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## Timely reminder Clocks go forward

Horologist Kevin Chellar adjusting the clocks for daylight saving at Timepiece Antique Clocks on Patrick Street, in Dublin.

On the last Sunday of March, which is tomorrow, clocks advance by one hour at 1am, meaning 1am becomes 2am.



Photograph: Fran Veale

## Rugby comes to Mayo Mayo go to Croke Park

GERRY THORNLEY DENIS WALSH  
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## Fionnula Flanagan A dramatic life on and off screen



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# Goal to lay off 30% of staff due to aid cuts

More than 900 Goal jobs are expected to be lost worldwide and 28 in Ireland

Cuts to aid are placing an 'indescribable toll' on millions of lives, says agency's CEO

MARTIN WALL  
Public Policy Correspondent

Close to 30 per cent of the staff of Irish aid agency Goal are set to lose their jobs amid a financial crisis brought about by international funding cuts.

More than 900 personnel across the world could be affected by job cuts. Goal chief executive Siobhán Walsh told The Irish Times there were 28 employees in Ireland "whose roles are at risk of redundancy".

In its first comprehensive public comments on the implications of the funding crisis,

Goal said "life-saving projects" in some areas were now "on hold".

"In Ethiopia we have many programmes focused on providing critical, life-saving care for children suffering from moderate and severe acute malnutrition. Because of the cuts, we are already receiving reports of children under five years of age participating in therapeutic feeding programmes dying due to interruptions and suspensions of the feeding programme," Ms Walsh said.

"We are also receiving reports of children under five

years who have deteriorated from moderate to severe acute malnutrition, putting them at risk of further complications and death. Stabilisation centres have already exhausted their allocated supplies of therapeutic milk, which has further exacerbated the situation and put thousands of children at significant risk."

### 'Profound implications'

Ms Walsh said Goal was assessing the full impact of the financial crisis on its global operations, but recognised there would be "profound implications" for thousands of families who relied on humanitarian assistance for food, water, shelter, and its longer-term mitigation work.

She said in response to the funding crisis it had "informed staff whose jobs may be affected by these abrupt funding cuts across our global operations in Africa, Middle East, Latin

America, and Caribbean".

"To date, over 900 staff in total have been impacted globally."

Goal has a total global workforce of 3,250 personnel, most of whom are recruited locally across the 14 countries in which it operates. It also has about 170 staff "associated with" its head office in Dublin.

Goal has been significantly exposed financially by cuts to funding allocated by giant US government aid agency USAID following a review by the Trump administration.

Goal's annual report for 2023 describes USAID as its "largest donor". The report said Goal received €103 million in 2023 "which equates to 54 per cent of the total portfolio". In 2022 Goal received €113 million from the US agency.

However, the international aid sector is also facing cuts by several other governments.

In March, another Irish agen-

cy Concern Worldwide said nearly 400 staff had been made redundant.

Ms Walsh said that, like many international humanitarian organisations, Goal was "deeply concerned about the impact of the significant and sudden cuts to overseas development assistance, which were announced in February and March of this year".

"These cuts come at a time when there are more than 120 million people displaced worldwide, and humanitarian needs are at their highest levels in decades."

### Vulnerable families

In 2024, Goal directly supported over 11 million people. "Sadly the consequence of these cuts means our ability to reach millions of vulnerable families is impacted."

Aside from the US funding reductions, she said: "the Netherlands has slashed 30 per cent of

its aid budget, redirecting funds to projects that 'directly contribute to Dutch interests.' Belgium has cut aid by 25 per cent, while France has reduced its budget by 37 per cent.

"More recently, the UK made a dramatic move, cutting foreign aid by 40 per cent. The unprecedented scale of these cuts is placing an indescribable toll on the entire humanitarian systems, and millions of lives are on the brink."



NEWS

# Survey of councillors shows no support for McGregor

CONOR GALLAGHER  
Crime and Security Correspondent

None of almost 190 local authority members surveyed this week said they would support former UFC fighter Conor McGregor's nomination for the presidency.

Of Ireland's 949 councillors who were surveyed by The Irish Times, 188 or 20 per cent responded. All stated they would not support a McGregor candi-

dacy, with the exception of Sligo Fianna Fáil councillor Dónal Gilroy, who said it is too early to say how he would vote.

Councillors opposed the 36-year-old's candidacy on a number of grounds, including his apparent ignorance of the constitutional role of the President, his increasingly far-right views and the finding of a High Court jury last November that Mr McGregor was civilly liable for the rape of a woman in a

Dublin hotel in 2018.

To appear on the ballot paper, Mr McGregor will require the nomination of 20 members of the Oireachtas or four of the country's 31 local authorities.

While none of the survey respondents said they would support Mr McGregor, many expressed concern about local representatives coming under pressure to back his nomination, including pressure from the Trump administration or

its supporters. Several close associates of Donald Trump have backed Mr McGregor's plans to run for president, including billionaire Elon Musk.

Labour representative John Walsh, who sits on Fingal Council, said there is "genuine concern" about outside pressure. "Not least because the vast majority of support that I have seen for Conor McGregor comes from people outside Ireland and is led by right-wing cheerleaders

in the Trump administration who have a strong online presence, but are spectacularly ignorant about Ireland."

Others doubted Mr McGregor will get on the ballot, but said they fear he will use the process to air misinformation about migration or undermine the nomination process.

➔ Councillors brace for chaotic McGregor presidential bid: page 3

## Weather

Mostly cloudy with patchy light rain developing. Highs of 11-12 degrees with moderate to fresh south to southwest winds.

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## Home News

**Homelessness:** A record 15,378 people were living in emergency accommodation last month, according to the Department of Housing: page 2

**Defence:** Simon Harris said Ireland is 'lagging behind' in defence spending at an Army cadets ceremony: page 4

## World News



**Myanmar:** A strong earthquake killed more than 140 people in Myanmar yesterday, while powerful shocks hit Thailand: page 10

## Business Today

**Tariffs:** The EU is identifying concessions, such as reducing regulations, that it is willing to make to secure partial removal of US tariffs: page 18

**Tourism:** The number of visitors to Ireland last month was down 30 per cent, with a loss of €88m to the economy: page 18

## Sports Weekend

**Boxing:** Delegates from Irish boxing will vote on April 12th to decide if a team from Ireland can compete in the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028.

**Horseracing:** Aidan O'Brien's Henri Matisse and Camille Pissarro will both be in action this weekend.

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