

What is NEO Philanthropy and Does It Support Hamas-Affiliated Groups?



Source: [Neo Philanthropy](#)

Executive Summary

NEO Philanthropy is a New York–based philanthropic intermediary that has provided verified institutional support to pro-Palestinian/Gaza-focused organizations through fiscal sponsorship, grantmaking, and political infrastructure. It also serves as a hub that helps translate pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel advocacy into organized political influence and is tied to projects such as MPower Change and the NEO Philanthropy Action Fund.

Over the years, NEO funded the Charity & Security Network, the Palestinian American Medical Association (PAMA) and Baitulmaal, the latter two reportedly aligned with senior Hamas figures and supportive of families of Hamas terrorists.

The significance of NEO is therefore not limited to grantmaking. Through its relationship with Linda Sarsour’s MPower Change and the Action Fund’s electoral activity, **NEO works within a pipeline that can carry activism into real-world interventions.**

NEO is thus relevant not just because it allegedly funds highly controversial, terror-aligned organizations, but also because it is part of the infrastructure through which the **pro-Palestinian advocacy network seeks measurable political outcomes.**

Key Findings

- NEO Philanthropy’s importance lies in its ability to convert organizational support into political consequence: its networks have moved from advocacy and “Uncommitted” pressure campaigns to direct involvement in recent Democratic primaries through MPower Action-aligned candidate support.
- Organizations like NEO and the groups it funds, including Linda Sarsour’s MPower Change, may have a part in the Democratic party becoming more radical in recent years. Another example is its support of Darializa Chevalier, the DSA member and

community organizer who won the June 23, 2026, Democratic primary in NY-13 despite her extreme views.

- NEO Philanthropy funded organizations allegedly linked to Hamas and other terror groups.
- NEO is not only controversial because of the grants it gives, but because it also provides fiscal sponsorship to organizations that challenge counterterror restrictions (e.g. The Charity & Security Network).
- NEO's support infrastructure extends into a broader ecosystem that includes individuals and campaigns associated with extremism and antisemitism. For example, CAIR's Minnesota and California chapters received NEO grants. CAIR, which was listed as an unindicted co-conspirator in the 2008 Holy Land Foundation terror-financing trial, continues to be under congressional scrutiny for its ties to terror groups and was designated by Texas Governor Abbott as a foreign terror organization in November 2025.

Background

NEO Philanthropy, Inc. (EIN 13-3191113) is a New York City-based 501(c)(3) public charity founded in 1983 as "Public Interest Projects," and rebranded as "NEO Philanthropy" in 2008.¹ It works as a philanthropic intermediary, so it does not hold its own endowment for grantmaking, but **money flows in from funders and out to grantees.**

Its three core lines of business include:

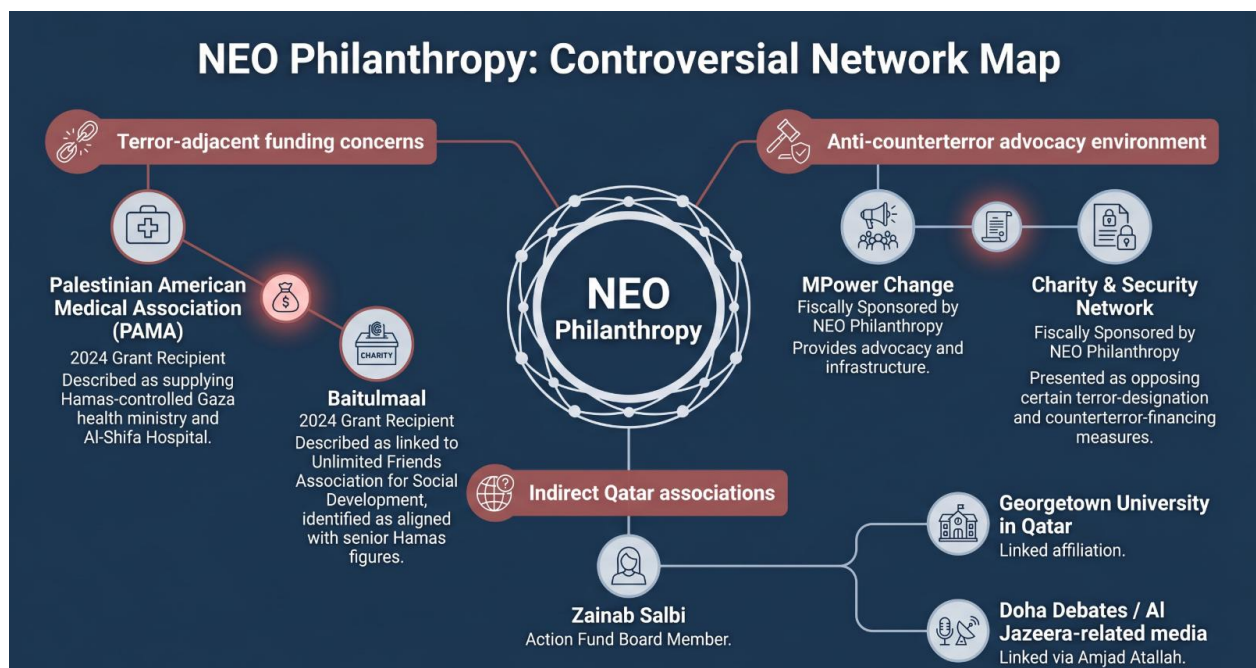
1. **Collaborative ("pooled") funds** — multiple donors pool money around an issue, and NEO manages the funds. Its two flagship funds are the Four Freedoms Fund which focuses on immigrant rights and the State Infrastructure Fund which focuses on voting/civic participation.
2. **Fiscal sponsorship** — NEO acts as the legal/financial "home" for projects that lack their own 501(c)(3) status by handling finances, HR, legal, and compliance for a fee. It has hosted 60–75 projects.
3. **Donor services / strategic partnerships** — NEO offers and manages donor-advised funds and tailored donor initiatives.

NEO Philanthropy Action Fund is the 501(c)(4) lobbying and election-related advocacy arm of NEO Philanthropy, providing financial support to left-of-center lobbying and election-related advocacy groups including Asian Americans Advancing Justice, NextGen Climate Action, and Make the Road Action.²



Source: [NEO Action Fund](#)

While NEO Philanthropy handles deductible charitable and educational work, NEO Philanthropy Action Fund engages in political advocacy and unlimited lobbying with non-deductible funds. This political arm is the key to understanding why NEO deserves scrutiny beyond the nonprofit sector: **NEO's structure allows advocacy networks associated with controversial projects to operate alongside lobbying and election-related activity.** NEO is therefore not a passive fiscal sponsor, but a platform through which aligned movements can scale from messaging and coalition-building into electoral influence.



NEO Financials

NEO Philanthropy, Inc.

The organization grew exponentially over a decade — from about \$30.2M in 2010 to \$83.4M in 2018, then into the \$130–169M range between 2021–2024.³

Fiscal year (Dec)	Revenue	Expenses	Net income	Net assets
2024	\$168,890,598	\$184,937,212	–\$16,046,614	\$164,920,430
2023	\$167,648,220	\$128,270,774	+\$39,377,446	\$180,341,005
2022	\$132,029,874	\$114,068,624	+\$17,961,250	\$141,235,940
2021	\$144,358,199	\$105,641,701	+\$38,716,498	\$127,047,807

NEO is funded by institutional foundations, donor-advised funds, and individual major donors. It reportedly partners with over 100 funding groups, including the following:

- **Open Society Foundations (OSF)** - OSF was founded by George Soros and has provided grants to terror-linked organizations including U.S.-sanctioned groups Al-Haq and Al Mezan, and anti-Israel organizations including Human Rights Watch (HRW), IfNotNow (INN) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP).^{4 5} OSF has been under congressional scrutiny in recent years for donating millions to terror-linked and terror-designated groups in the U.S., including Antifa.⁶
- **Atlantic Philanthropies (AP)** - AP is a major foundation providing support to international left-wing advocacy organizations. Over the years, it has provided funds to anti-Israel organizations such as the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and the New Israel Fund (NIF).⁷
- **Ford Foundation** – The Ford Foundation has provided grants to several highly biased NGOs, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), the Center for Constitutional Rights, Oxfam, and Christian Aid.⁸
- **The Knight Foundation** – The Knight Foundation provided a \$4M grant to NEO to establish an immigrant serving “American Dream Fund.” It also helped fund the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University to advocate for the First Amendment right to participate in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. In 2024, the Institute condemned the deployment of police to break up anti-Israel protests at universities, calling it an assault on free speech and claiming the use of law enforcement to break up the protests set a bad precedent.⁹

NEO Philanthropy Action Fund, Inc.

The Action Fund’s revenue peaked at about \$21.2M in 2021 (due to the election cycle) and settled to about \$9–10M annually thereafter. From 2009 - 2012, Atlantic Philanthropies’

Atlantic Advocacy Fund was a dominant early funder, contributing \$22 million to seed the Action Fund (then “Public Interest Projects Action Fund”). Over the years, the Action Fund has also made grants to entities such as the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, America’s Voice, the American Business Immigration Coalition Action, and the Black Progressive Action Coalition.¹⁰

Fiscal year (Dec)	Revenue	Expenses	Net income	Net assets
2024	\$9,483,466	\$13,434,770	–\$3,951,304	\$9,462,388
2023	\$9,101,710	\$6,111,295	+\$2,990,415	\$13,427,757
2022	\$10,358,810	\$9,003,292	+\$1,355,518	\$10,419,497
2021	\$21,155,351	\$15,381,074	+\$5,774,277	\$9,056,424
2020	\$17,574,130	\$21,099,910	–\$3,525,780	\$3,282,147
2019	\$13,226,182	\$15,328,281	–\$2,102,099	\$6,807,927
2018	\$14,397,520	\$8,452,395	+\$5,945,125	\$8,911,765

NEO Programs, Funds, and Fiscally Sponsored Projects

NEO Philanthropy funds various programs and organizations across several fields, including controversial organizations with alleged ties to terrorism and extremism.

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

CAIR Minnesota received a \$81,250 grant from NEO in 2024,¹¹ while CAIR California received a \$20,000 grant that same year.¹² CAIR is a Washington D.C.-based non-profit organization with branches all over the U.S. that ostensibly focuses on responding to anti-Muslim incidents. However, CAIR was also listed as an unindicted co-conspirator in the 2008 Holy Land Foundation terror-financing trial.¹³

Key CAIR leaders have expressed openly antisemitic and anti-Israel rhetoric. CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad was previously involved in a now-defunct organization that openly supported Hamas and met with members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Following the Hamas-led October 7 attack on Israel, many CAIR leaders defended or justified the massacre, arguing it was a “legitimate right” of the Palestinians to “resist the occupation.” Awad claimed that Israel did not have a right to defend itself after the attack and that he had been “happy” on October 7 “to see people breaking the siege.”¹⁴ In October 2025, CAIR Ohio

Director Khalid Turaani participated in an online event about October 7 with U.S.-designated Hamas leader in Europe Majed al-Zeer.¹⁵

Baitulmaal

Baitulmaal received a \$50,000 grant from NEO Philanthropy in 2024.¹⁶ Baitulmaal is a Texas-based, 501(c)(3) Islamic charity that provides humanitarian aid in Muslim-majority regions, including the Gaza Strip. According to an Israeli government report, its co-founder Sheikh Hasan Hajmohammad, funded a Hamas charitable organization in Jenin. Its director, Mazen Mukhtar, claimed that “suicide bombings are an effective way to attack the enemy and continue Jihad.”¹⁷

Baitulmaal is also allegedly a member of the Union of Good, a charity sponsored by radical Egyptian cleric Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi that was designated in 2008 by the U.S. Treasury as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Group (SDGT).^{18 19} It is also reportedly one of the charities that sponsors American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) conferences that openly approve of “resistance” against the “Zionist state.” Baitulmaal is also tied to another Gaza-based charity, Unlimited Friends Association for Social Development (UFA), that “is closely aligned with senior Hamas leaders” and “openly states that it channels funds from Baitulmaal to the 'families of martyrs of the Palestinian people.’”²⁰

The Charity & Security Network (C&SN)

The Charity & Security Network is one of NEO Philanthropy’s fiscally sponsored projects. It advocates for the activity of international NGO in areas where U.S.-designated terrorist groups are present, with a focus on the Palestinian territories.²¹ In November 2023, C&SN urged the Biden administration not to designate the Houthis, a Yemeni militant faction allied with the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, despite the fact that the Houthis targeted American ships and wish “death to America” as part of their slogan.²² C&SN also opposed H.R. 6408 11, which would terminate the tax-exempt status of organizations that support terrorists, claiming it “creates a tool that may be manipulated against NPOs by bad actors with political motives.”²³ In January 2024, it welcomed the Supreme Court decision not to review a lawsuit against the United States Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) that accused it of providing support to Hamas.²⁴ In November 2024, C&SN released the book “Suppressing Dissent: Shrinking Civic Space, Transnational Repression and Palestine–Israel”, which discusses the alleged “suppression of dissent related to Palestine-Israel at home and abroad and explains why this presents an existential threat to global civil society.”²⁵

The Security and Rights Collaborative (SRC)

The Security and Rights Collaborative is a collaborative grantmaking program focused on human rights defense for marginalized communities, particularly Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian populations, in the United States. SRC supports anti-Israel organizations like the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), which advocates for the BDS movement, opposes the IHRA definition of antisemitism and has pursued legal action to challenge Israel's entry into the U.S. Visa Waiver Program.²⁶

Palestinian American Medical Association (PAMA)

The Palestinian American Medical Association received a \$50,000 grant from NEO Philanthropy in 2024.²⁷ PAMA is closely involved with Al-Awda, an anti-Israel group whose leader has publicly praised the Hezbollah terror group. PAMA Executive Director Marwan Ahmad is a strong advocate for Hanaa Al-Shalabi, an accused member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terror group. Shortly after the Hamas-led October 7 attacks, PAMA provided medical supplies to the Hamas-controlled Ministry of Health in Gaza. According to Middle East Forum's Focus on Western Islamism's (FWI) report, PAMA appears to have been involved in an initiative by a terror-linked charity called Pious Projects, to provide \$50,000 worth of medical supplies to the Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza, which was used as a command center by Hamas.²⁸

Zakat Foundation of America

Zakat Foundation of America lists NEO Philanthropy among its donors.²⁹ The organization is a global Islamic charitable organization based in Bridgeview, Illinois, that offers aid to impoverished communities around the world. It also establishes independent institutions, including the U.S.-based psychological and spiritual wellness center, Khalil Center, and the Zahraa University in Turkey. Several of Zakat's partner organizations and donor recipients have been linked to terrorist groups, including Hamas and Al-Qaeda.³⁰

The New Jewish Philanthropy Project

The New Jewish Philanthropy Project at the Nathan Cummings Foundation is fiscally sponsored by NEO.³¹ It is a progressive philanthropic initiative that stands in sharp contrast to mainstream Jewish federations by actively funding structural critiques of Israeli policy. Reflecting its ideological stance, the New Jewish Philanthropy Project expanded its grantmaking program to explicitly include "Palestine."³²

The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)

ACCESS received a \$150,000 grant from NEO Philanthropy in 2024.³³ Based in Dearborn, ACCESS is the largest Arab-American community nonprofit in the United States. Several of its employees were found to be involved in the "Uncommitted" movement which sought to

push the Democratic Party to adopt anti-Israel policies.³⁴ In 2024, at its annual conference, ACCESS hosted Norwegian doctor Mads Gilbert, who defended the 9/11 terrorist attacks, called Hamas terrorists “brave” after the October 7 attack on Israel and praised the terrorist group for fighting Israelis “man to man.”³⁵

Georgia Muslim Voter Project (GAMVP)

Georgia Muslim Voter Project received a \$125,000 grant in 2024.³⁶ GAMVP is a left-of-center voter registration organization that encourages Muslim communities in Georgia to increase their civic engagement. Following the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack against Israel, GAMVP released a statement claiming that the organization “stands with our sisters, brothers, and kin in Palestine and condemns the state-sanctioned violence perpetrated against Palestinians by the state of Israel.” The organization also asked the Biden Administration, as well as Georgia Senators Jon Ossoff (D-GA) and Raphael Warnock (D-GA) to “stand with us to decry this violence by Israel and its settlers.”³⁷

Four Freedoms Fund (FFF)

FFF is NEO Philanthropy's flagship immigrant rights collaborative, which launched in 2003 and now claims it has raised over \$320 million. FFF funds state and local immigrant-led groups through long term operating grants and rapid response money triggered by restrictive laws (e.g., its Texas Fund after SB 4, and the current Immigration Frontlines Fund for anti-deportation work).³⁸

MPower Change

MPower Change is one of NEO's fiscally sponsored projects, founded in January 2016 by Linda Sarsour, Mark Crain, and Dustin Craun. It describes itself as the largest Muslim-American digital grassroots advocacy organization.³⁹

NEO Philanthropy received specific grants for MPower Change by the MacArthur Foundation, namely a two-years \$200,000 grant in 2019 and three-year \$450,000 grant in 2021 to strengthen Muslim-American presence on American media.⁴⁰ Other funders of MPower Change have included the Ford Foundation (\$300,000 from 2019–2023), and the Soros Foundation to Promote Open Society.

MPower Change's affiliated 501(c)(4) advocacy/electoral arm is MPower Action.⁴¹ As NEO's sponsored project, MPower's donors, budget, and expenditures are not separately disclosed on a public Form 990 — the standard transparency feature of fiscal sponsorship.

MPower and its Action arm promoted the 2024 “Uncommitted” Democratic-primary campaign pressuring the Biden administration over its Gaza policy.⁴²

On October 10, 2023, just days after the Hamas-led October 7 massacre which led to the murder of thousands and kidnapping of hundreds, including Americans, MPower Change promoted a DSA-led rally in New York City where protesters burnt the Israeli flag and displayed the swastika.⁴³



Source: [The New York Post](#)

In December 2023, MPower Change signed a letter opposing military aid to Israel and demanding a ceasefire and an end to U.S. support for Israel. In spring 2024, it endorsed the Gaza encampments across U.S. campuses.⁴⁴ MPower Change, along with Jewish Voice for Peace, sponsors the No Tech for Apartheid campaign, which targets Google and Amazon's Project Nimbus.

Linda Sarsour

MPower Change founder, **Linda Sarsour**, is a controversial Palestinian-American political activist with ties to terror operatives and figures accused of antisemitism. Since 2016, she has appeared in multiple “family” photos with Hamas financier Salah Sarsour, reportedly a former Hamas operative who fundraised for the terror group.⁴⁵ He is also an AMP national board member.

In 2017, Sarsour appeared in a Facebook photo hugging PFLP terrorist Rasma Odeh during the annual JVP national members’ meeting in Chicago, Illinois.⁴⁶



Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Sarsour publicly called for an arms embargo on Israel and labeled President Biden a “war criminal”.⁴⁷ The day after the October 7 attacks, Sarsour posted a graphic on Instagram with text that read: “FREE PALESTINE,” and wrote: “...This is the moment for all of us to stand together and demand loud and clear the END OF THE OCCUPATION & LIFTING OF THE SIEGE ON GAZA...”⁴⁸

On January 11, 2024, Sarsour posted a flyer on Instagram for a rally outside of the White House that day in support of Yemen under the Houthi terror group.

Sarsour supports the BDS Movement and stated her preference for “a one-state solution that, experts agree, will not be a Jewish state because the larger population will be Palestinian.”⁴⁹ Sarsour asserted that “nothing is creepier than Zionism” and also suggested that Zionism is racism.⁵⁰ In July 2020, she shared an Instagram post justifying violence in America.⁵¹

Over the years she has posted several antisemitic tweets, including repeated insinuations that American politicians who back strong bonds between America and Israel should be suspected of dual loyalties or corruption.⁵²

In 2017 and 2019, she chaired the Women’s March on Washington. She is also the former executive director of the Arab American Association of New York.

As a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), in 2016 she ran (and placed third) for a position as a County Committee member with the Democratic Party of Kings County, New York. Sarsour promoted New York City mayor and fellow DSA member Zohran Mamdani and donated to his campaign. Sarsour has backed Mamdani since his run for New York State Assembly in 2020.⁵³

The Arabella Advisors / Americans for Public Trust Allegation

On October 26, 2023, the New York Post reported a study by Americans for Public Trust (APT), a conservative watchdog led by Caitlin Sutherland. APT alleged that the Arabella Advisors network — a large set of progressive “dark money” funds (including the New Venture Fund, Sixteen Thirty Fund, Hopewell Fund, Windward Fund, and North Fund) — directed at least \$10 million to “anti-Israel causes” over five years.⁵⁴ APT says the largest single share, \$5,161,465 since 2018, went to NEO Philanthropy from four of the five funds, flagging NEO specifically because it runs Sarsour’s MPower Change. In August 2023, APT asked the IRS to investigate Arabella.⁵⁵

Direct Support for Controversial Political Candidates

In June 2026, NEO Philanthropy Action Fund paid for a communication supporting Darializa Chevalier, a 33-year-old DSA member and community organizer who won the June 23, 2026, Democratic primary in NY-13, defeating incumbent Rep. Adriano Espaillat. Chevalier has been a member of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) since a summer internship in West Bank in 2014 and was an organizer of the controversial Columbia University Gaza encampment. Chevalier also co-founded Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD) and refused to condemn Hamas for the October 7 massacre.⁵⁶

Chevalier was recruited by the Justice Democrats and endorsed by Mayor Zohran Mamdani and NYC-DSA. Her alignment with the anti-Israel movement matches MPower’s own advocacy profile, which is why the Action Fund supported her candidacy. Chevalier also previously organized for Families for Freedom, an immigrant defense group in NEO’s Four Freedoms Fund.

MPower Change also supported anti-Israel candidate Melat Kiros in the run-up to the June 30, 2026, Colorado Democratic primary. Kiros’ subsequent victory over longtime incumbent Diana DeGette shows how MPower’s ecosystem intersects with and bolsters active congressional primary contests.⁵⁷

In 2024, MPower Action endorsed Missouri Rep. Cori Bush and promoted the “Uncommitted” Democratic campaign pressuring the Biden administration over its Gaza policy. Recently, MPower Change has been among the official partners of the “Next 250,” a socio-political movement aimed at “centering the voices of marginalized communities and women of color.”⁵⁸ This proves that MPower’s strategy is not focused just on New York but is part of a **broader pattern of intervention in insurgent Democratic primaries across the country**. The support MPower Action and NEO provide to candidates with more radical views than have been previously held by more traditional Democratic candidates is concerning because many hold and promote views that are antisemitic, anti-Israel, anti-American, and pro-terror.

NEO Staff and Board

Michele Lord

Lord has been the president of NEO Philanthropy since 1999; however, she plans to retire in December 2026.⁵⁹ She worked as director for the Congressional Caucus on Women’s Issues from 1984 to 1988. From 1990 to 1993, Lord worked in the New York City Mayor’s Office under then-Mayor David Dinkins (D).⁶⁰



Michele Lord. Source: [Neo Philanthropy](#)

Blake Strobe

Blake Strobe is NEO Philanthropy board member and civil rights lawyer who serves as the executive director of ArchCity Defenders (ACD). In November 2023, he wrote the statement “On Israel and Palestine” on the ACD website, which calls for “freedom and justice that most Palestinians have never known”, provides an account of ACD’s joint work with unidentified “local Palestinian justice organizers” and refers to Israel as a “global systems of oppression at work.”⁶¹



Blake Strobe. Source: [ArchCity Defenders](#)

Glenn Harris

Glenn Harris is a NEO Philanthropy board member and the president of Race Forward, a U.S.-based racial justice nonprofit organization.⁶² In 2024, he authored an official statement in support of the Gaza encampments that spread across U.S. campuses, and mentioned the “slow walk toward authoritarianism” occurring in the U.S.⁶³



Glenn Harris. Source: [Race Forward](#)

Zainab Salbi

Zainab Salbi is a Neo Philanthropy Action Fund board member. She is an Iraqi-American citizen and co-founder of Daughters for Earth. She is a member of the Ismaha project at Georgetown University in Qatar which “publishes biographies, significant legal cases affecting women’s lives, and reflective blog posts from women in the local and diasporic community.”⁶⁴

She currently serves as a Visiting professor in Practice at the London School of Economics.⁶⁵ She is married

to Palestinian-American lawyer Amjad Atallah, who now serves as managing director of Doha Debates

after previously managing the launch teams of AJ+ and Al Jazeera America.⁶⁶ Salbi was a speaker at the Washington D.C.-based Palestine Center and an endorser of the #Monday4Gaza campaign.⁶⁷



Zainab Salbi. Source: [Ismaha Qatar](#)

Cathy Albisa

Cathy Albisa is vice-chair of NEO Philanthropy and the director of Branch4, a non-profit organization for federal workers.⁶⁸ She is a member of We Are Not Numbers (WANN), a project established in 2015 by Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor to provide English-language writing workshops for young Palestinians in Gaza.⁶⁹ Euro-Med shut down its activities in June 2026 following reports of its links to Hamas, as its founder, Ramy Abdu, has been listed as a Hamas operative in Europe.⁷⁰ In 2018, she endorsed a letter by the Center for Constitutional Rights condemning Israel’s alleged “practice of excluding human rights defenders and advocates”.⁷¹



Cathy Albisa. Source: [Branch4](#)

Conclusion

NEO Philanthropy is a financial and organizational platform that has funded, housed, and amplified organizations that have expressed anti-American, pro-terror, and antisemitic sentiments or allegedly worked with terror-linked individuals and groups. NEO grant

recipients CAIR, Baitulmaal, and the Palestinian American Medical Association are reportedly linked to Hamas.

Through projects such as the Charity & Security Network and MPower Change, NEO provided legal, financial, and operational backing to organizations active in anti-Israel mobilization, Gaza-focused campaigns, and opposition to terror-designation and counterterror-financing measures. Those activities show that NEO's role is not limited to providing isolated grants but to sustaining a wider advocacy network that challenges U.S. policy and legal framework surrounding extremist-linked entities and individuals.

NEO's fiscally sponsored project MPower Change supports Democratic candidates with more extreme views and goals, showing the extent to which it **helps to build and finance the institutional pipeline through which anti-Israel advocacy becomes organized election power.**

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