



# MIFTAH ACTIVITIES REPORT 2012

Report Prepared by: Julie Holm





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## Letter from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

As MIFTAH publishes its 14<sup>th</sup> annual activities report I would like to congratulate the organization on the results of its persistent, tireless efforts throughout the year of 2012. This was a year that brought many changes to the region and to the country and through it all, MIFTAH stands strong and continues to realize its mission of empowering Palestine's women and youth, creating strong independent leaders and promoting marginalized voices.

In my capacity as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I have seen MIFTAH grow and advance over the years. The organization excels in effort and outcome as each year's achievements are a reflection of the efforts of the previous years. Throughout the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem and internationally, MIFTAH has become a household name with a reputation of credibility, professionalism and a strong conviction to serve society.

This success would not be possible without the strong and capable men and women who make up MIFTAH's team. I am honored to be part of this and congratulate MIFTAH's administration, board and staff on the outstanding results they have achieved this year and all the years before.

It is my upmost hope that MIFTAH continues its excellent work, dedication and commitment to realizing its mission and promoting the principles of democracy and good governance towards the vision of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine.

Sincerely,  
*Sawsan Fahoum-Ja'far*

## Foreword by the Chief Executive Officer



2012 has been characterized by political changes throughout the region. Especially, two major events in Palestine have been significant for MIFTAH's work in 2012. First, the UN General Assembly decision to welcome Palestine as a non-member, observer state, sets the backdrop for an invigorating future working with democracy and good governance in Palestine. Secondly, this fall, the West Bank witnessed local council elections, which validates MIFTAH's determined efforts in its long term Election Support Program and is a step further towards a democratic state. MIFTAH is proud to see so many of its trainees moving on to becoming local council members, and making their voices heard nationally, locally and in political factions.

Throughout its 14 years of existence, MIFTAH has catered to the changes in society in a way to best serve the Palestinian public, especially those in the margins. 2012 was no different. MIFTAH keeps its commitment to promoting the voices of youth and women and developing their skills and knowledge to help them become leaders in their communities. Further, MIFTAH is proud to be working in areas such as the remote communities in the Jordan Valley, the inaccessible Gaza Strip and the marginalized and often forgotten east Jerusalem.

MIFTAH continues to promote a democratic, pluralistic and tolerant Palestinian state, and disseminate the Palestinian narrative abroad. The website delivers credible and accurate information in Arabic and English, giving MIFTAH a respected reputation among its readers and supporters.

I greatly appreciate the efforts and achievements MIFTAH's employees, administration and board have accomplished in promoting democracy and enhancing good governance procedures in Palestinian society. The diligence, hard work and commitment of MIFTAH's staff have made this success possible.

I am proud to present to you this 14<sup>th</sup> annual report on MIFTAH's activities. In the years to come MIFTAH will strive to maintain and advance in its commitment to serve the Palestinian society.

Sincerely,  
*Lily Feidy*

## MIFTAH's Vision, Mission and Objectives

### **Vision**

An independent, democratic and sovereign Palestinian state, which grants Palestinians their basic rights, preserves their dignity, and enjoys international recognition and respect.

### **Mission**

MIFTAH seeks to promote the principles of democracy and good governance within various components of Palestinian society; it further seeks to engage local and international public opinion and official circles on the Palestinian cause. To that end, MIFTAH adopts the mechanisms of an active and in-depth dialogue, the free flow of information and ideas, as well as local and international networking.

### **Strategic Objectives**

1. To disseminate the Palestinian narrative and discourse globally to both official and popular bodies and decision-makers
2. To empower effective leadership within all components of Palestinian society in order to enhance democracy and good governance and raise public awareness concerning the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship
3. To influence policy and legislation to ensure their safeguarding of civil and social rights for all sectors and their adherence to principles of good governance


## MIFTAH's Board of Trustees

- **Hanan Ashrawi**  
*Founder and Head of MIFTAH's Board of Directors*
- **Sawsan Fahoum-Ja'far**  
*Chair of the Board of Trustees*
- **Ziad Abu-Amr**  
*Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council*
- **Ghassan Al-Khatib**  
*Vice President for Advancement and Communication, Birzeit University*
- **Maha Abu Dayyeh**  
*Director of the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling*
- **Rima Hamammi**  
*Professor of Anthropology, Birzeit University*
- **Khalil Hindi**  
*President of Birzeit University*
- **Mohammad-Abdel-Qader Hussein**  
*Head of the Board of Directors of the Faisal Hussein Foundation*
- **Azmi Shuaibi**  
*AMAN Commissioner for Combating Corruption, MIFTAH's treasurer*
- **Khalil Jahshan**  
*President of the National Association of Arab-Americans (NAAA)*
- **Rashid I. Khalidi**  
*Professor, Columbia University*
- **Sa'id Khoury**  
*President and Co-owner of Consolidated Contractors International Company, Athens*
- **George Salem**  
*Attorney at Law and Partner at Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer and Feld, Washington DC.*
- **Iyad El-Sarraj**  
*Director General of the Gaza Community Mental Health Program*
- **Sabih Al-Masri**  
*Chairman of ASTRA*
- **Abdel-Muhsin Qattan**  
*Founder and President of A.M. Qattan Foundation, London*
- **Hania Bitar**  
*General Manager of Pyalara*
- **Khaled Kaloti**  
*Engineer*
- **Hashim Shawa**  
*Chairman and General Manager for the Bank of Palestine*
- **Raji Sourani**  
*Director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights*

## Who's Who at MIFTAH

- Lily Feidy  
*Chief Executive Officer*
- Rula Muzaffar  
*Administrative and Financial Director*
- Bisam Abu Ruqti  
*Director - Good Governance and Democracy Program*
- Dolly Nammour  
*Development Director (Left in August 2012)*
- Julie Holm  
*Development Officer*
- Joharah Baker  
*Researcher and Writer - Media and Information Program*
- Muath Bakri  
*IT Coordinator*
- Ruham Nimri  
*Media Monitoring Unit Coordinator*
- Ala'a Krajah  
*Arabic Media Coordinator*
- Najwa Yaghi  
*Project Coordinator*
- Lamis Shu'aibi  
*Project Coordinator*
- Taghreed Duaibes  
*Project Coordinator (Left in February 2012)*
- Sahar Rafidi  
*Project Coordinator*
- Marina Qaqish  
*Accountant*
- Kholoud Al-Joubeh  
*Administrative Assistant*
- Abeer Zaghari  
*Project Administrative Assistant*
- Haneen Shuaibi  
*Project Administrative Assistant*
- Maram Abu Rmeileh  
*Administrative Assistant*
- Jafar Ladadweh  
*Receptionist*
- Mohammad Abedrabo  
*Media Analyst*
- Ruba Awadallah  
*Intern - Media and Information Program*
- Lidet Shiferaw  
*Intern - Media and Information Program*
- Bailey Rose Ulbricht  
*Intern - Media and Information Program*
- Kevin William Strand  
*Intern - Media and Information Program*





# MIFTAH's Programs



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## Dissemination of the Palestinian Narrative

In order to contribute to “telling the Palestinian story” and better inform public officials and decision makers worldwide, MIFTAH disseminates the Palestinian narrative through briefings, the website and electronic newsletter. Throughout 2012 MIFTAH continued to provide substantive opinions on current events and their impact on future peaceful settlement to the conflict. The website (both English and Arabic) was updated daily and regularly received positive feedback from its users, on both email and Facebook. In addition the website, featured articles, fact sheets and special studies continues to give the reader an insight into life under occupation.

Further, MIFTAH use media monitoring to follow up on incitement, on how gender and youth- related issues are treated in the media, and to search for potential interventions to overcome stereotyping. In 2012 four media monitoring reports were published and disseminated concerning the coverage in Palestinian print media of: The Doha agreement; settler attacks; protests against rising prices and costs of living; and local elections. Consequently eight presentations were given at Palestinian universities resulting in around 250 media students becoming more critical media consumers.

## A Different Viewpoint

MIFTAH is proud to continue publishing the newspaper “Ra’yon Akhar” (Different Viewpoint) where media students and young, newly graduated journalists have the chance to practice journalism and publish investigative reports and articles. This is a chance for the students to get their voices heard and promote issues they find important that are not usually covered in local newspapers. The newspaper was published twice throughout the year giving about 35 media students the chance to contribute with original articles. Each of the two newspapers was disseminated in 10,000 copies and the articles of the students were widely read.



## Election Support

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The local council elections in October 2012 validated the substantial, enduring efforts of MIFTAH's election support program. The program is concerned with ensuring the transparency and integrity of the election system and works to guarantee a free and fair election process through election monitoring activities. This fall, MIFTAH worked in and around the elections to encourage the public to vote and educate citizens on the importance of political participation and raising their voice. Town hall meetings throughout the West Bank provided citizens with a platform to enhance their knowledge and boost a dialogue with local politicians and decision makers.

MIFTAH held a series of open dialogue meetings coordinating with representatives from the Central Elections Commission who addressed issues concerning the electoral procedures including voter registration, nomination, and electoral campaigning. In others, MIFTAH hosted guest community educators specialized in citizens' education. The meetings also addressed topics such as the right to participate in elections to enhance the democratic process, the concept of citizenship and the role of women in elections.

MIFTAH held a national mass media campaign for the Local Council Elections to encourage people to participate in elections. This was done through designing and publishing billboards and flash banners. The message was "My Vote, My Right to Expression, My Voice for Change." The mass-media campaign reached thousands of potential voters and the town hall meetings and televised dialogue meetings provided a platform for citizens to raise relevant issues with officials and politicians.

On Election Day, MIFTAH's team got "Local Observer" cards and was able to observe the electoral process (voting and results). Moreover, it submitted a report to the Central Elections Commission about the proceeding of elections day.

## Women in Local Council Elections

MIFTAH's election support program is especially concerned with ensuring the representation of marginalized groups, with a focus on women and youth in elected positions at all levels. For the local council elections MIFTAH supported female candidates and helped them in their campaigns. This was in the shape of trainings on campaigning and media as well as individual consultancy through MIFTAH's field coordinators. Further, MIFTAH, together with other CSOs, lobbied among political factions and lists to increase the number of female candidates and move them to the top of the lists.

For the first time the elections had two all-women's lists and ten lists featured a women on the top. MIFTAH was proud to see that the election results, in regards to women, saw an increase from the previous election and the percentage of women elected (21%) exceeded the assigned quota. MIFTAH trained 109 women candidates on managing electoral campaigns and dealing with media. 53 of MIFTAH's trainees were elected and there was a clear wish from all candidates that MIFTAH continue working with them, enhancing their skills and knowledge after the elections.

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Rudyna Abu Jarad, a disabled woman who was trained by MIFTAH for Local Council elections said during a consultation *"People wouldn't have known me without MIFTAH. I didn't attend meetings in the places that don't facilitate disabled people. MIFTAH's field coordinator always conducted the activities in a place that is appropriate and sensitive to disabled people."*

• Falha Awatleh from Nweimeh, one of the women participants said *"I am committed only to MIFTAH, because they trained me and supported me prior to elections, and they don't leave me now"*.

• A participant from Bethlehem said *"I am more confident now, I can speak in public as I did in the training in front of the participants, even if I did a mistake, I learn."*



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## Women Empowerment

This program is concerned with providing leadership training for women to become active community leaders as well as skill development to elected women officials. 2012 was the first year MIFTAH gave special attention to young Palestinian women leaders. During the year MIFTAH created a network of 80 young female leaders affiliated with different political (PLO) factions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The program provides specialized awareness campaigns and training aimed at overcoming stereotypes of women in influential circles. Further, it is concerned with affording women community leaders the opportunity to have access to political circles, enhancing their visibility and ensuring that their views are heard.

Throughout the process the participants have been very motivated and eager to learn and to increase their position within their respective political factions. As the project progresses and the knowledge, skills and confidence of the participants grow, it is apparent that many of them become more involved in decision making positions in their political factions.

The women themselves state that they learn a great deal from participating in the process. By going through laws and legislations they have become much more aware of their rights, something they bring into working within their factions.

MIFTAH has received feedback from the political factions that with the empowerment of the young women, they are more committed to increase the number of young women leaders in their upper hierarchy. The political faction FIDA, for example, has committed themselves to have 40% women represented in their political bureau and all other political structures.

## The KUMI-method

When working with women and youth, MIFTAH is committed to using the KUMI-method which is a new facilitation method, designed to enable social transformation in situations of conflict. KUMI, meaning 'rise up' in both Arabic and Hebrew, is a process within which individuals and groups who are working for social and political change are able to reflect upon the root causes of the conflicts in which they are involved and collectively mobilize towards creating alternative solutions. Using meaningful and honest dialogue, participants are guided through a series of steps that start with analysis and move through conflict engagement, to participatory planning. KUMI provides a framework for collective action aiming at transforming the contexts that sustain conflict.

In 2012 MIFTAH implemented a five day training workshop based on the KUMI method targeting 17 young women. The focus was on certain contradictions in the Palestinian society in relation to gender segregation and its impact on the under-representation of youth and women in positions of leadership in Palestine. In addition, the fact that the youth in general and young women in specific, have minimal impact in setting the Palestinian political agenda, and therefore the interests of young women are often unheard, and therefore not prioritized, was highlighted. This participatory process helped the young women narrow in on their priorities throughout the program.

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A 20 year old participant from the FATEH movement, said *"I am now more interested to search and learn more about political issues to expand my political awareness and experience and to empower myself to lead and facilitate political dialogue and discussion."*

• A 26-year old participant from Hebron said *"I now know more about the PLO and the timeline of the PLO development, which gives me the opportunity to participate in any political discussion circles more efficiently, as now I am more informed."*

• A young participant from Gaza said *"The training on the formulation of vision and strategic directions provides us with the efficient tools on how to address the political leaders within our political faction. In addition, what is remarkable is that the meetings we participated in brought decision makers and young members face to face for the first time and so we could communicate and express our point of view and recommendations directly to these decision makers."*

One participant said about the training *"We as Palestinian young women involved in political activities, lack this kind of capacity building, thanks to MIFTAH for offering the opportunity to involve us in these added value capacity building program."*

• Another stated *"this training was very rich with the information provided, I am now more educated with woman rights, and I am eager to study and read through the personal status law to search for more articles that deny the woman rights."*

• Another 26-year old participant noted *"This training adds a lot to my political knowledge, which will be very helpful in my field work."*



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## Youth Empowerment

• This program aims to increase the representation of young Palestinian political leaders in decision-making. In 2012 MIFTAH trained two groups within the Youth Empowerment Program: One group of activists from east Jerusalem and one group of student council members from four West Bank Universities. They were trained in conflict transformation and, using the KUMI method, reached a common vision and plan of action which have been supported by MIFTAH.

• The program intends to boost a culture of dialogue and acceptance of 'the other' within political factions and within the Palestinian political system. Throughout the process the young participants enhanced their political communication skills as they became more respectful towards each other's opinions and more open to listen to each other, despite their differences.

• Through knowledge attainment sessions and book reviews, the participants enhanced their knowledge on topics relevant to them and their work in their communities. Further, the program intends to raise the awareness of society of the role of young political leaders in the process of change and development and to provide an environment that empowers the youth in the structure of the Palestinian political system. Thus, MIFTAH facilitated a series of round table discussions with national and international experts, professors and activists on topics such as the situation in Gaza; Palestinian membership in the UN; Palestinian youth's views on political efficiency, Palestinian international politics, elections and the Arab spring; and alternative directions to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



### Youth Leadership Camp 28 -30/9/2012

The youth groups themselves initiated a Summer Camp for both groups to come together and share their knowledge and experiences. MIFTAH supported and facilitated the Camp that was deemed a great success by the 40 participants from the target groups. The Camp resulted in the establishment of “The Palestinian Political and Social Youth Network”, composed by the two target groups. The network has almost 50 members, young political and social activists from all over the West Bank. These youth will be working together throughout 2013 to create a shared agenda and advocacy plan to affect decision makers and reach the change they desire in the Palestinian society.



## Policy and Advocacy



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To achieve a more supportive policy environment for reform and democratization in Palestine, and to ensure the responsiveness and transparency of the decision making processes and their outcomes, this program intends to initiate interventions at the political, legislative and policy levels. The program facilitates dialogue among main actors on emerging public policy and timely issues, carry out policy research and papers, and monitor and analyze the government's plans, programs and annual budget to ensure responsiveness to the needs of the different groups of the Palestinian society.

In 2012, MIFTAH continued its work towards instituting a National Gender Responsive Budget in Palestine, and were pleased to see the gender responsive budget on the agenda of the Ministry of Women Affairs and that a national team for GRB was established. In coordination with Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Women Affairs, MIFTAH succeeded in elevating the capacity of the budget teams of four ministries: Agriculture, Local Governance, Culture, and Planning, to develop financial policies that guarantee equal distribution of funds to all sectors, including marginalized groups. In this regard, MIFTAH held a policy meeting with decision makers and stakeholders representing different line ministries; gaps were identified towards the government's fulfillment of adopting applicable procedures for gender mainstreaming within national plans and financial policies. Further, MIFTAH, worked on widening its scope of beneficiaries through conducting orientation and dialogue sessions on "GRB as a Tool of Social Accountability and Transparency" with the Civil Society Budget Team and The Gender Audit National Team in addition to a group of journalists.

In regards to the UNSCR 1325, MIFTAH's work in 2012 included supporting coalitions in three districts (Nablus, Hebron and Jericho). Throughout the year MIFTAH carried out networking activities among the coalitions in the form of exchange visits and the development of an action plan on operationalizing UNSCR 1325 for each coalition. This also included technical support for the trained NGOs in the West Bank, to report on cases of violations in regard to UNSCR 1325.

As a member of relevant bodies and committees, MIFTAH worked to increase awareness of the resolution and its implementation in Palestine. Among other events, policy-makers, GO and NGO-members were gathered to discuss the analytical Violence Against Women report produced as a result of the violence survey conducted in 2011 by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. MIFTAH further succeeded in coordinating a fruitful joint meeting with the OHCHR, UNFPA, OCHA, UNICEF, and UN Women, to discuss the issue of implementation of UNSCR 1325 and enhanced coordination mechanisms between CBOs and the UN system on the documenting of and reporting on UNSCR 1325 violations in Palestine.



## Policy Formulation

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Policy dialogue meetings are one of MIFTAH's ongoing activities aimed at enhancing multichannel communication among all sectors of society including government, civil society organizations, and the private sector with a view of supporting policy formulation. The meetings address pressing issues by engaging academics, ministers, decision makers and politicians in open and candid exchange of information and ideas. From these meetings a series of policy papers are published which formulates ideas, alternatives and strategies. The meetings and policy papers show the discernible impact MIFTAH has had on national decision making with many papers used by government officials as high up as the Prime Minister.

In 2012, three policy meetings were held with subsequent policy papers of the discussions and conclusions published:

### ***Chances of Implementing the Doha Agreement, March 5 2012***

The meeting discussed the possibilities of implementing the reconciliation agreement, between Fatah and Hamas, known as the Doha Declaration. Following the creation of the agreement, reconciliation was never achieved because factional interests superseded national interests. Until this date, the necessary steps for holding elections and reforming the PLO have yet to be taken. Neither have the reconciliation committees been able to begin their work. Hence, it was necessary to discuss the dimensions of this declaration, its obligations and the chances of its implementation in addition to discussing the ramifications of this lack of reconciliation on the Palestinian political condition. Finally, future scenarios, viewpoints and general policy guidelines were discussed in light of the current political and economic challenges at the Palestinian, regional and international levels.

### ***Outcomes of Egyptian presidential elections and their implications on the Palestinian situation, July 11 2012***

After the victory of Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Mursi in Egypt's presidential elections it was imperative to consider the implications of this victory on the Palestinian situation, especially in terms of reconciliation efforts and the way Hamas had impeded its progress through barring the Central Elections Committee from working in the Gaza Strip. Since the change in Egypt will no doubt have an effect on the Palestinian situation given the historical and geopolitical connection between the two, the meeting found it important to see how much Egypt can play a role vis-à-vis the Palestinian cause in light of its own internal challenges.

### ***Priorities of diplomatic action after Palestine's UN upgrade, December 27 2012***

After Palestine was granted a status upgrade at the UN to non-member observer state on November 29, 2012, it was imperative to discuss the ramifications of this achievement from various aspects. This included international relations, charters and covenants and Palestine's membership in international agencies. The meeting had discussions at the political, legal and security level in addition to issues pertaining to organization and structure towards the realization of a Palestinian state, deterrence of Israeli occupation practices and holding Israel legally accountable.

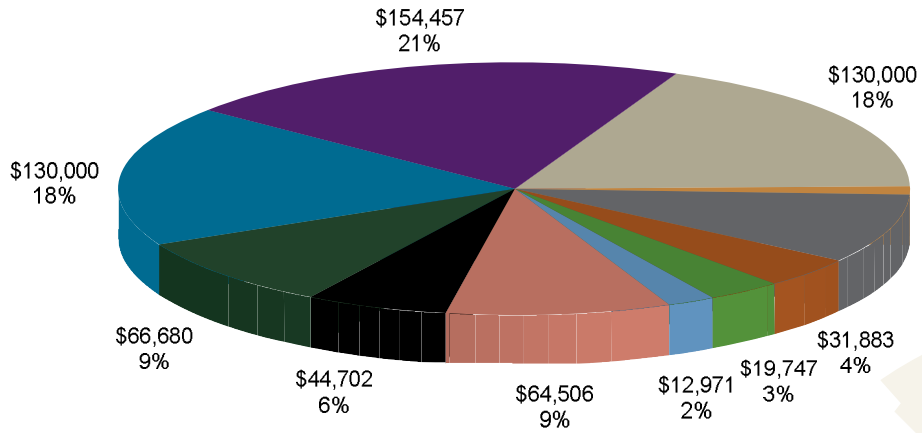
## Networking, Lobbying and Advocacy

- MIFTAH is an active member of the **Civil Society Coalition for Amending the Penal Law**. With the freezing of the PLC, the law has not changed. Nevertheless, as a result of the concerted efforts of the coalition and the women's movements, the President has issued a decree cancelling articles related to "honour killing". A draft law is being prepared by the Ministry of Justice and CSOs. This draft waiting for signature of the President.
- MIFTAH is an active member of **Al-Muntada** (NGO Forum to Combat Violence against Women). This forum coordinates the collective efforts of the different CSOs related to advocacy and lobbying in the field of violence against women.
- MIFTAH is a founding member of **AMAN Coalition** (The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity-AMAN) and has been a member ever since.
- As a member of the **Civil Society Team for Promoting Accountability and Transparency in the National Budget**, MIFTAH actively participates in the meetings and the annual conference organized by Aman Coalition for Transparency and Integrity. Citizens Index Budget is formally adopted as declared by Prime Minister Dr. Salam Fayyad.
- As an active member of the **National Committee for Palestinian Women's Employment**, MIFTAH participated in developing the Committee's Strategic Plan. The focus of the committee is reviewing laws and legislations concerning Palestinian women in the labor market from a gender perspective.
- MIFTAH is a member of the **Gender Audit Team** facilitated by ILO, MIFTAH participated in process of the gender audit conducted in the Ministry of Economy.
- MIFTAH is a co-founder of the **National Coalition for the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325**. The coalition is hosted at the General Union of Palestinian Women. The coalition advocates for developing and implementing a national plan of action for the implementation of UNSCR1325.
- MIFTAH is an active member in **Al-Multaqa** (Forum for gender and local governance). This forum aims at supporting women involvement in the decision making process at the local level through advocacy and networking.



# MIFTAH's Supporters

## MIFTAH's Contributions 2012 Total 731,601 USD



National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	NGO Development Centre (NDC)
UNDP	Oxfam Novib
UN Women	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
International Republican Institute (IRI)	The OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)
The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Ireland (MFAI)	Representative Office of Norway (NRO)
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories (KAS)	

Stay  
in  
Touch

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**To stay connected**

visit MIFTAH on Facebook, Twitter or sign up for our newsletter