



February 13, 2025

Pete Marocco, Acting Deputy Administrator
Joel Borkert, Chief of Staff
Ken Jackson, Assistant to the Administrator for Management
Office of Human Capital and Talent Management
USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20523

Gentlemen,

Despite multiple efforts to engage with you and your team on orderly process to restructure and reform USAID, you continue to engage in efforts to sideline and dehumanize USAID's Foreign Service Officer (FSO) cadre. I would ask you to please acknowledge the sacrifices made by FSOs, the high level of integrity FSOs demonstrate every day, and our commitment to serving the American taxpayer. To that end, we are patriotic Americans and believe in the good that the U.S. has to offer not just to people at home, but also to the world.

I'm not sure what the reason is that you have no intention of engaging with anyone on either the strategic rethink of foreign assistance or the future of USAID. While I do not know your motivation, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) intends to hold you and USAID accountable to the policies outlined in the Automated Directive Service (ADS) as well as its legal financial obligations to its FSO corps. Regarding the likely Reduction of Force. AFSA expects the Agency to fully follow ADS 454. This policy requires consultation with AFSA as well as the opportunity for each FSO to review their file (ADS 454.3.1). Additionally, AFSA will hold the Agency accountable for the proper and transparent assigning Retention Registers (ADS 454.3.3), Order of Separation (ADS 454.3.4), and all other provisions outlined in the ADS. Lastly, you should expect that AFSA and every FSO will hold you and the Agency accountable to ADS 454.3.5.a and b that allows 90 days notice for overseas FSOs and 60 days notice for domestic FSOs with repatriation or moving costs to their home of record. Failure of the Agency to meet its obligations outlined in ADS 454 will result in grievance filings by FSOs with AFSA's support.

It is regrettable that your actions have led to this. You had multiple opportunities to engage with USAID FSOs. I will remind you that the Foreign Service implements the policy of each President, Secretary of State, and USAID Administrator. We do so without regard to party or political affiliation and we do it proudly.

I want to draw your attention to another critical issue. Currently, the Agency is refusing to reimburse FSOs for travel expenses incurred for authorized official travel, costs incurred due to "ordered departures." and overseas housing and COLAs among others. The USG entered into an agreement with FSOs to either reimburse for official charges or provide services to maintain their overseas housing. Per the Prompt Payment Act, the Agency must pay all vouchered expenses within 30 days. We have reports from evacuees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, who have been told not to expect to be reimbursed for their expenses on OD, new FSOs with outstanding vouchers for their transfers to DC, and other FSOs who are carrying official travel debt of the USG with no indication that they will ever be



reimbursed. Additionally, posts are reporting that due to the Agency's current refusal to disburse any funds, many FSOs are facing having their electricity and gas being turned off at their official residences as well as the real possibility of being evicted if the Agency defaults paying their leases. Surely, it is not your intention for the USG to be an organization which reneges on its financial obligations. We have informed our members that they should file grievances against the Agency overdue allowances or reimbursements.

Finally, your lockout of all USAID staff from Agency office space is causing individual harm to all staff. You must allow staff to enter Agency spaces to retrieve their personal items. Denying access serves no purpose other than to continue to punish staff for loyal service.

I remain ready to meet with you and your team to discuss the upcoming RIF, overdue allowances and reimbursements, and other negative issues impacting FSOs because of recent Agency actions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Chester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Randy Chester
USAID AFSA Vice President