Vatican
Vatican News



Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Vatican foreign minister, speaks during a news conference at the Vatican, on Jan. 18, 2024. (CNS/Lola Gomez)



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The Vatican's foreign minister warned on March 25 that the Trump administration's decision to gut the United States' foreign aid assistance has created a "problem worldwide."

"We're hearing of the very bad effects of that around the world," said Archbishop Paul Gallagher, secretary for relations with states at the Vatican's Secretariat of State. "It's a very, very serious situation."

The diplomat added that the Trump administration's cancellation of some $60 billion in foreign aid comes "at a time when it seems, to us, very evident that what the world is in need of now is more expressions of solidarity, not less."

The archbishop's remarks came during a question and answer session following a book launch for *Iraq's Christian Heritage: Survival in Mesopotamia* by German scholar Matthias Kopp.

Earlier this month, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a Catholic, announced that over 80% of the projects administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, will be canceled.

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Among the initiatives affected, Gallagher highlighted the shuttering of Catholic Relief Services projects, programming that provides support for displaced Rohingya people in Bangladesh and programs throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

The Vatican's foreign minister added that when the incoming U.S. ambassador to the Holy See arrives to take up his post, "we will certainly be raising these issues."

Brian Burch, the president of the political advocacy group CatholicVote.org, has been nominated to serve as President Donald Trump's Vatican representative, although he has yet to receive confirmation from the U.S. Senate.

Kopp, who recently returned from Iraq, added that the aid cuts would be devastating for that country's fledgling Christian community.

The consequences of Trump's budget cuts would be "really terrible," he said, noting that USAID provided around one-third of the financial support received by Caritas and other Christian institutions working in Iraq.

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This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. View the full series.