

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last six years, Akevot has garnered recognition as Israel's expert on accessing and utilizing archives to advance human rights and peacebuilding efforts. We have successfully addressed and stood up against unlawful barriers to accessing government archives and built a reputation for doing this important work. After careful analysis we have determined that now is an opportune moment for Akevot to expand our public impact by articulating and sharing the stories we have uncovered in the archives.

The stories told in the archives are essential to share for the same reasons that they have been hidden away from the public eye. The stories buried in the archives tell of fraught and little-known events and mechanisms that problematize or even contradict "*the official story*" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Bringing these stories to light enables discussions, which have been prevented by the concealment of these records, to finally take place thereby opening space to reflect and rethink the past, present and future of the conflict.

Building on our continued success obtaining declassified documents, in 2021 Akevot plans to continue to expand the visibility of these documents and to use them as building blocks for a more nuanced, fact-based history that has long gone unheard. Our digital human rights archive, the Conflict Records Digital Repository (CRDR) now holds approximately 270,000 documents. In the coming year, we plan to continue to expand the CRDR, to fight for declassification, and to improve access to government archives. Akevot is now well-positioned to additionally expand our impact on the Israeli public. We will use innovative and engaging digital formats to articulate and disseminate the stories we have uncovered in the archives with the aim to transform discourse and open critical reflective space in Israel. We have designed this project to tell these never before heard stories from the archives using videos, online story-maps, written briefs, podcasts, and webinars. These digital materials are designed to be easily shareable and make a significant impact on available educational materials about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and open space for critical reflection and debate in Israel.

This project will involve two key programs: 1) declassifying and obtaining files at ISA and other archives that relate to human rights in Israel-Palestine and 2) disseminating contextualized declassified archival documents and the stories they tell with the Israeli public through engaging online tools. In doing so, we will directly address the following challenges:

- 1. Concealment of Archival Records:** The vast majority of Israel's government archives are still unavailable to the public. Increasing public access to archival records requires research and direct declassification requests made to the respective archives. These requests are often denied in contradiction with the applicable law. When this occurs, it is also important to fight these denials through the legal channels that exist in order to hold the archives accountable to Israeli law. This most frequently means filing appeals but can require high court petitions in serious cases.