

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Agency for International Development

Emergency Food Assistance: USAID Durban Warehouses Were Generally in Good Condition, but Limited Storage Gaps May Increase the Risk of Contamination or Spoilage

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June 16, 2026

Inspection



Office of Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL U.S. Agency for International Development

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TO: Eric Ueland
Performing the Duties of Administrator and Chief Operating Officer
U.S. Agency for International Development

FROM: Gabriele Tonsil
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SUBJECT: Emergency Food Assistance: USAID Durban Warehouses Were Generally in Good Condition, but Limited Storage Gaps May Increase the Risk of Contamination or Spoilage

This memorandum transmits the final report on our inspection of USAID's humanitarian assistance warehouses in Durban, South Africa. Our objectives were to examine the (1) characteristics of food aid in the warehouses and (2) food aid storage and inventory conditions. The scope of the inspection was food aid stored as of June 20, 2025.

USAID did not provide a response to or comments on the draft report. Should we receive written comments from the Agency on this report at a later date, we will update and reissue the report to reflect the comments and technical changes as applicable.

The report contains our findings and one consideration for responsible officials at the Department of State, which is now managing the warehouses.

We appreciate the assistance you and your staff provided to us during this engagement.

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Report in Brief

Why We Did This Inspection

USAID stored millions of dollars in food aid and emergency non-food items in warehouses around the world as part of its responsibility to lead and coordinate the U.S. government's disaster assistance efforts overseas. The food aid included shelf-stable items to prevent and treat malnutrition and to rapidly address crises around the world. According to USAID, the prepositioned warehouses decreased the amount of time it took to deliver food aid by an average of 3 months.

On January 20, 2025, the administration initiated a pause and review of all U.S. foreign assistance, including USAID programs. On March 28, 2025, the Department of State announced that USAID would cease operating as an independent agency. As of July 1, 2025, USAID food assistance programs transferred to the Department of State.

We conducted inspections of USAID warehouses storing food aid in three locations: Durban, South Africa; Djibouti City, Djibouti; and Houston, Texas, to determine the status of food aid remaining. For this inspection of the Durban warehouses, we examined the (1) characteristics of food aid in the warehouses and (2) food aid storage and inventory conditions. The scope of the inspection was food aid stored as of June 20, 2025.

What We Recommend

We suggest that responsible officials at the Department of State require the Durban warehouse contractor to address deviations from contractual requirements for food aid storage.

What We Found

USAID stored over \$4 million in vegetable oil and sorghum in the Durban warehouses. At the time of our inspection in June 2025, USAID had allocated the vegetable oil for shipment to a specific country and a food aid provider but not the sorghum, which accounted for about 92 percent of the total value of food aid. By September 2025, the warehouse contractor reported that the vegetable oil and sorghum had been distributed.

Durban food aid storage and inventory conditions generally met contractual requirements. For example, we observed adequate security systems, equipment and materials to respond to fires, and traps for pest control. Furthermore, we observed minimal inventory discrepancies when we compared the food aid present in the two warehouses to the USAID inventory report. However, there were instances of deviations from contract requirements, such as vegetable oil stored near batteries, food with dust and damaged packaging, and bird droppings. While these instances were limited, any deviations from contractual requirements for storage conditions may compromise food aid and increase the risk of contamination or spoilage. This could result in a waste of U.S. funds spent to purchase the aid and for other associated costs.

Figure 1. Storage Conditions at One of the Prepositioning Warehouses in Durban



Photo credit: OIG (June 2025).

Introduction

USAID stored millions of dollars in food aid and non-food items, like emergency shelter supplies, in warehouses around the world as part of its responsibility to lead and coordinate the U.S. government's disaster assistance efforts overseas. The food aid included shelf-stable items to prevent and treat malnutrition and to rapidly address crises around the world. According to USAID, the prepositioned warehouses decreased the amount of time it took to deliver food aid by an average of 3 months.

On January 20, 2025, the administration initiated a pause and review of all U.S. foreign assistance, including USAID programs.¹ On January 28, the Secretary of State issued a waiver for lifesaving humanitarian assistance, such as food aid. On March 28, the Department of State (State) announced that USAID would cease operating as an independent agency and certain functions and programs would transition to State by July 1, including lifesaving food assistance programs.

To examine the status of prepositioned food aid during this realignment, we conducted inspections of USAID warehouses in three locations: Durban, South Africa; Djibouti City, Djibouti; and Houston, Texas.² This inspection focused on the warehouses in Durban. Our objectives were to examine the (1) characteristics of food aid in the warehouses and (2) food aid storage and inventory conditions. We inspected food aid stored in the warehouses as of June 20, 2025.

To answer our objectives, from June 23 to June 25, 2025, we inspected the two warehouses in Durban, South Africa, that stored USAID emergency food aid. To determine food aid characteristics, we analyzed USAID's June 20, 2025, inventory report for the Durban warehouses to determine the type, value, expiration dates, and allocation status of the stored food aid.³ We verified the status of the food aid in September and November 2025. To determine food aid storage and inventory conditions, we compared our observations with contract requirements and best practices, such as temperature regulation, pest control, and other conditions. In addition, to verify the accuracy of key information from the June 20, 2025, inventory report, we selected a judgmental sample of food aid from each warehouse (15 pallets of vegetable oil and 60 containers of sorghum bags in total) to inspect. We conducted our inspection in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*. Appendix A provides more detail on our scope and methodology.

¹ Executive Order 14169, "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid," January 20, 2025.

² USAID had an additional five warehouses that stored non-food items, which we excluded from our inspection. According to USAID, at least one of these warehouses stored high-energy biscuits.

³ For this inspection, we considered food aid to be allocated when USAID assigned it to a specific country and a food aid provider (e.g., World Food Programme).

Background

Overview of USAID Warehouses Storing Food Aid

To carry out its mission of providing aid during humanitarian crises, USAID prepositioned key humanitarian assistance in warehouses around the world for rapid response to emergencies. Figure 2 shows the three locations of the prepositioned food warehouses as of June 2025.

Figure 2. USAID Warehouses Storing Prepositioned Food Aid as of June 2025



Source: OIG generated.

At the time of our inspection, the USAID warehouses stored the following types of food aid, depending on location:

- **Corn Soy Blend Plus.** A premixed blend of cornmeal and soybeans used to prevent and treat moderate acute malnutrition in pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- **Milled Rice.** A rice rich in complex carbohydrates and B vitamins fortified with a vitamin-mineral premix.
- **Sorghum.** A grain that provides complex carbohydrates, iron, and B vitamins.
- **Super Cereal Plus.** A fortified blend of corn, soybeans, dried skim milk, sugar, soybean oil, and vitamin/mineral premix used to prevent moderate acute malnutrition and stunting in children aged 6–59 months.

- **Vegetable Oil.** A refined blend of various plant oils that provides plant-based fats and vitamins A and D. USAID used vegetable oil to increase caloric value, improve the taste of cooked food, and increase vitamin absorption.
- **Yellow Split Peas.** A legume rich in complex carbohydrates, plant-based protein, iron, zinc, potassium, and folate that USAID used to improve nutrition and meet local tastes and diet preferences.

USAID outsourced the management of its food aid warehouses to contractors that were responsible for managing day-to-day activities. The contractors also maintained a weekly warehouse inventory report, which included information such as the food aid in storage, best-used-by dates, and if food had been allocated for shipment.⁴ In addition to the warehouse contractor, USAID used a third party for monitoring. According to USAID officials, the third-party monitor was responsible for actions such as conducting regular inspections and monthly inventories at the warehouses.

USAID had separate contracts for each location—Djibouti City, Durban, and Houston. The contracts included requirements for warehouse conditions, reporting, pest control, security, sanitation, and other matters. They also stipulated certain requirements for the interior and structure of the warehouses as well as the frequency of warehouse and food aid inspections. Additionally, the contracts required the adoption of *USAID Guidelines for Food Aid Storage and Warehouse Good Management Practices (2024)*, which outlined expectations to ensure the safety, effectiveness, and quality of food aid while also preventing food contamination, infestation, and waste.

Transfer of USAID’s Durban Warehouses to the Department of State

According to USAID documentation, USAID awarded a contract worth approximately \$13 million to C. Steinweg Logistics to manage and provide warehousing and logistics services related to food aid inventory in Durban through December 31, 2025.⁵

As a result of the administration’s foreign assistance review, the operating status of the Durban warehouses changed temporarily. Specifically, USAID issued a stop work order on January 30, 2025, that paused its contract with C. Steinweg Logistics. Despite the stop work order, the Durban warehouses continued to receive USAID food aid between January 30 and February 11, when the Agency rescinded the stop work order. USAID subsequently canceled its contract with C. Steinweg Logistics on March 12 but reactivated it on May 9. A USAID official said the contractor may not have been informed of the contract cancellation and that they believed the contractor continued to provide warehouse management services for a few months without knowledge of the cancellation.

From May to July 2025, USAID took several actions to transfer management of the Durban warehouse to State. On May 1, USAID and State established a memorandum of agreement.

⁴ According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s “Food Product Dating” (April 2025), a best-used-by date marks when food will be of the best quality or flavor.

⁵ USAID’s contract for the warehouses in Durban was for a base period of 2 years and three 1-year options for a total of 5 years.

According to State, this memorandum gave it the authority to perform certain functions, such as hiring and maintaining USAID employees and administering approved foreign assistance programming and awards on USAID's behalf, until December 31, 2025, or until an alternate arrangement was made. On June 6, a USAID official said a transition team was in place at State to transfer the warehouse contracts and was preparing the necessary systems, business processes, and clearance procedures to receive them. On July 1, the management of USAID's warehouses officially transferred to State, and according to a USAID official, on July 8, C. Steinweg Logistics had an introductory meeting with State to discuss contract details. USAID records confirmed this transfer and State's extension of the contract through June 2026.

Prior OIG Work

We have previously identified issues with USAID's management of its warehouses storing prepositioned humanitarian assistance. For example, in March 2026, we reported that USAID did not use quality inventory information to make decisions about humanitarian assistance supplies at its Dubai warehouse.⁶ In addition, we found that USAID did not enforce certain oversight requirements outlined in contracts for the Dubai warehouse, including pest and temperature control. Accordingly, we recommended that USAID or other U.S. government officials responsible for the administration and oversight of the Dubai warehouse (1) update the warehouse contract to clarify requirements for temperature and humidity control, maintaining mechanical equipment, and inspecting commodities in the warehouse; and (2) update the statement of work for third-party inspections to clarify quarterly inspection requirements of the Dubai warehouse conditions, such as pest and temperature control. The Department of State agreed with the recommendations and provided an action plan for implementation.

We also suggested that USAID or other U.S. government officials responsible for the administration and oversight of the Dubai warehouse regularly verify warehouse inventory accuracy for humanitarian assistance; incorporate this data into procurement planning; and develop and implement policies for managing aged and unused non-food items, including clear processes for dispatch or disposal.

USAID Stored Over \$4 Million in Vegetable Oil and Sorghum in Durban Warehouses

Our review of USAID inventory records found that the Agency stored about \$4.2 million in food aid—consisting of vegetable oil and sorghum—in the two Durban warehouses as of June 20, 2025, aid that was later distributed. At the time of our June inspection, USAID had allocated the vegetable oil to a food aid provider for distribution but not the sorghum, which accounted for about 92 percent of the total value of food aid in Durban. Table I shows the allocated and unallocated food aid stored at the Durban warehouses as of June 20, 2025, by value and weight.

⁶ USAID OIG, [Humanitarian Assistance: Actions Needed to Strengthen Inventory Management and Oversight at the Dubai Warehouse](#) (8-000-26-001-P), March 3, 2026.

Table I. Allocated and Unallocated Food Aid Stored in Durban Warehouses as of June 20, 2025

Food Aid Type	Allocated		Unallocated		Total Food Aid	
	Value (\$)	Weight (lbs.)	Value (\$)	Weight (lbs.)	Value (\$)	Weight (lbs.)
Vegetable Oil	\$327,567	419,627	\$0	0	\$327,567	419,627
Sorghum	\$0	0	\$3,833,456	22,536,838	\$3,833,456	22,536,838
Total	\$327,567	419,627	\$3,833,456	22,536,838	\$4,161,023	22,956,465

Note: Values and weights have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
 Source: OIG analysis of USAID’s June 20, 2025, Durban warehouse inventory report.

According to USAID’s June 20, 2025, inventory report, over \$3.8 million worth of sorghum was stored in the Durban warehouses and unallocated. Sorghum does not have a best-used-by date, according to a USAID official who was responsible for facilitating the Agency’s warehouse contracts. However, the official stated that, in general, USAID tried to release all food aid to recipients within 6 months of its arrival at the warehouse. The sorghum arrived in November 2024 and was still in the warehouses at the time of our inspection in June 2025, exceeding this 6-month timeframe.

Additionally, over \$300,000 worth of allocated vegetable oil was stored at the warehouses in June 2025 with best-used-by dates of either March or May 2026. Table 2 shows the best-used-by dates of vegetable oil in the warehouses, by value and weight.

Table 2. Best-Used-By Dates for Vegetable Oil Stored in Durban Warehouses as of June 20, 2025

Best-Used-By Date	Value (\$)	Weight (lbs.)	Percentage of Total Value (%)
March 2026	\$206,465	264,488	63 percent
May 2026	\$121,102	155,139	37 percent
Total	\$327,567	419,627	100 percent

Note: Value, weight, and percentage of total value amounts have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
 Source: OIG analysis of USAID’s June 20, 2025, Durban inventory report.

As of September 2025, C. Steinweg Logistics said USAID had distributed all the vegetable oil and sorghum that was stored at the warehouses in June 2025.⁷

Durban Warehouse Food Aid Storage and Inventory Conditions Generally Met Contractual Requirements

We found that storage and inventory conditions for the food aid we inspected in the Durban warehouses generally met contract requirements and USAID guidelines for best practices and safety and security measures. For example, we observed:

- Adequate security systems, equipment, and materials to respond to fires and traps for pest control. Specifically, the warehouses had security systems, controlled access, a video monitoring system, and firefighting equipment.
- Food aid stored away from the walls, which allowed warehouse personnel to walk between food to conduct inspections.
- Food aid labeling with the correct food name and storage in the warehouse to allow personnel to easily identify food.

In addition, C. Steinweg Logistics provided pest control inspection reports for both warehouses for the previous year.

We observed minimal inventory discrepancies when we compared the food aid present in the two warehouses to USAID's June 20, 2025, inventory report. Specifically, 87 percent of the vegetable oil we inspected was labeled with the correct best-used-by date, and 90 percent of inspected sorghum and vegetable oil were labeled with the correct purchase order number that matched the inventory report.

However, we observed instances that deviated from contract requirements, such as:

- Food aid stored near items that could pose a hazardous risk to the food aid, such as vegetable oil stored near batteries.
- Sorghum bags with signs of dust and damage as well as vegetable oil boxes with stains, dust, damaged packaging, and bird droppings.⁸
- Birds in both warehouses, contrary to guidelines for pest control.

Figure 3 shows some of the conditions we observed.

⁷ The contractor said it received additional food aid after our inspection, which had been allocated for distribution but remained in the warehouses as of November 2025.

⁸ We did not determine the source of the damaged packaging; it is possible that it occurred at the point of origin, in transit, or at the warehouse. We did not report a percentage of damaged food aid because we could not determine the source of the damaged packaging, which was minimal, and we inspected to a nongeneralizable sample of items.

Figure 3. Durban Warehouse Conditions Observed During June 2025 Inspection



Left: Food aid is organized to allow personnel to conduct inspections. *Center left and center right:* Some packaging showed signs of dust and damage. *Right:* Birds present in one of the warehouses. Photo credit: OIG (June 2025, Durban, South Africa).

While the instances of deviations from contract requirements we observed at the Durban warehouses were limited, any deviation from contractual requirements for food aid storage conditions may compromise food aid and increase the risk of contamination and spoilage. This could result in a waste of U.S. funds spent to purchase the aid and for other associated costs.

Conclusion

USAID’s humanitarian assistance warehouses helped the U.S. government provide millions of dollars of timely, lifesaving emergency food aid in response to crises around the world. While USAID allocated food aid stored in warehouses in Durban, South Africa, which generally met storage and inventory requirements, any deviation from contract requirements could pose safety risks to the aid and beneficiaries receiving it. Accordingly, it is imperative that the warehouse contractor address the observed deviations to appropriately mitigate the risk of spoilage or contamination, which could result in a waste of U.S. funds.

Considerations for Future Foreign Assistance

As the Department of State continues to implement humanitarian assistance programs formerly administered by USAID, including managing the Durban warehouses, we suggest that responsible officials at State consider the following action:

- I. Require the Durban warehouse contractor to address deviations from contractual requirements for food aid storage.

OIG Response to Agency Comments

We provided our draft report to USAID on May 5, 2026. As of June 4, 2026, the Agency had not provided a response to or comments on the draft report. Should the Agency provide comments at a later date, we will update and reissue this report to incorporate those comments.

Appendix A. Scope and Methodology

We conducted our work from Washington, DC, from May 2025 through May 2026 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*.

This inspection focused on warehouses in Durban, South Africa. Our objectives were to examine the (1) characteristics of food aid in the warehouses and (2) food aid storage and inventory conditions.

The scope of our inspection was the two warehouses in Durban storing food aid for USAID as of June 20, 2025.

To answer our objectives, we inspected the two warehouses from June 23 to June 25, 2025.

To answer the first objective, we reviewed USAID's June 20, 2025, inventory report for the Durban warehouses to determine the type, value, expiration dates, and allocation status of the stored food aid. In addition, we analyzed the inventory report to determine the remaining best-used-by dates of the food aid and when it would expire. We also received an update from C. Steinweg Logistics on the status of food aid in both warehouses as of September and November 2025 to identify any changes to its characteristics since our inspection.

To answer the second objective, we reviewed USAID's contract with C. Steinweg Logistics and the *USAID Guidelines for Food Aid Storage and Warehouse Good Management Practices (2024)* to obtain an understanding of the storage and warehouse requirements. From this review, we created checklists to guide our inspections of food aid storage and warehouse conditions in Durban. We interviewed USAID officials responsible for overseeing the warehouse contracts and supply chain management for food aid programs and C. Steinweg Logistics staff regarding the warehouse specifications, warehouse processes and procedures, current inventory, and inventory reporting to USAID.

In addition, we inspected a sample of food aid from each warehouse to verify the accuracy of key information from the June 20, 2025, inventory report. We judgmentally selected a sample that maximized the time we had available to physically inspect the two warehouses. Specifically, we selected (1) 15 pallets of vegetable oil from 2 purchase orders available at the time of our inspection and (2) 60 containers of sorghum bags from 3 purchase orders available at the time of our inspection.⁹ We also inspected the conditions of the food aid and verified compliance with certain requirements, such as the type of packaging, required storage conditions, and the existence of pest activity around food aid. Our findings cannot be used to make inferences about the overall condition of the food aid in the Durban warehouses. However, we believe our findings provide valuable insights into the storage and inventory conditions of USAID's food aid in Durban.

⁹ Each container had 20 individual bags of sorghum.



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