

Oppose the aid cuts!

Together we can stop the Government's U-turn on aid.

In November, the Government announced that it plans to cut spending on overseas aid, reducing the 0.7% of national income currently allocated to 0.5%, reducing the 2021 aid budget by around £4 billion (30%) compared with 2019. This is unacceptable, especially during a global pandemic that is causing vastly more poverty worldwide. It shows that the UK is turning its back on already-marginalised people and failing to play its part in building a fairer world and leaving no one behind. The impact will be felt by the poorest and most marginalised communities the hardest, and many thousands of lives are at stake. With the UK hosting key global moments this year, the Government should be setting a good example of global cooperation. It's up to us to continue to demonstrate public support for high-quality aid programmes that save lives and build stronger health and education systems. This month, please contact your MP, asking them to vote against the aid cuts when the necessary legislation is brought before Parliament, and to write to the Secretary of State to share your view that the aid cuts are wrong.

Huge aid cut announced

On 25 November 2020, the Chancellor Rishi Sunak MP said that the Government [intends to reduce](#) the amount allocated to Official Development Assistance (ODA) from 0.7% of the UK's Gross National Income (GNI) to 0.5% in 2021. Combined with previously announced cuts, this would make the 2021 aid budget around £4 billion (30%) smaller than it was in 2019.

Rationale for the proposal

The Government has argued that cuts are necessary because of domestic economic pressure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and has said it is committed to return to spending 0.7% of our income on aid '[when the fiscal situation allows](#)'. Although the cuts have been framed as a financial decision, it's clearly a political choice. While a cut of this size harms our impact on global poverty, it only makes a tiny saving domestically when compared to overall UK public spending.

This decision also signals a U-turn on [manifesto commitments](#) made before the 2019 General Election - a broken promise to UK voters and to people in poorer countries. And with the UK hosting the G7 meeting of world leaders and the UN Climate Change Conference ('COP26') this year, as well as co-hosting the replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Government must set a good example of global leadership. The decision to cut aid strongly calls into question this leadership, despite the Government's rhetoric about a 'Global Britain', and sets a dangerous

precedent at a time when global collaboration is needed to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

How will the cuts be implemented?

Allocating 0.7% of GNI to overseas aid is [enshrined in law](#), so the Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab MP has said that the Government will try to [repeal the legislation](#) later this year. No timetable or process has yet been published, but it is expected that a vote in Parliament could happen any time from late February / March. The Foreign Secretary has announced his [priority areas](#) for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). They leave out many vital areas of human development including nutrition, routine vaccinations, ending infectious diseases, and education. The Government is also [already budgeting for the cuts](#), even before the legislation is passed, but no details have been given of how prioritising decisions are being made about specific aid programmes, and the [transparency of Government decision-making has been criticised](#).

Impact of UK aid cuts on global poverty

A cut in UK aid of this scale will have a huge impact on the lives of people living in poverty. Continuing the UK's track record of effective aid programmes will be even more vital because of the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is not yet known which programmes will be cut, [it has been estimated that](#) 15.7 million fewer people will be reached by nutrition programmes, and 100,000 fewer lives saved through vaccination against killer diseases.

What areas are we most concerned about?

Nutrition: The UK has shown strong commitment to fighting malnutrition, by exceeding its target to reach 50 million children and women with nutrition programmes between 2015 and 2020. With COVID-19 putting [80 million more people at risk](#) of malnutrition, it's vital that the UK and other donors continue to support nutrition programmes. But the Government hasn't committed any new money for nutrition from 2021 onward. It should pledge new funding as soon as possible, aiming to reach at least 50 million women and children with nutrition programmes between 2021 and 2025, and committing at least £120 million per year to directly target malnutrition.

Vaccinations: Childhood vaccination is a vital part of health systems, preventing life-altering diseases like polio and deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases. COVID-19 has severely disrupted vaccination efforts, with at least [80 million children under the age of one](#) expected to miss essential vaccines. Now there is a [big push to vaccinate 39 million children in Pakistan](#) to ensure they can still be protected from polio. This won't be possible without continued funding from organisations like the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#) (GPEI) and [Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance](#). They not only support the delivery of vaccines, but strengthen countries' health systems. Having [already made a four-year pledge to the GPEI in 2019](#), this year it is vital that the UK delivers promised funds on time to avoid outbreaks of polio and other preventable diseases.

Infectious diseases: While the UK's existing financial commitments to the [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria](#) and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance are more likely to be protected, the COVID-19 pandemic has halted progress against infectious diseases, with diagnosis and treatment for diseases like TB, AIDS and malaria

massively disrupted. For example, progress on TB could be reversed to 2013 levels, causing [1.5 million extra deaths by 2025](#). We are also concerned that vital research and development (R&D) into diseases of poverty such as TB may also have their funding cut.

Education: 2021 presents opportunities for the UK Government to take concrete action to improve the state of education around the world. Education is integral to human development, and yet is chronically [underfunded](#). Millions of children have missed school due to the pandemic, and as many as [30 million are likely never to return](#) to formal education. Cutting the UK's global education budget now would make it harder for the Government to make a meaningful contribution to the [Global Partnership for Education](#) (GPE) summit later this year.

Campaigning matters!

[Over 200 charities](#) including RESULTS UK warned the Government against this decision before it was made. MPs of all political parties have also expressed concern about the proposed cuts, and some have said they will vote against them. RESULTS firmly believes that the cuts are wrong, and we hope you will feel able to encourage your MP to vote against the legislation when it comes before Parliament.

It is thanks to campaigners like you that the UK was the first country in the world to enshrine its aid spending commitments into law, but this legislation would reverse that, cutting support to millions of people around the world in the middle of a global pandemic. **Every MP counts!** We must stop the proposed cut, and ensure that any legislation proposing to cut the aid budget is defeated. To do that, we must show MPs that there is public support for aid, to help them feel more willing to speak out, or at least to abstain.

Take action!

1. **Please contact your MP, asking them to vote against any legislation that is put forward to implement the proposed aid cuts.** Let them know why you think this is so important, and if you can, find out what arguments against the cuts might resonate most with them.
2. **Ask your MP to write to the Foreign Secretary, Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab MP,** expressing your view that the 0.7% aid commitment should be retained, and highlighting the areas we believe are at most risk of being deprioritised, including nutrition, routine immunisation, infectious diseases, and education.

Let us know that you've taken this month's action by emailing Campaigns Coordinator Ruthie Walters at ruthie.walters@results.org.uk