

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Global Human Rights Funding Faces Precipitous Decline, Threatening Millions of Lives, New Report Warns

NEW YORK – 26 August 2025 – A new report from Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) reveals that global funding for human rights movements is rapidly contracting, driven by significant cuts to foreign aid and growing instability in philanthropic support. The report, which synthesizes data from multiple sources, projects that these converging pressures will have a profound and immediate effect on the infrastructure of civic space and human rights, with potentially devastating consequences.

According to the analysis, global Official Development Assistance (ODA) is projected to decline by a staggering 28% by 2026, an annual reduction of \$62 billion from a 2023 high of \$223 billion. This decline is largely driven by just three countries—the United States (\$36 billion), Germany (\$10 billion), and the United Kingdom (\$7 billion)—which are responsible for 84% of the projected decrease. The report warns that these cuts will put millions of lives at risk, citing predictions of up to 3 million additional HIV-related deaths and nearly 2 million children killed by preventable illnesses.

The report highlights the direct impact of these ODA cuts on human rights-specific funding, projecting an annual decline of up to \$1.9 billion by 2026. This shortfall is further compounded by political conditions that are increasingly undermining foundations' ability to make grants, with restrictive measures hindering cross-border grantmaking.

"These cuts to foreign assistance are colossal and will not be filled," said Kellea Miller, Executive Director at HRFN. "The rollbacks will come with an extreme loss of life. Our goal with this report is to get to the heart of what philanthropy can do together in the short term, moving money in agile and strategic ways to support human rights and social justice in a moment of extreme uncertainty and change."

The report, titled "Funding at a Crossroads: Foreign Aid Cuts and Implications for Global Human Rights," underscores that while the funding shortfall is a severe setback, it is not insurmountable. It urges funders from all sectors to take proactive steps by the end of this year and increase funding to bolster human rights movements—particularly those focused on LGBTQI rights and gender equality, which are expected to be especially hard-hit.

The full report provides an in-depth analysis of these trends, along with recommendations for funders to innovate and adapt in a challenging political and economic climate. It is available for download at <http://bit.ly/4p8Stik>.

About Human Rights Funders Network

Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) is the world's largest network of funders from the Global South, East, and North dedicated to resourcing human rights action. We use research, community building, and advocacy to cultivate a funding field that drives significantly more and better grant dollars directly to human rights actors and movements leading change around the world. Learn more at hrfn.org.

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