

# *U.S. Senate Panel Approves Bill to Suspend Aid to Palestinians*

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Washington, August 4 (RHC)-- The U.S. Senate has approved suspension of American financial aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) over the payments it makes to the families of Palestinians arrested or slain by Israel. The Republican-led Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 17-4 on Thursday in favor of the bill.

The measure was sponsored by Senators Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and committee chairman Bob Corker of Tennessee. Corker claimed the payments by the Palestinian Authority encourage acts of terrorism against Israel and the United States.

The Head of the Palestinian General Delegation to the U.S., Husam Zomlot, has described the move as “misinformed and counterproductive.” He said the payments are part of a 52-year old program “to support families who lost their breadwinners to the atrocities of the occupation, the vast majority of whom are unduly arrested or killed by Israel.”

“The program has served a social and security need to provide for our people, guarantee a better future for the children and protect the needy from the many radical groups around us,” Zomlot said in an emailed statement.

Washington provides Israel with over \$3 billion annually, making Tel Aviv the biggest recipient of U.S.

foreign aid. Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II. US military assistance to Israel has amounted to \$127 billion since it began in 1962, according to a recent congressional report.

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