



WOMEN'S  
REFUGEE  
COMMISSION

FINDINGS FROM

## A Year of Harms:

The Impact of US Foreign Aid Cuts on  
Women and Girls in Humanitarian Crises



On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order instituting a 90-day pause on United States foreign aid, ultimately cutting over \$40 billion in official development assistance, including more than \$10 billion in humanitarian assistance. When the pause was enacted, an estimated 305 million people across 72 countries required humanitarian assistance—the highest numbers in recorded history. The abrupt and unprecedented withdrawal of US foreign aid threw an already overstretched humanitarian system into chaos.

*A Year of Harms: The Impact of US Foreign Aid Cuts on Women and Girls in Humanitarian Crises* is the **most comprehensive synthesis of evidence to date on the gendered impacts of recent US foreign aid cuts**. Using a scoping review methodology, the report draws from 105 sources with evidence from humanitarian crises in 32 countries. This brief presents an overview of one of five key findings: *women and girls have lost access to lifesaving healthcare*.

Read the full report here: [womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/year-of-harms/](https://womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/year-of-harms/)

## Women and girls have lost access to lifesaving healthcare

The review found significant evidence that **US foreign aid cuts have drastically reduced women's and girls' access to essential health services**, including maternal health, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and HIV/AIDS.

### Maternal Health

- Approximately **88% of US foreign aid for maternal and child health** was cut, totaling at least **\$740.3 million**.
- Internal USAID documents estimated that the suspension of maternal health programming could impact care for as many as **16.8 million pregnant women annually**.
- Cuts have resulted in **hundreds of facilities closing** and reduced capacity for essential services in humanitarian crises.

### Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

- Approximately **94% of US foreign aid for SRHR** was cut, totaling at least **\$314.9 million**.
- **Guttmacher estimates** that cuts will cause **130,390 women and girls to lose access to contraceptive care per day**; as a result, more than 17 million women and girls will experience unintended pregnancy and **34,000 will die** from preventable complications during pregnancy and childbirth annually.
- Widespread service disruptions documented, but limited primary evidence of lived experience impact for women and girls in humanitarian crises.

[read more >](#)

### HIV/AIDS

- Approximately **21% of US foreign aid for HIV/AIDS was cut**, totaling at least **\$1.1 billion**.
- While most PEPFAR funding was reinstated, the initial 90-day pause severely disrupted supply chains and service delivery, with immediate and life-threatening consequences.

Immediate impacts to healthcare were reported from humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Mauritania, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Yemen.



The report includes firsthand accounts demonstrating the human cost of these funding disruptions:

- In Afghanistan, **191 family health houses and mobile clinics have closed**, leaving women in remote areas without any proximate health access. **One 38-year-old woman died** while traveling to a district hospital due to the closure of her local family health house.
- In Ethiopia, **more than 3,000 internally displaced women and girls** no longer have access to mobile clinics, which, as of July 2025, has resulted in the death of at least one pregnant woman.
- In Kenya's Dadaab Refugee Camp, a woman described **giving birth without any medical support** after her clinic lost US funding.
- In South Sudan, reporting described **two women who died** because they were unable to get antiretroviral drugs due to USAID supply lines shutting down.
- In Tanzania, young people reported **skipping doses of anti-retroviral drugs** out of fear of future service disruptions.
- In Uganda's Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, loss of funding has resulted in **no anesthetist or ambulance fuel** for emergency cesarean deliveries. **One woman nearly died**, and delays finding a transfer to another hospital led to a ruptured uterus and hysterectomy.
- In Yemen, a woman named **Fatima died en route to a distant hospital**, as her local clinic had lost US funding and no longer offered emergency obstetric care.

**“A shorter transfer time could have saved her life. When [the midwife] told me, I was shocked and cried. As women, we put ourselves in her place. She left behind two daughters—it's truly tragic. A mother's departure is not just the loss of children or a husband, but the disintegration of an entire family. It's very difficult, a soul is lost.”**

SOURCE: **THE GUARDIAN**