



How to Fundraise for Gazan Families



A Step-By-Step Guide

Why Start a Campaign

Anyone can help a family in Gaza through fundraising, **regardless of how much fundraising experience you have.**

Palestinians are not allowed by sites like Gofundme to run a campaign for themselves. This means Palestinians rely on those of us outside Palestine to create campaigns on their behalf.

For most, these campaigns are their **only source of income** and means of survival. even if donations are slow, it is significant for Palestinians' morale as they endure catastrophic conditions to know that there are people outside of Gaza who care about them and are checking in on them. **These campaigns save lives.**



While it is true that these fundraisers alone will not bring down the occupation and Free Palestine, they are a crucial lifeline to the heroic people of Gaza. It is all of our responsibility to support Gazans in any and every way we can.



Navigating conflict

You may have disagreements with the family you are fundraising for. Do NOT abandon them. If they become upset at you, remember what they are going through, and that no human is built to endure this amount of trauma. Gazans are the experts on how to survive their situation, and still the trauma they are experiencing affects their memory and decision-making. Trust and empower their strategic decisions whenever possible. If they make a request you can't fulfill or are concerned would hurt the campaign, express your concerns while reminding them you still want to honor their wishes whenever possible.

Sidenote on identity

Despite the Islamophobic monolith we are taught that Gazans hate Jews and queer people, like any other group of people in the world, Gazans have varying attitudes when it comes to queerness and race. Though I can't personally speak to the latter as a white person doing this work, as a trans jew I've had overwhelmingly positive experiences. If Gazans comment or ask you personal questions about your identity, approach them with humility and maintained focus on your goal of helping them survive. Don't take it personally if they don't understand you, or are wary of you for sharing an identity they're told is synonymous with their oppressor.

Connect with a Family

You can do this easily through social media. Chances are if you've been posting about Palestine, there are already Gazans in your comments or message requests asking for support. You can easily verify someone is real through a video call or photographs.

You can also sign up to sponsor a family through organizations like Falasteen Freed or Narrow Bridge to Dier al Balah (surely there are others too). Both have lists of verified families who are waiting for someone to sponsor them. The latter has monthly training and support calls as well as a support signal chat to connect those fundraising.

Falasteen Freed



Narrow Bridge



Create a Gofundme Campaign

Step 1: Title and goal

Name your campaign and set a \$ goal

Step 2: Cover image

Choose a visual header for your campaign, which you can easily create on programs like Canva or Microsoft Office. You can use photographs of the family you are fundraising for, or even just a symbol like the Palestinian flag. It doesn't have to be perfect or complicated and can be updated later.

Step 3: Campaign owner and beneficiary

List yourself as the owner of the campaign, as you are running it. Select an individual from the family to be a beneficiary--the person receiving the support. Ideally this is the person you're directly in contact with most often.

Step 4: Campaign biography

Write an explanation of what you are raising money for. It is helpful to include who you are and how you met the family. Consult the family in how they want their story to be told, what information they'd like you to include, whether they'd like you to write something on their behalf or if they want to share a direct quote. Share a draft of what you're posting to see if they'd like any edits before it goes live.

Provide psychological support

Message them unprompted that you are thinking of them, especially if there is a concerning news update.

Even just a "How are you," "I am fine" is something.

Listen to them and affirm their pain and grief, remind them no human deserves what they are going through. Create authentic bonds with them. Ask them about their lives before the genocide, their dreams, their families.

Send them videos of protests small and large, remind them the entire world cares about them even though we are failing them. It can be easy to be at a loss for words given the magnitude of their suffering and how limited we are being being able to help them, but always try.

Maintain your boundaries

Do not go past your capacity for organizing so that you can continue to do this work for a long time--ideally you will be friends with this family for life. Politely explain your boundary (ex "I don't have enough money to donate," "I am already running too many campaigns and I can't start another") and keep your work sustainable.

You can still reject requests from Gazans that are unfeasible or inappropriate. Remember Gazans are persistent because their survival depends on it.

Tips and Strategies

Maintain contact

Create a Whatsapp account. Many people outside the US, including in Gaza, use Whatsapp. If Palestinians are banned by Meta (which happens often), then you will lose contact with them. Whatsapp has allowed me many times to maintain contact with my friends and notify others what is happening with them on the ground.

Create a network

Build a coalition friends and comrades who can help with your campaign, even if it's just by donating regularly. Bring in people in your life interested in helping organize, and connect with others around the world who are in contact with the same family. Make a group chat of all these people so you can all stay informed of what is happening with the family, and what actions are being taken to support them.

Develop your cultural competency

Learn about Palestinian culture and history. This will make you a better friend and accomplice. Learning more Arabic words and knowing more about Islam often helps me communicate and support my friends in a way that feels more intentional and personal. It can be as small as saying "insha'allah" or wishing them "sumud."

Step 5: Transfers

Set up bank transfers to your bank account, whether you are using your personal account or setting up a new one specifically for receiving donation money. Once the campaign has been verified, Gofundme will automatically transfer you money and notify you via email the time and amount of the transfer.

Step 6: Verify your campaign

Verification is the most difficult and time-consuming step. Though your campaign can start receiving donations as soon as it goes live, you will not receive money from the campaign until it is verified. A Gofundme employee will reach out to you and ask for information about you and about the family you are fundraising for, including the first/last names and birthdays of every adult in the family. They will likely select a member of the family and ask to send that individual a verification link, where they will have to photograph themselves and their ID--this is often the most difficult part. They will also ask you what specifically the money will be going towards, and be specific but broad in your answer because funds going towards anything outside of what you list is considered "fraud." Funding for food, clothing, housing, cleaning supplies, transportation, medical treatment, and evacuation is often a comprehensive list.

Create a Chuffed Campaign

Steps 1-4 are more or less the same as Gofundme--create a title, header, \$ amount, and a bio for your campaign.

Transfers work slightly differently on Chuffed--you will have to set up and link a Stripe account between your Chuffed campaign and your bank account. Stripe also requires a separate authenticating app to access, i use Duo. Once this is all set up, you have go onto Stripe and manually initiate transfers of funds to your bank account. It will not make periodic transfers automatically like Gofundme.

I did not receive any requests for verification of my beneficiary family from Chuffed, only verification of my own identity.



Most will see the amount raised on your campaign not knowing that money has already been withdrawn and spent--they may assume that when the goal is hit all the money will be withdrawn at once. They also likely don't know of how much money is lost to fees. Use this as an opportunity to encourage new donations--ex "thank you all so much for helping me raise this much money, it has helped the family buy XYZ, but soon they will need more money to acquire XYZ."

Keeping organized

With something as simple as a Notes app doc, keep track of how much money you've sent to ensure it lines up with how much has been donated (excluding processing fees). Make a note of the latest transfer you made so you know where you left off last time you sent money.

Keep metric data of your campaign. Gofundme charges you if you want to see helpful metrics of your fundraiser, so I recommend keeping data of your own. Tracking every donation would be arduous, so I add up the transfers I've sent each month to have a broad idea of whether we raised more or less than the months before.

This informs me of how much money the family is surviving on each month, and can also be helpful information for donors. Ask them and ask yourself, could you survive on this little not in a blockade?

Transparency

Transparency with the family

Not every family will want/need login information for the campaign, but if your family would like to access the campaign directly, you should grant them access. If this is the case, I suggest creating the campaign with a new email for them to login with so that you can maintain your private email. But make sure to check the email regularly so you know when transfers are occurring.

Transparency with donors

Keep donors aware of the status of the family. if there is an update to their situation, ex they are facing a new displacement, they need medical care, there is a birth or death in the family, there is a new evacuation opportunity, post an update to encourage new donations. you could include news updates about the genocide itself to keep people informed as well. ive mentioned new displacement orders, massacres, "ceasefires," and details from on the ground like if there was food in the markets or if the weather was severe.

Keep donors aware of the status of the funds. Many people are not aware that crowdfunding campaign money is withdrawn periodically.

Cost Considerations

As many know, Israel has a total blockade on the Gaza Strip, and is restricting aid entering Gaza, which it has done even since before October 7th. Gazans report that food, medicine, and other supplies enter Gazan markets via Israeli war profiteering. They sell essential resources at extremely high prices knowing there is a high demand and that Gazans are desperate. There are many videos of Gazans reporting a tomato for \$12, or kilos of flour for \$100 a piece, and so on.

We must also consider that a lot of money is lost to crowdfunding platforms and in the transfer process. Gofundme takes 2.9% + \$0.30 per donation to cover payment processing fees, while Chuffed has options for how payment processing fees are paid. There are also processing costs associated with transferring the money internationally, and heavy withdrawal fees within Gaza.

While it is frustrating to that a lot of donation money will be lost in these ways, we can at least take solace that a Gazan survives another day with our support. Our goal in fundraising is to keep them alive until we can bring down the occupation.

Transferring Money to Palestine

This is perhaps the most difficult part of the process-- getting the money from your bank account to the family in Palestine. Some Palestinians have a Bank of Palestine account, though some don't. Unfortunately, a lot of donation money is often lost in the transferring process.

International wire transfers

Wire transfers don't have to be as daunting as they seem. Most banks unfortunately often deny or restrict transfers to Palestine, often without explanation. I have been successful sending money through Western Union, though sometimes they have transfer fees. I did it through their app and was only asked for the name of a representative and the country they are from when selecting cash pickup. I recommend using the WU app, because most in-person locations don't do wire transfers and they will often ask for more information than the app will. The family you are helping will often have the most reliable info about when/how the money will exchange hands, so follow their lead/instructions. You will probably have to wait to accumulate at least a few hundred dollars to make a wire transfer worth it, considering transfer fees.

More promotion strategies

- Reach out directly in person and online to friends, family, and acquaintances asking them to donate.
- Create flyers and post them up around your city, on telephone poles and/or businesses willing to display them.
- Get creative. If you have skills or items that you can exchange with people for donations, do that. sell art, offer services, host an event, etc.
- Encourage recurring donations--make it clear to donors that this is often the family's primary source of income, so knowing reliably that they will receive a weekly/monthly amount adds security to their lives.
- Gofundme and Chuffed have a feature where you can write updates to previous donors--they will receive an email with your campaign updates. Again, consult with the family what they would like the update to say and share a draft to get their approval, then send it.

Battling Censorship

Social media companies like Meta are notorious for censoring Palestine content through bans, removals of posts and accounts, and shadowbanning. Their businesses and their algorithm is built to encourage as much engagement as possible, so engage with Palestine content, but strategically. Palestinians and organizers have a variety of tactics:

- Exchange letters for symbols in words often associated with posts about Palestine and fundraising, ex "donate" (dOnate), Gaza (G@z@), link in bio (l!nk !n b!o)
- Comment at least 9 words but avoid copy-pasting so you don't get flagged as spam
- Put trendy audio and words in your posts and comments to confuse the algorithm and get it to promote your post
- Some suggest that posting all at once every 24 hours is most effective, but there is little means for confirming this strategy as more or less effective

Bitcoin

Some people use bitcoin, such as USDT, to make transfers. For this you have to use an app (ex Tether, Coinbase) to store, convert, and send the money.

Paypal

Paypal also doesn't allow Palestinians to have their own account, but sometimes they find a way. One person I know in Gaza was able to figure out transfers from Paypal to their Bank of Palestine card. I also made a second Paypal account to store money for a different friend of mine in Gaza--it's a good way to hold onto money on someone's but keep it separate from your own bank account.

Financial companies limit Palestinians' access to resources from the rest of the world. Paypal and Gofundme restrict Palestinians from holding their own accounts, and banks often deny transfers to Palestine. They discriminate by claiming they're preventing fraud, or say they can't serve Palestine because it lacks State recognition in the company's home country. Gofundme checks beneficiaries against lists of names who are believed to "be in Hamas", because they don't want liability for potential legal ramifications of platforming a campaign for resistance members.

Promoting Your Campaign

- Post on social media, making graphics in Canva, Microsoft office, or your preferred software. Again these don't have to be perfect, just include pertinent information.
- Upload to your timeline and your story. I post on my timeline periodically, and reshare my Gazan friends' posts on my story daily.
- Encourage people to interact with your posts by sharing, liking, commenting, saving, and reposting. Interact with Gazan and other organizers' posts.
- Film yourself for a post. Write a script if you need to or just speak from the heart, but your face will get a bigger boost from the algorithm.
- Create a social media account for Gazans who don't have one/were banned from their account. Meta restricts and bans Palestinian accounts all the time so making a fundraising account for them could help. This account might also get banned too though, and your personal social media may be shadowbanned for posting about Palestine.

Center your social media use around Palestine.

Shift your priorities and accept that your social media may look different. It will no longer be a catered archive of your life or whatever you were trying to promote before (your business, your art, etc). When I look at my Gazan friends' social media accounts pre-October 7th, they all had lives, art, and businesses they were sharing about too, but they have lost most of that to the genocide.

I don't personally recommend making a separate account just for fundraising--we need to use the accounts with the greatest existing following we have so these campaigns gain as much traction as possible. If you rely on social media financially to support your business, consider finally making a separate business/art account for yourself if you need to and encourage your customers/fans to follow you there. Personally though, I promote my fundraisers and my personal/art posts on the same account in hopes that sharing non-Gaza-related content will boost my account in the algorithm and ward off some shadowbanning. Of course, don't stop sharing about other human rights issues too.