

In Solidarity with the Palestinian Struggle for Liberation and Human Rights, the Detroit & Michigan NLG Has Decided to Drop PayPal

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PayPal discriminates against Palestinians, denying them access to work and funds to survive. PayPal contributes to the growth of illegal Israeli settlements and vilifies and shuts down accounts of groups that support Palestinian human rights. (Sources are linked and listed at end of document)

Palestinians Are Living Under a Brutal Occupation

We know that Israeli settlers are committing horrible atrocities against the Palestinian people and their homes and land, with the backing of the Israeli government and military forces. (And the US government)

We know that Palestinians living under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are victims of an immoral [apartheid system](#) that severely restricts everything they can do and access. Water is rationed; travel is very restricted; Israeli military checkpoints keep Palestinians waiting for hours on their way to hospitals or anywhere, and threatened by soldiers and settlers; every morning starting at 3am, tens of thousands of Palestinians begin crossing Israeli military checkpoints to get to work. It can take hours. Unemployment is very high. **Meanwhile, Palestinians trying to do online freelance work can't get paid.**

PayPal's anti-Palestinian practices cause and exacerbate harm. They inflict a second economic siege - a digital siege - along with the physical one.

PayPal *could* help Palestinians, but it doesn't

Particularly for young, tech-savvy Palestinians who do not have freedom of movement and have limited employment opportunities, PayPal could significantly improve their lives. However, PayPal's discrimination denies them access to 120 employment platforms and to Venmo, which is a PayPal platform.

[Zamleh research](#) has shown that access to PayPal would improve the lives of over 80 percent of Palestinian households, generate employment opportunities for more than 42,000 college graduates, accelerate the growth of small businesses, and facilitate the work of civil society organizations that rely on crowdfunding.

PayPal is Violating International Law

Israeli settlements are illegal according to International Law. The building of settlements and transferring people from the occupier's country (Israel) to the occupied country (Palestine) is also a war crime. Profiting from the transactions of Israeli settlers and facilitating Israeli economic growth on Palestinian lands is, in the opinion of some human rights defenders, an act of pillage. Thus, if PayPal services facilitate the economic development and access to financial markets for Israeli settlers and their businesses in the West Bank, then PayPal should be held accountable for its role in supporting the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine and violating international law.

PayPal shuts down accounts of Palestinian human rights groups

While Israeli settlers and apartheid government officials boast openly about their violent actions against Palestinians, Palestinians and allies who speak out against those actions are often silenced and accused of antisemitism by Israeli apartheid supporters. See the [backlash against Huwaida Arraf](#), NLG member and human rights attorney, in Bloomfield Hills.

PayPal has a practice of [shutting down](#) the accounts of [groups](#) around the world that support Palestinian human rights, including [BDS](#) campaign organizations, political parties, and even [media organizations](#) - at the behest of pro-apartheid politicians and agencies. PayPal has shut down services for Palestine advocacy organizations such as [Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network](#), a grassroots organization which relies on small and generous donations from people of conscience who want to ensure that Palestinian prisoners – and the Palestinian people – are not silenced.

PayPal and the ADL

PayPal has further exposed and bolstered its anti-Palestinian practices by teaming up with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) which, according to the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) "claims to fight antisemitism" but has "a long and uninterrupted track record of working to censor and punish Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims for speaking out or organizing for Palestinian liberation." In 2021, when PayPal announced its intent to investigate hate group funding through the ADL, [PYM told the Middle East Monitor](#):

"PayPal describes its new partnership as one rooted in 'studying' and 'ending' pipelines for hate and extremism, but ...we are all too familiar with this language of censorship that the ADL has used to blacklist pro-Palestinian activists and derail Palestinians' careers and livelihoods."

"With the ADL at the helm of determining what is 'hateful' or 'extreme,' financial transactions that are a literal lifeline for Palestinians in Occupied Palestine and the camps could be profoundly disrupted, making it even more difficult for families and communities to send remittances, fund lifesaving medical procedures, and otherwise help Palestinians under occupation to survive despite the tremendous economic barriers erected by Israel."

The Middle East Monitor also reported:

The ADL has a long history of describing Palestinian rights movements as antisemitic. It has worked with US law enforcement to [spy on and target](#) Arab-American groups and has [facilitated and funded](#) US police training trips to Israel.

In 2016, ADL CEO and National Director [published a letter](#) in the Times of Israel's NY Jewish Week condemning the Black Lives Matter solidarity work with Palestinian activists.

In 2020, 100+ human rights groups, including the Center for Constitutional Rights, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), and Dream Defenders, signed a [joint letter](#) urging progressive organizations to stop working with the ADL because of its "pattern of attacking social justice movements led by communities of color, queer people, immigrants, Muslims, Arabs, and other marginalized groups, while aligning itself with police, right-wing leaders, and perpetrators of state violence.

We wish to withdraw from projects and businesses, like PayPal, that engage in violations of Palestinian human rights and sustain Israeli apartheid.

The National Lawyers Guild stands in solidarity with the people of Palestine in their struggle against the settler colonial state of Israel, and calls on our members and allies throughout the US and around the globe to stand and act in support of that struggle. [NLG Statement in Solidarity with the People of Palestine](#), 5/13/2021

Resources

- 7amleh — The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media
 - paypal.7amleh.org/
 - paypal.7amleh.org/about
 - [Palestine & PayPal](#) publication
 - 7amleh #paypal4palestine campaign partners include US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, Jewish Voice For Peace, MPower Change, Sum of Us, Palestine Legal, Palestine Solidarity Campaign*
- [Attacks on Samidoun: PayPal's complicity in silencing Palestinian prisoners](#)
- [Pro-Palestine groups denounce Paypal-ADL research into extremism funding](#)
- [What is the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement?](#)