

PEPFAR Freeze Threatens Millions of Lives

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IAS – the International AIDS Society – warns that the immediate halting of funding to the [U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#) (PEPFAR), including a stop-work order for existing grants and contracts, places millions of lives in jeopardy.

On Day 1 of taking office as US President, Donald Trump signed an [executive order](#) that banned any new government spending on foreign aid projects. This was followed by an unexpected “[stop-work order](#)” issued on 24 January, which means that funding to PEPFAR, even for existing grants and contracts, is frozen.

“This is a matter of life or death,” IAS President Beatriz Grinsztejn said. “PEPFAR provides lifesaving antiretrovirals for more than 20 million people – and stopping its funding essentially stops their HIV treatment. If that happens, people are going to die and HIV will resurge.

“It makes no sense to suddenly stop this incredible catalyst of our global progress towards ending HIV as a threat to public health and individual well-being.”

PEPFAR is the largest commitment by any country, ever, to address a single disease. Since it established PEPFAR in 2003, the US government has invested over USD 110 billion in the global HIV response. It has saved 26 million lives and prevented millions of HIV acquisitions in more than 50 countries.

As PEPFAR itself states: “PEPFAR’s lifesaving work is enabled through the U.S. government’s unwavering commitment to the program and the American people’s compassion and generosity, as PEPFAR ensures every U.S. taxpayer dollar is optimally focused for impact.”

The IAS urgently calls on policy makers and stakeholders to restore the funding lifeline to this pivotal programme. Lives depend on it, right now.

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