

A Care-Centered Guide



to Digitally Archiving Palestine
from Librarians and Archivists with Palestine

About Us

Librarians and Archivists with Palestine is a network of self-defined librarians, archivists, and information workers in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination.



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Introduction

Digital activism is essential in this time of widespread censorship and repression, and yet we must take care not to violate dignity and privacy in the name of solidarity.

The sharing of violent and traumatic material is a deeply vulnerable act that makes public the pain, distress, and grief of people who have identities, private lives, and cultural norms and ways of caring for their dead. We must help amplify the wish of Palestinians to show the world the extent of their suffering while respecting the enormity of this sacrifice.

As activists in solidarity outside of Palestine also seek to document their struggle, we must strive to archive in a way that is ethical, transparent, and non-extractive. To this end, Librarians and Archivists with Palestine offers this guide for archivists at all levels of training and knowledge to archive Palestine ethically.

Archival Ethics

What are the values that you want to embed into your archival work?

These are examples of some archival values that you may wish to embed into your Palestinian archivism and advocacy work. Consider how these values interact or at times may even conflict with each other.

Right to Information

Uphold the right to information as essential to human liberty, and acknowledge that protecting this right is a complicated task.

Historical Preservation

Advocate for the historical and evidentiary value of archival records. Emphasize the need to preserve primary sources particularly at a time when many Palestinian archives have been destroyed.

Archival Ethics

Activism and Intervention

Exercise the power of collecting archival material as a form of historical intervention, understanding that historical and ongoing narratives may be biased, contested, suppressed, and/or incomplete. Consider how archives can be utilized in service of greater social justice aims.

Cultural Ownership

Recognize Palestinians as the rightful owners of their own historical and personal records. Attribute ownership, and seek consent and permission accordingly. If not Palestinian, embrace opportunities to consult Palestinian community members, learn from their expertise, and follow their leadership while avoiding creating additional labor for your teachers.

Archival Ethics

Responsible Stewardship

Appreciate the historical, political, sociocultural, and legal value and stakes in collecting archival material. Be mindful of your own positionality and power dynamics in the archival process, and your responsibility to the makers of the record as well as the larger historical record.

Privacy and Dignity

Acknowledge the need for privacy around sensitive and traumatic materials, and strive to preserve the dignity of the oppressed as far as possible.

Access and Use

Consider how archival materials will be accessed and used, by what audiences, and to what purpose.

Recommendations

1 Respect content from private accounts and avoid screenshotting and reposting unless the creator has given their permission. With Palestinian creators and those in solidarity being targeted and tracked through their social media presence, it is critical to respect people's wishes for privacy.

2 Avoid publicly disseminating videos or documents of activities that can be used against Palestinians such as protest or other forms of dissent, particularly of people in the West Bank who are vulnerable for arrest. Activists and protesters in solidarity are also at risk of being tracked or doxxed.

3 Boost the original post instead of reposting. Reposting can cause the original post to be taken down for copyright infringement. Instead, share the post to your story or through direct messages to amplify it.

Recommendations

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Consider the ethics of circulating footage of violence and humiliation, especially featuring nudity. Would the person in the video want this to be shared? Who shared the video originally and what are their aims? For example, scenes of the IDF assaulting and stripping Palestinian men filmed and circulated by Israeli authorities.

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When participating in archiving efforts, do not upload sensitive images or videos to public sites like Internet Archive, Vimeo, or Flickr. This could compromise the safety of the people featured. In addition, carefully vet requests for information, such as open calls for digital material, and evaluate the trustworthiness of the organizer and platform. Avoid doing harm when sharing sensitive content.

Ethical Questions

Why are you preserving this?

- ✿ Evaluate the need to preserve the material. Why is this material particularly at risk of damage, destruction, or censorship and repression? What kind of historical, evidential, informational, or cultural value does it hold?
- ✿ Consider your aims and the standards needed to achieve them: such as archiving for evidence of human rights violations to be used in criminal courts, for accountability in the public sphere, or for preserving cultural and personal materials from Palestinians. What is your collecting policy and why?
- ✿ What are your personal motivations and intentions in preserving these materials? What do you hope to achieve and why is this the most effective form of solidarity for you?

Ethical Questions

Who created or disseminated this material, and for what purpose?

Do you want to amplify their message?

- ✿ Sources may include Palestinian journalists, civilians, and resistance forces, activists in or outside of Palestine, and Israeli authorities, military, or settlers, for example.
- ✿ Consider what audience the material was made for and what its intended effects were.
- ✿ What other organizations or initiatives are already involved in archiving or disseminating this material? What is their mission, and is it more or less appropriate for them to share these materials than your organization?
- ✿ If there are other organizations involved, how can you potentially work together or support their efforts?

Ethical Questions

Do you have permission to share these materials?

- ✿ Did the creator give permission to you or a general audience to use their content? Do they have any guidelines on their page or site for how to engage with their content?
- ✿ How will you identify and document consent from creators? Are there multiple creators or stakeholders? How is ownership of materials determined?
- ✿ What ethical obligations do you have to people featured in the materials? How can you do your due diligence in trying to reach out to them or their next of kin and obtain consent?
- ✿ What are potential legal issues involved in sharing or saving this material?
- ✿ Is there an accessible way for creators or persons featured to later retract consent if they so wish?

Ethical Questions

How can this implicate Palestinians and pro-Palestinian supporters?

- ✿ Consider that Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank are under constant surveillance and threat of arrest by Israeli authorities.
- ✿ Palestinians in the diaspora and activists in solidarity with Palestine also face doxing, threats, and cyberattacks.
- ✿ If possible, obtain permission to archive the material, and be sure to consider if persons featured would want their image to be archived and shared publicly.
- ✿ Think about how you can safely save and store the material without exposing those who created or are featured in it to danger. Consider security measures or time-based restrictions on accessing the materials.

Ethical Questions

Who are you preserving for?

- ✿ Be as specific as possible. Consider potential viewers and users of the materials you are preserving.
- ✿ Who will have access to this and who will not? Who decides?
- ✿ Who is your intended audience for this material, and why?
- ✿ Consider including a statement about suggested uses and ethical approaches to the material.
- ✿ Consider implementing guidelines and restrictions to guide appropriate levels of access and uses.
- ✿ Consider including a statement about the nature of the content if it is potentially distressing or contains violent and traumatic themes.

Ethical Questions

How will it be organized and made accessible?

- ✿ What metadata standards are you using? Who gets to decide on the language that is being used? Who are you consulting and what makes them a trustworthy source?
- ✿ What archival standards are you using or meeting?
- ✿ Have you captured information about how the material was acquired and collected, from where, and why? Are you able to provide sufficient context for the material, as well for the broader historical circumstances?
- ✿ What platform and technologies will you use to make this material accessible? Have you evaluated the ethics and complicities of these technologies?

Ethical Questions

How will you practice digital security?

- ✿ What steps are you taking to proactively protect the digital security of materials?
- ✿ How can you evaluate and ensure the security of the platforms you use for archival storage, communications, and publicity?
- ✿ What is the long term stability of the platforms?
- ✿ How will you decide who has access rights to managing the platforms and master copies of materials?
- ✿ What methods will you use to securely manage and share sensitive information?
- ✿ Do you have back up copies of material and how often do you plan to back up your files?

Ethical Questions

How will you practice digital security?

- ✿ What steps are you taking to protect the archivists, contributors, and other stakeholders involved with the project? How will you preserve their privacy and anonymity if requested?
- ✿ What level of risk do members of your team consent to? How will you negotiate this collectively and equitably? How will you inform all members of your team about the risks involved with your work?
- ✿ How will you educate members of your team on digital security best practices?
- ✿ Do you have a plan for how to respond to a potential crisis? Who will be responsible for responding and what are different roles that members of your team could take?
- ✿ How often will you reflect, reassess, and refine your digital security practices?

Ethical Questions

What are long-term plans to sustain the archive?

- ✿ Who is responsible for the archive and how are tasks and responsibilities distributed?
- ✿ What labor force and sources of funding is the project drawing upon?
- ✿ What forms of psychological and emotional support will be provided to workers who encounter traumatic material?
- ✿ What institutional ties does the project have or is dependent on? What criteria do you have for institutional partners and funders?
- ✿ What will happen to the material if the archive is not sustained?
- ✿ What is needed to transfer the material between organizations?

Ethical Questions

*Are you respecting and honoring
Palestinian archival sovereignty?*

- ✿ Are digital initiatives led by or in dialogue with Palestinians?
- ✿ Are you crediting Palestinian creators?
- ✿ Is there a long term plan for you to return ownership to or share stewardship of material with Palestinians?
- ✿ How can you avoid replicating colonial dynamics in trying to help save history by taking stewardship of traumatic and sensitive material?
- ✿ Who will keep you accountable? Can you set goals and agreements to make this a tangible and consistent process?
- ✿ In addition to preserving Palestinian materials for future use, how are you working to support Palestinian liberation and self-determination in the here and now?

Glossary



Access

The ability to discover and use archival resources, or to make archives available.



Archive

A collection of historical records retained for their long-time or permanent value.



Collecting policy

A set of guidelines that outline how materials are selected and acquired in line with an archive's mission and scope.

Description

Information that helps make archival records discoverable and accessible. This could be a catalog record, finding aid, file list, index, or metadata.

Glossary

Inclusive Description

The practice of describing archival records in reparative and inclusive ways, avoiding biased and harmful language.

Metadata

Descriptive data that provides additional information and context for an archival record. This could include information about where and when the record was made, who made it, and in what format, as well as descriptions of its wider historical context.

Preservation

The act of extending the lifespan of an item through proper storage, security, and organization.



Resources

This list is intended as a preliminary, non-exhaustive guide to existing archival projects and resources, and as a starting point to explore archival possibilities.

Archival Tools and Resources:

Archiving Activism. "Community Archives - Additional Resources." www.archivingactivism.com/additional-resources.

The Blacktivists. "The Blacktivists' Five Tips for Organizers, Protestors, and Anyone Documenting Movements." www.sixtyinchesfromcenter.org/the-blacktivists-five-tips.

The Commons Social Change Library. "Activist Archiving." www.commonslibrary.org/activist-archiving-start-here.

Documenting the Now. "Tools (to help archivists, activists and researchers work with social media data)." www.docnow.io.

Resources

Archival Tools and Resources:

Just Vision. "Glossary (of nearly 250 terms related to the Israeli-Palestinian context)."
www.justvision.org/glossary.

Open Archive. "Save App."
www.open-archive.org/save.

Project STAND. "Archiving Student Activism Toolkit." www.standarchives.com/archiving-student-activism-toolkit-3.

Society of American Archivists.

"Documenting Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit."
www2.archivists.org/advocacy/documenting-in-times-of-crisis-a-resource-kit#immediateresponse.

Webrecorder. "Web archiving for all!"
www.webrecorder.net.

Witness. "Resources for fact-checkers and human-rights defenders."
www.gazamediaresources.com.

Resources

Digital Archives:

The Birzeit University Digital Palestinian Archive. www.awraq.birzeit.edu.

The Nakba Archive: www.nakbaarchive.org.

The Palestinian Museum Digital Archive.
www.palarchive.org.

**Palestinian Oral History Archive (POHA)
at American University of Beirut.**
www.libraries.aub.edu.lb/poha.

Palestine Poster Project Archives.
www.palestineposterproject.org.

**RIWAQ Centre for Architectural
Conservation.** [www.riwaq.org/archival-
collections](http://www.riwaq.org/archival-collections).

**UNRWA Photo and Film Archive for
Palestine Refugees.** [www.unrwa.org/
photo-and-film-archive](http://www.unrwa.org/photo-and-film-archive).

Resources

Digital Archival Initiatives:

Accountability Archive.

www.accountabilityarchive.org.

Arab American National Museum, "Share your activism story!"

<http://bit.ly/AANM-activism-stories>.

Archive of Silence. [www.instagram.com/ archive_of_silence](http://www.instagram.com/archive_of_silence).

Everyday Muslim. www.everydaymuslim.org.

Gaza Memory Map. [@GazaMemoryMap](https://www.gazamemorymap.com).

Hasbara Tracker.

www.hasbaratracker.com.

Index Palestine. [@index.palestine](https://www.indexpalestine.com).

International Criminal Court (ICC)

online platform for submissions.

www.justiceforall.org/icc-submissions.

Khazaaen, "The War Notebook Project."

www.khazaaen.org.

Mnemonic, Palestinian Archive Project.

www.mnemonic.org.

Resources

Digital Archival Initiatives:

Palestinian Stories.

www.palestinianstories.com.

Tirazain. www.tirazain.com/initiative.

The Tatreez Archive. www.tatreezarchive.org.

The Void Project. www.thevoidproject.org.

Digital Security Resources:

Access Now. "Digital Security Helpline."

www.accessnow.org/help.

Electronic Frontier Foundation.

"Surveillance Self-Defense." www.ssd.eff.org.

Digital Defenders Partners. "Publications."

www.digitaldefenders.org/publications.

Library Freedom Project. "Free Resources."

www.libraryfreedom.org/resources.

Tactical Tech. "Security in a Box." [www.](http://www.tacticaltech.org)

tacticaltech.org/projects/security-in-a-box.

Resources

Reports and Readings:

Librarians and Archivists with Palestine.

"Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024." www.librarianswithpalestine.org/gaza-report-2024.

Librarians and Archivists with Palestine.

"Under Pressure: Representation, Information, and The Archive in Palestine." www.librarianswithpalestine.org/archives-syllabus.

Image Sources

Librarians and Archivists with Palestine.

Flickr. www.flickr.com/groups/2216306@N20.

Librarians and Archivists with Palestine

 librarians2palestine@gmail.com

 www.librarianswithpalestine.org