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## US Pulls Funding for UN Population Fund

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The UN Population Fund rejects state department's claim that agency backs "coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization".

The U.S. State Department announced that it is discontinuing its funding for the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA). The UNFPA is an organization that focuses on family planning and maternal and child health in more than 150 countries worldwide. This marks U.S. President Donald Trump's first step in reducing funding for United Nation organizations. This move has raised some concerns since the U.S. is the major contributor to the UN.

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The State Department revealed that it withheld \$32.5 in funding because the UNFPA "supports, or participates in the management of, a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization." In January, Trump reinstated the Mexico City Policy, which withholds U.S. funding for international organizations that perform abortions or provide information about abortion. One of Trump's recent executive orders, which references all global health assistance, withheld at least half a billion dollars in U.S. funding. Trump's proposed 28 percent budget reduction for diplomatic and foreign aid, specifically, included reduced financial support for the United Nations and its agencies.

UNFPA stated that it regrets the U.S. government's decision to end funding, which it said is based on an "erroneous claim" that the agency supports coercive abortion or involuntary

sterilization in China. The agency added that its mission is "to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled." The statement from UNFPA also declared, "The support we received over the years from the government and people of the United States has saved tens of thousands of mothers from preventable deaths and disabilities, and especially now in the rapidly developing global humanitarian crises."

The State Department said the funds will instead be transferred to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to support family planning, maternal and reproductive health activities.

UN officials have warned that abrupt funding cuts could trigger more global instability and argued that dollars for diplomacy are more effective than military spending in combating terrorism. President George W. Bush had also defunded the UNFPA, from 2002 to 2008, arguing that its presence in China constituted participation in the country's "one-child" family planning policy. At that time, the U.S. government had pulled \$34m of funds.

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