

The
Freedom
Initiative





The Freedom Initiative

2021
Annual
Report

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Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

I am so pleased to share with you the Freedom Initiative's 2021 annual report. Since I joined the Freedom Initiative in December, I have been getting to know the incredible team here at Fi, and meeting with stakeholders and members of the community to learn more about the unique role that Fi plays in Washington, DC and around the world.

I have been a human rights advocate for two decades, working both inside and outside the system to effect change. I was drawn to Fi not only because it is a top-notch research and advocacy organization, but also because of the specific focus on individual cases of political prisoners, working directly with families to ensure that those in power hear their voices. In many ways, it feels like a return to my roots as a defense lawyer, and I am excited to lead this amazing team of researchers, advocates, communications professionals, and many more as we seek freedom for political prisoners in the Middle East and North Africa.

2022 is already proving to be another exciting year for Fi! We are slowly returning to in-person events, sharing our work with supporters and friends. We are expanding our team and ensuring that growth is sustainable. We are developing new partnerships and maintaining our existing partnerships in the U.S. and around the world. And we are looking inward, taking care of ourselves so that we can devote our working hours to helping others.

We are so pleased that you are joining us on this journey.

**With gratitude,
Andrea Prasow**

Program Highlights

In 2021, the Freedom Initiative served as a beacon of hope for tens of thousands of men, women, and children whose lives are torn apart by unjust detention in the Middle East and North Africa. Egypt and Saudi Arabia, our countries of focus, saw continued deterioration in their human rights situation, rule of law, and renewed economic strife, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Against this backdrop, Fi worked at the highest levels of decision-making power to influence U.S. and other international policy to ensure that jailed rights activists, political dissidents, religious minorities, and others remained at the center of their agenda.

While Fi has had many successes throughout the year, we have provided a short list of our most significant here:

Setting the Policy Agenda



Fi successfully lobbied Congress to include new legislative language requiring the Secretary of State to formally report on the Egyptian government's pattern of harassment, threats, and arbitrary detention against American citizens and their family members.



Fi worked as part of a coalition of human rights and policy organizations to ensure that \$75 million in U.S. security assistance to Egypt remained conditioned on release of political prisoners.



Fi advanced the Saudi Protection of Dissidents Act through the House of Representatives, elevating the concerns of Saudi human rights defenders in Congress.

Training the Next Generation of Rights Advocates



Fi trained more than 200 new advocates from 30 states on how to advance a rights-based agenda in the U.S. government's approach toward Egypt.



Fi began to build its presence in community and youth dominated spaces through public events and collaborations.

Shedding Light on Abuses through Research



Fi launched its inaugural report, "The Tip of the Iceberg: Impact of Egypt's Wrongful Detention Practices on U.S. Persons and Families in 2020", to wide acclaim.



"Friend or Foe: Saudi Arabian Government Repression in the U.S. and Worldwide," was the first report of its kind to explore the Kingdom's widespread transnational repression.

"We've seen, I think, just in the last hours the Freedom Initiative and the good-faith work that it's doing to shed light on this important issue."

- Secretary of State Antony Blinken



'Collison' by Merheb Merheb
Campaign Submission
Ideas Don't Die

Providing Hope... Against All Odds



Fi provided pro-bono strategic advising to the families of 12 Saudi and 12 Egyptian detainees.



Fi worked with UN experts to file secure communications with detaining governments. We saw the release of five detainees in 2021 and we were able to reunite one additional individual with family outside of Saudi Arabia.



Fi leveraged our relationships with civil society partners to maximize efforts to free and secure better treatment for hundreds more detainees.



With Amnesty International, Fi garnered over 100,000 signatures on a petition to Free Ramy Shaath and held a public rally in Washington, DC, calling for his freedom. Worldwide efforts like these led to Ramy being freed in January 2022 and reunited with his wife in France after nearly three years in detention.



Mobile Display
'#SaveTheirLives' Campaign
Washington, DC

Social Impact Campaigns:

Humanizing the Wrongfully Detained and Raising Awareness



Fi launched the "Ideas Don't Die" campaign that encouraged creative expressions and output. The campaign included a global creative competition and an art exhibit. The campaign received over 1,000 submissions, garnered over 1 million impressions, and led to an overall audience growth of 175% on Fi's social media platforms.



Fi launched an awareness campaign about medical negligence in Egyptian prisons. The campaign received over 26 million total impressions on its hashtag, over 200,000 unique visitors to a landing page, and over 3,000 signatures on a petition letter to Secretary of State Anthony Blinken.



Fi memorialized the legacy of Egyptian-American Moustafa Kassem, who died tragically of medical negligence in Egyptian detention in 2020. Fi installed a mural and memorial in NYC and DC, respectively, and launched a new Fi logo that features Kassem's silhouette.



'One Struggle, Many Faces'
Mural
Astoria, NY



Fi led the #FreeSadhan campaign, humanizing the plight of Saudi prisoners of conscience and calling for his release. After an impactful campaign, Abdulrahman AlSadhan was allowed to make contact with the outside world for the first time in over a year. The campaign's primary video received over 70,000 views.



Fi's campaign 'Freedom First', launched in collaboration with Amnesty International, brought awareness to the brutal human rights abuses committed by Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS), and the regime's attempts to whitewash them. With multiple activations, the campaign acquired over 45 million impressions through digital campaigns, events, nationwide advertisements, public displays, and celebrity endorsements.



Fi's growing presence in the media, with policymakers, and in academic spaces and communities alike, has strengthened our success in applying a multi-pronged approach to advocating for the wrongfully detained in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.



'Jamal Khashoggi Memorial'
Public Display
Washington, DC



*Public Display
'#unmuteUS' Campaign
Times Square, NY*

Operating Highlights

Though Fi has continued to work remotely, our staff's commitment has never been more present! Fi has reduced operating expenses significantly and brought our experts out of consultation and into our fold. Our new Executive Director, Andrea Prasow, is committed to constant improvement, ensuring our staff are fully supported so that they can achieve greater impact.

In 2021, the Freedom Initiative strategically expanded our staff while reducing external expenses to work more impactfully towards our mission.

During 2021, Fi continued to expand our team, as well as our impact.



We instituted a new Community Engagement program to build relationships with those who support our mission or who work in spaces directly or tangentially related to our mission, and to empower new collaborations and constituencies in their support of human rights.



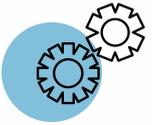
We built up our Development Department to pursue new streams of financial support in institutional, corporate and organic spaces, as well as several new Communications and Campaigns team members who produce the bulk of outward facing information about our work. We have continued to expand and define our brand through our output and through collaborations with partners in the global human rights ecosphere and we have instituted stronger protocols within our Research efforts to assure our reputation as a leading producer of thorough and relevant research on issues of detention in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.



Fi is also proud to have laid the groundwork for its internship program, with the firm belief that new voices must be given opportunity and access to this work if it is to succeed.



Each of these improvements was made to increase the connective and financial strength of our work and to support our long-term sustainability.



Our success in our mission is entirely dependent on the work that we produce and the outcomes we achieve – namely through the numbers of detainees that we support through their release.

Financial Highlights

Through the generous support of individual donors and institutional partners, Fi secured funding to expand our staff of experts, who are the core of our success, in order to expand our research and casework output, advance our digital campaigns, mobilize support within communities, and ramp up our advocacy efforts with policymakers.



Statement of Financial Position

The Freedom Initiative finds itself in a strong financial position thanks to the core funding provided by our institutional partners and major donors.

We expanded our development goals and started our Community Engagement department with an eye towards securing long-term ideological and financial support. We built relationships with important institutions that not only believe in our work and impact but that are partnering with us to realize our collective visions for freedom and justice.

The Freedom Initiative also secured funding for an endowment that will provide financial strength to ensure that our staff and work are secure into the future as we continue to build our relationships with individual donors, secure corporate partnerships and employee giving programs, and initiate strong connections to new grant-making institutions.

Despite the endowment, our fundraising goals for 2022 reflect the entirety of our budget and necessitate that we secure financial support from a wide range of sources to continually strengthen our position as a forward-facing organization with deep impact.

Independent Auditor's Report Summary

Our 2021 Independent Auditor's Report is complete! Please request a copy by contacting us at info@thefreedomi.org.

Statement of Comprehensive Income (Profits and Losses)



Expenditures:

\$1,899,729.83



Revenue:

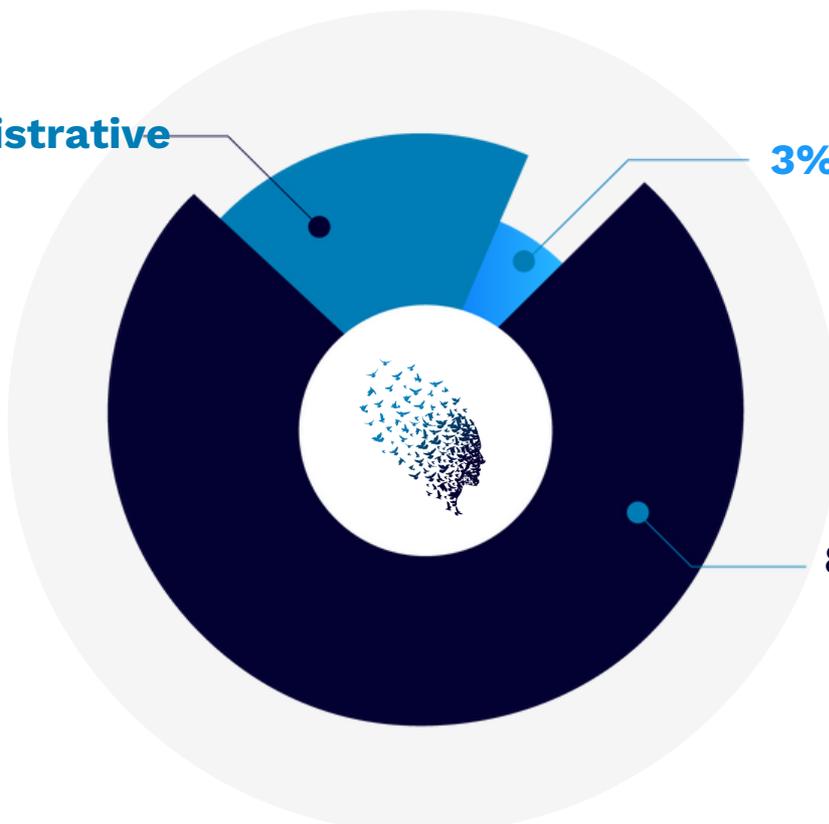
\$4,416,452.27

Programmatic expenses:

15% administrative

3% fundraising

82% programs



Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets for the Year Ended December 31, 2021

SUPPORT & REVENUE	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
Contributions and grants	\$4,356,067	\$560,000	\$4,916,067
Interest income	167		167
Other revenue	200		200
Net assets released from donor restrictions	62,596	(62,596)	
Total support and revenue	4,419,030	497,404	4,916,434
EXPENSES			
Program Services	1,688,058		1,688,058
Supporting Services:			
- General and Administrative	173,788		173,788
- Fundraising	26,656		26,656
Total supporting services	200,444		200,444
Total expenses	1,888,502		1,888,502
Change in net assets before other item	2,530,528	497,404	3,027,932
OTHER ITEM			
Extinguishment of debt	60,385		60,385
Change in net assets after other item	2,590,913	497,404	3,088,317
Net assets at beginning of year	1,157,928		1,157,928
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$3,748,841	\$497,404	\$4,246,245

Statement of 2022 Budget

The Freedom Initiative has streamlined our expenses through a reevaluation of our consultancy contracts, restructured our staff and administration, and supported our departments in becoming more collaborative. These changes have increased our capacity and focus and have enabled us to expand the tangible products of our work.

Our Research and Casework Department has ramped up its output, planning to produce three in-depth reports this year, in addition to leading a first-of-its-kind effort to explore legal mechanisms to hold rights abusers to account with critical partners, and identifying ways to support our detainees and their families.

Our Communications and Campaigns team has brought graphics and advertisement experts in-house with the goal of optimizing and growing our audience and engagement. Our Advocacy team is expanding its reach and influence in constituent and coalition groups, and in Congress, and is working to build tools aimed at accountability-based advocacy.



***Moustafa Kassem Memorial
Busboys and Poets
Washington, DC***



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***'Maspero Massacre Anniversary'
Memorial Digital Campaign***

Looking Ahead

Entering 2022, Fi will continue to leverage the relationships we have in communities around the world, civil society, and the U.S. government alike to free the wrongfully detained in Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the following ways:

- Expand Fi's advocacy to global capitals and audiences to push for a more cohesive policy agenda toward the region that centers human rights;
- Broaden the scope of our focus to include cases of political prisoners in other countries in the region where greater advocacy attention is needed;
- Reach constituencies and new diaspora communities in an effort to mobilize them towards key human rights issues;
- Widen the support we provide to detainees and their families, both during and after detention, to address financial, psycho-social, legal and other immediate and long-term needs;
- Train and support advocates through internal and external programs to provide opportunities for individual growth and organizational expansion.

Conclusion

At the Freedom Initiative, we believe in the power of hope.

2021 was a year full of challenges, but also of hope. We have seen a renewed focus on human rights and greater collaboration among those dedicated to promoting human rights. All our work is designed to achieve a single outcome: freedom for political prisoners and detainees. To achieve that goal, we work with like-minded partners in civil society, government, academia, and the private sector who have a compatible vision to advocate for the wrongfully detained. We believe that this vision can only be achieved by working strategically with others, so we welcome and engage with partners in a variety of ways, including long-term partnerships, shorter-term strategic alliances, one-on-one relationships, and active participation in networks, coalitions and with community groups alike.

With your continued support and engagement, we will continue our work to shed light on the social, political, and economic cost of wrongful detention and our tireless advocacy on behalf of detainees.

Our heartfelt thanks from all of us at the Freedom Initiative.



'Remember Rabaa'
1000 Flag Public Display
Egyptian Ambassador's Residence Washington, DC

