ANNUAL PLAN 2026 FOUNDATION VIRTUAL NAKBA MUSEUM

1. organization, board and objectives

1.1. general

Name of foundation: Virtual Nakba Museum
Established: 8 January 2025
Cultural ANBI: since 8 January 2025
Registered place of business: Rotterdam
RSIN: 867464860
Chamber of Commerce registration: 96089849
Bank account: NL57 ABNA 0141 8074 23
Website: https://virtualnakbamuseum.org
E-mail: SimonVnakbaM@gmail.com ← e-mail of the treasurer
The foundation is exempt from filing VAT, corporate income tax and payroll tax returns.

1.2. board

The foundation has an active board consisting of a maximum of seven persons.
At present, three members are in office – they are also the founders of the foundation:
• Benji de Levie – chair;
• Nazha Rustom – secretary;
Simon Jonker – treasurer.
Board members receive no remuneration for their activities. Any expenses incurred may be reimbursed if desired.
At present, there is no reason to expand the board.

The board may be supported by both an Advisory Board and volunteers.
The Advisory Board may advise the board both on request and unsolicited, and where possible also assist in establishing and maintaining relevant contacts. Members of the Advisory Board receive no remuneration for their activities. Any expenses incurred may be reimbursed if desired. In 2026, the first members of this board will be formally approached.
Volunteers will provide more structural support, such as assisting in establishing and maintaining contacts, setting up and maintaining the website, posting messages on social media, indexing and translating the many texts related to the objects captured in images, supporting the treasurer, and whatever else may come their way. Ultimately, an average workforce of three and a half volunteers is envisaged. Volunteers may in due course, if desired, receive the so-called "volunteer allowance". Any expenses incurred may be reimbursed if desired.
There is currently one active volunteer: Susanne de Klerk, supporting the treasurer. She has waived the volunteer allowance.

1.3. objective and new approach

The foundation's objective (Article 2 of the Deed of Incorporation) is:
a) *to optimally make visible, protect and disseminate the cultural heritage of countries and peoples in a virtual manner, in particular when this heritage is vulnerable, such as, in the first place, the cultural heritage of Palestine;*
b) *to promote worldwide awareness of the aforementioned cultural heritage;*
c) *to carry out all further actions that are related to or may be conducive to the above, in the broadest sense.*

The underlying idea was that if the remaining available heritage were made visible in its own context as broadly as possible, this would fuel indignation about ethnic cleansing to such an extent that the willingness to take action against it in some way would increase.
This without prejudice to other ways of drawing attention to the existing injustice.

The idea of doing this through a physical museum was quickly rejected. Such a physical museum could only be visited on location, a limitation that conflicted with our desire to reach as many people as possible. Moreover, it did not feel right to remove objects from the environment to which they originally belong. Another argument was that, albeit virtually, granting access to the often emotionally created small-scale museums (in halls, living rooms and tents in refugee camps) would lead to greater engagement by the "visitor".

Therefore, a virtual museum was chosen. The objective became to photograph small-scale private museums in Palestine and of refugees in neighboring countries, and to use this material to create a virtual "accessible" museum.
However, the large-scale Israeli destruction of Gaza and, in part, the West Bank, as well as the ongoing genocide, made even this plan impossible (so that the total "harvest" of 2025 consists of only one museum: the Palestine Museum & Cultural Centre in safe Bristol (England)).
We therefore continue to look for suitable existing museums that have digitized their museum or exhibition themselves and for which a public link is available that can be referenced.

Consequently, the objective for 2026 is to take a completely different approach. Instead of capturing existing museums, an entirely digital virtual museum will be "built". The exhibition spaces of this museum will then be digitally filled with relevant material to which we can gain access.
This material can be acquired in various (digital) ways: by making recordings in existing museums, but also by receiving digitized material from various museums. This approach also makes it possible, on a very small scale, to make recordings of available cultural heritage in people's homes, among individuals with the desired cultural background. A variant of this is, for example, inviting the Palestinian community in the Netherlands to curate its own (digital) exhibition.

In addition, if the opportunity arises, efforts will continue to capture existing museums after all. A promising option in this respect is the new Natural History Museum in Bethlehem (Palestine). This museum is expected to open around spring 2026 and will, in addition to biological specimens, also pay attention to cultural heritage – which is where our primary focus lies. The surrounding area is also interesting, as Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh and his team demonstrate how green and well-cultivated Palestine was before 1948.

Depending on progress, an initial start may also be made this year on capturing other cultures that have been eradicated through ethnic cleansing or where this is still ongoing.

2. the approach concretized

2.1. greater involvement of descendants of the cultural heritage to be depicted

For capturing the envisioned existing small-scale museums, little to no structure was required. What mattered was identifying those museums, making an appointment, capturing them visually, and ultimately making them visually accessible. It therefore did not matter whether or not people directly involved, other than the owners of the museums, were part of the approach. As a result, work was done with a Dutch company, a Franco-German photojournalist, and volunteers born in the Netherlands.

This method, however, is unsuitable for the new approach. Because this involves, in effect, the (albeit digitally virtual) construction and furnishing of a museum, the layout and structure of an

existing museum are no longer leading. Instead, that layout and structure must be developed in advance.

The aim is a neutral museum, with exhibition halls in which all attention can be focused on what is being shown: frames with photos and videos, possibly also drawings and paintings by Palestinian artists, oral history, audio fragments, (images of) official documents, texts, 3D objects (such as archaeological artifacts), and anything else that can support the message. Frames in the first digital hall will be used to refer to the themes/topics addressed (each of which will have its own exhibition space, with expansion where necessary to accommodate all desired material).

For this reason, it is now important that directly involved individuals from the relevant countries participate, as well as that specialists in various fields are available. Without immediately making things overly complex, it is nevertheless useful—depending on the themes—to have several working groups, with some form of mutual coordination. Experience shows that the organic emergence of such working groups is often the best guarantee of success.

A valuable reference in this regard is the 2016 business plan *Al-Nakba Museum Amsterdam*, as drawn up at the time by directly involved individuals such as Nawal Al-Baz, Sonja van den Ende, Chaima Nbigui, Gretta Duisenberg, Dina Zbidat and Paul Lamp.

Another valuable reference appears to be the digital material developed by The Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, *Gaza remains the story*. By indicating how much physical space is available, the Birzeit museum adjusts the dimensions of the material to be printed. In this way, a carefully designed presentation becomes available. In theory, this material could of course also be exhibited in a digital virtual museum. A variant is to make a digital recording of one of the many physical exhibitions, but for now YouTube offers at best a kind of summary: *the exhibition in Diss, Norfolk, England*.

2.2. topics/themes

The aforementioned 2016 business plan *Al-Nakba Museum Amsterdam* was based on eight themes:
*   Philistines in the region, Canaanities from the 14th century BC, the arrival of the Romans.
*   Palestine since the eighties of the 19th century until the Balfour Declaration, 1917.
*   An overview of the threatened World Heritage in Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine.
*   The Nakba, continuing since 1948, with theft of land, water, minerals and house-demolishing.
*   Palestine until the UN Partition Plan of 1947.
*   Palestine heritage with a comprehensive view of Palestine life before Nakba.
*   War crimes committed against Palestinians, Apartheid Wall, and blockade on Gaza, ethnic cleansings.
*   The Right of Return (UN Resolution 193 III).

The business plan elaborated these themes into four exhibition halls:
*   Hall 1: Before Al Nakba
    This hall will include archive material, archeological artifacts of Palestine before Al Nakba. It will be a remembrance room of Palestine's history in terms of culture and belonging:
    *   Jerusalem/Al-Quds/World heritage of Palestine;
    *   Palestinian heritage with a view of Palestinian life before Al Nakba;
    *   archive material include photographs, passports issued under the British Mandate clearly stating Palestine as the Nationality, coins, stamps and artifacts.
*   Hall 2: Al Nakba
    This hall will be the main room of the museum as it will include historical information and facts on how Al Nakba started, the agreements that led to it, the massacres and ethnic cleansing, refugee status:
    *   British Mandate and the Zionist congress;
    *   Belfour declaration and the migration of Jews;

- May 1948;
- Refugee camps in 1948 and after.
- Hall 3: After Al Nakba
  This hall wil be a continuation of the previous room, focussing on the refugee status in the main refugee camps (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan) as well as the continuous wars and assaults on Palestine until this day. This room will be updated with new occurrences that take place:
  - *1967 war, extended occupation, massacres and illegal settlements;*
  - First and Second Intifada;
  - life in refugee camps;
  - Apartheid Wall, demolitions of houses, check points;
  - Gaza Blockade and wars;
  - timeline of main modern events;
  - May 1948;
  - refugee camps in 1948 and after.
- Hall 4: Hope
  This hall will be dedicated to the contemporary Palestinian life that is able to live in dignity despite war and occupation. It will be a hopeful room showing the everyday life of the Palestinian beyond the destruction, to give people an opportunity to connect with the human:
  - contemporary art, poetry, literature and design;
  - historical narrative highlighting the notable artists;
  - showcase cultural foundations and platforms in Palestine;
  - showcase contemporary works that combine the traditional with the modern.
- Hall 5: Temporary Exhibitions
  This hall can include exhibitions that are more in-depth about historic events, contemporary art as well as BDS achievements. Examples of temporary exhibitions:
  - Naji Al Ali / Ghassan Kanafani;
  - The Art of Intifada;
  - BDS: settlements and opposition.

Notably, this approach also incorporates Palestinian feelings—something that must be carefully taken into account. This provides an additional incentive for a well-balanced composition of the working group(s).

The digital approach of the Birzeit museum is based on the following key components:
- Cultural Heritage and Identity: Showcasing Palestinian cultural resilience through art, traditional practices, and historical archives that exist despite destruction.
- Contextualizing Genocide: Framing the current war as a continuation of a long history of occupation, displacement, and blockade since 1948.
- Voices from Gaza: Incorporating personal stories from residents, including children and families, to highlight the human cost of the conflict.
- Global Solidarity and Action: Encouraging international audiences to understand, support, and actively participate in preserving Palestinian cultural identity.
- Digital Archive: Utilizing a digital archive to preserve and share images of Gaza's history and daily life.

For reference, the digital material made available is shown in reduced form at
https://palmuseum.org/sites/default/files/GazaRemainsTheStory/GRTS_Print_Guide.pdf
The images are sufficiently sharp to be easily enlarged, and with a print screen even further enlarged without significant loss of quality. As such, they are more than sufficient and even suitable (pending the possible definitive material from the Birzeit museum) to already create an initial digital virtual version for our own museum.

To ensure that truly all relevant topics are addressed, the following is provided as a kind of catalyst: a gross list of topics/themes that could in some way be addressed:
- earth sciences (evolution, fossils, geological formations, minerals)

- (world) history including many (now destroyed) historical buildings, world heritage, UNESCO, europeana.eu, PalestineRemembered.com, https://www.loc.gov/item/2006675875/, the Aramco bi-monthly magazines (see e.g. https://archive.aramcoworld.com/index/BackIssues1960.aspx?utm_source=chatgpt.com and https://archive.aramcoworld.com/index/BackIssues1970.aspx?utm_source=chatgpt.com and many more sources)
- population including origin, genealogy, DNA – borders cutting across tribal structures and cultures
- origins of Christianity – many old authentic (destroyed by Israel) churches (and notably, while many Christians support Israel, many Israelis hate Christians)
- language & literature incl. poetry
- war & occupation, administrative detention, laws of war, unsubstantiated accusations, sovereignstate, statelessness, passport, laissez-passer, geopolitics, politics
- Gaza and the West Bank
- colonization by many countries in many countries
- genocide & ethnic cleansing
- opinions of Jewish Israelis on the destruction of Palestine and Palestinians
- why so many Western countries are so opposed to Palestine and Palestinians
- United Nations (incl. structure, e.g. veto of the Security Council, refusal of countries to pay contributions both to the UN and to missions), mutual agreements, power, repression & intimidation, geopolitics
- Palestinian politics
- law & justice, Peace Palace, International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, recognition / non-recognition
- boycott of Israeli products including weapons, boycott of academic and other cooperation, why Israel *is* part of the Eurovision Song Contest, why Russia *was* excluded from the World Cup
- communication, free press, newspapers and magazines, websites, denial of access to journalists, influence & framing (e.g. rebels, terrorists or freedom fighters), fake news
- humanitarian aid: refusal to allow aid goods, refusal of UNRWA, organizations such as Doctors Without Borders only if they violate staff privacy
- rural and urban development, housing, design, cookware & household goods
  Palestine was once a green, cultivated country; had its own airport, port and central bank; cities were well designed and the economy steadily improved
- clothing
- cuisine – long history, authentic (such as kebab), halal, za'atar
- economy, work & income, tourism, pensions
- agriculture, livestock & fisheries – e.g. dates, olives/olive groves, watermelon, oranges
- education & science – the Arab world was far ahead of the Western world
- pro-Palestine organizations such as BDS and The Rights Forum
- infrastructure & transport
- health, leisure, sports & recreation
- infrastructure & transport
- art, culture & traditions
- music (including indigenous instruments) & dance (such as dabke)
- pottery, ceramics, sculpture
- tapestries
- religion & philosophy of life & society
- famous persons plus Handala
- future.

The first task of the working group(s) is to arrive at a (more or less) definitive layout of the digital virtual museum: a distribution of all (digital) material across a number of virtual spaces ("halls") to be further defined.

Presenting everything purely chronologically seems challenging. Possibly two "tracks" could offer a solution: one chronological (as proposed in the business plan) and another thematic, with certain topics elaborated separately (such as clothing, including fashion, tatreez and embroidery).

Both the sequence and the selection of themes/topics, as well as their interrelation, constitute a first task for the working groups. This results in an initial clustering that forms the basis for the division into exhibition spaces. Subsequently, content development can begin.

A good guiding principle here is: *not much is good, but the good is much*. In other words, opting for a limited, optimal and impactful presentation per topic/theme. (After all, the website can provide many references to other museums, collections, documentation and information.)

This also means that attention must be paid to the accompanying website—not to duplicate everything, but to support the displayed material, such as:

- an index enabling quick navigation of the digital virtual museum;
- an overview of (for now) all known Palestine museums;
- references to publicly available visual material;
- photo pages showing the same locations before and after destruction;
- possibly an agenda of Palestinian events – local/international?
- possibly some educational materials for schools;
- possibly references to sites where (Palestinian) products can be purchased;
- encouragement to donate to / sponsor our museum; possibly something like "Friends of …";
- experiments with "bringing back to life" destroyed historical buildings using old photographs and film footage;
- an online encyclopedia (for which www.palquest.org is a good example).

2.3. concretization

The experiences of 2025 make us somewhat cautious about articulating the ideal approach and what we aim to have achieved by the end of the year. Nevertheless, these are in any case the ingredients:

- first, an indicative outline of such a museum, which makes thinking about it easier;
- then establishing the first working group, i.e. approaching its members;
- subsequently determining the layout of the museum by themes/topics/additional elements;
- and then, with all this in place, approaching existing museums to request cooperation with visual material.

This should lead by the end of 2026 to a clear basic presentation that can be further developed in the years thereafter, accompanied by an evaluation of whether we are still on the right track.

Taking everything into account, a division into 12 themes — that is, rooms — is complete and therefore suitable both to be implemented as a stand-alone structure and to serve as the basis for a possible optimal division into 8 rooms. In both the 12-room and the 8-room variants, "sub-rooms" can be used.

The advantage of a virtual digital museum over a virtual physical museum is that no choice needs to be made between the complete (12) and the "compelling" (8) presentation. Since everything required for the 8-room presentation is already included in the 12-room presentation, the 8-room presentation can simply be added as a separate approach.

The following cross-cutting perspectives are present in all rooms:
- gender & care: who carries continuity, knowledge, and survival;
- class & economy: who loses land, labor, and security;
- internal plurality: differences within Palestinian society.

In addition, three methodological frameworks apply:
- knowledge production is never neutral;
- not everything can or may be shown;

- the visitor is not an outsider.

All of this leads to the following division into 12 themes:

Room 1 — Palestine as Place
Function: Ontological and geographical anchoring
Content (unchanged, deepened):
> Geography, ecology, water
> Arabic place names
> Long durée of habitation

New emphases:
> Multiple Palestines (regional, social, ecological)
> Place names as carriers of knowledge (epistemic violence in their erasure)

Meta-layer:
➡️ Knowledge does not begin with conflict, but with presence.

Room 2 — Life Before Colonization
Function: Social and cultural normality
Content:
> Villages and cities
> Agriculture, food, crafts
> Religious diversity
> Oral history

New emphases:
> Gender as infrastructure (care, transmission, food, textiles)
> Class differences between city/village, landowners/workers
> Internal diversity explicitly named

Meta-layer:
➡️ Culture is not folklore, but the organization of life.

Room 3 — Ottoman Palestine
Function: Historical governance and social ordering
Content:
> Land use (waqf, miri, melk)
> Administration and registers

New emphases:
> Palestinians as political and legal subjects
> Regional differences in governance and economy

Meta-layer:
➡️ Modernity does not begin with Europe.

Room 4 — The British Mandate and Colonial Infrastructure
Function: Colonial transition
Content:
> Cartography
> Legal restructuring
> Land registration

New emphases:
> Cartography as an instrument of power

Knowledge production by colonial institutions
Exclusion of the Palestinian voice in administration

Meta-layer:

➡️ Colonization is an administrative process before it becomes military.

Room 5 — Zionist Colonization

Function: Settler-colonial process
Content:

Land expropriation
Parallel institutions
Demographic engineering

New emphases:

Class: proletarianization and labor dependency
Gender: rupture in social structures
International networks and legitimation

Meta-layer:

➡️ 1948 has a long prelude.

Room 6 — The Nakba (1948)

Function: Central rupture
Content:

Expulsion
Destruction of villages
Violence

New emphases:

Ethnic cleansing as a structural process
Different experiences (region, class, gender)
Testimony and silence

Meta-layer:

➡️ Not everything is visible, but everything happened.

Room 7 — Destroyed Villages and Confiscated Land

Function: Spatial aftermath
Content:

Destroyed villages
Confiscation laws
Landscape replacement

New emphases:

Ecology as a cover for violence
Cartographic erasure
Memory in absence

Meta-layer:

➡️ Absence is also a form of presence.

Room 8 — Refugees and Camps

Function: Displacement as lived reality
Content:

Camps
UNRWA
Generations

New emphases:
> Camps as social systems
> Gender roles in exile
> Class and inequality within camps

Meta-layer:

➡️ Temporariness can be imposed permanently.

Room 9 — Cultural and Epistemic Destruction

Function: Erasure of knowledge
Content:
> Archive destruction
> Language suppression
> Museological exclusion

New emphases:
> Role of Western academia, media, and museums
> Who was allowed to speak, who was not
> The public as part of this system

Meta-layer:

➡️ What is not archived is denied.

Room 10 — Occupation and Fragmentation (after 1967)

Function: Ongoing colonial structure
Content:
> Settlements
> Checkpoints
> Wall
> Permit systems

New emphases:
> Economic dependency
> Spatial disciplining of daily life
> Continuity of colonization

Meta-layer:

➡️ The Nakba is not a closed chapter.

Room 11 — Diaspora and International Regimes

Function: Global dispersal and law
Content:
> Diaspora
> Right of return
> UN resolutions

New emphases:
> Inequality within the diaspora
> Politics of recognition/denial
> International responsibility

Meta-layer:

➡️ Exile is a global condition.

Room 12 — Continuity, Resistance, and the Virtual Nakba Museum

Function: Present and future

Content:
> Cultural, social, and digital resistance
> Counter-archive
> Digital reconstruction

New emphases:
> The Virtual Nakba Museum as method
> Visitor as witness and transmitter
> Ethics: what is not shown, and why

Meta-layer:

➡️ This museum is itself part of history.

If desired, this structure can therefore be condensed into the optimal 8-room model:

Room 1 — Palestine as a Living Place
(= merger of Room 1 + parts of Room 3)
Contains from the 12-room model:
> Room 1: Palestine as Place
> Room 3: Ottoman Palestine (contextual)

Content:
> Geography, ecology, place names
> Long durée of habitation
> Palestine as an organized society before European colonialism

Why this works:
Ottoman Palestine functions here as *proof of continuity*, not as a separate historical chapter.

Room 2 — Life Before the Rupture
(= Room 2, deepened)
Contains:
> Village and urban life
> Agriculture, food, crafts
> Gender & care
> Internal plurality

New emphasis:
> Class and regional differences explicitly visible

Function:
Normalizes Palestinian life before 1948 as the reference point for everything that follows.

Room 3 — Colonial Reordering
(= merger of Room 4 + Room 5)
Contains:
> British Mandate
> Cartography and legislation
> Zionist colonization
> International legitimation

Why combined:
> The Mandate and Zionist colonization form one continuous colonizing system.

Analytical core:
Colonization as an administrative, legal, and spatial process — not as sudden violence.

Room 4 — The Nakba (1948)
(= Room 6, untouched)
Contains:
> Mass expulsion
> Destruction of villages
> Ethnic cleansing

Important:
> No reduction possible or desirable
> Remains an autonomous core room

Meta-layer:
> Multiple experiences
> Testimony and silence

Room 5 — Destroyed Space
(= merger of Room 7 + spatial aspects of Room 10)
Contains:
> Destroyed villages
> Confiscation of land
> Forests, parks, ecological camouflage
> Spatial fragmentation

Why this works:
> Directly connects 1948 to ongoing landscape consequences.

Room 6 — Refugees, Camps, and Diaspora
(= merger of Room 8 + parts of Room 11)
Contains:
> Refugee camps
> UNRWA
> Diaspora
> Generations in exile

New clarity:
> Camp ≠ endpoint
> Diaspora ≠ separate from the Nakba

Analytical core:
Exile is both local and global.

Room 7 — Cultural and Epistemic Erasure
(= Room 9, deepened)
Contains:
> Archive destruction
> Language suppression
> Museological exclusion
> Western knowledge production

New emphasis:
> Visitor as part of the knowledge system

Function:
> Legitimizes the existence of the Virtual Nakba Museum as counter-archive.

Room 8 — Continuity, Resistance, and the Present
(= merger of Room 10 + Room 12)
Contains:
> Occupation after 1967

Fragmentation of daily life
Cultural, social, and digital resistance
The Virtual Nakba Museum itself

Closing position:
The visitor as witness
Ethics of showing and not-showing.

2.4. Working Groups

For privacy reasons, not much more can be mentioned here than that a number of individuals will be contacted with the request to contribute to the development of our virtual digital museum. Such participation may range from acting as the "lead" for the design of a specific room to "only" — though no less importantly — periodically reviewing progress.

The approach is partly traditional. This means that for each subject/theme, a storyboard will be created in which the layout of the respective room or sub-room is indicated in advance.
At the same time, however, the virtual digital approach makes it possible to easily test the design in practice: what does not work can be effortlessly moved or temporarily stored.

2.5. Acquisition of Visual Material

This will more or less develop organically, as several working group members have connections with archives, museums, and universities. To support this process, a longlist of archives, museums, exhibitions, and similar institutions relevant to our purpose will be made available.

3. budget

Because the year 2025 turned out completely differently than expected, this naturally also affected the budget. Given the new approach, the budget for 2026 therefore looks very different:

bedrag	total costs and income, both incidental and structural
0	TOTAL
625	minimum structural costs for the foundation
8.575	minimum incidental costs for programming and recordings
1.000	minimum structural costs for programming and recordings
10.200	minimum income

bedrag	minimum structural costs for the foundation
625	TOTAL
250	bank fees AbnAmro
150	accounting software (€-Boekhouden)
225	directors' liability insurance

bedrag	minimum incidental cost for programming and recordings
8.575	TOTAL
1.500	one-time recordings and processing of an existing physical museum
1.500	purchase and expansion of gallery software to make it suitable for virtual presentation
2.000	programming of the virtual museum, including te entrance and 3-D functionality
500	cost for facilitating working groups (but no remuneration/fees)
1.750	7 x digital recordings of existing exhibitions (in museums, etc.)
1.050	7 x processing/editing of digital recordings for the digital virtual museum
275	unforeseen costs

bedrag	minimum structural costs for programming and recordings
1.000	TOTAL
1.000	hosting and rental of domains, forwards and websites, including the digital museum

bedrag	income
10.200	TOTAL
10.200	minimum donations 2026

Rotterdam, 19 February 2026.