

The United States of America's Assistance and Peace Process towards Israel-Palestine Dispute

OSUCHUKWU, Nkechi Cynthia (Ph.D)

Department of Political Science,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam,
Anambra State Nigeria
Email address: cn.osuchukwu@coou.edu.ng

Abstract: *This paper focuses on the U.S. financial contributions to the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict and how it is implicated in the increasing terrorist attacks and peaceful settlement of the dispute. The trajectory of U.S. foreign aid towards the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as its appropriation and management were examined. Generally, this paper interrogated the links between these funds and terrorist activities in the region. Qualitative documentary method including the ex-post facto model and analytical construct of humanitarianism constituted the methodological considerations of this research. The financial aid provided by the United States of America as major tools for the peaceful settlement of Israel-Palestine Dispute were highly recognized, not minding the fact that the dispute appeared almost non intractable.*

Keywords: Assistance, Peace Process, Israel-Palestine dispute, financial aid

Introduction

The United States of America has made several frantic efforts in providing financial aid for both Palestine and Israel with the aim of creating any possible avenue to resolve the protracted dispute. There is no doubt, these moves by the United States of America were met by stiff opposition and unparalleled criticism from various quarters, both at floor of the United States of America. Since the establishment of the Palestinian State in 1993, (which enjoys some degree of self-governance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip) the U.S. government has consistently provided a sizable financial commitment. Between 1994 and 2018, the U.S. paid the Palestinian Authority with bilateral aid totaling more than \$5 billion, making the Palestinian State one of the Nations receiving the most international foreign aid per capita (UNRWA, 2014). In particular, the United States has continued to contribute the most money, per nation, to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Over \$6 billion has been donated by the United States to UNRWA through international humanitarian accounts since 1950. 20% of the funds that the United States has allocated for the Palestinians come from private volunteer organizations (PVOs), and 80% come from contractors working for USAID (Sharp and Blanchard, 2006). The improvement of the living conditions of those residing in the West Bank and Gaza has been a major emphasis of American policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Since 2007, the U.S. has continued to focus its policy on bolstering Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the Palestine Authority, which is centered in the West Bank. Over time, the U.S. governments have requested Congress to approve foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority in accordance with three major U.S. objectives and policy priorities for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict. These areas of priority include the following:

1. Combating, neutralizing, and preventing terrorism against Israel from the Islamist group Hamas and other militant organizations.
2. Maintain stability, peaceful co-existence between Israel-Palestine, progress in the West Bank as well as in Gaza Strip which is controlled by Hamas.
3. Providing humanitarian needs and rooting out all forces that promote destabilization in the Gaza Strip.

Generally, starting in the middle of 2007, U.S. money and policy goals were distributed geographically and among the factions of the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Between 2008 and 2012, the United States provided the Palestinian Authority with about \$600 million in financial assistance to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as \$200 million in direct budgetary support and \$100 million in non-lethal security assistance (UNRWA, 2014). Between 1988 and 2019, the United States provided the West Bank and Gaza with an estimated \$9.1 billion in aid. In contrast, between 1946 and 2007, Israel got around \$34.2 billion in economic assistance from the United States. Additionally, according to OECD data, between 1994 and 2017, Palestinians received between \$37.2 and \$40 billion (in constant currencies) in development assistance. The sum of the American contributions was \$8.2 billion (Kessler, 2019)

The table 1.1 below shows streams of U.S. direct funding to West Bank and Gaza Strip through the Palestinian Authority, while table 5.2 generally shows the direct funding from the stakeholders to the West Bank and Gaza through the Palestinian Authority.

1.1: U.S. Foreign Aid to West Bank/Gaza (Current US \$)

Fiscal Year	Amount Received in (Current US \$)
2001	64494167
2002	131309372
2003	188681491
2004	169734742
2005	207666955
2006	168086807
2007	201722120
2008	353105806
2009	918518975
2010	590867684
2011	831494918
2012	330475247
2013	803503162
2014	387464605
2015	456779105
2016	616246469
2017	375712179
2018	268555181
2019	120085587
2020	17545193

Source: USAID (2020) "U.S. Foreign Aid to West Bank/Gaza." <https://explorer.usaid.gov/data#tab-data-download>

Table 1.2: Net ODA Received Per Capita (Current US \$) –West Bank and Gaza

Year	Amount Received in (Current US \$)
1993	78.995
1994	199.453
1995	207.749
1996	213.451
1997	226.501
1998	220.621
1999	203.814
2000	234.245
2001	332.776
2002	315.932
2003	330.222
2004	358.657
2005	305.9
2006	399.33
2007	491.376
2008	687.666
2009	766.493
2010	663.617
2011	627.028
2012	504.048
2013	638.341
2014	596.119

2015	438.447
2016	549.945
2017	481.992
2018	490.341

Source: The World Bank (2018) “Net ODA Received Per Capita (Current US \$) –West Bank and Gaza.” Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.PC.ZS?locations=PS>

The tables above show that massive funds and financial aid have been donated to the Palestinian Authority by the U.S. as well as by the major stakeholders for them to promote peace, prosperity, economic development, security, good governance, and adequate peaceful co-existence with their neighbours. The funds are also meant to secure a better future for Palestinians and their children especially for improved education, social welfare, health care, and social infrastructure. However, the extent to which U.S. bilateral aid to the Palestinian Authority in West Bank and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and its connection to the rising terrorist activities in the area remains an issue of deep concern to the major stakeholders. The U.S. Congress expresses deep concerns that the U.S. bilateral aid could be diverted to Palestinian terrorist groups (UNRWA, 2014). These concerns have therefore raised the question of scrutinizing U.S. funds to Palestinian State through legislative oversight and imposing some restrictions where necessary especially when suspicions are raised by the Congress. Although besides the U.S. aid, other donors by the major stakeholders also dole out huge sums of money to the Palestinian Authority. In most cases, the U.S administration generally make out calls for more support to the Palestinian Authority from the Arab governments who have made some pledges toward the West Bank and Gaza Strip security and development.

Additionally, the Palestinian Authority takes part in the Conflict Management and Mitigation program (CMM), which the United States funds and was formed in 2004. (Wong, 2018). The Economic Support and Development Fund (ESDF) or the Development Assistance accounts are used to distribute the CMM's funds. Since the program's inception in 2004, the U.S. Embassy in Israel has distributed over 113 CMM grants totaling over \$26 million to Jewish, Arab, and Palestinian Israelis and Palestinians, an increase from \$10 million in 2012 to \$26 million in 2017. (Wong, 2018). With the intention of fostering their reconciliation and bringing them together, the funds are clearly intended to support individuals from a variety of groups with varying ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds who are living in conflict zones (CRS, 2018).

More significantly, the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account has received financial support from the United States for the Palestinian Authority. With the help of this funding, Palestinians will have the chance to equip and train own security forces in the West Bank. The goal of this bilateral, nonlethal security aid is to suppress terrorist and militant organizations, as well as other extreme combatants from groups like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Jeremy and Tartir, 2021). Additionally, it aims to strengthen the rule of law in regions under the jurisdiction of President Mahmoud Abbas' Palestinian Authority. In a sense, the money will be used to support increased coordination and security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The table below shows the trajectory of U.S. bilateral aid to the Palestinians between 2012 and 2019 according to different categories which are meant to support peace and security in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Table 1.3: Detailed U.S. Bilateral Assistance to the Palestinians, FY2012-FY2019 (Current Million Dollars)

Fiscal Year	ESF	ESF-OCO	INCLE	NADR
2012	396	-	100	-
2013	357	10	70	-
2014	272	98	70	-

2015	290	-	70	1
2016	-	206	55	2
2017	165	65	60	1
2018	215	-	35	1
2019	215	-	35	1

Source: U.S. State Department and USAID, adapted by CRS.

Notes: All amounts are approximate. NADR = Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs; INCLE = International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement; ESF = Economic Support Fund, OCO = Overseas Contingency Operations.

Unfortunately, with the increasing distrust and fallouts between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, it has been very difficult to coordinate the use of these funds especially on the side of the Palestinian Authority in reaching out to the Israeli Authorities for concerted actions toward improved security coordination. Although the PLO Central Council expressed worries that the aid has fundamentally inhibited their security choices and plans, and demanded that the Palestinian Authority pull out from the aid support and free itself from any form of security coordination which the aid requires (Jeremy and Tartir, 2021).

The U.S. Bilateral Assistance to the Palestine Authority through UNRWA

For many years, the U.S. government has continued to provide enormous bilateral assistance to the Palestinian Authority through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The U.S. is a key sponsor of the UNRWA, which was created following the Arab-Israeli War in 1948. Although other countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Sweden, Qatar, and the UAE have been part of the programme, but the responses from these countries and the major stakeholders generally are not adequate, thus leaving the chunk of the funds coming from the U.S. year after year. The U.S. provides almost one-third of UNRWA's annual budget in 2017 (UNRWA, 2021). The U.S. funding through the UNRWA helps to provide education, healthcare, and general humanitarian assistance for around 5.4 million Palestinian refugees registered in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. There have been increasing requests on UNRWA's emergency and refugee assistance as a result of the rising levels of conflict in the region which has raised serious concerns for humanitarian needs especially in Gaza and Syria. These humanitarian concerns are based on rising insecurity, lack of financial and social support to the displaced people, poor economic conditions, and generally need to improve residents' wellbeing in the areas of conflict. There are specifically five areas of focus for the UNRWA's beneficiaries in different field operations (i.e. West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria). The UNWRA funding reflects deeply in helping the parties in the Israel-Palestine dispute, as it gives essential, lifesaving assistance to vulnerable Palestinian refugees (Gladstone, 2018).

Key benefactors of the UNWRA programme are Palestinians and their school children who are part of the future of the Middle East and deserve an improved system of support. However, apart from the budget lapses of other sponsors, a major concern of the U.S. in funding the UNRWA is that the administrators of the UNRWA have continued to endlessly expand the community of entitled beneficiaries of the programme thereby making it quite unsustainable over the years (CRS, 2018). The U.S. administration argues the UNRWA administration and major regional stakeholders have not provided an improved system of running the UNWRA programme for greater support to peace and progress; instead, the current system represents an endlessly crisis-driven service provision model. Therefore, failure of the major stakeholders to reform the UNRWA and put in place a sustainable model of UNWRA impact on the lives of innocent Palestinians, and school children who benefit from the programme (CRS, 2018).

The table below shows a history of U.S. donation and contributions to the UNRWA refugee assistance. The figures in the table point to the fact that the U.S. has been consistent in releasing enormous funds to better the lives of the people of Palestinian origin living in the West Bank. Over recent years, the U.S. has committed a lot of money to the Palestinian refugees, including the children in these areas.

Table 1.4: Historical U.S. Government Contributions to UNRWA

Fiscal Year	Amount (in US \$ millions)
-------------	----------------------------

1950-1989	1,473.3
1990	57.0
1991	75.6
1992	69.0
1993	73.8
1994	78.2
1995	74.8
1996	77.0
1997	79.2
1998	78.3
1999	80.5
2000	89.0
2001	123.0
2002	119.3
2003	134.0
2004	127.4
2005	108.0
2006	137.0
2007	154.2
2008	184.7
2009	268.0
2010	237.8
2011	249.4
2012	233.3
2013	294.0
2014	398.7
2015	390.5
2016	359.5
2017	359.3

Source: U.S. State Department (2012). "Historical U.S. Government Contributions to UNRWA."
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf>

The U.S. has pledged to increase dialogue with the United Nations, and Palestinians as well as other stakeholders in the region and international community to advance new models and new approaches for the UNRWR, in the form of direct bilateral assistance from the United States and other partners, so as to easily provide Palestinians with more sustainable and prosperous future through funding (Lindsay, 2009).

The U.S. Aid to the Palestine Authority and Promotion of Terrorist Activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Palestinians and Israelis maintain partial self-government and occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Although the U.S. has made large funds available to the Palestinians to train and equip their national police and security force over the years since 2006. The authorized security forces have to a greater extent maintained good cooperation with Israel in containing militant attacks from supporters of Hamas and other terror Palestinian Islamist Jihad groups in West Bank (Thrall, 2010). The U.S. has put in over 500 million to develop and train the Palestinian National Security Forces and Presidential Guard (Thrall, 2010). Although, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) alarmed that the US-trained forces are now capable of overrunning small IDF outposts and isolated Israeli communities during conflicts (Glick, 2014).

Importantly, there have been growing concerns regarding the actual use of U.S. bilateral aid to the Palestinian Authority in West Bank and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and its connection to the rising terrorist activities in the area. This remains an issue of deep concern to the U.S. policymakers as well as the international community. The U.S. Congress expresses deep concerns that the U.S. bilateral aid could be diverted to Palestinian terrorist groups (UNRWA, 2014). These concerns have therefore raised the question of scrutinizing U.S. funds to Palestinian State through legislative oversight and imposing some restrictions where necessary especially when suspicions are raised by the Congress. For example, in early March 2018, the U.S. Congress pushed through the Taylor Force Act to cancel restrictions from cutting down bilateral ESF (including ESF-OCO) in annual budget dating back from FY2015. The Congress stated that this action is to discourage some PLO/Palestinian Authority payments "for acts of terrorism."

The U.S. Congress maintains that the PLO/Palestinian Authority makes payments to some Palestinians (and/or their families) who have been jailed or tried over acts of terrorism by Israel. They maintain that the PLO/Palestinian Authority engages in these actions simply because the U.S. has always provided funds that clear their debts, hence, most funds received are diverted towards settling or compensating families of those found to have committed acts of terrorism. Therefore, it is argued that any bilateral assistance that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority could sustain such payments in a secondary manner (Abrams, 2018). Then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said, "Attaching payments as appreciation of violence or killings is something the American people could never embrace or understand," in his appearance before the House Foreign Affairs Committee in June 2017. (Shira, 2017). According to the CRS (2018), Palestinians accept that some payments go to individuals or their families who commit "heinous assaults."

Again, more critical concerns have been raised that Palestinian Authority approves payments for 'Martyrs' and prisoners of the War and their families. The Palestinian compensate families of those who lost a member (combatant or civilian) in connection with Israel-Palestine conflict and this act has been practiced over the years since the 1960s (Zilber, 2018). However, these payments on behalf of prisoners or their families increased outrageously and formalized as a standard practice around the period of the second intifada (Palestinian uprising) between 2000 to 2005 (Kuperwasser, 2020).

The Palestinian government's payment of salaries to the jailed Palestinian fighters and terrorists as well as to the families of the dead terrorists has been backed by different laws and decrees made by the Palestinian Authority. These laws see the prisoners as "a fighting sector and an integral part of the weave of Arab Palestinian society" and authorize that "the financial rights of the prisoner and his family" should be paid. It further authorizes Palestinian Authority to give allowance to "every prisoner, without discrimination." The Palestinian Authority is mandated to give prisoners monthly allowance during their imprisonment as well as salaries or jobs after they have been freed.

Prisoners' or terrorists' years of being in jail are counted for them as years of seniority of service and those that have stayed up to five years in jail will be given employment in government institution with higher ranks and salaries upon their release (Kuperwasser, 2020). The Palestinian Authority underwrites huge sums of money to cover the expenses made on the prisoners and their families. About 488.4 million shekels were approved by the Authority for salary payments to jailed terrorists and freed terrorists in the 2016 budget, with an addition of 42.1 million shekels for salary payments (Palestinian Media Watch, 2016). The

Palestinian Authority gives the PLO the money directly to pay the salaries. Also, about 663.6 million shekels was budget in 2016 as allowances to be released to the families of the “martyrs.” On the whole, the Palestinian Authority made available payments amounting to 1.152 billion shekels (\$303 million) to fighters and their families in the 2016 budget. This amounts to 7 percent of the budget allocations. Foreign aid constitutes about 30 percent of the general budget. Salary payments to terrorists and their families are estimated to be about 40 percent of the aid directed to the general budget (Kuperwasser, 2016).

Palestinian Government Decision No. 23 of 2010 further spells out prisoners’ monthly allowance based on the length of sentence. This goes from \$364 a month for up to three years of jail term to \$3,120 a month for 30 years and more. A \$78 additional amount is made available for terrorists from Jerusalem and a \$130 additional amount for Arab-Israeli terrorists. Prisoners also receive a monthly allowance for canteen expenses, to the tune of \$780,000 per month. These allowances are given ‘without discrimination’ according to the existing laws, thus making it possible for Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist fighters to benefit accordingly. In December 2015, for instance, members of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad received \$338 to \$208 for those freed (Palestinian Media Watch, 2016).

The tables below clearly show the various categories of these payments, including higher ranks and allowances given to fighters and their families who have been jailed. The higher the jail terms served the higher the compensation received by the fighters and their families.

Table 1.5: Monthly Salaries According to the Length of Imprisonment

S/N	Length of Imprisonment	Monthly Salary
1	Up to 3 years	NIS 1,400 (\$400)
2	3-5 years	NIS 2,000 (\$570)
3	5-10 years	NIS 4,000 (\$1,142)
4	10-15 years	NIS 6,000 (\$1,714)
5	15-20 years	NIS 7,000 (\$2,000)
6	20-25 years	NIS 8,000 (\$2,286)
7	25-30 years	NIS 10,000 (\$2,857)
8	Over 30 years	NIS 12,000 (\$3,429)

Source: Kuperwasser (2016) "Incentivizing Terrorism: Palestinian Authority Allocations to Terrorists and their Families," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, at <http://jcpa.org/paying-salaries-terrorists-contradicts-palestinian-vows-peaceful-intentions/>

Table 1.6: Grants to Released Prisoners

S/N	Time Spent in Prison	Amount paid in dollars
1	1-3 years	\$1,500
2	More than 3 years (and less than 5 years)	\$2,500
3	More than 5 years (and less than 8 years)	\$3,500
4	More than 8 years (and less than 11 years)	\$4,500
5	More than 11 years (and less than 15 years)	\$6,000
6	More than 15 years (and less than 18 years)	\$8,000
7	More than 18 years (and less than 21 years)	\$10,000

8	More than 21 years (and less than 25 years)	\$12,000
9	More than 25 years (and less than 30 years)	\$15,000
10	30 years and more	\$25,000

Source: Kuperwasser (2016) "Incentivizing Terrorism: Palestinian Authority Allocations to Terrorists and their Families," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, at <http://jcpa.org/paying-salaries-terrorists-contradicts-palestinian-vows-peaceful-intentions/>

Table 1.7: Key for Promotion in Employee Grade and Military Rank

S/N	Number of Years in Prison	Civil Grade	Military rank
1	5-6 years	Head of department	First Lieutenant
2	6-8 years	Director (c)	Captain
3	8-10 years	Director (b)	Major
4	10-15 years	Director (a)	Lieutenant Colonel + seniority
5	15-20 years	Director General (A4)	Colonel + seniority
6	20-25 years	Assistant Undersecretary (A2)	Brigadier General + seniority
7	25-30 years	Undersecretary of Ministry	Major General
8	30 years and more	Minister	Major General + seniority

Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014) "Palestinian Authority Funds Terrorists." IMFA, Available at: <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/Palestinian-Authority-funds-terrorists-June-2014.aspx>

Table 1.8: Monthly Allocations to the Families of the Martyrs and the Wounded

S.N	Category	Basis	Addition for Spouse	Addition for Each Child
1	Married Martyr	1300	100	25
2	Unmarried Martyr	1000		
3	Married Woman Martyr	1000		
4	Married Civilian Martyr	650	100	25
5	Unmarried Civilian Martyr	400		
6	Civilian Woman Martyr	400		

Note: Financial Allocations to Families of Martyrs and Wounded (in shekels); A Martyr who carries a military rank receives his allocation according to his military rank

Source: Kuperwasser (2016) "Incentivizing Terrorism: Palestinian Authority Allocations to Terrorists and their Families," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, at <http://jcpa.org/paying-salaries-terrorists-contradicts-palestinian-vows-peaceful-intentions/>

Table 1.9: Financial Structure for Allocations to Military Married Martyrs and Wounded – Who are then cared for by the organization (in shekels)

S/N	Rank	Amount (Shekels)
1	Private	1300
2	Corporal	1380
3	Seargent	1460
4	Sergeant First Class	1540
5	Master Sergeant	1670
6	Sergeant Major	1800
7	Second Lieutenant	1930
8	First Lieutenant	2060
9	Captain	2260
10	Major	2540
11	Lieutenant Colonel	2790
12	Colonel	3290
13	Brigadier General	3590
14	Major General	3990

Source: Kuperwasser (2016) "Incentivizing Terrorism: Palestinian Authority Allocations to Terrorists and their Families," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, at <http://jcpa.org/paying-salaries-terrorists-contradicts-palestinian-vows-peaceful-intentions/>

An order from President Mahmoud Abbas came in May 2014, disengaging the Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs from making these payments and directing that the funds be henceforth be disbursed by the PLO Commission for Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs. Analysts claim that the reason for redirecting the disbursements to the PLO was to put away the concerns of international donors so that they don't think that their funds or aid are directly used by the Palestinian Authority to pay terrorists. However, most of the foreign aid, up to 40 percent, still go to the national budget of the Palestinian Authority from which the allocations are earmarked for the PLO to disburse and make payments to the fighters and their families. Nevertheless, the Palestinian Authority continues to supervise the disbursements and payments made to the fighters and their families, even though the funds are now channeled through the PLO Commission (Palestinian Media Watch, 2016).

The U.S. Congress have clearly expressed deep concerns that the actions of the Palestinian Authority could incentivize violence, especially considering the new and higher ranks received by war fighters and terrorists who are given greater compensation both in ranks and monetary values upon returning from longer jail terms (Gehrke, 2017). Therefore, in 2018, the U.S. government suspended most of its direct bilateral assistance to the Palestinian Authority based on these concerns. This was enforced through the Taylor Force Act which suspended all ESF aid that "directly benefits" the Palestinian Authority (with specific exceptions for the East Jerusalem Hospital Network and a certain amount for wastewater projects and vaccination programmes) unless and until the Palestinian Authority testifies that the funds being released are not funneled to sponsor or encourage terrorist fighters. The U.S. government therefore mandated the Palestinian Authority and the PLO on the following actions as precondition for continued release of funds:

- i. To stop any payments made for terrorist activities committed against United States of America and Israeli citizens to anyone who, after a fair trial, was convicted and sentenced to prison for such crimes or to anyone who passed away as a result of such crimes, including that person's family;

- ii. To invalidate any law, decree, regulation, or other document authorizing or implementing a system of compensation for those who are incarcerated that bases the amount of compensation paid on the sentence or length of incarceration of a person who has been imprisoned for a terrorist act, or to take similar action; and
- iii. To vehemently denounce any acts of violence, and to take steps to look into them and bring those responsible to justice (CSR, 2018).

The then Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu welcomed the Taylor Force Act, while the PLO representative to the United States, Husam Zomlot, rejected the law and claimed that it offends the Palestinian Authority and its people. Hence, the PLO Chairman and Palestine President Abbas refused to stop the payments (Wilner, 2018; *Times of Israel*, 9 July 2018). Further, the U.S Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 was also passed in order to possibly put a final end to U.S. bilateral assistance to Palestinians as President Abbas continue to resist any attempt to account and show that the U.S. aid are not diverted to fund terrorist groups and their activities.

The U.S. Aid to the Palestine Authority and Increasing Terrorist Attacks

Most terror groups involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict have indirectly received significant financial assistance from the authorities in their campaign against Israelis alleged control and expansionist tendencies in West Bank and Gaza Strip. The major terror groups in these areas have been Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Others include Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), and Harakat al-Sabireen (Jewish Virtual Library, 2020).

However, the number of terrorist cells in the region that are under the control of Hizbollah has increased by 150% since 2006. In the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Judea and Samaria, Hizbollah controlled 80 cells, the majority of which were affiliated with the Tanzim and Islamic Jihad. Generally, the terror cells are always utilizing their financial support from the authorities to promote attacks in areas such as West Bank, Gaza Strip, Judea, Samaria, and Jerusalem (Jewish Virtual Library, 2020). Historically concentrated in greater Jerusalem, the number of fatalities linked to terrorist acts from Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria increased to include casualties in Kiryat Gat in the south, Tel Aviv, Afula in the north, Gan Shmuel (near Hadera), and Raanana (in the center of the country).

These groups have harvested series of terrorist attacks in diverse ways through missile, rocket and mortar attacks as well as detonation of Improvised Explosives Devices (IED) at areas largely controlled or inhabited by Israelis. Added to this are numerous cases of shootings, suicide attacks, bombings, stabbing and other forms of violent attacks on the Israelis. Table 1.10 below highlights series of rocket and mortar attacks on the Israelis.

Table 1.10: Number of Attacks from Palestinian Fighting Forces, 2009-2020

Year	Rockets Attacks	Mortar Attacks
2009	142	100
2010	115	78
2011	373	242
2012	1,956	32
2013	32	12
2014	2,975	271
2015	33	-
2016	15	-
2017	21	25

2018	278	71
2019	163	-
2020	133	-

Source: Jewish Virtual Library (2020a) "Rocket & Mortar Attacks against Israel by Date."

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/palestinian-rocket-and-mortar-attacks-against-israel>

The table above shows that the number of rocket attacks launched by Palestinian terrorist fighters has increased considerably from 142 in 2009 to 1,956 attacks in 2012. In addition, the number of attacks further increased to the highest levels in 2014 when about 2,975 rocket attacks were recorded. On the other hand, mortar attacks were at the highest levels in 2011 and 2014 with about 242 and 271 attacks respectively.

Meanwhile, the attacks launched by the terrorist groups have resulted to loss of many lives and property. Table 5.11 below shows the record of the fatalities resulting from the terror attacks launched by Palestinian terrorist organizations fighting in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Judea and Jerusalem.

Table 1.11: Number of Fatalities recorded from Palestinian Terrorist Organizations' Attacks

Year	Israelis Killed by Palestinian Terrorism	Palestinians killed in the Conflict
2000	43	26
2001	207	38
2002	457	37
2003	213	24
2004	124	44
2005	53	99
2006	29	167
2007	13	296
2008	26	91
2009	6	92
2010	10	-
2011	21	-
2012	9	-
2013	7	17
2014	24	30
2015	36	-
2016	16	4

2017	13	3
2018	14	-
2019	9	-
Total	1330	968

Source: Jewish Virtual Library (2020b)

The table above shows that as many as 1330 Israelis have been killed in terrorist attacks launched by Palestinian terrorist organizations between 2000 and 2019. Some 968 Palestinians also lost their lives during these attacks, or from counter-attacks or self-defense by Israelis over the same period.

Conclusion

Hence, the continued terrorist attacks can be linked to the underlying support rendered to the groups by the Palestinian Authority as clearly demonstrated in this section. Which on the contrary the US financial aid geared towards the settlement of the decade long dispute was not only misinterpreted by Palestine and their allies, accusing United States of America as enemies of progress but equally demonstrated that the Palestine’s quest to occupy Jerusalem as its bonafide territory is a process out of greed and human irrationality.

References

- Abrams E. (2018). National security leader adopt the Palestinian narrative. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from: <https://www.link.cfr.com/publication/politics/>
- Congressional Research Services (2018). US Foreign aid to the Palestinians. Washington DC Library of Congress, CRS. Retrieved from: <https://www.ark/67531/metadc332923>
- Gladstone, R. (2018). Aid agencies ask US to restore Palestinian aid. New York Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.addameer.org/publication/nytimes.com>
- Glick C. B. (2014). The Israeli solutions: A one-state plan for peace in the Middle East, New York: Crown Forum, pp. 324. Retrieved from: <https://jcpa.org/carolineglick/>
- Jeremy, W. & Tartir A. (2021). Political economy of foreign aid in the occupied Palestinian territories: A conceptual framing, in Tartir, Alaa; Tariq Dana & Timothy Seidel, eds, Political Economy on Palestine: Critical, Interdisciplinary, and Decolonial perspectives. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan Press, pp. 223 – 247. Retrieved from: <https://www.prio.org/publications/politics/>
- Jewish Virtual Library (2020a). Rocket & Mortar Attacks against Israel by Date. Retrieved from: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/palestinian-rocket-and-mortar-attacks-against-israel>
- Jim Z. (2014). US Foreign aid to the Palestinians: United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Congressional Research Services Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.crs.gov/RS22967>
- Kessler, G. (2019). Have the Palestinians received ‘more aid than any group in history’? The Washington Post publications. Retrieved from: https://www.thewashingtonpost.com/fact_checker/
- Kuperwasser (2016) Incentivizing Terrorism: Palestinian Authority Allocations to Terrorists and their Families. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Retrieved from: <http://jcpa.org/paying-salaries-terrorists-contradicts-palestinian-vows-peaceful-intentions/>
- Kuperwasser, Y. (2020). The unilateral application of Israeli sovereignty is necessary to move the peace process forward: An open letter to Boris Johnson from Yossi Kuperwasser. Fathom Books online publications. <https://fathomjournal.org/publications/politics/>

- Lindsay, J. G. (2009). Fixing UNRWA: Repairing the UN's troubled system of aid to Palestinian refugees. Policy Focus, Washington Institute for Near East Policy no. 91. Institute of National Security Studies. pp. 89 – 100. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stables/resrep27794.13>
- Matt, S. & Stephen, F. (2021). US restores assistance for Palestinians, to provide \$235 million in aid. United Nations Relief and Works Agency Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/politics/>
- Palestinian Media Watch (2016). Israel-Palestine peace accord: Friends of Israel today. Retrieved from: <https://radio.foi.org/palestinian-media-watch/news/palwatch.org/>
- Sharp J. M. & Blanchard C. M. (2006). US foreign aid to the Palestinians. CRS report for congress. Pp. 1 – 6. Retrieved from: <https://www.hsdl.org/>
- Shira E. (2017). Toward a renewed Middle East peace process. The Rand Blog online. Retrieved from: <https://www.rand.org/blog/publications/worldpolitics/>
- Thrall, N. (2010). Is force the solution to peace in Middle East?: Forcing compromise in Israel and Palestine. Time Publication online. Retrieved from: <https://www.time.com/publications/politics/4800819/>
- Wong, E. (2018). US is ending final source of aid for Palestinian civilians. The New York Times Publications online. Retrieved from: <https://www.google.com/amp/nytimes/>
- World Bank (2018) “Net ODA Received Per Capita (Current US \$) –West Bank and Gaza.” Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DY.OA.ODAT.PC.ZS?locations=PS>
- Zilber, N. (2018). What might be next for Israeli-Palestinian conflict after tumultuous week. WBUR Publications. Retrieved from: <https://www.wbur.org/publications>