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Trump has argued that USAID is not a valuable use of taxpayer money. It is one of many federal agencies his administration is targeting as it works to slash federal spending in the US.

The Republican campaigned on overhauling the government and formed an advisory body named the Department of Government Efficiency (Doge) - led by tech billionaire Elon Musk - to slash the budget.

Friday's ruling by Judge Nichols came in response to an emergency petition by the American Foreign Service Association and American Federation of Government Employees - two unions representing employees of the Judge Nichols, who was nominated by Trump during his first term, said the written order would be issued later and go into more detail.

The organisations who sued told the BBC they were waiting for the text of the court order to find out how all employees at USAID would be affected

But for now, it appeared that the more than 2,000 direct hires at the agency who are part of the unions would be safe, according to Lauren Bateman an attorney at Public Citizen, an advocacy group that filed the lawsuit

About 500 USAID staff have already been placed on leave by the Trump administration

During the hearing, the judge did not seem likely to grant other requests as part of the lawsuit, including to restore grants and contracts or reopen USAID building

The legal action argued that the president was violating the US Constitution and federal law by attempting to dismantle the agency

"Not a single one of defendants' actions to dismantle USAID were taken pursuant to congressional authorization," it sai

"And pursuant to federal statute, Congress is the only entity that may lawfully dismantle the agency

Representing the Trump administration, justice department official Brett Shumate told the judge that the president "has decided there is corruption and fraud at USAID"

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