

## Impacts of USAID cuts on Rohingya Refugees

**Mains (GS II): International relations- India and its neighbourhood relations.**

### Why in the news?

The abrupt cut down of United States Agency of International Development (USAID) support by US has worsened the conditions of Rohingya people in Cox's Bazaar.

### What is USAID?

- It is the **lead international humanitarian and development arm** of the US government.
- **Created in** - 1961 under President John F. Kennedy.
- **Objective** - To provide economic, humanitarian, and development assistance globally, aiming to promote stability, health, education, democracy, and poverty reduction.
- **Role** - It provides assistance to other countries primarily by funding non-governmental organisations (NGOs), foreign governments, international organisations, or other US agencies.
- **Coverage** - It has provided assistance to **around 130 countries** in FY2023.
- **Priority Sectors** - Food security, disaster relief, healthcare, gender equality, and environmental protection.

### Significance USAID For India

- The US has provided development and humanitarian assistance to India since 1951, when President Harry Truman signed the India Emergency Food Assistance Act.
- **In education** - Economic aid from the US has also helped establish 8 agricultural universities, the first Indian Institute of Technology, and 14 regional engineering colleges.
- **In health** - It also strengthened India's national programs on immunization, family planning, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and polio.
- **Recent decline** - In 2004, the Indian government decided to reject any foreign aid that comes with conditions.
- This has, over time, led to a decline in the quantum of such assistance.

### What is the Rohingya crisis?

- **Rohingya** - They are a Muslim ethnic minority originating from Myanmar's Rakhine State.
- **Issues** - The Myanmar government does not recognize the Rohingya as citizens, leaving them stateless and vulnerable.

- **Mass Displacement** - Following brutal *military crackdowns in 2017* involving mass killings, sexual violence, and the burning of villages, over 700,000 Rohingya were forced to flee Myanmar.
- Most of the displaced Rohingya have taken *refuge in Cox's Bazar*, Bangladesh, which has become the ***largest refugee camp*** in the world.



- **Global Condemnation** - The United Nations has labeled the violence against the Rohingya as a “textbook example of *ethnic cleansing*.”

### How cut down of USAID funds affect Rohingyas?

- **Escalates humanitarian crisis** - Without renewed aid, hunger, disease, and death will surge, pushing the camps toward a humanitarian disaster.
- **Food insecurity** - It forced the World Food Programme (WFP) to slash food rations from USD 12.50 to USD 8/month per refugee, a *36% reduction*, pushing refugees closer to starvation.

*With an annual budget of around \$40 billion, it is the largest contributor to international organizations like the World Food Programme.*

- **Dwindling medical aid** - At least *five hospitals shutting down*, and sanitation programmes collapsing.
- **Loss of protection services** - It *ended gender-based violence support* and psychosocial care, increasing the vulnerability of women and children in camps.
- **Inadequate global response**- Despite new pledges (e.g., EU: Euro 32.3M), other donors cannot offset USAID's massive withdrawal, leaving critical funding gaps.

## What measures can be taken to resolve this?

- **Strengthening multilateral aid** - Boost funding for organizations like WFP for refugees.
- Supporting emergency funds or soft loans from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.
- Diversifying funding sources from other nations.
- **Encouraging private philanthropy** - Engaging global foundations & wealthy individuals to support through targeted donations.
- **Re-engagement with US** - Diplomatic channels can be used to persuade the U.S. to resume funding.
- **Focussing on long-term solutions** - The international community must intensify diplomatic efforts to push for recognition of Rohingya citizenship and rights.
- **Legal and human rights advocacy**- Support international legal mechanisms to investigate crimes against the Rohingya and advocate for justice and reparations.
- **Livelihood programs** - Investing in vocational training, education, and mental health services to reduce aid dependency and improve the well-being of refugees.

## Reference

[The Hindu| Impact of USAID Cuts on the Rohingya's](#)

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