

October 2024 aid news

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Development Policy Centre



UNRWA supports displaced Palestine refugees in Syria (Twitter/UNRWA)

Australian aid

As conflict in the Middle East widens and the toll on civilians worsens, the Australian Council For International Development's members have launched **a consolidated appeal** to help address the humanitarian situation in Lebanon. Australia **has allocated** \$12 million to the humanitarian response in Lebanon since September 2024 and \$82.5 million to the Gaza crisis since October 2023. The government is reportedly **undertaking a review** of Australia's defence exports to Israel.

The Australian government also joined Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Korea and the UK to **protest moves by the Israeli government** to revoke all the privileges and immunities of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

(UNRWA). Despite these concerns, which have also been **expressed by the Biden administration**, the Israeli parliament has voted to designate UNRWA as a “terrorist group” and outlaw all UNRWA operations in Israel, including the supply of aid to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) via Israeli border crossings. The law will take effect in 90 days. UNRWA provides the bulk of aid to Palestinians in the OPTs, as well as in the wider region, and other UN agencies and aid groups have said that the move **will further undermine** the flow of aid to people in Gaza at risk of famine.

The government launched its **new humanitarian assistance policy** which focuses on building humanitarian readiness and response capability, as well as reinforcing the international humanitarian system and strengthening adherence to international humanitarian law. Australian NGOs **have welcomed** the policy, the first since 2016, but have called for increased humanitarian funding, improved resourcing of DFAT and enabling legislation to support the policy’s commitments.

At the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) annual meetings, Australia’s Treasurer Jim Chalmers joined his G20 counterparts and central bank governors in endorsing **continued multilateral development bank reform**, a “robust and impactful” International Development Association (IDA) replenishment outcome and progress toward addressing debt issues in countries such as Zambia, Ghana, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka.

At the Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting in Samoa, **Australia announced** \$76.4 million over six years in funding to scale-up its support for climate resilient agriculture in Africa, to be delivered through the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has published an **updated multi-year development evaluation plan** for 2024-2025 to 2026-2027. Comparing this update to the **previous plan** published earlier this year, a total of 33 evaluations (out of 55) have been rescheduled from 2023-24 to 2024-25, bringing the total number of evaluations planned for this financial year from 53 to an ambitious 112 (see Table 1). Over the last several years, DFAT has published around 40 evaluations per year.

Table 1: status of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s planned 2023-24 evaluations

DFAT program	No. planned in 2023-24	No. published by 30 June 2024	No. rescheduled to 2024-25	No. neither published nor rescheduled	Total no. planned in 2024-25
Pacific	22	10	10	2	49
Southeast Asia	17	5	11	1	38
South and Central Asia	7	2	5	0	7
Middle East and Africa	1	0	1	0	2
Global programs	2	0	2	0	5
Sector programs	6	2	4	0	11

In its latest Annual Report, DFAT has presented its [aid performance data](#) for last financial year. In 2023-24, 85% of activities (n=375) subject to an Investment Monitoring Report were rated as satisfactory against both efficiency and effectiveness criteria, including 80% of activities (n=59) subject to a Final Investment Monitoring Report. Only 4% (n=14) were reported as underperforming on both criteria with six of these investments subject to “remediation plans”.

Regional/global aid

The IMF and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are considering the findings of [a highly critical report](#) by Solomon Islands’ Auditor General’s Office which has found “multiple instances of missing documentation, conflicts of interest, procedural breaches and possible fraud” in the administration of the country’s donor-supported COVID-19 response and economic stimulus package. The report has been published on the [Auditor General Office’s website](#).

The latest UN Humanitarian Update for Myanmar [estimates that](#) more than three million people across the country have been displaced by the ongoing conflict and the recent flooding caused by Typhoon Yagi. The Update notes that the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan is “critically underfunded”, with only 28.5% of required funding received to date.

Indonesia’s new foreign minister, Sugiono, has said the country [has commenced the steps](#) necessary to join the BRICS group of emerging economies, which includes China, Russia and India. Earlier this year, Indonesia also [began the formal process](#) to join the Paris-

based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), becoming the first Southeast Asian country to do so.

In a joint letter, a group of the world's leading development economists — including one of this year's Nobel prize winners, Daron Acemoglu — has [urged G20 countries](#) to increase their contributions to the World Bank's upcoming IDA replenishment, arguing that “the world's poorest countries are in a development crisis and need greater access to affordable financing”.

A high-profile congressional Republican, Marjorie Taylor Greene, [has said](#) that if Donald Trump wins a second term in the upcoming US election, it is “very likely” that Trump would seek to withdraw the US from the World Health Organization (WHO) again. The US is the [largest single contributor](#) to the WHO's core budget and a major source of voluntary contributions.

USAID has released [a new position paper](#) on direct monetary transfers (DMTs) provided to individuals, households and micro-enterprises through aid programs. The paper states the negative impacts of such transfers are often overstated and that USAID should use DMTs “as a core element of its development toolkit, expanding the use of transfers when both contextually appropriate and cost-effective for priority outcomes”.

Books, articles, reports, blogs and podcasts

[A new book](#) by former head of the Department for International Development (DFID) Mark Lowcock and a former economic advisor to the UK aid program Ranil Dissanayake tells the story of “DFID's trajectory from its origins to its unravelling, distilling timely lessons for government aid institutions in the UK and beyond” and is available via open access.

The Centre for Global Development has published [a new data portal](#) on the 2024-25 multilateral replenishments covering the major development banks, as well as global health and climate funds. And the Our World In Data website has published [a new series of interactive charts](#) on foreign aid.

[A new article](#) in *International Studies Quarterly* looks at “prestige projects in the Global South” as a source of both “symbolic capital and international status” for local elites through case studies of China's aid to Costa Rica and PNG.

And Gordon Peake talks to Heather Murphy on The Readout podcast about what [the contest for influence](#) in the Pacific looks like from the perspective of a tour of Port Moresby's hotels and coffee shops.

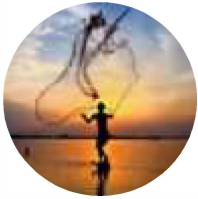
Disclosure: Material for this update has been collected by Devpol staff; editorial responsibility lies with Cameron Hill. Devpol's work on Australian aid is supported by the *Gates Foundation*. The views represent those of Centre staff only.

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