

20 years of fair trade
with Palestine



ZAYTOUN
FROM PALESTINE



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

20 YEAR EDITION

FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Reaching twenty years is not a given. Only one in five businesses make it. Fewer still do so while sourcing exclusively from a place as politically and economically constrained as Palestine. That we are here at all is something worth pausing on.

Zaytoun began as a bold, determined idea – to create another route to market for Palestinian farmers who were being cut off from their own.. What started with a few cases of olive oil carried by hand has become a business that connects producers with customers across the UK and beyond, channelling millions of pounds back into Palestinian agriculture and sustaining thousands of farming families.

I joined that journey fifteen years ago. As someone with Palestinian roots, it offered more than a role – it was a way to reconnect with land, culture, and a story that is so often reduced or overlooked. I have come to understand that this is true for many people who encounter Zaytoun. It creates a sense of purpose and connection that goes well beyond the product itself. We have taken something as simple as food and turned it into a community. This work has always been collective – built on the resilience of the producing communities in Palestine, the commitment of our team, the guidance of our board, and the loyalty of customers and partners who have stayed with us through everything.

What has become clear over twenty years is that trade, in this context, is not neutral. It is a deliberate act. It sustains livelihoods, preserves connection to land, and keeps open a channel

between communities that might otherwise be cut off from one another. Building something commercially resilient enough to fulfil that purpose - through conflict, supply shocks, and profound uncertainty - has been the work of this organisation over the past two decades. 2024 proved to be our most challenging and, in some ways, our most rewarding year yet. For the first time, every quarter returned a profit, and we purchased over £2 million worth of goods from Palestinian producers - a 46% increase on 2023, and the clearest measure we have of our mission in action.

Our aim remains what it has always been: Palestinian communities building sustainable livelihoods through farming; land cultivated rather than abandoned; and Palestinian produce recognised for the quality and heritage it represents.

Looking ahead, our focus is on building the stability and adaptability needed to serve our producer communities through whatever comes next - ensuring that Zaytoun remains a reliable and growing route to market for Palestinian producers for the next twenty years as much as the last.

Marking twenty years holds a deep personal significance for our founders, who could not have imagined when they first set out what Zaytoun would become. Their story follows in their own words.

For me, 15 years in, it is a reminder that this work is as urgent now as the day I arrived.

Manal Ramadan White
Managing Director

20 YEARS OF SUPPORTING THE RESILIENCE OF PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES THROUGH FAIR TRADE

2 million kg
of product purchased



£14 million
paid to Palestinian producers



20 years of fair trade with Palestine



232,000 trees
planted in Palestine



£926,000
sent for tree planting

FROM THE CO-FOUNDERS

During the harvest season of 2003, we volunteered as human rights activists in the occupied West Bank. What we witnessed there changed our lives forever. Living and working with farming communities, we experienced first-hand the everyday intimidation, violence and injustice with which Palestinians have lived for decades. The farming families with whom we lived were gathering an exceptionally bountiful olive harvest, yet were having to sell their delicious oil at prices below the cost of production because they had lost access to their traditional overseas markets.

When we asked farmers what we could do to help, once we returned home, their answers were unanimous. Time and again they asked us to share their stories with our communities back in the UK – to actively bear witness to the oppression and constriction of a military occupation, and also testify to the deep humanity and generous spirit of the Palestinian families we grew to love.

When we met, back in the privilege of safety and relative freedom of our home country, we

discovered a shared vision: to put the call out to friends and family to support us to purchase boxes of olive oil – to not only support the livelihoods of the farmers we had met, but to use the bottles of oil as a way to talk about Palestine and her people. To carry a message in a bottle, speaking of an ancient culture and of modern injustices.

Within weeks, we were receiving orders along with cash and cheques in the post from people we had never met. It seemed that our vision was one shared by many, many people seeking a tangible way to support Palestinians. Within a few months, Zaytoun was born. 20 years later, some of those people who first trusted us are still with us.

The world has changed a lot in twenty years. Tragically, the situation for Palestinians has only worsened in that time. Our vision and mission still drives us and we remain resolute in our work to support Palestinian communities under fire. Ultimately, we take our inspiration from the incredible spirit of resilience shown by the Palestinian people. Together, we are strong.

Heather Masoud, Atif Choudhury and Cathi Pawson
Co-founders



OUR COMMUNITY

Zaytoun exists because of the people who have gathered around it – from the community distributors who carry our products to their neighbours, to the producers whose hands grow and harvest them, to the customers who choose them week after week. This is a community built on shared purpose.

Here, a small selection of voices from our first twenty years. The full collection is available at: <https://zaytoun.uk/20-years-of-zaytoun/>

I contacted Zaytoun 20 years ago to purchase a case of olive oil for my family. The feedback was “this is the best olive oil we’ve ever tasted.” So I ordered another two cases after a few weeks, this time for colleagues and friends – again the same feedback. The same thing happened with the delicious Medjoul dates.

The best thing about Zaytoun is the active and growing social network that it has created in the UK with the common goal of supporting the Palestinian farmers.



Zafar Naseem
Community Distributor

Zaytoun’s early buy-in to our fair trade olive oil project was vital in enabling us to deliver on the fair trade promise of fair prices and fair terms to family farmers. Twenty years later, we have built a thriving fair trade movement in Palestine. We work with a network that organises over 2,500 family farms across 50 villages under organic and fair trade standards. May our partnership continue to help our farmers overcome the many odds imposed on them economically and politically.

Onward!



Nasser Abufarha
Director, Canaan Palestine

The Fairtrade Foundation was hugely proud to launch the first ever product from Palestine, and the first Fairtrade certified olive oil. It meant the world to us. We wanted to be sure that Fairtrade as a movement was reaching people in areas of conflict where we could contribute to building the economic underpinnings of peace.

Harriet Lamb
Former Director, Fairtrade Foundation



The relationship that we have with Zaytoun provides employment opportunities for 20 Palestinian families making a living at the only permitted location for Palestinians on the Dead Sea. We are proud of our partners that provided new markets – not only to market our Sea Salt, but to also tell our story of our people.

Husam Hallak
Director, West Bank Salt Company



2024: PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

2024 was Zaytoun's most testing year – and, by any measure, one of its most significant. The ongoing and devastating assaults on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank weighed heavily on the whole team, many of whom have close personal ties to the region. The sense of helplessness in the face of such suffering was difficult to carry, yet it deepened our resolve to continue the work that connects us with our partners on the ground.

Practical pressures compounded this. A poor 2023 harvest left us with reduced stocks at precisely the moment demand surged. Extended lead times, heightened logistical complexity, and the need to hold larger stock buffers placed significant pressure on cash flow. These difficulties demanded agility and resilience across the entire team and supply chain.

Against this backdrop, communities across the UK and Ireland chose to buy Palestinian products as a deliberate act of solidarity – a tangible way of supporting farming families in the West Bank. That groundswell of support shaped the year, and the results reflect it.

SALES IN THE UK & REVENUE TO PALESTINE

In 2024, as sales of our products grew by 51% over 2023 figures, so did the revenue remitted to Palestinian producers. We were able to purchase over £2 million worth of goods, a 46% increase over the 2023 figure.

£2,048,038

Value of Zaytoun purchases to producers in 2024

“

“My deep connection to the land is rooted in all the time spent accompanying my father to the fields since childhood. Now I am dedicated to instilling the same love for the land into the hearts of my own children”

”

Yassir Abu Alrub

CO-OP LISTING

In October 2024, our award-winning Fairtrade certified organic extra virgin olive oil launched in 250 Co-op stores across the UK. The Co-op is a retailer with a longstanding commitment to ethical sourcing and fair trade, and this listing has brought Palestinian producers new visibility on high-street shelves. It demonstrates that our mission resonates as strongly now as it did when the company first began. We look forward to growing this partnership in the years ahead.



COMING TOGETHER FOR PALESTINE

Throughout the year we joined events organised by partners and friends across the UK - conferences, supper clubs and fundraisers. In a year as heavy as 2024, these gatherings mattered beyond the usual purpose of such events. They were spaces where people with a shared connection to Palestine could come together - to grieve, to hope, and to find in each other the solace and resolve to keep going.



The Zaytoun team at Co-op, Oxfam and fundraising events

TREES FOR LIFE

We received a record-breaking volume of donations towards Trees for Life, the tree-planting programme run by the Palestine Fair Trade Association.

While the financial benefits from the trees support farmers and their families, the most profound impact remains the renewed sense of hope and dedication to the land.

Zaytoun's contribution enabled the Palestine Fair Trade Association to distribute more than 63,000 olive trees to more than 750 farmers across 40 villages.

Alongside this, the wider programme includes other saplings, such as almond, fig, apricot and grape, supporting diversification of both farmer livelihoods and farm ecosystems, and contributing to a broader shift towards regenerative farming practices.



Trees for Life



63,000

Trees sponsored by Zaytoun customers

SUMUD: PALESTINIAN STEADFASTNESS AT A TIME OF SEVERE CRISIS

Throughout 2024, reports arrived from our farmer colleagues in Palestine's West Bank of violent attacks carried out by Israeli soldiers and illegal settlers. Farmers were shot while bringing in their olives, and whole harvests were confiscated. In Burin, trees were set alight by settlers. In Madama, the army closed off access to the village and raided homes, blocking families from reaching their olive groves. In Al Auja in the Jordan Valley, armed settlers regularly diverted water from the natural spring that serves as a vital source for local communities.

The numbers behind these lived realities are stark. UN OCHA registered 1,420 incidents of settler violence in 2024, up from 1,189 in 2023 – itself the highest recorded since 2006.¹ The year also saw the Israeli government establish five new settlements deep inside the West Bank. Some 24,258 dunums were declared as “State Land” in 2024 alone, approximately half of all land appropriated since the Oslo Accords.

Movement restrictions added severe pressure. Long waits at checkpoints, unpredictable road closures, and circuitous routes made daily travel exhausting and costly. In Fara'a refugee camp in Tubas, where airstrikes tragically claimed lives, many workers were unable to travel to the harvest further south in the Jordan Valley. Some of our suppliers arranged accommodation for dozens of workers near their factories. According to an ILO report, over four out of five West Bank businesses identified supply chain disruption and increased transportation costs as their two most significant challenges in 2024.²

Climate change added further complexity: date farmers headed to their groves two weeks earlier than in 2023 as high summer temperatures accelerated the ripening process.



“Almost every day, towns and refugee camps are being subjected to raids, arrests and demolition. The difficulty of movement is isolating cities, regions and communities from each other.”

A colleague in the West Bank



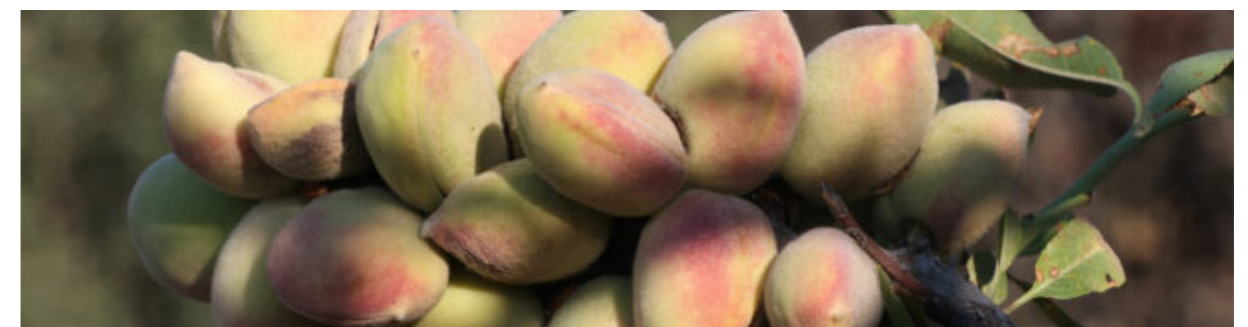
Yet the farming community in Palestine went out to their groves and fields. Farmers grouped together, taking turns visiting each other's lands to both speed up the harvest and offer mutual protection. Within the context of a national economy brought to the brink and local markets blocked by movement restrictions, export markets proved crucial for livelihoods.

As one of our suppliers put it simply:
“Thank goodness we can still export.”



“All the challenges we face ultimately point us back to one undeniable truth: the land. It's the heart and soul of every Palestinian. These tough times are as challenging as ever, but what stands out now is the lack of economic and social opportunities, which only deepen our attachment to the land. Rebuilding it with our own hands, together with our children, is our only refuge and remaining hope.”

Mohammad Saleh Yassin / Anin



¹https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/report-israeli-settlements-occupied-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-reporting-period-january_en

²https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ILO_OPT_Impact_businesses_2024.pdf

SUMMARY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2024

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Turnover | 3,177,973 | 2,102,268 |
| Cost of sales | (2,368,260) | (1,521,781) |
| Gross Profit | 809,713 | 580,487 |
| Other income | 861 | 603 |
| Administrative expenses | (432,232) | (393,742) |
| Operating Profit | 378,342 | 187,348 |
| Interest received and paid | 17,967 | (20,552) |
| Profit before tax | 396,309 | 166,796 |
| Tax paid | (98,669) | (39,323) |
| Profit for the year | 297,640 | 127,473 |

BALANCE SHEET

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Fixed assets | | |
| Tangible assets | 1,903 | 1,181 |
| Total fixed assets | 1,903 | 1,181 |
| Current assets | | |
| Stock | 838,927 | 458,609 |
| Debtors | 425,514 | 431,650 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 605,011 | 388,306 |
| Total current assets | 1,869,452 | 1,278,565 |
| Creditors falling due within one year | (806,562) | (502,320) |
| Net current assets | 1,062,890 | 776,245 |
| Total assets less current liabilities | 1,064,793 | 777,426 |
| Creditors falling after more than one year | (61,174) | (71,447) |
| NET ASSETS | 1,003,619 | 705,979 |
| Capital and Reserves | | |
| Called up share capital | 9 | 9 |
| Profit and loss account | 1,003,610 | 705,970 |
| Shareholders' funds | 1,003,619 | 705,979 |

Zaytoun is a Community Interest Company, a social enterprise founded to support Palestinian farmers through fair trade. 100% of our profits are reinvested into furthering this mission.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Atif Choudhury
Cathi Pawson
Heather Masoud
Manal Ramadan White
Peter Jones
Rebecca Rowland
Susan Ralphs
Taysir Arbasi

ZAYTOUN TEAM MEMBERS

Charlotte Borger
Communications Manager

Donal Guerin
Finance Manager

Heather Masoud
Co-founder and Operations Director

Manal Ramadan White
Managing Director

Omar Qasim
Management Accountant

Wesam Tahboub
Customer Relations and Office Manager

BANK

Triodos Bank
Deanery Road
Bristol
BS1 5AS

WITH GRATITUDE

Twenty years of Zaytoun has been made possible by many hands.

Thank you to the farmers, producers and suppliers in Palestine whose dedication to their land – and to trade as a form of resistance – is the reason this organisation exists.

Thank you to our customers, supporters, and partner organisations across the UK and Ireland, many of whom have been with us since the beginning and continue to champion our mission.

Thank you to our team and board – past and present – for the commitment, care and patience this work requires.

Rooted in Time
& Tradition



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