FUNDING FREEDOM

PHILANTHROPY
AND THE
PALESTINIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT
Solidarity with Palestine has been a shared value within our network since our founding. Our members care deeply about supporting the Palestinian freedom movement and have mobilized funds for several campaigns over the years. While this area is not our focus in our grantmaking, our membership and staff stand in solidarity with those fighting for Palestinian liberation here and abroad. Jewish members in Soldiaire have worked steadfastly to support Palestinian liberation, and this report is no exception.

When our member Deborah Sagner and ally Rebecca Vilkomerson approached us about this project, we knew we had to show up. We have seen organizations that oppose Palestinian rights act as gatekeepers for the flow of funding to pro-Palestinian organizations. More recently, we have witnessed how the pro-Israel lobby has attacked young, progressive candidates who show solidarity with Palestine. Through this report, we are calling out the power of philanthropy to censor grassroots organizing. And we are calling on our colleagues in the sector with love to support human rights with integrity.

When we are at our best, philanthropic organizations shift the balance of power to social movements working towards abundance, connection, and collective liberation. Grassroots organizers need funders to be brave and unwavering in our support. The Palestinian freedom movement needs our help urgently, and we hope this report offers a roadmap for mobilizing funding sustainably. Further, we hope this report and launch event provides space for healing, reconciliation, and increased collaboration. Anti-Arabism, Anti-Semitism, islamophobia, racism, and militarization are all on the rise worldwide. We must work together more than ever to realize our collective aims of peace and justice.

Rajasvini Bhansali, Solidaire Action
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INTRODUCTION

There is currently an extraordinary gap between the enormous amounts of money raised annually to support continued Israeli apartheid compared to the amount raised to fight for Palestinian liberation. A number of factors, including changes and challenges within the philanthropic sector, an evolving understanding of Palestinian resistance and Israeli oppression, and a growing pressure for aligning values across movements rooted in justice, are leading to a new willingness among donors, funder networks, and foundations to support and participate in the Palestinian liberation movement.

But enormous obstacles—including smear campaigns, legal threats, and false accusations of antisemitism—continue to make it difficult for donors to make long-term,
sustainable commitments to funding work on Palestinian liberation. And the fight for Palestinian rights affects all movements for justice because of how the right weaponizes it as a cudgel to weaken the interconnected movement ecology of the left, as we have seen in the most recent midterm election cycle in 2022.

Despite these challenges, the movement to support Palestinian freedom in the U.S. has only grown in the last decade. There is enormous potential at this political moment to expand the pool of donors committed to supporting movement-building efforts in support of Palestinian rights—and the need to scale up could not be more clear. The aim of this report is to take a clear look at the obstacles, both historical and current, that have curtailed giving in support of Palestinian liberation, and to lay out recommendations for individual donors, foundations, and funding networks for how to create the conditions to give, and encourage others to give, sustainably, consistently, and without harm.

**METHODOLOGY**

The basis of this report is interviews with 28 individual donors, foundation and funder network staff, and leaders of Palestinian organizations seeking funding (see Appendix for list). It includes four in-depth case studies to illuminate some of the greatest challenges and opportunities of this political moment.

The report is geared toward the progressive wing of philanthropy, where the vast majority of current support for Palestinian freedom is found, with an emphasis on movement building and political goals. Purely humanitarian efforts are outside the scope of this work though are often subject to the same dynamic. Further, its focus is on support in the U.S. and for Palestinian organizations inside Israel, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, although there may be useful takeaways for funders and organizations in other countries as well.

**LIBERATORY GIVING FRAMEWORK**

We offer this report from a framework of liberatory giving. As Nora Lester Murad characterized it, “Liberatory giving is committed, explicitly political, grounded in mutual relationships, and part and parcel of political solidarity, not a replacement for it.”

1 Murad, Nora Lester, “Aiding Liberation” in Our Vision for Liberation: Engaged Palestinian Leaders and Intellectuals Speak Out edited by Ramzy Baroud and Ilan Pappe, 2022
We know that funding is a political act, but that it is only one part of solidarity which must also include action and accountability. There is a growing network of courageous funders who are leading the way in integrating support for Palestinian rights into philanthropic spaces. To continue to enlarge that circle and deepen commitments, donors need community–networks, information, education, and support—to continue to act courageously and accountably in pursuit of Palestinian freedom. We offer this report as a roadmap to contribute to the project of making those commitments real.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Part of the history of international philanthropy in support of Palestinians has been the enforcement of segregation between regions that have been imposed by Israel. Some funders restrict their funding to organizations inside Israel, some to the West Bank, some to East Jerusalem, and some to Gaza. Others separate their offices and budgets along the same lines, creating portfolios with different strategies and approaches. This reinforces the fragmentation between Palestinians and restricts Palestinians from working across regions.

In addition, the definition of what people are talking about when they say “Palestine” can be vague or confusing. Some people are referring only to the territories occupied by Israel, while others mean the entirety of the region that encompasses Israel, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza.

In this report, therefore, we have chosen to use terms that name the people, rather than the specific region, to avoid confusion and imprecision and so as not to reinforce this enforced fragmentation. You will see phrases including “the Palestinian rights movement,” “the movement for Palestinian freedom,” “Palestinian liberation,” and “solidarity with Palestinians.” Although these phrases are not interchangeable and may reflect different areas of emphasis, geographical focus, political viewpoint, or all three, their overlapping meanings are meant to reflect the broad range of perspectives of interest to the donors, donor networks, and foundations we hope will make use of this report.
The movement for Palestinian rights and freedom in the U.S. has grown larger, stronger, more impactful, and more integrated with other racial and social justice movements.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Since the summer of 2014, when Israel’s attack on Gaza coincided with Ferguson protests against the murder of Michael Brown by police, building upon historic cross-movement solidarity and conversation, the movement for Palestinian rights and freedom in the U.S. has grown larger, stronger, more impactful, and more integrated with other racial and social justice movements. As an ecosystem, it encompasses a range of political positions, theories of change, areas of focus, and relationships with organizations inside Israel and the Palestinian territories it occupies. Unconditional defenders of Israel, always many magnitudes larger in resources and political power, have also ramped up in response. Meanwhile, in the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and inside Israel, ongoing systems of Israeli violence and control in combination with intensifying violent repression and expulsion of Palestinians, have also led to a level of unity and resolve among Palestinians that is unprecedented in the last several decades.

This section reviews a number of key factors that impact the potential for fundamental shifts in approach in the U.S. toward Palestinian liberation, and how they specifically can affect donors and potential donors as individuals, foundations, and organized networks.
Polling in the last 7–10 years has consistently shown that unconditional support for Israel, which used to be a matter of bipartisan consensus, is now generally the realm of older and Republican voters. This is true across every category of identity, including Jewish voters and evangelical Christians. While historically Israelis were overwhelmingly viewed positively over Palestinians, in 2022, Pew found that voters under 30 feel slightly more favorably toward Palestinians than Israelis. In the same poll, Republicans were much more likely to view Israelis favorably than Palestinians, while Democrats viewed Israelis and Palestinians just about equally. However, material support for Israel is still a matter of bipartisan consensus for the political establishment.

About half of Americans know at least “a little” about BDS (the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement for Palestinian rights) as of 2020, according to polling analyzed by Brookings pollster Shibley Telhami. While 76%
of Republicans oppose it, 48% of Democrats (a plurality) approve of it. The more Democrats knew about BDS, the more they were likely to support it. Notably, vast majorities of both Republicans and Democrats oppose legislation that penalizes people who choose to boycott Israel. These numbers are supported by similar results in polling by Data for Progress.

U.S. policies and political party leadership don’t yet reflect shifting opinions, but since 2018 and the election of the “Squad,” a growing number of Congresspeople, at least two to three dozen now, speak out regularly on Palestinian rights, including two (Representative Rashida Tlaib and Representative Ilhan Omar) who support the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

**FUNDING**

The overall funding picture is immensely lopsided. At the federal level, the U.S. provides Israel with at least $3.8 billion per year, almost entirely in military aid, more than any other country since World War II. While funding for Israel is guaranteed yearly, U.S. aid to Palestinians fluctuates yearly, is not guaranteed, and in recent years has hovered at around $350 million in mostly humanitarian and “recovery” aid to mitigate the harm of Israeli attacks funded in no small part by the U.S.
Total amounts of philanthropic giving are difficult to pin down, especially with the rise in the use of Donor Advised Funds (DAFS), but the overall picture is very clear. In 2014, *the Forward* analyzed the total size of Jewish communal charity giving and found it raises about $12-$14 billion per year, of which the largest segment, 38% or $4 - $5 billion, is in support of Israel.

Christian evangelical organizations, which are an enormous force in political and economic support for Israel, were *estimated in 2016* to give about $175 - $200 million yearly.

In 2015, *Haaretz* found that U.S. donors, who receive tax breaks for their giving through 501c3 vehicles, gave about $220 million from 2009 - 2013 in support for illegal settlement projects specifically. Since 2015, just one U.S. tax-exempt organization, the Central Fund, *has funneled $75 million* to settler organizations, providing over 99% of the budget, for example, to the Israeli Land Fund, which has been targeting Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah for expulsion. Similarly, Friends of Ir David have given over $36 million to support the settler organization that is expelling families in the Silwan neighborhood in Jerusalem. It is not an exaggeration to say that U.S. funding is fueling the displacement of Palestinians from Jerusalem and the West Bank, in violation of international law.

These intensely lopsided numbers are echoed in the electoral realm. For example, in the primary election cycle of 2022, AIPAC, the Democratic Majority For Israel (DMFI) and
Palestinian rights have been integrated enough into a broadly understood progressive agenda that Zionist and right-wing organizations are targeting progressives even if they don’t take explicit positions on Palestinian rights. This has huge consequences for a range of left movements and democracy itself.

There are no reliable reports available about the amount of giving to Palestinians or support for Palestinian liberation. It is important to note that Palestinian groups and their supporters face constant concern about how to give in the face of accusations of material support for terrorism (discussed more thoroughly in the “Barriers” section below), while organizations like the Friends of the IDF and U.S. settler organizations are able to freely raise hundreds of millions of dollars as 501c3 tax-exempt organizations despite their role perpetuating human rights violations.

affiliated groups spent $4.5 million against Congressmember Summer Lee, a progressive backed by Justice Democrats and Sunrise, among other groups. Palestinian rights have been integrated enough into a broadly understood progressive agenda that Zionist and right-wing organizations are targeting progressives even if they don’t take explicit positions on Palestinian rights. This has huge consequences for a range of left movements and democracy itself.

Zionist organizations campaigned against progressive candidates in 2022 including Congressmember Summer Lee from PA (Brian Cahn/ZUMA Press Wire) & Jessica Cisneros, House candidate from TX (Veronica Cardenas/Reuters)
SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN LIBERATION IN PHILANTHROPIC SPACES

Historically it has been very difficult to even talk about Palestinian rights and freedom in the vast majority of philanthropic spaces, let alone coalesce around individual or collective support. Fear of being called antisemitic or of offending powerful donors had largely silenced these conversations outside the sector. Even in self-identified progressive spaces and networks, red lines around talking about Zionism or beyond the Occupation have made even those conversations that were happening limited in scope.

In particular, Jewish foundations that are progressive in their approach to domestic funding and also define themselves as Zionist have exerted pressure on their peer organizations, networks, and grantees to constrain the parameters of conversations, not to mention what and who are funded, up to and including setting up DAFs that One organization called the need to fit inside the parameters laid down by their liberal Zionist funders “traumatic.”
don’t accept gifts to non-Zionist or anti-Zionist organizations. A staff person from one organization called the need to fit inside the parameters laid down by their liberal Zionist funders “traumatic.” That trauma is multi-faceted: it disempowers Palestinians, reinforces existing power structures, and makes Palestinian grantees feel forced to make compromises in order to do their work.

When funding is allocated to Palestinian organizations, it can still be harmful when it lacks political framing, reinforces the fragmentation of Palestinian people, or enforces barriers between them.

Organizations or movements who step outside these lines can be punished with withdrawn funding, the most infamous recent example being the response to the Vision for Black Lives platform in 2015 (addressed in further detail in one of the case studies).

One solution to the fear of controversy in talking about Palestinian freedom has been to exclude conversations about it entirely. This has been seen as a way to preserve progressive bona fides while avoiding the challenges of taking sides, but in practice it has meant that crucial conversations cannot occur and inconsistencies in stated values are not addressed.

In the last ten years or so, a nucleus of funders and networks has emerged that supports organizations working for Palestinian freedom, including anti-Zionist organizations. These groups, which include large foundations, family foundations, and individual funders, are increasingly collaborating with each other, though much more could be done in this regard to leverage their work to push the sector to open even further. In addition to funders who focus on Palestinian liberation as a site of struggle,
feminist, climate, food sovereignty, and racial justice funders are giving to Palestinian groups in an under-the-radar manner but with effective results.

This trend began with the wars on Gaza, and accelerated with the emergence of movements like Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), and Indigenous Land Back, which have taken principled positions in support of Palestinian liberation based on their own anti-racist struggles. Since the uprisings of 2020 in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, foundations have undertaken their own racial reckonings, resulting in increasing numbers of younger staff of color as well as commitments to anti-racism that can be utilized internally to push for new policies around Palestinian funding. However, the leadership of many of these foundations has not yet caught up with staff, making navigating what is actually possible treacherous for organizations who seek their funding.

**BOYCOTT DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS (BDS)**

The **BDS movement** emerged in 2005 as a call from the majority of Palestinian civil society. Since then, it has established itself as the framework for global solidarity with Palestinians, both in its demands and its tactics. As an organizing principle and an accountability mechanism, it offers useful guideposts for what constitutes solidarity and effective action, though it is still considered to be controversial in mainstream circles in the U.S. To the best of our knowledge, no foundation has yet to take public action to align their portfolios with BDS demands, or even to divest themselves from companies that profit from the occupation, though they may have informal policies to avoid the risk of criminalization under anti-BDS laws that have been passed in both Israel and the United States.

Numerous interviewees cited the principled solidarity of movements like M4BL as having had the most influence in opening up space to talk about Palestinian rights and freedom.

**CROSS-MOVEMENT SOLIDARITY**

As M4BL, Indigenous Land Back movement and other aligned movements have emerged and strengthened over the last decade, the philanthropic world, which is still overwhelmingly white, has
been forced to reckon with how their own structures and priorities were not set up to fundamentally challenge the status quo. Numerous interviewees cited the principled solidarity of movements like M4BL as having had the most influence in opening up space to talk about Palestinian rights and freedom. Donors who have already aligned with these movements have a clearer understanding from a place of values than they would otherwise, and the experience of the backlash these movements have experienced makes it easier to understand the political goals of the backlash against the Palestinian solidarity movement as well.

In fact, the progressive philanthropic world is in a process of internal reflection and change that includes a generational shift in staffing, internal political education, and a turn toward an ecosystem approach that understands the way that different movements relate to and reinforce one another. While many interviewees emphasized that this process is just beginning, it is a source of hope and potential.

**PALESTINE AS A WEDGE ISSUE**

Supporting Palestinian liberation is important in its own right. However, the strategies and tactics by which its opponents try to prevent it should concern all supporters of movements that strive for freedom, justice, and equality for all people. Although the movement for Palestinian rights is gaining support in the U.S., it is still considered
anathema by almost the entire leadership class of this country. Tactics such as anti-BDS laws and deplatforming (discussed in more length in the “Barriers” section) meant to hobble the growing strength of the movement are being used as experiments to be exported to harm other movements. We have already begun to see examples in the fields of climate and reproductive and gender justice. In effect, strategies that target the Palestinian liberation movement are the canary in the coal mine for targeting other progressive and left movements that have greater public support.

Further, attacks on those who support Palestinian rights and freedom, overwhelmingly people of color, are consciously used to break left and progressive organizing. Accusations of antisemitism are deployed to discredit thought leaders like Angela Davis and Marc Lamont Hill, to demonize broadly progressive candidates like Summer Lee and Jessica Cisneros, and to weaken the overall agenda and popularity of elected officials like Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib.

**MANUFACTURED FEAR**

As discussed in more depth in the “Barriers” section there is a network of right-wing Zionist organizations dedicated solely to sowing fear of speaking out on Palestine and imposing costs on individuals and organizations that do so. Tactics range from social media troll farms to blacklists to campaigns targeting foundations, universities, and socially responsible investment firms for taking even mild action such as hosting events and speakers on Palestine. Enumerating these tactics are not meant to sow further fear, but to highlight that each courageous effort to pushback against them makes it a little bit easier for the next targeted institution to speak out. Donors, who are overwhelmingly white and relatively powerful, can be extremely effective allies and partners by supporting those who do speak out and speaking out themselves.

**Attacks on those who support Palestinian rights and freedom, overwhelmingly people of color, are consciously used to break left and progressive organizing.**
BARRIERS TO FUNDING

This section will briefly review common barriers to funding for Palestinian solidarity, both to name and understand how they work individually, and to paint an overall picture of the multitude of tactics and strategies being used to repress philanthropic support for Palestinian freedom. The impact of these strategies—which were designed specifically to have this effect—is to create an atmosphere of fear and raise the cost of working within the Palestinian solidarity space, whether as an organization or a funder. The underpinning of many of these tactics is Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. It is important to note that the Israeli government has been an active instigator or funder of efforts in each of these categories. Extensive existing research and writing has been done on each of these topics, so consider this rundown merely a brief introduction, with some additional resources listed in the Resources section.

The impact of these strategies—which were designed specifically to have this effect—is to create an atmosphere of fear and raise the cost of working within the Palestinian solidarity space.
THE IHRA DECLARATION AND ACCUSATIONS OF ANTISEMITISM

Accusations of antisemitism and how they are weaponized against Palestinians and those who support them are a linchpin of the battle for control over narrative and action on Palestine. These accusations are used to bully, harass, intimidate, fire, and silence voices for Palestinian rights, and are deployed in every category below.

Over the last several decades, right-wing forces, with the active participation of the Israeli government, have worked to redefine antisemitism to include criticism of Israel, and in particular to define anti-Zionism as antisemitism. Known as the “new antisemitism,” it has been codified by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) as the IHRA Definition.

There is a global effort for governments, universities, and other institutions to adopt this definition via legislation and regulation, as well as counter-efforts such as the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, However, there is much more work to be done to create space for Palestinian perspectives on anti-Zionism and to de-couple it from definitions of antisemitism.

Alarmingly, even as antisemitism is an increasingly central rallying cry among ascendant white nationalists, prominent organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) continue to claim that manifestations of antisemitism on the left are equivalent to those on the right, despite all evidence to the contrary. Successful efforts to distinguish between actual antisemitism against Jewish people and accusations of antisemitism used to shield Israel from criticism are essential to shifting the narrative in support of Palestinian freedom and to shield against antisemitism itself. Given the impacts on Palestinians who are accused of antisemitism simply for reporting their lived experience under Zionism, it is important to include their voices regarding the politicization of the IHRA definition.
**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS:**

Be alert to ways that accusations of antisemitism are used to obscure discussions about Israel’s actions and be willing to push back against false charges of antisemitism.

Work within your networks, institutions, and families to reject the IHRA definition and to distinguish between antisemitism and anti-Zionism.

Commit to sharpening your understanding of antisemitism, how it manifests and its dangers by learning from values-aligned organizations.

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**LAWFARE**

A number of right-wing legal organizations, which collaborate and coordinate with the Israeli government, use politically motivated bogus legal threats to try to intimidate, shut down, embroil in legal battles, and impose fiscal and reputational costs on organizations promoting Palestinian rights. Lawfare can take many forms including litigation, regulatory complaints, trying to withdraw charitable tax status, and pressure campaigns to cut off funding. Though legal maneuvering is rarely successful, the chilling effects on organizations are profound. These tactics are a concerted threat not only to Palestinian civil society and solidarity organizations but to organizations supporting a range of movements, as these tactics are tested on the Palestinian rights movement and are in the process of being adopted more widely. For more information, see Charity and Security Network’s essential report, [*The Alarming Rise of Lawfare to Suppress Civil Society: The Case of Palestine and Israel*](#).

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**FOR FUNDERS:**

Don’t make assumptions about organizations that have been tarnished by accusations from lawfare organizations.

If an organization that you fund faces accusations, understand the political nature of these allegations and respond accordingly. Be willing to push back against allegations as needed. Do not be punitive toward organizations that face allegations.

Support legal resources and other needs of organizations who face or who may face lawfare accusations.
LAWS TARGETING POLITICAL SPEECH

Since about 2014, attempts to legislate against Palestinian rights have proliferated at the state and federal levels. These usually take the form of anti-BDS legislation or attempts to codify antisemitism to include criticism of Israel (e.g., the IHRA definition). Almost 250 bills have been introduced in 32 states, though only about 20% have passed; of the ones that have passed, they have often been overturned by the courts for being unconstitutional. These laws are meant to act as a deterrent against pro-Palestinian activism and are also a strategy to divert the attention of organizations working for Palestinian freedom from proactive to defensive work against these laws. These types of laws are also of grave concern for their use as a model to attack other movements with similar tactics. For more information, see Palestine Legal’s legislative map.

FOR FUNDERS:

• Support organizations that fight back against these laws

• Advocate for other organizations you support, your networks and peers to speak out against these laws
DEPLATFORMING

Palestinian organizations and those that support them face ongoing censorship from major social media and other crucial communication platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google Maps, and Zoom. They also face barriers to using Venmo, PayPal, and other online donation platforms. As key global communications and fundraising tools, these actions can cripple their effectiveness and make it harder to raise awareness of Israeli human rights violations. They also have real-world consequences, as Palestinians have been arrested for incitement due to their posts, and Palestinian Americans have received home visits from the FBI for similar reasons.

7amleh documented almost 500 cases of censorship in May 2021 alone, ranging from removed posts to adding sensitivity labels to account suspensions and bans. The Israeli government plays an active role in advocating the removal of social media posts that document Israeli human rights abuses, with its Cyber Unit bragging of a 90% success rate in getting posts pulled from Facebook. Emi Palmor, an appointed member of Facebook’s Global Oversight Board, is a former high-ranking official in the Netanyahu government who was the architect of Israel’s monitoring and censoring of Palestinian social media posts.

FOR FUNDERS:

• Be aware of restrictions Palestinian and organizations supporting Palestinian rights face and adjust your support accordingly

• Support campaigns such as Facebook, We Need to Talk, a collaboration of dozens of organizations in the Palestinian freedom movement pressuring Facebook to shift their discriminatory content moderation practices
ONLINE SMEAR CAMPAIGNS

A number of organizations, funded at least in part by the Israeli government, exist largely to defame and destroy the reputations of individuals and organizations active in Palestinian rights. They are largely anonymous, and thus difficult to hold accountable. They work to ensure that their profiles are search engine optimized so that they are widely seen. The impact of these organizations is to intimidate, bully, and harass students and other activists and organizations from being active advocates for Palestinian rights. Israel has also used the profiles created by Canary Mission to block individuals’ entry to Israel. The main organizations in this category are Canary Mission, StopAntiSemitism.org, Stand With Us, and NGO Monitor.

FOR FUNDERS:

- Understand that profiles by Canary Mission, StopAntiSemitism.org, NGO Monitor, or other similar efforts are politically motivated, are usually inaccurate in whole or in part, and created solely to inflict reputational damage on individuals and organizations
- Ensure that any institution through which you are giving your own funds is not also giving to these organizations

PRESSURE FROM LEGACY JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

There are a number of legacy Jewish organizations that trade upon their perceived bona fides in fighting antisemitism to advance a right-wing agenda when it comes to Israel. These include well-resourced and influential organizations like the ADL, American Jewish Committee, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center. The ADL, for example, publishes a “Top 10 Anti-Israel Organizations” list every few years that smears organizations working for Palestinian freedom and has recently doubled down on its commitment to equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism. DropTheADL has comprehensive materials on its history of attacking social justice movements, including for Palestinian liberation, under the banner of civil rights.

Organizations such as the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), Stand With Us, and the non-Jewish organization Christians United for Israel (CUFI) which have a more overt right-wing reputation, are also extremely well-resourced (often directly from the Israeli government) and use their weight to bully institutions into not hosting events, accepting donations, firing those who support Palestinian freedom, punishing thought-leaders who
speak out, and trying to control the public narrative by claiming to speak for the Jewish people as a whole. For example, in the Spring of 2022, Stand with Us was found to have advised a donor to the University of Washington who successfully negotiated with the university to return a $5 million donation for an endowed chair that had been filled by a non-Zionist professor.

Note: although electoral politics are beyond the scope of this report, there are a number of groups that play similar roles in the electoral field.

TERRORISM DESIGNATIONS

The U.S. government imposes sanctions on organizations that it determines to support groups on its terrorist list, which has long been politicized. In the case of Palestinians, that has intensified in the wake of 9/11 and the passing of the PATRIOT Act. Designation often reflects racist and Islamophobic policies and practices and U.S. foreign policy biases. The impact of being designated a terrorist organization is severe and can include the freezing of all assets, de-platforming from social media, and criminal and civil penalties for the organization’s leadership.

FOR FUNDERS:

- Understand the actual role these organizations play in smearing Palestinian rights organizations and how their perceived expertise on antisemitism acts as credentialing for their right-wing agenda when it comes to Israel
- If your relatives, friends, or institutions are funding these organizations, help educate them on the real role they are playing and advocate that they stop funding them
More recently, Israel has also used terrorism designations to cripple the work of leading Palestinian human rights organizations (addressed in further depth in a case study in this report). The threat of being designated a terrorist organization, in particular for Muslim and Arab-led organizations, can lead to decisions to be more cautious in taking strong positions than they would otherwise prefer.

FOR FUNDERS:
• Be aware of the context in which Muslim and Arab-led organizations are operating
• Work with trusted intermediary organizations and funders networks to learn how to do due diligence with minimal burden on the operations of the organization (further addressed in the Practical Resources section)
• Work with other funders to advocate for changes in U.S. law to mitigate the impact of these policies on civil society organizations

SPYING/SURVEILLANCE/THREATS OF VIOLENCE

Palestinian rights activists have been the targets of surveillance and spying, the most recent high-profile example being the Israeli firm NSO’s Pegasus. There is evidence that companies such as the Israeli Black Cube have attempted to entrap activists in activities that could de-legitimize them. These efforts contribute to the overall intimidation that activists and organizations face and require attentiveness to personal and online security measures that can be expensive and unwieldy. Organizations and their members have periodically received death threats and threats of violence that require individual and communal defense systems, all of which take their psychological, emotional, and physical tolls.

FOR FUNDERS:
• Support organizations’ having the resources they need to develop the infrastructure to defend their people and systems from spying and surveillance and invest in online and offline security.
CASE STUDIES
CASE STUDY #1: INDIVIDUAL DONORS

As part of the research for this report, interviews were conducted with ten individuals who have been offering substantial support for Palestinian solidarity work in the U.S. and in some cases Palestinian and/or Israeli organizations on the ground. These donors included Arab Americans (including Palestinian Americans), Jewish Americans, and those who are not in either of those categories.

While this set of interviews is neither comprehensive nor representative, there were notable commonalities among all donors, as well as specific themes that emerged from each community. While every individual donor has their own story of how they came to make a commitment to Palestinian liberation, we are sharing one illustrative story here:

Sam Jacobs is in his late twenties and lives in Brooklyn, working as a fundraiser for a social justice organization. He grew up in a secular Jewish, very wealthy, politically liberal family—on every issue except Palestinian freedom. His family is staunchly Zionist and his extended family makes very large gifts in support of Israel.

Sam’s politicization around Palestinian rights began when he went to college around the time of the Occupy movement. New ideas about class and political change were everywhere. On his own, he attended a Students for Justice in Palestine anti-

...that’s a big reason I feel a debt of gratitude to the Palestinian struggle—it opened my eyes to everything, inspired me to redistribute my wealth, to lean into conflict when it happens, and to take a public stand.”
apartheid week event where Noam Chomsky spoke. Sam calls it a “life-changing afternoon, one of the biggest events in my life.” As he described it, he listened to someone who looked like his own grandfather discuss the settlements and occupation, a perspective he had never heard before.

Although greatly moved, Sam didn’t have a political community at this point and wasn’t sure what to do next with the information he had just learned. He began to wonder how much of what he had been told by his family had been lies or half-truths, which led him to wonder if other topics had been false or one-sided. Sam says, “that’s a big reason I feel a debt of gratitude to the Palestinian struggle—it opened my eyes to everything, inspired me to redistribute my wealth, to lean into conflict when it happens, and to take a public stand.”

While Sam did not have access to inherited wealth at that point, he knew that he one day would. During a time of great conflict and confrontation with his family, he met organizers for the first time when he joined Resource Generation. Through them, he also made contact with Grassroots International. After some persuasion, he agreed to go on a delegation to the region, meeting with Palestinian individuals and organizations. Sam says, “I was convinced that Palestinians wanted me to see. That was transformative. What I saw was gutting.” Sam also joined Grassroots International’s Donor Engagement Group. From that period on, he made commitments to ongoing giving to Palestinian liberation as well as trans-feminist and anti-imperialist movements.

Sam reflects that, “As a giver, if you’re not organized, you’re part of the problem. The most politically powerful model is resource redistribution where people work together in consistent ways as part of a political project.”

Sam summarizes, “This work is about relationships, making commitments, and most important of all is to communicate clearly. So much of what boards and donors need is
emotional fortification. I would love for there to be more public discourse about donors supporting Palestinian liberation.”

As in Sam’s case, all the donors who were interviewed felt strongly about the need for ongoing political education, including and especially delegations to the region. Additionally, formal and informal networks of support, whether through intermediary organizations or friendships, were identified as crucial by every donor. However, each community’s motivations and concerns about their giving were also distinct.

Arab American donors did not report having to worry about pressure or opposition from family and friends, although a critique was offered of their community’s general emphasis on humanitarian giving over political giving. They felt less need for education about the issue and cast their support as part of their obligation to their families, community, and heritage. However, they did express concerns about being perceived as antisemitic.

Additionally, the cloud of the Holy Land Foundation Five case, during which the largest Muslim humanitarian aid organization was categorized as a terrorist-supporting organization shortly after 9/11 (and culminating in the criminal convictions and prison sentences for its officials), continues to have a chilling effect on how at least some Arab Americans approach their giving. The Holy Land case was directly related to Israel, as the accusation was of material support for Hamas, and two Israeli agents were allowed to testify anonymously in closed courtrooms as part of the prosecution, among other irregularities and injustices around the case. The remembered history in this case casts Israel’s recent criminalization of the six Palestinian human rights organizations in an even more sinister light, illuminating the strategy of a potential loss of fiscal support that those designations were designed to elicit.

For Jewish American donors like Sam, having the opportunity to educate or re-educate themselves about the issue was a much greater priority. These donors are also much more concerned about having the tools to confront or convince their families or communities to learn about Palestine and perhaps give as well. Some Jewish donors experienced backlash from their communities or decided not to respond to pressure and criticism aimed at them. They recognized that they have the ability and therefore
mandate to discuss Zionism critically in a way that enables others to do the same, which they identified as integral parts of their philanthropic and political responsibilities.

Donors who are neither Jewish nor Arab also fear being accused of antisemitism and of having uncomfortable conversations with peers. They further identified that allyship is noticeably complicated in this space and that the learning curve is particularly steep, including understanding the finer gradations of politics within the broad category of giving in support of Palestinian rights.

**LESSONS LEARNED:**

- Donors need to be organized and, whenever possible, public about their giving
- The tools, education and support that donors need to be confident in their giving may vary depending upon which community they come from
- There is potential to attract a younger generation of donors as generational wealth is shifting; current donors are often key connectors to bringing in new ones
- More research about who makes up the community of giving to Palestine would be helpful in understanding the sector, and where and how it can expand.
CASE STUDY #2: AROC

Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC) is a Bay Area-based grassroots membership organization that offers an innovative blend of direct services to Arab and Muslim communities, including legal, language access, and youth advocacy. They also organize and campaign towards an uncompromising vision of justice and liberation (including anti-Zionism) for Arab and working-class communities of color.

AROC has faced numerous direct barriers to receiving funding for its organizing and campaign-related work. When AROC has been able to raise funds, like those from local county and city governments, it is to support providing direct legal and other social services. AROC receives very little foundation funding, with recent notable and significant exceptions of The Radical Imagination Family Foundation and fruitful partnership with the San Francisco Foundation. Lara Kiswani, the Executive Director of AROC, attributes the lack of foundation funding partly to funders who have been hostile because of the organization’s anti-Zionism, even when funding requests are unrelated. She cited multiple occasions when AROC was invited to apply for programs that would support their youth, legal and social justice programming, only to be subsequently questioned about AROC’s position on Israel and then not being awarded funding. Despite being national leaders in the Trump era on the broad front against right-wing authoritarianism, AROC didn’t get any money dedicated to Arab and Muslim organizing, despite many new foundation portfolios dedicated to expressly supporting this work, indicating a broader blacklisting. These interventions not only blocked much-needed funding for the organization but imperiled entire community programs.
Walter and Elise Haas Fund, for instance, pulled out of a funders' collaboration in 2006 because AROC would be receiving money. Although the foundation is not explicitly Zionist, it has, over time, directly kept anti-Zionist organizations like AROC from funding opportunities. These actions targeting and harming vulnerable organizations supporting Palestinian liberation and AROC by philanthropic stakeholders are not unique.

In the last year, AROC was once again invited to apply for funding for a youth collaborative fund partially funded by Walter and Elise Haas Fund, with assurances that they were likely to receive funding. Yet again, they were questioned about their position on Israel despite it being entirely unrelated to the program under consideration and despite that question not being asked of anyone else. When AROC was honest about its anti-Zionist position, they did not receive funding.

But this time, the next steps went differently and included remarkable sites of progress.

Supported by an ally at the San Francisco Foundation, AROC was able to meet with the new program officer at Walter and Elise Haas Fund. The new staff person is a woman of color who was unaware of Haas's history of blocking funding to AROC. She brought this to the attention of the foundation's Executive Director, who is also new in her position and a woman of color.

As a result, in late 2021, Walter and Elise Haas Fund sent an email of apology to AROC for its previous interventions and decisions. In addition, they approached AROC to open up a dialogue going forward. It isn’t clear where this conversation will lead, and structural barriers remain, but this is a remarkable turnaround. There are numerous other examples of blackballing organizations from funding due to their Palestinian liberation positions,
usually only known through whisper networks. But it is a rare instance where it has become possible to document it retroactively. While AROC has yet to receive funds from the foundation, they remain hopeful of the reparative steps made by the Walter and Elise Haas Fund and the potential for these actions to shift historic patterns in a positive direction.

There is great promise in both organizations being part of the Solidaire Action community. In holding trusted relationships with both AROC & the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, Solidaire Action feels great honor and responsibility. Solidaire Action believes that standing united for peace and justice across great divides is essential to carrying out the difficult and beautiful work of repair and restoration. Solidaire Action is deeply honored to support the innovative leadership of AROC and the Walter and Elise Haas Fund and their continued efforts toward bold, powerful repair.

LESSONS LEARNED:

• Foundations have tremendous influence over funding opportunities far beyond their program areas, both through broader formal collaboratives and through informal networks of relationships.

• The shift in staffing at the foundation, specifically to younger people of color who bring an anti-racist lens that they are applying to the Palestinian struggle, can lead to significant changes in policy, although boards must be ready to shift as well.

• For both supportive and hostile funders, internal education on Zionism and the Palestinian struggle for freedom is crucial to change the power structures within foundations fundamentally.

• Supportive foundations can open doors and act as facilitators for organizations they support. Philanthropic organizations deeply rooted across social justice sectors and movements play a critical role in transforming the landscape of philanthropy toward a terrain where all communities are well-held in their work for peace and justice.
CASE STUDY #3: V4BL PLATFORM

In 2016, the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) launched the Vision for Black Lives (V4BL), a comprehensive policy platform that was the result of an in-depth collective process of over fifty organizations. It had a deliberately internationalist and abolitionist lens, including naming harmful tenets of U.S. foreign policy and proposing a decrease in military funding, in a range of countries, including a few paragraphs on Palestine.

When the platform first launched, it had a significant mainstream impact. However, after just a few days, member organizations started reporting that they were getting concerned calls from funders and individuals in positions of power across sectors. The pressure continued to increase, with Jewish organizations, ranging from liberal to right-wing Zionist putting out statements and articles condemning the platform and accusing M4BL of antisemitism. People stopped wanting to host M4BL at events, and at times there were even in-person protests and security concerns. Ultimately it also meant one of the largest charitable foundations in the world pulled resources from organizations associated with M4BL. Other funders then followed, which was doubly damaging because while the gift was public, its retraction was not, so there was an impression that M4BL had a level of funding it actually did not.

All of these concerns were centered on the language around support for Palestinian rights, in particular on the use of the word “genocide,” which has a long tradition in Black organizing.

During this time, M4BL received crucial support. A number of Jewish organizations,
notably Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) and Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) publicly defended the platform. Most importantly, staff in foundations, especially Black staff, organized and strategized within philanthropy to muster support.

Although time has passed since this occurred in 2016 and the current situation is very different, the reverberations are still being felt. The energy, attention, and respect that had been the response to the launch of the V4BL were deflected to a conversation exclusively focused on the brief section about Palestine and accusations of antisemitism, which impeded efforts to promote the platform as a whole.

LESSONS LEARNED:

• When taking a position that may draw opposition, prepare ahead of time how you will communicate both internally and externally, including your community and fiscal supporters. Additionally, clear decision making processes and strong relationships are essential to ensure internal cohesiveness.

• Build alliances within the philanthropic community. Black staff and board of funding institutions, as well as other people of color and anti-Zionist Jews, are a potential backbone of support.

• Palestine is often an issue that is used to break solidarity within the left, be prepared for it as a tactic. Organizations should be aware that this can have reputational as well as financial consequences. It is essential in a coalition setting that there is a clear plan to support organizations who are the most vulnerable and that larger or more durable organizations are prepared to flank other organizations.

• Don’t allow threats to funding to shift your political positions.
CASE STUDY #4: FUNDERS FOR PALESTINE

On October 19, 2021, six prominent Palestinian human rights organizations (Al Haq, Adameer, Defense for Children International-Palestine, Bisan Center for Research and Development, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, and Union of Palestinian Work Committees) were labeled as so-called “terrorist organizations” by the Israeli government under its Anti-Terrorism Law of 2016. This designation criminalized the work of these highly respected organizations (and later led to the raiding and closure of their offices by military order), as well as aiming to criminalize those who fund or support them in other ways. Israeli security sources have confirmed that the purpose of the designation is to not only criminalize these organizations, but to cut off their funding and other forms of support they receive from international partners and supporters.

The designation set off an immediate strong response from institutions around the world, perhaps stronger than Israel had expected, from bodies ranging from the UN, to a joint statement from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty and a coalition of Israeli organizations, to even a resolution in Congress sponsored by Representative Betty McCollum (which did not pass).

In an unprecedented move, U.S. donors also came together to protest Israel’s action. Ultimately, over 150 mostly U.S.-based foundations and individual donors signed onto an open letter under the new banner of “Funders for Palestine.” While many of the signatories have been active in supporting Palestinian solidarity for many years, there were also numerous signatories who had been relatively peripheral to funding in support of Palestinians but who recognized the danger to human rights defenders worldwide.

Shortly thereafter, a subset of those funders hosted a webinar briefing for donors on the ramifications of the designation, featuring the leaders of some of the targeted organizations. It was co-sponsored by a number of smaller and larger foundations and donor networks—most but not all of whom are known for their support of Palestinian

The open letter and webinar may mark the first time that donors came together publicly in large numbers as a potential political force to discuss together how to support Palestinian human rights defenders and Palestinian civil society.
rights. At least 125 people attended the webinar, again a combination of those who have been supportive of Palestinian organizing and those who were new to the topic but were activated by Israel’s actions.

The open letter and webinar may mark the first time that donors came together publicly in large numbers as a potential political force to discuss together how to support Palestinian human rights defenders and Palestinian civil society.

While the terrorist designation has yet to be lifted and the six organizations remain under existential and fiscal threat, no major private organizations withdrew their support, although a number of European governments and the EU itself suspended continued funding for some of the six pending investigations. While it is impossible to claim that the various vocal defenses of the six organizations have definitively made a difference, it is plausible to think that it has slowed or prevented further Israeli action. As of April 25, 2022, UN human rights experts called for governments to resume and increase funding to all six organizations.

Note: as this report went to press, Israel took further steps to violently shut down the six organizations.

LESSONS LEARNED:

• These relatively small but unprecedented efforts show the untapped potential within the philanthropic sector to come together and be an effective political voice in support of Palestinian civil society.

• There is potential to broaden the scope of support for Palestinian rights both among human rights funders focused on other countries and among potential new funders who are distressed by Israel’s actions.

• In addition to funding, funders can work in partnership with Palestinian civil society to promote the truth about the work of crucial organizations to counter the dominant Israeli narrative.

• The active support of larger/more mainstream foundations and funders’ collaboratives helps build mainstream recognition and potential power of smaller funders to speak out on this issue.
RECOMMENDATIONS
The purpose of these recommendations is to help create the conditions to bring in new donors, make their commitments sustainable through education and support, and enlarge the overall commitment to giving in support of Palestinian freedom. They are tailored to the specific conditions facing the movement for Palestinian freedom and are largely drawn from the reflections of those interviewed for this report (see Appendix). These recommendations are applicable for individual donors, donor networks, and foundations of every size, though implementation may look different in each category.

Be Prepared

BE PREPARED FOR PUSHBACK

While many or even most funders do not receive any pushback for their giving to Palestinian and Palestinian solidarity organizations, it happens enough that it is best to be prepared. That includes being able to show that your gift aligns with your principles, ensuring that your board and staff (if applicable) know the grantee and their work and are prepared to defend the gift, making sure you and/or your organization have had the political education to speak with confidence (though not necessarily expertise!) about how the gift fits in with your work, and that you have a communications plan to communicate internally and/or externally to your networks as needed.

SET PRINCIPLES THAT APPLY TO ALL GRANTMAKING

Having an articulated set of values by which you make funding decisions is always a worthwhile practice for intentional giving. It creates a baseline for consistent giving, exposes potential inconsistency around the application of commitments to human rights, democracy, freedom, and justice, helps build an internationalist solidarity framework, and provides a basis of defense for funding decisions if they are questioned.
In the case of Palestine—where fears, stereotypes, pressure, and misinformation can all contribute to reluctance to give—it is an essential tool.

If you haven’t already adopted a set of principles, whether as an individual donor, family foundation, or larger grantmaking institution, conduct an internal process that articulates the values by which you make decisions about who and what to fund. This can surface any misalignment among stakeholders or between values and actual grantmaking. Commit to applying your principles consistently across programs and grantmaking and create measures to hold yourself accountable to them.

BUILD COLLECTIVE POWER

There is enormous untapped potential in funders uniting to advocate together for shifts in philanthropy and public policy. Become a donor organizer! Think about ways you can organize with colleagues and peers to protect and defend organizations under attack, advocate for changes in policy that impact giving to Palestinian and Palestinian support organizations (for example: terrorism designations, anti-BDS laws, the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and charitable tax status for settler organizations), and work to enlarge the circle of donors and funders who will do the same.

Donor Organizing, Political Education and Peer Support

DONOR NETWORKS

Donors, especially those new to giving in support of Palestinian liberation, need peers to talk to, take courage from, learn with, strategize and exchange resources with, and develop collective practices and work. This can take the form of individual mentorship, informal circles, or established donor organizing networks and funder alliances/communities. These are places where relationships and trust can be built over the long-term (see the next section for some specific successful donor organizing models).
Philanthropic support organizations and intermediaries should invest in creating these spaces and making them accessible to donors. Donors, in turn, can support and fund this type of donor organizing in addition to program work.

Donors, especially those new to giving in support of Palestinian liberation, need peers to talk to, take courage from, learn with, strategize and exchange resources with, and develop collective practices and work.

**POLITICAL EDUCATION WITH AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS**

In the face of overwhelming Israeli and pro-Israel propaganda and misinformation, it is crucial to invest the time and resources to learn about Palestinian history, the movement for global solidarity, and how it fits in with other movement work and commitments. It is often most effective to do this as part of existing networks. Learn about the history of funding in the sector and the ongoing attempts to repress solidarity with Palestinians and how those methods are being exported to other movements. Hear directly from Palestinians. For foundations and funding networks, make sure staff and board participate in political education, and provide resources in various media for individual donors to learn more and share with their families and communities.
DELEGATIONS

Nothing compares to seeing the situation with your own eyes. Create or seek out opportunities to see for yourself, especially with peers. If you are part of a foundation or network, go as a group. Design your itinerary or work with an organization already partnered with and trusted by Palestinian groups, that prioritizes hearing directly from Palestinians and complies with the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel's (PACBI) Ethical Tourism Guidelines, such as Eyewitness Palestine. Create opportunities for individual and group accountability to take concrete steps and commitments at the end of the trip and beyond.

Countering Philanthropic History

UNDERSTAND ROOTS OF DISTRUST FOR THE PHILANTHROPIC SECTOR

The philanthropic sector has done harm to Palestinians and those engaged in solidarity with Palestinians in the ways that it imposes litmus tests on political positions, chiefly around the willingness to talk about Zionism; enshrines the fracturing of Palestinian society in its giving practices; fosters an atmosphere of competition rather than joint action; and has at times eliminated funding due to political pressure. Because of that history of harm, as a donor you can expect it to take time, a willingness to listen, and grants without preconditions to build trust and partnership with organizations that are bringing this history with them.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PALESTINIAN-LED ORGANIZATIONS

Palestinian-led organizations in the United States and Palestinian organizations on the ground are less resourced, less networked, and less well-known than other organizations due to long-standing exclusion and the philanthropic history referenced above. Palestinian organizations report often being the only Palestinian organization in the room even when the subject under discussion is their own lives, experiences, and aspirations. To reverse this dynamic, which can be a result of a combination of racism, Islamophobia, and political targeting or litmus tests, funders can create opportunities to bring Palestinian organizations further into their orbit. This can include introductions to your personal networks or funders’ networks, invitations to speak at events where funders will
be present, sponsoring events where Palestinian voices will be highlighted, acting as a validator for less well-known organizations, ensuring that panels prioritize Palestinian representation, and committing to increase the proportion of your funding allocated to Palestinian-led or Palestinian organizations.

CAUTIONS RE: GATEKEEPING

For many decades, organizations, specifically those who are anti-Zionist, have faced formal and informal restrictions in receiving funding. Philanthropy more generally, whether through individual gifts or foundations, relies upon recommendations and introductions from trusted interlocutors. Think about ways to continue to broaden access to potential funders, especially for smaller, less connected organizations. As a funder, consider whom you rely upon for introductions and recommendations, as well as whether they have stated or unstated political litmus tests that are inconsistent with your own values.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Devise and share accountability measures and commit to evaluating your progress. Measures of accountability might include the amount of funding committed, the percentage of funding allocated to Palestinian-led organizations, transparency about your process, percentage of funding going to organizing/power-building of frontline communities, accessible application and reporting processes, a percentage of gifts going to multi-year gifts, progress toward divestment, etc.

Concrete Action

MORE MONEY

Funders supporting justice for Palestinians are vastly outspent by those supporting Israeli oppression. If you can give more, push yourself to do so. Make multi-year commitments. Use movement-centered funding strategies: make general support

Palestinian-led organizations in the United States and Palestinian organizations on the ground are less resourced, less networked, and less well-known than other organizations due to long-standing exclusion and philanthropic history.
grants without preconditions, and support organizing and power-building, which are under-resourced across all movements and are the root of fundamental structural change. Create space for organizations to be able to experiment and fail in support of finding long-term tactics and strategies that work.

**DIVESTMENT**

Consider divesting your grantmaking funds from companies that are supporting or profiting from Israeli apartheid. If you are a shareholder, especially a significant one, in a company, pension fund, or other institution that invests in those companies, organize fellow shareholders and advocate for divestment.

**BE BOLDER!**

Funders hold immense power in matters of discourse, advocating for policies, and setting new norms and standards. Given the barriers facing funding for the Palestinian freedom movement and the ongoing harm to Palestinians, taking risks, especially collectively, can significantly impact philanthropy and its ability to influence conditions on the ground and the potential for liberation.
For support for Palestinian freedom to grow and be sustainable in the philanthropic sector, we need to think about building community and an ecosystem of solidarity through fundraising and beyond. This orientation, at least for now, requires a labor-intensive, high-touch approach that creates space for learning and engagement for donors. This section details some of the ways this can happen.

As we recognize the range of political positioning and interests that animate those who give or are exploring giving in support of Palestinian rights and freedom, this section offers a guide to intermediaries, networks, and collaboratives that can make the process of giving more manageable, that can organize donors, that can foster cross-movement Palestinian solidarity, and that can offer education and mutual support for donors. It is not meant to be a comprehensive list of organizations that support Palestinian projects or organize in support of Palestinian liberation in the U.S.

**DONOR NETWORKS**

Donor networks are donor organizers—they provide donors with a community that will support and challenge them in taking their giving to the next level as part of a lifelong project through political education, leadership development, relationship-building, mutual accountability, and in some cases collective funding circles.
**Solidaire Action**—Solidaire Action is a community of donor organizers mobilizing critical resources to build political power for movements for racial, gender, and climate justice. Their three-pronged strategy includes donor engagement and activism, resource mobilization, and strengthening donor practices through education and peer support.

**Resource Generation**—for young people up to 35 with wealth and/or class privilege who are committed to the equitable distribution of wealth, land and power. They focus on education and mutual accountability, and also run campaigns with national campaign partner organizations.

**Women Donors Network**—a community of donors that offers opportunities for learning, connection and action, and also has a number of pooled funds that prioritize Black, Indigenous, and people of color-led work, with a particular focus on BIPOC women of color leadership.

**Donors of Color Network**—the first cross-racial community of donors of color and a home for donors committed to building the collective power of people of color to drive systems change and advance racial equity.

**Foundation for Middle East Peace** (FMEP) is an institutional funder with a long history of funding on the ground in Palestine and the U.S. and, more recently, mobilizes new funding in the sector from private foundations and individual donors. FMEP is a one-stop shop of webinars, podcasts, and written resources that amplify the movement for Palestinian liberation and track and analyze the sector wide political issues outlined throughout this report, including lawfare, the weaponization of antisemitism, and anti-BDS legislation.

**INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

Each of these organizations offers ways for individual donors to join a donor community that collectivizes resources and decision-making as well as varying opportunities for political education and ongoing engagement. At the same time, they help donors avoid the intensive vetting and due diligence that can be barriers to giving. These models focus on Palestinian organizations as vehicles for giving, housed at individual funds or organizations. As of now, there are no pooled funds in support of Palestinian liberation in the U.S.

**Donor engagement circles** can be cohorts of any size and duration that offer peer support, political education, and collective resource sharing and decision-making.

**Grassroots International** (GI) has a 40-year history of funding movements in Palestine. For donors, Grassroots International has regular delegations to Palestine, and has a
Donor Engagement Group practicum that is a model in the field. Based on Grassroots International’s overall framework of Global Solidarity Philanthropy and building long-term partnerships with politically aligned organizations, each cohort of 10-20 donors commits to deep intersectional political education, receives tools on how to reach out more deeply and effectively to their own communities to become supporters, learns directly from Grassroots International partners in the field, and culminates by engaging in collective fundraising.

**Community-directed funding** emphasizes decision-making about funding happening at the community level. Donors give to the intermediary organization but, as a way to return dignity and autonomy to the communities that need fiscal support, do not have further input into the decision-making process.

**Rawa Fund** is an innovative new model to support creative community-led democratic grantmaking to Palestinian organizations. Donors give directly to Rawa through their fiscal sponsor, Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA). Funding is distributed based on a regional network of community organizers who prospect for and vote on initiatives that need funding. In addition to being community-centric, this process helps funnel money to newer, smaller, unregistered projects and avoids the arduous due diligence process for donors and reduces it substantially for initiatives that are funded.

**Dalia Association** is a community foundation that provides community-controlled grantmaking. Dalia has themed program areas, a training and support program for local identification of needs and making grants along those lines, and also hosts geographic-specific community funds.

**FUNDER NETWORKS**

Funder networks are usually made up of grantmaking institutions, but may also include individual donors as members. They provide opportunities to identify and advocate for common issues affecting members, organize together to make changes in philanthropic approaches, develop tools and research in their fields, and offer educational and convening opportunities. They do not generally do any of their own grantmaking. They have a range of receptivity to funding and speaking out for Palestinian rights and are places where efforts to build awareness and action are ongoing. Some examples include:

**EDGE Funders Alliance**’s membership is open to major donors, grantmakers and institutions. Its focus is to raise awareness and deepen understanding of the interconnected crises threatening our common future. It advocates within philanthropy and builds community to increase resources for systematic alternatives based on justice and equity.
Human Rights Funders Network is a network of funders dedicated to resourcing human rights movement action around the world. Membership is open to foundations and grantmaking institutions but not individual donors. It holds events, facilitates communities of practice, develops tools for funders, and advances its open philanthropy philosophy of sharing power, advancing justice, and responding to intersecting forms of oppression.

Peace and Security Funders Group (PSFG) is a network of funders that works in the realm of peace and security. PSFG is open to both individuals and grantmaking institutions, including every major foundation that funds the Palestinian solidarity movement. It offers multiple venues for peer learning and support, crisis response coordination, policy briefings, and more to its members.

OTHER PUBLIC FOUNDATIONS OR ORGANIZATIONS WITH GRASSROOTS-FOCUSED GRANTMAKING PROGRAMS

The following is a non-exhaustive list of U.S. public foundations that support grassroots Palestinian organizations.

Global Fund for Women—supports gender justice movements to create meaningful change that will last beyond our lifetimes, including long-term partnerships with groups working against anti-gender based violence in Israel and Palestine.

The Jerusalem Fund—offers education in the United States and supports communities in Palestine.

MADRE works on ending gender violence, advancing climate justice, and building a just peace through grantmaking, legal advocacy, and organizational strengthening. Palestine and Palestinian partners are one of their areas of focus.

Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA) works for the rights and well-being of the children of the Middle East, including supporting dozens of community projects for Palestinian children.

Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights—is a feminist fund that protects, strengthens, and sustains women and transgender human rights defenders at critical moments, including to Israeli and Palestinian organizations. They make rapid response grants, engage in advocacy and alliance building, and are part of a Global Consortium of Urgent Action funds.
Practical Resources for Giving to Palestinian Organizations

Funding for Palestinian organizations faces some specific due diligence barriers that can be daunting in particular for new donors.

**Equivalency Determination:** U.S. law requires that grants to any international organization have to provide an equivalency determination, which shows that the organization in question functionally operates by the same principles and standards of U.S.-based 501c3 organizations.

**Material Support:** The U.S. counterterrorism framework, which is unmanageably broad, politically motivated, and often racist, impedes the work of legitimate organizations, both by constraining their actions for fear of being designated terrorists, and by making it harder to provide needed financial support. Muslim and Arab organizations (both U.S. and Palestinian organizations) are disproportionately targeted.

**SOLUTIONS**

*NGOsource* maintains a database of international organizations that have been pre-vetted and certified for equivalency determination, and can also conduct and certify new organizations. This reduces the burden on organizations to provide detailed documentation repeatedly, reduces the fiscal burden (on grantmakers and grantees), makes grantmaking more efficient, and fosters the ability to make grants to smaller and unregistered organizations.

NGOsource is available for all kinds of foundations, including community foundations and others that host donor-advised funds (DAF). Individual donors who are unaffiliated will need to pursue a different option—either by doing their own due diligence or giving through an intermediary.

*Intermediary organizations:* Especially for newer donors, intermediary organizations can be an excellent bridge to avoid costly, intimidating or risky donations, including the equivalency determination of funding through a US-based intermediary.
be an excellent bridge to avoid costly, intimidating or risky donations, including the equivalency determination of funding through a US-based intermediary. In addition, for donors who aren’t as familiar with the field, it is a way to support the ecosystem as a whole without doing their own research into which specific organizations to support.

Intermediary organizations, including Rawa, Dalia Association, and Grassroots International (each addressed in more depth in the previous section) invite donors to contribute pooled funds specifically for Palestinian organizations. Each uses somewhat different models but all invite donors to commit funds to a common fund whose distribution is determined by Palestinian partners and community representatives and/or based on long-term partnerships with Palestinian grantee organizations.

**Additional Resources**

**REPORTS**

*The Impact of Foreign Sanctions Listings under US, UK and EU Law on Nonprofits* by the American Bar Association, Center for Human Rights (2022)

*Challenging the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism* is a constantly updated resource in chart form, with dozens of additional links, by Lara Friedman of Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP) (2022)

*The Alarming Use of Lawfare to Suppress Civil Society: The Case of Palestine and Israel* has detailed case studies and concrete recommendations, including for civil society and donors, by Charity & Security Network (2021)

*Preventing Peace: How Material Support Laws Undermine Peacebuilding* chronicles how these laws create a chilling effect and make it harder to move money, as well as some proposed legal remedies by Charity and Security Network and Alliance for Peacebuilding (2021)

*The Attacks On Palestinian Digital Rights* published by 7amleh, focuses on the over 500 digital violations of Palestinian rights in May 2021, further illustrating ongoing trends across social media platforms (2021)

*How Not to Fight Antisemitism: A Critique of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition on Antisemitism (IHRA-WDA)* by Independent Jewish Voices Canada offers analysis of the harm of the IHRA definition and an alternative definition (2020)


Fear, Inc looks at the donors and networks that fund and promote Islamophobia, by Center for American Progress (2011)

Blocking Faith, Freezing Charity looks at how U.S. anti-terrorism laws impact Muslim charitable giving, by the ACLU (2009)

ARTICLES

Human Rights Funders Must Support Civil Society in Palestine by Alice Rothchild (2022)

Mobilizing People and Moving Money for Palestinian Human Rights by Katherine Asuncion/Grassroots International (2021)


Philanthropy in Palestine and Israel—It’s Time to Change the Framing by Nora Lester Morad (2018)


WEBSITES

Defund Racism—a Palestinian-led campaign to end the use of charitable status to fund the settler movement, specifically five organizations: American Friends of Ateret Cohanim, American Friends of Ir David, Israel Independence Fund, Central Fund of Israel and Hebron Fund

DropTheADL—includes a primer, webinar and open letter to the progressive movement documenting the harms to social movements, in particular those led by people of color, perpetrated by the ADL, endorsed by over 100 progressive movement organizations
**Distorted Definition: Redefining Antisemitism to Silence Advocacy for Palestinian Rights**—From Palestine Legal, includes a timeline, case studies, and links to many useful resources.

**Funders For Palestine**—a joint effort by individual donors and foundations in response to the six Palestinian human rights organizations that were labeled as so-called “terrorists” by Israel, including a joint open letter, resources, and a way to sign on.

**Map of State and Federal Legislation Targeting Advocacy for Palestinian Rights**—from Palestine Legal, tracks state and federal legislation that is pending, in effect or has been defeated or struck down by the courts.

**Boycott Film**—by Just Vision, includes links to film and resources regarding attempts to challenge anti-boycott laws in several states.

**PANELS**

**Zionism and Philanthropy**—panel sponsored by Resource Generation.

**The IHRA Definition and the Fight Against Antisemitism: Implications and Impacts for Palestinians**—part of a six part series by the Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP).
APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

Conducted November 2021 - July 2022
Organizational affiliations as noted for identification purposes only

Mike Amitay | Open Society Foundations
Rajasvini Bhansali | Solidaire Action
George Bisharat | UC College of the Law, San Francisco
Perry Cammack | Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Katherine Franke
Lara Friedman | Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP)
Terry Greenblatt
Naseem Haffar
Chung-Wha Hong | Grassroots International
Sam Jacobs
Sam Jadallah
Anna Lefer Kuhn | Arca Foundation
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Lara Kiswani | Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)
Moukhtar Kocache, Coleen Jankovic, Soheir Asaad | Rawa Fund
Libby Lenkinski | New Israel Fund (NIF)
Matthew Lindenbaum
Yousef Munayyer | former Executive Director, US Campaign for Palestinian Rights
Ariadne Papagapitos | independent human rights and governance consultant
Deborah Sagner | Sagner Family Foundation
Sandra Tamari | Adalah Justice Project
Sam Vinal | Radical Imagination Family Foundation

And several people who requested to remain anonymous.

Please note: being interviewed for this project does not imply endorsement of any or all portions of this report.
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