



2022 Annual Report

Mission Statement

Established in 2010, the mission of the Coalition for Civil Freedoms is to defend civil liberties and freedoms, promote a fair U.S. criminal justice system, and advocate for the rights of political prisoners targeted in the "war on terror."



Member Organizations

The Aafia Foundation (TAF)

aafia.org / Silver Spring, MD peacethrujustice@aol.com 301.441.2300

Committee to Stop FBI Repression (CSFR)

stopfbi.org / Minneapolis, MN
stopfbi@gmail.com

Council on American-Islamic Relations FL (CAIR-FL)

cairflorida.org / Florida, USA 813.514.1414

Creating Law Enforcement Accountability and Responsibility (CUNY-CLEAR)

cunyclear.org / Long Island City, NY cunyclear@law.cuny.edu 718.340.4558

Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM)

drumnyc.org / Jackson Heights, NY 718.205.3036

Friends of Human Rights (FHR)

@friendsofhumanrights / Tampa, FL
friendshumanrights@yahoo.com

International Action Center (IAC)

iacenter.org / New York, NY iacenter@iacenter.org 212.633.6646

Islamic Circle of North America Council for Social Justice (ICNA-CSJ)

icnacsj.org / Vienna, VA
info@icnacsj.org

The Jericho Movement

thejerichomovement.com / Chesterfield, VA jihadabdulmumit@gmail.com

Massachusetts Peace Action (MAPA)

masspeaceaction.org / Cambridge, MA info@masspeaceaction.org

Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA)

mlfa.org / Dallas, TX 972.331.9021

National Lawyers Guild (NLG)

nlg.org / New York, NY 212.679.5100

Project Support and Legal Advocacy for Muslims (Project SALAM)

projectsalam.org

United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC)

unacpeace.org / Delmar, NY unacpeace@gmail.com 518.281.1968

How to reach us:

Coalition for Civil Freedoms

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A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Friends of CCF,

2022 began with high expectations. After almost two years of operating virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were once again able to meet face-to-face. Modern technology had allowed the family members to meet virtually every month during 2022, but in November they came together in Washington D.C. for a very well-received in-person family conference. The Annual New Year's Day CommUNITY Picnic was also live, although due to a COVID-19 flare-up, it took place in May 2022- instead of its usual January date. And we are happy to report that once again CCF team members were in physical attendance when they spoke at events this year!

Support for the prisoners also continued with a record number of Ramadan gifts of \$100 going out to 250 prisoners. They were also sent a newsletter designed especially for them, complete with articles in their entirety and color photos! Of course, CCF attorneys continued to file petitions looking for compassionate release of political prisoners.

CCF continued its educational policy of publishing a weekly news digest featuring articles that are relevant to our issues. CCF also published a 195-page book, *The Terror Trap: The Impact of the War on Terror on Muslim Communities Since 9/11*, which was written by 30 national and international experts and scholars about the impact of the War on Terror on the global Muslim Community.

CCF has also continued to lobby its bill, The Entrapment and Governmental Overreach (EGO) Relief Act, which would restrict the FBI to targeting only people already engaged in crime,

rather than allowing the FBI to target people based on ideology, religion or politics. Already there is a lot of bipartisan interest in the EGO bill. The EGO bill is retroactive and if it passed, it could result in many political prisoners having their conviction reviewed and possibly dismissed under the new standards in the EGO bill.

We deeply regret that Executive Director Leena Al-Arian resigned from her position as of November 30, 2022. It is important to recognize that in losing Leena Al-Arian as Executive Director, CCF lost a leader almost perfectly suited for the job. Daughter of our founder Dr. Sami Al-Arian, with deep roots in the Palestinian and Muslim Communities, and a strong commitment to freeing our wrongfully convicted political prisoners and ending the surveillance and scapegoating of the Muslim Community in the War on Terror, Leena established CCF as a prominent civil rights organization. We are very grateful to Leena for her services and hope she will return to her role as Executive Director in the near future.

In the meantime, Deputy Executive Director Mel Underbakke, and Board Chair Steve Downs have been designated as interim Executive Directors, and our work goes on!

Sincerely, Interim Directors

Mel Underbakke, Ph.D.

Deputy Executive Director Stephen Downs, Esq. Chair of the Board of Directors

Prisoner and Family Support



Ramadan Gifts Fundraised by the CCF	\$31,501
Ramadan Gifts Sent to Prisoners	\$100 to 250 prisoners = \$25,000
Post-release Grants Provided	\$500 to 3 former prisoners = \$1,500
Correspondence with Political Prisoners	100 Prisoners via Corrlinks (Prison Email System) 250 via Snail Mail
Trial and Hearing Alerts	10
Pen Pal Program	35 Matches
Impacted Family Support	1 in-person family conference 11 Monthly Virtual Gatherings/Support Group

Annual Ramadan Gift and Card for Prisoners

Every year, CCF provides prisoners with a \$100 Ramadan Gift sent directly to their commissary account. In addition, we send prisoners a uniquely designed Ramadan card letting them know they are remembered and supported. This year, for the first time, we added a transcribed Khutba (sermon) delivered by Dr. Omar Suleiman called "To Truly be Free." We will continue to add an additional unique resource to the Annual Ramadan Gift for prisoners.

Prisoner Correspondence, Support, and Advocacy

This year, similar to previous years, hundreds of emails and letters are exchanged between our Support Coordinator and over 250 prisoners. The prisoners write us to request articles, development programs, social support, advocacy, and more. They often write to us to document abuses and injustices they face on the inside. In this role, we always need to evaluate the potential risks of our advocacy, which often include retaliation against prisoners from prison authorities. If the risks are deemed manageable to the prisoner, with their consent, we agree to advocate on their behalf, which means we write



a letter(s) and/or make a phone call(s) to the prison warden or judge. This year, we stepped in to advocate for prisoners in over a dozen instances. For some of them, we are their only link to the outside and their only source of support, with no family or friends to turn to. This is why we continue to maintain our Pen Pal Program, where we create an additional source of social support and friendship for prisoners by matching volunteers on the outside with prisoners.

Prisoner Newsletter

This year, CCF produced and mailed one issue of its prisoner newsletter, *Until Freedom*. It included articles about current events as well as prisoner art, poetry, and useful resources. Though we strive to produce these newsletters on a quarterly basis, our limited staffing diminishes our capacity to accomplish this. We will continue to aim to produce multiple issues per year.

Financial Sponsorship Program for Prisoners

Incarceration creates a significant financial burden on prisoners and their families. With most services and operations being outsourced to predatory for-profit companies, prisoners are charged outrageous prices to make phone calls, send emails, and purchase basic essentials like hygiene products and supplemental food. For many prisoners, the \$100 Ramadan gift is the only financial support they receive all year. Prisoners are required to work prison jobs and will earn 12¢ to 40¢ an hour, with other more specialized jobs earning 23¢ to \$1.15 an hour. This year, we strived to find more ways to provide financial support for prisoners, beyond the Annual Ramadan Gift Program. With our new **Sponsor a Prisoner Program**, we have bought books and other important materials for prisoners. We have also expanded our postrelease support to include \$500 grants provided upon release to prisoners who lack financial support and resources.

Monthly Family Support Group

Starting in 2021, we have created a monthly virtual support group for impacted family members. Every third Friday of the month, dozens of impacted family members get together on Zoom for 1-2 hours, with each month varying in theme or objective. The purpose of this support group is to create a space where families can struggle and heal together. To that resolve, our families have enthusiastically confirmed that we have been successful.



Annual CCF Family Conference The 11th Annual Conference for Families of Political Prisoners

The Catalyst for Change:
Empowering Families to
Carry Our Movement Forward

Since 2012, CCF has been holding conferences for families missing a loved one due to the government's overzealous "war on terror" launched two decades ago. The families of these political prisoners are often harassed, isolated, and shunned by even their own communities as if they had done something wrong when in fact they are the ones that have been wronged. The goal of these conferences is to help end their persecution and to empower family members to speak out against repression.

Through Veteran's Day weekend, CCF held its 11th Annual CCF Family Conference in Washington, D.C. This was our first in-person conference since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference hosted over 80 attendees representing 30 families from all around the country. The conference was themed, *The Catalyst for Change: Empowering Families to Carry Our Movement Forward*. The families of prisoners have always been on the forefront of fighting for justice for their loved ones. We hosted sessions that will help them become stronger and well-equipped advocates.

Sessions included: political education, storytelling with Academy Award-winning filmmaker and screenwriter, David Riker, one-to-one outreach strategy for advocacy, mental health support, and lobby training.



David Riker with CCF Family Members

We also had a separate track of sessions for youth which included art projects and an excursion touring museums and historical sites in the nation's capitol with Ayesha Hoda and other chaperones.



The Youth Presenting Their Creations

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Legal Advocacy

2022 By the Numbers

Compassionate release motions filed	3
Other legal filings and appearances	4
Advocacy letters or calls	Around 11
Reviewed legal papers and advised prisoners or sent them legal material	Around 20
Legal calls	45
Email correspondence with prisoners	At least 50 prisoners, many with frequent emails
Snail mail	Corresponded with 24 prisoners

In 2022 the CCF legal team, led by Legal
Director Kathy Manley, continued filing a few
compassionate release motions, as well as a
habeas petition and a petition to the Supreme
Court. We filed 3 compassionate release
motions and have 5 pending now. Two other
motions are in the research process but not yet
filed. We filed a habeas petition to try to get
someone out of ICE detention, which involved
an appearance in Dallas, and also litigated his
conditions of supervised release, which involved
an appearance in NYC. That case is ongoing – the
habeas petition was granted but the government
is appealing.

We also wrote a Petition for Certiorari to the Supreme Court for Shain Duka, and then when the Supreme Court required the government to respond, we also wrote a Reply for Shain. It is a longshot for the Supreme Court to take the case, but if it does, it will draw needed attention to the whole Fort Dix Five case.

We also wrote a motion for early termination of supervised release for Khalifa Al-Akili. And we assisted other attorneys with various issues, including supervised release conditions for Ahmed Sattar.

In addition, an appeal and an assist with a FOIA request are in process but not yet filed, Suad Abdel Aziz did an Externship with CCF while in law school. She helped write some of the prisoners' stories, worked on our database, and corresponded with several prisoners, among other things. We are very lucky that she

continues to work with CCF on a volunteer basis, and came to our Family Conference – she is also an impacted family member.

This year we started a new project - Case Alerts. Kathy and Suad made a list of pretrial cases, and Suad taught CCF staff to obtain and use a case alert system so we could learn of upcoming trials, pleas and sentencings. Then we let people know about them in our News Digest so we can try to get supporters to attend.

We also continued to maintain and update our extensive database of cases, and our Ramadan List of prisoners we support. We wrote letters and made phone calls to advocate for prisoners to be transferred, get proper food or medical care, and regarding other issues. We corresponded with and advised many prisoners, and researched many of their cases. Finally, we spoke to journalists about the cases, spoke on several CCF webinars, and spoke to family members and at other events, including presenting workshops at the Family Conference.

In addition, Staff Attorney Amith Gupta provided legal seminars and advice to family members at the family conference and through a family webinar.



Education and Outreach



Videos posted to Youtube	18
Webinars	4
Publications	News Digests - 50
Social Media Followers Gained	Instagram followers doubled
In-person Speaking Engagements	4 plus a few virtual

7th Annual CommUNITY Potluck Gathering

The Coalition for Civil Freedoms has co-sponsored an Annual New Year's Day CommUNITY Potluck for the past seven years. The first community potluck was held in 2016 in response to a rash of hate crimes and violence fueled by Islamophobia. In a phenomenal show of solidarity, 20 organizations came forward to cosponsor this event, and park rangers estimated that 2500 people from all walks of life attended throughout the course of the afternoon! By popular demand, the tradition has continued every year since. Due to the pandemic, last year's gathering was virtual over Zoom but this year it was again live and in person. The Seventh Annual CommUNITY Potluck - 2022 was planned for New Years Day, but again the pandemic altered our plans and it was held in May at the Quaker Meeting House in Tampa. Many people were out

of town (summer time!) and so the crowd was much smaller than usual, but the group was diverse and many meaningful conversations were held.

In 2022, sponsors were Coalition for Civil Freedoms, Friends of Human Rights, Islamic Community of Tampa, Tampa Friends Meeting (Quakers), First United Church of Tampa, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa, Veterans for Peace and CAIR-FL.

Webinars and Videos

In 2022 CCF held four webinars. The first was **The War on Drugs Meets the War on Terror**. For 20 years of the War on Terror, the FBI has been creating and foiling its own plots, resulting in innocent people going to prison for decades. Was this technique perfected in the War on Drugs? This webinar answered this guestion! In

addition to a discussion of entrapment targeting Muslims, it looks at "stash house" stings which have disproportionately targeted Black people for decades. Guests include Mike German (Former FBI agent and whistleblower), Fahd Ahmed (Ex. Dir. of DRUM), Erica Zunkel (Clinical Professor of Law at the University of Chicago) and Beverley Carradice-Henry (whose grandson is an entrapment victim and political prisoner.) Moderated by Kathy Manley, CCF Legal Director.

Ramadan Behind Bars focused on Muslim political prisoners and the impacts of the predatory prison industrial complex on Muslim political prisoners. The webinar also discussed simple steps you can take to provide relief this Ramadan and beyond.

VICTORY: A Political Prisoner Criminalized for Charity to Somalia Released celebrated the case of Amina Ali, a former political prisoner who served more than 10 years of her 20-year sentence for sending charity to Somalia. CCF won the compassionate release of Amina as well as her co-defendant, Hawo Hassan. Amina's attorney, Amith Gupta, community member, Suad Mahfouz, and Amina's daughter, Faduma Farah talked about Amina's community work, the role of Islamophobia in her prosecution and conviction, the challenges of material support laws, and Amina's victory.

Before the Palestinian 6, There Were the Holy Land 5 included a discussion of the "terror" designation of human rights groups in Palestine and the U.S. The webinar took a closer look at the egregious case of the Holy Land Foundation, a charity that was shut down and its leaders imprisoned by the U.S. government in its "war on terror".

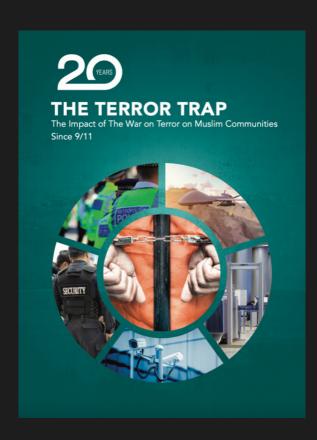
These webinars can be found on the CCF Facebook page. They are also on the Youtube channel, along with 14 other videos.











Publications

In addition to the weekly News Digest, CCF published a report called "The Terror Trap: The Impact of The War on Terror on Muslim Communities Since 9/11". CCF partnered with 6 other organizations to produce this report: The Bridge Initiative, ICNA Council For Social Justice, CAGE, The Muslim Justice League and United Voices for America. The report consists of 22 chapters written by 30 scholars, advocates, researchers, survivors, and experts on all matters involving the Global War on Terror, followed by an extensive section on specific recommendations for ending the War on Terror.

Speaking Engagements

Steve Downs, Leena, Al-Arian and Nada Dibas spoke at the Community Church of Boston in a program called *Survivors of the USA's War on Terror*. They were joined by Nida Abu Baker (daughter of Shukri Abu Baker), Miko Peled (author of The General's Son, and by Dr. Sami Al-Arian via zoom.

On two occasions, Steve Downs and Kathy Manley spoke at screenings of "Witness", a documentary film by Masood Haque. "Witness" is about the Aref-Hossain case in Albany, New York and explores the difficult balance between civil liberties and security with a searing look at the impact of the War on Terror on everyday life.

In addition, Mel Underbakke spoke at the 8th Annual CommUNITY Picnic in Tampa, Florida.



Nada Dibas, Nida Abu Baker and Miko Peled.



A Screening of "Witness"



Filmmaker Masood Haque and Kathy Manley Following the Screening of "Witness"

Justice for Aafia Rally

The Coalition for Civil Freedoms (US) and CAGE (UK) held a first of its kind virtual global rally with over two dozen organizations, human rights activists, lawyers and family members of Dr. Aafia from across four continents to express collectively that her case was a grave miscarriage of justice. Through this effort we highlighted the concerted effort, or lack thereof, of respective governments to demand the release of Dr. Aafia. Almost 20 years on, it was critical to show that despite having global support from Muslims all over the world, she remains unjustly incarcerated. Our goal was to show solidarity with Dr. Aafia and let her and her family know that she isn't forgotten, to keep her case alive, and to not allow her unjust imprisonment to vanish from the collective memory and consciousness of the public and essentially demand the release of Dr. Aaafia Siddiqui. Dr. Aafia Siddiqui is a Pakistani neuroscientist who obtained her PhD from MIT. In March 2003, Aafia and her children were kidnapped in Karachi, Pakistan, and held at a black site for 5 years, before being extra-legally sent to the US. In 2010, after what many saw as a "show trial", she was sentenced in the U.S. to 86 years in prison on fabricated charges. Today, Dr. Aafia is being held in a federal prison in Fort Worth, Texas under extremely punitive and dehumanizing conditions.



/ Legislative Advocacy

CCF has continued to lobby its bill, **The Entrapment and Governmental Overreach (EGO) Relief Act**, to restrict the FBI to targeting only people already engaged in crime, rather than allowing the FBI to target ideology, religion or politics. Already there is a lot of bipartisan interest in the EGO bill. The EGO bill is retroactive and if passed, it could result in many political prisoners having their convictions reviewed and possibly dismissed under the new standards in the EGO bill.

We have been holding conversations with Senator Grassley, and his staffer Erin Creegan. We hold a lot of common ground with Senator Grassley, as he believes that FBI abuses are a problem, but he also believes entrapment is already illegal and EGO might allow other crimes to take place. Since the FBI does not follow its own rules, he is focusing on oversight. We seem to have the same concerns, but we have different perspectives. Erin indicated that she would like to receive information about the cases where people are mentally ill, or other provable abuses took place. We are continuing our conversations with Erin and hope to get some of the old cases examined

In addition, following our Annual Family conference in November, families of our prisoners along with CCF staff engaged in meetings at the offices of Democratic Congressman Paul Tonko of New York and Republican Senator Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania. We strongly believe that the debates and discussion of advocating for our issue, and pushing for the support of our bill is a non partisan matter. We will reach out to every elected official in all levels of government to garner their support. We believe these meetings

were a great start to further lobbying efforts in the coming year. In 2023, we intend to meet with as many elected officials, and even community members in prominent positions who will be able help us achieve our goal.



Family members meet with Erin Creegan, Staffer for Sen. Grassley.



Nada Dibas, Leena Al-Arian, Amith Gupta, and Sarwat Malik-Hassan

Development



General donations	\$58,472
Ramadan Donations	\$31,501
Other	\$9,485

During 2022, the Coalition partnered with United Voices, in particular during the Family Conference. United Voices co-sponsored the event and covered the costs of food and printing. In addition, Executive Director Ahmed Bedier presented a workshop on lobbying to family members to prepare them for the following day on the Hill.

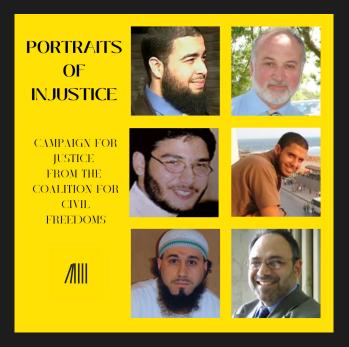
To increase the reach and impact of our programs, we will expand our search for grants.

We also are looking at various platforms that will allow us to increase the size of our audience and simultaneously provide an easy way for supporters to make recurring donations. Two new platforms for us are Patreon and GiveLively. Both of these enable us to reach new people with our message.

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What's Ahead for the Coaltion for Civil Freedoms





In the coming year, we will continue what we have always done to support and advocate for the prisoners and their families. CCF will continue efforts in securing justice for those wrongfully imprisoned as we continue to strengthen our commitment to those we serve. Our very successful Ramadan gift program will continue, and we also will be expanding our Sponsor a Prisoner Program to encompass regular financial support for prisoners who need it. We will continue producing our quarterly prisoner newsletter, Until Freedom, as a resource for our prisoners. It is also important for the prisoners to get their stories out, and so we will be restarting our "Portraits of Injustice" series.

Confronting oppressive power structures can be very difficult and intimidating when you are isolated and alone, which is why programs like our Annual Family Conference and monthly support groups are essential for justice. A positive outcome of the latest family conference was a working group of about 20 family members and allies. After identifying a focus and strategy, the-group decided to meet regularly to discuss issues and pursue a way forward.

Working together with coalition members, we remain relentless in the pursuit of justice! We hope we can count on your continued support in 2023.

Onward together to justice!

/ Meet the Coalition

The CCF Team



Mel Underbakke, PhD
Deputy Executive Director
melva@civilfreedoms.org



Steve Downs, Esq.Interim Co-Director and Board Chair swdowns68@aol.com



Kathy Manley, Esq. Legal Director kathy@civilfreedoms.org



Sarwat MalikPolitical Advocacy Director sarwat@civilfreedoms.org



Hatem FarizDevelopment Director
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Amith Gupta
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Nada Dibas
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Board of Directors Advisory Council

Ahmed BedierUnited Voices

Committee to Stop FBI

Friends of Human Rights

Former Political Prisoner

Attorney and Activist

Tom Burke

Repression

Fred Bryant

Marilyn Levin

Daniel McGowan

Huma Yasin

UNAC

Stephen Downs, Esq.Chair of the
Board of Directors

Ashley Young Secretary & Impacted Family Member

Hatem Fariz
Treasurer & Former
Political Prisoner

Fahd AhmedDesis Rising Up and Moving

Ghassan BallutAl-Nahda and Former
Political Prisoner

Zahra Billoo CAIR-SF

Jonathan A.C. Brown, PhD Georgetown University

Zahid Bukhari, PhD ICNA for Social Justice

Sara Flounders International Action Center

Lynne Jackson Project SALAM

Mauri' Saalakhan The Aafia Foundation

Sonali Sadequee
Holistic Health Coach and
Impacted Family Member

2022 Financials

Current Assets

Total Assets	\$26,615.37
PayPal	\$5,539.83
Bank Account	\$21,075.54

Liabilities & Equity

Total Liabilities and Equity	\$26,615.37
Total Equity	\$26,615.37
Net Income	-\$178,978.46
Retained Earnings	\$205,593.83
Opening Balance Equity	\$0.00
Equity	

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Income & Donations

Gross Profit	\$104,326.39
Total Income	\$104,326.39
Total Contributed income	\$104,326.39
Ramadan donations	\$31,501.04
Prisoner/Family Emergency Funds/Zoom Family Conference	\$65.00
General Donations	\$63,275.35
Film Festival	\$4,250.00
Family Conference Donations	\$5,235.00
Contributed income	\$0.00

Expenses by Group

Advertising & marketing	
Advertising & marketing	\$63.00
Graphic Design	\$3,939.15
Total	\$4,002.15
Communications	
Communications	\$8,148.40

Contract & professional

Contract & Professional fees	\$415.00
Accounting fees	\$6,529.74
Contractors - Advocacy and outreach	\$11,400.00
Contractors - Deputy Executive Director	\$23,000.00
Contractors - Executive Director	\$40,500.00
Contractors - Miscellaneous	\$3,799.20
Contractors - Prisoner & Family Support Coordinator	\$46,000.00
Legal Director	\$10,389.39
Staff Attorney	\$15,788.96
MIscellaneous Legal Services	\$387.00
Total	\$159,042.29

Occupancy

Occupancy	\$200.00

Office

Total	\$8,774.23
Shipping & postage	\$605.30
Printing & photocopying	\$7,866.68
Bank fees & service charges	\$302.25
Office expenses	\$0.00



Travel

Total	\$1,101.44
Taxis or shared rides	\$349.44
Travel	\$752.00

Uncategorized Expense

Uncategorized Expense	\$430.33
Family Conferences	\$1,443.81
Family conferences - Hotel	\$42,631.63
Family Travel	\$8,895.70
Film Festival	\$3,014.97
Prisoner/Family Emergency Funds/Zoom Family Conference	\$2,164.45
Ramadan Gifts to Prisoners	\$25,190.74
Retreat	\$3,255.41
Website / data base development	\$49.00
WOT Report	\$11,000.00
Total	\$98,076.04

\$283,844.55 **Total Expenses**

Coaltion for Civil Freedoms

Net Operating Income

Net Other Income	\$539.70
Total Other Income	\$539.70
Refunds	\$539.70
Other Income	
Net Operating Income	\$ -179,518.16

\$-178,978.46

Net Income

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