

Greetings to your excellencies, committee members, colleagues and distinguished experts.

My name is Ahmad Abuznaid and I serve as the executive director at the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights. We are a network of organizations across the US committed to ending all US support for the apartheid state of Israel. Most immediately we are fighting for a permanent ceasefire and an end to the genocide. You all know that the situation is dire, we have heard powerful testimonies from speakers during this conference as to the horrifying reality on the ground. While we continue to see growth in our movement, we have not been able to stop the genocide, the starvation, or the devastation that Israel is heaping on the Palestinian people.

American officials love to brag about being the best, well the United States is the greatest defender of genocide & apartheid in the world today. While the images, reports and stories coming out of Gaza continue to break our hearts on a daily basis, the US government has refused to act, offering only a shift in rhetoric while continuing with the same actions. The US is deeply complicit not only in arming Israel, but in defending & providing cover for Israel in every avenue possible.

A majority of Americans want a permanent ceasefire and the USCPR believes that our tax dollars should be dedicated to funding healthcare, schools, infrastructure and more..rather than subsidizing the Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people & colonization of Palestinian land.

I am honored to be here with you today as a Palestinian organizing in the United States. We are in a moment where we are seeing the largest grassroots pro Palestine movement in US history, the largest anti-war movement since the protests against Vietnam.

- More protests
 - Millions of people in the US have been protesting for 6 months now.
 - A broad, diverse coalition that is coming out in force to support Palestine.
- More actions & Civil Disobedience
 - Thousands of people in the US have been arrested or risked arrest in acts of civil disobedience.
- More focus on our stories as Palestinians
 - Social media has allowed for us to shift the conversation greatly from that which is normally portrayed in mainstream western media.

- More focus on Palestinian demands & more BDS

With that in mind, I want to share some information on the “Not on our dime” campaign that USCPR launched along with several partners in the state of NY.

Between 2017 and 2019 alone, organizations that are known to fund illegal settler organizations fundraised over 144 million dollars in New York State. These dollars sustain Israeli settler violence and have enabled settlements to significantly expand in the past two years.

These New York-registered charities include the Central Fund of Israel (CFI), Friends of Ir David, American Friends of Ateret Cohanim, the One Israel Fund, and the Israel Independence Fund. With the status of a New York-registered non-profit organization, these organizations are able to raise hundreds of millions of tax-exempt dollars for the purpose of expelling Palestinians out of their generational homes and land. For example, Friends of Ir David funds the Israeli settler group Elad, which is responsible for countless demolitions of Palestinian homes. Friends of Ir David gave Elad \$36 million between 2006 to 2013, [according to Haaretz](#). These organizations masquerade as charities while funding illegal activities, including war crimes.

Let's examine the Central Fund of Israel (CFI), a New York-registered nonprofit, and one of the largest identifiable organizations that fund Israeli settler organizations. CFI's founders sought to push U.S. philanthropy towards funding settlements. **Today, CFI is one of the most significant sources of NY-based non-governmental funding to Israeli settlements; its size has more than doubled since 2017, sending almost 50 million dollars annually to Israel and its illegal settlements.** Several CFI grantees work to entrench and expand Jewish-only Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and displace Palestinians. These grantees include: Regavim, Ateret Cohanim, Hashomer Yehuda ve Shomron or Hashomer YOSH, Israel Land Fund, and Kela Shlomo (Concert for

The NY state legislation ([A6943/S6992](#)) takes on the issue of charitable status for organizations that support illegal activities, and helps stop New York support for Israeli settlements in three ways:

The legislation establishes a prohibition in the not-for-profit corporation law on aiding and abetting illegal Israeli settlement activity and clarifies that such support is inconsistent with any charitable purpose. Organizations that fund illegal Israeli settlement activity, as defined in the legislation, would be prohibited from the benefits of non profit status.

The legislation allows the Attorney General to fine organizations that knowingly

fund settlements by a sum not less than one million dollars.

The legislation empowers Palestinians who have been harmed by settlements or settler violence funded in part by New York-based charities to seek accountability. This legislation offers Palestinians a day in court against individuals and organizations who knowingly bankroll this violence.

Overall, this legislation makes clear that New Yorkers do not support violations of international law. By explicitly naming Israeli settlements, and the war crimes that they entail, this legislation signals New Yorkers' values, and directs enforcement priorities. This would be a first under New York law.

In New York State, the Attorney General, through the New York Charities Bureau, is tasked with regulating charitable organizations, including by ensuring that those organizations – which claim to be holding assets or accepting funds for charitable purposes – are actually using funds for charitable purposes.

The Attorney General has the power to strip any organization which improperly claims a charitable purpose of their non-profit status.

This pioneering legislation makes explicit what is implicit—that a certain class of activities are fundamentally inconsistent with a charitable purpose, and should therefore subject an organization to dissolution.

The legislation is specific as to which activities are fundamentally inconsistent with a charitable purpose—violations of the Geneva Conventions, or war crimes. The legislation names specific internationally recognized war crimes which are currently being funded by NYS charitable organizations—an issue that has been the subject of deep reporting and thorough [journalistic investigation](#).

This legislation creates an explicit cause of action, allowing individuals who have been harmed by settlement activity to sue the New York-based groups who aided and abetted them.

Many organizations have already called on the Attorney General's office to use the ample authority she has under existing law to investigate New York-registered charities, and we stand ready to support any of her efforts to do so.

This visionary piece of legislation will hopefully be a model that we can export to different states in the US and countries outside the US as well.

We need to keep pushing with every avenue possible. Advocacy. Protest. CD. Culture. Workers. BDS & more. Everyone. Every tool, until freedom rings in Palestine.