

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write with deep concern regarding the recall of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) personnel from overseas missions. The Congressional Notification sent to Congress on March 28, 2025, does not address the details of how USAID personnel will return to the United States. To date, USAID personnel have received conflicting messages and scant details about the process and terms for how they and their families will return to the United States. This leaves some 1,400 USAID personnel and their families—many of whom are serving in difficult posts or crises areas—in unacceptable limbo and uncertainty.

Our offices have heard conflicting reports on the deadline for USAID personnel overseas to return to the U.S. ranging from April to May. Despite prior inquiries, the Department has not provided details regarding how or when personnel will be repatriated, under what criteria they can stay abroad longer, and what if any support will be provided to their families. Further, while communication to USAID personnel has referred to the repatriation process as “a voluntary Agency-funded return travel program,” it has been made clear to personnel that returning is in fact mandatory.

Earlier this month, Senate Foreign Relations Committee minority staff requested a briefing on repatriation of USAID personnel. Despite fast approaching deadlines for when the Department has communicated to some USAID personnel they must return, the Department has yet to provide Congress with basic answers. The Department has a duty to consult with Congress on major reorganizations, including efforts to downsize its overseas presence—none of which has occurred.

We therefore request an immediate update on the Department’s plans to recall USAID personnel and a response to the following no later than May 22, 2025:

1. What is the deadline by which USAID personnel overseas must return to the U.S.? Are there varying deadlines based on where someone is posted, or any other factors?
2. Please provide a copy of the permanent change of station travel orders notice and any guidelines sent to USAID personnel regarding return to the U.S.
3. For those who return to the U.S., will funds be available to employees to assist in their transition back, such as participation in the Foreign Service Institute’s job search and transition program, temporary quarters and subsistence expenses, or other allowances typically made to employees who are separating from the Foreign Service or involuntarily repatriated from overseas?

4. If the USAID employee were to return but their family remained in country for warranted circumstances, would the families maintain their immunities and privileges? Would they continue to be provided housing?
5. What is the status of individual cases under review for pregnant and postpartum USAID Foreign Service Officers and their spouses regarding extension requests for their Reduction in Force (RIF) dates? Will all pregnant and postpartum USAID Foreign Service Officers and their spouses have their RIF dates extended to September 2?
6. What are the “compelling reasons” under which personnel can be exempt from the recall? What specific criteria is the Department using to determine whether exemptions will be granted for medical, school schedules and other circumstances?
7. What is the process to apply or be considered for an exemption from recall orders? What funds will be available to employees to sustain their living situations if they are granted permission to remain at Post?
8. For those who remain overseas due to an exemption or compelling reasons, what costs will they have to incur? What other expenses, if any, will be covered?
9. What is the estimated total cost of recalling all overseas USAID personnel and their family members?
10. Now that the USAID coordination support team is dissolved, how will the Department coordinate the recall process and what bureau and team will be in charge of the process?

Our USAID personnel dedicated their careers to advancing U.S. interests overseas and deserve to be treated with respect. This starts with providing clear guidelines for the return of personnel and their families as well as commensurate support from the Department throughout the process. We request a response to this letter and our questions no later than May 22.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee  
on State Department & USAID Management,  
International Operations, & Bilateral  
International Development



Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee