



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on March 10, 2025

Watchdog: Rubio Covers for USAID, Won't Disclose Gaza Aid Recipients

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is once again at the center of controversy. The agency refuses to disclose which organizations received \$27 million in taxpayer-funded grants for a so-called "multisectoral response" in Gaza.

According to the conservative watchdog group Judicial Watch, the Trump administration's State Department, led by Marco Rubio, is shielding USAID's secrecy. This raises serious concerns over whether the funds have been diverted to terrorist-linked groups.



AP Images
Marco Rubio

Stonewalling the Truth

Despite repeated demands for transparency, USAID remains steadfast in its refusal to disclose who exactly received \$27 million in taxpayer-funded grants for Gaza. Judicial Watch, in a July 2024 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) [lawsuit](#), sought to force the agency's hand. Yet, to this day, the bureaucratic "stonewalling" continues.

Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton, ahead of the latest court hearing on Friday, didn't mince words about his frustration with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the State Department actively "fighting" to keep USAID's spending in the dark.



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Tom Fitton
@TomFitton

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Hearing in federal court this afternoon. Disappointing @PamBondi DOJ and @marcorubio State Dept are sending lawyers to court to fight us in order to hide who USAID was giving our money to in Gaza...



Tom Fitton @TomFitton · Feb 23

STONEWALLED BY USAID: USAID is a nightmare for transparency! Judicial Watch filed a lawsuit a few weeks ago about the USAID giving \$24 million to Gaza. And they don't want to tell us exactly who is getting the money! READ: judicialwatch.org/27m-grants-gaz...



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"USAID is a nightmare for transparency!" Fitton wrote in February, highlighting the ongoing refusal to reveal the recipients of the Gaza aid.

The watchdog group reaffirmed this on Sunday, stating bluntly that USAID "continues to hide" where the money went.



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Judicial Watch  
@JudicialWatch

...

The USAID continues to hide the identities of recipients of \$27 million in grants awarded to “Miscellaneous Foreign Awardees” that were designated for use in Gaza. READ:



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174

385

14



And the agency’s excuse? [According](#) to Judicial Watch, it quotes “trade secrets, financial information, and privacy [concerns].” A convenient justification, considering USAID’s well-documented history of funding questionable foreign entities on behalf of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Given this track record, though, USAID expects the public to accept its assurances at face value. That is a hard sell for anyone who understands the Establishment’s playbook.

Millions to Unknown Entities

According to Judicial Watch, the funding in question includes:

- \$7 million awarded on November 15, 2023, for a “multisectoral response in Gaza” under Federal Award ID 720BHA24GR00005.
- A “continuation” grant of \$20 million issued the same day, with no disclosed recipients.
- Over \$282 million allocated to the West Bank and Gaza in fiscal year 2023.

Judicial Watch’s lawsuit seeks records identifying the recipients of these funds, along with proposals, applications, and work plans associated with the grants.

The organization reports that instead of transparency, USAID produced heavily redacted documents. It leaned on multiple exemptions of FOIA, claiming that disclosure could “cause substantial harm” to the awardees’ competitive position and that revealing their identities could endanger their safety.



“High-risk” Aid: A Flaw or a Feature?

USAID wants the American public to believe its Gaza aid is properly managed. Yet, its own Office of Inspector General (OIG) warns otherwise.

A July 2024 OIG report, cited by Judicial Watch, explicitly flagged USAID-funded assistance to Gaza as “high risk for diversion and misuse.”

This isn’t just a hypothetical concern. The report came just months after controversy arose regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Allegations surfaced that UNRWA officials — major recipients of U.S. aid — had direct involvement in the October 7, 2023, attacks on Israel.

Even USAID Administrator Samantha Power admitted UNRWA’s vetting process was weak and “had to be significantly strengthened.” A bureaucratic understatement if ever there was one!

The bigger question remains: Is this incompetence, or something worse? The United States has a long history of propping up radical elements to undermine political movements and regimes that challenge its global agenda. Benjamin Netanyahu’s [well-documented](#) past support for Hamas aimed to undermine Palestinian statehood. Is it really a stretch to suspect Washington is using its aid for the same purpose?

Unanswered Questions

Fitton repeatedly blasted the secrecy surrounding the foreign aid, calling out Rubio’s State Department for actively shielding USAID’s dealings.

“Americans have a right to know who in Gaza is getting our money,” Fitton stated. He argued that transparency is essential to protecting both American and Israeli national security.

Still, Americans still have no idea:

- Who in Gaza received \$27 million in U.S. taxpayer funds
- What safeguards (if any) prevented Hamas-linked groups from accessing these funds
- Why Rubio’s State Department is fighting to keep this information hidden

Until those answers come, the only certainty is that USAID’s secrecy remains intact. And Rubio’s State Department is making sure it stays that way.

Broader Context

Once in office, the Trump administration announced sweeping reforms to federal agencies. Led by Elon Musk, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) made headlines publicizing USAID’s bloated budgets and lack of oversight. On Day 1, Trump [ordered](#) a near-total freeze on foreign aid. Yet, Rubio [quickly issued waivers](#) for humanitarian assistance, raising questions about the extent of these cuts.

While Musk declared USAID a “[criminal organization](#)” beyond reform, the administration did not truly dismantle the agency. Instead, it was absorbed into the State Department. Today, Rubio, now acting as USAID’s administrator, announced that [83 percent](#) of USAID programs would be cut. That will eliminate 5,200 contracts and 9,500 jobs. Yet, 17 percent remains, with no clarity on which programs survived, who benefits, or why they were spared.



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Why Keep USAID At All?

For years, USAID has been a vehicle for regime change, destabilization, and political interference. It has funneled money to extremist-linked groups and unaccountable nongovernmental organizations, all under the guise of humanitarian aid. Among those who're calling for a full audit and total shutdown of the agency is principled constitutionalist and former Texas Congressman Ron Paul. He argues the agency is implicated in the most "disastrous" aspects of U.S. foreign policy.

Audit USAID...Then Shut it Down! pic.twitter.com/ooeFeQmA03

— Ron Paul (@RonPaul) [February 3, 2025](#)

This raises an urgent question: If USAID serves as a means for unconstitutional foreign entanglements that undermine American interests, why keep any of it?

The answer may lie in the continuity of power. The Establishment rarely discards its tools. It merely reshapes them to fit new political realities. The State Department's refusal to disclose where \$27 million in Gaza aid went only fuels suspicion that USAID's most secretive and controversial operations remain untouched.

The cuts may have eliminated some "wasteful" projects from past administrations. But without full transparency, there's no guarantee that USAID's worst practices aren't still running — just under a different name.



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