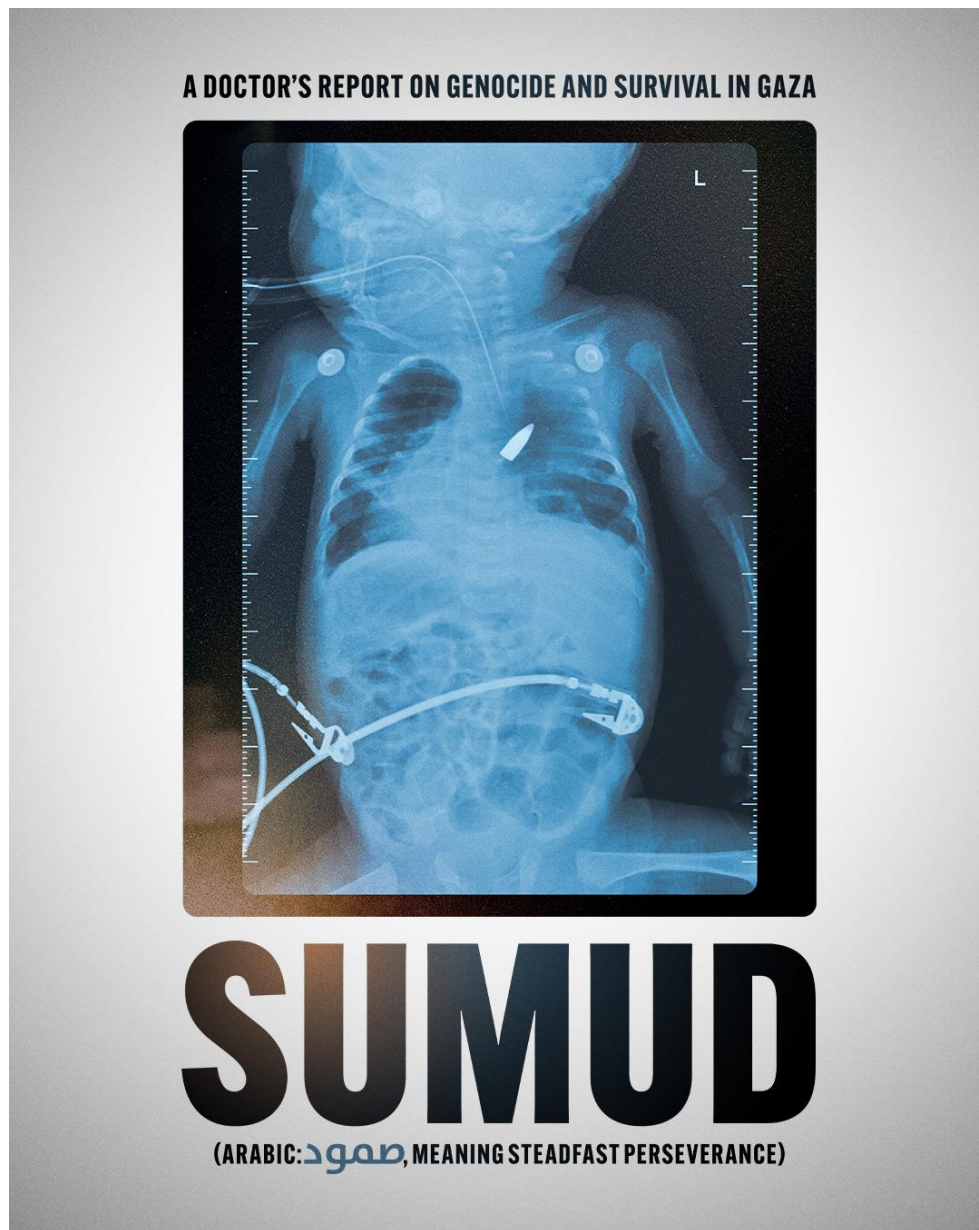


SCREENING GUIDE



with commentary from:

American anesthesiologist, Dr. Travis Meleen,
and author Omar El Akkad, National Book Award Winner for
[One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This](#)

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



My interests are in the fields of psychoanalysis, feminist theory, the history of psychiatric diagnosis, the social dynamics of remembering and the psychology of storytelling. My academic work considers collective forms of suffering and offers a critical lens for understanding the cultural implications of psychiatric and psychological frameworks.

As a documentary filmmaker, I am guided by my commitment to social justice. I take up the complex interplay of individual and collective identities in contested spaces and sites of social conflict. My method of filmmaking involves participatory action research, which centers on the lived experiences of people who inhabit liminal spaces — from war zones, refugee camps and climate protests to abortion clinics, hip-hop clubs, and drag bars—and builds on extensive collaborations with community groups.

I use documentaries as a form of social memory— a means of gathering up and holding fragments of history that are often marginalized, repressed or demonized by the mainstream media and dominant narratives. I invite audiences to engage critically with the forces that shape individual and collective realities and ways of imagining that another world is both necessary and possible.

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ABOUT THE FILM

Sumud (Arabic: صمود) means steadfastness or steadfast perseverance.

The film follows Dr. Travis Meleen, an American anesthesiologist volunteering at Nasser Hospital in Gaza, as he works with Palestinian surgical teams that continue training at Nasser Hospital even as the medical center is under siege. The film includes commentary from Egyptian-Canadian journalist Omar El Akkad, reporting on the genocide. He is the author of *One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This*.



KEY ISSUES

1. Journalist Omar El Akkad describes Gaza as “an open air prison.”
What does he mean by this?

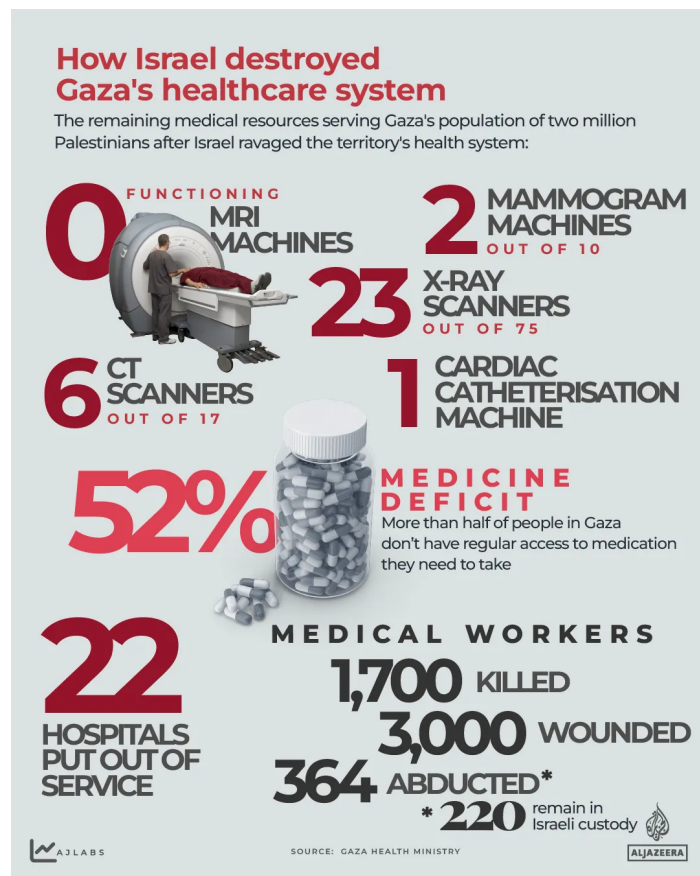


[According to Human Rights Watch](#), Israel places carceral restrictions on Palestinians’ right to freedom of movement by segregating living spaces, criminalizing movement, and fragmenting communities. [Since 2007, Israeli authorities have banned Palestinians from leaving Gaza](#) through Erez to reach Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan. Israel prevents the Palestinian government from operating air and sea ports for travel, and it deliberately restricts the import and export of goods, including food and medical supplies.

2. Dr. Travis Meleen tells the story of traveling to, entering, & working in Gaza. What challenges do medical professionals face in trying to provide basic healthcare to people with devastating injuries?



SUMUD shows how [Israel's military campaigns have deliberately and methodically destroyed Gaza's health care system](#). Twenty-two hospitals have been destroyed since October 2023, very few patients with life threatening injuries and chronic conditions have been evacuated, there is a severe lack of medical equipment, shortages of medication, and great need for medical workers.



3. How does the film protect the identities of the medical providers who bear witness to the ongoing genocide? Why is this important?

The right to medical assistance is a basic human right. Ethical principles of healthcare are required during emergencies and times of peace. Medical providers are [protected under international law](#). The duty of treating the wounded and sick, and the correlating protection of medical personnel and facilities, has been at the [core of international humanitarian law \(IHL\) since its inception in 1864](#).

4. What is AIPAC? What is the organization's role in maintaining political support for the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza?

[The American Israel Public Affairs Committee \(AIPAC\) is a lobbying organization](#) that maintains U.S. financial, military, and diplomatic support for Israel's genocide against Palestinians. Staff at AIPAC maintain strong connections to the Israeli and U.S. governments. New data mapping the [professional connections of more than 3,000 current and former AIPAC staff](#) demonstrates a revolving door relationship between AIPAC and U.S. and Israeli governmental institutions, with dozens of current and former AIPAC staff having worked for Israeli or U.S. government bodies.

5. How do American tax dollars fund the ongoing genocide in Gaza?

[In 2025, the average taxpayer paid over \\$4,000 in federal spending to fund war](#). Over 50 days of your labor were taxed to pay for weapons used in this genocide; including 23 workdays paying taxes for Pentagon contractors.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What were your strongest reactions to the film?
- How do the film participants, Omar El Akkad and Dr. Travis Meleen, bring their own histories to the documentary film project? What did you find most compelling about their personal stories?
- Omar El Akkad says we should not have to test the limits of human resiliency. It is important to acknowledge resilience & question how this term is used to deny the scale & scope of Palestinian suffering. How does Omar El Akkad view these contradictions?
- What is medicide? How is it used as a weapon against Palestinian survival?
- What do you think about our US medical system compared with what you viewed in the film? What connections does the film draw between medical professions in the US where the “Palestine exception” prevents healthcare workers from speaking up in support of their colleagues in Palestine?
- Why should we focus on what is happening on the other side of the world? What can we do in response?
- Why is advocacy for Palestine politically unacceptable in the United States?
- What does it mean to live in America in terms of imperialism and hypocrisy?

RESOURCES FOR DIRECT ACTION

Now that you have a deeper understanding of the film's key issues, we urge you to engage in meaningful conversations, community service, and direct action to stop the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

[**Samir Foundation**](#) supports medical students and future healthcare professionals in Gaza. Samir's initiatives are designed to provide essential resources, financial aid, and educational support to ensure that aspiring doctors have the tools they need to succeed.

[**GLIA Equal Care**](#) organizes for Palestinian liberation through open-source medical tools, delegations, and solidarity work.

[**Palestine Action**](#) is a direct action movement committed to ending global participation in Israel's genocidal and apartheid regime. Using disruptive tactics, Palestine Action targets corporate enablers of the Israeli military-industrial complex and seeks to make it impossible for these companies to profit from the oppression of Palestinians.

[**Boycott, Divest, Sanctions \(BDS\) Movement**](#)

The Palestinian call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions has led to a global movement of activists, workers, students, and community groups who run targeted campaigns that challenge international support for Israeli oppression and pressure Israel to comply with international law.

[**Little Sis: Power Research for Palestine**](#)

Universities are a critical part of the U.S. war machine. Billions of dollars from the Department of Defense fund research that advances weapons' systems. University endowments invest in military-tied corporations and many university trustees are connected to war profiteers. Little Sis helps organizers map social relations of power between institutions to dismantle the war machine.

[**Democratic Socialists of America \(DSA\) Palestine Solidarity Toolkit**](#)

A collection of tools for local and global actions to de-escalate militarism and seek justice for Palestinians.