

# Middle East Network Newsletter – **Action Alert**

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November 2, 2011

## Tell Congress to Stop Blocking Aid to Palestinians

Congress has already blocked around \$340 million in funds designated for Palestinian development and security in response to the Palestinian bid for UN membership. Further aid cut-offs are threatened if the Palestinians continue to move forward with their bid. The UN and some of its agencies are also in danger of losing U.S. funding if the bid receives a favorable reception. Just this week Palestine was admitted to UNESCO, and U.S. funding for that agency has stopped due to congressional requirements enacted in the 1990s.

These real and threatened cuts to Palestinian aid are counterproductive to peace, security and development.

[Churches for Middle East Peace](#), in which the ELCA is a partner, explains with regard to the frozen funds, "In early October we found out that members of Congress have placed a hold on about \$340 million of U.S. aid to Palestinians in response to the Palestinian application for statehood recognition in the United Nations. This hold impacts the aid funds already allocated for the 2011 fiscal year that ended on September 30."

Read more about the frozen funds and threatened cuts in [CMEP's bulletin](#), and take action through [CMEP's alert](#).

Regarding the Palestinian bid for UN membership, ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson sent [a letter to President Obama](#) urging support for Palestinian self-determination and [an alert went out to advocates](#) to back up Bishop Hanson's message.

Furthermore, on September 30 Bishop Hanson and several other church leaders [issued a response to a statement from the Heads of Christian Churches in Jerusalem](#). The U.S. Christian leaders wrote,

*"Our churches have spoken plainly and repeatedly for the recognition of the Palestinian's right to self-determination..."*

Congressional threats to further defund the Palestinians and UN agencies run counter to support for self-determination and send the wrong message to the Palestinians and the world.

[Take action today to support](#) continued U.S. aid to Palestinians. Your elected leaders need to hear that you believe such punitive measures will hurt the cause of peace and must be stopped. Tell your elected officials to lift the freeze on aid to the Palestinians and to stop further threats of funding cuts.



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

