



# Newsletter

June 2025

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we look back on the past three months since our last newsletter, we are filled with both pain and hope—emotions that often walk hand in hand for those who care deeply about everyone living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. This month, those feelings have extended even further, as tensions escalated between Israel and Iran, casting a wider shadow of fear and uncertainty. At B8 of Hope, these events are not abstract. Within our small team, we hold deep personal ties to the region—family, friends, and lifelong communities in both Israel and Palestine.

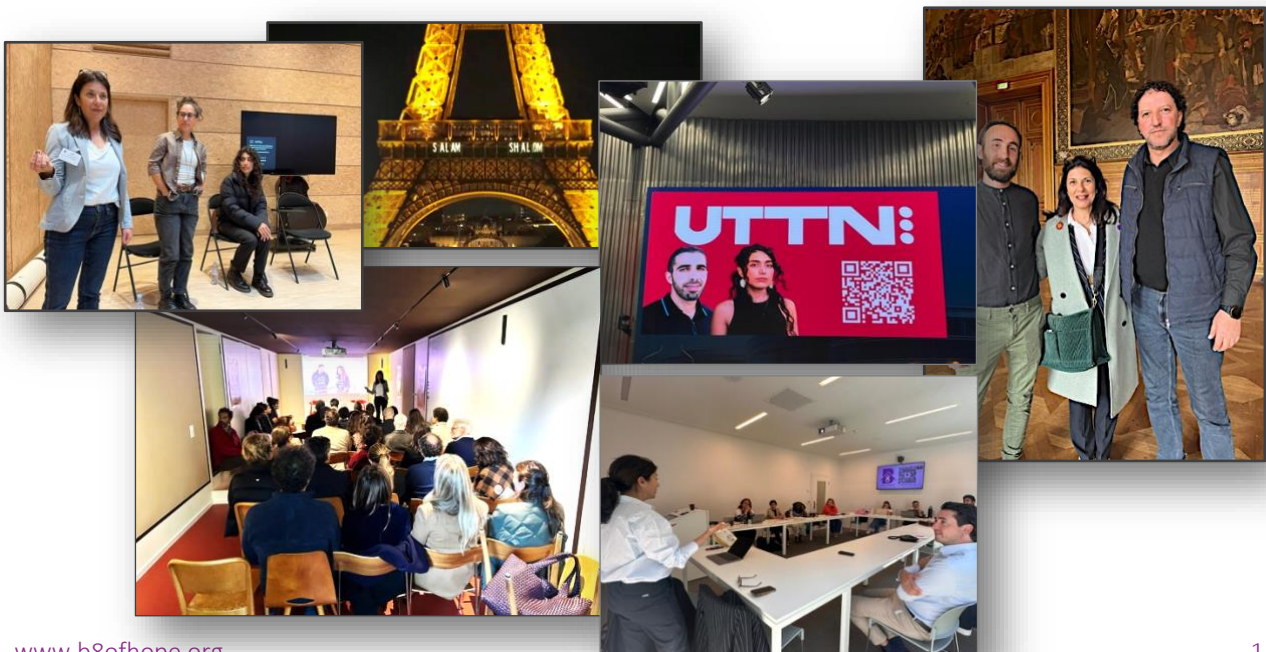
Our director, Mehra, has also been checking in with loved ones in Tehran in recent days, while receiving heartfelt messages of concern from her Israeli and Palestinian friends. These relationships—across borders, identities, and histories—remind us daily of what’s at stake, and why this work is both urgent and personal.

Amid the devastation of ongoing war, a small but steadfast group of Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilders continues to show extraordinary courage and resilience. They are doing the quiet, essential work of healing, remembering, reaching out, standing up, and refusing to give in to despair. With hearts both heavy and hopeful, we remain committed to sharing their stories—glimpses of those who are daring to imagine and build a better future for all.

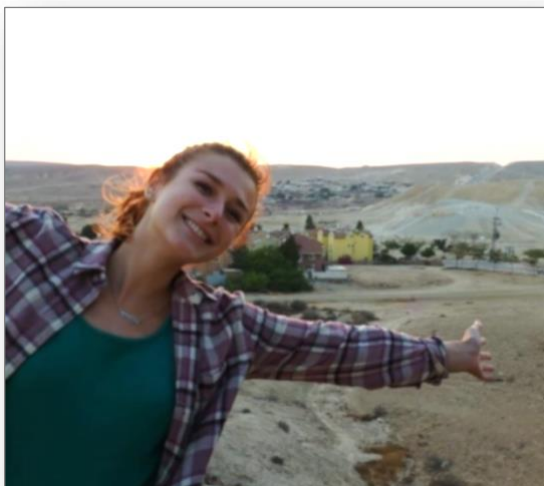
## ◆ *B8 of Hope Activities in Switzerland and Beyond*

Our work in Geneva is a small contribution to that same effort—a way to amplify our grantees’ voices, foster connection, and build understanding far beyond the region.

If you’d like to see what’s been keeping us busy on the ground, please visit our [Activities page](#).



## ◆ Remembering Sarah Milgrim



©Tech2Peace

It is with heavy hearts that we share the tragic loss of Sarah Milgrim, who was killed on May 21<sup>st</sup> outside the Jewish Museum in Washington DC. Sarah was a dedicated volunteer and passionate advocate for peace and dialogue with [Tech2Peace](#), a longtime B8 of Hope grantee organization.

Sarah's commitment to building bridges and fostering understanding exemplified the values at the heart of our work. As she once said, *"The most impactful peacebuilding happens outside political institutions. It happens in shared rooms, over common projects, in the eyes of strangers who become friends."* Her voice for peace and her

dedication to positive change had a meaningful impact on everyone who knew her.

The reach of Sarah's work was evident in the outpouring of grief following her death. As one former Tech2Peace colleague observed: *"One small bright spot in all of this is seeing both Israelis and Palestinians that knew Sarah sending their condolences and remembering her together. We can grieve and care for the 'other side' without taking away from 'our side.'"*

Since October 2023, B8 of Hope has mourned the loss of five colleagues and partners from the Israeli and Palestinian organizations in our network—all changemakers working toward a better future who were taken from us far too soon. Sarah's memory joins theirs as we honor their legacies and continue the vital work they championed. Our deepest condolences go out to Sarah's family, friends, and the entire Tech2Peace community during this difficult time.

## ◆ A Voice of Healing from Gaza

We are honored to share a powerful letter from Dr. Salem, a psychiatrist and mental health professional living in Gaza who has been trained through our newest grantee, [EMDR for Peace](#). Founded in 2022, EMDR for Peace brings together dozens of volunteer EMDR professionals—including Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs—all certified trainers, facilitators, and practitioners united in using trauma therapy to promote healing in conflict areas.



Dr. Salem's letter offers a deeply personal perspective on trauma, resilience, and the essential role of mental healthcare in building sustainable peace. Writing from his current heartbreaking circumstances, he shares both his family's journey through loss and his professional commitment to transforming pain into healing for his community.

### *A Personal Journey Through War and Healing*

*"I am from Gaza, and I continue to live in Gaza—under tents—after enduring multiple displacements and forced evacuations. It has been a journey marked by pain, loss, and the daily struggle to protect and comfort my children and family amid deep uncertainty.*

*We lost our home. We lost our sense of safety. My children suffered sleepless nights, trembling at the sound of explosions. My wife and I carried not only physical burdens but deep emotional wounds—fear, helplessness, grief.*

*As a father, it broke my heart. As a mental health professional, I knew I had to find a way to transform this pain into a path for healing.*

*That path came through Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)—a trauma-focused psychotherapy that helped me reclaim my strength and help others do the same. EMDR allows survivors to reprocess traumatic memories in a way that frees them from the grip of fear.*

*I am forever thankful to [those] who guided me with skill, compassion, and dedication through EMDR training. Despite the war, despite the distance, they stood with us—coordinating support, supervision, and knowledge that has empowered therapists like me to continue our mission. Through this work, I have seen trauma transform—from silent suffering to resilience, from despair to dignity."*

*Trauma is not a private matter. It lives in our communities, in our children, in the spaces between us. Without healing, peace remains fragile—a word, not a reality. With healing, however, peace becomes possible, sustainable, and real. When we treat trauma, we interrupt cycles of violence. We create the inner space for forgiveness, empathy, and coexistence...*

*As I send you this message from afar, I carry with me a hope stronger than war: that together, we can transform suffering into strength, silence into healing, and trauma into peace. Thank you for allowing me to share my message. May our collective work continue to bring light into the darkest corners of human experience."*

## ◆ **United in Grief: 20 Years of Shared Remembrance**

This spring, B8 of Hope once again supported two powerful gatherings where Palestinians and Israelis came together in shared grief and solidarity. The Joint Memorial Day Ceremony—organized [by Combatants for Peace](#) and the [Parents Circle–Families Forum](#)—and the Nakba Remembrance Ceremony, organized by Combatants for Peace, offered rare and courageous spaces for collective mourning and mutual recognition.



©Combatants for Peace

Held for the second consecutive year amid an ongoing war, the ceremonies took place at a time when death and destruction have reached heartbreaking levels. More families than ever are losing loved ones to violence, deepening the urgency of efforts to recognize shared pain and affirm a different path forward.

This year marked the 20th anniversary of [the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day Ceremony](#)—now the largest peace event jointly organized by both communities. The April 29th gathering brought together bereaved families from both sides to share their grief and acknowledge a profound truth: that pain knows no boundaries, and tears are the same. In

addition to honoring their loved ones, participants used this moment to jointly call for an end to the war and the ongoing cycle of killing and loss.

The May 15th [Nakba Remembrance Ceremony](#), now in its fifth year, provided a unique opportunity for Palestinians to be joined by Israelis and internationals in commemorating the events of 1948, when more than 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes, became refugees, and saw their villages and cities destroyed. In a context where open discussion of the Nakba remains largely taboo in Israel, this ceremony offered a space for honest recognition of this painful history and its enduring impact.

At B8 of Hope, we believe that peacebuilding begins with empathy—by listening deeply to each other's stories and recognizing each other's pain.

That is why we stand in support of these ceremonies. They invite Israelis, Palestinians, and internationals to confront the traumas of the past and their lasting consequences, and to move toward mutual recognition and a shared future rooted in dignity, equality, safety, and self-determination for all.



©Carly Rosenthal

## ◆ *Civil Society Rising: Israelis and Palestinians Mobilize to End the War*

As the war in Gaza continues, courageous civil society actors—many supported by B8 of Hope—are uniting across lines of division to demand an end to the bloodshed, the release of all hostages, and a just political resolution rooted in equality, safety, and freedom for all.

## Not in Our Name: Protesting at the Gaza Border

For many months, Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations have been mobilizing together to demand an immediate end to the war. Some of our grantees—including [Standing Together](#), [Women Wage Peace \(WWP\)](#), [Combatants for Peace \(CfP\)](#) and the [Parents Circle–Families Forum \(PCFF\)](#)—have persistently taken to the streets in nonviolent protest, calling for a ceasefire, humanitarian aid access, and an end to the unbearable suffering.

In recent weeks, these efforts have intensified with a series of protests near the Gaza border. Hundreds of Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel came together in large, peaceful demonstrations, courageously confronting the devastating humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza. Activists united in their urgent demand to stop the violence.

Standing Together also organized silent protests across Israel, where participants held pictures of Gazan children killed in the war. This campaign aims to raise awareness within Israeli society and challenge the culture of denial that allows the government to continue the war unchecked.

At the Gaza border protests, bereaved families and activists shared powerful statements, including one penned by Palestinian PCFF member [Bassam Aramin](#) and read aloud by Israeli member Itai Horowitz. In it, Bassam called on Israelis to face the reality of the crisis:

*“This is one of the moments when I most wanted to be with you and march with you towards the border, towards bleeding Gaza... This is no longer a war of self-defense, this is a terrible revenge against innocents. You, my friends, and you alone remain the human voice... I call on you, Israelis, to march in your thousands to Gaza carrying water, bread, milk and medicine – simply to help children and women... Do not give up, until we create together a future of freedom and security for all of us.”*

During one early demonstration, several participants—including Standing Together’s co-director Alon-Lee Green—were detained. Upon release to house arrest, Alon-Lee declared:

*“They think that by arresting us, we’ll be quiet. But the opposite is true. The only way forward is to keep showing up, together.”*

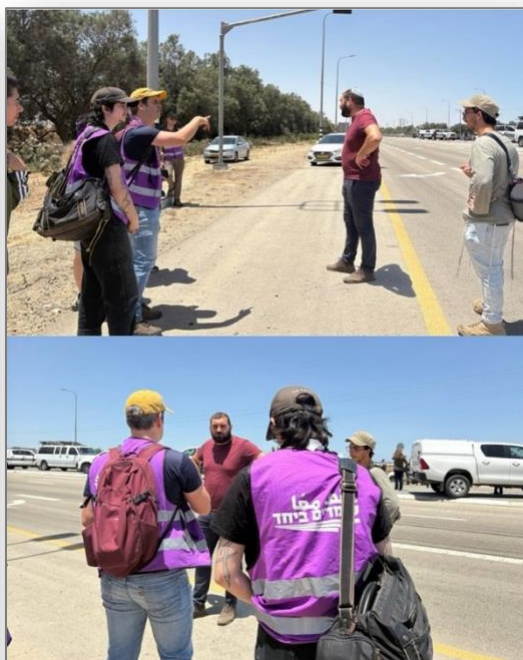
Many of those detained returned to the protests immediately after release, refusing to surrender to fear or despair. These ongoing demonstrations culminated in a powerful three-day march from Jerusalem to the Gaza border, where thousands of Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel walked side by side, demanding an end to the war and a reckoning with its human cost.



## Guarding Aid and Civilian Life

As aid convoys resumed access into Gaza after months of near-total restriction, Standing Together's Humanitarian Guard quickly mobilized to help ensure their safe passage. With tensions high and extremists having previously attacked aid trucks, volunteers positioned themselves along key routes to deter violence and support the delivery of life-saving supplies to families in desperate need.

Humanitarian Guard volunteers were also present in the Old City of Jerusalem during the annual Jerusalem Day flag march, an event historically marked by incitement and unrest. Their peaceful presence offered support and protection for Palestinian residents and business owners at risk of harassment.



©Standing Together

## Campaigning for an End to the War

In parallel to the protests and border actions, the Parents Circle launched a public campaign with a single, urgent message: **"Enough."** Billboards bearing the call to end the war are now visible across both Israeli and Palestinian areas.

In a time of profound violence and polarization, the campaign reasserts the moral clarity of those who have paid the highest price: bereaved families united in the belief that there is another way forward.



©Parent's Circle Families Forum

## The People's Peace Summit

Last month, over 8,000 Israelis and Palestinians came together for the People's Peace Summit, organized by the It's Time coalition. More than 60 organizations and hundreds of peacebuilders participated, including many B8 of Hope grantees.



The summit brought together civil society activists and political figures in a joint call to end the war and pursue a viable political future. Messages of support arrived from local and international leaders, including Palestinian President Abbas, French President Macron, and EU Foreign Minister Kaja Kallas. Over 100 diplomats—including 30 ambassadors—attended in person.

B8 of Hope was proud to help fund the gathering, which underscored the vital role civil society plays in shaping a shared horizon. The coalition continues to call for urgent international action to end the war and to advance a just political horizon, while uniting grassroots efforts on the ground.

## FINAL WORDS

In the face of ongoing war and immense suffering, the courage and resilience of these individuals and organizations offer a vital reminder: peace is not simply the absence of violence, but the presence of justice, dignity, and shared humanity. At B8 of Hope, we stand with those who refuse to surrender to despair. Together, through steadfast commitment and collective action, we can nurture the seeds of hope and help build a future where all can live with safety, equality, and respect. Thank you for joining us in this journey.

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*B8fully Yours,*  
The B8 of Hope Team



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