

COMBATANTS FOR PEACE 2021



לוחמים לשלום
مقاتلون من أجل السلام
COMBATANTS FOR PEACE

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Dear Friends,

2021 is a hard year to describe, and one full of difficult lows and inspiring highs. Combatants for Peace adapted to the new pandemic reality, and found creative ways to keep our movement active in Israel and Palestine, and united communities of activists to challenge the occupation in all of its oppressive forms. From a campaign highlighting the inequality in access to water in Area C, to providing urgent assistance to families left vulnerable from unlawful demolitions in the Jordan Valley to meeting with diplomats and foreign tours – we were on the front line in the most harsh situations.

What we have demonstrated most proudly is that we will not stand by as tension builds to intolerable levels, democracy is eroded and violence overtakes our communities. We managed to keep Israelis and Palestinians talking through war and bloody civil unrest which rocked both societies in the first half of the year. Our joint memorials then reminded the world yet again that we aren't alone in our pursuit of a just peace, and that we must stand for hope and be brave in the face of even the most powerful forces against us.

The future has never been easy to predict, and it can feel hopeless at times. But Combatants for Peace remains positive and hopeful that we can help to achieve the breakthrough all Palestinians and Israelis need to end the occupation, and change the future for the next generation, so that they don't grow up with division, fear, anger and sadness.

On behalf of our activists, staff, volunteers and leadership, thank you for your support throughout this difficult year. We will keep going because together we serve as a model of hope and unity, and prove to the world what can be achieved when we don't allow checkpoints, walls or fear to separate us.

Thank you.

Rana Salman
Palestinian Director

Yonatan Gher
Israeli Director

AREA C – WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Sixty percent of the West Bank is known as Area C, which has a planning process, which directly contradicts international humanitarian and human rights law. Building permits submitted by Palestinians are routinely rejected, and existing homes and dwellings are frequently destroyed and cleared by the Israeli army. The restrictive and discriminatory planning regime applied in Area C and East Jerusalem makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain the requisite Israeli building permits.

There is very little local infrastructure including public transport or sanitation services in Palestinian areas, while local settlements are connected to Israeli mains, with a constant supply of clean water, electricity and sewerage.

Throughout 2021, we witnessed an increase in violence in Area C, particularly in the areas of the South Hebron Hills, the Jordan Valley, and areas surrounding Nablus and Bethlehem. The inequality between the settler and Palestinian communities living in close proximity to each other, and some of the largest military demolition orders for decades, has caused violent clashes, intimidation and provocation.

Today, the most intense violence of the conflict occurs in the occupied West Bank where around 475,000 Israeli settlers, and a little more than 2.8 million Palestinians live. From the years 1969 through 2014, the Israeli military issued approximately 1,150 seizure orders across the West Bank, approx. 868 of which are valid to date.



WHAT'S OUR ROLE?

We have a highly unique role to play in the de-escalation of violence in Area C. We are a movement led by ex-actors in the conflict, jointly managed and governed by Israelis and Palestinians. We are one of the few organisations in our field who are truly bi-national. We are invited into isolated and under the radar communities which are closed to outsiders, and we have built trust through consistent support, friendship, and cooperation.

We have also developed our own method of non-violent trainings and communication which isn't taught by others involved in the context of conflict resolution. In addition to focussing on dialogue and co-resistance, our training allows individuals to deal with potential violent and hostile situations, and to shield or defend others who are at risk of attack. Through our programmes with at-risk communities, we teach these unique methods and equip activists with the skills and tools to both defend themselves and others.

WHAT DID WE DO?

In response to unrelenting settler violence we put ourselves between the settlers and shepherds, and provided safe passage to grazing lands and pastures. Under a programme we titled "Area Occupation – defending Human Rights" we focused our resources on protecting the pastures and upholding the civil and legal rights of the shepherds living and working in the Jordan Valley along 'Road 1', and the Jahalin Bedouins in Han-el-Ahmarour. Each week, our activists were present in the region to prevent and document the systematic violence targeting the shepherds. We worked primarily with the Bedouin population living in the region who face daily threats of physical violence, are deprived from local water sources, and have their agricultural lands and homes routinely demolished.

Israeli presence in this area allows us to demand that the army present legal permits allowing them to displace the shepherds, and in the case of violence, to put ourselves between the settlers and villagers. Through Israeli and Palestinian activists uniting to pick olives, plant trees, and tend to the crops, we show a community which is hidden from the mainstream that they are not alone, and they have allies and friends who will stand by them to preserve their traditions, livelihood and safety.

*For every act of violence,
there is a greater show of
peace*

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

LEARNING NON-VIOLENCE

Former Israeli and Palestinian fighters work to transform both themselves and their societies. By breaking out of the cycle of violence we transform ourselves from within, and our joint work on the ground serves to transform society. We believe in what is commonly known as the “virtuous circle”: that personal transformation prompts social action, and that direct social action then prompts personal transformation.

Before participating in direct action in the field, we delivered critical programs to our activists, leaders and volunteers that best exemplify this virtuous circle;

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) training for activists. We hosted monthly NVC workshops, at our Palestine HQ in Beit Jala. Participants learnt how to embody the principles of nonviolence, deepening their ability to solve conflicts. Remaining nonviolent when faced with both systemic and acute violence requires profound personal strength and training. Through NVC, Combatants for Peace delivered bespoke learning packages to practice and internalize a new way of communicating, thinking, and responding, both personally and politically.

Theater Group and our Nonviolent Direct Action training. The theater group met monthly and used this art form as an active healing technique both for the participants/activists involved in the group, as well as within the society by using theater as a form of political and social activism.

Nonviolent Direct Action training workshops and seminars taught our volunteers the tools of non-violent activism and helps individuals to remain nonviolent at all times, even when faced with confrontational and volatile situations.



FIELD ACTIONS

SHEIKH JARRAH

We went back to our roots to stage a Freedom March in solidarity with the residents of Sheikh Jarrah, who are at risk of displacement from their homes and land. We were joined by 100s of people, organizations and international journalists as we marched from Area C to the village, to demand that the rights of the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah were protected. During the action eight of our activists were arrested, despite our peaceful protest, and were later released by the Israeli authorities.



HEMDAT, JORDAN VALLEY

In the settlement of Hemdat, near the Palestinian hamlet of Khirbet Makhoul, settlers built a barbed wire fence to restrict the movement of the local Palestinian shepherds, preventing them from entering their land. Despite repeated requests to the Civil Administration by us and several other organizations, the wire remained and the land was illegally seized by settlers. Our activists staged a protest, and removed the wire barb, returning the land to the rightful owners.



WE BUILT COMMUNITIES!

Our activists were mobilized to areas where intervention was needed most.

The Israeli activists educate and demonstrate in their local areas, while Palestinian groups act to reach people living under occupation, and want to engage in non-violent activities and find a network to join.

The groups partner, to model how Israelis and Palestinians are strongest when we act in unity, and work together.



PALESTINE

Northern Group - Nablus/Jenin/Tulkerem
Southern Group - Hebron/Bethlehem
Central Group - Ramallah



ISRAEL

Northern Group - Haifa
Jerusalem Group
Central Group - Tel Aviv and surrounding areas



JOINT MEMORIALS

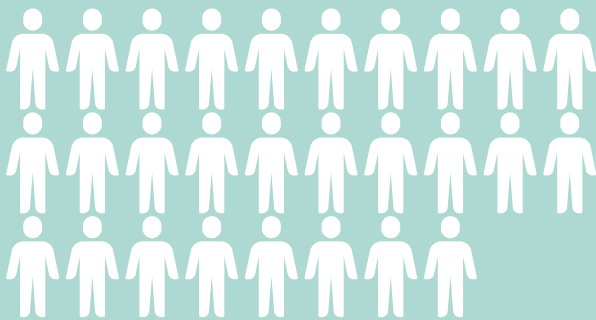


The 16th Israeli-Palestinian Joint Memorial Ceremony

Considered one of the most important days in Israel, Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terrorism Memorial Day is an official national day of commemoration. Services are held in the presence of local leadership and military personnel, and official, public and private Memorial gatherings take place in cemeteries where soldiers are buried. In 2021, these services were broadcast to thousands of Israelis due to Covid-19 restrictions on public gatherings.

Our event is a unique opportunity for Israelis and Palestinians to both grieve together and stand strong in demanding an end to the cycle of violence. It provides an alternative for Israelis who want to commemorate Memorial Day by mourning the victims of violence while not inflaming nationalistic, militaristic passions. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, and following on from the success of the 2020 ceremony, we broadcast the memorial online, with a small audience in attendance in both Tel Aviv and Beit Jalla.

**THE 2021 JOINT
MEMORIAL CEREMONY
WAS THE LARGEST
JOINT ISRAELI-
PALESTINIAN PEACE
EVENT THAT HAS EVER
TAKEN PLACE.**



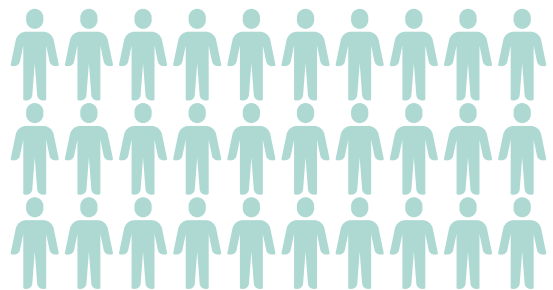
**280,000 people watched live, over 1 million
streaming views**

JOINT NAKBA CEREMONY

Nakba Day has long been a taboo subject for Israeli society, and a day of mourning for Palestinians. Translated from Arabic as ‘the Catastrophe’, the events of 1948 are central to Palestinians’ collective memory and to the history of our wider conflict. The Joint Nakba Day Ceremony brought together Palestinians, Israelis, and the international community to remember, honor and acknowledge the Nakba, when more than half a million Palestinians were displaced from their homes.

**WHILE THE PAST
CANNOT BE UNDONE,
OUR
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
AND UNDERSTANDING
OF IT IN THE PRESENT
CAN BE A SOURCE OF
HEALING - AND CAN LAY
THE GROUNDWORK FOR
CREATING A DIFFERENT
FUTURE, FREE OF
OCCUPATION, VIOLENCE,
AND SUFFERING.**

Due to extreme levels of violence, the Joint Nakba Memorial had to be moved from the official Nakba day to ensure the safety of our staff, the speakers and guests. We held the memorial later in the year and broadcast live despite the backdrop of violence.



**Nearly 30,000 people watched live, over
100,000 streaming views**

Our unique Joint Memorials serve as a reminder that occupation, oppression, and violence are not inevitable. By mourning together we are shifting public opinion, reaching new audiences, and telling stories of the past, to change the future.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING



WHAT DID WE DO?

- Bi-national meetings between Israeli and Palestinian youth peer groups to build trust, tolerance and promote peaceful conflict resolution.
- Outreach to local NGOs and non formal groups to build a network trained in nonviolent communication and facilitation of direct youth participation with 'the other'.
- A series of in-person seminars reaching teachers, educators, tour guides and other people involved in the formal and non-formal education of Israeli youth.
- Online lectures and discussions with leading experts and activists, focussing on different aspects of the conflict, resolution, and occupation.

THE LAND ABOVE THE MOUNTAINS SEMINARS

A joint initiative together with Ir Amim and Breaking the Silence



4 Cohorts



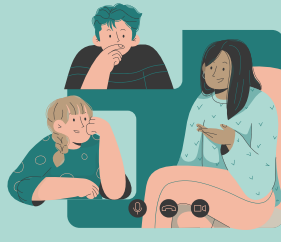
60 participants

In order to end the occupation, we need educators to be informed on the reality of oppression in all its forms and how to effectively challenge traditional narratives in order to create societal change from within a classroom. The workshops were held in Beit Jala, where participants heard firsthand accounts from Israeli and Palestinians activists and discussed a range of topics including daily routines of those living under occupation, the role of the occupier, and how to make an impact within our own societies. We used storytelling and interactive workshops to create an open and safe space to share personal experiences, and plan how to turn the theory of conflict resolution into a new way of educating.

CHALLENGING MILITARISM SEMINARS



Pilot Year



8 Online meetings



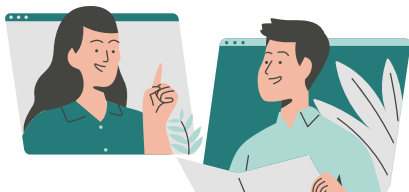
18 educators

From the earliest educational settings, young people in Israel are exposed to a single militaristic narrative and rhetoric which is entrenched in them throughout their academic life. Little space is given to free thought and counter arguments, and teachers and educators lack the information they need to provide an alternative case. From meeting with students and educators, we identified a gap in society which we needed to fill.

Our seminars trained the trainers on how to present the true reality of occupation in a classroom setting, and how to counter Nationalism through the lens of militarism. Due to the success of the Pilot workshop we are extending the course to run throughout 2022.

FREEDOM SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP

A joint initiative together with Hashomer Hatzair World Movement, and Breaking the Silence



2 Cohorts



20 participants

The longer the conflict goes on, the harder it is to engage young people in conflict resolution, and the peace community across Israeli and Palestinian societies is shrinking. We need to replenish and rebuild it.

Our educational programmes are different to any other. We work with youth groups through unique immersive programmes that seek to create the next generation of Israeli and Palestinian peace activists. These students are mentored by experienced members of Combatants for Peace, who empower them to create change, and stand up together for equality, justice, and peace.

THE WATER CAMPAIGN

"CLEAN DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE REALISATION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS." UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 64/292

Access to clean running water is a basic human right. A stark result of the occupation is the inequity in water rights for rural Palestinian villagers compared to the Israeli settlers who surround them.

While Israeli settlements are given priority access to water sources, to the extent that lush gardens and swimming pools are common in the desert climate; Palestinian communities across the South Hebron Hills are prevented from gaining access to running water and are forbidden from gathering rain water and digging wells. As a result, they are forced to purchase water in expensive tankards from Israeli companies.

In order to change this unjust and harmful policy, we launched a campaign to provide Palestinian communities across the South Hebron Hills with the water they so desperately need.

We distributed water tankards to villages throughout the region and drew international attention to the disparity in water rights throughout Palestine and Israel.

Within days of this campaign achieving widespread international attention, the UN announced a resolution demanding water equity between Israelis and Palestinians. Combatants for Peace was also invited to speak before the Knesset twice to address this campaign and the profound settler and military violence that came as backlash to it.

As a result of the widespread coverage that this campaign received locally and internationally, a senior ranking General in the Israeli military agreed to negotiate infrastructure building in the Palestinian village of Al Mofakara, outside of At-Tuwani in the South Hebron Hills. If this negotiation is successful, and running water is provided to the village, this will be a revolutionary and unprecedented victory.

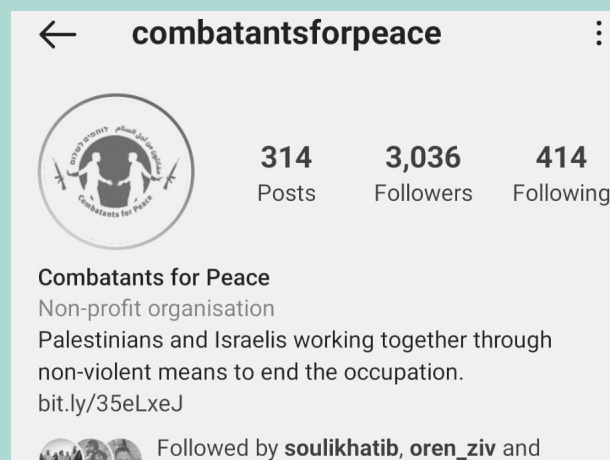
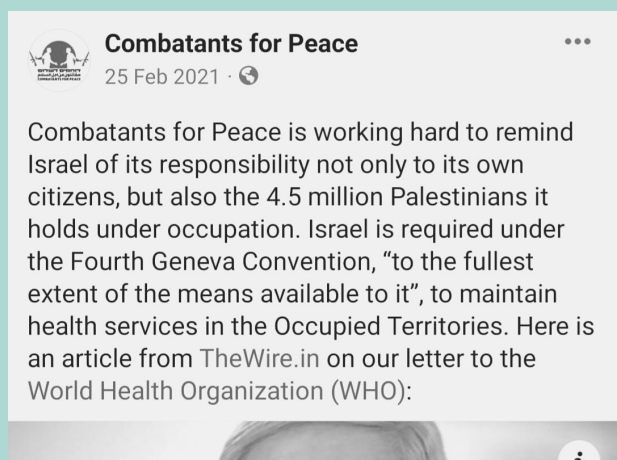


MEDIA AND PRESS

NEARLY 50,000 SOCIAL
MEDIA FOLLOWERS

Document
Testify

Tell good stories...



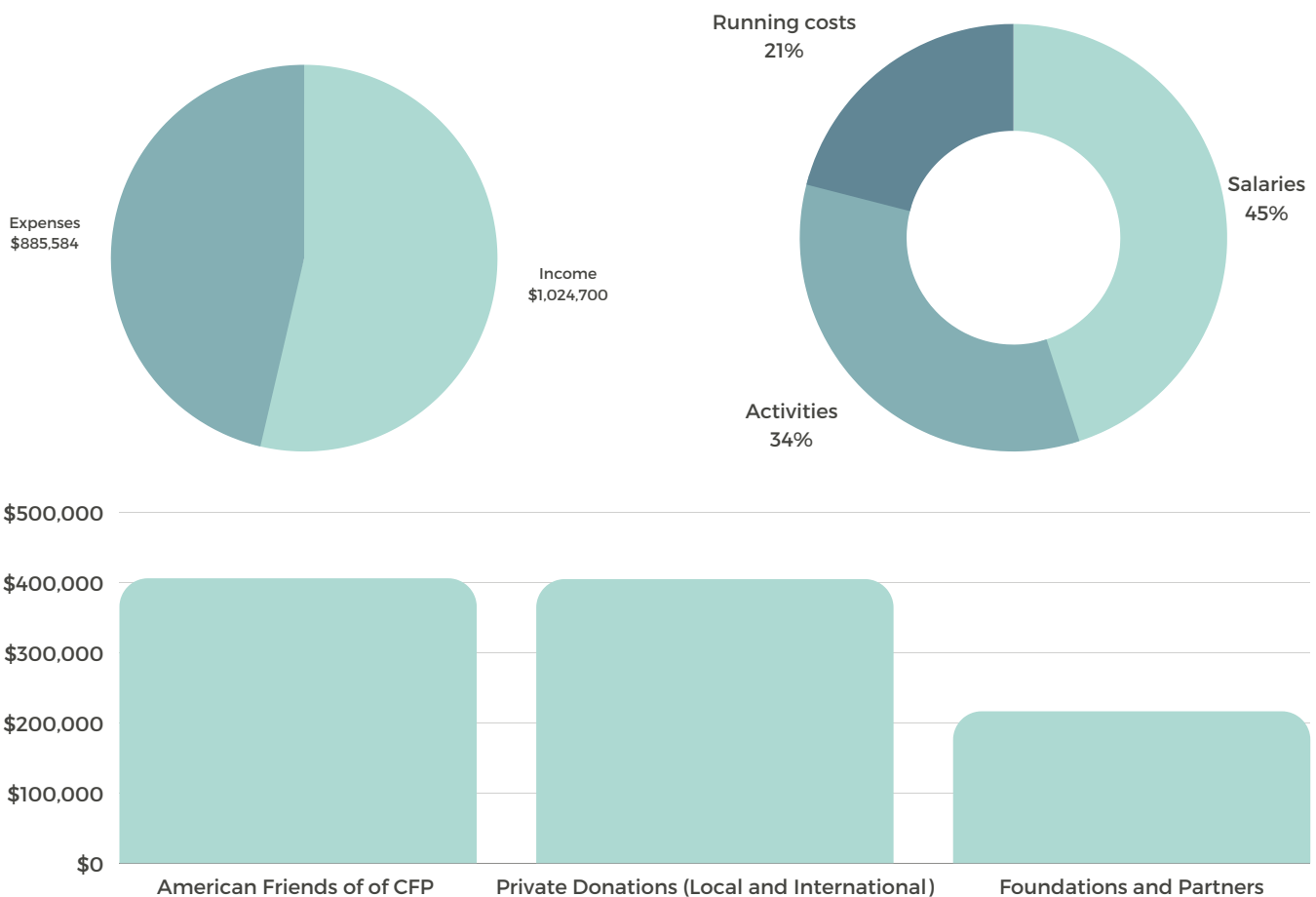
THE YEAR IN FIGURES

Thanks to the generosity, trust and loyalty of our donors and supporters we had a balanced budget in 2021.

All of our accounting is annually approved by an independent auditor and all financial reports are available on request and published online according to Israeli law.

We have created an organisational structure which is sustainable and professional both in terms of staffing and governance

A special thank you to our international friends, and to the **American Friends of Combatants for Peace (501C)** for their tireless efforts to educate, inform and inspire the American public to support human rights and the peace movement both at home and abroad.





THANK YOU!



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COMBATANTS FOR PEACE