



# NEHAWU CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO DEFEND OUR HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN THE FACE OF ATTACKS ON OUR SOVEREIGNTY BY THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

## MEDIA STATEMENT - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Tuesday February 11, 2025**

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] calls on government to intervene in ensuring that vital HIV/AIDS and TB programmes are safeguarded and, that our brave healthcare workers and the critical services they render to our communities are protected in the face of the Trump Administration's attack on our sovereignty.

Since assuming office, the Trump administration has led a relentless campaign of exerting pressure on our constitutionally elected government. The most recent act of imperialist bullying came in the form of signing an executive order, halting foreign aid and assistance through the United States Agency for International Development [USAID]. The executive order will see a ninety-day freeze on support and aid administered. The decision to halt these vital funding programme will have broad implications for global health and in particular on the South African context. The freezing will impact essential HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) services, impact testing and treatment services, which will lead to an increase in undiagnosed cases, a rise in infections, the spread of drug resistance and an increase in mortality and an increase of TB.

However, this also provides an opportunity for governments across the world to develop self-reliance in funding their healthcare system and not being solely reliant on funding from USAID. As NEHAWU, we call on government to build this self-reliance and to commence fully financing HIV/AIDS programmes and to delink from our dangerous dependence on the USAID. We have, in recent years, noted how the USAID has always been used by the US government for as a subversive weapon for regime change, we must therefore ensure that we safeguard our national sovereignty.

The attitude of the US government with its aggressive posture towards South Africa is a manifestation of the consolidation of geopolitical right-wing politics. The right-wing Trump Administration wants to cruelly punish sovereign countries that do not toe its savage line. It considers unacceptable that South Africa can exercise independent foreign policy positions and act outside of its hegemonic control for its national interests.





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Indeed, the fact that our government instituted proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) charging apartheid and genocidal Israel in contravention of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide [Genocide Convention] in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. This is major issue for the Trump Administration due to its support for apartheid and genocidal Israel and the atrocities that are unfolding in Palestine. The Trump administration has been brazen in their support of the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine.

As NEHAWU, we reiterate our support for the government on the decision of approaching ICJ against Israel. We call on our government to remain resolute and unwavering in its principled position against Israel.

Equally, the signing of the National Health Insurance [NHI], Basic Education Laws Amendment [BELA] Act and Expropriation Act, have been a thorn in the administration of Trump and the racist grouping here at home such as Afriforum and Solidarity. We support the government in signing those acts into law to address the transformation agenda of the country. The government must not be side-tracked by the misinformation being peddled by right-wingers and Trump administration.

Lastly, we call on government, National Treasury and the NDoH to develop emergency contingency plans to safeguard workers expected to be impacted by the funding freeze and to ensure that vital HIV/ AID and TB services are not halted. We reiterate our call for the government to defend our national sovereignty against the Trump Administration.

END

**Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat.**

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