

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:45:13 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy R Ajimine	One Impact Hawaii	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Bill is biased and only supports one community of people. National/world issue that is not specific to Hawaii. We have SO MANY BIG problems here. Can we please stay focused and spend our time and money on issues that make our state and nation a better place to live?



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: CAI

MARCH 20, 2024

HCR 36/HR 25, URGING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROMPTLY REINSTATE FUNDING FOR THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST TO SUPPORT ITS LIFE-SAVING AND CRITICAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES.

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** HCR 36/HR 25, which urge the President of the United States to promptly reinstate funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to support its life-saving and critical humanitarian assistance programs to Palestinian refugees.

According to the health ministry in Gaza, at least 30,717 people have been killed in Israel's ongoing war against the Palestinians. Roughly 12,300 of those lost were children and 8,400 were women. Another 72,156 have been injured, 8,663 of whom are children and 6,327 of whom are women. These numbers do not include figures from the occupied West Bank, where another 400 people have been killed and 4,600 injured.

The devastation in Gaza is impossible to overstate. More than half of Gaza's homes—360,000 residential units—have been destroyed or damaged. Another 392 educational facilities have been demolished; 12 out of 35 hospitals are only partially functioning; 132 ground water wells have been damaged or destroyed, and 267 places of worship have been ruined.

Every hour in Gaza since the incursion began, 15 people have been killed (including 6 children), 35 people have been injured, 42 bombs have been dropped, and 12 buildings have been destroyed, Nearly 100 journalists have also been slain, some of whom appear to have been deliberately targeted by Israeli forces for reporting on the horror of the conflict. As 1.9 million Palestinians have been forced to flee their homes, many more lives are now at risk from hunger, disease, and low temperatures.

This situation is exacerbated by the U.S.'s defunding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians in the Near East, which has provided critical humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees since its inception in 1949. Much of the UNRWA's budget since the most recent conflict began has paid for flour for 350,000 families; 14 million food items, mattress pads, blankets, and kitchen sets; the distribution of 20 million liters of water; and life-saving medication.

Local, national, and international pressure on Israel to stop its military offensive is growing. The months-long Israeli siege of the Gaza strip has created a dire humanitarian crisis that can only be addressed by the achievement of a permanent ceasefire. We also note and condemn the continued U.S. military aid for Israel—President Biden recently requested another \$10 billion—that has come despite Israel's restriction of humanitarian assistance and repeated violations of international law.

Israel's assault on Gaza is the latest episode in a long legacy of colonial bloodshed that has left the Palestinian people struggling to defend their basic human rights and dignity. We cannot stand idly by while the world bears witness to a withering offensive that is intended to fortify the apartheid conditions that Israel has imposed on Gaza's citizens. **To prevent the further loss of innocent lives, we, the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, stand with all those throughout the world who are demanding the restoration of humanitarian assistance for the UNRWA and the establishment of a permanent ceasefire. Now.**

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 679-7454
kriscoffield@gmail.com

Abby Simmons
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 352-6818
abbyalana808@gmail.com

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:43:58 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
miranda Cabero	Rise for palestine	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people-especially children and the elderly-are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding.

The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawaii State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

Slide #2: The Hawaii Ceasefire Resolution still needs a JHA committee hearing. Call Vice Chair Takayama at

808-586-6340 and ask him to schedule HCR215/ HR195.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:52:39 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wren Patton	Democratic Socialists of O'ahu	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA provides critical support for Palestinians who have struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai'i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai'i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.



Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Gemma G. Weinstein, President

Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President

March 19, 2024

Committee On Culture, Arts, & International Affairs
Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Chair
Rep. Rose Martinez, Vice Chair

Testimony in strong support of HCR36 / HR25

Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez, and Members of the Committee,

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents over 10,000 Hawaii workers in hotels, health care, airports and food service. We are concerned that the United States has ignored the findings and recommendations of the United Nations regarding the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and has made matters worse by defunding the United Nations' efforts for the relief of Gaza's civilian population.

The UN and its international relief agencies are the most potent tool the global community has to address mass civilian casualties and displacement when conflicts arise. Maintaining this safety net for the world's people is of vital importance to all nations. The United States is making a grave mistake by refusing to support the United Nations in its mission of mercy.

Our union has called for an immediate ceasefire and the freeing of hostages in order to protect the civilian population of Gaza. A ceasefire will allow vitally needed relief into Gaza, and the UN relief agency needs the funds to provide that relief.

The US must restore funding to the UNWRA immediately. We support the effort of the Legislature to do the right thing for the world's people. Please pass this resolution.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:29:42 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fatima	Rise for Palestine	Support	In Person

Comments:

Kidnapped UNRWA workers were pressured and beaten by Israeli authorities to *falsley claim they have Hamas links* and that staff took part in October 7th.

There is absolutely NO evidence of the UNRWA having any links to resistance forces. Billions were divested from UNRWA and millions are still being starved by no support from the organization that gave so much.

All because of a lie.

Really reflect on this for a moment and ask yourself if you still want to support the terrorism of Israel.

No charge, no trial, no consequences for IOF. Hawai'i can make a statement and be the first in the nation to show the world our compassion and value for human life.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/unrwa-report-says-israel-coerced-some-agency-employees-falsely-admit-hamas-links-2024-03-08/>

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:32:31 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Warech	Jewish Voice for Peace-Hawai'i	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

Jewish Voice for Peace-Hawai'i is in **STRONG** support of HCR36/HR25.

Jewish Voice for Peace Hawai'i is the local chapter of the largest Jewish anti-Zionist organization in the world. We are a grassroots, multiracial, cross-class, intergenerational movement of Jews in solidarity with the Palestinian freedom struggle, and the struggle for a free Hawai'i. Like generations of Jews before us, we fight for the liberation of all peoples and lands.

Just today, it was announced that 1.1 million people are on the brink of starvation and therefore imminent death. We need to work bottoms up for our congressional delegation to listen to its constituents. They need to hear the state legislature united in calling for them to do the right thing and reinstate this funding. There has been clear evidence tha Israel lied about any ties of UNRWA to Hamas and children have died at the hands of those lies. It is time to say enough is enough and end these atrocities and move toward working tirelessly to save as many lives as possible.

The UNWRA is a vital source of support for Gaza and can provide the much needed resources if reinstated and allowed unconditional access to save the lives of 1.1 million people.



HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

Defending and Respecting the workers of
Hawai'i

(503) WORKERS ☎

(503) 967- 5377 ☎

hawaiiworkerscenter@gmail.com ✉

Mail: 2252 Puna St., Honolulu, HI 96817 ✉

hawaiiworkerscenter.org 🌐

March 19, 2024

**Executive Board
Committee**

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Board Chair

Mary Ochs
Vice Chair

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Executive Director

Sergio Alcubilla III, Esq.

Hawaii State House of Representatives
Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs
Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Chair
Rep. Rose Martinez, Vice Chair

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for HCR36/HR25 URGING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROMPTLY REINSTATE FUNDING FOR THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST TO SUPPORT ITS LIFE-SAVING AND CRITICAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES.

Dear Chair Rep. Tam, Vice-Chair Rep. Martinez, and Members of the Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs:

The Hawaii Workers Center joins with many unions, workers, and human rights organizations across the country and internationally in calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the protection of Palestinian rights, especially the right to life. At this point after weeks of heavy bombing, over 30,000 civilians have been killed in Gaza, many of them children. Thousands more have been injured and many thousands more buried in the rubble. There is no safe place from the bombing by the Israeli government.

Thus, we stand in strong support of HCR 36/HR25 the President of the United States to promptly reinstate funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees in Palestine. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive throughout the occupation of its land and the illegal settlements that have circumvented international law.

The hard-earned tax dollars of our workers all across this country should not be used for the bombing and killing of innocent civilians, including children. Instead, it should support the humanitarian efforts UNRWA as Australia, Canada, and the EU have done.

Sincerely,

Sergio Alcubilla
Executive Director



HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 3:34:26 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Moses Barrios	Calvary by the Sea Lutheran Church and Faith Action Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai'i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai'i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

The Rev. Dr. Moses Barrios, President of Faith Action Hawai'i and Calvary by the Sea Lutheran Church

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:02:26 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaysha Alonzo-Estrada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

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I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:03:48 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Beaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:20:18 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sven Sorge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:25:42 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The people of Palestine are being subjected to a genocide, and are facing mass displacement (with nowhere safe to go) as well as inexcusable levels of starvation. We have seen multiple so-called "flour massacres" as the faux state of Israel's troops continue to slaughter innocent people with US tax dollars, weapons, and training.

The least we can do is encourage humanitarian aid as we continue to be complicit in war crimes against Palestinians.

- Isis Usborne, 96815

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:55:18 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:57:05 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bonniebrooke Bullock	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo. Bonniebrooke B.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:46:37 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariko Whitenack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou!

My name is Mariko Whitenack and I am a resident of Kaimukī. I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has become so severe that people - especially children and the elderly - are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the EU have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. has yet to do so. I call on the Hawai‘i State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

Mahalo for your consideration and for this opportunity to offer testimony!

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:53:28 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynda Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in Strong support of 36 HCR URGING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO PROMPTLY REINSTATE FUNDING FOR THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST TO SUPPORT ITS LIFE-SAVING AND CRITICAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO PALESTINIAN REFUGEES.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:53:44 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this resolution

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:16:58 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Absolutely Restore the funding!! I'm appalled that Biden discontinued funding. I couldn't possibly support him or anyone who stopped humanitarian funding of UNRWA.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:23:22 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lily Hiʻilani Okimura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for Palestinians in Gaza, a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel falsely accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that thousands of people, especially children and the elderly, are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if some of the UNRWA staff members were associated with Hamas in any way, **cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable**. On top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that **Israeli forces used torture techniques** including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning these accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The United States still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Mahalo ā nui for your time and consideration.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:24:57 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaime	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

RE: Testimony of Will Caron

Strong Support for HCR36/HR25: Urging the U.S. to restore its funding to the UNRWA
House Committee on Culture, Arts and International Affairs

March 20, 2024

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in **strong support** of HCR36/HR25. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides primary and vocational education, primary healthcare, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response for Palestinian refugees, including in situations of armed conflict. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade at the hands of the State of Israel for nearly two decades.

After Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness, in addition to the bombs that the U.S. is still providing to Israel to drop on them.

Even if a tiny fraction of UNRWA staff were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding for Palestinians while they are being actively targeted by Israel for genocide is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members.

The accusations against UNRWA staff were lies—yet another example of Israeli disinformation tactics used by this far-right, genocidal regime to justify the immense suffering and collective punishment it is continuing to inflict against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai'i State Legislature to do everything it can to end the genocide in Gaza, to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by sending weapons and money to Israel, and to uphold the universal human rights of all people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai'i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:05:10 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Arif Rahman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I am reaching out to you with a heartfelt plea in fervent support of HCR36. The UNRWA plays a critical role in providing essential services such as primary and vocational education, healthcare, relief, social services, and emergency response to Palestinian refugees, particularly in times of armed conflict. This agency serves as a lifeline for a defenseless population enduring the harsh realities of prolonged siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

The recent actions taken by the State of Israel, accusing select UNRWA staff of affiliations with Hamas, have led to a devastating chain of events. Western nations, including the United States, have withdrawn crucial funding from this humanitarian organization. Consequently, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has escalated to catastrophic levels, resulting in widespread suffering and loss of life among vulnerable groups, including children and the elderly. The situation is exacerbated by Israeli bombings that indiscriminately target civilians.

Even if there were allegations of Hamas affiliations among staff members, the decision to cut off vital relief funding is morally reprehensible. Recent reports from Reuters have exposed Israeli forces employing torture methods like waterboarding to extract false confessions from these individuals, revealing the baselessness of the accusations. This unjust tactic is part of a broader strategy aimed at inflicting suffering and collective punishment on innocent civilians.

Countries like Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the European Union have taken steps to reinstate funding to UNRWA recognizing its indispensable role. However, the United States has yet to follow suit. I implore the Hawai'i State Legislature to take a stand against this grave injustice enabled by our government's support for Israel's actions against the Palestinian people. Your affirmative vote to advance HCR36 to the full House is crucial in upholding our community values here in Hawai'i that reject such atrocities.

I urge you to act with compassion and humanity by supporting this resolution. Let us not turn a blind eye to the immense suffering inflicted on innocent lives. Your decision holds the power to make a difference and uphold justice where it is most needed. Mahalo for your attention and consideration.

Mahalo,

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:05:21 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Chee	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair Rose Martinez, and Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs,

I am in strong support of HCR36. I am the Pastor of Wahiawā Church of Christ and am one of 49 faith leaders who are calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. (see our statement below) We must do all we can to reinstate funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to support its life-saving and critical humanitarian assistance programs for Palestinian refugees.

Mahalo,

Pastor Cassandra Chee

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 19, 2024

(Signatures updated 3/18/2024)

Contact: Cassandra Chee, cassandralchee@gmail.com

Hawai'i Interfaith Call for a Permanent Ceasefire in Gaza

We, faith leaders of Hawai'i, undersigned, are calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. We live in the Hawaiian Kingdom which has been illegally occupied by the United States since January 17th, 1893. Now over a hundred years later we join the many who call for the de-occupation of Hawai'i, Palestine, and all occupied nations across the world.

We are calling upon Representative Jill Tokuda and Representative Ed Case to support [House Resolution 786](#) "Calling for an immediate de-escalation and cease-fire in Israel and occupied Palestine"; and we are additionally calling upon Senator Brian Schatz and Senator Mazie Hirono to support a Senate counterpart when and if it surfaces. We thank Senator Hirono for being the first congressperson from Hawai'i to publicly call for a ceasefire.

We are calling upon Governor Josh Green and all members of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives and members of the Hawai'i State Senate to support measures which call for an immediate ceasefire including [Senate Resolution 6](#) and [Senate Concurrent Resolution 13](#) "URGING MEMBERS OF HAWAII'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO SUPPORT THE CEASEFIRE IN GAZA RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY UNITED STATES CONGRESSWOMAN CORI BUSH." We thank Senator Maile Shimabukuro and Senator Mike Gabbard for introducing these resolutions.

The conflict between Israel, Hamas, and other armed groups has taken a devastating toll on civilians. The level of casualties is unprecedented. Nearly 30,000 civilians have been killed since October 7th and the majority of them are women and children. (An additional credible-but-as-yet-unverified 7,000 civilians are "under the rubble" of the northern area of the Gaza Strip and presumed dead. Also, some 68,000 Gazan civilians are in a "wounded" category.) A ceasefire would put a stop to unlawful attacks by all parties, halt the ever-surging death-and-wounded toll in Gaza and enable aid agencies to get life-saving aid, water and medical supplies into the Strip to address the staggering levels of human suffering. It will also allow hospitals to receive life-saving medicines, fuel and equipment they desperately need and a repair to damaged wards. Importantly, a ceasefire would lead imminently to a resolution of the hostage crisis (Israelis taken into Gaza on October 7th; thousands of Palestinian prisoners languishing without legal recourse in Israeli prisons) on both sides.

We reject Settler-Colonial Zionism, the extremist ideology which displaced some 750,000 Palestinians from their homes, towns, and land in 1948-9 plus many thousands more in the intervening 75 years (many of them, effectively imprisoned via siege/blockade in the Gaza Strip). We condemn all forms of religious violence and intolerance including Islamophobia, anti-semitism, and Christian supremacy.

"Why is it totally acceptable and commendable to resist oppression in other contexts, yet there is a double standard when it comes to Palestinians? Why is every Israeli violence "self defense" while every Palestinian violence "terrorism"? . . . Repeatedly throughout the years, the Palestinian Christian community and the great majority of Muslims have been committed to non-violence and to dialogue. Even in the midst of violence and oppression that we face daily in every aspect in our life." (Rev. Dr. Munther Issac of Christmas Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem) We support nonviolence as the de-escalation of violence and we support Palestinians in their rights to defend their land, families, and selves.

As South African Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu said, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." While we are people of many faiths and cultures, we are united in demanding an immediate and permanent ceasefire for true peace and an end to violence.

Rev. Alan Mark
Retired United Methodist Pastor
Honolulu, Hawaii

Rev. Amy Chieko Wake
Trinity United Methodist Church
Pearl City, Oahu

Rev. Bob Miyake-Stoner
United Methodist
Aiea, Oahu

Kahu Brianna Lloyd
Ka Hana O Ke Akua
Wai‘anae, O‘ahu

Pastor Brenda Wong
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Rev. Brittani Alexander
Honolulu, Oahu

Pastor Cassandra Chee
Wahiawā United Church of Christ
Wahiawā, O'ahu

The Rev. Christopher PJ Golding
SCP Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i
Makawao, Maui

Senior Pastor Rev. Darren Galindo
United Church of Christ
Honolulu, Oahu

Rev. David Yoshida
The Giving Circle Church, UCC Honolulu, O‘ahu

Fr. David Gierlach, SCP
Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii
Honolulu, Oahu

Eric Paul
Church of the Nazarene
Kailua Kona, Hawai'i

George M Hudes
Jewish Voice for Peace Hawaii
Honolulu, Oahu

The Rev. Prof. Gregory Johnson
St. Elizabeth of Kapalama
Honolulu, Oahu

Dr. Kahu Haaheo Guanson
Pacific Justice & Reconciliation Center
Honolulu, Oahu

Kahu Mua Heather Barfield
Kaumakapili Church
Honolulu, Oahu

Imam Dr. Ismail Elshikh
Muslim Association of Hawaii
Honolulu, Oahu

Rev. Dr. Jack E. Belsom
United Church of Christ
Wailuku, Maui

Jeffrey Hayashi
Honolulu, Oahu

Rev. Jessica Kawamura
Aiea, Oahu

Jim Albertini
Malu 'Aina
Ola'a (Kurtistown), Hawaii Island

John Witeck
Hawaii Workers Center
Honolulu, Oahu

Rev. JP Sabbithi
Joy of Christ
Honolulu, Oahu

Dr. Kahu Kaleo Patterson
Pacific Justice and Reconciliation Center
Honolulu, Oahu

Dr. Ketty Mobed
Humanists of Hawaii
Kaunakakai, Molokai

Kristen Young
Faith Action Hawai'i
Honolulu, O'ahu

Rev. Mary K. Herbig
United Church of Christ
Kailua, O'ahu

Kahu Moanike'ala Nanod-Sitch
Ka 'Ohana o ke Aloha
Kailua, O'ahu

The Rev. Dr. Moses D. Barrios
Faith Action Hawai'i President
Honolulu, O'ahu

Makaiwa Kanui
Hilo, Hawai'i

Rev. Malia Galindo
Church of the Crossroads
Honolulu, Oahu

Malie Sellers
Keaau Friends Worship Group
Keaau Hawai'i

Rev. Mary Paik
Kailua, Oahu

Rev. Dr. Michele Shields
United Methodist Church
Kaneohe, Oahu

Kahu Napua McShane Burke
Hawaii Conference United Church of Christ
Waiakea Uka, Hawai'i

Rev. Neal MacPherson
United Church of Christ
Honolulu, O'ahu

Noel J. Kent
UH Manoa
Honolulu, Oahu

Pete Doktor
Jikoen Hongwanji
Buddhist Peace Fellowship
Moanalua, O`ahu

Rev. Piula Alailima
Wesley United Methodist Church, Kahala
Honolulu, Oahu

Rev. Pua Kekaula Kāneali`i
Church of the Nazarene
Kalama`ula, Molokai

Rebecca Woodland
Central Union Church
Honolulu, Oahu

Kahu Rennie Mau
Hawaii PAAM
Honolulu, Oahu

Rona Mangayayam
Honolulu, Oahu

Ronald Fujiyoshi
Retired missionary, United Church of Christ
Hilo, Hawai`i

Rev. Dr. M. Scott Landis
Ordained Minister - United Church of Christ
Kihei, Maui

Venerable Rev. Steven Costa
Episcopal Church
Honolulu, O`ahu

Wally Inglis
Catholic Worker House
Honolulu, O`ahu

Pastor Wayne Ibara
Makiki Christian Church
Honolulu, Oahu

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:06:15 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
david gierlach	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I urge you to tell the United States government to restore funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The ongoing catastrophe in the Gaza strip is inexcusable. The famine that is occurring even now is only going to grow worse. Aid needs to be forwarded as soon as possible and a cease fire is absolutely urgent.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:24:24 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Jewell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Mahalo,

Jean Jewell

96725

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:48:47 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diliaur Tellei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure and urge the committee to pass it. That the US and other countries would pull funding for this lifesaving and critical organization based on unfounded allegations of terroristic activity goes against the basic rule of law -- namely, the presumption of innocence. This is especially befuddling given that funding was pulled while Gaza is in a literal humanitarian crisis and in desperate need of aid. The stakes are so high; why should all of Gaza be punished for the unproven, alleged actions of a handful of people? Now countries like Canada and Australia have restored funding, recognizing the direness of the crisis. We in Hawaii must do all we can to urge the United States to do likewise, leave this ethical limbo, and restore funding to UNWRA. I for one would like to think we will stand on the right side of history in calling for this restoration.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 4:02:50 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Kevin Kekoa Dolan-Ma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo nui loa.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 4:06:47 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laila Popata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing as an individual. UNWRA provides critical assistance to the people of Gaza. Many of the countries who suspended funding have not restored it. They have not found evidence of UNWRA workers being Hamas. The only workers who said they were affiliated with Hamas were tortured. RESTORE funding for UNWRA.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 4:20:22 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
smita Paul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the reinstatement of aid for GAZA. this is literally something any human being should support. In fact, we should double and triple our aid and help them rebuild everything immediately. We have let Isrealis murder these people in front of our eyes, with our tax money AGAINST THE majority of Americans demands for a ceasefire. This is the very least we could do.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 5:29:38 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chazz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear committe members,

It has become clear that the UNRWA does not have any connections with Hamas. In light of the news that members were coerced to give false statements, I believe it to be of utmost importance to resume funding for them. We cannot allow Israel to maintain their power through false narratives, cutting off life-saving aid to the civilians in Gaza as well as the hostages still held by Hamas. I understand the issue with giving aid that will go to Hamas, but this is the only way to ensure the safety of the remaining hostages. I hope you will do the right thing.

Mahalo for yout time and consideration.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 5:41:52 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeanette Qablawi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawai'i State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 6:03:17 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie Redican	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in SUPPORT of HCR36, cutting funding of UNRWA is incredibly inhumane and has only caused more suffering in Palestine.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 6:05:14 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Shimizu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorables Representative Tam (Chair), Representative Martinez (Vice Chair) and Members of the Culture, Arts, & International Affairs committee (CAI); Representative Tarnas (Chair), Representative Takayama (Vice Chair) and Members of the Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs committee (JHA):

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36 / HR25 in order to urge the President of the United States to reinstate funding for UNRWA. Please do not delay any further as Palestinians are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

Thank you for your consideration and sincerely,

Sherry Shimizu

Oahu

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 7:00:16 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Spencer Kelly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people-especially children and the elderly--are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding.

The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawaii State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 7:07:43 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert H Stiver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is an ultimate no-brainer. Not only is UNRWA the literal LIFELINE to millions of oppressed/occupied Palestinians, IN ACTUAL FACT UNRWA has been operating compassionately for DECADES because the 2024 Colonial/Genocidal regime of Zionist Israel (preceded by many other regimes of varying intensity of persection and crimes against humanity) is, UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AS THE OCCUPYING POWER SINCE AT LEAST 1967, *RESPONSIBLE* for providing aid to the [illegally] occupied populace, the Palestinians. This aid is across many fields including medical, hygienic, educational, infrastructural, humanitarian (food! water!), social, spiritual, etc., in order to provide some succor to the occupied. Zionist Israel has abysmally -- totally -abrogated its *absolute* responsibilities in these regards!

We, the US, the UN, and the world must rise in concert and RE-INITIATE, UNABATED, RESOURCES TO UNRWA SO THAT IT CAN EXECUTE ITS VITAL-VITAL MISSION!

Thank you for your attention and your affirmative vote!

Robert H. Stiver, Pearl City

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 7:21:23 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas--claims which have remained unsubstantiated and incredible--Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people, particularly children and the elderly, are now highly vulnerable to death from starvation and illness in addition to Israeli bombs and being targeted by Israeli snipers.

Cutting off this vital source of relief funding was an absolutely unconscionable move by the United States. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have already restored UNRWA funding based on the discreditation of Israel's false allegations, but the U.S. still has not. This is yet another way the U.S. is deeply incriminated in Israel's genocide of the Palestinian people.

I call upon the Hawai'i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its ethnic cleansing campaign against Palestinians. You must vote yes to advance HCR36 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai'i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:07:45 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breanne Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:07:49 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashlie McGuire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an obvious no brainer! These are human beings we are talking about and we need an end to this genocide.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:16:23 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Cutting off aid to UNRWA while watching a genocide unfold before our eyes is unconscionable and antithetical to our professed values. People who have been under seige for decades are now again displaced, bombed, maimed and left without food or medical aid. Common humanity should drive us to insist with every fibre of our being that aid be restored. The indecent assault and ethnic cleansing are horrific enough. To add to that the withholding of basic humanitarian aid is unthinkable. Please vote YES on this resolution.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:18:40 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosemary Bearden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people-especially children and the elderly- are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawai'i State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

Mahalo,

Rosemary Bearden

Nīnole, Hawai'i, 96773

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:36:16 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Lawrence	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am here to strongly advocate for HCR36/HR25. UNRWA plays a crucial role in supporting a population that has been enduring constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades. The United States cut funding to this vital relief agency based on false accusations that some UNRWA staff were members of Hamas. As a result, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has reached a severe level, leading to mass deaths from starvation and illness, especially among children and the elderly. It is unacceptable that the U.S. has not restored its UNRWA funding while other countries like Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the European Union have done so. I urge the Hawaii State Legislature to demand the immediate restoration of U.S. funding to UNRWA. Should this story continue? I am here to strongly advocate for HCR36/HR25. UNRWA plays a crucial role in supporting a population that has been enduring constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades. The United States cut funding to this vital relief agency based on false accusations that some UNRWA staff were members of Hamas. As a result, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has reached a severe level, leading to mass deaths from starvation and illness, especially among children and the elderly. It is unacceptable that the U.S. has not restored its UNRWA funding while other countries like Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the European Union have done so. I urge the Hawaii State Legislature to demand the immediate restoration of U.S. funding to UNRWA.

Mahalo,

Rachel Lawrence

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 10:06:22 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlotte Sandoz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HCR36/HR25 with all my heart and pray that you will vote in favor of restoring funding to UNRWA . The level of extreme suffering in Gaza is so disturbing and we must do all we can to alleviate the situation asap.it is of utmost urgency as you know that everyday more life are lost, more injuries cause excruciating pain.

Please vote YES !

Thank you

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 10:26:04 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aisling Kennedy	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dia dhaoibh. Aisling is ainm dom agus is Éireannach mé. Hello, my name is Aisling and I am Irish.

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25.

The reason I mention being Irish is because, while the US and other countries suspended funding to UNRWA based on Israel’s unreliable allegations that 12 of UNRWA's 13,000 staff were involved on October 7th, Ireland continued to support UNRWA. In fact, after the US and other key donors suspended aid, Ireland pledged 20 million Euros to UNRWA and urged countries that had suspended funding to resume and expand support to the agency.

The reason for this, and the reason that support for Palestinians is so strong in Ireland, is that as Irish people we are intimately familiar with what subjugation, forced starvation and collective punishment from a colonizing entity looks like.

You most likely will have heard of the Great Hunger, or the Irish famine. At least 1 million Irish people were killed by starvation or disease, while at least another million were forced to flee Ireland on coffin ships. The common misconception is that these deaths occurred because a blight on the potato meant there was no food in Ireland. This is incorrect. While there was a blight on the potato, there was food in Ireland. Irish people were starved to death through **man-made famine** brought about by British policy. It was the purposeful destruction of Irish people, our culture, and our existence, by those who were colonizing us.

What we are seeing in Gaza today is the purposeful destruction on Palestinian people, their culture and their existence, by those who are colonizing them. This most recent form of collective punishment – Israel’s blocking of aid and now the US failure to restore funding to UNRWA – is a continuation of the 17 years long blockade and siege on Gaza, which is widely regarded by human rights groups as illegal.

On Monday a report from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification initiative – or IPC – (the world’s leading body on food emergencies) laid out the reality of the situation stating that 1.1 million people in Gaza are facing catastrophic levels of hunger and starvation between now and July.

UN Secretary General António Guterres said in response to the IPC report, “Palestinians in Gaza are enduring horrifying levels of hunger and suffering... This is the highest number of people

facing catastrophic hunger ever recorded by the Integrated Food Security Classification system – anywhere, anytime... This is an **entirely man-made disaster**, and the report makes clear that it can be halted."

Along with this report warning of us of the absolute devastation that is to come, we are already seeing people in Gaza, including young children, dying just skin and bone from malnutrition. Let us not forget that the ICJ recently ruled that it is plausible that genocide is being committed in Gaza by Israel. The US absolutely cannot enable this to continue.

As an Irish person and a human being, I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people.

You must vote YES to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Go raibh maith agaibh. Thank you.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 10:40:25 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Jennifer Stikeleather. I live in Diamond Head, Honolulu, HI. I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/ HR25. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people-especially children and the elderly-are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawaii State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 11:57:32 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Testifying in strong support, from Hawai'i to Palestine.

Mahalo,
Dylan Ramos
96816

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:19:44 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ella Malie Turner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in complete support of HCR36. Canada, Australia, and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The US has not. We urge the Hawai'i State legislature to demand the US to restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 1:45:12 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Nicole Echols	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

Those who can sit idly during a manufactured famine have no humanity left.

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it

must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai'i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:41:23 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn L Bradford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this resolution. Israel lied about UNWRA and tortured them to admit to something that never happened. Hawai'i must stand on the right side of history and push the president to start funding UNWRA again. The Palestinians are starving to death. As I write this the death toll from starvation is over 25 people, most of them children.

No votes for genocide supporters.

RE: STRONG SUPPORT HCR36/HR25 URGING THE U.S. TO REINSTATE UNRWA FUNDING

Dear Chair Tam and Members of the Culture, Arts & International Affairs Committee,

The decision by the U S. Administration to freeze funding for UNRWA is a classic example of collective punishment; punishing millions for the *alleged and unfounded* actions of a few.

The Israeli Government has for decades, through today, practiced extensive collective punishment. From the ongoing daily bombing, killing and maiming of tens of thousands of civilians, half of whom are children, in a vengeful rage following the October 7th attack, to routinely demolishing entire villages in the Occupied West Bank in response to claims that a single Palestinian, without any due process or judicial proceedings, *may* have attempted to commit a crime against an Israeli.

Let us not forget that Israel has long targeted UNRWA and the entire International UN system, including decisions by the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. It's no coincidence that the allegations made by Israel against UNRWA were released at the same time that the ICJ announced that Israel was plausibly committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza (also see March 19, Haaretz article below).

In withholding desperately needed funding to UNRWA, who serves millions of Palestinians across the region, not only in Gaza, our own Administration has reached a new level of cruelty and complicity in war crimes, as withholding humanitarian aid is in violation of numerous international laws. Fortunately, Australia, Canada and the European Union have since reinstated funding. The US should immediately do the same.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this Resolution.

Inga Gibson

Israeli Influence Operation Targets U.S. Lawmakers on Hamas-UNRWA - National Security & Cyber

www.haaretz.com

For the first time since the war in Gaza began, social media researchers have discovered an Israeli influence operation active across a number of platforms using hundreds of fake accounts to advance what was termed "Israeli interests" online among young Western audiences, in English.

The campaign, discovered by an Israeli online watchdog, is not pushing out disinformation but rather focuses on un-organically amplifying claims and reports

regarding the involvement of UNRWA workers in the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, and its targets include U.S. lawmakers.

At the center of the campaign, researchers at Fake Reporter found, were three "news sites" that seemed to have been created especially for the operation. The sites published reports that were copied from other, real news outlets, among them CNN and The Guardian – for instance, a UN report about sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas on October 7. Hundreds of avatars – complex online digital personas – intensively promoted the "reports" from the campaign's sites, as well as posting screen captures from real ones, such as a Wall Street Journal report on UNRWA staff members' involvement in the attack.

The avatars were all created on the same dates, made use of the same profile photos and naming conventions, and shared other characteristics that indicate they are all part of the same network, stated a report published by the watchdog on Tuesday (Full report in Hebrew available here). The accounts were opened in sets across Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter); one of the avatars has Hebrew letters in its username in what looks to be a typo. While so-called bots are automatic accounts that can be easily identified by platforms, avatars are "cyborgs" and are not fully automated, but rather try to mimic real human behavior by being active on a number of platforms.

Over 500 different avatars were found on the three social networks. They pushed out posts with almost identical wording and links to what Fake Reporter called "the three main assets" in the influence operation: UnFold Magazine, Non-Agenda and The Moral Alliance. The date that UnFold's X profile was created was the same date on which a large number of the avatars were also created. While the Moral Alliance only has a presence on social media, the other have two actual websites – and these two also share a number of technical characteristics that indicate they are linked to each other and were set up as part of the same operation.

The three assets have over 40,000 followers across social media, and according to researchers, the network includes a core group of users, a secondary group for amplification – including some Israeli avatars, though most were American (including many with Jewish and African American names) – and another group for retweeting or responding.

The operation began a few weeks after the war broke out and is still active today. The campaign, researchers found, tried to inflate the exposure of its content and to artificially boost the popularity of online materials deemed to be pro-Israel or advancing Israeli interests.

A review of its content reveals that it began by focusing on Zionism and Jewish history, in what seemed like an attempt to address rising antisemitism in the West, especially among young Jewish and African American progressives in the U.S. The campaign's content also attempted to address widespread denialism of rape and sexual violence during the Hamas massacre. Later, it shifted to more aggressive tactics and more

political content, amplifying claims also being pushed out by the Israeli government, the Foreign Ministry and Israel's official hasbara (public diplomacy) channels – namely, claims against the UN aid agency and its ties to Hamas.

In January, Haaretz revealed that an Israeli body had procured an online influence system to respond to what numerous sources called "Israel's hasbara crisis" and a "pro-Palestinian online hate machine" that was pushing out antisemitism, pro-Hamas propaganda, massacre denialism and disinformation that was undermining Israel's international legitimacy online – and thus also the Israeli army's ability to battle Hamas.

The system was intended to counter unauthentic support for Hamas online. At some point, it was transferred to a civilian body, likely a governmental agency, and today it operates alongside other hasbara initiatives, including official and private initiatives being funded by Israel's hasbara directorate and the Diaspora Affairs Ministry.

It's impossible to know who is behind this current operation being exposed here today – and it's impossible to find the operators or those funding such campaigns using social media analysis alone.

'As an African American woman'

The three assets at the center of the campaign opened prior to the war in the Gaza Strip, but kicked into action only after it began. They published content that can be described as being of interest to general progressive audiences. The websites published reports about climate change, AI regulation, the state of democracy across the world – and of course the Gaza war, Iran's role in Yemen and even Jewish history. There were also reports on culture, including about the Oscars. Researchers believe these were intended to draw non-political readers to the sites and increase their followers on social media that at a later stage would also see pro-Israel content.

Most of the content, researchers found, was copied, likely automatically, from other websites, mostly prominent and respected media outlets, and were either copied in full or used as the basis for what looks like an automatic rewrite. The website also published original content that may have also been generated automatically using AI – for example, a real UN report about sexual violence was written up on Non-Agenda.

The different avatars retweeted, shared and posted similarly worded posts, and many began their digital lives with a declaration of identity: "As a middle-aged Jewish American male, I stand against human rights violations, but I cannot support Hamas; let's find a peaceful solution for justice," tweeted "David Taylor." Taylor's profile picture shows a young Black man.

Others also tweeted similar phrases and in some cases there was incongruence between their names, pictures and claims of identity, researchers found. Aaliyah Martinez Paul tweeted, "As an African American middle-aged male, I find solace and strength in my Christian faith," though the profile picture showed a woman. Butler Juan,

whose profile picture is of a person of color, also wrote that he found solace in his faith – but as a "middle-aged white American man."

After basing their identity, the different avatars began to tweet about a wide array of topics, including lack of safety for Jewish Americans on college campuses and discrimination against Jewish students, and even tagged academic institutions like Harvard as the Senate was discussing the Gaza war's effect on American academic life.

Others focused on the shared history of African Americans and U.S. Jewry, and the role Jewish Americans played in the civil rights struggle: "The Jewish people stood by the black community and supported your fight for equality, now you need to support us against those who want to destroy us," a user named Lisa Akerman tweeted.

The avatars pushed out the different reports published on the three assets. For example, UnFold's content stressed the values shared by Israel and the West and the shared liberal values at the heart of Judeo-Christian culture. There was also general content about Jewish history on Non-Agenda, for example debunking myths regarding Judaism or stressing Jews' historical links to the region.

Content dealing directly with the Gaza war was taken from other websites, including Jewish outlets like the Jewish Telegraph Agency and the Jewish Chronicle; Israeli outlets like the Jerusalem Post and the Times of Israel; and even respected outlets considered liberal-leaning, like CNN, The Guardian and others.

To further attract a broad readership, Non-Agenda was set up as a general interest news site. Out of the three, Non Agenda had the most followers on social media. On its website and on social media, Non Agenda offered its readers purported coverage on a wide array of topics, purportedly devoid of any agenda.

On its homepage, it automatically aggregated the X feeds of other outlets not focused on Israel at all: For example, the BBC's feed was embedded into the site. However, it also included feeds from other lesser known outlets. It showcased the tweets of Nexta, an online TV channel run by Belarussian now based in Poland, and from Visegrád 24, a mysterious online media presence with active YouTube and Telegram channels that in the past has pushed out content considered favorable to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and is considered close to the pro-Donald Trump European right. Both outlets gained online popularity after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and after the Gaza war broke out they began publishing content on this topic, too.

UNRWA for Democrats

At the end of January, now with tens of thousands of followers, the campaign pivoted toward a much more political topic: From Jewish history, antisemitism on U.S. campuses and Judeo-Christian values shared by Jews and African Americans, the avatars and assets shifted their focus to what was at the time the main narrative of

Israeli diplomacy: UNRWA, its staff members' ties to Hamas and their role in the events of the October 7 massacre.

For years Israel has claimed that the Gaza aid agency is collaborating with Hamas. On January 18 The New York Times published that the UNRWA chief met with the deputy head of Israel's Foreign Ministry, who presented damning evidence collected by the Israel Defense Forces that linked UNRWA staff to the terror organization. A week later, UNRWA conducted an internal investigation into its workers, and a number of donor states froze support. As part of the aggressive campaign against the agency, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged the international community and the UN to shutter UNRWA.

After UNRWA's announcement of the investigation and news that donors were halting funding, on January 28, the influence network's avatars and assets began pushing out content about UNRWA. On January 30, the social media platforms of all three assets posted the same screen capture of the same Wall Street Journal report on intelligence linking UNRWA staff to the October 7 attack.

The avatars worked to inorganically amplify the assets' posts, and they responded to U.S. lawmakers, influencers and prominent news outlets on social media with almost identical comments regarding the "shocking" and "disturbing" revelations made in the report.

The people targeted the most with such comments by the campaign's avatars were American politicians, specifically the social media accounts of Democratic lawmakers, and accounts considered pro-Israel. An analysis of the campaign's content over the span of the war reveals that UNRWA has been the single most popular topic.

Some 85 percent of all the American politicians whose accounts were targeted with such content were Democrats, and 90 percent of them were African Americans, Fake Reporter's analysis found.

The American lawmaker targeted the most was Ritchie Torres, a Democratic congressman from the Bronx considered to be among the party's more pro-Israel member. After Torres, the lawmakers who got the most responses from avatars were Rep. Joe Neguse, Rep. Hank Johnson, Rep. Cori Bush, Rep. Lucy McBath, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Sen. Rev. Raphael Warnock, Rep. Robin Kelly, Rep. Richard Blumenthal, Rep. Jamaal Bowman, Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove and Rep. Danny K. Davis. These cover a wider ideological span within the party.

"Have you seen this?" the avatars asked in the comments section of the lawmakers' Facebook pages, or in response to one of their tweets, appended with a link to one of the assets' reports about UNRWA.

Since the war broke out, and ahead of the U.S. presidential election this November, tensions regarding Israel and American support for it have grown within the Democratic

party. The younger progressive wing of the party has urged U.S. President Joe Biden to restrict aid to Israel and demand a cease-fire. Targeting Democratic African American lawmakers seems to be an attempt to try to address the wave of support they have given to Palestinians.

Researchers speculate that the decision to target Torres' page was likely due to his popularity among pro-Israel Democrats, and the campaign had hoped to use the page's comments section to increase exposure to its content among Black users.

In recent weeks, the campaign has started shifting focus again, now tweeting more about global terror funding and the "axis of evil" of Iran, China and Russia.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:20:32 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Noelle Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Mahalo,

Julia Noelle Hall

Hilo, Hawai'i

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:47:24 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniela Escontrela	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee, I am here to testify in very strong support of HCR36 and HR25. Over the past 5 + months we have seen a genocide carried out at the hands of Israel. Over 31,000 people have been brutally murdered. I have seen images of decapitated children, mothers trying to identify their kids from limbs and pieces of hair, and people burned alive, among many other horrendous things. In the last month and a half I have added to that list pictures and videos of emaciated children, who have become skin and bones, and with at least 16 of them dying from starvation and dehydration. I don't understand how it is the year 2024 and we are live streaming the mass starvation of children without taking action to stop this. Just the other day I saw Palestinians break their Ramadan fast by eating grass. This is incredibly dehumanizing. I implore you to support these resolutions so we can pressure our government to use our tax payer dollars to help Palestinians, which are in this situation thanks to us, rather than continue to kill them.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:08:38 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zachary Kubo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. In addition, Israel has still yet to provide concrete evidence to back these accusations. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. UNRWA was founded in 1949 with the purpose of providing direct relief to Palestinian refugees, majority of whom were brutally & violently displaced from their land during the Nakba in 1948. As I write this testimony, there is a population of over 2 million innocent Palestinians starving and on the brink of collapse. In multiple reports, ranging from Al Jazeera to the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 1 in 6 children below the age of two in Gaza are considered malnourished. Furthermore, nine out of ten people in Gaza cannot eat everyday & skip meals for an extended amount of time. According to the IPC, Gaza “has the highest share of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity that the IPC initiative has EVER recorded.” Approximately 25 people have reportedly died from starvation, and that number will increase exponentially if funding does not resume to UNRWA immediately.

It has been over a month since the Israeli government’s accusations against UNRWA were made, and they still have not provided any evidence to back up their claims that people within UNRWA have ties or connections to Hamas. The Israeli government has a long history of lying to the public to maintain their image, so it comes as no surprise that they would utilize such an accusation to justify freezing funds to UNRWA and continue their ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people by weaponizing starvation. Let me remind you that collective punishment and forcibly starving an entire population is a war crime. How many more children need to die of starvation? How many more children need to vomit blood because they’ve been forced to consume indigestible animal feed to survive? For the sake of humanity, I call upon the members of this committee to do the right thing and pass this bill. Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:34:06 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Evonuk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mr President Biden

I am writing to condemn the genocidal actions of Israel on behalf of the Palestinian people. The US is complicit by cutting off the funding to UNRWA. The funding to UNRWA needs to be reinstated immediately to stave off the impending famine that the people of Palestine will suffer from. Babies, children, the elderly, men and women should not die from starvation when there are aid trucks lined up at the border. This is a man made famine stoked by Israel's greed to steal Palestinian land. This is murderous, racist driven greed and I will not stand by and watch my government fund such a monstrous genocide. Reinstatement funding to UNRWA immediately. Thank You

Sarah Evonuk

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:49:32 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christian Ramil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in support of HCR36/HR25. UNRWA is the largest humanitarian provider in Gaza, and particularly now given the current humanitarian catastrophe, UNRWA's work in the region is vitally needed. This resolution will signal to our federal government that constituents in Hawai'i strongly support continued funding for this important agency.

Regards,

Christian Ramil

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:02:01 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mistee Uyehara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. THE UNRWA is an extremely important and vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades. Children, elders, so much precious life are dying en masse from starvation and illness, not to mention the continuous violence and bombing from Israel.

Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding, but the U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawai'i State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

Mahalo for your time,

Mistee Uyehara

Aiea, Oahu, 96701

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:06:16 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Israa Leibrand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36 to urge restoration of UNRWA funding. UNRWA is a relief and human development agency that provides services to Palestinian refugees. These services range from providing temporary shelter, water, food, clothing, and blankets to temporary job creation and help for rebuilding. This agency has lost funding from Western countries, including the United States.

Many people in Gaza are facing catastrophic levels of hunger and starvation. The lack of humanitarian aid is affecting over a million people in Gaza- some of whom, both children and elderly, have already died from severe starvation and untreated illnesses.

I ask the Hawai'i State Legislature to do everything in its power to alleviate the inhumane suffering being allowed by our government by supporting Israel before Palestinians face mass death from starvation. We need an immediate change of course, as Palestinians are at imminent risk of death. Please vote YES to advance HCR36 to the full House. We need your help in stopping this humanitarian disaster and injustice against the innocent people of Palestine.

Mahalo nui loa for your time.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:19:23 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Chua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

My name is Anna and I live in Honolulu. I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I urge members of the committee to stand firm in your leadership and through the power that us constituents have bestowed upon you to do everything you can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Please use this opportunity to stand with communities in Hawai‘i as we continue to fight for justice for the Palestinian people. Mahalo for your time.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:21:15 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Aronson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Sean Aronson and I am in strong support of HCR 36.

Following the 1948 War, UNRWA was established by [United Nations General Assembly Resolution 302 \(IV\) of 8 December 1949](#) to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees. The Agency began operations on 1 May 1950.

In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until 30 June 2023.

For the last 70 years, UNWRA has been a vital source of funding for the Palestinian people who were made refugees in their own homeland by the creation of Israel. UNWRA provide necessary housing, food, education and other support for the more than 6 million Palestinians that live across several countries.

I have also linked to a story that describes the torture inflicted on UNWRA employees to coerce false confessions about Hamas. This was the lie that prompted the US to defend UNWRA. This demonstrates the lengths Israel will go to deceive the world and maintain its image as a victim and not an oppressor.

[UNRWA Says Israel Tortured & Waterboarded Staffers, Leading to False Confessions | Democracy Now!](#)

Mahalo for hearing this important resolutions. It will send a message to the people of Hawai'i that we will not to kowtowed by Israel's lies.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:23:13 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa J Bowman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for Gaza at a time when all international humanitarian organizations are sounding alarms of immense suffering and risk of famine and disease.

Israeli allegations of UNRWA members' involvement in 10/7 have not been substantiated, and even if they had been, the allegations were against 13 members out of 20,000 members operating in Gaza. Starving an entire population of 2 million people as revenge against 13 people is a **war crime**.

Other Western countries such as Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the EU have restored funding, and the **US should take action immediately to restore UNRWA funding** and restore critical aid to Gaza. On the collective level, this is a life-or-death situation.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:23:44 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Hee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this resolution urging the President of the United States to promptly reinstate funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in order to alleviate the widespread famine and provide critical aid. Palestine Refugees have endured unimaginable suffering for far too long.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:25:15 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Warech	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in **STRONG** support of this resolution. Just today, it was announced that 1.1 million people are on the brink of starvation and therefore imminent death. Please step up and stop this. To not vote yes is to vote for your own personal interest at the expense of 1.1 million lives.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:31:01 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Mapa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Legislators,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people- especially children and the elderly- are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs we fund that Israel drops on them in violation of international law.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The US still has not. I call on the Hawai'i State Legislature to demand the US restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

Aloha,

Kelsey

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:31:38 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

UNWRA = Hamas

Funding UNWRA is essentially funding Hamas. That is why several countries have stopped funding for UNWRA.

That the Hawaii Legislature is spending time supporting Hamas is shameful.

Focus on Hawaii issues.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:54:24 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

strong support

stop the genocide

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:05:31 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Gifford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez, and Members of the Culture, Arts, & International Affairs Committee,

I wholeheartedly support this resolution.

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom."

It is unfathomable to me that we live in a society where we have to beg our local politicians to appeal to our federal politicians just to support funding for humanitarian aid while they unhesitatingly bankroll murderous weapons of death, destruction, and despair. Yet here we are, and all the meanwhile, our federal elected officials are collectively gaslighting us into believing that this is justified or a normal part of the human condition even. I can assure you that it is not, and anyone who believes so is undeserving of leading the moral and political direction of a nation/state.

The community will not let you hide behind the cowardly deflection of "this is out of our control/jurisdiction." All residents are affected by how our federal government chooses to spend our taxpayer money and exert its power internationally. Speak for us, rather than cowering behind these spineless excuses.

Should you choose not to pass this resolution, the blood of innocent, starving, dehydrated, and forcibly ill Palestinians will be on your hands.

Mahalo,

Scott

Moanalua Resident

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:36:15 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Mahalo.

Shay Chan Hodges

Hailku, Maui

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:43:48 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maryam Siddiqui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an American citizen I support this bill because it will provide desperately needed humanitarian aid to innocent people who are starving, unhealthy, traumatized , and displaced. I urge you to operate from power rather than fear, for this bill is morally correct. You have the opportunity to make a choice that is very important to many powerless people.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:59:36 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabrielle Saba Zimmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Support for UNRWA Funding (HCR36/HR25)

I urge your support for House Concurrent Resolution 36/House Resolution 25.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) provides critical assistance to Palestinian refugees facing immense hardship. For nearly two decades, they've endured a difficult situation, further strained by siege and blockade.

Unfortunately, U.S. funding for UNRWA was cut based on unproven accusations against a small number of staff. These claims have since been debunked and proven false by reputable sources including the United Nations.

The partial consequence of these false accusations is a worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This crisis puts people, especially the most vulnerable, at dire risk of death from malnutrition, illness, and ongoing conflict.

We cannot stand by while this unfolds. Other countries like Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the European Union have already restored UNRWA funding.

It's time for the U.S. to do the same. I call on the Hawai'i State Legislature to send a strong message demanding the immediate restoration of U.S. funding for UNRWA.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:38:18 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Puanani Kanealii	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou!

UNRWA provides much-needed services and support for our Palestinian brothers and sisters, and they are needed now more than ever. As a people who have experienced our own colonialism, displacement, and denationalization in the Hawaiian Kingdom, the people of Hawai‘i can see the *hewa* in the same atrocities taking place in Gaza. Our hearts are troubled. For those of us who cannot see the destruction, mass murder, and intentional crisis by Israel, there seems to be an unbalanced support for the state of Israel by way of a poor theological understanding of scripture and who God’s people are. God’s people are ALL people, regardless of race, religion, sexuality, nationality, and location. If the intent of these measures is to live according to scripture, they are misaligned, misled, and gravely distorted. I plead with you to end the support of the anti-Palestinian, anti-muslim genocide that upholds white supremacy through Zionism. If your hearts are conflicted with your religion, our God is a God that goes to the broken, feeds the hungry, and liberates the oppressed. Until there is no longer a need for UNRWA, please restore the funding to do our best to undo the complicity of the *hewa* that is happening at a federal level.

Me ka ha’aha’a,

Rev. Pua Kekaula Kāneali‘i

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:33:46 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been reported in Reuters that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members. This means the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō‘ili‘ili, O‘ahu

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:40:15 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alina Bwy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Funding for UNWRA must be urgently reinstated as this is the main organization responsible for organizing and distributing aid to Palestians which is particularly crucial for those in Gaza who are facing plausible genocide from Israeli forces. The cynical timing of Israel's charges against UNWRA, so far with no evidence mean that countires should never have suspended funding for the agency in the first place. This funding must be granted immediately to prevent further escalation of famine and the detahs of more innocnet men, women and children.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 3:21:01 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariam Fawaz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HCR35/HR25. UNRWA is vital to the survival of the Palestinian people living under genocide in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, and it also serves the refugees living in the surrounding countries. Contrary to popular belief, the World Food Program and other UN programs cannot take UNRWA's place as UNRWA preexisted these programs and Palestinian refugees were explicitly excluded from receiving aid from these programs.

UNRWA funding was stopped based on unfounded claims by the Israeli government one day after the UN ICJ ruled that efforts must be made to prevent genocide in Gaza. Since stopping funding, the forced starvation has become a famine and mass death is no eminent. The US has begun airdropping aid but it is less than 1% of what it has sent in weapons since October 7th. The humanitarian aid port it is building in Gaza will be given over to Israel to control entry and distribution of aid. All the while, Israel continues to massacre civilians collecting aid and bombing UNRWA aid distribution centers killing UN employees.

By stopping aid, the US has become an active participant in the genocide of the Palestinian people. Even during the holy month of Ramadan, the US sends gentle reminders that it is unhappy with what is happening while continuing to send weapons to Israel. We must take stop our complicity with Israel's blatant disregard for human life and restore funding to UNRWA.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 4:13:44 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Austen Conlon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez, and committee members,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawai‘i State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

Mahalo nui loa,

Austen Conlon

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 5:04:29 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mira Gurung	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testifying in very strong support of this reso!

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 6:04:53 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 6:30:29 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kinsley McEachern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR 25. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people- especially children and the elderly-are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the European Union have restored UNWRA funding. The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawai'i State legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNWRA funding immediately.

Mahalo nui,

Kinsley McEachern

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:03:56 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Romeo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution and urge the committee to pass it

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:12:59 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jazmine Uyehara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawai'i State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:28:29 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
rose elovitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Rose Elovitz and I am a proud anti-zionist jew calling upon you, my representatives, to support the passing of HCR36. Over 1.4 million innocent Palestinians in Gaza are in desperate need of the UNRWA's assistance to help reach their most basic of needs.

Our government claims that it had to withdraw funding from the UNRWA due to baseless claims it had been infiltrated by Hamas. The impact of this decision has further solidified the fact that the US government is an active accomplice in the horrific genocide unfolding in Gaza

Everyday, I tune in to the news to witness Palestinians talking about how they are forced to eat animal feed and rancid canned food to stay alive. Their water sources are contaminated, inoculating thousands with preventative diseases while having medication and medical aid withheld by the Israeli government. Newborns are being starved to death because their families cannot get access to milk substitute and adequate nutrition.

How is this humane?

How do we dare to call ourselves heroes while we are complicit in this widespread death and destruction?

I demand my tax dollars support organizations like the UNRWA tasked with mitigating this senseless suffering. We must take accountability for our country's violent agenda. The reinstatement of funding to the UNRWA, is just one drop in the bucket. Approve this resolution now.

Free Palestine

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:34:17 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been reported in Reuters that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice.

Mahalo,

Laura Young

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:10:57 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Yang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a healthcare provider in Hawaii, it pains me every day to see the bombing of Palestine and the killing of civilians as well as healthcare providers. The United States MUST reinstate funding NOW to the UN to provide life-saving humanitarian aid, because it's the least that we can do.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:14:24 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Mupas Purugganan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

May you read these words and hear the testimonies of the People with empathy. May they enter your heart. May you be moved to support the People of Palestine who need this aid.

I don't know why you entered into politics to begin with, but may you remember that you have come into a position of great power. And this is a moment where you can use it for the Good of the People.

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawai'i State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

Me ke aloha,

Teresa Mupas Purugganan

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:30:57 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Kandagawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

UNRWA has the top track record among humanitarian aid organizations as the most capable, effective, and principled network for delivering essential services and aid to civilians in Gaza. To remove funding based on entirely unsubstantiated allegations is to be complicit in ongoing genocide and war crimes being committed against Palestinians. Do the right thing and join Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the European Union in restoring this essential funding to save indigenous people's lives.

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 12:31:50 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ayla Castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the committee

I am local resident of Hawaii, born and raised. I am testifying in strong and full support of HCR36/HR25. The UNRWA provides primary and vocational education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, micro-finance and emergency response, including in situations of armed conflict, for Palestinian refugees. It is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades.

After the State of Israel accused a handful of UNRWA staff of being members of Hamas, Western countries including the United States cut funding to this vital relief agency. Partially as a result, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people—especially children and the elderly—are now dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs that Israel is dropping on them.

Even if staff members were Hamas members, cutting off this vital source of relief funding is absolutely unconscionable. But on top of that, it has since been [reported in Reuters](#) that Israeli forces used torture techniques including waterboarding to extract false confessions from these staff members, meaning the accusations were lies—another Israeli tactic used to inflict suffering and collective punishment against defenseless civilians. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not.

I call upon the Hawai‘i State Legislature to do everything it can to alleviate the extreme inhumane suffering our government is enabling by supporting Israel and its genocide of the Palestinian people. You must vote yes to advance HCR36/HR25 to the full House, and there it must be adopted. This is essential in upholding the values of our community here in Hawai‘i, which do not permit us to turn away from such injustice. Mahalo.

I am submitting this testimony in support of HCR36/HR25, which urges the Biden administration to restore funding to UNRWA immediately. I am unable to attend the meeting in person, however, I am taking my time to voice my deeply held convictions related to this grave matter.

Three of my grandparents served in the U.S. armed forces during World War II, and their experiences left a profound impression on me. I value the United Nations as an institution because it offers the hope that through international cooperation and International Human Rights Law, people across the globe will not suffer the horrific devastation of war and famine. I'm relieved that my grandparents didn't live to see the shameful day that their adult grandson felt compelled to plead with state legislators to pass a resolution, which requests the U.S. government to provide funds to a UN agency and stop a human-engineered starvation campaign. It's utterly shocking to me that this is, in fact, the current reality.

I contacted the offices of our dishonorable U.S. Senators Mazie Hirono and Brian Schatz multiple times prior to the International Court of Justice's ruling on January 26, 2024 to express my forceful opposition to providing additional funding to the apartheid state of Israel. At the time, the 2.3 million Palestinians trapped in Gaza had already endured more than 100 days of the unfolding plausible genocide perpetrated by Israel against them, and Israel had already demonstrated they were employing a strategy of collective punishment against the civilian population. "No water, no food, no fuel, no electricity", promised Yoav Gallant in early October, knowing very well that approximately 50% of the targets of that depraved policy would be Palestinian children. Israelis wearing uniforms had already demonstrated their strategy of attacking aid distribution centers, churches, hospitals, libraries, mosques, UN schools, and universities. Israelis had already killed over 20,000 Palestinians.

The day following the ICJ ruling, which found there was a plausible case that Israel is perpetrating genocide in Gaza and the case would continue, the Israeli state alleged apparently specious claims that 12 (later fewer) UNRWA employees "participated in October 7th". According to various sources, including the UN, Israel did not provide any actual evidence supporting those claims. Although the UN announced it would immediately open an investigation into the claims and it fired the employees accused by Israel, the Biden administration and many Western allies cynically suspended aid to UNRWA. Many U.S. allies have reinstated the funding due to the emerging famine in Gaza, but the Biden administration maintains a pause on the funding until the UN concludes its investigations.

The offices of Senators Hirono and Schatz sent me canned emails in response to my comments directed to them prior to consideration of additional funding for military assistance to Israel, Taiwan and Ukraine. Then, on February 13th, they both were among the 70 senators who voted 'yes' on a supplemental national security bill, which includes an additional \$14 billion to Israel. Although they've issued press releases "urging" more aid delivery and for Israel "to follow international humanitarian law", such empty platitudes have no teeth, especially after consenting to additional funding for Israel while the Biden administration withholds desperately needed funds from UNRWA, thereby deepening the US government's complicity in a plausible genocide.

I realize the same may be true of HCR-36/HR25, they're just words, but I feel like I have no other recourse, so I'm appealing to your humanity to use your influence to promote life. People need food, water, and sanitation to survive. Palestinian people living in Gaza, the occupied West Bank,

and in Lebanon need UNRWA--children need schools, diabetics need insulin, babies need diapers, and people need food regardless of where they happened to be born. I hope that you have the wisdom and courage to support HCR-36/HR25 to send a message to the Biden administration that, despite the cowardice, corruption and hypocrisy of the President, and senators like Mazie Hirono and Brian Schatz, the residents of Hawai'i oppose famine by fiat and we stand for compassion, full bellies, international law, and justice.

Sincerely,

James L. Trasport, Jr

Honoka'a

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 1:44:29 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daria Fand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee:

It is ludicrous that any country should have withheld funds from UNRWA as a whole, based on a non-fact-based claim advanced concerning a tiny fraction of all UNRWA staff. It is a travesty that such a critical source of humanitarian aid needed so desperately was held hostage by a rogue state (Israel) hellbent on the continued deprivation and destruction of the Palestinian population. It is extremely disturbing that the U.S., along with the entire Western Hemisphere, took no pause in jumping on that convenient bandwagon, thus contributing to ever-escalating catastrophic conditions in Gaza.

I implore this committee to APPROVE this measure, to send a clear signal to President Biden that we need to join our global partners who are already restoring funding to UNRWA -- funds which never should have been denied in the first place.

Thank you for your support and attention to this urgent matter.

Daria Fand, Honolulu, HI

HCR-36

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 7:22:27 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley Ancheta Galacgac	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in strong support of HCR36. Stop U.S. tax payer money from providing weapons to the Israeli Occupation. Use the money to provide food, water, medical supplies, and what is needed so that Palestinians may live.

The UNRWA is a vital source of support for a population that has struggled to survive under constant siege and blockade for nearly two decades. Israeli accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agency. These accusations have since been proven false. Partially as a result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has gotten so severe that people-especially children and the elderly-are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs Israel drops on them.

This is unconscionable. Australia, Canada, Sweden and the European Union have restored UNRWA funding. The U.S. still has not. I call on the Hawai'i State Legislature to demand the U.S. restore its UNRWA funding immediately.

Restoration of the UNRWA is where funds should go, NOT the Israeli Occupation Forces. The U.S. must stop Israel in the terror and violence. Permanent ceasefire now. End the genocide. Lift the siege. End the occupation. Support the right for Palestinians to return to their ancestral homelands. Let Palestine teach us what it means to live. Free Palestine.