

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over recent years, the humanitarian system has faced a tension between rising levels of need and a decline in funding. This strain reached a critical point in early 2025 when the United States government significantly reduced or withdrew funding across multiple contexts. These cuts have had immediate and far-reaching implications for humanitarian programming, particularly in fragile contexts.

This report is one of a [series of ALNAP outputs](#) to support the sector to understand the prioritisation choices, trade-offs and impacts of recent cuts to humanitarian assistance. Through consultations with community members, community leaders and aid workers conducted in mid-2025, it assesses the impact of these funding cuts on populations affected by crisis and on the humanitarian sector.

The report examines two country contexts – Mali and South Sudan – which both combine a strong prior presence of US funding, active humanitarian coordination structures and acute levels of needs. The findings shed light on how funding fluctuations influence humanitarian access, service delivery and community coping mechanisms, offering a crucial perspective on resource-driven shifts in the aid system from the perspective of both implementing actors and communities.

KEY FINDINGS

- The abrupt suspension of US funding in early 2025 triggered critical service disruptions in high-severity areas and they have affected trust between stakeholders.
- Population groups most at risk bear the brunt of deteriorating conditions, leading to a growing reliance on informal support systems that in turn put pressure on community structures.
- The funding cuts undermine national response capacities and they have disrupted humanitarian coordination systems.
- Re-prioritisation exercises have narrowed the scope of humanitarian response planning.
- In the absence of broader social and information infrastructure, a narrowly focused humanitarian system could have compounding effects.
- Loss of trust between communities and aid actors adds a long-term barrier to humanitarian access and effectiveness.