

PRESS STATEMENT:

Lusaka, Friday 9th May 2025

**CARITAS ZAMBIA: A CALL FOR JUSTICE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND THE
PRESERVATION OF LIFE IN THE FACE OF US AID REDUCTION**

Caritas Zambia has noted with deep concern the decision by the United States government to cut aid for essential medicines in Zambia. We understand that this decision stems from credible reports of theft and the illegal sale of donated medicines within our healthcare system. While we unequivocally condemn any form of corruption and the criminal actions of individuals who pilfer resources meant for the sick and vulnerable, we must also voice our profound worry about the devastating impact this aid cut will have on the lives of countless Zambians who rely on these vital medications.

We acknowledge the frustration and anger felt by some within our nation who have witnessed this unacceptable abuse of trust. We recognize the difficult position of the US government and its Ambassador to Zambia, who are understandably seeking to ensure the responsible use of their taxpayers' contributions. However, we believe that halting aid, while perhaps intended as a strong deterrent, risks punishing the innocent and exacerbating an already precarious healthcare situation.

As the social arm of the Catholic Church in Zambia, we implore all citizens to embrace a culture of honesty and integrity. The theft of medicines is not only a crime but a grave moral failing that undermines the well-being of our communities. We must collectively reject such actions and hold those responsible accountable.

While acknowledging the validity of concerns regarding corruption, we must also maintain empathy for those who will be directly affected by the reduction in aid. We must stand in solidarity with them and advocate for solutions that protect their right to healthcare.

We urge all stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue, avoiding divisive rhetoric and focusing on solutions that address both the issue of corruption and the urgent need for access to medicine.

This situation underscores the urgent need for the government to significantly increase domestic investment in the healthcare sector. Relying heavily on external aid creates vulnerabilities. A stronger, self-sufficient healthcare system is essential for the long-term well-being of our nation.

The government must engage in open and transparent dialogue with the US government and other donors to rebuild trust and explore alternative solutions that address their concerns without jeopardizing the health of Zambians. This could include jointly implementing stricter monitoring mechanisms, involving independent oversight bodies, or exploring phased approaches to aid.

Caritas Zambia remains committed to working alongside the government, civil society organizations, and international partners to ensure that all Zambians have access to quality healthcare. We will continue to advocate for justice, transparency, and accountability, while also standing in solidarity with those who are most in need. We believe that it is possible to condemn corruption with the utmost firmness while simultaneously upholding the sanctity of life and ensuring that essential medicines reach those who desperately require them. We call for wisdom, compassion, and a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to find a path forward that upholds both justice and the fundamental right to health.

ISSUED BY



Caritas Executive Director

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