



PARENTS CIRCLE FAMILIES FORUM

Bereaved Israelis and Palestinians for Peace

2024 | **ANNUAL
REPORT**

Dear Friends,

This year, our journey at the Parents Circle - Families Forum (PCFF) has been marked by unimaginable loss, profound grief, and incredible resilience. The tragic events of October 7, 2023, and their aftermath continue to shake the very foundation of our communities, leaving heartbreak, anger, fear and more bereavement in their wake. The humanitarian toll on Gaza where entire families have been shattered continues to deepen. Yet, in the face of this devastation, we find renewed strength in our shared humanity. Together, we are proving that even in the darkest moments, the seeds of reconciliation can take root.

The path forward has been neither simple nor linear. Ongoing violence, heightened polarization, deep trauma and restrictions on movement created unprecedented challenges. But the courage and determination of bereaved families, joint staff, and board, who chose connection over division, inspired us to adapt and persevere. Whether it was gathering in virtual Dialogue Meetings, bringing teenagers together at our Summer Camp in Cyprus, or amplifying our message through storytelling and education, we saw time and again the power of compassion to prevail against even the greatest odds.

We take pride this year in the 75 new members — families newly bereaved by the conflict. Their voices bring urgency and authenticity to our mission, reminding us that peace is not an abstract goal but a deeply personal and immediate need. We are also proud of our newest initiative in the United States, Listening from the Heart, which generates meaningful conversation about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and demonstrates the universal resonance of our work, transcending borders to foster empathy in communities worldwide.

As we reflect on 2024, we do so with heavy hearts but also with profound hope. The Parents Circle exists as a living testament to what is possible when we choose dialogue over division, and humanity over hate. We are deeply grateful for your unwavering support, which allows us to carry this mission forward, transforming grief into action and pain into purpose.

With hope and gratitude,



Nadine Quomsieh

Nadine Quomsieh
Palestinian Co-Director,
PCFF



Ayelet Harel

Ayelet Harel
Israeli Co-Director,
PCFF



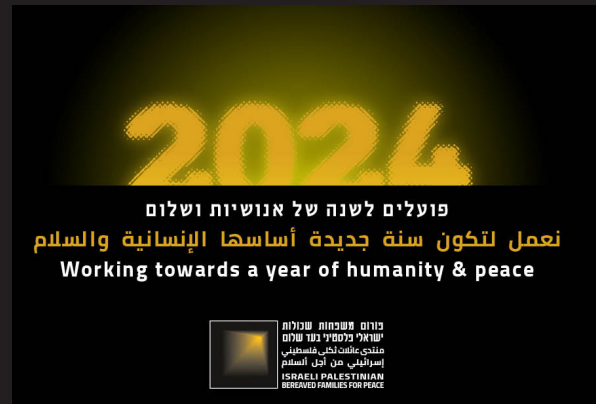
Shiri Ourian

Shiri Ourian
Executive Director,
American Friends of the PCFF

HOLDING ONTO HUMANITY: HOPE IN THE AFTERMATH OF OCTOBER 7TH

The tragic events of October 7, 2023, and the devastating war on Gaza have left both Israeli and Palestinian societies grappling with profound loss and trauma. For the Parents Circle - Families Forum (PCFF), these moments of collective heartbreak underscored the urgency of our mission. Despite unimaginable obstacles and the weight of grief, we found ways to adapt, to persist, and to reaffirm that reconciliation is not just a possibility—it is an essential path forward.

This report is a testament to the resilience of our members, the transformative power of our programs, and the hope that continues to guide us. It reflects the humanity and courage of bereaved families who, even in the darkest moments, against all odds, choose dialogue over division and compassion over hatred.



The Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF), founded in 1995, is a joint Israeli- Palestinian organization of over 800 bereaved families, all of whom have lost a family member to the ongoing conflict. We call to prevent further bereavement, destruction, violence, displacement, terror and war; to promote dialogue, reconciliation, and peace. As part of our commitment to a fully and equally shared effort, PCFF is jointly operated by Palestinian and Israeli staff.

American Friends of the Parents Circle - Families Forum (AF-PCFF) shares the human side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the American public in order to foster a peace and reconciliation process. The AF-PCFF is committed to supporting the PCFF through raising public awareness, constituency building and fundraising in the U.S.

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Michal Halev, bereaved Israeli mother

“They showed me a picture of a missile with the inscription: ‘In memory of Laor Abramov,’ and I realized what that meant. It means that this thing, with the name of my Laori on it, who only wanted to do good in the world during his too-short life, is going to strike, kill, destroy, and perhaps even murder the child of another mother. I couldn’t bear the thought of this being done to another mother and child.”

”

A YEAR OF RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION

BEREAVED MEMBERS AT THE CORE OF OUR MISSION

Uni-national and Binational Gatherings: In the immediate aftermath of October 7, uni-national meetings offered bereaved members spaces to process their grief and share messages of solidarity across divides. After two months, facilitated binational Zoom meetings resumed, enabling members to reconnect and reaffirm their commitment to peace despite immense personal pain.

Narratives During the War: Four groups of bereaved members participated in workshops that included learning about the other side's narratives during the war, the possibility of reconciliation and outreach training, as well as follow-up sessions to support the alumni of the workshops in their outreach to community leaders.



Women's Group Activities: 100 Palestinian and Israeli women found strength in each other and in moments of creative healing. One especially poignant gathering involved Israeli women creating art from stones collected by a bereaved member's mother who was killed in the violence—a heartfelt symbol of resilience and hope. In September, women from both sides met for a binational session led by Northern Irish peace activist Anne Carr, finding inspiration in shared experiences.

Welcoming New Members: PCFF welcomed 75 new bereaved members this year, individuals and families who have endured unimaginable losses. Through personal outreach, small-group gatherings, and storytelling support, these members have become vital voices in our growing community, each bringing renewed urgency to our shared mission. New members and veteran members have been connected and integrated to learn from and support each other.



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Mor Yinon, bereaved Israeli daughter

“Reconciliation begins with recognition that both sides are destined to live in this geographic space. None of us is going anywhere, so this mutual recognition is fundamental. The solution must be based on mutual agreement and dialogue. It needs to be developed together, and I truly believe that when we decide and have the will on both sides, we will find the solution.”

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DIALOGUE DURING DEVASTATION

The war necessitated unprecedented innovation, compelling us to rethink how we sustain the vital connections that underpin reconciliation.

DIALOGUE MEETINGS

Reaching Youth and Communities: Over 50 Dialogue Meetings, both in-person and virtual, engaged thousands of Israeli and Palestinian youth and adults. From January onward, due to the war and the closure in the West Bank, in-person Dialogue Meetings were led by veteran and newly bereaved Israeli members bridged gaps, fostering powerful and humanizing conversations.

We also held more than 100 Dialogue Meetings for U.S. audiences including universities and faith-based audiences. Newly bereaved members shared their stories, compelling participants to confront the human toll of the conflict and consider new perspectives.

Expelled from Israeli Schools: In response to the Ministry of Education's expulsion of our program from Israeli schools, we turned to the courts to appeal this decision and at the same time we conducted Dialogue Meetings for other audiences.

SUMMER CAMP IN CYPRUS

Amid ongoing violence, we did not give up on our youth and our annual summer camp. We pivoted and took 39 Israeli and Palestinian teenagers to Cyprus for a week of dialogue, cultural exchange, and healing. Removed from the immediate pressures of the conflict, they formed bonds through team-building exercises, cooking workshops, and deep, meaningful conversations. The camp became a sanctuary of connection and a testament to the enduring power of shared humanity.



ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

This year's Memorial Day Ceremony, streamed to tens of thousands globally, offered a deeply moving reminder of shared grief and hope. Despite logistical hurdles, the Ceremony featured testimonials, heartfelt candle-lighting, and an unwavering call for peace. It included many newly bereaved members, and honored the children of both sides.

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Hala Al-Bukhari, lost 33 family members in Gaza

“In every word I write, I find it difficult to express because our hearts bleed with sorrow on loved ones we have lost and continue to lose today. Our sorrow is great and we yearn for peace; my message to the world is that we all want to live together equally in Peace and provide a bright future for our children.”

”

YOUNG AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE

Despite significant challenges and traumatized societies on both sides, PCFF was able to recruit a new cohort of Israelis and Palestinians between the ages of 19-29 in the fourth quarter of 2024. This cohort will participate in a series of workshops and leadership seminars in partnership with NYU in 2025.



SOLIDARITY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Care Packages for 250 Families: Early in the war, as financial hardships intensified for many Palestinians, PCFF's Israeli members partnered with Rabbis for Human Rights to provide care packages. Distributed by Palestinian team members to 250 member families, these packages offered vital support and a message of compassion.



Ramadan Food Support for 250 Families: We provided food packages for Ramadan. Israeli members and alumni contributed to this effort, ensuring 250 Palestinian families received essential supplies to prepare their evening meals during the holy month.

Back-to-School Campaign: Ahead of the 2024 school year, we organized a campaign, in coordination with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, to supply 1,200 Palestinian children with new school bags and supplies. Staff and members purchased and distributed the items, sharing in the children's smiles and affirming hope for the future.

Olive Harvest Gathering: 100+ Israeli and Palestinian members and alumni united in the village of Battir, Beit Jala, and the Jordan Valley. Together, they harvested olives and shared tea and lunch, creating a moment of connection and shared purpose.

Visiting the Gaza Envelope: Bereaved Israeli members and alumni visited an exhibition called "Through their Eyes" about the story of Kibbutz Kfar Aza, devastated on Oct. 7. The tour was facilitated by one of our newly bereaved members from the kibbutz.



EXPANDING OUR VOICE

Amid the challenges, PCFF amplified its message locally and globally, ensuring that stories of resilience and reconciliation reached ever-wider audiences.

MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Audiovisual Testimonials: Stories of bereaved members were shared widely on all social media platforms, creating ripples of understanding and empathy across platforms including We Must Save the Children on International Children's Day, Our Women Speak on International Women's Day.

Creative Outreach: Initiatives like Poetry in Times of War and animated videos for Listening from the Heart as well as illustrated narratives of our newly bereaved members shared powerfully inspiring stories of loss and hope.



Podcast Series: Launched this year, the "Holding on to Humanity" podcast and the "Forum" podcast series brought listeners into the intimate journeys of Palestinian and Israeli members, offering a window into the transformative power of reconciliation.

IT'S TIME COALITION

PCFF is one of the leading organizations in a new coalition of over 40 Israeli peace NGOs which held its first mass event in Tel-Aviv with over 5,000 people supporting the end of the war and calling for peace. PCFF also participated in the Coalition's "Peace Journey" from the north to the south of Israel.



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Khouloud Housiya
bereaved, Palestinian father

"On New Years Eve, my son Muhammad was 23 years and 7 days old. People usually exchange flowers on New Year, but I received no flowers. Rather, the military returned my blood soaked son to me and his only guilt was that he was a Palestinian. Our message is that we want an environment of freedom and peace and security and to stop the oppression and segregation so that we can raise our voices as women to have a better life for the coming generations of Israelis and Palestinians."

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Liat Atzili,
former hostage and bereaved Israeli wife.

"I always had faith that this conflict will end, and that any conflict could be solved, even ours. This war made me realize that we do not have time to continue fighting, and we don't have the right to impose further suffering on future generations. Today, more than ever, I am ready to do all I can to enable our children to live in peace and security."

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LISTENING FROM THE HEART

American Friends of the Parents Circle developed a new peace education program in collaboration with Georgetown University and endorsed by the American Federation of Teachers. This program introduced PCFF's dialogue model to American communities, featuring compelling personal narratives and a Facilitator's Guide with activities, discussion questions, and further resources.

This came in response to a year of heightened polarization, tension, and even violence among communities in the U.S. since October 7, 2023. Listening from the Heart has inspired meaningful conversations among community members, especially across college campuses, about empathy, understanding, and connection across deep divides including, but not limited to: New York University, Columbia University, Brandeis University, St. Mary's College of Maryland, Georgetown University, Barnard University, the town of Hastings-on-Hudson, the town of Maplewood, NJ and more.

NOTABLE SCHOOLS



— All of them —
HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE
 to the **ONGOING VIOLENCE** in the region



LISTENING FROM THE HEART WEBSITE

“

**Liora Eilon,
bereaved Israeli mother**

“My name is Liora and I am from Kfar Aza. Before October 7th, I believed in the goodness of humanity and I refuse to stop now; I will continue to believe in peace and reconciliation despite the tragedy that befell by family”

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“

Waji Tomazi, bereaved Palestinian brother

“Revenge was not the path I chose after my brother was killed because I knew that if I sought revenge on those who killed my brother or on any other Israeli, it would not bring my brother back. Instead, I would enter a cycle of blood and mutual revenge. Jubran Khalil Jubran says, ‘If you seek revenge, dig two graves, one for yourself and one for your enemy.’ The only way to stop the killing is to end the occupation and work together as friends in the PCFF to prevent killings on both sides.”

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RECOGNITION, CHALLENGES, AND TRANSITIONS

Amid the challenges, PCFF amplified its message locally and globally, ensuring that stories of resilience and reconciliation reached ever-wider audiences.

RECOGNIZING RESILIENCE

This year, PCFF received several prestigious awards, including the Pax Christi International Peace Award, the Danish PL Foundation Freedom Award and the Shenhav-Shaharbani Ivory Prize, awarded by the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University. These honors reflect the global significance of our mission and the courage of our members.

ANOTHER FRONT: ISRAEL'S MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

In late 2023, the Israeli Ministry of Education (MoE) moved to ban us from public schools. We appealed and took it to court. With the legal guidance and advocacy of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), Israel's District Court ruled in our favor. By that point it was too late in the school year to schedule many Dialogue Meetings (DMs). Some schools however, scheduled DMs immediately for the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year in September.



However, in September 2024, the MoE removed our DMs from its platform again, making it impossible for schools to reserve the program. ACRI continues providing legal guidance as we take the case to court again, and advising we refrain from scheduling DMs even with willing schools outside of school hours and premises.

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

We said farewell to Yuval Rahamim, the Israeli co-Director, who led the way for 4.5 years through a pandemic, war, and growth of the organization. In late 2024, Ayelet Harel was appointed as the new Israeli Co-Director. She is a bereaved member of the Parents Circle and has been involved in the organization for more than a decade. Ayelet along with the integration of newly bereaved members into several other leadership roles, has brought fresh perspectives and renewed energy to PCFF's mission. A new joint Israeli and Palestinian board was elected with many newly bereaved members included in leadership positions.



LOOKING AHEAD: 2025 AND BEYOND

As we move into 2025, we carry with us the lessons of this difficult year. Grief and division cannot silence the voices of those who believe in peace. Together, we will refine our educational tools and develop new ones, as we:

Expand programs for newly bereaved families, offering learning about the other side's narrative and training.

Engage youth through Summer Camps, Young Ambassador Program, Dialogue Meetings, and storytelling initiatives.

Strengthen our team's resilience, ensuring they remain equipped to sustain this vital work.

Amplify our message through new podcasts, videos, and media campaigns and partnerships with other organizations.

In the face of loss, PCFF remains a beacon of hope. Together, we transform pain into purpose and grief into action, proving that reconciliation is not just possible—it is necessary.

2024 YEAR IN NUMBERS

29 INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

Reached audiences all over the world

150 DIALOGUE MEETINGS

Reached 1,800+ Israeli and Palestinian youth & adults, and 3,000+ global audiences.

12 AUDIOVISUAL TESTIMONIALS

Shared in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

500 CARE PACKAGES

Delivered to Palestinian families during the war.

35 U.S. UNIVERSITIES

Engaged with PCFF and Listening from the Heart

1200 SCHOOL BAGS & SUPPLIES

Donated to Palestinian children.

39 TEENS

Participated in Summer Camp in Cyprus.

70k PEOPLE

Attended Memorial Day Ceremony livestream.

75 NEW MEMBERS

37 Israelis, 38 Palestinians

4 PEACE AWARDS

Recognizing PCFF's reconciliation efforts.

OUR SUPPORTERS*

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 Itzik Yahav & Prof. Yuval Noah Harari, Sapienship
 The Zients Family Foundation
 Barbara Zuckerberg

*Indicates 5,000+ Donors



MIDOT - A SEAL OF QUALITY

Following a comprehensive evaluation by Midot, an Israeli NGO that strives to help other NGOs maximize their impact, PCFF was awarded Midot's "Seal of Effectiveness," certifying to donors that PCFF is a strategic, effective organization for social change.

Israeli Office

1 Hayasmin St.
Ramat Efal 5296000
Tel: 03-5355089
www.theparentscircle.org
office@theparentscircle.org

Palestinian Office

94 Cremisan A-Tahtani St.
Beit Jala Palestine
Tel: 02-2754447
www.theparentscircle.org
alquds@theparentscircle.org

American Friends of the Parents Circle

2248 Broadway #1531
New York, NY 10024
www.parentscirclefriends.org
info@parentscirclefriends.org

Friends of the Bereaved Families Forum (UK)

Dymotts Cottage, Frogham Hill
Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 2HW
Tel: 020-3916-5280
www.familiesforum.co.uk
info@ukfbff.org



פורום משפחות שכולות
ישראל-פלסטיני בעד שלום
ISRAELI PALESTINIAN
BEREAVED FAMILIES FOR PEACE
منتدى عائلات ثكلى فلسطيني
إسرائيلي من أجل السلام



AMERICAN FRIENDS
of the PARENTS CIRCLE
— FAMILIES FORUM —
Palestinian and Israeli Bereaved Families for Peace



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