and other local actors have drastically reduced or stopped their work, leaving organizations like The Tenth of April to fill a widening gap.

IN THE FIRST
THREE MONTHS,
USAID FUNDING TO
UKRAINE WAS

SLASHED BY

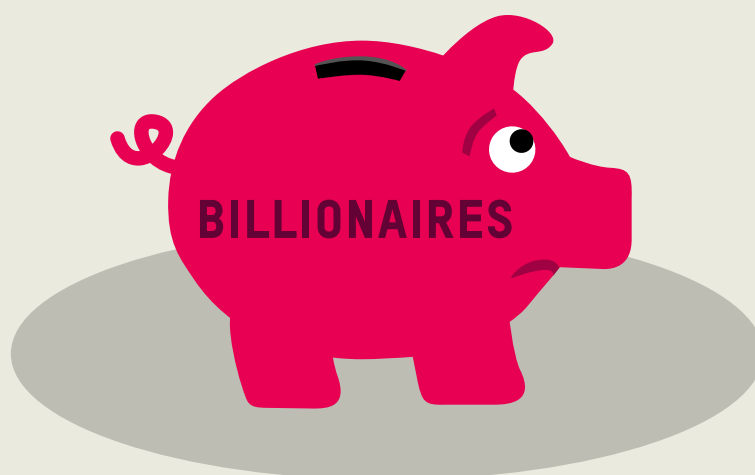
**\$3.1
BILLION**

“I wanted to help people, who like me, felt frozen by trauma. I want them to find confidence again.”

OLENA KARAMOVA

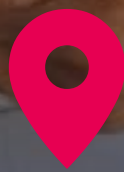
Psychologist based in Odesa working with
The Tenth of April in Ukraine





THE SYSTEM OF PROFITS OVER PEOPLE

The combined wealth of the world's billionaires grew by \$2.5 trillion in 2025—enough to end extreme poverty 26 times over.



SYRIA

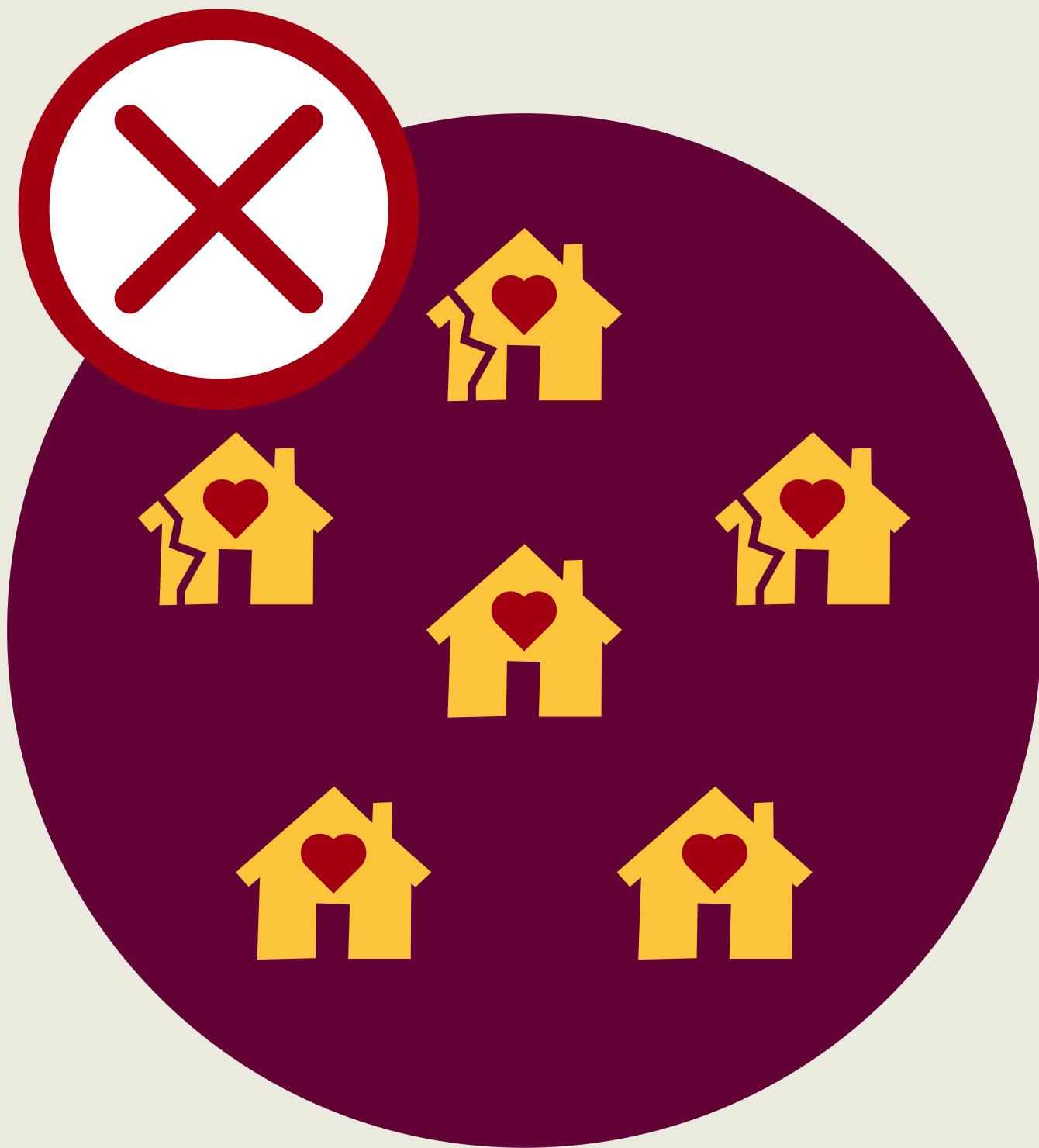
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According to
the U.N., 200,000
people are currently
without food, and
500,000 will be
without water in
the next few
months.

SARA SAAVA

Deputy Director, GOPA-DERD

Since the fall of the Assad regime, more than one million refugees are returning to Syria. One of Oxfam's partners in the country is GOPA-DERD, which focuses on many forms of aid including health, education, water, and shelter. Since the USAID cuts, GOPA-DERD's work has been severely compromised. The cancellation of its educational services is expected to increase school dropouts and limit equal opportunities.



**GOPA-DERD WAS FORCED TO SHUT
DOWN SIX SERVICE CENTERS
ACROSS SYRIA, THREE OF WHICH
WERE IN AREAS AFFECTED BY
THE 2023 EARTHQUAKE.**

“\$1.2 billion was given last year in 2024 and this year this has gone down overnight.”

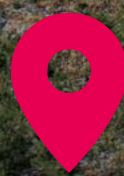
SARA SAVVA KARAMOVA
Deputy Director-General, GOPA-DERD





THE SYSTEM OF PROFITS OVER PEOPLE

The so-called Big Beautiful Bill includes more tax breaks for corporations and the richest 1 percent of households in the next decade than the total amount the U.S. has spent on international development and humanitarian aid since 1962.



GUATEMALA

In 2025, the United Nations identified Guatemala as facing a “complex humanitarian crisis” driven by climate-induced crop failures and acute malnutrition.

Climate change has had dramatic effects on the welfare of communities across Guatemala. That's why the work of independent media outlet Quorum was so important. Partially funded by USAID, Quorum had plans to deepen its reporting on the effects of climate change, including exploring solutions to water access issues, exposing mining projects beset by contamination and corruption, and reporting on efforts within the Central American Parliament to move the region forward. All of those plans evaporated, and the USAID funding cuts had negative ripple effects on Quorum's entire operation.



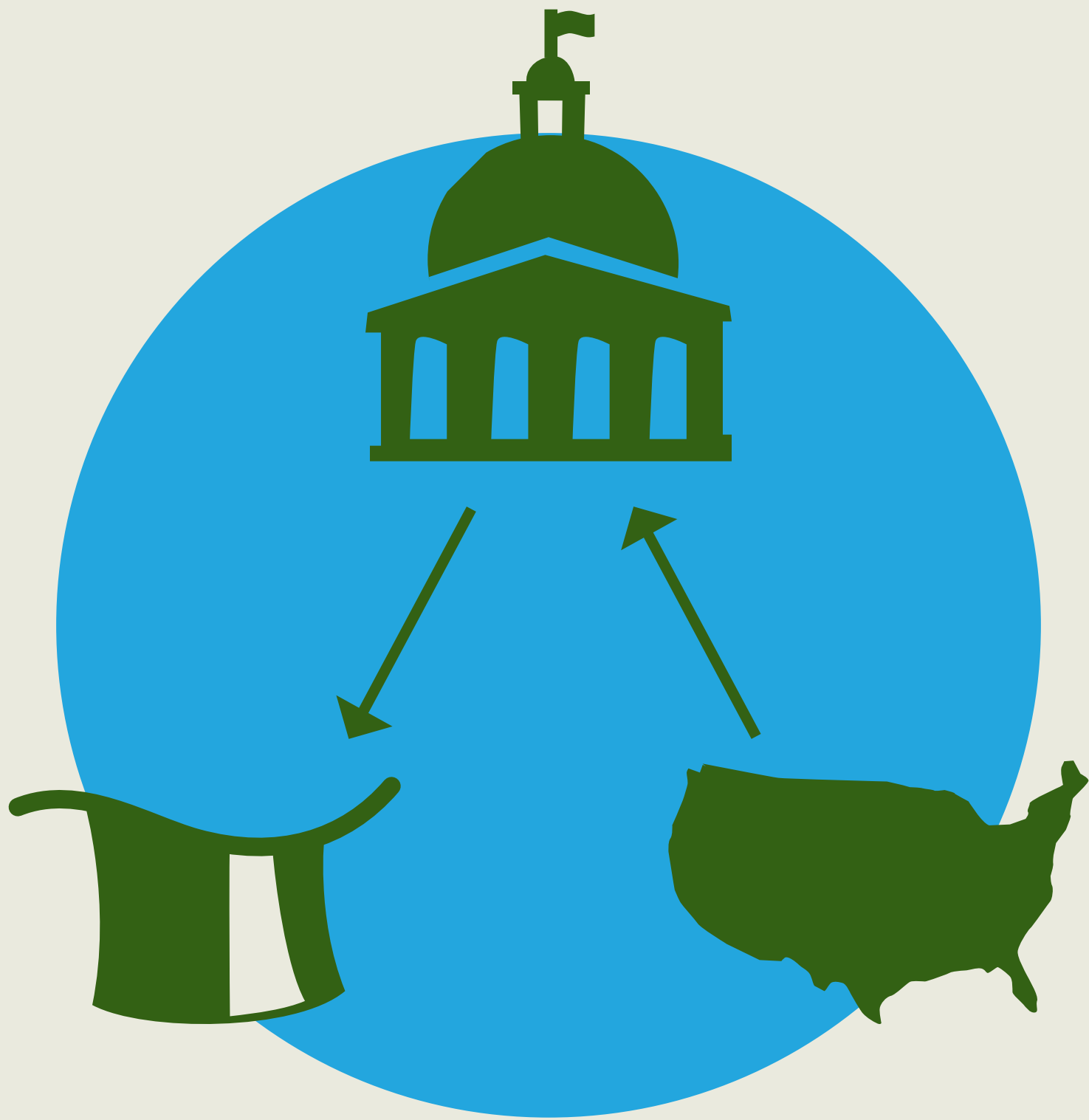
A 2025 SURVEY SHOWED THAT
OVER 87%
OF GUATEMALANS EXPRESS HIGH
CONCERN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

“Losing [staff] specialized in environmental issues in a context that we are in, where climate topics are urgent issues to investigate and work on from a journalism standpoint, that is a very strong blow.”

PIA FLORES

A journalist with Quorum





THE SYSTEM OF PROFITS OVER PEOPLE

President Trump and Republicans in Congress proposed plans to slash \$31.7 billion in foreign aid spending. Meanwhile, the ultra-wealthy are set to receive roughly twice that amount—\$60.3 billion—in just one year of tax breaks.



**THREE THINGS YOU
CAN DO TO FIGHT FOR
LIFESAVING AID**



CALL YOUR SENATORS

Congress can and must fight back against this illegal action. Call (888) 252-2329 now. We'll give you a quick and easy message to share with your senators and then we'll connect you directly to their offices.

CALL (888) 252-2329



SIGN OUR PETITION

Lifesaving aid is an essential part of U.S. foreign policy and has proven to be a key factor in reducing global poverty.

TAKE ACTION



MAKE A GIFT TO OXFAM

Oxfam America does not take U.S. government funding—but our partners and other humanitarian organizations have lost their funding, and services have been shut down.

Help us fill the gap by making a donation to Oxfam—and help save lives today.

DONATE NOW



OXFAM

The future is equal