



expanding and enhancing the electronic intifada

2006-2008

Proposal for Funding of The Electronic Intifada

The Electronic Intifada (EI), an educational program of the Middle East Cultural and Charitable Society, a 501(c) 3 tax-exempt organization, recently celebrated a significant milestone: the fifth anniversary of the site's launch in 2001. Initially founded as a media monitoring tool for activists desiring accurate depictions of and fair debates about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, EI has rapidly transformed into a unique, internationally recognized resource known for dependability and integrity; high quality, reliable, and up-to-date reporting; incisive commentary and compelling graphics as well as music, literary and video features. With greater resources, EI could achieve much more at a time when ensuring the free flow of unbiased news and fine-grained information from on-the-ground in Palestine is imperative.

As it enters its sixth year, EI has become an institution, a media phenomenon respected in North America, Europe, and the Middle East for carving out new – and urgently needed – terrain for comprehending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a rich variety of perspectives and in multiple contexts. What distinguishes EI from other internet sites focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and critiques of the roots and repercussions of this deepening conflict, is EI's fair, clear, and humane depictions of Palestinians' lives at a time of immense suffering, profound pressures, and uncertainty. Enhanced awareness and accurate information can play a key role in changing public attitudes and media depictions of injustices affecting Palestinians.

A half-decade after EI's launch, however, the necessity of providing in-depth coverage of Palestine has only increased. The numbers of dead and injured continues to grow. The Apartheid Wall remains a tourniquet cutting Palestinians off from the life-blood of their land, communities, and freedom. Orchards and water resources disappear daily. Economic pressures are severe and growing, even leading, in some areas to malnutrition. Much of this injustice and impunity

prevails with the direct or indirect complicity of the United States and the European Union, all underpinned by a biased presentation of the conflict in the mainstream media. Disregard and misperceptions of the profound injustices confronting Palestinians, as well as the International Community's failure to protect Palestinians' human rights, have sadly become the norm.

EI's efforts must be redoubled in the face of discouraging developments which, according to a 2004 advisory ruling of the International Court of Justice concerning the Wall – which EI was the first media source to report on – gravely contravene International Humanitarian Law. In December 2005, the European Union decided to suppress the publication of an alarming and accurate report documenting the devastating effect on Palestinian communities of the Wall and the settlements that Israel continues to build in Occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank. "When the barrier is completed," the document stated, "Israel will control all access to East Jerusalem, cutting off its Palestinian satellite cities of Bethlehem and Ramallah, and the West Bank beyond," thus creating irreversible facts-on-the-ground that will rule out a Palestinian state."

Yet EU foreign ministers decided to shelve the report for fear that it might hurt Israeli sensitivities at a time when the basic necessities of Palestinians' lives are increasingly hard to attain. This is but one example of how logic, commonsense and fairness have been absent from the international community's approach to the conflict. While diplomats continue to talk of a "peace process" that has accomplished little, the hard realities of life under occupation are simply swept under the media carpet and hidden from the view of citizens in democratic societies that fund and thus enable these human rights violations to continue.

In a world of averted gazes, EI continually strives – through reference materials, live reporting, incisive editorials, arts coverage, and even satire -- to bring the Palestinian narrative front and center, emphasizing the human dignity of Palestinians at a time when their humanity has been denied by conventional narratives, be they journalistic, academic, or diplomatic.

EI's coverage and features have expanded over the last two years from a focus on political and human rights issues to encompass a wide and rich spectrum of Palestinian artistic expression: films, paintings, literature, music and theatre. These compelling aspects of Palestinian reality are usually obscured by stereotyped and sensationalist coverage of the conflict. EI's Arts and Culture Editor, Maureen Clare Murphy, recently affirmed, "Palestine is a nation defined as much by culture as by politics." Thus, "exporting Palestinian art is particularly important because while the US, which can be considered a third party to the conflict, shares a sense of cultural identity with Israel, it holds very negative perceptions of Palestinians."

EI's continuing and creative approaches to deflating stereotypes and dispersing public ignorance have been sustained on a spare budget and largely volunteer

efforts. Our annual expenses are less than the yearly salary of a single foreign correspondent. Although we often feel that EI's aims are far from being realized, we are also buoyed by the knowledge that our website has a growing influence on changing depictions of Palestinians and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. EI's impact is increasingly clear in the mainstream media, in classrooms and newsrooms, in popular discourse, and in some policy-making circles. In 2005, The Electronic Intifada saw over two million visitor sessions and received numerous accolades and citations in a variety of media outlets. The original material EI produces continues to be utilized by journalists, activists and educators all over the world.

Clearly, EI's goals and aspirations have increased dramatically since the site's founding in 2001. But new and crucial projects have stretched our human resources, necessitating additional levels and forms of support.

One of EI's primary goals for 2006 is to produce a multimedia DVD for distribution to journalists, editors, media producers, community leaders, activists, and others concerned with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. EI's DVD will include a detailed introduction to the history of the conflict and key aspects of the current situation on the ground, as well as map collections and photo galleries from some of the photojournalists whose work appears on EI.

The DVD will feature extensive Arts, Music and Culture section showcasing a range of audio and visual materials from Palestinian and Palestine-related artists. This invaluable resource will provide a unique and professional-grade tool that groups and individuals can employ to advance and deepen understanding of the conflict from a human rights perspective.

Palestinian dignity, though continuously subjected to immense pressures, is sustained by the riches of Palestinian culture and history. EI is sustained by your continuing interest, support, and concern for justice in one of the world's oldest and most damaging conflicts. As EI marks its half-decade anniversary, please help us to continue putting the "electricity" into the Electronic Intifada.

Thank you for your time and interest,

The EI Team

Ali Abunimah
Arjan El Fassed
Laurie King
Maureen Clare Murphy
Nigel Parry

The Electronic Intifada: Mission Statement and Methodologies



Above: Homepage of the Electronic Intifada found at <http://electronicintifada.net>

The Electronic Intifada (EI) is a not-for-profit, independent publication committed to comprehensive public education on the question of Palestine, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the economic, political, legal, and human dimensions of Israel's 39-year occupation of Palestinian territories. EI provides a needed supplement to mainstream commercial media representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Launched in February 2001 at <http://electronicintifada.net> As a pioneering on-line resource for media monitoring, analysis, and criticism, EI has progressively expanded its scope of coverage into new domains: reference materials, live reporting, editorials, arts coverage, and satire, all with the aim of presenting an accessible, credible, and responsible Palestinian narrative of developments to the North American and European public.

This proposal outlines EI's 2006-2008 budgetary needs (US\$280,000) for research, editing, investigative reporting, web development, photography and video offerings as well as the production of a multi-media DVD. These

enhancements will increase and diversify EI's unique educational and media innovations.

As the leading Palestinian portal for information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, EI receives one quarter of a million visitors each month. Widely respected for providing sober analyses, eloquent editorials, and breaking news reports from trusted on-the-ground reporters, EI fills readers' needs, as well as a key media niche, in an unparalleled fashion. No other Palestine-related site can match EI's credibility, high quality of writing and visual appeal, or rapid response to events on the ground.

***"[EI is]... something quite spectacular ... a highly professional site."
--- Financial Times***

Although EI addresses the prevailing pro-Israeli slant in US media coverage by offering information from a Palestinian perspective, our views on the conflict are based firmly on universal principles of international law and human rights conventions. Our reporting and analyses are built on a solid foundation of documented evidence and careful fact checking.

Created through the largely voluntary efforts of four well-known writers and activists for Palestinian rights -- both Palestinians and internationals -- EI has received favorable reviews in such respected publications as the *Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, *The Nation*, *Tune Reader*, and *the Jerusalem Post*. EI's founders are regularly contacted by the mainstream media, such as the BBC, PBS, MSNBC, CBC, CNN, Fox News and dozens of radio stations around the world to provide commentary and analysis on events in the Middle East.

During periods of increased conflict, the number of visitors to EI dramatically increases. During Israel's invasion of the West Bank in March/April 2002, EI's website saw over 600,000 visits in less than one month. As Israel's "Operation Defensive Shield," the biggest military operation in the West Bank since 1967, began, Israel barred foreign journalists from entering Ram Allah, creating a news blackout in that key Palestinian city. The official Palestinian Authority website (then found at www.pna.net) was knocked off the Internet during the events, so the pna.net domain was pointed at EI's website, a tacit recognition of high levels of faith in EI's credibility and professionalism.

***"...very professional, user-friendly and well written...the Palestinian CNN."
--- The Jerusalem Post***

In response to the news blackout, EI launched *Live from Palestine, the Electronic Intifada Diaries Project*, featuring continually updated and dramatic accounts from local residents detailing life under a punishing curfew and military invasion. For a period of two weeks, these were literally the only voices heard from Ramallah. On April 2nd, *The Washington Post* featured EI's diaries project on its

Newsbytes technology wire service. On April 5th, *The Daily Star* (Lebanon) said of the project:

“Intended as a news source, the [EI] has slowly been transforming into a work of art, a human testimony of collective grief and a will to survive... Diaries and eyewitness accounts, from Anne Frank’s to Elie Wiesel’s, have long been the way that we understand history....In the end, Live From Palestine does not read all that differently from a novel of fragments, each of the different voices coming together to make sense of a collective tragedy. The site is different, though, in large part because of its remarkable immediacy. It is art in progress, history in the making, a document not discovered in an attic but available simultaneously as the events themselves occur.”



A large part of EI’s appeal is the wide variety of content offered by the site. EI’s News & Analysis section includes Opinion/Editorial, Diaries, Israel Lobby Watch, Activism, Human Rights, and Development. EI’s Media Analysis section includes material examining the Role of the Media, Coverage Trends, Journalists in Danger, Action Items, Letters to the Media, journalists’ contact information, and EI in the Press. EI’s entertainment content includes a growing and lively Arts, and Music & Culture section.

“Intended as a news source, the site has slowly been transforming into a work of art, a human testimony of collective grief and a will to survive...”
--- The Daily Star

In June of 2003, EI’s four co-founders were awarded the “Voices of Peace” media award at the 20th National Convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington DC. EI co-founders Nigel Parry and Ali Abunimah accepted the award on behalf of the founders of EI and its sister site, Electronic Iraq. The award was presented to EI and e-Iraq “in recognition of EI’s commitment to bringing the concerns, voices, and experiences of the Iraqi and Palestinian peoples to audiences the world over *via* the Internet.”

Embarking on new dimensions of communications media, EI launched a Multimedia section in June of 2003. Aiming to establish and consolidate links with activist groups around the world and on the ground in Palestine, EI offered an increasing variety of video and audio offerings depicting daily life for Palestinians and reports on solidarity events from the global movement for Palestinian rights around the world.

To facilitate ease of use by researchers and journalists, EI introduced its valuable BY TOPIC section in mid-2003, a significant upgrade of the site’s original “Reference Library.” BY TOPIC is an important reference tool as it offers an

alphabetically organized, browsable interface to all the content on EI. Visitors to EI are now able to enter the BY TOPIC section and browse a single page that lists all our news reports, human rights analyses, opinion/editorial pieces, and multimedia relating to that topic, as well as external links to useful, related resources on other websites.

The end of 2003 saw the launch of Electronic Intifada Version 3.0 on 10 December, International Human Rights Day. The new version represented a major upgrade of EI, adding the following new features:

- Stronger visual design
- New BY TOPIC directory
- Improved navigation
- New search tools
- News feeds from other sites

In a press release introducing EI v.3, co-founder and designer Nigel Parry noted: “Since we launched The Electronic Intifada in February 2001, millions of people all over the world have used our site as a resource for the latest news and in-depth analysis about Palestine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In barely three years, the scope of our coverage has grown – elucidating not only the fundamentals of the conflict, but human rights, activism, the pro-Israel lobby, Arts, Music and Culture; and the good, bad and ugly of the mainstream media. Today EI is recognized as the leading web resource on Palestine. A major factor in EI’s success is that it offers a window through which people in Palestine and in the Diaspora can make their voices heard.”

***"[EI is] a democratic bombshell, a fascinating look between and behind the lines."
--- The Web Review, ITV***

EI’s journalistic and technical methodologies have advanced and highlighted the role of the internet to inform the public and build networks of citizen-activists to confront one of the most pressing challenges of US foreign policy and international peace: the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. An intifada is all about political changes rooted in profound paradigm shifts and personal commitments to a more humane and just political order. EI has deftly combined high quality journalism with the latest advances in Internet technology to offer a unique resource, an electronic uprising, on a minimal budget.

EI co-founder Ali Abunimah summed up the purpose and impact of EI when he said, upon receiving the ADC “Voices of Peace” award in 2003:

“We think of these websites as smart weapons. They're the kind of smart weapons that don't kill people. We hope that they are the sort of weapons that will make a small contribution towards freeing people in Iraq and in Palestine, and freeing people in the United States from the deceptions which were used to railroad this country into war and which are used to promote myths in which Palestinian violence is the only obstacle to peace.”

With a clear information gap to fill and a steadily rising visitor base to serve, EI began 2006 with plans to make its unique content more accessible and to develop new resources, such as the EI DVD. EI's readership now includes editors, journalists, diplomats, academics, activists and researchers from around the world. EI co-founders have been called upon as experts for PBS and MSNBC news programs.

"...credited with making the pro-Palestinian cause more prominent with the media in recent years".
--- News Day

As the Israeli occupation is about to enter its fifth decade, human rights indicators on the ground show no movement, bar a steady worsening of conditions. The need is greater than ever to provide information and analysis of developments from a trusted source: The Electronic Intifada.

EI's Key Funding Needs for 2006-2008

From its founding in 2001 until today, EI has managed to produce a universally respected and highly valued supplementary news website on a "shoestring" budget. As EI enters its second half-decade of education and analysis, additional funding is needed to continue and to enhance the high-quality offerings that have become synonymous with EI. The categories and estimates of funding for projects appear below:

Special project: The EI DVD

The Electronic Intifada is currently working on the production of a multimedia DVD for distribution to journalists, editors, producers, politicians, entertainment industry contacts, activists, and others interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The EI DVD will include introductions to the history of the conflict and to key aspects of the current situation on the ground, including the razing of Rafah in Gaza, and the effect of Israel's West Bank Barrier.



Sample screen in the Photographic Portfolios section of the EI DVD.

Other resources will include map collections and photo galleries from some of the photojournalists whose work appears on EI, as well as some general information about EI. As well as educational materials and activist resources, the EI DVD will include an extensive Arts, Music and Culture section, will offer features, videos,

and MP3s showcasing a range of material from Palestinian and Palestine-related artists.

As with the rest of EI, the production quality of the DVD will be extremely high, resulting in a professional-grade tool that you can use to help others understand more about the conflict from a Palestinian perspective. While much of the production costs of the actual DVD have been covered by a generous donation from The Jerusalem Fund, the extremely labor-intensive process of compiling, editing, and producing both the content segments and final DVD master still requires funding, as does the costs of marketing and distribution to target audience.

Investigative Reporting

Mainstream media, whether print or electronic, rarely delve beneath the official stories or surface realities of the Israeli occupation, regional and global geostrategic realities, and the politics of media representation. A budget for special investigative reporting projects would give EI a critical edge in coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and attract not only a wider readership, but high-quality and well-known writers and reporters as well. EI co-founders, and other volunteers, have already done investigative reporting, and uncovered some important news “scoops,” and continue to do so, but additional investigative reporting capacities are a key need.

Research

Producing media analyses and reference materials is a very labor-intensive process. In EI’s current semi-voluntary stage, attention to research often detracts from regular updates of various parts of the site and vice versa. EI needs to contract researchers/writers for short-term (1-5 days) and medium-term (1-4 weeks) projects, as well as for ongoing reference creation projects. EI must also pay for services such as Lexis-Nexis database access. Adding both researchers and research tools will greatly increase EI’s research output and general credibility as an information source

Editing

EI does not currently have a budget for any comprehensive editing of material posted on its site. Similarly, there is a need for ongoing and active solicitation of articles from quality sources. EI must be able to pay for editing services in order to sustain a proactive search for fresh, compelling, and well-written material on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the pursuit of reprint agreements with respected publications, and the presentation of materials in the highest quality manner. This will ensure EI’s credibility as an information source while enabling us to reach an increasingly wider readership.

Advertising and Marketing

EI wishes to reach as wide and as diverse an audience as possible, and thus seeks to promote its online news service through conventional advertising online, in print, on the television and radio, and in poster and billboard campaigns. EI's advertising strategy will incorporate a combination of public education and striking visuals, offering the website as a source for further information. While EI already has the skills to produce professional advertisements in all of these formats, we lack the funds to enable us to do effective advertising

Training

In mid-2002, EI launched a vastly reorganized and professionally redesigned website with a dynamic "backend" that allows EI's co-founders and trusted writers/photographers throughout the world to directly publish material at a "top speed" of more than 50 articles a day. This system allows content addition to be delegated to several non-technical editors, who must receive proper training; features printable and e-mailable pages that encourage dissemination, and permits the syndication of automatically-updated web headlines – all of which immediately increased EI's baseline number of monthly visits from 120,000 to one quarter of a million. Uploading stories, photographs, and video and audio offerings consumes co-founder valuable researching and writing time, however. EI requests funding to train and compensate at least two individuals to assist the co-founders in maintaining the site on a weekly basis.

Translations

EI has received increasing requests to translate key articles and features of the site into Spanish, French, Dutch and Hebrew. To ensure the quality and consistency of translations into these languages, and thereby extend EI's offerings to non-English speaking publics, EI must hire experienced translators.

EI Project Income/Expenses 2002-2005*

EI Income/Expenses 2002		EI Income/Expenses 2003	
1/1/02 through 12/31/02		1/1/03 through 12/31/03	
Category	1/1/02- 12/31/02	Category	1/1/03- 12/31/03
Income/Expenses		Income/Expenses	
Income		Income	
Commissions on web sales	303.53	Commissions on web sales	1,590.24
Donation	46,228.48	Donation	54,059.64
Repayment of Loan to EI	3,000.00		
Total Income	49,532.01	Total Income	55,649.88
Expenses		Expenses	
Ads	80.00	Ads	1,241.61
Bank Charges	131.99	Bank Charges	138.28
Consulting:		Consulting:	
Training	120.00	Content Research	5,500.00
Web Design	14,900.00	Graphic Design	1,060.00
		Training	350.00
Total Consulting	15,020.00	Web Design	8,840.00
Entertainment	160.00	Total Consulting	15,750.00
Fees	38.50	Cost of Goods:	
Office Equipment and Materials:		Promotional Materials	2,045.00
Computer hardware	9,685.20	Total Cost of Goods	2,045.00
Computer software	850.82	Entertainment	387.50
Materials	335.42	Insurance	563.23
Other	298.41	Internet DSL	1,204.61
Total Office Equipment and Materials	11,169.85	Office Equipment and Materials:	
Postage and Shipping	404.31	Computer hardware	14,636.31
Repayable Loan	3,000.00	Computer software	673.83
Site hosting and domain names	1,265.25	Materials	699.96
Subscriptions	148.50	Video Equipment	409.52
Telephone	151.21	Total Office Equipment and Materials	16,419.62
Travel	96.38	Photography	139.00
Total Expenses	31,665.99	Postage and Shipping	753.97
		Rent Paid	300.00
Total Income/Expenses	17,866.02	Site hosting and domain names	6,476.67
		Subscriptions:	
		Lexis-Nexis	677.03
		Subscriptions - Other	155.46
		Total Subscriptions	832.49
		Telephone	2,124.90
		Travel	1,208.75
		Total Expenses	49,585.63
		Total Income/Expenses	6,064.25

EI Income/Expenses 2004		EI Income/Expenses 2005	
1/1/04 through 12/31/04		1/1/05 through 12/31/05	
Category	1/1/04-12/31/04	Category	1/1/05-12/31/05
Income/Expenses		Income/Expenses	
Income		Income	
Commissions on web sales	656.96	Commissions on web sales	685.58
Donation:		Donation	36,589.15
Grant	10,000.00		
Donation - Other	42,716.71	Total Income	37,274.73
Total Donation	52,716.71		
Total Income	53,373.67	Expenses	
Expenses		Ads	69.48
Ads	600.00	Audit Costs	843.75
Audit Costs	505.31	Bank Charges	252.42
Bank Charges	110.90	Consulting:	
Consulting:		Content Research	2,647.50
Content Research	1,100.00	Web Design	21,574.85
Web Design	21,173.85	Consulting - Other	2,000.00
Total Consulting	22,273.85	Total Consulting	26,222.35
Cost of Goods	1,020.00	Entertainment	244.42
Entertainment	90.00	Event Sponsorship	2,500.00
Event Sponsorship	1,000.00	Fees	15.00
Insurance	267.05	Internet DSL	682.08
Internet DSL	1,722.28	Office Equipment and Materials:	
Office Equipment and Materials:		Computer hardware	1,319.40
Computer hardware	3,497.81	Materials	507.39
Computer software	511.18	Other	88.80
Materials	694.15	Video Equipment	207.50
Other	1,295.30	Total Office Equipment and Materials	2,123.09
Video Equipment	902.65	Photography	1,030.03
Office Equipment and Materials - Other	187.32	Postage and Shipping	1,088.75
Total Office Equipment and Materials	7,088.41	Site hosting and domain names	5,477.15
Photography	993.91	Subscriptions:	
Postage and Shipping	1,631.08	Lexis-Nexis	2,544.00
Printing & Copying	83.50	Subscriptions - Other	120.00
Site hosting and domain names	5,189.70	Total Subscriptions	2,664.00
Subscriptions:		Telephone	1,185.47
Lexis-Nexis	2,289.22	Travel	1,608.85
Subscriptions - Other	360.00	Total Expenses	46,006.84
Total Subscriptions	2,649.22		
Telephone	1,857.20	Total Income/Expenses	-8,732.11
Travel	3,957.60		
Total Expenses	51,040.01		
Total Income/Expenses	2,333.66		

* EI project has been audited by an external auditor in 2005. This audited report is available in a hardcopy.

El Project Proposal Budget 2006-2008 (USD)*

	2006	2007	2008
Income			
Donations -Individual	45,000	50,000	55,000
Grants	41,000	40,000	40,000
Other	1,200	3,000	3,000
Starting Balance	12,000	10,860	10,145
Total Income	99,200	103,860	108,145
Expenses			
Personnel-website and consulting	38,000	40,000	42,000
Personnel-administrative and research	25,000	26,250	27,560
Office Equipment - computer hardware	5,000	5,000	5,000
Office Equipment - computer software	1,000	1,000	1,000
Office Equipment - materials	700	800	900
Postage and Shipping	1,200	1,500	1,600
Site hosting and domain names	6,000	6,600	7,000
Subscription services	2,600	3,000	3,000
Travel	2,500	2,625	2,750
Internet DSL	1,260	1,260	1,260
Bank Charges	180	180	180
Audit Costs	900	900	1,000
Advertising and sponsorship	2,000	2,500	2,500
Telephone	2,000	2,100	2,250
Total Expenses	88,340	93,715	98,000

* This budget is excluding in-kind support and matching expenses valued at \$ 57,600 per year.