

Session 2 – Semestre 2 – Année 2024-2025

Langue : ANGLAIS

Niveau : 5

Date : 28 juin 2025

Durée : 1h30

Trump overstepped his constitutional authority in freezing Congress' funding for USAID

Los Angeles Times (March 11, 2025)

President Trump overstepped his constitutional authority in freezing almost all spending on U.S. humanitarian and development work abroad, a federal judge ruled, saying the administration could no longer simply sit on the tens of billions of dollars that Congress has appropriated for foreign aid.

- 5 But Judge Amir H. Ali stopped short of ordering Trump officials to use the money to revive the thousands of contracts they have abruptly terminated for U.S. aid and development work around the world. Ali's ruling Monday evening came hours after Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that the administration had finished what has been a six-week purge of programs of the six-decade-old U.S. Agency for International Development, cutting 83% of them. Rubio said he would move the remaining aid programs under the State Department. Rubio made his announcement in a post on X,
- 10 in one of his few public comments on what has been a historic shift away from U.S. foreign aid and development, executed by Trump political appointees at the State Department and Elon Musk's White House advisory team, which he calls the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE. Rubio in the post thanked DOGE and "our hardworking staff who worked very long hours to achieve this overdue and historic reform" in foreign aid.
- 15 Trump on Jan. 20 issued an executive order directing a freeze of foreign assistance funding and a review of all U.S. aid and development work abroad. Trump charged that much of foreign assistance was wasteful and advanced a liberal agenda. Rubio's social media post Monday said that review was now "officially ending," with some 5,200 of USAID's 6,200 programs eliminated. Those programs "spent tens of billions of dollars in ways that did not serve, (and in some cases even harmed), the core
- 20 national interests of the United States," Rubio wrote.

- Democratic lawmakers and others call the shutdown of congressionally funded programs illegal, saying such a move requires Congress' approval. In his preliminary injunction Monday, Ali said Trump could not simply ignore most of what is roughly \$60 billion in foreign assistance funding that was given to USAID and the State Department by Congress, which under the U.S. Constitution has
- 25 the authority to spend money. "The constitutional power over whether to spend foreign aid is not the President's own — and it is Congress's own," Ali wrote, adding elsewhere that Trump officials "offer an unbridled¹ view of Executive power that the Supreme Court has consistently rejected."

- (...) Despite claims from the administration it was continuing to fund at least life-saving programs in its foreign aid freeze, USAID staffers and the agency's nonprofit and business partners say all
- 30 payments through USAID were cut off until recently, and that USAID's payment system was disabled by Musk's DOGE. (...) USAID supporters said the sweep of the cuts has made it difficult to tell what U.S. efforts abroad the Trump administration actually supports. (...) The dismantling of USAID that

¹ Unbridled = uncontrolled.

35 followed Trump's order upended decades of policy that held that humanitarian and development aid abroad advanced U.S. national security by stabilizing regions and economies, strengthening alliances and building goodwill.

40 (...) The shutdown has left many USAID staffers and contractors and their families still overseas, many of them awaiting back payments and travel expenses to return home. The Trump administration on Monday gave USAID staffers abroad until April 6 to move back to the United States if they want to do so on the government's tab, according to a USAID email sent to staffers and seen by the Associated Press. Staffers say the deadline gives them scant time to pull children from school, sell homes or break leases, and, for many, find somewhere to live after years away from the United States.

COMPREHENSION (10 points) *Do not quote from the text, use your own words.*

- 1) How did the Trump administration freeze USAID funding and why? (3 points) 120 words
- 2) Why did the judge view Trump's decision as problematic? (3 points) 120 words
- 3) What could be the potential consequences of freezing USAID funding on international development and U.S. foreign policy objectives? (4 points) 150 words

WRITTEN EXPRESSION (10 points) *Choose one the following questions. Write a well-structured essay. 400 words.*

- A) What are the risks and consequences of allowing unilateral and/or rapid decisions in foreign aid policy, and more generally in domestic and foreign policy, without broader oversight²?

OR

- B) How are recent changes in U.S. foreign aid funding, and more generally U.S. foreign involvement, likely to impact its "soft power"³?

² Regulatory supervision.

³ Soft power: a persuasive approach to international relations, typically involving the use of economic or cultural influence (*Oxford Dictionary*)