

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.  
All praise and thanks belong to God, the Lord of the Worlds.  
May peace and prayers be upon Prophet Muhammad and his family.



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The Honorable Samantha Power  
Administrator  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Ronald Reagan Building  
Washington, D.C. 20523

**RE: Requesting Answers After USAID Contractor Forced to Resign Over Presentation on Maternal and Child Mortality in Gaza**

Dear Administrator Power:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, we write to express our serious concern and seek immediate answers regarding the recent resignation of a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) contractor, Alexander Smith.

This situation raises significant ethical and humanitarian concerns. In his resignation letter to you, Mr. Smith stated: *"I cannot do my job in an environment in which specific people cannot be acknowledged as fully human, or where gender and human rights principles apply to some, but not to others, depending on their race."* He highlighted the glaring disparity in how USAID addresses human rights violations in different regions, pointing out the bold advocacy for Ukrainian victims while remaining silent on the rights and suffering of Palestinians.

Mr. Smith also alleges that USAID gave him the choice of resigning or facing dismissal over a presentation he planned to give on maternal and child mortality among Palestinians, which was canceled at the last minute by USAID leadership.

Your book *"A Problem From Hell"* poses a serious question: *"Why do American leaders who vow 'never again' repeatedly fail to marshal the will and the might to stop genocide?"* As an expert on genocide, and as the head of USAID, we certainly hope that you would not prevent a government contractor from reporting facts about maternal and child mortality in Gaza. We also continue to hope that you will, in the spirit of your own writings, join Mr. Smith in taking a bold stand against the genocide in Gaza.

The Biden administration's ongoing provision of billions in U.S. tax dollars and offensive weapons to the far-right Israeli government—despite Israel repeatedly violating the White House's publicly declared red line against conducting operations in the refugee-filled Gaza city of Rafah—makes the U.S. intentionally complicit in the ongoing slaughter of Palestinians. As you know, the Israeli government has killed more than 36,000 Palestinians in Gaza, mostly women and children, and forcibly displaced some two million Palestinians in a campaign of systematic genocide and erasure.

The UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) was correct in ordering Israel to halt its attacks on Rafah in Gaza. So was the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor's decision to seek charges against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Gallant for war crimes in Gaza. The international community is increasingly recognizing the need to address and halt Israel's genocidal atrocities; USAID should join this effort.

Transparency, accountability, and the courage to confront uncomfortable truths are the bedrock of effective humanitarian leadership. As you have previously advocated, embracing and addressing these truths is paramount to preventing current and future genocides.

Therefore, CAIR urges you to explain the circumstances of Mr. Smith's resignation transparently and publicly; address the concerns he raised about the treatment he experienced and the atmosphere within USAID; and, finally, forcefully speak out against U.S. support for the Israeli government's war crimes.

If the Biden administration persists in supporting Israel's genocide against Palestinians, we urge you to demonstrate moral courage, which you have shown for decades in both private life and public service, by joining Mr. Smith in resigning your position in protest.

Thank you for considering these important matters.

Sincerely,

Edward Ahmed Mitchell, Esq.  
Deputy Executive Director  
Council on American-Islamic Relations