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Week 33: U.S. Role in Palestine



Dear Kumi Now supporter,

August 19 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 join us for Tuesday's online gathering:

Next Online Gathering

August 16: Week 33 - U.S. Role in Palestine

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

Our guests will be **Dr. Waltrina Middleton** from **Community Renewal Society** and **Eric Sype** from **7amleh**.

Time: Tuesday, August 16, 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 Entry

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 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. Last year, we were joined by **Angela Godfrey-Goldstein** of **Jahalin Solidarity** for our [online gathering](#). And here are a few more facts for you:

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 2021, 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 continue and increase their humanitarian and economic assistance to Palestinians. As you may know, the Trump administration cut American aid to Palestine and the Biden administration restored some aid to Palestine in 2021 and [announced further aid in July 2022](#). However, even this additional funding does not necessarily return aid to its historical levels. And as the last few years have proven, U.S. aid can be fickle; without constant reminding and reinforcement, the American government's support of Palestinians can easily dry up again.

Let your elected officials know how important this aid is to Palestine, and that 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.

Furthermore, UNRWA shouldn't have to rely on the American government for its funding. We can all get involved and can do so by using the [UNRWA donations page](#).

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 #Kumi1. You will find more information on how to contact your government leaders and ambassadors on this page of the Kumi Now website.

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:

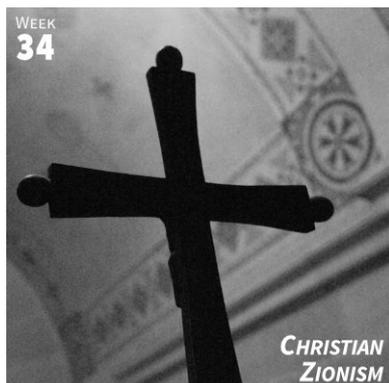
KUMI NOW ONLINE: AUGUST, 2022

Week 31	Week 32	Week 33	Week 34	Week 35
				
August 2 <i>Collective Punishment</i>	August 9 <i>Indigenous Rights</i>	August 16 <i>U.S. Role in Palestine</i>	August 23 <i>Christian Zionism</i>	August 30 <i>Art as Resistance</i>

EVERY TUESDAY | 6PM PALESTINE TIME | 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 20 to 26: 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 27 to September 2: 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.

Closing Thoughts

On Tuesday, musician and activist **Lyla June** spoke the connection between Palestinian rights and indigenous rights around the globe. 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 hope to see you in the online gathering on Tuesday, after which you'll receive another newsletter next 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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