



We are pleased to present the annual report of the Center for Freedom and Justice - Colorado (CFJ) covering accomplishments in 2024. Our work during the year continued to support sustainable community development in impoverished Beit Ummar, Palestine, and use its example of life under Israel's brutal occupation to educate the public. We also actively supported efforts in Colorado and elsewhere to stop US financing of Israeli's ethnic cleansing and genocide.

## CONDITIONS IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK AND BEIT UMMAR

As a temporary ceasefire took hold in Gaza, despite the Israeli military's continued killing, Israel's radical right-wing government turned its attention to the West Bank where over 3 million Palestinians live. As Israel moved closer to its plan to annex the West Bank, it set up new restrictions across the West Bank, with prolonged delays at checkpoints, and installed 12 new road gates at the entrances to towns. The military placed new roadblocks and earth mounds on secondary access routes to isolate each town. Jenin in the north and long noted for its resistance to occupation has started to resemble Gaza with the military fully occupying the town. Nearly all of Jenin refugee camp's 20,000 residents were displaced and an estimated 150-180 homes sustained severe damage in a two-month period.

In Beit Ummar, the Israeli military closed off the town, strangling its economy, and continued its ethnic cleansing through routine raids, arrests without charge, seizure of agricultural lands, and destruction of homes. Emails we received from Beit Ummar vividly portray the continuing nightmare experienced by the 22,000 residents.

## AN UPDATE FROM THE FOUNDER

*Sent by the founder of CFJ in Beit Ummar, January 29, 2025*

*Over the past week, two waves of arrests took place in Beit Ummar. The first arrests wave included elderly individuals and their sons, used as a means of exerting pressure on the Palestinian population.*

*In the second wave, Israeli forces detained 20 individuals, most of whom were previously imprisoned and released, only to be re-arrested.*

*Two months ago, Israeli authorities demolished two homes and an agricultural well in Beit Ummar. Last week, demolition orders were issued for six additional homes. These homes are located in areas classified as Zone B, and their owners were given a 10-day deadline to vacate before demolition begins.*



*These actions are part of a broader policy of forced displacement, particularly as the new U.S. administration promotes the relocation of Palestinians to Egypt, Jordan, and other parts of the world.*

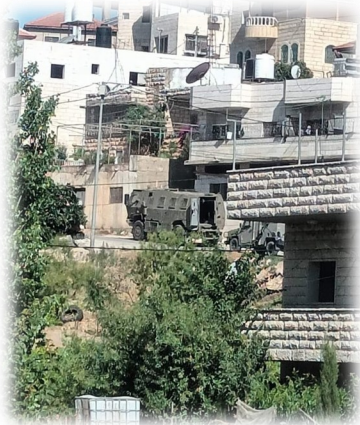
*Furthermore, the Israeli government has greenlit the settler council's plans to expand settlements in the West Bank. One such expansion*



*involves Migdal Oz, a settlement located north of Beit Ummar. The planned expansion will seize approximately 300-500 dunams (equivalent to 125 acres) of treasured field of Beit Ummar’s most fertile agricultural land). Since October 2023, Palestinian farmers have been unable to access their properties in these areas.*



*Military gates installed at the main entrances to Palestinian towns continue to severely restrict movement, making daily life increasingly difficult. Palestinians are forced to seek alternative routes—often unpaved, damaged agricultural roads or narrow side paths—to reach cities. These restrictions are particularly critical for those needing to access hospitals, universities, or workplaces.*



*As a result, unemployment has risen sharply across the West Bank, with the younger generation disproportionately affected by these blockades. The situation remains uncertain, and the challenges are mounting.*

*At CFJ in Beit Ummar, we have consistently worked to connect with partners and allies to confront these challenges. However, given the growing scale of suffering, we urge you to not only stand in solidarity but to actively seek partners willing to contribute financially to sustain and expand relief efforts.*



*Sent by Bessan Adi, former Director of CFJ in Beit Ummar, December 29, 2024*

*“Almost every night, our house trembles violently, the air reverberates with the deafening sound of explosions, and my heart plummets. Is it an earthquake shaking the earth beneath us? A raging thunderstorm tearing through the sky? Or is it my own mind conjuring horrors too real to escape? I rush to check the news, desperate for answers, only to discover the truth I dread: my people are dying, their lives stolen just kilometers away.*

*I cling to my children, holding them as though my embrace could shield them from the chaos. My thoughts race to my loved ones—are they safe? I squeeze my eyes shut, seeking a moment of respite, but the images behind my eyelids are more unbearable than the darkness around me. They’re filled with devastation, anguish, and loss. I open them again, my gaze falling on my children, making sure they’re still beside me, breathing, unhurt.*

*A wave of helplessness washes over me. I cannot act. I cannot speak. I cannot even cry the tears my soul aches to release. Sleep is an impossibility; my heart and mind are captive to a storm that refuses to end.*

## OUR WORK IN BEIT UMMAR

Through the generous donations of our supporters, CFJ Colorado continued to support projects in Beit Ummar to make life livable in the face of the occupation and as a main form of resistance. In the past year, we focused on funding the construction of a kindergarten, providing food aid from Beit Ummar and West Bank to Gaza, and supporting a women’s cooperative to process and sell locally- grown food. Our campaign on *Give Lively* for the kindergarten raised \$125,000 and enabled continued construction under the most difficult circumstances. We raised an additional \$20,000 to fund other needs.



It is startling how CFJ in Beit Ummar found a way to continue its work in such a repressive environment. Below is an official report of projects successfully executed by CFJ in 2024. Note there were many donors to these projects in addition to CFJ-Colorado.



**KINDERGARTEN** – CFJ successfully completed the first two phases of the construction and operationalization of an educational kindergarten and daycare in Beit Ummar. Completion of the project will see the establishment of modern classrooms, play areas, and educational facilities equipped with essential learning materials. CFJ conducted workshops and awareness programs for parents and local educators to foster an inclusive and collaborative learning atmosphere once classes begin.



**FOOD FOR GAZA** – In response to the ongoing crisis in Gaza, CFJ became the first organization in the West Bank to coordinate multiple food aid convoys delivering essential supplies such as vegetables, fruits, plastic tarps, and cleaning products. CFJ worked closely with local partners to address logistical challenges and ensure the safe aid. Beyond providing direct aid, CFJ actively raised awareness about the humanitarian crisis among stakeholders and advocated for continued aid distribution.



**FOOD PROCESSING WAREHOUSE AND FACTORY** – CFJ rehabilitated a 400-square-meter food production facility in Beit Ummar, enhancing its structural integrity and equipping it with essential tools. Renovations included upgraded roofing, rainwater collection systems, and reinforced flooring, ensuring a fully functional production space. The factory integrates environmentally friendly practices, including composting organic waste to reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers and utilizes locally available resources to create high-value products that opens up new economic opportunities for the community.



A key objective of the project is to economically empower women and farmers by providing training in food production, entrepreneurship, and marketing. CFJ engaged 20 women and 30 farmers in skill-building programs, fostering sustainable income opportunities and self-reliance.

## NEW FUNDING PROJECT UNDERTAKEN BY CFJ-COLORADO IN 2025

In 2025, we are planning a project to raise money to replace destroyed bakeries in Gaza and provide a regular source of bread to feed the almost 1 million Palestinians who are returning if a ceasefire holds. This project continues the humanitarian goal that started with CFJ in Beit Ummar delivering food to Gaza. The project will set up a modular steel structure and purchase ovens, dough mixers, and packaging tools.

**Caveat:** We first published the CFJ Colorado Dispatch before the collapse of the ceasefire in Gaza. Since that time, Israel has destroyed all existing bakeries in Gaza and stopped shipments of flour as a primary weapon of its genocide. Until a ceasefire occurs again, we are not asking our supporters to donate funds for the creation of a bakery. Instead, we ask you to donate to the women’s cooperative in Beit Ummar for the purchase of equipment to process, package and market locally produced agricultural goods. CFJ recently has completed work to house a food processing factory and has additional need for equipment to get the factory up and running. You can donate to the Market of Hope project at <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/colorado-friends-of-cfj/market-of-hope-factory> or by mailing a check to PO Box 12235, Denver, CO 80212. You can also make a donation by visiting our website at [cfjcolorado.org](http://cfjcolorado.org) and clicking on the Donate Now button and dedicating your donation to the Market of Hope.

# Our Work in Colorado

What with US policy – both the Biden Administration and now Trump’s – supporting Israeli genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Gaza, along with the ongoing intensified repression in the West Bank, it’s been a busy year for the Center for Freedom and Justice – Colorado. This work has includes ...



Work on Ceasefire Resolutions (Denver/Boulder/Ft.Collins/Longmont/Colorado Springs). The only such resolution in Colorado that passed was in Glenwood Springs.

However, other local city councils had to listen to, and for many it was the first time, the Palestinian narrative. They had to hear about the US supported Israeli genocide and to see face-to-face the Palestinian Community of Colorado and its supporters.

We also mobilized support for the growing number of Palestine protesters on trial from local encampments and acts of civil disobedience, at Denver County Court. That has included dozens of people. Many of these cases were simply thrown; others were settled with the city district attorney on favorable terms to the protesters.

Over the past year, an increasingly broad-based statewide coalition, the Colorado Palestine Coalition (CPC) has come into being, of which CFJ is a member. It has organized some of the biggest demonstrations for a ceasefire, against the genocide and for support of the Palestinian people that this state has ever seen. The CPC is the consequence of two unprecedented events entitled *Together For Palestine*. CFJ participated in organizing both events including member Julia Halaby who set



up a “pop-up Palestine museum” which has already traveled nation-wide. CFJ also helped organize an educational together with CPC held by the Denver Democratic Party. Other members focused their work on establishing longer-term relationships with churches and other groups to help educate the broader public. We were pleased to help arrange a visit to Beit Unmar by a Christian delegation head by Rev. Jeff Wright of the *Disciples of Christ church*.



As a result of strong pressure from groups like the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the US Congress suspended its contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNRWA’s considerable infrastructure on the ground – some 13,000 employees prior to October 7, 2023 along with decades of experience in Gaza – is vital to avoid an even more devastating collapse of Palestinian civil society and to help rebuild the shattered region. CFJ participated in a rally/press conference created by the Colorado chapter of Doctors Against Genocide at which CFJ member Diana Deschanel read a statement. Along with the Friends Committee on National Legislation and Doctors Against Genocide, CFJ-Colorado is working to get Congress to re-fund UNRWA.

**take action**

Contact your elected officials

Senate  
Sen. John Hickenlooper - (202)224-5941  
Sen. Michael Bennet - (202) 224-5852  
Congress  
1st. District Rep. Diana DeGette - (202) 225-5657  
2nd. District Rep. Joe Neguse - (202) 225-2161  
3rd. District Rep. Jeff Hurd - (202) 225-4676  
4th District Rep. Lauren Boebert - (202) 225-4761  
5th District Rep. Jeff Crank - (202) 225-4422  
6th District Rep. Jason Crow - (202) 225-7882  
7th District Rep. Brittany Pettersen - (202) 225-2645  
8th District Rep. Gabe Evans - (202) 225-5625

#HandsOffUNRWA  
unrwausa.org/Hands-Off-UNRWA



We will continue many of these efforts in 2025 while also undertaking a project to address the relationship between US policy toward Palestine and racism and class, and how money spent on weapons and war steals from the most vulnerable Americans. We were pleased that Dr. Hermon George, Emeritus Professor of African-American Studies at the University of Northern Colorado, is leading this effort.

