

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The Open Society Foundations have been working in Israel and Palestine since 1999 with a focus on the rights of minorities in Israel, the rights of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, and efforts toward reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict.

We work on the principle that all people living in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have the right to safety and dignity. We have proudly supported efforts to improve the living conditions and rights of Palestinians, and to contain escalating violence between state and non-state actors on both sides.

In the Occupied Territories, we support an array of different civil society groups including:

- human rights organizations that document Israeli abuses and advocate for accountability
- partners focused on arts and culture, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, disinformation, and other issues affected by the conflict
- policy think tanks that address various aspects of the conflict
- university programs training future lawyers and social scientists and carrying out research

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE: 2022 EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures for
Israel and Palestine in 2022:

\$8.6M

Total Expenditures for the Middle East
and North Africa in 2022:

\$37.7M

Total Global Expenditures in 2022:

\$1.32B

Internationally, we have worked with partners to bolster this rights-based approach, whether in mainstream policy areas, or among specific constituencies in the West and in the Global South.

Over more than two decades working in the region, we have consistently condemned all attacks on civilians, including the abhorrent taking of hostages.

During times of direct military conflict, including the current fighting in Gaza, we advocate for maximum efforts to protect civilian populations under the laws of war, for the investigation and prosecution of atrocity crimes, and for the speediest possible end to hostilities.

All the groups we support are committed to nonviolence and adhere to the principle that human rights and safety should be enjoyed by Israelis and Palestinians alike, both currently and in whatever political solution eventually emerges in the region.

Open Society has announced it is committing an additional \$3.3 million to provide critical support to its partners and grantees operating in Palestine and Israel. These funds will be directed toward leading human rights organizations that are documenting violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza and protecting vulnerable communities under attack including Palestinians in the West Bank and inside Israel.

Open Society has given \$14.3 million to groups working on the issues of Palestine and Israel so far in 2023, excluding the additional \$3.3 million emergency funding.

Many of our partners have been at the forefront of pushing for a ceasefire in Gaza. Open Society itself has publicly taken this position and continues to advocate for an end to fighting alongside many groups around the world, including members of the United States Congress, the Secretary General of the United Nations, and the Pope.

The Open Society Foundations do not support Hamas. The false accusations that are being repeated in some media circles in the United States, and that have been picked up by Israel's UN ambassador, are simply untrue. There is strict U.S. anti-terrorist legislation that determines which organizations a foundation like Open Society can fund. We devote a lot of effort to ensuring full compliance. None of our partners have ever been designated under U.S. law as supporting terrorism.

These false claims are part of a well-established pattern whereby numerous Israeli politicians have equated support for any Palestinian rights as support of terrorism—as an apparent strategy for intimidating and denigrating critical voices of Palestinian, Israeli, and pro-Palestinian civil society. This toxicity is one of the reasons why Open Society is one of the few private foundations in the United States that is prepared to support even the most mainstream Palestinian human rights groups.

Many of the groups that Open Society helps fund have different perspectives and routinely disagree with each other. As a funder that respects the expertise and independence of those we fund, Open Society supports partners who take a variety of positions on particular strategies of non-violent opposition, without itself taking a position.

In the United States, our grantees take positions that span quite a range from the establishment to the progressive. But the general approach of all of them is to improve the human rights of Palestinians under Israeli occupation and find a just solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. All have argued for changes in U.S. foreign policy on these questions. This criticism of the status quo in the U.S. approach to the Israeli-Palestinian question across successive administrations, Democrat and Republican, has been painfully vindicated by the current crisis.