

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20550

Mr. Stephen Ehikian
Acting Administrator
General Services Administration
1800 F St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20405

Dear Mr. President and Acting Administrator Ehikian,

On Tuesday morning, our offices became aware that staff for the Inspector General of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with no advance notice or rationale, had been barred from accessing their office space by the General Services Administration. This means staff charged with eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse have been unable to ensure the security of firearms or prevent unauthorized access to law enforcement records, active investigation files, or ongoing whistleblower matters. Later that evening, the President fired Inspector General Martin, in violation of the law.

Both of these actions came immediately following the issuance by the USAID Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of an advisory detailing the harmful impacts caused by abrupt USAID staffing reductions and the administration's pause on foreign assistance.¹ Among other harms, the Inspector General found that \$489 million in food assistance was at risk of being wasted due to spoilage or diversion, and that staff were unable to vet international partners, leaving the U.S. without an accountability mechanism to safeguard taxpayer funds.²

Prior to removing any Inspector General, the law requires that the President provide a written 30-day notice to Congress and include "the substantive rationale, including detailed and case-

¹ USAID Office of the Inspector General, *Oversight of USAID-Funded Humanitarian Assistance Programming Impacted by Staffing Reductions and Pause on Foreign Assistance* (Feb. 10, 2025) (<https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/USAID%20OIG%20-%20Oversight%20of%20USAID-Funded%20Humanitarian%20Assistance%20Programming%202021025.pdf>).

² *Id.*

specific reasons for any such removal or transfer.”³ In the case of the USAID Inspector General—along with the other Inspectors General removed in late January—no notice or rationale was provided to Congress. It appears clear that the USAID Inspector General was fired in retaliation for doing his job: issuing an advisory warning on the national security risks and detailing the waste that could result from the administration’s recent stop work orders, personnel decisions, and the closing of USAID buildings.⁴

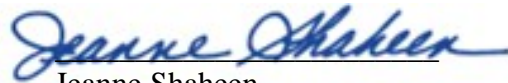
Not only is this apparent retaliatory firing illegal under federal law, it contradicts the administration’s purported desire to curb government waste, fraud, and abuse. Inspectors General are, by law, responsible for conducting oversight that improves government efficiency and helps recover billions of taxpayer dollars. Removing Inspector General Martin and impeding staff work renders taxpayer dollars more vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse.

Inspector General Martin and all Inspectors General fired in violation of the law should be reinstated immediately and authorized OIG staff must be allowed to access their office space to continue their critical oversight work.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
And Governmental Affairs



Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations

³ 5 U.S.C. 403(b) as amended by section 5202(a) of the *Securing Inspector General Independence Act of 2022* (Title LII, Subtitle A, of Pub. L. No. 117-263).

⁴ USAID Office of the Inspector General, *Oversight of USAID-Funded Humanitarian Assistance Programming Impacted by Staffing Reductions and Pause on Foreign Assistance* (Feb. 10, 2025) (<https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/USAID%20OIG%20-%20Oversight%20of%20USAID-Funded%20Humanitarian%20Assistance%20Programming%20021025.pdf>).