

## Palestine Fact Sheets

*Whether a student, community activist, politician or an average citizen, these fact sheets will provide you with concise information on the different issues related to the current Intifada and Palestine. Feel free to print and distribute them as long as they are accredited to the Palestine Monitor.*

**United States Aid to Israel: Funding the Occupation** Israel is a funded state. Despite its own relatively healthy economy, it continues to receive aid from the US, in disproportion to both the country's population and needs.

The financial aid alone that Israel receives from the US allows it to purchase tanks, helicopter gunships, F-16 war planes, machine guns and bullets – all of which it uses to commit human rights violations against the Palestinian people on a daily basis. When it is not possible for the Israeli government to use the funds directly on military expenditure, their use elsewhere frees up other Israeli government funds to pay for military salaries, services and facilities. Military power is required for Israel to maintain its occupation of the Palestinian territories, implemented through a system of expanding settlements, checkpoints and closure. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the US is funding and supplying the Israeli government's occupation of the Palestinian territories, as without financial subsidies from the US, the Israeli government would have found it considerably more difficult to sustain its military occupation of the Palestinian territories for the past thirty-four years. **Snapshot of the state of Israel**

- Israel's population is 6 million people, including: > 182,000 illegal settlers in the West Bank > 20,000 illegal settlers in the occupied Golan Heights > 7,000 illegal settlers in the Gaza Strip > 176,000 illegal settlers in East Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>
- Israel ranks as the 16th wealthiest country in the world, and Israelis enjoy a per capita income higher than Ireland, Spain, or oil-rich Saudi Arabia.<sup>2</sup>
- Israel's GNP is higher than the combined GNP of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>3</sup>
- Since 28 September 2000, Israeli police, soldiers and settlers have killed more than 2,050 Palestinians -- the vast majority of them civilians -- in contravention of international law.

**A BREAKDOWN OF UNITED STATES AID TO ISRAEL** *Financial Aid* The Israeli government is the largest recipient of US financial aid in the world, receiving **over one-third of total US aid to foreign countries**<sup>4</sup>, even though Israel's population comprises just .001% of the world's population and has one the world's higher per capita incomes.

1. Since 1949 the US has given Israel a total of **\$84,854,827,200**. The interest costs born by US taxpayers on behalf of Israel are \$49,937,000,000 – making the total amount of aid given to Israel since 1949 **\$134,791,507,200** (more than \$134 billion).<sup>5</sup>

2. The total cost of this financial aid to US tax payers **per Israeli** is **\$23,240**.
3. Since 1992, the US has offered Israel an additional \$2 billion in loan guarantees **every year.**<sup>6</sup>
4. Nearly all past loans to Israel have been forgiven – leading Israel to claim that they have never defaulted on repayment of a US loan – with most loans made on the understanding that they would be forgiven before Israel was required to repay them.
5. In 1997 alone, the total of US grants and loan guarantees to Israel was \$5.5 billion, i.e., **\$15,068,493 per day**.

**Military Aid** The United States provides direct and indirect military aid to Israel – totaling more than it gives to all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean put together, whose combined total population is 1,054,000,000. According to a US Department of Defense Joint Report to Congress in March 2001, “It is in the United States’ national interest to promote the existence of a stable, democratic and militarily strong Israel, at peace with its neighbors [...]”.<sup>7</sup> According to a US State Department statement in November 2002, the US government is committed to “maintaining and enhancing Israel’s security and qualitative edge over any combination of adversaries” and “the important advantages the US-Israeli strategic relationship has and will continue to provide us.”<sup>8</sup>

**Foreign Military Financing (FMF)** is grants to foreign governments financing the purchase of American-made weapons, services and training. Israel receives 50% of the FMF budget request. The large sums paid by the US to Egypt and Jordan are in recognition of the two countries signing peace accords with Israel in 1979 and 1994 respectively.

FMF Budget Request FY 2001:	Total budget request:	\$3.54 billion
	<b>Budget request for Israel:</b>	<b>\$1.98 billion</b>
	Budget request for Egypt:	\$1.3 billion
	Budget request for Jordan	\$75 million

The **Economic Support Fund (ESF)** promotes economic and political stability in areas strategically important to the US. It is not intended for military usage, but allows the recipient government to free up other money, therefore providing indirect military aid. Israel receives the largest single grant of the Near East budget, which alone is 79% of the total ESF request.

ESF Budget Request, FY 2001:	Total budget request:	\$2.313 billion
	Budget request for Near East:	\$1.828 billion, including:

<b>Israel</b>	<b>\$840 million</b>
Egypt	\$150 million
WB/GS	\$100 million

**Furthermore:**

1. 18 of the 92 pending arms sales transfers in the year 2000 were to Israel;
2. Israel has the world's largest fleet of F-16s outside the US, currently possessing 200 jets -- with a further 102 on order with American manufacturer Lockheed Martin;
3. In June 2001 Israel again requested \$800 million in supplementary US aid. This was originally pledged to cover the cost of the Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon – in other words, Israel was being paid for complying with international law. As Israel re-requests this package, administration officials have considered linking it to the implementation of the Mitchell Report, again effectively paying Israel to comply with international standards;<sup>9</sup>

**Charitable Aid** Private donations to American charities initially constituted one quarter of Israel's budget. Today, it is estimated that these tax-deductible donations exceed **\$1.5 billion per year**. The ability of Americans to make what amounts to tax deductible contributions to a foreign government does not exist for any other country. **US aid to Israel: A violation of US law** US law prohibits the President from providing military aid to any country that "engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights".<sup>10</sup> Under the 1967 US Arms Export Control Act, it is illegal to use US weapons to carry out extra-judicial killings. This act stipulates that weapons be sold to "friendly countries solely for internal security and legitimate defense."

- Since September 2000, the Israeli army has used attack helicopters, tanks and F-16 missiles to target Palestinian civilians, homes, forces, buildings and in demonstrations. In its Human Rights Report, the US State Department declared that Israeli army actions were an "excessive use of force", noting that the Israeli forces used live ammunition, even when they were not in imminent danger, and that the Israeli military "shelled PA institutions and Palestinian civilian areas in response to individual Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians or settlers".

The Israeli government's policies in the occupied Palestinian territories have been condemned by human rights organizations worldwide. The Israeli army's "excessive use of force" towards Palestinian civilians and its policy of "state assassinations" violate international human rights law. In supplying military aid to such a state, the US is violating its own laws.