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One Hundred Nineteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

June 16, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20541

Dear Secretary Rubio,

Thank you for your recent testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on May 21, 2025. I write today to offer you an opportunity to clarify your testimony based on additional information that has come to light since the hearing about the impacts of recent U.S. foreign assistance cuts.

In an exchange with Representative Brad Sherman at the May 21 hearing, you testified that “no one has died” because of USAID and foreign assistance cuts, calling the Congressman’s assertion to the contrary “a lie” and “false.” During his questioning of you, Representative Sherman shared the photographs of two people – Pe Kha Lau, a refugee from Burma, and Evan Anzoo, a five-year-old boy from South Sudan – who died after their U.S.-supported medical care was precipitously shut off. *The New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof documented both deaths in an article he wrote in March.¹

Boston University, on March 20, 2025, announced a tracker assembled by its faculty to assess the human cost of the funding cuts the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) imposed on USAID. The modeling and analytics estimate more than 60,000 adult and 6,400 child deaths

¹ Nicholas Kristof, “Musk Said No One Has Died Since Aid Was Cut. That Isn’t True.” *New York Times*, March 15, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/03/15/opinion/foreign-aid-cuts-impact.html>

from HIV/AIDS and 88,000 adult and 9,400 child deaths from preventable diseases (such as malaria, tuberculosis, and diarrhea) since January 24, 2025, due to USAID funding cuts.²


Moreover, *ProPublica* published an article reporting on internal State Department cables that detailed deaths of refugees at food distribution centers in Kenya and documented “a sharp increase in criminality, sexual violence, and instances of human trafficking” at the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi.³ The cables reportedly note that these are results of U.S. funding cuts to the World Food Programme (WFP), which have forced the WFP to cut food rations, in turn leading to increasing desperation among those who are dependent on that food assistance. One cable was sent to the Department in late April and another in early May – well in advance of your testimony before our Committee.

Given this reporting and the data analytics that document deaths due to U.S. foreign assistance cuts, I request that you clarify your testimony in which you asserted “no one has died,” including whether you were aware of Department cables asserting the contrary, and offer any correction of your statement(s) in writing to the Committee by June 23, 2025.

I further request that the Department provide to the Committee, on a rolling basis beginning on June 30, 2025, any and all records generated since January 20, 2025 (to include, but not limited to, cables, memoranda, emails, and electronic messages) referring or relating to the impacts of the freeze or termination of U.S. foreign assistance programs after January 24, 2025. As the House Committee with primary responsibility for oversight of and legislation related to the Department of State, these materials are critical to the Committee’s understanding of the administration of U.S. foreign assistance, including development and humanitarian assistance, and its impact on human lives.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gregory W. Meeks". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "G" and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member

²See Preventable Death Tracker: <https://pepfar.impactcounter.com/>

³ Brett Murphy and Anna Maria Barry-Jester, “Death, Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking: Fallout From U.S. Aid Withdrawal Hits the World’s Most Fragile Locations,” *ProPublica*, May 28, 2025.
<https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-usaid-malawi-state-department-crime-sexual-violence-trafficking>