

THE PALESTINIAN DIASPORA

June 2025

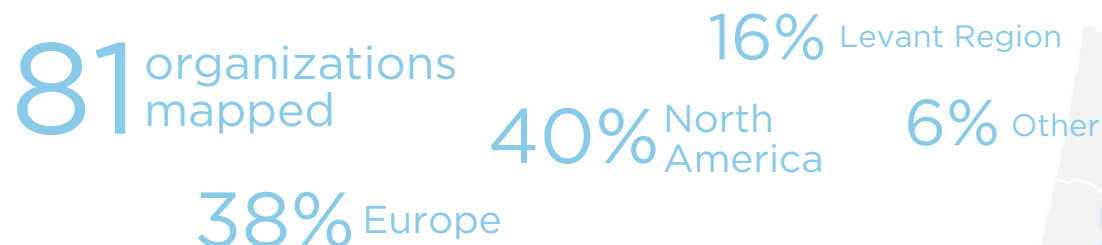
The Palestinian diaspora is one of the world's oldest. As of June 2024, nearly 6 million Palestinian refugees were registered with UNRWA. The global Palestinian refugee and diaspora community is widespread, from Mexico with about 20,000 to Guatemala with over 200,000 and over 250,000 in the USA.

Two key events contributed to the formation of the Palestinian diaspora. The first was the Nakba - the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The second was the forced displacement linked to the 1967 Six-Day War. Palestinians have been either living in or at risk of forced displacement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for over 70 years.

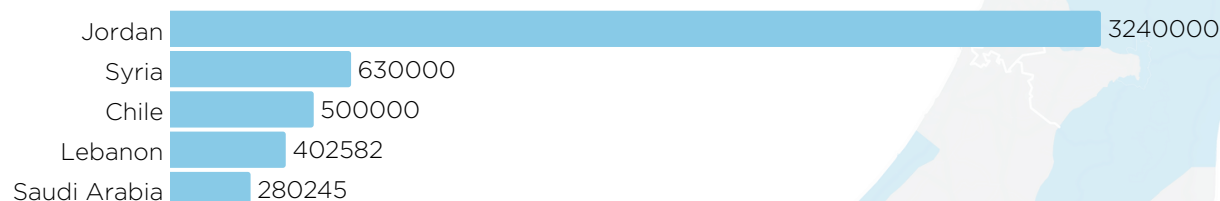
Today, the Palestinian diaspora is marked by strong interpersonal and community ties, with active cultural exchange often rooted in family connections. Diaspora members play a vital role in supporting local actors and communities by providing financial and logistical assistance, advocating for humanitarian needs, raising awareness, and monitoring human rights violations affecting Palestinians.

To better understand the work of these communities, DEMAC undertook a mapping exercise of Palestinian diaspora organizations (PDOs). Through online research and an informal snowball survey, DEMAC aimed to capture the diversity of these actors and their vital roles in humanitarian assistance.

DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS MAPPED



Top 5 host countries for the Palestinian diaspora (approximate numbers):



Since October 7, 2023, diaspora-led organizations have increasingly focused on humanitarian relief and awareness-raising efforts related to the ongoing conflict. They have drawn on community networks to support the most vulnerable households, using both cash assistance or other forms of aid:

AREAS OF INTERVENTION



DIASPORAS' ROLE IN THE GAZA RESPONSE

OCTOBER 2023 - NOVEMBER 2024

STRENGTHS OF DIASPORA RESPONSE

- Palestinian diaspora organizations have strong connections with their families and community members, allowing them to respond directly to household and community needs.
- Responsive to changes, as communities trust diaspora, keeping them informed and able to quickly adapt.
- Supports sustainability, since diaspora is more likely to invest in long-term solutions, such as solar panels, when anticipating recurring challenges.
- Lays a foundation for recovery and reconstruction.

CHALLENGES OF DIASPORA RESPONSE

- The Israeli government has established a complex logistical process that prevents Palestinian diaspora organizations from officially registering and conducting direct activities in Gaza.
- Financial regulations imposed by both the Israeli government and the international banking system have hindered money transfer to Gaza.
- Donor compliance regulations among Western governments have limited the degree to which Palestinian diaspora organizations can access funding to scale up their support in Gaza.

Roles of both large and small diaspora organizations

Both large and small PDOs provide support to local NGOs in Gaza. These partnerships are based on trust and personal connections. The high level of connection enables effective partnerships – but the need to work through personal connections can limit possibilities to scale up.

LARGE DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS:

- They historically provided specific technical support such as medical aid and education.
- Since October 2023, they have pivoted toward humanitarian assistance and have expanded to sectors including but not limited to protection, psychosocial support, water and shelter.
- They often support smaller diaspora organizations to reach communities through organizational and bureaucratic hurdles.

Examples: Palestinian Children's Fund; United Palestinian Appeal; Medical Aid for Palestine; Taawon; Anera

SMALL DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS:

- They have in-depth knowledge of community and household level needs.
- They often conduct fundraising activities, including fundraising dinners, community events, and online fundraising campaigns.
- They can target their responses to the specific needs of individual households and communities.

Examples: Gaza Collective; Palestinian Aid Society; Students for Justice in Palestine; Australia Palestine Advocacy Network

DIASPORA ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN GAZA

70%

of the mapped Palestinian diaspora organizations, both small and large, engage in advocacy efforts for humanitarian response.

We are Not Numbers - WANN (UK)

The mission of WANN is to create a new generation of Palestinian writers and thinkers who can bring together a profound change to the Palestinian cause to get their voices heard. WANN provides the world with direct access to the Palestinian narrative without any restrictions and without foreign intermediaries speaking on behalf of the Palestinians. WANN also collaborates with other organisations including Jewish groups supporting the end of hostilities in Gaza to conduct more inclusive and impactful advocacy campaigns.

Palestina Komiteen i Norge (Norway)

The Palestine Committee in Norway, established in 1969, is an independent national organization that seeks to raise awareness about the situation in Palestine. It collaborates with international NGOs to carry out advocacy and public information activities related to developments in Gaza and the broader region.

Dansk Palæstinensisk Venskabsforening - DPV (Denmark)

Since 1998, DPV has been a nationwide member organization with regional associations and local groups. It engages in public meetings and other democratic activities to raise awareness and encourage dialogue on the situation of Palestinians, with the aim of promoting their right to self-determination. DPV also supports Palestinian communities in contributing to public discourse through advocacy initiatives.

Palestine International Institute - PII (Lebanon)

PII is the first and only Palestinian NGO to specialize in gathering academic and scientific information about communities of Palestinian origin. The Institute was founded in 2002, in response to a severe lack of information about Arab and Palestinian communities around the world. It helps to support regular and effective connections among diaspora communities and between diaspora and local organisations in Palestine.

PALESTINIAN DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORTS IN GAZA

30%

of the mapped Palestinian diaspora organizations, both small and large, engage in humanitarian relief efforts.

The Gaza Collective (Canada)

Gaza Collective is a grassroots initiative, founded by Palestinians in- and outside of Gaza, that originated from the urgent need to support women and families in Gaza. Initially the focus was on supporting artisans, empowering women and youth, and fostering sustainable employment opportunities through crafts like Tatreez (embroidery), woodwork, and ceramics. As a response to the current conflict, they scaled up employment efforts, focusing on embroidery, re-establishing a clothing factory and setting up home bakeries. These programs aim to provide income for vulnerable households using their traditional skills and resources.

United Palestinian Appeal - UPA (USA)

With over 45 years of presence in Gaza, UPA is a Palestinian-led organization based in the USA. After the attack on October 7, 2023, UPA mobilized emergency responses within 72 hours. Their key initiatives include delivering critical medical supplies through its "Fortifying the Palestinian Medical Sector" project, operating mobile medical teams, and distributing over 370,000 hot meals and 16 million liters of water. UPA also provides psychosocial support through its "Healing through Feeling" program and "Young Hakawati" storytelling project for children, striving to uphold dignity and resilience amidst the crisis.

Taawon (France)

Established in Geneva in 1983 by Palestinian and Arab business leaders, Taawon is one of the largest organizations supporting Palestinians in Palestine and refugee camps in Lebanon. With nearly \$900 million invested in development and humanitarian relief, it annually impacts over one million lives, focusing on education, cultural identity, and social services. Through the 2023 Gaza Emergency Relief Campaign, Taawon raised \$11.7 million, delivering food, water, healthcare, shelter, and mental health support through partnerships with 20 local organizations in innovation, sustainability, and gender equity.

Tripoli for Gaza (Libya)

Tripoli for Gaza is a small coalition of volunteers that focuses on working to provide practical support for affected households. Palestinian, Lebanese and Libyan volunteers work together to sell books and other items. The collected revenue is sent to affected households in Gaza.

Palestine Australia Relief and Action - PARA (Australia)

PARA has historically focused on supporting Palestinians to integrate into Australia. Since October 2023, they started engaging in efforts to support Palestinians in Gaza through fundraising, both online and through community events. PARA has also supported emergency support and evacuation out of Gaza to Australia.