

Trump Cuts To U.S.-Funded Media Put Reporters at Risk – RSF

By [AFP](#)

March 17, 2025



The office of Radio Svoboda, the Russian-language affiliate of RFE/RL. **Mikhail Pochuyev / TASS**

President Donald Trump's dismantling of U.S.-funded international media outlets such as Voice of America could put their journalists at risk, including nine currently jailed worldwide, Reporters Without Borders warned Monday.

The Trump administration began mass layoffs Sunday at Voice of America and other U.S.-funded media, two days after Trump signed an executive order gutting VOA's parent, the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), in his latest sweeping spending cuts.

"Reporters Without Borders is sounding the alarm over the risks facing USAGM staffers around the world, including nine journalists currently imprisoned abroad for their work," the press freedom watchdog said.

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"The Trump administration is sending a chilling signal: authoritarian regimes such as Beijing and Moscow now have free rein to spread their propaganda unchecked," RSF director general Thibaut Bruttin said in a statement.

He said the decision "betrays" the nine USAGM journalists jailed in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Myanmar, Russia and Vietnam and "leaves thousands more jobless and in danger" because of their work.

USAGM oversees media including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, set up by Washington during the Cold War to counter Soviet propaganda, and Radio Free Asia, created to provide reporting to China, North Korea and other countries with heavily restricted press.

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Partner public media organizations in Europe also voiced alarm over Trump's funding freeze.

"This move threatens to deprive millions of people worldwide of a vital source of balanced and verified information — especially in countries where independent journalism is scarce or nonexistent," said France Medias Monde and Germany's Deutsche Welle in a statement.

"This action is particularly concerning given the United States' long-standing role as a champion of press freedom."

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