

Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer

Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

27th February 2025

Dear Prime Minister

cc: Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Rt Hon David Lammy MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs; Rt Hon Anneliese Dodds MP, Minister of State for Development

As 138 leaders of the UK INGO sector, responding to urgent humanitarian emergencies and supporting global development, we are appalled by the recent announcement that UK aid will be cut to pay for defence spending. It is alarming that the UK is now following in the US's footsteps and has accepted the false choice of cutting the already diminished UK aid to fund defence. We implore you to reverse this decision before significant damage is done to both the UK's development and humanitarian work and its global reputation.

Labour pledged to rebuild the UK's reputation on international development in its manifesto, especially as the UK's global partnerships were severely damaged by the previous government's deep cuts to the UK aid budget. We expected that this meant that the cuts would be reversed over time and we would see a progressive and fair approach taken to address global issues, such as conflict, instability and climate change. Instead, the government has decided to reduce its UK aid budget to the lowest level for 25 years and introduce the largest cuts in aid by any UK government.

No government should balance its books on the backs of the world's most marginalised people. The previous UK aid cuts and the current US aid freeze have already shown their impact: children are now at risk of missing out on vaccines, girls may lose access to education, and healthcare services in refugee camps are being withdrawn. This move will also destroy Labour's legacy on international development and will leave your manifesto commitments and the government's ambition to be a reliable development partner on the global stage in tatters.

We recognise that the safety and security of the people of Britain should always be a priority of the government. But using the UK aid budget to do this is both strategically and morally wrong. UK aid, which is around 1p in every £1 of public spending brings a huge return on investment. It builds peace and prevents conflict and instability, forced migration, provides access to clean water and sanitation, and prevents the spread of diseases like COVID - which would save the UK money in the long run, and help make both the UK and the world a safer, healthier and more prosperous place for us all. As we saw during the pandemic, viruses don't respect borders. By making these cuts today you're weakening already fragile health systems, putting us all at risk of the next global outbreak.

We urgently call on this government to make a statement to parliament, outlining whether the impact of these cuts has been thought through and whether alternative sources of funding were explored before deciding to remove support to those who need it the most. A wealth tax of just 2% on wealth above £10 million (affecting just 0.04% of the population) would raise £24bn annually. It is unacceptable that taxing extreme wealth was not looked at before cutting UK aid.

In the immediate, the proceeds of the sale of Chelsea FC, which would be worth billions of pounds, should be made available to support humanitarian projects in Ukraine and in other communities impacted by the war to help try and plug the gap left by the US and now your government.

Now is not the time for the UK to scale back its development and humanitarian support, adding to what is already a nightmare scenario for the world's most marginalised people, made worse because of the USAid freeze. At a time when the US retreats from the world, Labour should honour its promise to turn the page on international development and once again become a reliable partner on the world stage. Anything less will cost lives and significantly damage our long-term interests.

Signed

1. A Leg To Stand, A Hand To Feed, Liza Tong, Director
2. Ace Africa, David Evans, Ace Africa UK Country, Director
3. Action Against Hunger UK, Jean-Michel Grand, CEO
4. Action for Global Health, Katie Husselby, Director
5. ActionAid UK, Hannah Bond, Co-CEO and Director of Advocacy and Influencing
6. ADRA-UK, Sandra Golding, CEO
7. Advantage Africa, Andrew Betts, Director
8. Afghanaid, Charles Davy, Managing Director
9. Afrikids, Charlie Hay, CEO
10. Age International, Alison Marshall, CEO
11. All We Can, David Thomson, CEO
12. Amref Health Africa UK, Camilla Knox-Peebles, CEO
13. Anti-Slavery International, Donna Covey Interim, CEO
14. APT Action on Poverty, Alex Daniels, CEO
15. Avert, Sarah Hand, CEO
16. AzuKo, Jo Ashbridge, CEO
17. BE REEL, Nicola Swan, Executive Director
18. Bond, Romilly Greenhill, CEO
19. Britain and Nepal NGOs, Nick Hinton, Chairman
20. British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group, Michael Young
Director Executive
21. CAFOD Christine Allen Executive Director
22. CARE International UK Helen McEachern, Chief Executive Officer
23. Carers Worldwide, Anil Patil, Executive Director
24. Centre for Global Equality, Lara Allen, CEO
25. CHASE Africa, Harriet Gordon-Brown CEO
26. Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, Dhivya O'Connor, CEO
27. Child's i Foundation, Christopher Muwanguzi, CEO
28. Choose Love, Emma Stevenson, Deputy, CEO
29. Christian Aid, Patrick Watt, CEO
30. Climate Action Network UK (CAN-UK), Catherine Pettengell
Director Executive
31. Comic Relief, Samir Patel, CEO
32. Commonwealth Human Ecology Council, Mark Robinson, Chair
33. Concern Worldwide UK, Sayyeda Salam, Executive Director
34. Conciliation Resources, Jonathan Cohen, Executive Director
35. Dalit Solidarity Network UK, Elizabeth Joy, Director
36. Dhaka Ahsania Mission UK, Matthew Lake, CEO

37. Driving Aid to Ukraine, Nicola Cousins, Company Director
38. Elrha, Fiona McSheehy, Interim CEO
39. Embrace the Middle East, Jamie Eyre, CEO
40. Enable-Ed CIC, Mark Smith, Director
41. Engineers Against Poverty, Petteer Matthews, Executive Director
42. Equality in Tourism, Tricia Barnett, Director
43. Firefly International, Jane Salmonson, Director
44. Five Talent, Rachel Lindley, Co-CEO
45. Friends of Afghan Women Network, Shabnam Nasimi, CEO
46. Friends of Kipkelion, Michael Deriaz (Personal), Chairman
47. Frontline AIDS, John Plastow, Executive Director
48. Gender and Development Network, Jessica Woodroffe, Director
49. Girls not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage, Faith Mwangi-Powell, CEO
50. Global Citizen, Mick Sheldrick, Co-Founder
51. Global Health Partnerships (formally THET), Ben Simms, Chief Executive Officer
52. Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction, Marcos Concepcion Raba, Executive Director
53. GOAL Global, Siobhan Walsh, CEO
54. Habitat for Humanity Great Britain, Henrietta Blackmore, National Director/CEO
55. Health Poverty Action, Martin Drewry, CEO
56. HelpAge International, Cherian Matthews, CEO
57. HIAS + JCORE, David Mason, CEO
58. Hope and Homes for Children, Mark Waddington, CRO
59. Hub Cymru Africa, Claire O'Shea, Head
60. Humanity & Inclusion UK, George Graham, Chief Executive
61. INASP, Jon Harle, Executive Director
62. Include Me TOO, Parmi Dheensa, Executive Director
63. Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Peter Taylor, Director
64. International Alert, Nic Hailey, Executive Director
65. International Broadcasting Trust, Mark Galloway, Executive Director
66. International Institute for Environment and Development, Tom Mitchell, Executive Director
67. International Nepal Fellowship, John Reynolds, CEO
68. International Rescue Committee UK, Khusbu Patel, Executive Director
69. INTRAC, Kate Newman, CEO
70. Islamic Relief Worldwide, Tufail Hussain, UK Director
71. Jesuit Missions, Paul Chitnis, Director
72. Kanaama Interactive, Community Support, Fiona Bristow Director
73. Karuna Trust, Ciaran Maguire, CEO
74. Link Education International, Fiona Greig, Executive Director - Operations and Resources
75. Malaria Consortium, James Tibenderana, Chief Executive
76. MapAction, Colin Rogers, CEO
77. Mbedza Projects Support, Julian Watson, Director
78. Mothers' Union, Bev Jullien, CEO
79. MSI Reproductive Choices, Bethan Coble, CEO
80. Musana UK, Paul Smith, UK Director
81. Muslim Aid, Khalid Javid, CEO
82. Muslim Hands, Irfan Khan, Director, Humanitarian and International Partnerships
83. Network for Africa, Annabel Harris, CEO

84. Norwegian Refugee Council, Martin Hartberg, Director
85. Omega Research Foundation Ltd, Fiona Gorton, Company Secretary
86. ONE Against Poverty UK, Adrian Lovett, UK Executive Director
87. Options, James Harcourt, Managing Director
88. Orbis UK, Rebecca Croni, CEO
89. Oxfam GB, Halima Begum, CEO
90. Pahar Trust Nepal, Alan Sweetman, Executive Director
91. Peace Brigades International UK, Ben Leather, Director
92. Peace Direct, Dylan Mathews, CEO
93. Plan International UK Rose Caldwell CEO
94. Population Matters, Amy Jankiewicz, Chief Executive
95. Practical Action, Rachel Hudson, Acting CEO
96. Pragya, Gargi Banerji, Director
97. Pratham UK, Nick Sankey, Executive Director
98. Restless Development, Alex Kent, Co-CEO
99. Results UK, Kitty Arie, CEO
100. Right To Play UK, Gillian McMahon, Executive Director
101. Ripple Effect, Paul Stuart, CEO
102. Saferworld, Susana Klien, CEO
103. Save the Children UK, Dan Paskins, Executive Director of Policy, Advocacy & Campaign
104. Scotland's International Development Alliance, Frances Guy, Executive Director
105. Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, Lorraine Currie, CEO
106. Search for Common Ground, Lizzie Nelson, U.K. Director
107. Seenaryo, Lara McIvor, Executive Director
108. Send My Friend to School, Emma Wagner, Co-Chair
109. Send My Friend to School, John McLaverty, Co-Chair
110. Sense International, Kavita Prasad, Director
111. Shabaka, Elvina Quaison, CEO
112. ShelterBox, Sanj Srikanthan, Chief Executive
113. Small International Development Charities Network, Amber Shotton, Chair of Trustees
114. SOS Children's Villages UK, Alison Wallace, CEO
115. South West International Development Network (SWIDN), Hannah Doornbos, Executive Director
116. Start Network, Christina Bennett, CEO
117. STiR Education, Jenny Willmott, Co-CEO
118. STOPAIDS, Mike Podmore, CEO
119. TB Alert, Paul Sommerfeld, Executive Trustee
120. Teach A Man To Fish, Nik Kafka, CEO & Founder
121. Tearfund, Nigel Harris, Chief Executive
122. The AKCGlobal Group, Alexander Knapp, CEO
123. The Global Resilience Partnership, Jesper Hornberg, CEO
124. The Leprosy Mission, Peter Waddup, CEO
125. The Power of Nutrition, Jim Emerson, CEO
126. Theatre for a Change, Fiona Morrell, Executive Director
127. Toybox, Lynne Morris, CEO
128. Transaid, Caroline Barber, Chief Executive
129. Transform Trade, Alice Oyaro, Interim Chief Executive
130. Trocaire, Caoimhe De Barra, CEO

131. United Against Malnutrition and Hunger, Jonny Oates, Chief Executive
132. Unlimit Health, Wendy Harrison, CEO
133. War Child UK, Helen Pattinson, CEO
134. WaterAid, Tim Wainwright, Chief Executive
135. Women and Children First (UK), Elizabeth Silver, CEO
136. Women for Women International, Sara Bowcutt, Managing Director UK
137. Workaid, Adrian Hatch, CEO
138. World Vision UK, Fola Komolafe, CEO