



MEMO AIPAC

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U.S., Israel Act to Prevent Palestinian Humanitarian Crisis

Israel and the United States are working to ensure that the Palestinian people will not face a humanitarian crisis. The two allies are seeking to increase direct humanitarian aid to the Palestinians while maintaining efforts to isolate the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (PA), which refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence and adhere to previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements. This refusal by Hamas to accept the international community's criteria, combined with the continuing focus of Hamas and other terrorist groups on pursuing violence, has led to the financial difficulties now faced by the PA. Providing aid and support to the Hamas-led PA—beyond humanitarian assistance—would only serve to strengthen the terrorist group's grip on power and diminish prospects for the resumption of a meaningful peace process.

The United States is putting in place policies to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the Palestinians are met.

- The United States—the single largest bilateral donor of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians—has increased to \$245 million this year its support for the basic humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.
- The United States is providing an immediate infusion of \$10 million of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to address the urgent health needs of the Palestinian people. The first shipment was delivered to local Gaza clinics on May 10.
- Both versions of the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act being considered by the House and Senate allow humanitarian assistance to flow unfettered and maintain the president's flexibility—in consultation with Congress—to provide indirect project assistance if he deems it is in the national security interests of the United States.

The Israeli government also is continuing to take steps to provide for the needs of the Palestinian people.

- Israel supports the Quartet's efforts to explore ways to provide humanitarian aid directly to the Palestinian people while bypassing the Hamas-led government. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni recently said Israel wishes to have these funds “used for direct humanitarian purposes.”
- Israel continues to facilitate humanitarian shipments to flow into Gaza. More than 3,400 trucks entered Gaza in April despite a Hamas-directed attack on Karni, the key border crossing between Gaza and Israel.
- The government of Israel is using revenue from the value added tax (VAT) it collects on behalf of the Palestinians to continue to provide electricity and water to the Palestinians.
- Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel will use the VAT funds to provide drugs and medical equipment directly to Palestinian hospitals.

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The Hamas-led government's refusal to meet international criteria for receiving assistance and its continuing support for terrorism have led to the difficult financial situation it now faces.

- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Hamas is to blame for the current financial situation because it “is refusing to accept the international community’s requirement that it govern in a way that is consistent with the obligations that the Palestinians have undertaken before.”
- Hamas continues to do nothing to prevent terrorist attacks on Israelis, while praising the perpetrators. Hamas lauded the recent suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, which killed 11, including an American teenager.
- Hamas continues to allow the smuggling of explosives instead of food and medicines. Israel has thwarted two recent attempts to smuggle into Gaza enough explosives for more than 100 suicide bombs.
- Hamas is spending \$1.2 million a month to fund a new 3,000-man “security” force led by Jamal Abu Samhadana, a leader of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), and comprised of his followers. Abu Samhadana is wanted by Israel for the deaths of more than a dozen Israelis. The PRC, in addition to its attacks on Israelis, also is linked to the killing of three Americans in a 2003 roadside bomb attack in Gaza.
- Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal called on supporters to send weapons to fight Israel rather than food and medicine to help the Palestinian people, saying: “We ask all the people in surrounding Arab countries, the Muslim world and everyone who wants to support us to send weapons, money and men.”

Providing aid and support to the Hamas-led PA before Hamas reforms will strengthen the terrorist group and give it no incentive to change.

- Providing non-humanitarian assistance would only serve to reduce the incentive for Hamas to change, strengthen the terrorist group’s grip on power and diminish any prospect for the resumption of a meaningful peace process.
- The international community should do nothing to relieve Hamas from the pressure of the financial crunch it is now facing until it recognizes Israel, renounces violence and adheres to previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements as called for by the Quartet—the United States, EU, U.N. and Russia,

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