

*We are surrounded by lies wherever we go.
Regarding the Palestinians, the Nakba, the Right of
Return – everyone lied to me. When the document,
signed by a general, states that “this village must be
cleansed tomorrow”, there is less room for maneuver.
Only Zochrot never lied to me. Only Zochrot had the
decency of telling me the difficult truth.*

*Zochrot Opened My Eyes
Ami Asher*

**WE TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT THE PAST,
AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE**

ZOCHROT \ \ ANNUAL REPORT 2021

The coming year, 2022, marks Zochrot's 20th anniversary. Zochrot has been working for two decades to promote the responsibility of the Jewish public in Israel for the Palestinian Nakba and the return of Palestinian refugees. Our work continues in defiance of all efforts to silence and conceal historical facts, against deliberate ignorance and trampling on hope.

Ours is a work that moves from the past and connects it to the present and future. Through painstakingly researching, collecting testimonies, creating education and developing resources to understand our painful histories, we have been working collectively with a multitude of partners to fundamentally change Israeli society. The facts of Nakba are better known now thanks to two decades of this work. Our focus in recent years is on highlighting the ongoing nature of the Nakba, its effects on every day's Palestinian and Israeli lives and the necessity of acknowledging the ethnic cleansing of 1948 in order to understand current Israeli policy, correctly analyse the current situation and make a different future possible. These connections have been made clearer than ever in 2021.

Over the past year we have organized over fifty educational and political events and activities for over 4,000 participants. Those included: tours to Palestinian communities destroyed in the Nakba, workshops for organizations and groups, lectures and panels, campaigns, advocacy, research and testimony collection activities.

Further, this past year, despite attempts to silence our voices, sabotage our work and threaten us with violence, we worked diligently to bring the historical memory of the Nakba and the imperative of return to the Israeli public consciousness. At the same time, we formed a community of brave Israelis who dare to open their hearts and minds, listen, face their fears, reveal the truth and take responsibility for the past by changing the future for the better.

Here are some highlights from the past year:

Over the past year Israeli state sanctioned violence has escalated against all Palestinians under its control – whether in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank or Jerusalem, and even beyond borders – causing tension and fear across communities. That year, 2021, has also saw growing and more united Palestinian resistance. Palestinian protest this time around began because of the pending evictions in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of Jerusalem it quickly morphed into wider protests against the occupation and colonization of Palestine and Palestinians everywhere. In clearer terms than before, Palestinian protestors explained the ongoing expulsion, house demolitions and land confiscation, arrests and police brutality in places like Lydd, Hebron, Jerusalem, al-Naqab, The Jordan Valley, Yaffa, Haifa, Gaza and more, as part of an ongoing process of colonization of Palestine and gradual ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. The events of May 2021 were painful but it was nonetheless a time that presented an opportunity to unify the Palestinian struggle and highlight to the local and international community the links between the different issues. In other words, this highlights the ongoing Nakba and the refugees' status of Palestinians even inside Palestine.

We at Zochrot had to change our priorities slightly to be on the ground with and for the people while the protests were at their height. Most of our staff participated in actions and in community care, working with detainees and families under threat and encourage our activist community of Israelis to stand in solidarity. At the same time, we participated in many international forums and talked to different groups, organizations and institutions, some of whom are listed later in this report, to highlight our view of the events not as isolated incidents but as part of an ongoing Nakba – the gradual dispossession of Palestinians.

In December we offered a [webinar with Sahar Francis](#), the director of Adameer, one of the persecuted organizations, to explain the situation. We were the only Israeli organization offering this kind of conversation in Hebrew to the Israeli public.

Through these disparate, yet mission driven and intentionally conceptualized programs, we will continue promoting a public discourse grounded in truth and justice as we push for the radical change Israeli society sorely needs.

Zochrot is grateful for the solidarity, partnership and support of Christian Aid, Misereor, HEKS-EPER, IHL Trust, AFSC, MCC, Kurve Wustruw, St. Het Solidariteitsfonds, Kaleidoscope, Haella Foundation, Sivmo, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, as well as of private individuals from all over the world.

Highlights from Zochrot Activities in 2021:

Tours to destroyed Palestinians localities

Virtual Lecture and Tour at the destroyed Palestinian village of al- Shaykh Muwannis

More than a 100 people joined us on a virtual tour and lecture in the destroyed Palestinian village of al-Shaykh Muwannis to learn about its history, occupation at 1948, Expulsion of the Palestinian families, preventing their Return, destruction of the Palestinian houses and building the Tel Aviv University and number of Israeli neighborhoods in the north of Tel Aviv on the village lands.

During the event, that took place through ZOOM platform, we presented maps, photos and relevant data regarding the process of Palestinian history erasure and the process of Israelization of the landscape, and exposed ruins and memories that remained despite all.

In search of Lifta

In collaboration with 'Imbala, a radical cultural space in Jerusalem, Zochrot organized a tour to visit the remains of the Palestinian village of Lifta, one of the largest villages in the al-Quds (Jerusalem) district, which stood at the entrance to the city until 1948. During the tour, we learned about its Palestinian residents, visited the fresh water spring, and witnessed the impressive remaining houses.

Online event organized in Partnership with Green Olive Tours

In collaboration with Green olive tours, we organized an online event open to the public (in English). The event included an introduction on the Nakba followed by a virtual tour to some of the depopulated Palestinian villages along route 1

to the west of Jerusalem. The third part of the event focused on Palesitnian return

About 70 people took part in the Zoom Event

JNF- 120 years of Dispossession: Action and tour

On(Palestinian) Land day, Zochrot organized a full learning day to expose destroyed Palestinian villages in JNF sites.

The remains and lands of hundreds of Palestinian communities are hidden within and underneath JNF's forests and parks around the country. Site signs do not mention the names of the destroyed villages nor the Palestinian history of these places. In omitting these details, they are taking an active part in the erasure and denial of Palestinian existence under Zionist colonialism. Thus, JNF sites serve as a tool for shaping a false consciousness in the public.

On the 120th year of the establishment of the Jewish National Fund, we explored its role in Palestinian dispossession throughout the years.

On Land Day, March 30, Zochrot with 35 people visited a number of such sites, learned the names of the villages hidden within them, placed signs containing relevant information about each village and learned about the JNF mechanism for erasure and uprooting of Palestinian villages since its establishment in 1901 until now.

The event included four JNF sites: "Ayalon-Canada Park" including tour in the destroyed village of Imwas, one of three villages that were destroyed in 1967 on whose ruins the park was built.

“[Mrar hills national park](#)”, on the destroyed Palestinian village [of al-Maghar](#) that was occupied in 1948.

“Plugot forest” that was planted on the lands of two destroyed Palestinian villages, al-Falluja and Karatiyya.

al-‘Araqib. A [learning and support visit](#) to the village of al-‘Araqib that was destroyed 184 times where we met with a representative of al-Turi family, who continue to fight resolutely for decades against the persecution and dispossession by the Israeli authorities, including the JNF. This whole day tour highlighted the ongoing Nakba and the continuation of dispossession practices throughout the years and in all areas of Palestine.

Dayr Yasin Massacre- Memorial Event

In commemoration of the victims of the Dayr Yasin massacre in 9.4.1948, Zochrot together with 30 people (and more on live broadcast via [Facebook](#)) held a memorial tour to mark the 73rd anniversary of Dayr Yasin massacre, its occupation and depopulation of its people. We walked through the remains of the village, heard of its history and commemorated the names of the 110 victims. Dayr Yasin is located in outskirts of Jerusalem. It is considered as one of the bloodiest atrocities committed during the 1948 war.

Today, many of the village houses on the hill are still standing and have been incorporated into an Israeli hospital for the mentally ill that was established on the site. Some houses outside the fence of the hospital grounds are used for residential and commercial purposes, or as warehouses. The old village cemetery, southeast of the site, is unkempt and scattered with debris from a ring road that has been constructed around the village hill.

The memorial at Dayr Yasin is an annual event Zochrot is holding, despite attempts from the Israeli police to limit our access to the site. We came back to the remains of the village in 2021 after holding the memorial online in 2020 due to COVID19 lockdown.

” Thank you, Omar and Zochrot for organizing and leading this somber and very important tour of Dayr Yasin.”

”We have no exclusivity on pain, it is time to acknowledge the other pain, that is the condition for reconciliation.”



For world Refugee day, Zochrot organized, a Memory, Recognition and Return journey from Yaffa (Jaffa) to Beirut.

Saturday 19th of June 45 people joined us on a unique journey from Jaffa to Ras al Nakura Calling for return, justice and freedom. The journey took us from Jaffa through al-Tantura in the northern coastal plain, Balad a-Shaykh in the outskirts of Haifa, al-Bassa in the Western Galilee and Ras al-Naqla (Rosh HaNikra) on the border with Lebanon.

The whole day tour started 9:00am and ended 11pm. It took place in light of June 20 world Refugees Day emphasizing that Palestinians are still the largest refugee group in the world whose return has been denied for 73 years, and that Palestinians in historic Palestine continue to suffer arrests, forced displacements, house demolitions, siege and massacres and other injustices as part of the Israeli regime policies to take over the entire space. This tour was postponed from May, when another attack on Gaza, subsequent rocket fire from there and



clashes in Israeli cities made it impossible to hold a tour. It held special meaning for participants, most of whom were involved in protest in May, and got a better understanding in the root causes of the current situation through this tour.

The tour was broadcasted live on Facebook and you are invited to watch parts of the journey here: [Yafa, Tantura, Balad a Shaykh, al Bassa, Ras al Naqura](#)

Educational tour about the Nakba in the city of Al-Iydd/Lod

On the anniversary of the occupation of Lydd, still in the shadow of recent events, Zochrot invited the public for a tour between the Past and the Present, the Nakba and the ongoing Nakba in the city of Al-Iydd. About 60 people took part in the study tour and almost 500 people watched the tour on live broadcast via social media. Our tour commemorated the massacre and depopulation of the city, one of the worst atrocities of 1948. We heard from current Palestinian residents of their families' stories of dispossession and separation, of their hope to reunite, and of the events of May 2021 that echoed the Nakba for them.

A tour to Lifta



On Saturday, August 28, we held another [tour of Lifta](#) to express our solidarity with its refugees and our opposition to the destructive plan that seeks to eradicate the Palestinian village once and for all. As in all of our tours, we presented the injustices of the Nakba to the participants, above all the uprooting and denial of return of some 85% of the Palestinians living in the territory that became the State of Israel. We also emphasized the realization of the refugees' right to return as a prerequisite for a just future in the region.

Several dozen Israelis, Palestinians and internationals took part in the tour, including Lifta

refugees who fascinated the participants with important stories about the village's history – memories that are still alive and form a clear statement about the refusal to forget the Nakba and the eternal desire to return home. Here is a [link](#)

A tour to Dayr Aban

Tour at the Destroyed village of Dayr Aban and Action in U.S.A Park, as part of "JNF- 120 years of Dispossession and Displacement" campaign. The remains of dozens of Palestinian villages and towns are hidden in plain sight inside forests and parks planted by the Jewish National Fund across the country. The U.S.A Independence park near Jerusalem is but one example. Like other JNF forests, the US park plays an aggressive role in re-designing the landscape in colonial-Zionist patterns, this erasing the landscape's Palestinian identity. It covers up the remains of Palestinian villages that the state of Israel destroyed, and it prevents their former Palestinian inhabitants, who became refugees in 1948, from returning. The tour was broadcasted live via facebook and you can watch [parts](#) of the [tour here](#) and on our [facebook page](#)

A tour to Lubya

Marking the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people and the partition plan day, Zochrot organized a tour to the destroyed Palestinian village of Lubya in the Lower Galilee. Lubya, which stood west of Tiberias on the main way to Nazareth, at Maskane junction [Golani Junction] was occupied in July 1948 and all its inhabitants were expelled. As we walked between the remains of the village, we learned about its history, occupation and demolition as part of the Nakba crimes. We placed signs as an act of responsibility and solidarity, to revive the erased name of Lubya and to mark some of its main sites. The participants heard from Haitham Haju, a medical student who is a third generation to displaced people from Lubya about his family's ongoing connection to the place and hopes for return. We also visited the cemetery covered by the South African forest which is inside the JNF's **Lavi forest** and [talked to Heidey Greenbaum](#), an academic and organizer from **South Africa**, who together with a group of South African Jews had took responsibility and conducted a public apology in Lubya in 2015 saying "Not in our Names" and who had expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people and commitment to work for a just future of return.

Christmas tour to Iqrith

On Christmas day, December 25, we held our last tour of the year at the depopulated village of Iqrith in the upper Galilee. Iqrith was a Palestinian village conquered in October 1948. After surrendering to the advancing Israeli forces, the villagers were ordered to leave their homes for just two weeks “for security reasons”. When they refused to cross the border to Lebanon (which, as we know now, would have made them permanent refugees), they were sent to the village of Rameh, about 20 kilometers to the south. The people of Iqrith petitioned repeatedly to the Israeli high court of justice and demanded to be allowed to return. After a court rule that accepted their demand, the army blew up all the houses of the village on Christmas eve 1951, as those houses’ owners, all Catholics, were preparing for the holiday. Today only the church remained of the village but the community of internally displaced persons still gathers around it for holiday prayers, weddings and other activities. Almost 70 people joined us on this tour to hear the story of Iqrith, meet this resilient community and imagine their return.

Webinars and Online discussions:

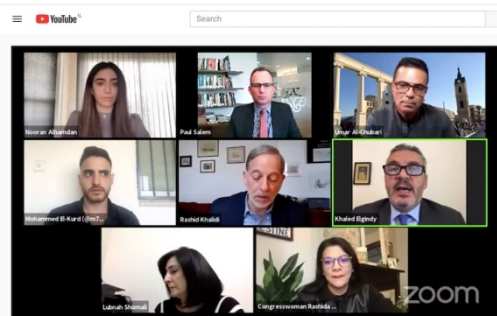
Why the Nakba still matters (May 10 2021)

We were honored to have our own Umar Al-Ghubari next to such brilliant speakers and congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, Jerusalem activist and writer Mohammed al-Kurd, academic Rashid Khalidi and others to talk about Zochrot’s role in exposing the truth about the Nakba crimes to Israelis, the state’s erasure policy and attempts to hide the truth and how we imagine return as we visit destroyed and depopulated Palestinian villages and most importantly work to advance the acknowledgment not only of the Nakba but for the responsibility to redress and work towards a just future of return.

Listen to Mohammad el Kurd from Sheikh Jarrah who is threatened to be expelled from his half home as the other half is already occupied by settlers, and his literal experience of the Nakba today. More than 1,200 people took part in the [event](#).

Online discussion “Palestinian return, Jewish accountability – In conversation with Israeli & Jewish voices”

Zochrot online discussion “[Palestinian return, Jewish accountability – In conversation with Israeli & Jewish voices](#)” took place on June 20th,



The Palestinian Nakba: What Happened in 1948 and Why It Still Matters

International refugee day. The discussion included Jewish-Israeli thinkers and activists as well as Thinkers from the Jewish Diaspora and focused on the different ways in which we can show up in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and support the rights of Palestinian refugees. Speakers: Peter Beinart, Dr. Inna Michaeli, Dr. Avi-ram Tzoreff, Moderator: Dr. Munir Nuseibah.

Webinar “Acknowledgment and accountability: Palestinian struggle for freedom and life in dignity 2021”

Tuesday 22/6 we held a [zoom event](#) in Hebrew with Palestinian activists, who are active on different fronts of the struggle at the moment, talked about what is happening on the ground, what issues are coming up, where the struggle is going and whether and how Israelis can take responsibility.

Political arrests as ongoing repression

In February we [held a talk online](#) with two Palestinian lawyers who represent political prisoners and an Israeli academic. They talked about the legal system as a colonial tool and the worsening trend of arrests of students and intellectuals on both sides of the “green line”, as well as of actions required from Israelis of conscience. More than 80 people attended.

Apart from the aforementioned events organized or co-organized by us, we participated in more than 10 virtual talks and panels organized by different organizations, educational institutions and lobby and action groups around the world, for the US and the UK to India and South Africa.

We thought it was temporary– Memory and resistance event on Israeli independence day

On the evening that the State of Israel celebrates its “independence,” established on the ruins of the lives and towns of the Palestinian people, Zochrot held a special community gathering and activity with 40 people also broadcasted live via [facebook](#). We listened to the testimonies of Israeli fighters

from 1948 in their own words, read by young Israeli; returned to the events of 1948 and their devastating consequences in order to explore the ongoing Nakba today: in Qalansawe, Sheikh Jarrah, Khalat al-Daba, Gaza, Ain al-Hilweh, Jaffa or Silwan; and imagine together with more activists a just future for all the land's inhabitants and Palestinian returnees.

Advocacy and public campaigns

We met with several diplomatic missions during the year to talk about our work and the need to include the Nakba in the political framework of foreign governments' engagement with Israel. We regularly update relevant embassies on our programs.

Ongoing Nakba

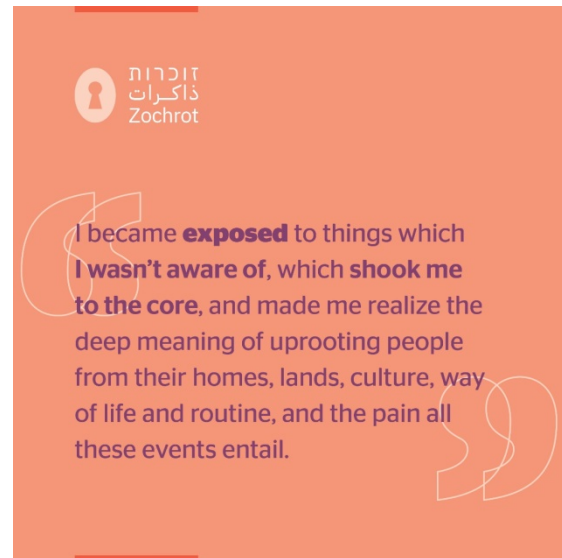
To support the efforts of Palestinians on the ground to communicate the full picture of what was going on to the world we released three statements: one about Sheikh Jarrah one on [Nakba day](#) and [another one](#) after the designation of six Palestinian human right organizations as "terror entities". Those statements were sent to all diplomatic missions as well as international organizations and went out as newsletters to supporters. Following those, we received many invitations to speak at different forums, some of whom are listed above.

Here is our statement regarding the six Palestinian organizations:

On October this year the Israeli Ministry of occupation (Ministry of Defense), made an announcement which labeled six Palestinian civil society organizations as "terrorist groups", this should have enraged anyone who cares deeply and sincerely about human rights. And yet, while the decision should provoke widespread opposition and firm action to repeal it, it should come as no surprise. [We, at Zochrot, stand in solidarity](#) with the crucial Palestinian organizations that are undergoing a campaign of slander and intimidation; organizations whose opposition to oppression and protection of basic human rights is classified as a terrorist act. The vital research center Bisan, whose name echoes the Nakba; The Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, an organization committed to feminist activism which is critical for building a civil society; The Union of Agricultural Workers Committees which protects Palestinian farmers from repeated land grabs and severe infringement on agricultural lands; The Defense for Children International-Palestine, which documents and brings to light the horrors of

occupation and dehumanization that even children are not protected from; Addameer, demanding Palestinian prisoners' rights; And finally, our friends at Al-Haq, who have been defending basic human rights since 1979.

The criminalization of the above organizations, signed off by a "security" minister who is proud of committing war crimes, is intended to silence those who show the true nature of Israeli colonialism. As long as there are those who see the truth and are willing to tell it as it is, such attempts to silence critics will ultimately fail.



120 Years of Dispossession and Displacement

On Sukkot 2021, we launched our social media campaign 120 Years of Dispossession and Displacement, a three week effort to raise awareness about the role of the Jewish National Fund.

(JNF) in the forced displacement of Palestinians from their land, replacing Palestinian homes with parks and Jewish settlements since 1901. Through story-telling, historic documentation, infographics and online actions, the campaign highlights the histories of the Palestinian homes and villages demolished by the JNF that remain hidden in plain sight.

In the "[Zochrot's #ExposeJNF Campaign](#)" Google Drive folder, you can find collected resources from our campaign. The sub-folders and their contents are outlined and linked directly.

Our audience remains in line with our goals with a majority of Israeli audience and an increased number of younger followers as a result of our grassroots activism. Additionally, we have managed to increase our international audience through Twitter particularly academics, journalists and activists. Instagram has also

enabled us to increase our Israeli and International audience while maintaining the majority of Israeli audience. Hence we are highlighting more Hebrew content on Facebook and English content on Twitter and a bi lingual content on Instagram which allows us a better reach despite the bi lingual use.

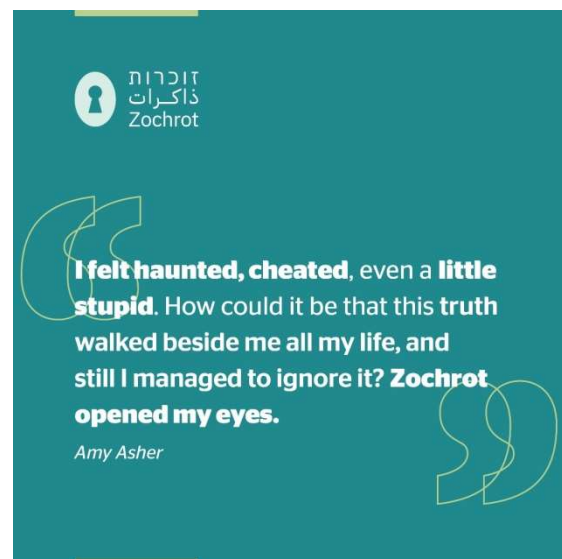
Since the beginning of this year, 2021, we've had a little over 70,000 unique users visiting our website, including 87% new users, reaching an increase of 5% of the total number of all users which we managed to keep this period as well without any change. We're also happy to maintain young people, between the ages of 18-34 and mostly from Israel, as the majority of our audience reaches up to more than 57%.

Our presence on **Twitter** has seriously increased particularly due to our campaigns with over 16000 profile visits and more than 600 mentions in addition to over 2000 retweets and over 200k tweet impressions out of 400k during the whole period. Same goes for **Instagram**, 2.8 k followers compared to 2.3k the previous period with over 12k accounts reach which is over 100% compared to previous period. On **Facebook** we're managing to maintain our community base and engagement despite the challenges and continue to grow gradually with a special highlight on our Hebrew content as most of the majority of our Israeli audience is on Facebook. We've had 80k reach (42k only during the campaign) and 20k engagement (over 7k only during the campaign). Including 2k shares and over 1k comments and around 800 link clicks and 800 new followers.

Our performance on our social media platforms indicates that people have great interest in our educational posts about current events and affairs, such as our stand and statements connecting the current events with the Nakba and Return. They also showed great interest in our educational campaign tracing 120 years of JNF dispossession and displacement, which relates to the past, present and future; Nakba and Return; Settler colonialism and climate justice. The JNF campaign is not only a great tool to emphasize the current events and the ongoing Nakba and prevention of return, but also emphasizes the responsibility of Jews and people around the world who are supporting it and the crimes are being done in their names. Thus this campaign was a good incentive for many others to start talking about it, start initiating new projects and take responsibility. The kind of engagement we have on our social media platforms shows great results because it led people to share, read over and over and save our content which means our content is



getting to people and we noticed that not only from the numbers but also from the number of people approaching us during and following the campaign, the number of people thanking us and number of requests for talks and collaborations. And it's leading people to visit our profiles and our website and learn more about us and our work.



Testimonies

A Testimony of Nazmiya's Kilani (Nakba survivor) 1926-2018, And a talk With her daughter in a public zoom event.

In recent years, Israeli Ministry of Defense officials have been scanning archive after archive, concealing evidence of the Nakba. Hundreds of documents have been hidden as part of a systematic effort to hide evidence from the Nakba from public eyes in order to undermine the credibility of research on the history of the refugee issue. Like the Palestinian refugees and their descendants, the Nakba will not disappear. Facing formal and informal mechanisms of erasure

and denial, the testimonies of the Nakba serve as an important tool of resistance to settlement colonialism aimed at destroying Palestinian history. For years Zochrot have been collecting oral histories from Palestinian refugees who witnessed and survived the Nakba of 1948. The testimonies give witness to Palestinian society, its culture and economics until 1948 and to the lives of refugees since then. We have been remembering for many years the testimonies of Nakba survivors, listening to them and bringing them to Israeli public, because giving the testimony and listening to it takes the Nakba out of the personal space and gives it a place in the public space.

The Testimony of Nazmiyya al-Kilani (1926– 2018) was screened for the first time in Zochrot’s public Zoom event on February 10th with her daughter joining us to an extraordinary and remarkable talk about her mother, her childhood and about being a second generation to the Nakba. The Event was in Hebrew with the participation of over 100 people and more people joining us via Facebook as the event was broadcasted live.

The Testimony of Nazmiyya and the talk with her daughter are both available here:

Click [here](#) for the Testimony by Nazmiyya al-Kilani (1926– 2018), version with English subtitles.

Click [here](#) for the Zoom event in Hebrew – the talk with Nazmiyya’s Daughter

As of January 2022, two more video testimonies are being edited and will be released during this year.

Courses and workshops

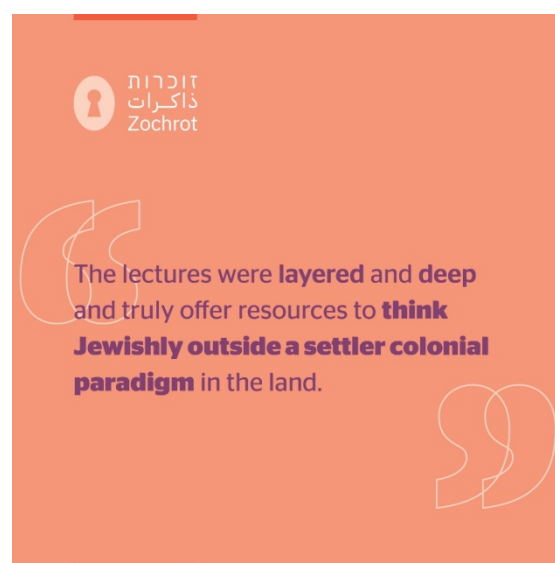
Palestinian Women, History and Memory

The third cohort of the “Palestinian Women, History and Memory” course consisted of five online sessions which took place between February 21 to March 21, 2021 with 60 participants.

The course was first held in 2016 based on the understanding that the struggle against colonialism must also be a feminist struggle. We assert that we cannot understand the full scale of the Nakba’s socio-economic and political history without reference to the key element of women’s lived experience. Conversely, we cannot understand gender relations and roles without reference to political developments within the broader colonialist context.

In recent years, a range of scholarly studies, films and artworks have examined the Nakba from the gender perspective, and the impact of the Zionist colonization of Palestine on the socioeconomic and political status of Palestinian women. The course makes this important work accessible to the Hebrew-speaking audience in Israel and exposes it to a variety of issues and questions, such as: Palestinian women’s movements from the British Mandate period to the present day and the impact of colonial reality on their development and vision; the impact that the attack on Palestinian urban life had on gender relations, and more.

To encourage and support activism, participants of this and another online course we invited to a workshop on net security that we organized.



“A Volcano of Our Own Making”: Anti-Colonial Voices of Jews in Palestine/Land of Israel

How can we imagine a Jewish existence in Palestine/Land of Israel that is independent of the colonial situation? Can we think of the “Land of Israel” other than as a settler-colonial state, one designed to exclude “Palestine”? How may the decolonization of Palestine untie the knot between the Land of Israel and the colonial situation?

During this online course, we reflected on those possibilities, identifying the moments when Jewish existence in the country began intertwining with the colonial situation and thinking of the political horizon arising from earlier forms of Jewish existence in that space. The course was moderated by Dr. Avi-ram Tzoreff. The course was held online via Zoom and consisted of 5 sessions. 54 people joined the course. Of those enrolled, only 36.2% had previously participated in a Zochrot activity and for 63.8% this was the first activity. The course was meant to be more than a historical course, but to shape participants

political thought and activism. This also seems to have been successful: “I thought the lectures were layered and deep and truly offer resources to think Jewishly outside a settler colonial paradigm in the land;” “I was never before exposed to the possibilities that were at stake in this land. I never thought of the Zionist position as one of many, only now through this course. The course also repeatedly illustrated the how Zionism functioned as a colonial project;” “This history of discussions and deliberations regarding the status of the Jews in Israel-Palestine was completely new to me and very relevant to the questions we are asking today.”

Some participants mentioned that the course will affect their political discourse and action: “We need to retell the history of this place. The contents of the course gave me tools for creating the new language that needs to be spoken;” “The course offered material that can be used for the purpose of opening a window to a different status of Jewish people in Israel-Palestine, without superiority. In this sense, the contents of the course can support the work of contemporary decolonization.”

Local “Learning and Acting” groups

Based on the understanding that decolonization processes require not only recognition, remembrance and commemoration but political action, these unique workshops’ purpose is to establish informed and active local communities. The participants of the workshops acquire knowledge about the ongoing Nakba, specifically in their living area, and about reflective, de-colonial activism and are then encouraged to independently organize activities and direct actions to promote acknowledgement and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the Nakba, and re-conceptualize the right of return as the key for a just solution and sustainable future.

The first “learning and acting” workshop took place in Tel Aviv-Jaffa and has already materialized into action planned for 2022 based on a research done by the group members. The process that the members of this group have gone through and their development as change agents was apparent throughout the year but especially during the events of May, when all of them showed deep solidarity and showed up to Palestinian rallies in Jaffa, participated in actions in the city and brought more people to these actions.

The second group met in Haifa from October to the end of the year with two facilitators from

Zochrot. The members of the group decided to keep meeting and to plan an action in the city.

“The workshop completely changed my perspective on the events that took place in the area. My doubts regarding the Zionist narrative grew (as did the shame).”

“A winning combination of information, written and visual materials, fundamental questions, multiple perspectives and a stubborn call for action.”

Training for change agents in the landscape (tour guides)

This course is a first of its kind collaboration between Zochrot and the School for Peace and is designed to train tour guides or others who teach in the landscape to breach the subject of the Nakba to their audience, point to remains of Palestinian communities and thus be change agents helping to crack the taboo on the Nakba and allowing more people to re-imagine the landscape as a space for return.

15 participants, Israelis and Palestinians are currently in this pilot program that started October 2021 and will run until June 2022. The training takes place in Neve Shalom and in different depopulated Palestinian sites across the country. It is co-facilitated by Umar alGhubari from Zochrot and Maytal Strul from SfP.

Research Group

Research group on the Nakba and Health (in cooperation with PHRI)

Despite of increasing interest and research on personal and collective impacts of state violence and structural racism, there is still no broad and accessible body of knowledge about the effects of the Palestinian Nakba – as a collective trauma and as an ongoing mechanism of repression – on the physical, mental and public health of the Palestinian people.

It is against this backdrop that Zochrot, together with Physicians for Human Rights – Israel, published in August 2021 a call for applications inviting researchers, social activists, artists and writers to research the effects of the Nakba on the health of Palestinians in different spaces.

We received 40 applications and after a round of interviews we selected a group of 31 participants, Palestinians and Jewish-Israelis from a wide variety of backgrounds and occupations (PHRI team members, public and mental health scholars, psychologists, physicians, poets, play writers,

editors, activists and more). Amongst the participants are some of the most prominent researchers in the relevant fields

The goal of the research group is to produce a body of profound, accessible knowledge about the Nakba's impact on Palestinians' physical, mental and public health through a variety of disciplines (health sciences, social sciences arts and humanities). The group will aim to combine review and analysis of existing knowledge with the presentation of new research findings and the formulation of operative recommendations for policy change. The final product is meant to be both accessible to the public audience as well as effective as advocacy paper calling policymakers to acknowledge the Nakba and to address it as a public health issue.

Workshops and Lectures

Culture of solidarity – Culture of solidarity is a food charity initiated during the covid-19 pandemic, which has since grown into a broad movement leading community action and independent political education. In November we were invited by CoS to give a two-hour introductory talk about the Palestinian Nakba in an open event marking 74 years from the UN Partition Plan (Resolution 181). 20 people participated in the event. A second talk at CoS is scheduled for December 20th on the linkage between the Nakba and Ashkenazy-Mizrachi relations.

Hechalutz – Hechalutz is a pre-army voluntary civil service program under the Zionist educational center: HaMidrasha at Oranim. In November we were invited to give a workshop about the Palestinian Nakba to 30 participants of the program – all 18-19 years old, living and volunteering in kibbutzim near the Gaza strip. For the event, we combined in our standard introductory workshop a screening of a testimony of an Israeli soldier about war crimes committed in 1948 in the area where the participants will spend their year.

Following the positive feedback, the organizers have invited us to give similar workshops in the next cohorts of the program.

Midreshet Dror (“Freedom School”) – Midreshet Dror is a learning program for Israelis aged 20-25 organized by Combatants for Peace, Breaking the Silence and Achvat Amim. It is a six-month educational program that teaches youth about the political realities of the region and empowers them to be activists and educators. After completing their training, they start a four-month internship

in a human rights or education organization of their choice.

In March and August Zochrot met 15 participants of this program for a workshop on the Nakba. These were the second and third times this cooperation took place.

Anthroposophy School – In June we were invited to give a talk about the Right of Return of the Palestinian refugees in front of 70 students at the Anthroposophy high school in Kibbutz Harduf. The participants were very attentive and engaged.

Feedback from one of the students: *“Thank you very much for the meeting. We all talked about it a lot, both those who identified and those who did not – everyone really appreciated the way you spoke. Personally, it opened me to a new way of thinking. I’m sure you changed something even in the one who disagreed the most... Thank you!”*

2021 “Shministiyot” Letter – In January 2021 a group of over 60 high school seniors announced that they refuse to serve in the Israeli Army because of its actions against the Palestinian people and its contribution to social, economic and gender inequalities. Following a lecture by Zochrot (September 2020) and follow up conversations these young conscientious objectors referred in their [letter of refusal](#) directly to the events of 1948 and the ongoing Nakba. This is the first time an Israeli letter of refusal mentions the Nakba and specifically addresses the Right of Return as imperative for a just future. The letter was signed by over 100 youngsters.

The conscientious objectors clarify in the letter that “the actions of the Israeli Army in 2020 are nothing but a continuation and maintenance of the massacre, deportation of families, and dispossession of land by which the State of Israel was established.” They point the finger at the Israeli education system for erasing historical truths, they reject the framing of the Occupation as if it had begun in 1967, and they emphasize that there is no peace without justice and no justice without “ending the occupation, the lifting of the siege on Gaza and recognizing the right of return of the Palestinian refugees.” This is a significant political outcome of Zochrot’s lectures.

Other groups we engaged with, gave talks, workshops and tours to included: Parents circle, combatants for peace, The school for peace at Nave Shalom, Parents community of “Hand in Hand” bilingual schools network, Arava institute, Ajeek, al-Haq internship program, faculty of

social work, Tel Aviv university, vacation for war & more.

Activist initiatives and public engagement

Part of our strategy to create ripple effect in Israeli society is supporting activists who initiate their own actions or come to us with ideas related to the work of Zochrot.

Yafa Streets – During 2021 we supported a community action in Jaffa to give the streets back their old Palestinian names from before the Nakba. With ours and others’ help, three residents of Jaffa researched the old names, designed signs and held several community engagement meetings to encourage people to put up signs in the streets where they live.

Mapping the Nakba – a participant in one of our tours who is a hiking enthusiast gave a workshop to eight other activists on how to update hiking apps with information from Zochrot’s own app, the iNakba. The group is gradually adding information on destroyed Palestinian localities to app used by hikers in Israel, thus bringing this information to groups who wouldn’t necessarily use the iNakba.

Jaffa residency rights – Several Zochrot members organized solidarity rallies in Jaffa following municipal and right wing groups moves to squeeze the remaining Palestinian population out of their historical city in a form of economic displacement.

JNF – On the last day of 2021 a short video came out that explains the role of the Jewish National Fund in the Nakba and prevention of return. The video was produced by independent activists based on information collected by us. We were happy to have helped this important educational tool come to life.

In the course of the year we got almost 100 requests for information from different individuals, from high school students to PhD researchers, from visual artists to film makers to individuals looking for information about their own families. Those requests show a growing interest in Israeli society in learning about the Nakba and growing willingness to face unsettling truths.

Zochrot in the Media

Our work has been featured in more than 50 articles and news items in 2021 including by news organizations such as The Guardian and al-Jazeera as well as many others.

Here are some of the articles featuring us:

[The fight for Lifta: the last Palestinian village standing in Israel](#)

[If we must talk about Rabin let us talk about the Right to Return](#)

[The boy who unified the Palestinian land in his death](#)

[‘we’re taking responsibility’ – 60 teens announce refusal to serve in the Israeli army](#)

Podcast about Lifta

“This is my memory. This is my history. This is my life,” 81-year-old Yacoub Odeh tells us about his childhood and experience of expulsion from the Jerusalem village of Lifta in 1948.

[On episode 41](#), the [The Electronic Intifada](#) el Podcast speaks to Yacob Odeh about Lifta and his community’s 73-year struggle to return to their homes and our own [Umar Al-Ghubari](#) .

Al-Ghubari and Odeh both lead political tours inside Lifta, where

Odeh and other refugees from Lifta are forbidden to return to live under Israel’s racist laws.

Publications

Return to Lifta

A [short video](#) produced by Zochrot about Lifta

[Why does the JNF still exist?](#) – a review of the history of the JNF by Dr. Yaara Benger Alaluf, Zochrot’s education director

[We need to talk about Lydd](#) – a review of the Nakba and its ongoing effect on the central city of Lydd – Lod (in Hebrew) by Dr. Benger Alaluf

When Utopia becomes topia – mapping the future in Israel- Palestine: an article by Zochrot’s program director Umar al-Ghubari & Debby Farber, former director of visual research, was published in a new book: [Israel – Palestine, lands and peoples](#), at Brown University

Incidents, threats and impediments on our work

Incident during a tour in Lifta

Upon our arrival at the village spring, we were received with racist and homophobic slurs by about ten men and a woman, and when we refused to leave the place and continued with the tour as planned, the verbal violence became physical. One of the assailants declared that he trains his dog “to bite Arabs”. Another one claimed that we were disturbing him at “his own home” where he has been living for 15 years. The tour proceeded as planned among the remains of the village, but upon our return to the parking lot, we found that several vehicles of the tour participants had been vandalized.

Violence against people who are well within their rights to use public space, and who take part in nonviolent activity on behalf of a legally registered NGO should concern anyone who cares about individual liberties and freedom of expression. Attacks on civil society and human rights organizations in Israel are not new. They are the product not only of ideological conflicts and flawed understanding of democracy, but above all of living in deep denial and constant collective and individual defensiveness. This social disease of denial laced with fear is highly familiar to us, and we at Zochrot strive to heal it.

The attack on the tour participants precisely on the lands of the depopulated Palestinian village of Lifta is a sobering reminder of the necessity of our work. The ability of so many who have been raised in the Zionist education system to spend their leisure time in a water spring that used to be a source of life for thousands of people without stopping for a moment to think about the place they are in is tragic. The instinctive opposition to those who seek to invoke the memory of those who lived here, to talk about the price we all pay for the crimes committed here, and mainly about ways to redress this reality indicates the fragility of the Zionist vision, and the importance of bringing the Nakba and the return of Palestinian refugees to the forefront of the public agenda

Attempts to shut down Zochrot events:

Our event on Israeli Independence Day was held at the al-Saraya theatre in Jaffa. Council members of the Tel Aviv – Jaffa municipality pressured the theatre not to host us and called on the mayor to withhold funding to the institution, but were denied and the management of al-Saraya stood their ground. We appreciate their commitment to freedom of speech, and to the truth.

Another attempt of cancellation happened in Haifa this October where again council members called on the mayor to forbid the gathering of our study group (see above) in a building the city owns and uses for social services and educational activities. This time the mayor indeed banned the activity after intense campaign in local media in Haifa by right wing groups. The study group went on as planned in another, privately owned location. Those incidents go to show the shrinking space in Israeli society for freedom of speech and activism, as well as the authorities’ fear of real discussion of the Nakba.

Zochrot Team & Board of Directors

Team

Rachel Beit Arie, *Zochrot Director*

Dr.Yaara Benger Alaluf, *Political Education Coordinator*

Umar al-Ghubari, *Landscape & Space Coordinator*

Najwan Berekdar, *Media & Advocacy Coordinator*

Liat Rosenberg, *Resource Development Coordinator*

Board of Directors

Moran Barir (Chairwoman)

Aya Zinatey

Niva Grunzweig

Dr. Munir Nuseibah

Maysoon Badawi

Elia Michaeli

We thank Dr.Tom Pessah for his outstanding work and contribution as the former chairman of our board and for being part of our board for the last six years. We welcome Elia Michaeli as the newest member of our board.

| We thank all of our volunteers, Supporters, partners and friends. Thanks to your courageous partnership and solidarity, we have managed to make an impact. We are committed to continue challenging the status quo in Israeli society with a clear voice for truth and accountability. By acknowledging the crimes of the past and present, and taking responsibility for our future, Zochrot will continue elevating the need for justice and return. We invite you to join the growing community of Zochrot supporters and invest in a journey towards a better future |

Zochrot 2021