



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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:54:33 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 HR25. 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 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:33:08 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	Written Testimony Only

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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:40:48 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:

Please see videos on why the UNRWA needs funding ASAP.

Commissioner General of UNRWA:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C4IZpggoqhr/?igsh=MXJmcW82ZzMwOXFqeg==>

Activist & Author

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C4bRN5Ru4TY/?igsh=ZmMwdzBkeGMzZ2V5>

Francesca Albanese Report:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/C2ooCGMtsfc/?igsh=MWgxN3QyNjdrM3d6Mw==>

Thousands will become millions until there are no Palestinians left. Do you really want Hawai'i to support the eradication of an entire people, people who live here, on this island with you. Your constituents. Your friends. Your neighbors.

Stand up for what's right.

Aloha and mahalo for your time.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:05:53 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:21:15 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:29:46 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:

Please support this resolution.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 12:58:29 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'm a mother of three under seven with the youngest being two. It's spring break and everyone is home. Writing out a full testimony is not possible for me. I've reviewed the below and agree with it in full and thus have copy and pasted it as I support in full HR25. I trust Hawai'i to stand in our humanity and that means standing with Palestine.

I am testifying in strong support of 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 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:01:45 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 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 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. Bonniebrooke B.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:47:12 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 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 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!

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 1:54:38 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:19:03 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 funding. Biden's despicable action lost my vote for President that with his support of Israel's genocide of the Palestinians.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 2:25:31 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 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 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.

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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:06:31 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 HR25. 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 HR25 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,

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:48:13 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 4:09:25 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:

Please restore funding to UNWRA. The majority of countries who suspended funding have restored it. The Palestinian people have endured the most horrific bombing and mass murder of the civilian population imaginable. They need UNWRA more than they ever had. Please restore funding. It is the pono thing to do.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 5:30:50 PM

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

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

Comments:

Dear committe members,

I am writing in support of HR25. 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 your time and consideration.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 5:42:25 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 5:50:46 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 HR25. The UNRWA is a vital source of support for the Palestinian people in Gaza, who continue to struggle under constant siege, blockade, and bombardment for nearly two decades. The Israeli government's accusations that a handful of UNRWA staff were members of Hamas and/or in association with Hamas gave the United States an excuse to cut funding to this vital relief agent. These accusations have since been proven false. As a partial result of this lie, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza has increased severely. People, mostly children and elderly, are dying en masse from starvation and illness in addition to the bombs the IDF drops on them.

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

Mahalo for your time. Please choose the path of humanity.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 6:04:07 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 HR25, cutting funding of UNRWA is incredibly inhumane and has only caused more suffering in Palestine.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 7:01:12 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 7:22:38 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 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--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 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:08:58 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:

I am in **STRONG** support of a ceasefire but I'm the mean time we **NEED** to restore funding to save the 1.1 millions Gazans at risk of death by starvation and dehydration!!

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:09:20 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 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 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:20:05 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 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.

Mahalo,

Rosemary Bearden

Nīnole, Hawai'i, 96773

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 10:27:45 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 10:53:43 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 Honorable 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 11:56:59 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:20:33 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, Ella Mālie Turner, am testifying in complete support of HR25. 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 1:45:59 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,

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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:42:14 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:21:50 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:48:26 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:09:02 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:36:59 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:

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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:03:02 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 HR25. 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:07:55 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 HR25 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 HR25 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:12:33 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Griffin H Haugen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe the US should do more to help Palestinians and stop supplying munitions to Israel.

HR-25

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
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 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 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 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. 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:25:33 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:27:07 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 writing in strong support of HR25. The US should take immediate action to restore UNRWA funding to prevent an ever growing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

HR-25

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
Kelsey Mapa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee,

I am testifying in strong support of 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 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.

Mahalo,

Kelsey

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:12:07 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:36:46 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:57:49 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:

I am in strong support of this bill. As an American citizen I am in opposition to the genocide tactics used by Israel military, and strongly urge that humanitarian aid can be delivered to the innocent victims who are dying at alarming rates. If aid is not delivered soon, they will be ethnically cleansed. Please help the innocent, do what you think is right, I trust your judgment! Do not act out of fear! Thank you for your time.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:40:03 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:34:25 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:49:51 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:

It's unacceptable that funding for UNRWA was ever withdrawn at such a critical moment when Paestinians in Gaza are experiencing plausible genocide and Israel was instructed to ensure that more aid was provided by the ICJ. The fact that the US was so immedicately willing to withdraw this funding with no verified evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the agency draws our country into further complicity with Israeli war crimes and the breaking of international law. This funding must be immediately reinstated to prevent further loss of life, and also as part of the US refusing to be complicit in the ethnic cleansing being committed by Israel.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:58:41 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nate Hix	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The people in Gaza are in dire need of help. Let's please ask that we give it to them.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 3:21:28 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 5:05:26 PM

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

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

Comments:

Testifying in very strong support of this reso!

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 6:05:31 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 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 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 6:32:00 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:05:11 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:14:24 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 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.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:51:16 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 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.

Mahalo,

Rachel Lawrence

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:13:15 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, I am shocked daily to see the killing of Palestinian civilians and healthworkers every day. The least that the United States should do is to reinstate life-saving humanitarian aid to Palestine, and hold the state of Israel responsible for harming innocent civilians.

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:16:18 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:29:43 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.

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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 1:47:36 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

HR-25

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 7:23:01 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 HR25. 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.