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Week 33: U.S. Role in Palestine

WEEK AUG. 13
33 TO
AUG. 19

U.S. ROLE IN PALESTINE



In April 2021, the Biden administration announced the resumption of \$125 million in aid.

That is still a fraction of the \$496 million in 2012.

It also reinstated \$150 million in contributions to UNRWA.

That too is a fraction of the \$359.3 million it gave in 2017.

Sources: Addameer, Congressional Research Service, CEIP

<http://kuminow.com/USRoleinPalestine>

[Next Online
Gathering](#)

[This
Week's
Entry](#)

[You
Should
Know](#)

[Upcoming
Weeks](#)

[You Should
Watch or Read](#)

Dear Kumi Now supporter,

On Tuesday **Angela Godfrey-Goldstein** of **Jahalin Solidarity** spoke about the struggles of and lessons to be learned from the Bedouin as they struggle for their rights as an indigenous people. The replay of the session is now available on [YouTube](#) and on [our website](#). The website includes her bio, the advocacy instructions, and links shared during the gathering.

We would love it if you could share the session with your community. You could use language such as:

Last week we learned about the the struggles of the Bedouin as an indigenous people as we observed International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Our guest was Angela Godfrey-Goldstein of Jahalin Solidarity. Learn more in the latest Kumi Now online gathering. <https://youtu.be/uyNi2Fi1d0c>



Thursday is **World Humanitarian Day**. This week we look at the role of the U.S. in Palestine: what it is, and what it should be. We can take this time to consider our governments' roles in contributing humanitarian aid around the world, as well as our personal and organizational contributions. You can learn more starting with the [United Nations' page on the holiday](#). And now, let's move on to Tuesday's online gathering:

Next Online Gathering

WEEK 33	U.S. ROLE IN PALESTINE
	
TUESDAY AUGUST 17 6PM (UTC+3)	 featuring Jonathan Kuttab of FOSNA

August 17: Week 33 - U.S. Role in Palestine

[Full information on the gathering is here.](#)

August 19 is World Humanitarian Day. As we advocate for the “safety and security of humanitarian aid workers, and for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises” around the world, it is not without irony that we analyze U.S. cuts to humanitarian aid to Palestine and the Palestinians.

Our guest will be **Jonathan Kuttab**, the new executive

director of **Friends of Sabeel North America**.

Time: Tuesday, August 17, at 6:00pm East Jerusalem, Palestine time (UTC+3) That's...

- Pacific (Seattle/Vancouver): 8am
- Central (Chicago): 10am
- Eastern (New York/Toronto): 11am
- Atlantic: 12pm
- Newfoundland: 12:30pm
- Greenwich (London): 4pm
- Central Europe (Paris/Stockholm): 5pm
- South Africa: 5pm
- Manila: 11pm
- Sydney: 1am (+1 Day)
- Auckland: 3am (+1 Day)

Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/94679502800> (There might be a quick registration form, and please set an alarm for yourself for Tuesday.)

Remember, if you'd like to receive a reminder about the gathering an hour before it begins, please use the [registration form at the bottom of the page](#).

This Week's Kumi Now Entry

Please note: To match the dates in the book, we will now be posting a new entry each Friday, and this newsletter should go out each Friday or Saturday.

Sharing and publicizing: The graphics in this newsletter are designed to be the perfect size and shape to share to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. So each week you can help the cause simply by sharing these images online. It's one more option you have to help.

Kumi Week #33: U.S. Role in Palestine

Week 33 of Kumi Now is now available [on the website](#). In the mid-1990s, following the signing of the Oslo Agreements when a two-state solution seemed within reach, the Clinton Administration began providing bilateral economic assistance to the newly-established Palestinian Authority (PA). Since 1994 the United States has provided over \$5 billion in economic assistance to the Palestinian people. However, after the election of Hamas in the 2006 Palestinian elections, the United States Congress imposed restriction after restriction on how humanitarian aid could be provided to the Palestinian territories. A series of executive decisions on the part of the White House and the passage of two key congressional acts in 2018 brought this process to a radical culmination—U.S. humanitarian aid to Palestine had for all practical purposes been terminated. The Biden administration has restored some, but not nearly all, of this previous aid. The challenge of defining the U.S. role in Palestine is far from finished.

Please read the essay on this issue and the stories of victims of UNRWA funding cuts. And here are a few more facts for you:

WEEK AUG. 13
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U.S. ROLE IN PALESTINE

Just the facts...

At least 26 states have enacted laws against the right to boycott Israel.

The United States has vetoed at least 53 UN Security Council resolutions critical of Israel.

In 2018 the U.S., under President Trump, severely cut aid to Palestine, including \$231.5 million of bilateral aid intended for the West Bank and Gaza (including \$25 million for occupied Jerusalem hospitals).

U.S. aid to Palestine in 2019 was a measly \$0.6 million.

In March, the Biden Administration directed \$15 million to COVID response and food assistance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In April 2021, the Biden administration announced the resumption of some aid, including \$115 million in bilateral aid to Palestine and \$10 million to peacebuilding programs.

That aid is still a fraction of the \$496 million in 2012.

It also reinstated \$150 million in contributions for humanitarian response to UNRWA.

That too is a fraction of the \$359.3 million it gave in 2017.

Meanwhile, Israel receives \$3.3 billion annually in foreign military financing (FMF) and \$500 million for missile defense systems, along with other subsidies and tax-breaks.

Sources: Al Jazeera, Addameer, Congressional Research Service, CEIP

<http://kuminow.com/USRoleinPalestine>

Understanding the U.S. Role in Palestine: Just the Facts...

- At least 26 states have enacted laws infringing upon the right to boycott the Israeli state for its abusive and illegal practices.
- The United States has vetoed at least 53 UN Security Council resolutions critical of Israel.
- In 2018 the United States, under President Trump, severely cut aid to Palestine and Palestinians, including \$231.5 million of bilateral economic assistance intended for the West Bank and Gaza (including \$25 million for occupied Jerusalem hospitals).
- U.S. aid to Palestine in 2019 was a measly \$0.6 million.
- In March, the Biden Administration allocated \$15 million for COVID response and emergency food assistance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- In April 2021, the Biden administration announced the resumption of some aid, including \$115 million in bilateral aid to Palestinians and \$10 million to peacebuilding programs.
- That aid is still a fraction of the \$496 million in aid provided in 2012.
- It also reinstated \$150 million in contributions for humanitarian response to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA);
- But that too is a fraction of the \$359.3 million it gave to UNRWA in 2017.
- Meanwhile, Israel receives \$3.3 billion annually in foreign military financing (FMF)

and \$500 million for missile defense systems, along with other subsidies and tax-breaks.

- Israel receives more FMF from the U.S. than all other countries in the world combined.

Sources

This week's Just the Facts comes from:

- [“A history of the US blocking UN resolutions against Israel”](#) from **Al Jazeera**
- [“U.S. Legislation in Opposition to Palestinian Rights”](#) from **Addameer**
- [“U.S. Resumption of Foreign Aid to the Palestinians”](#) from the **Congressional Research Service**
- [“Bringing Assistance to Israel in Line With Rights and U.S. Laws”](#) from the **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace**

Learning More

You might want to read [“10 Things to Know: Biden’s Approach to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”](#) by **Ambassador Hesham Youssef** for the **United States Institute of Peace**

To go deeper, we will be developing an extensive list of [Additional Resources](#) at the bottom of this week’s entry as well as a [YouTube playlist](#) on the subject.

Once you understand the situation you'll want to get involved. Here's the Kumi Action for this week:

Kumi Action



CMEP is especially concerned about the dire humanitarian situation facing Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, especially those who are refugees both in the territories and abroad. If you are in the United States, we encourage you to reach out via email or phone to your members of Congress and urge them to oppose the Trump administration’s decision to cut American humanitarian and economic assistance.

Let your elected officials know cutting services to the Palestinian people will only further exacerbate the crisis, leading us further away from a negotiated peace. While addressing humanitarian concerns cannot in and of itself resolve the political and economic injustices at the heart of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, these vital services offer the hope of education, healthcare, and employment to the most vulnerable members of Palestinian society.

As organizations like UNRWA, Catholic Relief Services, International Medical Corps, Mercy Corps, and American Near East Refugee Aid face budget shortfalls as a result of the Trump Administration’s funding cuts, they have been calling on donations from private individuals to close the gap. In January 2018, UNRWA launched its “Dignity is Priceless” campaign which you can contribute to. So far the campaign, whose goal is to make up for the U.S. funding cuts, has raised \$238 million from private individuals, NGOs, and foreign governments around the world.

We encourage you to work within your Kumi Community and with other Kumi Communities online to find the most creative ways to get your messages across. When you come up with a creative idea share it online using the hashtags #Aid4Gaza, #KumiNow, and #Kumi33. You will find more information on how to contact your government leaders and ambassadors on this page of the Kumi Now website.

Special Action



During the pre-dawn hours of July 7th, 21 year old Layan Nasir, a 4th year Nutrition student at Birzeit University, was arrested, bound, gagged and blindfolded by Israeli Occupation Forces. She was interrogated at the Ofer Military Prison without benefit of legal counsel and her family was unable to visit her.

Layan was later charged with membership in Democratic Progressive Student Pole (Al-Qutub Al-Tulabi), a university-based organization composed of left-leaning students. Israel's designation of the Democratic Progressive Student Pole as an unlawful organization in October 2020 is one of many attempts to suppress student activism and silence Palestinian demands for freedom.

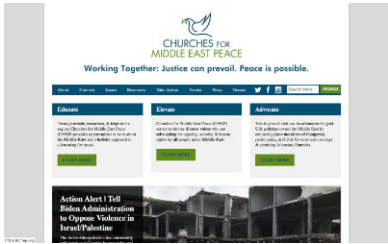
Layan now awaits trial from Damon Military Prison with seven other female students. In total, seventy-four Birzeit University students were similarly "detained" and many remain in Israeli prisons for non-violently expressing their opposition to Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

The freedoms of expression and peaceful association are fundamental, universal human rights. We call on our elected representatives, and those in authority within our government, to demand and pressure the Israeli government and military forces to immediately release Layan and her fellow students.

Please friends: [Sign and help in sharing the petition.](#)

You Should Know

One or two people, companies, or organizations generally related to the issue of the week you should know, and how you can follow them online.



Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) contributed the essay for this week's entry on U.S. Aid to Palestine.

CMEP is a coalition of 27 national church denominations and organizations in Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical traditions. Through its more than 47,000 individual constituents and denominational partnerships, CMEP influences millions of American Christians. CMEP works to encourage U.S. policies that actively promote a just, lasting, and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ensuring security, human rights, and religious freedom for all the people of the region.

You can find CMEP on their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

Upcoming Weeks

And here's what we have coming up in August so you can plan ahead and decide how you want to be a part of Kumi Now:

KUMI NOW ONLINE: AUGUST, 2021

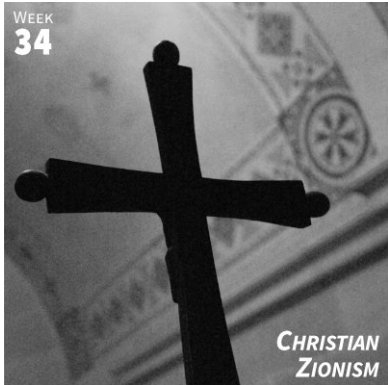
Week 31	Week 32	Week 33	Week 34	Week 35
				
August 3 Collective Punishment	August 10 Indigenous Rights	August 17 U.S. Role in Palestine	August 24 Christian Zionism	August 31 Art as Resistance

EVERY TUESDAY | 6PM PALESTINE TIME | [KUMINOW.COM](https://www.kuminow.com)

Each week below will have an online gathering with a guest or guests speaking on the topic. The time and Zoom link are the same each week.

The weekly newsletter will always contain reminders of the upcoming online gatherings and the Zoom link. But if you're like me and need a reminder right before the sessions begin, you can [register to receive a reminder email one hour prior to each online](#)

[gathering](#). And no more digging through your inbox looking for the Zoom link! Just [use the registration form at the bottom of the page](#).



August 24: Week 34 - Christian Zionism

[Read the full entry online.](#)

All Palestinians regardless of their faith face similar challenges. However, Palestinian Christians face a specific kind of challenge from Christian Zionists who manipulate scripture to support the oppression of Palestinians. On August 22, 2006 Palestinian Christian churches addressed the threat of Christian Zionism with the “Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism.” We mark the anniversary of the declaration by learning about Christian Zionism and learning what you can do so that together we can rise up.

For our Kumi Action we will encourage our local libraries to stock more books on Palestine, particularly on the effects of Christian Zionism.



August 31: Week 35 - Art as Resistance

[Read the full entry online.](#)

Art as a creative tool of resistance is a cornerstone of a successful nonviolent resistance. While some resist the occupation with stones or guns or worse, and others turn to politics or religion, still others turn to art. One such artist was Naji Al-Ali, the political cartoonist who created Handala. Naji Al-Ali was assassinated for his art, and died on August 29, 1987. In honor of Naji Al-Ali, and all the brave Palestinian artists who have risked their lives in the service of truth and art, this week we look at art as resistance in Palestine.

For our Kumi Action we will work with a local church, gallery, concert venue, theatre, or school to host or produce a show of Palestinian art or that features Palestinian artists.

You Should Watch or Read...

One (or maybe two) recent or not-so-recent film, book, video, article, or other piece of art that you should consider reading or watching this week. Have a recommendation? Let us know.

¡Yallah! ¡Yallah!



This week, the **Palestine Film Institute** has selected **¡Yallah! ¡Yallah!** (Documentary, 2018, 74 minutes) as their film of the week. You have until Wednesday to watch it for free [on their website](#). More about the film:

“The film focuses on the story of seven characters, which are connected to the world of football in one way or another. Through their daily lives, we get to know their bond with the sport, their activities and the problems they have to face due to the occupation by Israel. Even though they are constantly affected by Israel's subjugation of Palestine, they manage to survive and endure all sorts of issues in order to enjoy one of their biggest passions: football.”

What's Next

We hope to see you in the online gathering on Tuesday, after which you'll receive another newsletter next Friday/Saturday, focused on our next topic, [Christian Zionism](#). As always, there is more to come!

Sincerely,

The Kumi Now Team

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kumi@kuminow.com



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