

Statement from Palestinian Members of the National Leadership of Standing Together

As Palestinian citizens of Israel, our daily existence is marked by systemic discrimination, persecution, neglect, and violence. We live in a state of constant tension, denied recognition of our Palestinian history, identity, and culture. Since the Hamas attack on October 7th, we have been facing a deeply traumatized Israeli society and a political leadership that capitalized on these atrocities to further incite against us. Our situation has become even more untenable, as we face collective trauma and the fear of a second Nakba, as well as deep grief and oppression within our society.

Our ability to speak, act, or effect change under a fascist government is already severely limited and seems to be diminishing further. The call to boycott Standing Together, an organization we are proud to co-lead with numerous elected Jewish and Palestinian partners, was infuriating. Efforts to silence and isolate Standing Together do not serve the Palestinian cause, they serve the interests of Israel's political establishment, which is also attempting to silence us.

Standing Together is the only organization that has provided us and tens of thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel a safe political refuge during these challenging times, a place to demand a ceasefire, grieve safely, and organize for a future where we are free and equal in our homeland.

Standing Together also offers tens of thousands of Jewish Israelis an alternative vision. In a political reality where many support our government's attacks on civilians in Gaza, Standing Together has been a safe political haven for Jewish Israelis to resist dominant narratives and fight against the dehumanization and subjugation of Palestinians, out of allyship, solidarity, and self-interest.

The fight for Palestinian liberation is multi-faceted. As a movement operating within Israel, we took upon ourselves a specific role: to shift Israeli public opinion away from supporting policy that maintains and deepens the subjugation of Palestinians. Our strategy is not to morally lecture or attempt to shock Jewish Israelis with the ugly truth of our reality, to "force them into liberating Palestinians." This, historically, here and around the world, does not work on its own. Our role is to empower and develop joint leadership, shift public opinion, and create a shared, embodied struggle for liberation between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis.

We believe that all politics, whether we like it or not, begins from a place of self-interest. We believe that it is politically effective to argue that oppression, racism, and bigotry harms the people of the oppressor as well as the oppressed. The harm is by no means equal, though the role of self-interest in political organizing must not be underplayed. We work under the basic assumption that millions of Palestinians and millions of Jews live in this land today, and no one is going anywhere. Ending Israeli control over Palestinians and forging a society in which everyone is free and equal between the river and the sea is in the interest of both Palestinians and Jewish Israelis.

Palestinians have always paid the highest price for decades of Israel's systemic oppression, in the form of military occupation, siege, incarceration, and apartheid, and the Israeli public is already starting to understand that they are paying a price too. Since October 7th, it is more clear than ever that the security, freedom, and ultimate fate of Israelis and Palestinians will forever be linked and we must forge a politics of multiethnic solidarity grounded in our common humanity, pain, and purpose. Our role at Standing Together is to organize our society toward understanding this reality, toward recognizing that the majority of people who live in this land - not only Palestinians, but also most Jewish Israelis - are not benefiting from this reality, and need to rebuild the very foundations of our society for a different, sustainable and just future.

We actively campaign against Israel's oppressive regime and have made specific efforts to increase the visibility of the atrocities committed by Israel in Gaza, both to Israeli and international audiences, despite the risks involved in doing so within Israel. Standing Together was among the first organizations inside Israel to actively call for a ceasefire and is currently leading the movement to revive conversations about ending the occupation and striving for peace.

Our short-term goal is to reach a ceasefire agreement to save the lives of our people in Gaza and the West Bank and to secure a hostage deal so that people can return to their families alive and safe. Our long-term goal is to create a new majority in Israeli society, composed of both Palestinian and Jewish citizens, who are united in the fight to end the occupation and advance equality and justice, and ultimately, liberation — a sustainable and just peace.

We are part of the Palestinian people and we take on the collective demands for freedom and historic justice from all of our people - including the Palestinian diaspora and refugees. We welcome criticism and dialogue from other Palestinian groups with different realities, missions, organizing programs, audiences, and strategies.

It is disheartening to be silenced by other pro-Palestinian groups at a time when we are being silenced and persecuted by the Israeli government and Israeli institutions for fighting for the lives of our people, but it will not stop us from continuing to organize. We are proud to organize Palestinians and Jews together, we stand by our movement, our strategy, and our theory of change, and we will continue to organize until we are all equal and free.

In solidarity,

Palestinian National Leadership Members
Standing Together