

News

March 15, 2025

By [RFE/RL](#)



Trump Signs Executive Order For Major Cuts To 7 Agencies, Including RFE/RL Overseer USAGM



USAGM headquarters in Washington, D.C. (File photo)

U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order that aims to reduce seven federal agencies – including the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM), which oversees Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and other federal broadcasters.

The [order](#), signed late on March 14, also targets agencies that deal with homelessness, labor disputes, and community development.

“Within 7 days of the date of this order, the head of each governmental entity listed [in the order] shall submit a report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget confirming full compliance with this order and explaining which components or functions of the governmental entity, if any, are statutorily required and to what extent,” the order says.

Hours after the executive order was published, media reports circulated a letter from the USAGM saying the Congress-approved grant that funds RFE/RL had been terminated.

The letter was signed by Kari Lake, who lists her title as senior adviser to the (USAGM) acting CEO with authorities delegated by acting CEO.

Lake has been nominated by Trump to take over as head of Voice of America, though her nomination must still be approved by the International Broadcasting Advisory Board.

RFE/RL President and Chief Executive Officer Stephen Capus said cancelling the grant agreement would be "a massive gift to America's enemies."

"The Iranian Ayatollahs, Chinese communist leaders, and autocrats in Moscow and Minsk would celebrate the demise of RFE/RL after 75 years. Handing our adversaries a win would make them stronger and America weaker," he said in a statement.

"We've benefitted from strong bipartisan support throughout RFE/RL's storied history. Without us, the nearly 50 million people in closed societies who depend on us for accurate news and information each week won't have access to the truth about America and the world," Capus added.

The USAGM is an independent US government agency that oversees the broadcasting of news and information in almost 50 languages to some 361 million people each week.

The total **budget request** for the USAGM for Fiscal Year 2025 was \$950 million to fund all of its operations and capital investments.

This includes media outlets such as RFE/RL, Voice of America, Radio Free Asia, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Radio Marti), Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN) and the Open Technology Fund.

According to media reports, VOA employees were informed early on March 15 that they had been put on administrative leave with pay, though if they are asked to work, they must do so.

The situation at the other broadcasters was not immediately clear.

“It is outrageous that the White House is seeking to gut the Congress-funded agency supporting independent journalism that challenges narratives of authoritarian regimes around the world,” Carlos Martinez de la Serna, program director at the Committee to Protect Journalists, said in a [statement](#) on March 15.

“We call on congressional leaders to protect this critical agency, which provides uncensored news in countries where the press is restricted.”

Trump, who has taken several moves to slash government spending since taking office for a second term in January, clashed with the USAGM over editorial independence and the direction of programming during his first term.

He has reiterated those concerns again since retaking office. Supporters of the broadcasters say they are an important arm of US diplomacy.

In addition to the USAGM, the order targets Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund; and the Minority Business Development Agency.



More News

April 08, 2025



By [RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service](#)

Detained Azerbaijani Journalist Farid Mehralizada Says Trial Is Politically Motivated

Azerbaijani journalist and economist Farid Mehralizada (file photo)

Detained Azerbaijani journalist and economist Farid Mehralizada [testified in court](#) on April 8 that his imprisonment was politically motivated, tied directly to his critical reporting for RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service, known locally as Azadliq Radiosu.

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UPDATED April 08, 2025



By [RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service](#)

Chinese Nationals Fighting For Russia Captured In Ukraine, Zelenskyy Claims

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed Ukrainian armed forces captured two Chinese nationals who were fighting as part of the Russian Army in Ukraine's Donetsk region and called on Kyiv's allies to react to the situation and demand an explanation from Beijing.

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April 07, 2025



By [RFE/RL](#)

Trump Warns Iran Of 'Great Danger' If Weekend Nuclear Talks Fail

US President Donald Trump meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office of the White House on April 7, 2025.

US President Donald Trump said the United States will hold high-level "direct" talks with Iran at a "very big meeting" this week while warning Tehran it would be in "great danger" if the talks on its nuclear program don't succeed.

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April 07, 2025

By [Nathan Hodge](#)



How Ovechkin's Record-Breaking Goal Was A Gift To Russian Propaganda

Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) greets ice-hockey player Aleksandr Ovechkin after Russia won the men's ice hockey World Championship in 2014. (file photo)

Russian hockey star Alex Ovechkin made history when he overtook Wayne Gretzky as the National Hockey League's (NHL) all-time goal scorer, but he also served up a win for the Kremlin's propaganda machine.

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UPDATED April 07, 2025



By [RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service](#)

Ukraine Mourns Children Killed In Deadly Russian Attack On Zelenskyy's Hometown

A woman reacts at the site of a deadly Russian missile strike on a residential area in Kryviy Rih that killed several children and adults on April 4.

Several vigils were held in the Ukrainian city of Kryviy Rih for some of the 20 people -- nine of whom were children -- killed over the weekend at a playground and restaurant that were struck by an air strike as Russia again denied firing on civilian infrastructure despite evidence to the contrary.

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UPDATED April 07, 2025



By [Andras Nagy](#)

Serbia's Pedaling Protesters Take Anti-Corruption Campaign To EU Parliament



BUDAPEST, Hungary -- Dozens of Serbian cyclists are traveling some 1,300 kilometers to the European Parliament in Strasbourg to draw attention to their country's ongoing anti-corruption campaign.

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April 06, 2025



By [RFE/RL](#)

Iran Rejects Trump Call For Direct Talks Over Nuclear Program

A worker rides a bicycle in front of the reactor building of Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant. (file photo)

Iran's foreign minister rejected US proposals for direct negotiations over Tehran's nuclear ambitions, days after US President Donald Trump called for face-to-face talks.

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UPDATED April 06, 2025



By [RFE/RL](#)

Russia Fires Dozens Of Drones, Missiles At Ukraine, Hits State TV Broadcaster

Firefighters work at the site of an office building hit by a Russian missile strike in Kyiv early on April 6.

Russia hit the Ukrainian capital with a ballistic missile and dropped a powerful "glide" bomb on a city east of Kharkiv, further undermining efforts to cement a cease-fire between Moscow and Kyiv.

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April 06, 2025

By [RFE/RL](#)



Iranian Currency's Value Tumbles To Record Low As US 'Maximum Pressure' Bites

Iran's national currency has tumbled to record lows in value against the US dollar.

Iran's national currency, the rial, tumbled to a record low against the US dollar, as US President Donald Trump's "**maximum pressure**" strategy against the Islamic republic's economy continued to take its toll.

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UPDATED April 06, 2025



By [RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service](#)

Zelenskyy Hails 'Progress' With European Military Chiefs After Criticizing US Response To Deadly Attack

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (left) during his meeting with Thierry Burkhard, the French military chief of staff, and his British counterpart in Kyiv.

KYIV -- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed "tangible progress" on a potential peacekeeping force after meeting with French and British military chiefs, shortly after he called out Washington for what he **termed a "weak" response** to the latest Russian air strike that killed nine children.

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April 05, 2025

By [RFE/RL](#)



Netanyahu Traveling To US To Meet Trump, Discuss Iran, Tariffs

US President Donald Trump (right) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a February 4 news conference

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will travel to the United States on April 6 to meet with President Donald Trump for discussions on Iran and new US trade tariffs, the Israeli leader's office said.

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April 04, 2025



By [RFE/RL's Uzbek Service](#) and [Merhat Sharipzhan](#)

Samarkand Summit Marks A New Era In EU-Central Asia Relations Amid Geopolitical Challenges

The two-day summit involving the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, comes as traditional ally Russia and neighboring China vie for influence, while the region also eyes deeper ties with the West.

The European Union says it is entering a "new era" in its relationship with Central Asian nations following a summit aimed at making inroads in a region dominated by Russia and China.

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April 04, 2025



By [RFE/RL](#)

USAGM Terminates Some Satellite Broadcasts By Radio Free Europe's Russian-Language Current Time

RFE/RL reaches almost 50 million people in countries including Belarus, China, Iran, and Russia as it seeks to present independent and unbiased news and information to the 23 countries it broadcasts to in 27 languages.

The US Agency for Global Media (USAGM) has terminated contracts with two satellite systems that carry Russian-language content produced by Current Time, a network run by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, amid a fight over winding down operations at a number of US-funded broadcasters.

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UPDATED April 04, 2025



By [Olena Abramovych](#) and [Marek Hajduk](#)

Europe Calls Out Putin For Failing To Make Ukraine Peace Deal

NATO foreign ministers meet in Brussels on April 4.

BRUSSELS -- Several of Europe's top diplomats called out Russian President Vladimir Putin for failing to agree to a US-led peace proposal to end the war in Ukraine amid signs Washington has grown wary of the Kremlin's intentions during several weeks of talks.

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UPDATED April 05, 2025



By [RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service](#)

Zelenskyy Calls Out 'Weak' US Response To Russian Playground Strike That Killed 9 Children

Mourners at a playground that was hit by a Russian missile strike in the Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has sharply criticized a "weak" US response to a Russian air attack that hit a playground, killing at least 20 people, half of whom were children.

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