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USAID Flagged Gaza Aid Risks Before \$30M Grant

July 9, 2025

– Categories: Human Rights



An internal review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) raised serious doubts about a major Gaza aid effort just days before the State Department approved a \$30 million grant to the group.

The assessment, spanning 14 pages, pointed to significant problems with the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation’s (GHF) funding proposal. USAID officials found that the organization lacked basic plans for distributing aid safely and transparently. One USAID

official concluded bluntly, “I do not concur with moving forward with GHF given operational and reputational risks and lack of oversight.”

The review noted GHF lacked detailed risk management protocols, clear delivery site plans, and had proposed distributing powdered baby formula in zones where water safety remained uncertain. Despite these concerns, senior Trump administration officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, urged swift approval of the aid, stressing expedited funding for urgent relief efforts.

The grant was announced on June 26, just days after the critical assessment. According to sources familiar with the decision, normal procedures that would have given GHF time to respond to USAID’s questions were bypassed in favor of an expedited process.

GHF, launched in February 2025 to deliver emergency food aid in Gaza, has faced criticism: UN officials and human rights groups warn its highly militarized hubs have led to deadly crowd control incidents and civilian casualties. The organization also employs armed American security contractors working alongside Israeli forces, adding to safety concerns.

A State Department spokesperson defended the decision, calling GHF “a results-focused alternative to a broken aid system.” Officials emphasized that the funding aligns with President Trump’s commitment to help Gaza’s civilians without benefiting Hamas, the militant group controlling the territory.

GHF maintains that the USAID assessment was routine and that it is addressing each issue as required. However, internal documents show that the foundation still needed to complete key tasks, such as registering in U.S. government systems and providing evidence of audits, even after the grant was approved.

As of last week, the funds had not yet been disbursed. Meanwhile, pressure is growing from human rights groups demanding an end to GHF’s operations due to safety risks and a lack of transparency. Despite the criticism, U.S. officials have signaled that more funding could be possible if GHF meets expectations and improves its operations.

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