INTRODUCTION

There is an extraordinary gap between the enormous amount of money raised annually to support continued Israeli apartheid and the amount raised to fight for Palestinian liberation. Numerous obstacles—smear campaigns, legal threats, accusations of antisemitism—continue to create a chilling effect, making it harder for donors to make long-term, sustainable commitments to funding work on Palestinian liberation.

Despite these challenges, the movement to support Palestinian freedom has grown in the U.S. in the last decade and there is a new willingness for donors, funder networks, and foundations to engage in and contribute to the movement. In a moment of critical need and potential, this report, based on interviews with 28 individual donors, staff of foundations, intermediaries, donor networks, and organizations working for Palestinian freedom takes a clear look at the obstacles, both historic and current, that have curtailed support of Palestinian liberation. It then lays out a roadmap of recommendations for individual donors, foundations, and funding networks to create the conditions to give—and encourage others to give—sustainably, consistently, and without inflicting harm on Palestinians or those who work to protect their rights.
The first section of the report 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 in networks. These factors include:

- the steady shift in political opinion toward supporting Palestinian rights in the last decade;
- the lopsided amounts of funding available to support Israel compared to that available to Palestinians and their allies;
- the history of silence, gatekeeping and harm inside philanthropic spaces on Palestinian rights;
- the rise of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) as an international solidarity tool;
- the emergence of cross-movement solidarity, in particular from the Movement for Black Lives and Indigenous Land Back movements;
- the way the Palestinian rights movement is used as a wedge issue to break the left; and
- the way fear of speaking out is manufactured through specific tactics, and how donors who resist these tactics can help create space for those with less power.
The report then looks in depth at the barriers to funding for Palestinian solidarity, both to 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. Often instigated or funded by Israel, the impact of these strategies—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. In each section, tools for funders to address these barriers are included.

Tactics and strategies used to repress support for Palestinian freedom include:

- **The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and False Accusations of Antisemitism**
  The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition, increasingly adopted by governments as a result of intensive lobbying efforts, codifies anti-Zionism and other criticisms of Israel as antisemitism. False accusations of antisemitism are weaponized against Palestinians and those who support them as a linchpin of the battle for control over the narrative and action on Palestine.

- **Frivolous Lawsuits**
  A number of right-wing legal organizations, which collaborate and coordinate with the Israeli government, use politically-motivated bogus legal accusations to try to intimidate, shut down, embroil in legal battles, and impose fiscal and reputational costs on organizations promoting Palestinian rights.

- **Anti-BDS Laws**
  Since about 2014, attempts to legislate against Palestinian rights have proliferated at the state and federal levels, usually taking the form of anti-BDS legislation.

- **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 in ways that seriously impede their functioning.

- **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. These organizations include Canary Mission, StopAntiSemitism.org, StandWithUs, and NGO Monitor.
• **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 enormously resourced and influential organizations like the ADL, American Jewish Committee, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, as well as well-resourced overtly right-wing organizations such as the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) and StandWithUs.

• **Terrorism Designations**

The U.S. government imposes sanctions on organizations that it determines supports 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. Israel is simultaneously using terrorist designations to undermine and destroy Palestinian human rights organizations.

• **Spying/Surveillance/Threats of Violence**

Palestinian rights activists have been the targets of surveillance and spying. Organizations and their members have periodically received death threats and threats of violence that require them to put in place individual and communal defense systems, all of which have taken an enormous psychological, emotional and physical toll.
CASE STUDIES

The report includes four case studies that illustrate both difficult and hopeful emerging conditions in the philanthropic sector relating to funding for Palestinian solidarity and freedom, with lessons learned for the sector included in each case study.

They are:

**Individual Donors:**
Recounts the personal story of the evolution of one major donor’s giving, outlines the key resources and tools that donors identified as facilitating their giving, and offers an initial sketch of the different conditions faced by different donors and the strategies needed to support them.

**Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC):**
Recounts the blacklisting of AROC by local foundations in the Bay Area due to AROC’s anti-Zionism, as well as hopeful signs for how the potential for funding is evolving thanks to politically aligned staffing and changing political currents.

**Vision for Black Lives:**
Recounts the experience of the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) when they released their Vision for Black Lives (V4BL), which included a short section on solidarity with Palestinians. Their story of funding lost and eventually regained outlines the need for preparation, integrity, and internal organizing in crucial moments from allied organizations and inside philanthropy.

**Funders for Palestine:**
Recounts the recent coming together of a number of foundations, donor networks and individual donors in response to Israel designating six leading Palestinian human rights organizations as terrorist organizations, highlighting the potential for collective power when donors work together.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of these recommendations is to help create the conditions to bring in new donors, ensure their commitments are sustainable through education and support, and enlarge the overall commitment to giving in support of Palestinian freedom.

**Set Principles that Apply to All Grantmaking**
Have an articulated set of values by which you make funding decisions: it creates a baseline for consistent giving, exposes potential inconsistency across programs, and provides a basis of defense for funding decisions if they are questioned.
Understand Roots of Distrust for the Philanthropic Sector
The philanthropic sector has harmed Palestinians and those engaged in solidarity with Palestinians through litmus tests, eliminating funding due to political pressure, reinforcing the fracturing of Palestinian society, and fostering competition rather than joint action. Be prepared as a donor to spend time and resources to build real trust and relationships.

Be Prepared for Pushback
Be able to show that your gift aligns with your principles, ensure that your board and staff are prepared to defend the gift and have had the political education to speak with confidence, and have a communications plan to communicate internally and/or externally as needed.

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!

Donor Networks
Donors, especially those new to giving in support of Palestinian liberation, need peers to talk to, as well as to learn, strategize, and exchange resources with. Philanthropic support organizations and intermediaries should invest in creating these spaces and making them accessible to donors.

Political Education with an Intersectional Lens
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, the history of funding in the sector, the ongoing attempts to repress solidarity with Palestinians and how those methods are being exported to other movements. Create opportunities to hear directly from Palestinians.
Delegations
Create or seek out opportunities to see for yourself, especially with peers. Design your itinerary or work with an organization such as Eyewitness Palestine that prioritizes hearing directly from Palestinians and complies with the Ethical Tourism Guidelines from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). Create opportunities for individual and group accountability by taking concrete steps and making commitments at the end of the trip and beyond.

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. To reverse this dynamic, funders can create opportunities to bring Palestinian organizations further into their orbit.

Cautions Regarding Gatekeeping
As a funder, think about ways to broaden whom you rely upon for introductions and recommendations and whether they have stated or unstated political litmus tests that are outside your own principles.

Accountability
Devise and share accountability measures and commit to evaluating your progress in reaching them.

More Money
If you can give more, push yourself to do so. Make multi-year commitments. Make general support grants without pre-conditions, and support organizing and power-building, which are under-resourced across all movements and are the root of fundamental structural change.

Divestment
Consider divesting your funds used for grantmaking from companies supporting or profiting from Israeli apartheid.

Be Bolder!
Funders hold immense power in matters of discourse, advocating for policies, and setting new norms and standards. Taking risks, especially collectively, can have a profound impact on philanthropy—and by extension on conditions on the ground and the potential for liberation.
PRACTICAL RESOURCES

The final section of the report provides resources to support the movement for Palestinian freedom in the philanthropic sector, highlighting the specific need for intensive political education and relationship building.

The **Donor Organizing** section offers a review of the forms of organization, networks and collaboratives that are needed to expand and strengthen the ecosystem of solidarity for Palestinians, through fundraising and beyond. It includes brief profiles of useful organizations in the categories of donor networks, intermediary organizations (including community-directed fundraising and donor engagement circles) and funder collaboratives.

The **Practical Resources for Giving to Palestinian Organizations** section reviews some of the due diligence rules that are barriers, especially for newer donors, to giving to Palestinian organizations, and some effective ways to bypass these barriers.

The **Additional Resources** section offers a list of reports, websites, articles, and online panels that can deepen your knowledge about the issues addressed in this report.