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DeepSeek

Jimmy Carter legacy

Gaza ceasefire

Indonesia BRICS ties

Trump executive orders

USA-global trade war

Tulip Siddiq resignation

US Fund Halt

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The Future is a newsletter periodically published by The Future Institute from First Floor, East, Business Centre, 93 Greenfield Rd, London E1 1EJ.

This newsletter aims to chronicle the major events and developments in the societies of emerging nations with the potential to impact their future. This publication offers snippets of news analysis that might be advantageous to academics, policymakers, social and political workers, students and various organisations.

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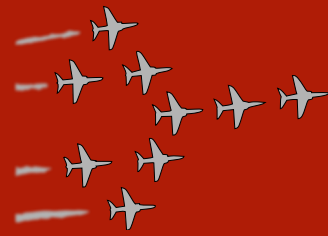
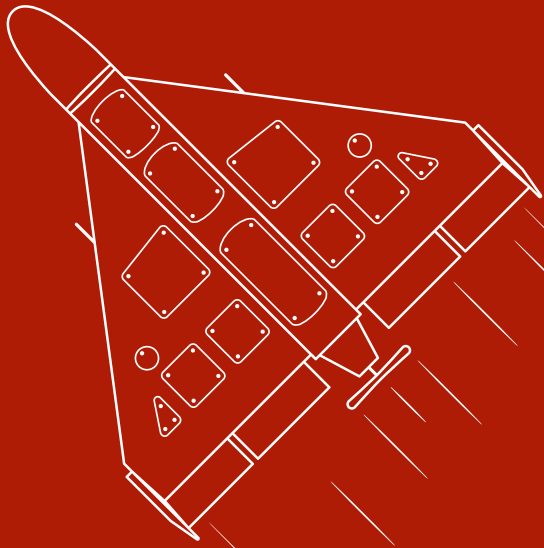


Ceasefire in Gaza after 15 months of genocide

After more than 15 months of war that has devastated Gaza, a ceasefire deal agreed between Israel and Hamas came into effect on January 19, with mediation efforts by Qatar and the US. The multi-phased deal included a temporary ceasefire that, for now, has brought to an end the destruction visited upon Gaza. It stipulated the release of captives held in Gaza and many Palestinian prisoners held captive in Israel. Currently, the ceasefire is in stage one, which is expected to last 6 weeks, and include release of 33 Israeli hostages by Hamas, while Israel will release about 1,900 Palestinian hostages, as well as allow the entry of aid.

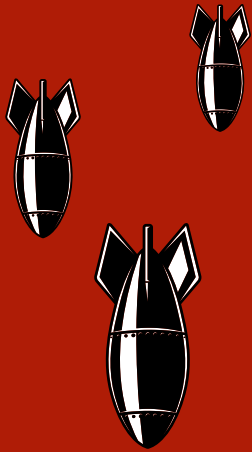
Displaced Palestinians are being allowed to return to their homes in Northern Gaza – though after Israel's deliberate destruction campaign, these homes no longer remain. Israeli troops will remain in Gaza's border areas, including the southern Philadelphi Corridor, but will leave the Netzarim Corridor, a military zone cutting off the north of Gaza from the south. The second stage is expected to centre on negotiations establishing a permanent ceasefire, complete Israeli withdrawal, and release of the rest of captives, while stage three will focus on the reconstruction of Gaza, a step expected to take years and billions of dollars.

There are problems, however, mainly the fact that the UN Palestinian refugees aid organization UNWRA ban in Israel, the occupied West Bank, and East Jerusalem, which was approved by the Israeli Knesset several months back, is expected to take effect in February. This prohibition would severely hamper the flow of aid and cripple the humanitarian response in Gaza, as well as deprive millions of Palestine refugees of essential services in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.



The number of Palestinian casualties in Gaza as of February 3 is at least 61,709 dead, including at least 17,492 children, while the number of Palestinians injured was more than 111,588. The updated death toll from Israel's war on Gaza includes thousands who are missing amidst the rubble and now presumed dead.

Last July, according to a study published in the Lancet, it was reported that the accumulative effects of Israel's war on Gaza could mean the true death toll could reach more than 186,000 people in Gaza alone. The number of missing people is believed to be at least 14,222, most of whom are reported missing due to being trapped in building rubble, and might have been killed as well. In the Occupied West Bank, there have been at least 905 deaths, of whom more than 181 are children, while more than 7,370 are injured.



According to the latest data from the UN, WHO and the Palestinian government as of January 15, more than all of Gaza homes have been destroyed or damaged, 80% of commercial facilities, 88% of school buildings, 17 out of 36 hospitals are partially functioning, 68% of road networks and 68% of cropland have been damaged. As of December 27, more than 200 journalists, predominantly Palestinians, had been killed since October 7. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), this includes 217 Palestinian, three Lebanese, and two Israeli journalists killed.





President Trump issues slew of executive orders following inauguration

On January 20, 2025, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States. Following his inauguration, Trump signed a series of executive orders, some of which not only tested the limits of executive authority, but also drew immediate legal challenges. Some of the major executive orders included:

- Withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organization
- Roll back protections for transgender people and make it the official policy of the United States government that there are only two sexes, male and female.
- Reverse sanctions on Israeli settlers
- Pardon nearly all January 6 rioters, and commuting sentences for many members of the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers including Enrique Tarrio and Stewart Rhodes
- End birthright citizenship for descendants of illegal immigrants
- Declare a national emergency on the southern border that would enable the deployment of armed forces
- Revoke diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs
- Declassify files concerning the assassination of John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.

Among these, the executive order for ending birthright citizenships for illegal immigrants was temporarily blocked by a federal judge, who called it “blatantly unconstitutional.” Another federal judge later issued a stay against a White House directive that ordered a spending freeze on federal assistance. The events are indicative of the controversy, confusion, and pushback surrounding the early days of the second Trump presidency. In the meantime, however, Trump has implemented sweeping changes to shake up the federal administration, firing hundreds of officials and threatening a host of others to resign across departments such as USAID, the State Department, National Security Council, Inspectors General, the Education department, and DEI staff, among others. On the other hand, Trump’s picks such as Pete Hegseth (defense secretary), Kash Patel (FBI director), RFK Junior (Dept of Health), and others, have been facing grilling Senate hearings for confirmation.

Among the more serious issues related to the above is Trump's drive towards removing all obstacles towards mass deportation of illegal migrants residing in the United States. This has included a lot of rhetoric of mass deportations, executive orders such as declaration of a national emergency at the Southern borders, threatening countries such as Mexico and Colombia, as well as measures such as the rolling back of Obama-era policy that restricted Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents' ability to arrest undocumented people at or near so-called sensitive locations, including houses of worship, schools and hospitals. Trump has stated that he was planning mass deportations of up to 15-20 million people, although the number of illegal immigrants is estimated to be at 11 million people, a move which experts have said is slated to cost close to a trillion dollars over a decade, as well as the shrinking of the US GDP by 4.2-6.8 percent. Another measure being discussed will be the constitutions of mass detention centres in border towns, the setting up of detention centres for tens of thousands of immigrants in Guantanamo Bay, as well as the legal procedures to process deportations, which are guaranteed to make the overall situation rather messy and risk violations of human rights of the migrants and their families.





Photo: [Ian Hutchinson](#)

Trump orders to deport pro-Palestine supporters from US campuses

U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order on January 29 pledging to combat anti-semitism. It aimed to deport non-citizens who participated in pro-Palestinian protests, which a White House fact sheet described as “pro jihadist” demonstrations. The directive promises to “combat the explosion of anti-Semitism” by deporting and canceling the student visas of “ Hamas sympathizers.” The order pledges “immediate action” to “prosecute, remove, or otherwise hold to account the perpetrators of unlawful anti-Semitic harassment and violence”. To achieve that goal, it calls on the secretary of education to provide an inventory of court cases involving anti-Semitism at colleges, universities and schools teaching kindergarten through 12th grade. The order also requires all higher education establishments to be instructed on how to “monitor for and report activities by alien students and staff” that are relevant to the anti-Semitism push. If warranted, the government can then initiate “actions to remove such aliens”. The order comes in response to what the Trump administration calls an “explosion of anti-Semitism on our campuses and in our streets since October 7, 2023”.

However, many have noted that the executive order raises issues of free speech – it could result in a chilling effect on free speech through silencing vulnerable student protesters who rely on visas or other immigration documents to stay in the US. Furthermore, critics also questioned whether Trump’s directive would actually achieve its stated aim of combatting anti-Semitism, since in the US, any criticism of Zionist Israel is equated with anti-semitism, while Islamophobia is given a free pass. With Trump’s latest comments on the rebuilding of Gaza, it is getting clear that he is in favour of moving towards the next stage of ethnically cleansing Palestine off the Palestinians. This makes his Palestine policy a continuation of the earlier Biden administration, members of which were heckled and shamed by journalists till the last day for their undying support for Israel, despite an unfolding genocide over fifteen months. US senators, funded by Israel lobby AIPAC, have been at the forefront of calling for sanctions against the International Criminal court for investigating genocide and issuing arrest warrants against Israeli PM Netanyahu.



New China-based DeepSeek challenges West-based AI technology; wipes out 600 billion from tech market

US tech giant Nvidia, which manufactures high-end chips used in the development of AI technology, has lost over a sixth of its value (almost 17 percent), which saw 600 billion dollars of its market capitalization wiped off, after the surging popularity of a Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) app spooked investors in the US and Europe. The said Chinese AI app is DeepSeek, which was reportedly made at a fraction of the cost of its rivals, and already became the most downloaded free app in the US within a week following its release. Other tech firms connected to AI, including Microsoft and Google, saw their values tumble in the wake of DeepSeek's sudden rise.

DeepSeek-R1's creator says its open-source model was developed using less advanced, and fewer, computer chips than employed by tech giants in the United States - the model's development team said they had spent less than \$6m on computing power, a fraction of what AI startups in the US have spent. DeepSeek's engineers said they had used about 2,000 Nvidia H800 chips, which are less advanced than the most cutting-edge chips, to train its model. This has severely challenged assumptions about US dominance in AI and raised fears that the sky-high market valuations of companies such as Nvidia and Meta may be detached from reality, which contributed to the market crash of the tech companies.

DeepSeek, which is based in Hangzhou, China, was founded in late 2023 by Liang Wenfeng, a serial entrepreneur who also runs the hedge fund High-Flyer. He reportedly built up a store of Nvidia A100 chips (rumored anywhere between 10,000 to 50,000 pieces), now banned from export to China, which he paired with cheaper, lower-end ones that are still available to import to launch the app. For the US government, the arrival of DeepSeek raises questions about the state strategy of trying to contain China's AI advances by restricting exports of high-end chips. The app's advent suggests that either the most advanced chips are not needed to create high-performing AI models or that Chinese firms can still source chips in sufficient quantities – or a combination of both, both of which bring the US strategy into question.



Photo: Wikipedia

Death of US ex-President Jimmy Carter; leaving behind a mixed legacy

Former President Jimmy Carter, a onetime naval officer and peanut farmer who was the 39th president of the United States, died at the age of 100. Carter's death marked the end of the longest life of any former U.S. president. A one-term president from 1977 to 1981 who presided over a stagnant economy and a series of foreign policy setbacks, Carter enjoyed substantial popularity and goodwill in the decades after leaving office. He was particularly well-known for his work with the housing nonprofit organization Habitat for Humanity and was regularly photographed helping build homes in his later years.

When Carter took over office in 1977, the US was just emerging from the Watergate scandal and the end of the Vietnam War, he came with the promise of bringing honesty and ethics back to government. His idealism, however, did not translate into action, as the economy remained in near-recession and suffering from high inflation. That toxic combination came to be known as "stagflation" and Carter struggled with it throughout his presidency. Internationally, he struck treaties that saw the Panama Canal brought under local control; established full diplomatic relations with China; brought about the Camp David Accords between Egypt-Israel in 1978, and brokered a deal to limit nuclear weapons with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. The Middle East, however, was also instrumental in his downfall – the seizure of 66 U.S. Embassy staff in Iran following its 1979 revolution dominated headlines over the last 14 months of Carter's presidency. A failed U.S. rescue attempt, which led to the deaths of eight troops after diplomatic efforts failed, largely contributed to his landslide defeat by Reagan in 1980.

Carter devoted much of his post-presidency to charitable efforts. His establishment of the Carter Center and its work fighting diseases, such as Guinea worm and river blindness, and promotion of peace earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. He regained much of his popularity in retirement. Moreover, Carter's diplomatic skills remained in demand. He mediated in Nicaragua, Panama, and Ethiopia, helped broker a power handover in Haiti and tackled North Korea's nuclear weapons scheme. He wrote several books, mostly on Middle East peace. In 2006 Carter published the book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. Although commonly used by human rights organizations such as HRW and Amnesty today, the word apartheid in relation to Israel was uncommon back then; he defended the use of the word apartheid in a 2007 interview with the US broadcaster NPR, calling it "an accurate description of what has been going on in the West Bank".

Despite this late life activism, experts believe one ought to be cautious before calling him a utopian peace dove; in reality his legacy was that of a shrewd driver of US empire and an enforcer of Cold War policy. His bonhomie with the repressive Shah of Iran till the end suggests he was no friend of democracy or the Iranian people, but a driver of American geopolitical interests. His strategy during the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan was to supply the opposition with weapons and arms in order to force the USSR to experience its own Vietnam moment. And on Palestine, Carter's 1978 Camp David Accords had done more to gut the prospects for a liberated Palestine than any President before him, and it is wrong to try to erase this legacy by bringing forward his book on Palestine. Carter's betrayal was apparent across the Arab world and in Iran. In severing Egyptian solidarity with Palestine, he effectively oversaw a major defeat of Arab unity around Palestine, and helped Israel become a stronger power in the region.

Photo: Wikipedia



UK minister and Hasina's niece Tulip Siddiq resigns amidst corruption investigation in Bangladesh



Photo: Wikipedia

Tulip Siddiq, a British-Bangladeshi member of the British Parliament for the Labor Party and formerly a senior anti-corruption minister in Keir Starmer's government, recently resigned from her ministerial position amid intense scrutiny and public pressure. The niece of Bangladesh's former authoritarian Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Siddiq faced widespread media scrutiny in the United Kingdom regarding the sources of funding for two properties linked to associates of the Awami League, the political party led by her aunt in Bangladesh. These properties, gifted in 2004 and 2009, were allegedly acquired over 20 years ago, with one currently owned by Siddiq. In response to public concerns, Siddiq voluntarily referred herself to the U.K. government's Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards, Sir Laurie Magnus, to address potential conflicts of interest. After the investigation, Sir Laurie concluded that Siddiq had "inadvertently misled" the public regarding a flat gifted to her by an ally of Hasina, but he found no evidence of deliberate wrongdoing. Siddiq has been the Labour member of parliament for the north London constituency of Hampstead and Highgate, previously Hampstead and Kilburn, since 2015. In December, several months after the overthrow of the Hasina regime in Bangladesh, the minister was named in a corruption inquiry in Bangladesh alongside her family and Hasina's daughter Saima Wazed, the World Health Organization's Southeast Asia chief, into whether the family was taking funds from infrastructure projects in Dhaka. In particular, Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) said it was investigating the family over an alleged link to the embezzlement of \$5bn related to the construction of a nuclear power plant in Rooppur, 160km (99 miles) northwest of the capital Dhaka, and fraudulently obtaining plots in the diplomatic zone of a development close to Dhaka. Moreover, Bangladeshi barrister Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem, a victim of enforced disappearance for 8 years, said that Dhaka police raided his family home after British journalists asked her niece Tulip Siddiq, about his plight back in 2017. This implied that not only did Tulip have knowledge of authoritarian actions of the Hasina administration, but rather aided and abetted them when necessary.

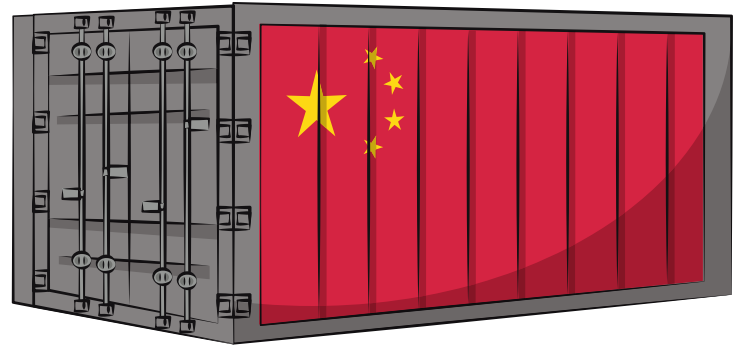
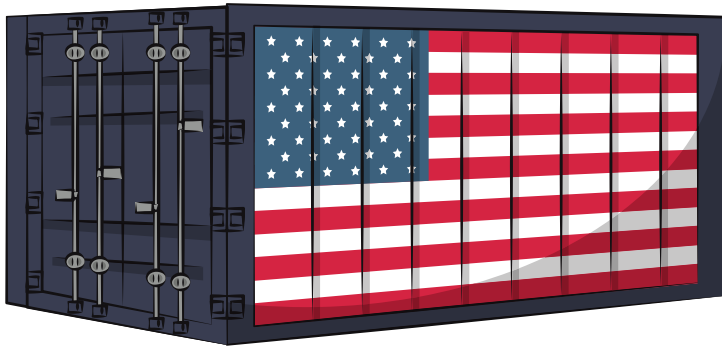


Indonesia joins BRICS

Indonesia is to formally join BRICS as a full member, Brazil's government said in January, further expanding the group of major emerging economies that also includes Russia, India, China and South Africa. Indonesia's foreign ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that it welcomed the announcement and that "BRICS membership is a strategic way to increase collaboration and partnership with other developing nations." Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation, had previously expressed its desire to join the group as a means of strengthening emerging countries and furthering the interests of the so-called Global South. BRICS was formed by Brazil, Russia, India and China in 2009, and South Africa was added in 2010. Last year, the alliance expanded to embrace Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia has been invited to join but has not yet done so. Turkey, Azerbaijan and Malaysia have formally applied to become members and a few others have expressed interest.

Prior to Indonesia's membership, BRICS already accounted for a significant portion of the world's economic output, representing 35% of global GDP and 46% of the world's population. One of the bloc's most important objectives is to reduce reliance on the US dollar in international transactions, an agenda that has gained momentum in recent years. In its most recent summit, held in October 2024, BRICS members discussed initiatives to strengthen local currencies and promote non-dollar transactions, a move that could reshape the future of global trade and finance. In lieu of this, the bloc has come under increasing threats from leaders of Western nations, chief amongst them Donald Trump. Recently, US President Donald Trump has reiterated his warning to the BRICS member countries against replacing the US dollar as a reserve currency by repeating a 100 percent-tariffs threat he had made weeks after winning the November presidential elections.





Has Trump started a global trade war?

In line with his “shock and awe” approach in domestic politics, President Trump signed executive orders on 1st of February, imposing 25% taxes on most imports from two of his country's biggest trading partners: Canada and Mexico, with the exception of Canadian oil and energy products, which would face a 10 per cent levy. Furthermore, goods from China will be charged a 10% tax. To explain the reasons behind the tariffs, Trump said in a social media post that he was taking the action in an effort to address the illegal flow of drugs and immigrants across the United States' northern and southern borders. However, following local and global pushback, and the onset of a potential economic disaster, Trump later announced a month-long pause to the implementation of tariffs for both Canada and Mexico a day before they were about to go into effect. Both Canada and Mexico had initially announced that they would implement retaliatory tariffs of their own, but Trump declared pause to the tariffs following commitments from Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, some of which they'd already made earlier, to bolster security at their respective borders with the United States.

From their end, Beijing denounced the tariffs and said China would take unspecified "corresponding countermeasures." The commerce ministry said the tariffs were a serious violation of World Trade Organization rules, and said it would launch a legal challenge at the WTO. It said the tariffs were imposed “under the pretext of the fentanyl issue”, but that China already was “one of the world’s toughest countries on counternarcotics both in terms of policy and its implementation”. Economists have said that the North American tariffs, had they materialized, would swiftly send the Canadian and Mexican economies into recession and likely lift consumer prices for Americans on cars, gasoline, lumber and other imported items. Tariffs and the threat of tariffs served as go-to policy moves for Trump in his first term, and are expected by experts to be key pillars and tools of foreign-policy control and negotiation in his second term as well, in all probability to the detriment of a struggling US economy, which is already in danger of loss of a migrant working force and probability of shortage of goods and inflation.



Bangladesh-Pakistan ties finally on the road towards mend?

Since Hasina's departure in a popular revolution, Pakistan and Bangladesh have edged closer to each other in an apparent reset at a time when politics in both countries have a general anti-India sentiment, overriding half-a-century worth historical animosity between Islamabad and Dhaka. It started after Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met Muhammad Yunus, head of Bangladesh's interim government, in September on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, and also later during an international summit in Egypt's capital, Cairo, last month. In another high-level exchange, Pakistan's army chief, General Asim Munir, met with Lieutenant General SM Kamrul Hassan, an officer in the Bangladesh military. This cozying up of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations comes in the backdrop of the unequal and unfair partnership of India with Hasina and her cronies, which resulted in popular disapproval of India in Bangladesh and reached its crescendo last year during the protests. Moreover, by granting asylum to Hasina in August 2024, India showed her full support to the ex-leader to extract maximum advantage from Bangladesh while ignoring the interests of the people of Bangladesh.

There are, however, several issues which need to ironed out to ensure a smooth transition towards normalcy in terms of bilateral relations. These include strained diplomatic relations, weak economic ties, the China factor in Bangladesh, Indian hegemonic aspirations, as well as historical issues such as the 1971 war of independence. While Pakistan did accept Bangladesh's independence in 1974 under a tripartite agreement with India, unresolved issues between Islamabad and Dhaka persisted. They included the lack of a formal apology from Pakistan for atrocities committed by the Pakistani army in 1971, the repatriation of Urdu-speaking people from Bangladesh who identify as Pakistanis and the division of pre-1971 assets between the two nations. However, following Indian support for Sheikh Hasina, and its decision to provide shelter to the former autocrat means that Bangladesh-Indian ties are in a freefall. Some experts have even been calling for collaboration on nuclear technology to act as a deterrent against Indian hegemonic aspirations. In any case, Pakistan's foreign minister, Ishaq Dar, is expected to visit Bangladesh next month, the first such trip since 2012, prompting analysts to suggest that the geopolitical ground in South Asia could be shifting.



US Fund Halt: The End of Global Development?

The suspension of U.S. government support has left nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees without medical services and other essential resources, threatening the lives of countless families. This is just one example of a larger issue; the funding freeze has affected communities around the world. Urgent international action is needed to address this humanitarian crisis and explore sustainable, community-driven solutions for aid delivery.

The morning of January 24th was different for Mohammad Anis's family from any other day. Every fifteen days, he went to the nearby food distribution center in the Rohingya refugee camp to collect the monthly ration for his family. The ration is not fancy—rice, lentils, and cooking oil—but that is the only food they can afford, so it is imperative. Seeing the crowd in front of the center from a distance, he thought the relief distribution had begun. But upon reaching there, Anis saw that no food was being distributed. Instead, there was a large notice posted on the door saying, "Food relief is suspended until further notice."

Anis's wife, Marium Bibi, had also left with Anis that morning. She had two destinations. First, she needed to go to a health center to collect a life-saving medicine for her 7-month-old daughter, who suffers from a chronic illness and relies on specialized medical care. After that, she would go for her physiotherapy. Marium Bibi had been paralyzed from the waist down after a stroke. However, after regular therapy, she was able to walk again to some extent. But without therapy, there is a possibility that her paralysis could return, potentially confining her to bed permanently. Unfortunately, today Marium Bibi had to return empty-handed from both places. Both centers were closed—*indefinitely!*

Mohammad Anis and Marium did not know that all organizations assisting in the Rohingya camp, which were operating with support from the U.S. government, had ceased operations starting that morning. An executive order from the newly elected President Trump suspended these activities for 90 days. Additionally, an order has been issued that all projects funded under this executive order must be postponed immediately.

This sudden freeze on aid had far-reaching implications for countless families in the camp. Organizations like USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) have historically provided essential services, contributing billions of dollars annually to support health care, education, food security, and infrastructure both in the Rohingya camp and around the world. In fiscal year 2023 alone, the U.S. allocated approximately \$31.7 billion to various initiatives aimed at improving global well-being. This funding is critical during crises; for instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. assistance was vital in delivering vaccines and medical supplies to some of the world's most vulnerable populations. Additionally, USAID accounts for only 40% of the total U.S. government funding.

While the U.S. stands as a leading donor, other countries also play essential roles. The United Kingdom, for example, contributes around \$18.9 billion annually through its Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), focusing on humanitarian aid and education support. Germany provides about \$30.8 billion, emphasizing sustainable development efforts. Japan, with its commitment of around \$12.7 billion, prioritizes disaster relief and economic growth. China, too, has increased its presence as a significant donor, often linking its aid to infrastructure investments in Asia and Africa. These nations might prioritize different strategies, often focusing more on economic partnerships rather than direct humanitarian relief, which highlights the unique standing of U.S. contributions to global aid responses. Another source of charitable income comes from philanthropists around the world; U.S.-based major donors contributed approximately \$12 billion in 2023, which is currently the only source of charity coming from the U.S.

The humanitarian crisis faced by Rohingya refugees underscores the urgency of international support. The Joint Response Plan (JRP) aims to deliver life-saving assistance to nearly 1 million Rohingya in Bangladesh, seeking about \$1.2 billion to fund crucial services like health care, food, nutrition, disability inclusion, and education. The U.S. has been a major supporter of this plan, and any decrease in funding could lead to dire consequences for the refugees, worsening their already precarious situation.

As funding landscapes evolve, it is essential to explore new methods of delivering aid that focus on sustainability and community involvement while requiring less financial input. We cannot completely rely on any other country after this incident. This should be an eye-opener for everyone. Encouraging local populations to identify their needs and engage directly in projects increases cultural relevance and effectiveness. Strategies like "blended finance," which combines public funds with private investment, could open up new funding avenues, ensuring more resilient support for communities in need. Additionally, leveraging technology, such as mobile health applications or online educational platforms, can enhance the efficiency of aid delivery. Building partnerships with local organizations can further strengthen these efforts, making humanitarian interventions more adaptable to changing circumstances.

The halt of U.S. charitable funding has already impacted the assistance programs designed to improve the lives of vulnerable communities worldwide. While alternative funding sources may emerge, they may not replicate the comprehensive nature of U.S. contributions.

Readers may be curious about what is happening with Anis and Marium's family. Are they going hungry? Are they eating tree bark and leaves collected from the forest? How is their daughter doing? Can Marium walk now? We are searching for the answers as well!



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