



Combatants for Peace

2020

The year like no other

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A message from us to you

2020 has been a year like no other. Not only because of the global pandemic which swept the world, or the seismic political shifts which affected us all, but because of the way people responded to a new and uncomfortable normal with compassion, strength and hope. Combatants for Peace unites Palestinians and Israelis in the pursuit of human rights, and through joint actions on the ground, educational programs, and digital campaigning, we are changing the course of oppression and building a better, more united society.

Despite the obstacles of the past year, we have had some truly standout moments we are especially proud of. We held the annual Israeli-Palestinian Memorial at the height of the lockdown, as the scale of the pandemic was just being realized. Due to tight restrictions on physical gatherings, we staged the event online only for the first time in its 15-year history, and broadcast live to over 200,000 people from Tel Aviv and Ramallah. Following this success, we launched our inaugural Nakba Day event, which attracted over 25,000 online participants, and a new institution was born in our movement. Together, we now honor both the Israeli day of mourning on Yom Hazikaron and the Palestinian day of mourning on the Nakba Day, both through our unique joint approach which underpins all we do.

Our activists pushed hard when faced with the renewed threat of annexation, and joined with friends and partners to win this round of political opportunism and occupation expansion. We continued this positive momentum and demonstrated across Israel and Palestine from

Tel Aviv to the Almog Junction and campaigned to uncover the reality of life under occupation in a distracted world. We were there every week at the historic Balfour demonstrations to remind the people and those in authority that corruption is the result, occupation is the cause. Our work in Palestine intensified throughout the year in response to settler violence, military demolitions and the ongoing human rights violations which plague the rural communities of the Jordan Valley. Week after week our activists were there to shield the shepherds working their land, support families left homeless, and to challenge the illegal practices of occupation forces operating in the area. This intervention is only made possible by our joint approach to activism on the ground.

Thanks to virtual meetings, we have met more of our supporters this year than we would have ordinarily, and we don't plan to slow down or to stop now. Combatants for Peace is a growing movement of people committed to upholding human rights through non-violent actions, and a shared vision of peace and justice. We know the only way to create a change in the status quo is to challenge ourselves and others, and set an example to each and every community in Israel and Palestine – together, we make a difference. We couldn't have achieved any of what we have this year without you, so from us, our staff, volunteers and activists, thank you for your support, friendship and belief in us all.

In peace, good health and solidarity,
Souli and Yonatan
Co-Executive Directors



Peaceful RESISTANCE

Combatants for Peace has an important role to play in opposing the occupation. We are not an Israeli run movement working to aide Palestinians, nor are we a Palestinian collective offering an olive branch. We are a bi-national movement of professional, dedicated and diverse individuals, working in an organization with equality at the core. We tackle issues of injustice head-on through non-violent actions, and work in areas which often pass under the mainstream radar, and which stays off the front pages of the press.

The 'Trump deal of the Century' unveiled at the beginning of the year, threatened to annex parts of the West Bank, once again claiming sovereignty over Palestinian land. The plan included building more settlements, relegating Palestinian residents to small enclaves, and further stripping people of their human rights and self determination.

What did we do?

Firstly, we wrote to 120 Knesset members reminding them of their personal liability, and the legal consequences under international law that they would be facing were they to support and enable annexation. We also [sent letters to foreign heads of State and the UN security council](#) demanding action.

Then, we took to the streets. We, and other human rights partners formed a strong coalition, and organized an [anti-annexation rally in Tel Aviv in Rabin Square](#) addressed by Bernie Sanders, and our co-founder Sulaiman Khatib amongst other leading peace activists. We made it clear to our government that we oppose any attempt at annexation, and that we will not allow further aggression or human rights violations in Palestine to pass by unchallenged. Several thousands of people gathered, despite Coronavirus fears while adhering to all regulations.

"I know that as a young Israeli, the occupation is my responsibility. I was born a citizen of an occupying nation. It is my responsibility to resist against it. The occupation is bad for all of us: it corrupts us with its twisting of human moral values. The policies of control and intimidation over another people reaches deeply throughout society, and ultimately corrupts from within. It harms and hurts me personally. I know we are capable of better than that." - Kochav Shachar



The Jordan Valley

Throughout the year, Combatants for Peace has partnered with several organizations to protect farming communities in the Jordan Valley in villages including Duyuk, Nuema, Auja and Hamra. We have rallied in response to increasing intimidation, settler violence and threats of land grabs.

We are committed to protecting agricultural land and maintaining the dignity, traditions and ancient farming techniques of the Palestinian and Bedouin communities who live in 'Area C'. From olive trees to water supplies and from homes to grazing pastures, we have been there to ensure human rights are maintained and land is accessible without harassment or violence. Solar panels, water sources and shelter are the basis of life, and a right which is too fragile across rural Palestine.

"The communities I join need one thing from me – to be escorted through their land. It amazes me that a Palestinian's freedom of movement is so limited, and that an essential and daily activity such as shepherding one's herd, might end in conflict with settlers or the military."

- Kochav Shachar



Khirbat Humsa A-Fuka

On November 4th, the Palestinian shepherding community of Khirbat Humsa A-Fuka was razed to the ground by Israeli occupation forces, leaving 73 people homeless, including 41 children. In one of the biggest demolition operations in a decade, the army destroyed agricultural buildings, solar panels, water

reserves, and shelter the community and their livestock relied on. Following the military operation, Combatants for Peace activists delivered a truckload of essential supplies, including tents, food, a refrigerator, blankets, heaters and clothing. Again we demonstrated the power and strength of Israelis and Palestinians working together.



Harvest Season

The Olive harvest takes place from October to December, when the trees are ripe. Combatants for Peace joined the farmers in Sawiya, Hares, Azon and Al Khader amongst others, to gather the olives, and protect the rights of the farmers to be on their land. Wherever settlers uproot Palestinian trees, we will be there to help re-plant them! "I will not abandon my home, even if settlers uproot every new tree I plant" Khaldoun Sabih who had his crops destroyed by settlers in the village of Al Khader.



Educational Work

Freedom school

In February 2020, Combatants for Peace partnered with Breaking the Silence and Hashomer Hatzair to launch a new educational program for young people aged 20-25. This six-month program, named Midreshet Dror (Freedom School), was created to educate young Israelis about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the occupation, and provide them

with the tools to become strong leaders in the anti-occupation camp in the future.

In order to strengthen the joint struggle for an end to the occupation and a just peace, there is a need for Palestinians to meet and build relationships of trust with Israelis in the context of shared resistance to the occupation and support of human rights of Palestinians living under occupation.



Freedom School in figures

Numbers of students



2
cohorts



21
participants
in total

Volunteer placements following completion of the Freedom School:

4

Ma'an
worker's union

3

CFP

3

Ir Amim

2

Lissan

3

Individual
activist projects

2

Standing
together

1

One
Climate

1

Taayush

80%

of the participants
answered that the
programme had a very high
impact on their motivation
to get involved in activism.

100%

of the participants
answered that they
would recommend the
programme to their
friends.

We are expanding civil society

Quotes from participants about what is Freedom School for them:

“Freedom school is an exceptional opportunity to learn about the Israeli political reality in-depth. It allows you to challenge the obvious narratives we grow up with. It gives you the opportunity to find partners to learn together with, to ask questions with, to get active in politics, and to be surrounded with people who believe that it is possible to create a different and better future in the region.”

“Freedom school is a place where you can get to know the Palestinian narrative, learn Arabic, learn about politics in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories. You get the opportunity to understand better the complexity of life in Israel, in the West Bank and in Gaza. You will hear amazing stories that give hope and strength, from people who work in order to change the reality we live in.”

“Freedom school is a place that allows you to get confused, and to understand the political reality on the ground and by meeting people. To talk and most of all to experience, to get connected. To get to know activists and to analyse the ways I can make activism an integral part of my life.”

Learning Peace Education

As meetings were restricted and gathering were banned, we moved our series of educational talks, lectures and debates to online platforms. We held sessions covering a range of topics relating to the occupation, as well as bringing Israeli and Palestinian perspectives to a wide range of subjects. We hosted the Chair of the EU delegation, and the German ambassador to explore the impact of foreign diplomats, and heard from our own activists working in the field daily, confronting the violence in Area C. We grew participation in the events throughout the year, and had up to 300 online participants join us through Zoom. These meetings are an essential element of our movement, and ensure both Israeli and Palestinian voices are heard, and traditional narratives are challenged.

Land Beyond the Mountains Seminars

We reached out to teachers, and anyone involved in the education sector to help them to understand the reality of the occupation, and to be able to discuss it factually, equipped with knowledge of the situation. We bring our dual narrative to each meeting, and introduce the groups to an Israeli and Palestinian speaker, and share testimonies and stories of lives affected by occupation. Our seminars also touched on the influence of the Israeli military and the effect it has on Palestinian children, women and society as a whole. We met with groups including Israeli army preparation classes, other informal groups, as well as international delegations online.

Participants

israeli:

1,300 **900**
Adults Youth

International:

330 **230**
Adults Youth

Palestinian:

30
All Youth

Field work stats



32
Educational
meeting

15
Activity Days



Joint Memorials

Yom HaZikaron

The annual Joint Memorial ceremony took place for the 15th consecutive year on April 27th. We had planned for another beautiful event, where brave individuals stand on stage, and share their experiences of grief through the conflict, and embrace another way to respond to acts of violence. But, as Covid-19 took hold, and the possibility of a physical event vanished, we went back to the drawing board. We quickly realized an opportunity in the constraints – we could for the first time share the event between Tel Aviv, and Ramallah, and truly combine the experience of the ceremony. The event was watched by over 200,000 people around the world. The ceremony became the biggest event in the Israeli-Palestinian peace camp's history, and brought a new perspective on the conflict, broadcast directly into people's homes.

We followed the event by virtually inviting people to hear stories of grief, and sorrow, but also hope and resilience. 1000s of people accepted this invitation, and for one night, from homes across Israel and Palestine, people heard that there truly was another way.

[WATCH](#)

"We've seen cooperation, we've seen confrontation, but what we really need to see is Palestinians and Israelis coming together. Not just to fight the virus, but to fight for peace. And fighting for peace perhaps may be even more difficult."

- Nickolay Mladenov, the United Nations Middle East envoy

Nakba Day

The Nakba (translated as; the Catastrophe) is the Arabic term for the events which took place in 1948 when more than half a million Palestinians were displaced from their homes and homeland as a result of the creation of the new State of Israel.

For the first time in our history, Combatants for Peace observed this day with a virtual public event. The ceremony took place on 14th May, and together, we marked the 72nd year since the Palestinian Nakba through a broadcast ceremony. The audience heard testimonies from Palestinians and Israelis with memories and experiences from the events of 1948. This inaugural event began a new tradition in our movement, and an important date was added to our diaries.

[WATCH](#)



Media, Campaigns and International outreach

Through 2020, we have upgraded our social media platforms, and built communities through English, Hebrew and Arabic original content.

We created unique posts and captivating videos to grow our audience, and uncover the reality of occupation to the world.

Digital Campaigning

In April, we launched the digital campaign #occupationundercorona to show how the occupation is expanding while the world is distracted by Coronavirus. The campaign included unique content including first hand accounts from inside the occupied territories, informative posts and videos. We reached over 30,000 people on FB alone and reminded people occupation doesn't pause or stop just because people can't see it.



Seizing the Power of Social Media

We increased our reach through social media, and added 1000s of new followers to our English, Arabic and Hebrew Facebook pages.

We launched new and active twitter accounts in Hebrew and Arabic to support our long-running English account.

We have used social media to enhance our activism. From the Balfour demonstrations, which we joined to remind everyone that it's [Occupation or Democracy](#), to [humanitarian aid in the West Bank](#) and hosting online events, every action we take against the occupation is echoed through the media.



International Outreach and Advocacy

Combatants for Peace understands the impact American foreign policy has on our conflict, and without American aid, the occupation could not continue. As part of our strategy, we aim to reach Americans, and more specifically American voters, in order to open minds and shift harmful policies from the grassroots. Prior to the Covid-19 lockdown, American Friends of Combatants for Peace organized a one-month tour up and down the West Coast of the United States, meeting and sharing our activist's stories with well over a thousand people. They used the lockdown period to focus on education, hosting dozens of online lectures and webinars, reaching close to ten thousand

people through online educational events. AFCfP put tremendous focus on the Joint Memorial Ceremony, recruiting sixty American NGO's as sponsors and partners for the event, bringing in a new audience, and reaching a record number of viewers.

We would also like to thank the German Friends of Combatants for Peace for their ongoing support, and to all of our European advocates who are working with us to affect policy and keep attention on the conflict.



The year in figures

Thanks to our generous donors, individuals and organizations, we had a balanced budget in 2020. All of our accounting is annually approved by an independent auditor and all financial reports are available on request and published on-line according to Israeli law.

Most of the funds were spent directly on our activities. In 2020, we shifted to a more sustainable model of operating. We hired a professional core team of both the Israeli and Palestinian staff, and opened two offices (one in Tel-Aviv and one in Beit Jala, next to Bethlehem).

Income	\$576,950
American Friends of CFP Including income from The Firedoll Foundation and The Samuel Rubin Foundation	34%
Private donations (local and Europe)	32%
Foundations and Partners	34%

Expenses	\$539,550
Salaries	50%
Activities	37%
Running costs	13%

*Please note that the numbers are approximates, the audited financial report will be published on our website in June 2021.

**Due to Covid-19 restrictions, our activities were limited and altered throughout the year.





THANK YOU!

to everyone who has been a part
of our extraordinary year

Keep in touch

