

# *UN says HIV and AIDS deaths could increase globally amid U.S. aid freeze*

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**A man puts up a banner at the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute in Johannesburg, South Africa [EPA/STR]**

United Nations, March 25 (RHC)-- There could be 2,000 new HIV infections a day across the world and a tenfold increase in related deaths, possibly in the millions in the years to come, if funding frozen by the United States is not restored or replaced, the United Nations AIDS agency has said.

U.S. President Donald Trump put almost all U.S. foreign aid on hold upon taking office on January 20.

Days later, the U.S. Department of State said life-saving HIV work under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) would continue.

But the disruption to health funding and the impact on broader services were having a devastating impact on people living with HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS executive director Winnie Byanyima told reporters in Geneva on Monday.

“This sudden withdrawal of U.S. funding has been shutting down many clinics, laying off thousands of health workers ... All this means that we expect to see new infections rising. UNAIDS has estimated that we could see 2,000 new infections every day,” she said.

She added that if funding from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) did not resume at the end of the 90-day pause, in April, or was not replaced by another government, “there will be, in the next four years, an additional 6.3 million AIDS deaths.”

“We’ll see it come back, and we’ll see people die the way we saw them in the ’90s and in the 2000s,” she said. Byanyima said the figures were based on UN modelling, but did not give more details on how the estimates had been reached.

According to the latest data, there were 600,000 AIDS-related deaths globally in 2023.

UNAIDS, which coordinates the global response to preventing and treating HIV/AIDS, received \$50 million in core funding last year from the U.S., representing 35 percent of the UN agency’s budget.

The Trump administration has said the funding was frozen to ensure it was in line with the president’s “America First” policy. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has dismissed concerns that Washington is ending foreign aid, saying waivers had been provided for life-saving services.

Trump’s team members claim they have saved U.S. taxpayers tens of billions of dollars through rapid-fire moves to cancel contracts, fire workers and root out fraud and waste in the government, although they have offered little evidence to support that assertion.

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