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Africa

Lethal Trumpery in Africa

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP601- February 2025 -

Publication date: Friday 14 February 2025

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In a matter of seconds, the time it takes to sign, Trump and Musk put the lives of millions of people in danger, confirming the precariousness of aid from rich countries.

“Radical madmen” is what Trump thinks of the leaders of USAID (the United States Agency for International Development), whose activities he has just frozen for 90 days. His sidekick Elon Musk compares the structure set up by Kennedy in 1961 with a “criminal organization”. The development agency's staff have been laid off, those working abroad must return to Washington by the end of the month and most of the local staff have been dismissed.

Millions of potential victims

The future of USAID is uncertain, with most observers betting on its integration into the State Department (the equivalent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), thus putting an end to the broad autonomy enjoyed by the organization.

With a fund of more than 40 billion dollars, the main beneficiary is not Africa, which comes only in second place, but Europe, with aid to Ukraine amounting to 17 billion dollars for projects to support the economy and institutions.

In 2023, Africa received more than 15 billion dollars for two important areas, emergency aid and health. The sudden and unannounced cut endangers the lives of millions of people by depriving them of their medicines, particularly antivirals for the treatment of HIV.

This freeze also weakens health prevention structures, both the early warning systems against epidemics and the logistics for the distribution of vaccines. This weakening is all the more worrying as it coincides with the withdrawal of the United States from the WHO (World Health Organisation).

An unjust order

Many people in the United States consider this measure to be harmful, especially for American politics, which risks suffering negative effects, whether in terms of the reliability of the country's commitments or the weakening of its soft power and its power to exert pressure. This is certainly true. But this measure illustrates above all and tragically that if the rich countries' development aid policies exist, it is because these same rich countries impose structural adjustment policies that persist under other names, taking advantage of the international division of labour to plunder the resources of so-called poor countries with the complicity of local potentates.

The desire to dismantle USAID, coupled with the reduction in European countries' development aid policies - remember that the Netherlands is going to reduce its allocation by 9 billion dollars over the next four years, and the 2025 budgets of France and Germany are decreasing by 2 billion and 1.7 billion dollars respectively - demonstrate that the solution does not lie in dependence on aid but in a struggle for a fundamental change in the world order. A struggle truly of... “radical madmen”.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#). 13 February 2025*

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