



# EYEWITNESS PALESTINE ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021



DESIGN + ART BY @SHIRIEN.CREATE5

20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION: ROOTED IN OUR VALUES

# STAFF + BOARD

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# A NOTE FROM US

As 2021 closes out, we celebrate *20 years of Eyewitness Palestine!*

What started as a delegation through the Fellowship of Reconciliation is now a dedicated program bookended with education and advocacy. Twenty years ago, we would have never thought members of Congress would call out Israeli apartheid, but this year, Palestinian-American Representative Rashida Tlaib spoke passionately about how her family suffers under apartheid. In that time and as recently as this year, we have seen multiple campaigns successfully boycotting Israeli products and institutions. Public opinion and criticism challenging Israel's continued horrific occupation and blockade is higher than ever. It is through the ***steadfast advocacy of organizers and supporters of Palestinian freedom***, including countless Eyewitness Palestine delegates, that we have ***succeeded and grown the movement for Palestinian liberation more than ever.***

Over the past 20 years, Eyewitness Palestine sent **1,500 delegates** on **70 delegations**, hosted more than **2,500 people on virtual delegations** since June 2020, and helped countless people learn the skills to advocate for Palestinian rights and freedom.

Every year as the movement grows, we see ***individuals who participated in our programs taking the lead both nationally and in their own communities.*** Each one, motivated by the powerful experience they had learning directly from Palestinians. **Every one of us has the power to organize for Palestinian freedom.**

**Because of your investment in Eyewitness Palestine, this movement is growing and unstoppable.** Palestinian freedom is intertwined with anti-militarism, anti-colonization, and anti-racism – we understand that we can't be truly free unless we are all free.

This year's annual report covers not just how our programming has grown during the ongoing pandemic – when we, of necessity, pivoted to virtual delegations instead of on-the-ground experiences – but also the lasting ***transformation*** that delegates felt from their delegation experience. We also share our organization's values that drive us.

Thank you for being a part of our journey so far. We cannot wait to see what the next 20 years will hold for us, the Palestinian Solidarity Movement, and freedom for everyone.

Nada El-Eryan  
*Managing Director*

Tom Hier  
*Board Co-Chair*

Sarah Scruggs  
*Board Co-Chair*

# OUR VALUES + STORIES FROM OUR DELEGATES

In 2018 as we renamed the organization to Eyewitness Palestine, we also developed our values as an organization. These same values are what drive us and hold us accountable to one another. But these values have been an intrinsic part of our organization and our community's fabric for the past 20 years. We've also included a selection of reflections from our delegates who embody these values and their transformative journey to become accountable activists and organizers for Palestinian liberation.

“Our delegation was visiting Bil'in where we walked to a newly constructed playground right below the apartheid wall. One delegate had her 4-year-old daughter, V, with her. While we were examining the wall up close, V shouted up to a guard in a watch tower, "I hate this wall!" The IDF soldier shouted back "I hate it too." Not long after we left the playground was demolished because they had not been able to obtain a permit to build it.”

- **SUSAN B.**  
2013 Delegate

“I went back to Tuwani in South Hebron where I worked for a few years from 2006-2008. We joined the villagers and others to reclaim the village of Sarura, which had been destroyed by Israel many decades ago. The original inhabitants were there, with the original keys to their homes. The area has since become 'Sumud Freedom Camp' and has become a site for Palestinian-led solidarity actions and presence.”

- **SARAH S.**  
2017 & 2018 Delegate

## OUR VALUES

1.

We believe that every person deserves to live with dignity, freedom, and within an equitable society. Our delegates, and other members of Eyewitness Palestine's growing community, are extensions of this dream and vision.



“ After speaking to many people and hearing many reports of Israel’s violations of human rights I began to think about how Palestinians and native peoples around the world have lost land, resources, rights, etc. I visualized making a chart listing the various ways foreign powers, usually white, have colonized populations for their own personal use.

*I thought of factors like stealing land, denying access to natural resources, forbidding use of a language, destroying villages and killing inhabitants as ways to suppress/destroy a culture. When I visited Israel, streets signs were written in Hebrew, Arabic and English. I saw an arrow pointing to Jerusalem, written in English, Hebrew (which I don’t read) and then in Arabic. But the Arabic did not say ‘Al-Quds’, the Arabic name for Jerusalem, it said ‘Jerusalem’.*

**Israel changed the Arabic name to Hebrew.**

*What next? I instantly thought of Hawaii where Hawaiian children had been forbidden from using their native language in school and were punished when they did – much like American Indian children who, not long ago, were taken from their homes and sent to boarding schools where they were forced to speak English.*

*Then I realized that where I lived – Hawaii – was colonized for the growth of sugarcane and the fortunes to be made from it. The language was almost lost and the indigenous Hawaiians lost much of their land. It took going to Palestine to make me fully aware of this and how it happened. Thank you for the experience. ”*

**- JUDY B.**

2010 Delegate

2.

We believe social change happens from the ground up. Therefore, Eyewitness Palestine centers the narratives, histories, and lived experiences of Palestinians – both in Palestine and within the diaspora.

“ My memories are many and intertwined with emotion. My time in Palestine was transformative. From the time I got off the plane at Ben Gurion Airport to the moment it was time to go home, I felt an intense ‘othering’ happening to me as a human being. Brown skinned and with the name Hiram, I had a unique look, albeit a limited one, into the apartheid that currently exists in Israel/Palestine. I experienced a trip rich with history, passionate stories, joy and the beautiful culture of Palestine. The geography of the land holds so much meaning to the billions of followers of the Abrahamic religions.

I was able to witness the elation and pain of the young Palestinian woman traveling back to the land of her ancestors as a visitor. I also experienced first-hand the dehumanization of open bigotry, Islamophobia, and the violent apartheid of Israeli occupation as armed Israeli soldiers asked me more than once if I was “carrying bombs” and how I “stole” my US passport.

I remember standing atop a hill in Hebron, overlooking the city as a couple of Palestinian men tended the olive trees just below us, a cool breeze blowing. Underneath those trees sat Israeli police, rifles in hand as an armed settler carried on in the shadows of an Israeli military building about 100 feet away from us. In the distance, amidst the cramped picturesque structures of Hebron, a cloud of smoke engulfed a building. This ‘smoke’, our guide would explain to us, was actually tear gas. The building? An elementary school, gassed almost weekly as children of the ‘Holy Land’ tried to learn and dream inside this hell. ”

- **HIRAM R.**

2019 Delegate

“ While I was not a member of a delegation, I had the opportunity to take delegations around Hebron when I was with the Christian Peacemaker Teams from 2002-2009. It was an honor to arrange for the delegations to meet with Palestinians and their allies living in the midst of the Israeli Occupation. ”

- **DONNA H.**

3.

We believe social change happens from within. Therefore, Eyewitness Palestine fosters shared power in decision making, and equally values the labor and gifts of each person in our community – staff, volunteers, delegates, donors, and partners.

“ I remember spending a night and day with a family that owned a grove of olive trees. We went with several members to the fields and harvested olives with them – a first for me. We laid nets around the base of the trees and dropped the olives onto the nets. Then the nets were gathered and loaded onto trucks and taken to the olive presses where we watched them press out the olive oil. It was a new and fascinating experience; one I shall never forget. ”

- **ELISABETH S.**  
2014 & 2017 Delegate

“ I remember sitting in on a meeting at the United Nations --†East Jerusalem. A woman was giving a PowerPoint presentation to three NGOs with maps showing all of Israel’s checkpoints. She explained that Israel was breaking laws set at the 4th Geneva Convention. At the end, a man from a French NGO asked what the world was doing about Israeli breaking so many international laws. The presenter said no one was holding Israel accountable. By that point in the trip it wasn’t terribly shocking to hear this, but it was deeply disturbing nonetheless. ”

- **EMMA J.**  
2019 Delegate

“ Upon our return to the US, we talked, wrote, and lobbied politicians as much as we were able. Mary Ann joined Ruth Tracy in selling olive oil and other products from ‘Canaan Fair Trade’. They held several fundraisers for Eyewitness Palestine with Palestinian–Americans and other people, formed the Eyewitness Palestine–Ohio branch, recruited additional delegates, and invited Palestinian and Israeli leaders we met on our trip for public events. We have made four other trips to Palestine/Israel since. ”

- **DOUGLAS AND MARY ANN K.**  
2007 & 2014 Delegates

# 4.

We believe that misconceptions prevalent in mainstream discourse can be effectively confronted through experience. Eyewitness Palestine delegates root their advocacy in the lived experience of Palestinians and Israelis working for peace with justice.

“ I was totally ignorant of the history and current conditions in Palestine when I joined my first delegation. The briefing our guide, Said, gave on the bus ride from the Tel Aviv airport to our hotel in Jerusalem helped prepare me for what I was to see, though this did not make it less appalling.

*In our tour of Hebron, led by Issa Amro, I witnessed the process of dispossession going on daily by the Israeli occupation. For example, young armed Israeli Jewish soldiers blocked Issa from entry to the street on which he grew up. Street names had been changed from the original Arabic to Hebrew. Palestinians had to walk on a dirt path along a paved road while Jewish settlers drove along that road – their yellow license plates the only credentials needed for passing, and their stony gazes suggesting their desire to squeeze Palestinians into small, separate areas of land with no guaranteed routes from which to pass from one to the other.*

*We walked through one of the checkpoints jammed with people. The reality of existence in Palestine/Israel was demonstrated continually by activists, leaders of NGOs, lawyers, families whose very access to water and to their farms was controlled by Israeli administrators and military personnel, and, incredibly, by children who had been taken from their homes and tortured.*

*All of this we saw for ourselves... this was not an abstract history lesson but a cold plunge into reality. The recent short film ‘The Present’ encapsulates the constant, seething injustices and brutalities in Palestine. Even so, Palestinians we met received and treated us warmly and shared meals, homestays, and conversations with us. ”*

- **CALLIE W.**  
2017 Delegates

5.

We believe in relationships and nurture our long-standing ties with communities of peace-builders, resisters to oppression, and nonviolent activists.



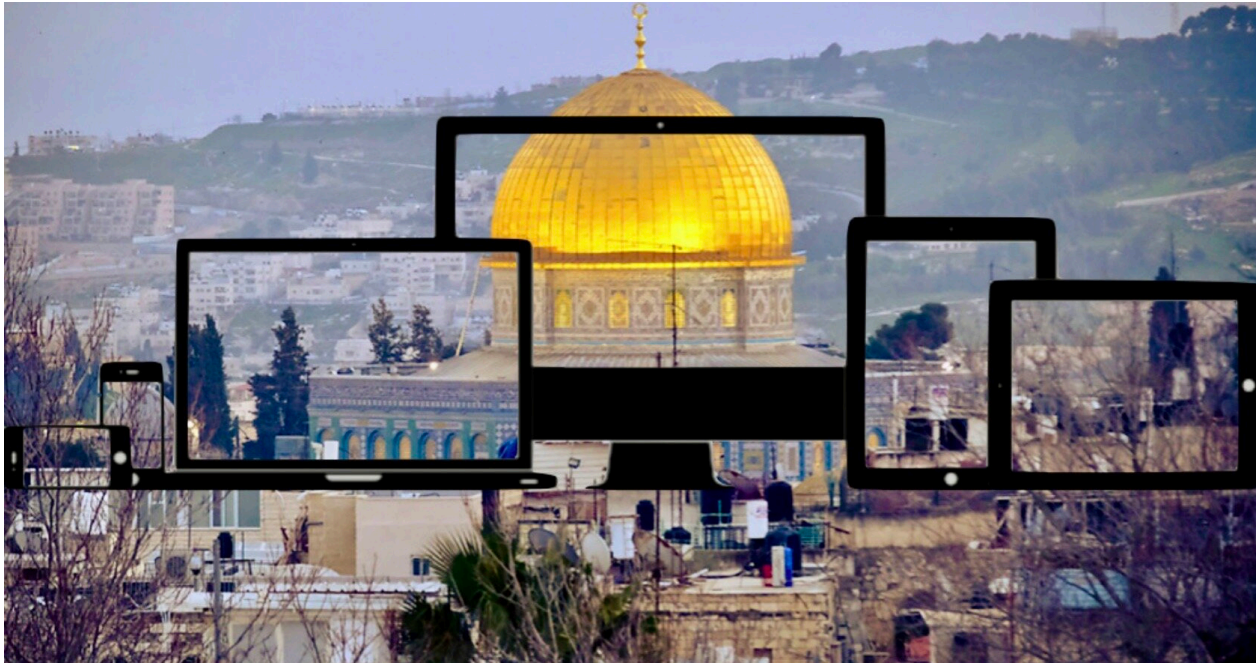


# 6.

We believe in collective liberation and the transformative power of nonviolent social change. Eyewitness Palestine builds power at the intersections and challenges oppression, racism, and war in all forms.



# VIRTUAL DELEGATIONS



## July: Battir

### Visit Battir with Grassroots al-Quds in July 2020

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

**Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 35 Participants)

**Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!

With your Guides:  
Fayrouz Sharqawi & Hassan Muamer



## August: Deheisheh Refugee Camp

### Visit Deheisheh with Shorouq in August 2020

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

**Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 40 Participants)

**Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!

With your Guides:  
Hazem and Tamara



## September: Yafa

### Visit Yafa with Abed Shehadeh - September 2020

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

**Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 40 Participants)

**Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!



## October: Seed Library

### Visit the Heirloom Seed Library ~ October 2020

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

**Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 40 Participants)

**Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!

With your Guide:  
Vivien Sansour



## November: Alshati' Refugee Camp

### Visit Alshati' Refugee Camp in Gaza - November 2020

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions (Maximum of 40 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!

With your Guide: Mohammed Rafik

## December: Olive Harvest in Tulkaram & Salfit

### Visit the Tulkaram & Salfit Areas for the Olive Harvest with the Rebuilding Alliance and your Guides: Fares al- Deek & Abed Dalbah

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions (Maximum of 40 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!

Your Guide: Fares al-Deek

Your Guide: Abed Dalbah

## January: Bethlehem

### Visit Bethlehem - DECEMBER 2020

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions (Maximum of 40 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!

With your Guide: Baha Hilo

The town of Bethlehem is home to one of the oldest churches in the world, the Church of the Nativity, which has been continuously used as a church since 325 AD. What some don't know that Bethlehem is a Palestinian town that was initially established to connect two older towns, Jerusalem in the North and Hebron to the south, and it has been continuously inhabited for nearly 4,000 years. This virtual tour took us to some old parts of the city and highlighted the impact of the state of Israel on the city since 1967.

## February: Gaza's Old City

Over 200 people joined us to connect with Gaza City, virtually. Our guides, Aya Alghazzawi and Mohammed Rafik were powerful hosts, providing a tour around the Old City, where many of the oldest historical places lie in the Gaza Strip. The tour not only firmly showed Palestinians' historical connection and right to this land, but also gave participants a deep understanding of how Israeli assaults have affected the Gaza Strip. Participants connected with our hosts, creating important connections for both participants and hosts. Since the tour, Mohammed has engaged with EP staff to publish articles in various publications and connected with one of the participants to publish a chapter in the recently published book, *A Land with a People: Palestinians and Jews Confront Zionism*.

### Visit Gaza's Old City - FEBRUARY 2021

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions (Maximum of 40 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!

Your Guide: Aya Alghazzawi

Your Guide: Mohammed Rafik

## March: Jenin Refugee Camp

### Visit the Jenin Refugee Camp - MARCH 2021

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine

Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions (Maximum of 40 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!

Your Guide: Ahmed Tobasi

Your Guide: Mustafa Sheta

Over 100 people joined this unique Virtual Delegation to the Jenin Refugee Camp, which used a combination of pre-recorded video footage and live narration of the tour. Participants spent time with staff of The Freedom Theater. Mustafa Sheta, an ex-political prisoner and a researcher, journalist, and coordinator for various organizations and projects, gave delegates insight into the lack of infrastructure, like water and sewer lines, and the need for vertical construction due to space constraints within the camp. While Ahmed Tobasi, also an ex-political prisoner and whose life echo's the struggles of the Jenin refugee camp, spoke about

his experiences growing up in the camp during the First and Second Intifadas. The tour emphasized the need for a third intifada being a cultural one and the ways in which art can be used as a powerful form of resistance.



## April: Tent Of Nations

**Visit the Tent of Nations - APRIL 2021**

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine  
Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 45 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!



Join Daoud & others from the Nassar family!  
Photo by: Macdon McGuigan/EMU

## May: Mesarvot, Israeli Army Refusers

**Visit with Israeli Military Refusers - MAY 2021**

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine  
Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 45 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!



Your Guide: Yuval Gal Cohen


## May: Lifta

**Visit Lifta - Commemorate the Nakba - May 2021**

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine  
Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 45 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!



Join your Guide, Umar al-Ghubari

## May: Defense for Children International

**Visit with Defense for Children International - Palestine**

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine  
Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 45 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!



Your Guide: Manar Al-Amieh

## June: Silwan

**Visit Silwan, East Jerusalem**

Part of the Virtual Delegation Series from Eyewitness Palestine  
Each Virtual Delegation will include:

- Small Sessions**  
(Maximum of 45 Participants)
- Video Footage from the Location**

With an open discussion and the ability to interact fully with the host, other participants, and EP Staff!



Join your Guide, Sahar Abbasi Baidon

About 225 people joined us for a Virtual Delegations of Silwan, East Jerusalem, during an escalation of violence and demolitions by Israeli authorities in the neighborhood. The delegation was co-sponsored by Madaa Creative Center and Art Forces and hosted by Sahar Abbasi and Zuheir el Rajabi, organizers born and raised in Jerusalem and active in resisting these demolition orders in Silwan. Delegates spent time walking, virtually, through Silwan, learning about the ways in which in which Palestinians in

the neighborhoods of Wadi Hilweh and Batn al Hawa are resisting Israeli occupation and displacement. They also explored the I-Witness Silwan art exhibit, which consists of murals depicting the eyes of local and international leaders, activists, workers, and more across the hills of Silwan. This Virtual Delegation took place at a crucial time for the community in Silwan and allowed individuals from around the US and beyond to show their solidarity.



# RACIAL JUSTICE + EQUITY PROGRAMMING

## **Campaigns and Virtual Events**

### ***Campaign to End Medical Apartheid (February–May 2021)***

As a member of the Invest in Justice Coalition, Eyewitness Palestine took part in a campaign to End Medical Apartheid from the US to Palestine. This campaign made important connections between racialized vaccine access disparities from the US to Palestine and called on Dr. Anthony Fauci to boycott Israel’s Dan David Prize due to its normalization of the Israeli apartheid system. The campaign culminated in a webinar, From the US to Palestine, End Medical Apartheid! that took place on March 31, 2021.

### ***Endorsing Organization for H.R. 2590, No Way to Treat a Child***

Eyewitness Palestine is proud to have been one of the over 70 organizations that endorsed Rep. Betty McCollum’s bill introduced in April 2021, the first of its kind introduced in Congress! The bill seeks to set important limits on Israel’s use of military funding for the military detention of Palestinian children and destruction of Palestinian homes.

Stop Israel’s Illegal Expulsions of Palestinians in Jerusalem. Eyewitness Palestine took part in campaigns to call attention to Israel’s push to illegally expel Palestinian families in the Jerusalem neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan. This advocacy culminated in a petition calling for people from around their world to express their opposition to this latest manifestation of Zionist ethnic cleansing in May – June 2021.

### ***Countering Digital Repression of Palestine (May 2021)***

As Palestinians boldly resisted their looming expulsion from Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan by the apartheid Israeli state, scores of users across the world noted that Big Tech platforms were censoring their documentation of Israeli violence and repression. Omar Zahzah, our E&A coordinator, published articles in Al Jazeera and Wear Your Voice Mag.

### ***Instagram Live Conversations (May – July 2021)***

Eyewitness Palestine hosted a series of one-hour conversations focusing on various

Palestinian resistance across geographies, Palestinian cultural resistance, why Palestine is a feminist issue, updates from Silwan, and why Palestine is a racial justice issue. Speakers included Jihad Abusalim of AFSC; Ahamd Abuznaid, Executive Director of US Campaign for Palestinian Rights; Soheir Assad; Reem Assil, owner of Reem's California; Maurice Cook, Executive Director of Serve Your City; Wafa Ghnaim, author of Tatreez & Tea; Dayla Masri; Rasha Mubarak, Principal of Unbought Power; Rebecca Pierce; Inès Abdel Razek of the PIPD; @savesilwan, and Fayrouz Sharqawi of Grassroots Al-Quds.



**WATCH THESE CONVERSATIONS  
ON OUR **INSTAGRAM** PAGE:  
**@EYEWITNESSPALESTINE****

## **Palestine is a Racial Justice Issue**

### *Racial Justice and Equity Trainings for Community Organizers*

This year, we hosted our first-ever Racial Justice and Equity Trainings for Community Organizers! These trainings are for all organizers who want to inspire meaningful conversations and actions around Palestine liberation - through a racial justice lens.

Participants learn about:

- What ethical and accountable solidarity with Palestinians looks like
- Understanding Zionism as a racially oppressive ideology and political system
- How Palestinian liberation is rooted in intersectionality

So far, four different Palestine solidarity organizations participated, and we look forward to training more people in the years to come!

# BY THE NUMBERS



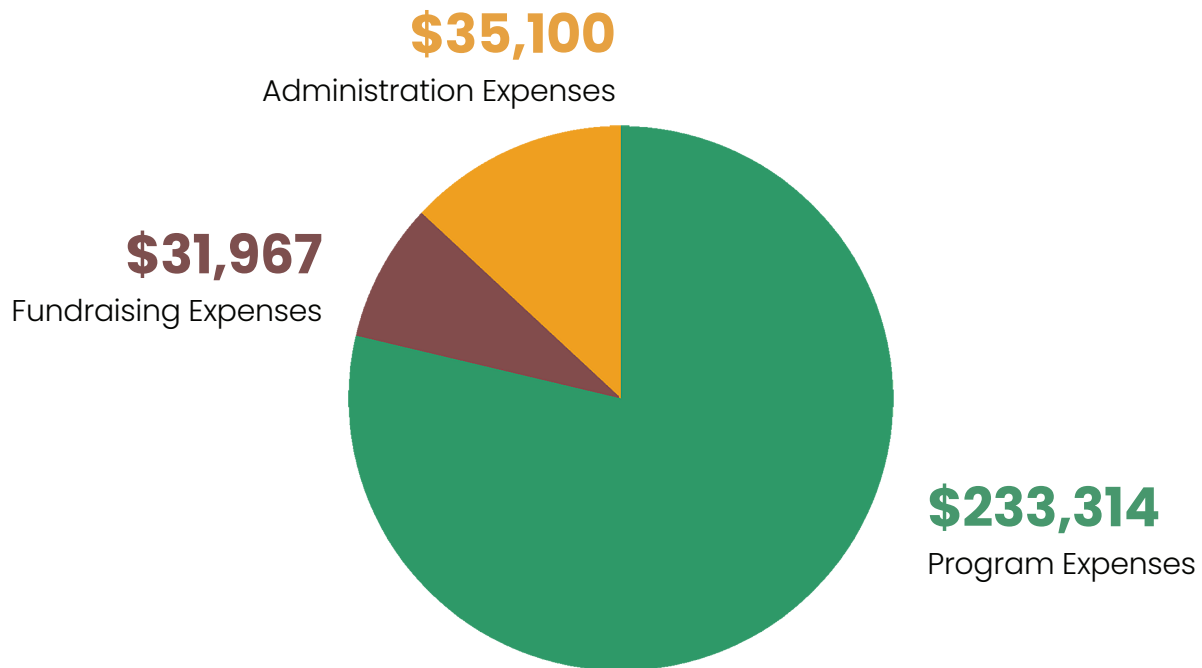
## 14 Virtual Delegations

2,523 participants



## 4 Community Trainings

4 organizations went through RJ&E community trainings



## Our Funding:

**\$97,899**

Program Revenue

**\$175,774**

Individual Donors

**\$21,000**

Grants + Organization Support

**\$48,088**

PPP Loan (Forgiven)



APPLY TODAY  
eyewitnesspalestine.org



VISIT PALESTINE/ISRAEL

There's only one way to truly understand the realities of Palestine/Israel - through the eyes of those who live there. Are you ready for an unforgettable journey for justice?

2022 DELEGATIONS  
February | June | October



EYEWITNESS PALESTINE