



American Muslims for Palestine

# 2020 Mid-Year Report

Turning the tide for Palestine in the U.S

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## Background

AMP was founded in 2006 in Chicago as a community organization to fill a void in the work for Palestine among the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim American communities. Over the years, AMP has transformed to become a major national organization in the Palestine solidarity movement. Within the policy domain, AMP is engaged in vigorous advocacy work for Palestinian rights, effectively enhancing the Palestine voice in the U.S.

With 10 chapters from coast to coast, and with supporters in many other places, AMP has built a large and solid grassroots community. AMP organizes events, actions, and festivals to educate about the history, culture, and struggle of our people.



## Mission

American Muslims for Palestine is dedicated to advancing the movement for justice in Palestine through education, advocacy, and grassroots mobilization.



Protestors gather in front of the Israeli Embassy at the AMP National “All Out Against Annexation” protest in Washington, DC (2020).



## Letter From The Executive Director



**Dr. Osama Abuirshaid**  
Executive Director

**“He who does not thank the people is not thankful to Allah.” (Hadith: Sunan Abi Dawud 4811).**

With all of our hearts, we say: Thank you! Despite all of the obstacles and challenges, and with the blessing of Allah and your generous continuous support, we have been able to achieve great accomplishments for Palestine in the U.S. so far this year. This report in your hands now is a testament to that.

It is true that we, like other people, countries, and institutions, have been severely affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, from the first day, after relying on Allah, we resolved not to spare any effort in serving Palestine.

Oppressors do not freeze their injustices during moments of crisis such as a pandemic. It is not reasonable nor acceptable for the people standing in opposition to these oppressors to abandon their responsibilities in fighting these injustices.

Over the past six months, Israel has attempted to further legalize its land theft from Palestinians (with the backing of the Trump administration) by annexing additional parts of the West Bank, continued to support settler expansion, demolished more Palestinian homes even as the pandemic escalated, shut down COVID-19 testing sites for Palestinians, extrajudicially killed Palestinians at checkpoints, and furthered its chokehold on Gaza. Therefore, withdrawing from the scene or reducing our workload was never an option. The Palestinian people understand this reality. Despite the tremendous difficulties and challenges they are facing, they have not given up, nor will they surrender.



Following in their footsteps and inspired by their determination, we solidified our commitment to our just cause in Palestine. The annexation attempt was stalled, in part, to the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and also because of our collective dedication and joint efforts. Your support was pivotal here.

We know the extent of the challenges facing the work for Palestine in the US. Furthermore, we are aware of the betrayals to Palestine by some Arab Muslim States. But we know that surrendering and accepting this reality is neither logical nor a correct choice.

The only option available to us is to rise to the challenge and deliver the appropriate response. We are not defeated, and we will not be defeated unless we accept defeat. In this report, you will find many accomplishments we have achieved despite our modest capabilities. There is real positive change currently taking place in US public opinion relating to Palestine; Millennials and Gen Z are more receptive to the Palestinian cause and there are new dynamics growing within Congress to condition US funding to Israel on Palestinian human rights. We are at an inflection point in US history. How we capitalize on this energy is dependent on the support we receive from our donors.

At American Muslims for Palestine, our moral compass is inspired by the divine guidance: “And say, do [as you will], for Allah will see your deeds, and [so, will] His Messenger and the believers.” (9:105). We at American Muslims for Palestine promise we will continue to work for the sake of our blessed cause. We kindly ask you to keep your faith in us and in our work. Your support and partnership are essential for the success of our collective mission.

Thank you for believing in the importance of our work. Together, we are making a difference on the path toward freedom and justice in Palestine. May Allah (SWT) bless our collective efforts.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Osama Abuirshaid**

Executive Director





## Staff



**Dr. Osama Abuirshaid**  
Executive Director



**Josh Ruebner**  
Managing Director



**Raed Jarrar**  
Advocacy Director



**Taher Herzallah**  
Outreach Director &  
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**Shakeel Syed**  
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**Felicia Eaves**  
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Consultant



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**Mohamad Habehh**  
National Development  
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**Hareth Adlouni**  
Digital Media Consultant



**Zarefah Baroud**  
Digital Media Associate



**Tarek Khalil**  
Education Coordinator



**Malak Shalabi**  
Legal and Advocacy  
intern

## Infrastructure Development

- **Grew and centralized staff.** AMP hired five additional mid-career experts to its growing staff and integrated two Chicago-based staff into its national staff structure in Washington, DC, enabling AMP to further develop into a larger, more specialized, and more cohesive staff. As of August 1st, AMP has 13 staff members and is in the process of hiring more project coordinators and interns.
- **Began to restructure and expand external communications.** AMP finalized a rebranding process, took major strides toward creating a new, sleeker, and more functional website which will be launched in September 2020, is set to upgrade to an improved customer relations management (CRM) system for its database and communications with supporters, and took steps to increase the size of its email list six-fold. All of these steps, when completed in September 2020, will greatly expand the effectiveness and scope of AMP's external communications.



Dr. Osama Abuirshaid at an AMP Congressional briefing on the Israeli treatment of US citizens (2019).

## Education and Advocacy

### ○ Organized the first-ever Virtual Palestine Advocacy Days (V-PAD).

AMP was set to hold its largest-ever Palestine Advocacy Day (PAD) with Members of Congress in March 2020 with an expected 750 attendees. COVID-19 made this in-person gathering impossible, necessitating AMP to postpone PAD and make it a virtual event.

On the week of September 13th, we held our first-ever Virtual Palestine Advocacy Days! More than 800 people from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds from 42 states held more than 150 congressional meetings, including dozens with members of Congress themselves, joined to advocate for Palestinian rights. V-PAD included an entire week of activities: a training session on Monday, September 13; a plenary session with Members of Congress on Tuesday, September 14; and one-on-one phone calls with congressional offices later on in the week. We've seen dramatic results with more members of Congress cosponsoring historic legislation--H.R.2407 and H.R.8050--to support the human rights of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention and to impose consequences on Israel should it illegally annex more Palestinian land. In addition, six members of Congress--Reps. Betty McCollum, Rashida Tlaib, Donald Payne, Jr., Judy Chu, Debbie Dingell, and André Carson--delivered powerful remarks during our public plenary session, viewed by more than 25,000 people, in support of Palestinian human rights.





- **Took a leadership role in convening the Palestine solidarity movement to achieve policy change.** AMP hosted its first-ever policy forum in January 2020 with representatives of dozens of key organizations and individuals working within the electoral system for Palestinian rights to strategize about how utilize the 2020 elections to advance our goal. AMP followed up by convening a second virtual policy forum in July, focusing on how to impact the political conventions.

AMP's campaign [www.platformforpalestine.org](http://www.platformforpalestine.org) with Jewish Voice for Peace Action to include Palestinian rights in the parties' platforms, signed by nearly 10,000 people, was a culmination of this effort. AMP also took the lead in assembling and co-convening a 60+ organizational coalition--the Palestine Federal Working Group--to coordinate legislative efforts broadly across the spectrum of groups supporting Palestinian rights, and also launched a Palestine Advocacy Club with its most dedicated supporters to engage in high-level policy training and additional advocacy opportunities.



Organizational leaders from around the country gathered at the AMP Policy forum (2020).

- **Countered Israeli annexation plans by building Congressional support for sanctioning Israel.** AMP worked with several Congressional offices on policy, including Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), on legislative initiatives to cut and/or condition US funding as a response to Israel's plans to illegally annex additional Palestinian land. These are game-changing initiatives that finally seek to hold Israel accountable for its actions. AMP produced a policy memo, which was distributed to congressional staff, outlining the legal and political reasons to oppose Israeli annexation and hold Israel accountable, and held a webinar for congressional staff and the public on the same topics.
- **Revitalized and expanded campaign to boycott Israeli dates.** AMP updated and expanded its campaign this Ramadan to boycott Israeli dates, many of which are grown and/or packaged in illegal Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley and which exploit Palestinian land and labor. It did so by producing a detailed research paper, creating a hard-hitting video, and publishing a high-profile op-ed in Al Jazeera, all of which led to greater awareness among Muslim-American communities of the need to avoid purchasing Israeli dates for Ramadan.
- **Engaged in anti-racism work in support of Black rights.** After the horrific killing of George Floyd sparked a national uprising to support Black Lives Matter, AMP took immediate action to support the movement and continue to build on the tradition of Black-Palestinian solidarity. AMP's Minnesota chapter led the efforts on the ground to deepen these ties of solidarity while, on the national level, AMP supported legislative efforts to end police brutality, initiated a monthly series of webinars to increase our community's understanding of anti-Black racism, and hired two experienced organizers in Black-Palestinian solidarity work--Felicia Eaves and Philip Agnew--as consultants to increase Black-Palestinian solidarity work.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum of Minnesota and Dr. Osama Abuirshaid address an AMP delegation (2017).





- **Webinars.** Since the beginning of the pandemic, AMP has worked to make our essential educational programs more accessible by hosting them online. We have hosted a variety of different talks with renowned speakers such as Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, Dr. Rashid Khalidi, Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and others. These webinars have reached thousands of viewers nationwide.



- **Action Alerts.** One of AMP's most popular advocacy tools is our action alerts that go to tens of thousands of AMP supporters around the country. These action alerts typically consist of calls-to-action such as emailing your elected officials or signing petitions. Since January 1, we have issued 12 action alerts with more than twelve thousand participants. These actions have centered around issues like annexation, our date boycott campaign, and Congressional letters supporting Palestinian rights addressed to the UN and State Department.
- **Conducted events around the country at mosques, colleges, and community centers before COVID-19.** In January and February 2020, AMP hosted 34 events in 20 cities and 14 states to educate communities and colleges about ways to get engaged in activism for Palestinian rights. Due to COVID-19, AMP had to cancel a number of additional events this spring.
- **Digital Media:** Recognizing that Gen Z learns and interacts more through social media, AMP is investing in the digital media domain. We utilize multimedia and infographics on social media to educate a wide audience.



### ○ #DroptheADL Project.

AMP participated in a coalition of 100 Black, Latino, Indigenous, Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Arab organizations to launch a letter and campaign to drop the Anti-Defamation League from progressive circles in the US. The initiative culminated in a website [droptheadl.org](https://droptheadl.org) and a primer



that explains in detail the full breadth of the ADL's history of smear campaigns against progressive organizations in the US. This is by far the largest and most deliberate effort to counter one of America's largest pro-Israel groups.

- **Policy paper on the nexus between Zionist normalization and Jewish-Muslim interfaith work.** AMP commissioned the writing of a 60-page study which provides an in-depth look into the various mechanism that Zionist organizations utilize to promote Jewish-Muslim interfaith work as a means of tamping down advocacy for Palestinian rights within the Muslim community. This paper will serve as a useful handbook for the Muslim community to engage in forms of interfaith work with Jewish partner organizations to advance justice here and abroad without sacrificing our convictions about Palestine. AMP is currently in the process of finalizing the report for publication in the fall.



Protestors gather in front of the Israeli Embassy at the AMP National "All Out Against Annexation" protest in Washington, DC (2020).

- **Organizing around the Israeli Annexation Non-Recognition Act.** Rep. Betty McCollum introduced a historic bill on August 14 to withhold US recognition of Israeli annexation and prevent US funding from supporting annexation.

This bill holds Israel accountable for its violations of Palestinian rights and imposes consequences for laying further claims on Palestinian land. AMP is proud to have worked closely with the Congresswoman's office on the rollout of this bill and to be an official supporting organization of the bill listed on her website. AMP mobilized chapters and volunteers around the country to promote this bill with their Congressional representatives.

## Fundraising

- **Launched innovative and effective fundraising campaigns post-COVID-19.** The coronavirus pandemic could have been devastating for AMP because it precluded the organization from visiting mosques to fundraise during Ramadan, traditionally a major source of income for AMP. However, AMP agilely pivoted to creative online and person-to-person fundraising campaigns, which included a mixture of email and snail mail pitches, phone calls, webinars, videos, and a LaunchGood campaign. Instead of COVID-19 being a fundraising disaster for AMP, the organization was able to raise \$225,000 during Ramadan, allowing AMP to expand its operations and set itself on a firm footing to accomplish its goals during the remainder of the year.
- **Exceeded entire 2020 budgeted income in the first six months.** Due to the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, AMP dramatically slashed its 2020 budget by 33 percent (from \$1.2 million to \$800,000) and froze discretionary funding in anticipation of a significant downturn in fundraising capacity this year. However, due to a combination of creative fundraising and effective programming, AMP was actually able to raise approximately \$870,000 in the first seven months of 2020, enabling AMP to continue expanding and setting plans for an even more effective second half of the year.

## Chapter work

### ○ Chapter Education and Advocacy

#### 📍 Minnesota

- MN Book Club now has dozens of members nationwide and is covering books such as *Morning Jenin*, *Returning to Haifa*, and *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*.
- Held first-ever local Imams meeting to discuss normalization in February.

#### 📍 New Jersey

- Partnered with Jewish Voice for Peace to conduct an education seminar in Central New Jersey on Gaza.
- Held webinars on a variety of topics including children's book *P* is for Palestine with author Golbarg Bashi.

#### 📍 Chicago

- Initiated and drafted an educational curriculum for high school students on the history of Palestine and Palestine activism. Set to be one of AMP's largest educational initiatives.
- Leading a local coalition of a dozen like-minded groups in political action by meeting with elected officials in the Chicagoland area pertaining to Palestine.

## 📍 Missouri

- Led our first-ever state-level Palestine Advocacy Day in Jefferson City, MO, attended by dozens of people to advocate against a bill which would criminalize BDS.
- Successfully challenged and defeated an anti-BDS bill in the state legislature.

## 📍 Dallas

- Hosted Deir Yassin webinar with survivor in commemoration of the horrific events in 1948.

## 📍 Bay Area, CA

- Launched monthly webinar series focused on topics such as the Deadly Exchange between US police and Israeli security, Kashmir/Palestine connections, and political engagement.



Congresswoman Betty McCollum of Minnesota poses for a photo with an AMP delegation (2017).



## Chapter Campaigns

### ○ Chapter Education and Advocacy

#### 📍 Minnesota

- Hired a local contractor to lead efforts on House Resolution 2407, introduced by Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN).
- Led AMP's response on the ground in Minneapolis in the wake of the murder of George Floyd.
- Led chapter efforts to educate the community on the Nakba by creating infographics and videos.

#### 📍 New Jersey

- Led local response to a national boycott of Israeli dates by going store to store and getting commitments from dozens of retailers to drop Israeli date brands such as Hadiklaim and Jordan River.

#### 📍 Chicago

- Initiated flagship youth program, Yalla Shabab, which brings together nearly 100 high school-age youth to discuss identity, politics, history and culture every month.

## 📍 Missouri

- Hosted Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) in February for an AMP benefit dinner.

## 📍 Dallas

- Led local efforts in the wake of the brutal murder of George Floyd by organizing protests.

## 📍 North Carolina

- Launched a new chapter in Charlotte this year and already joined major coalitions demanding the demilitarization of police.
- Leading efforts in the state to promote HR 2407 introduced by Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN).



Protestors marching the streets of North Bergen, NJ in a local AMP Chapter protest against the annexation (2020).

## Upcoming Projects

### 501c4

AMP is classified as a 501(c)(3) organization, which means we are restricted in the amount of lobbying and political work that we can do.

In order to take advantage of the many opportunities AMP currently sees to build for Palestinian rights on Capitol Hill, we hope to establish an affiliated 501(c)(4) organization this year, which would be able to engage in unlimited amounts of lobbying.

This organization could engage in limited electoral work, such as endorsing candidates for office and running ads to support them.

We could also establish an affiliated Political Action Committee (PAC) to make direct financial contributions to candidates and encourage its grassroots supporters to do so as well.

By taking full advantage of these opportunities, we will build our political power and more effectively influence US policymakers to support Palestinian rights.

**Project Cost**  
**\$3,000,000**



Rep. Tlaib speaking at an AMP Congressional briefing on the Israeli treatment of US citizens (2019).

We knew that 2020 would be an important year and full of challenges but no one could have expected the obstacles we faced. Thanks to supporters like you, AMP has met all these challenges head on and has been successful every step of the way!

Thank you for supporting AMP and our work for Palestine in the U.S. We look forward to updating you on all the future accomplishments we hope to achieve this year.





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