



A Global Palestinian Policy Voice

Al-Shabaka in 2017, Looking Ahead to 2018

Dedicated to the memory of Abdel Mohsin Al-Qattan, 1929-2017
And to all he has done to build Palestinian capacity to work for justice

Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network, is an independent, non-partisan, and non-profit organization whose mission is to educate and foster public debate on Palestinian human rights and self-determination within the framework of international law.

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Letter from Al-Shabaka

This year's annual report is dedicated to the memory of Abdel Mohsin Al-Qattan (Abu Hani), who was the first to support Al-Shabaka's mission, and who passed away in December 2017, may he rest in peace. As we mourn his loss and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, we also celebrate all that he achieved during his lifetime together with his wife, the late Leila Miqdadi Al-Qattan. For many are those who loved him and who treasure the time we had with him. We treasure, too, the lessons he imparted and the support he offered to all the initiatives that he felt held promise in sustaining the Palestinian people and their quest for rights.

Abu Hani was one of Palestine's towering figures and a dedicated institution-builder. In addition to establishing his own company, he founded the A. M. Qattan Foundation 20 years ago, with his son Omar leading the

institution during the past several years. Abu Hani also co-founded the Welfare Association (since renamed Taawon) at a time when Palestinians were at one of their lowest points, the exile of the Palestine Liberation Organization from Beirut during Israel's invasion in 1982. He supported countless other initiatives and he and Leila invested greatly in the education not only of their children and their extended family but also of many other individuals, both through the institutions they built as well as their personal support.

The educators, artists, and creators the Al-Qattans have helped to nurture are legion. By so doing they have contributed not only to the Palestinians' national survival, but also their survival as a people that have sustained their human dignity despite 100 years of forcible dispossession, displacement, and suffering. Human dignity is at the core of human rights; it is what drives us to pursue those rights for Palestinians living under siege and occupation, within Israel, and as refugees.

Without Abu Hani there would likely have been no Al-Shabaka. It was in January 2009 when I met with him at his home in Amman and presented our proposal for a Palestinian think tank. We co-founders were not modest in our ambitions: We envisioned a think tank that would cross geographic boundaries to reach Palestinian analysts at home and in exile.

Through this intellectual *lamm shamel* (ingathering) we would produce policy analysis that tapped the Palestinians' own positions and strategies in their richness and diversity and, most importantly, in their own voices. And we would ensure that those policies and strategies reached policy communities, the media, and civil society worldwide, and the Palestinian people themselves to support the quest for self-determination.

Abu Hani welcomed the initiative and provided the seed money for Al-Shabaka's first two years. He continued to support Al-Shabaka each year while emphasizing, as did Omar, the importance of diversifying funding sources. And, indeed, many generous individuals and foundations have supported Al-Shabaka since those early days, which we greatly appreciate.

Thanks to the faith placed in us, 2017 has been a year of growth and institution building. We continued to produce quality analysis; worked with the entire network to ensure that Palestinian policy analysis reached key capitals; piloted new mechanisms for cross-country engagement such as policy circles and a policy lab; expanded and diversified the policy network, which is now over 175 members; enhanced our reach via mainstream and social media in both English and Arabic and through pro bono translation of our analysis into French,

Italian, Spanish, and German; and built a solid institutional base, growing the staff complement to eight full and part-time staff and planning a 2018 budget of close to \$400,000. Our progress is spelled out throughout this report.

In the last few years of his life Abu Hani offered sage advice to Al-Shabaka and the other organizations he supported, urging them to set up an endowment to ensure institutional longevity. He pledged the funds toward an endowment for Al-Shabaka and his children have honored his pledge. We thank Najwa, Hani, Lina, and Omar for doing so, and in turn vow to honor his memory and commitment by pursuing Al-Shabaka's sustainability.

As Palestine and the Palestinians struggle with the ferocity of Israel's attacks against their legitimate national rights, attacks that in effect seek to undermine the whole framework of international law in order to crush those rights, we have no choice but to redouble our efforts for freedom, justice, and equality. With his emphasis on building and supporting institutions that meet Palestinians' needs for physical survival, that nurture creativity, knowledge, and excellence, and that protect and preserve our core human dignity, Abu Hani has shown us the way.

Nadia Hijab
President, Board of Directors

“...political alienation is not the same as political apathy. Some young Palestinians are seeking new political spaces in which to express themselves.”

Nur Arafah
writing for the Carnegie Endowment

1 Analysis to Promote Sound Strategy

Al-Shabaka's policy analysis is both topical and forward-looking. This approach enables us to tackle the most important issues of the day while ensuring that the arguments and evidence-based policy recommendations remain valid long after publication. Al-Shabaka also seeks to move discussion forward on key questions to help shape policy as well as the mainstream discourse.

In 2017, a series of Al-Shabaka pieces sought to reframe the Palestinian narrative in order to enrich policymaking. These included “[Talking Palestine](#),” which

discussed different frameworks that could be applied to the Palestinian struggle, and concluded that apartheid was the most strategic framework to use in the quest for decolonization and self-determination. “[To Achieve One State... Work for Two](#)” called for the narrative to center around freedom, justice, and equality (the goals of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement) so as to underscore the Palestinians' positive vision of the future. “[Rethinking Definitions of Apartheid](#)” made the case that Palestinians must recognize apartheid as a system of racial capitalism and not just racial discrimination.



Al-Shabaka analysis also built on the anniversaries of the year – the 100th of the Balfour Declaration and the 50th of the 1967 war – to look forward as well as reflect on the past. [The Roads Not Taken](#) offered analysts an opportunity to reflect on the ways Palestinians might have moved events in a different direction, drawing lessons for the future, while “[The Past is Still the Palestinians’ Present](#)” investigated Britain’s treatment of Palestinians across the decades. In “[Tracking the Trends of the Palestinian Cause](#),” experts reviewed the half-century since 1967, noting that although the cause has in some ways reverted to where it stood before the war, Palestinians can still mobilize resources

– such as growing global support for their rights – to secure their freedom.

Efforts to bring together Fatah and Hamas made headlines in 2017, and Al-Shabaka provided context and assessment, including analysis of whether reconciliation could “[Save the National Project](#).” Analysts also looked at the “[Pitfalls of ... Reconciliation](#)” and Abbas’s “[Shortsighted Gaza Policy](#).”

The actions of US President Donald Trump and his administration also dominated the news, particularly Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and his plan to move the US embassy there.

In “[Imposing Peace](#),” “[Trump... and the Future of Palestine](#),” and “[Options for Palestinians](#),” Al-Shabaka experts considered how Trump’s move was the culmination of decades-long US policy, its impact on the national struggle, and ways forward for civil society. We followed this up in 2018 with analysis on how Trump has emboldened Israel’s “[Annexation Crusade](#),” particularly in East Jerusalem.

Al-Shabaka continued to expand its reach by producing short policy memos tailored to journalists and policymakers on such topics as “[China’s New Plan](#)” to solve the conflict and ways to move “[Beyond the Binary](#)” of state solutions. In addition, when current events of vital importance to Palestinians arose, Al-Shabaka compiled critical pieces from its previous publications in short “Focus On” pieces to shed light on these issues, such as “[Palestinian-Israeli Security Coordination](#)” in the wake of the assassination of Palestinian activist and youth leader Basil Al-Araj and “[PLO and Palestinian Representation](#)” given the failing health of Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas.

In addition, in 2017 Al-Shabaka laid the ground for joint strategy and policy development by the members of the network. We developed the concept for two policy circles – a new mechanism

to bring experts together wherever they are to strategize on policy approaches to key issues, taking the time they need and publishing their analysis throughout the process. The two key topics that were launched in 2017 and will bear fruit in 2018 address *Palestinian Leadership and Accountability* as well as *Narrative and Discourse*. Al-Shabaka also laid the ground for an authoritative study to be undertaken in 2018 centering on dimensions of the Palestine Liberation Organization that are rarely addressed.

In 2017 Al-Shabaka conceptualized and piloted a new tool to encourage engagement in policy development by Palestinian and other audiences worldwide. The concept involves using the internet to host a monthly “Policy Lab” with Al-Shabaka experts in which different ideas and approaches are assessed and discussed and audience members can pose questions. The goal of the lab is to inform thinking about Palestine and the Palestinians with broader audiences than can be reached in person or in print.

“Israel has enforced a series of discriminatory laws and policies designed to reduce the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem, whether through the destruction of Palestinian homes or the revocation of (their) residency.”

Nadia Hijab and Zena Agha
writing in *The Nation*

At the heart of Al-Shabaka's network of nearly 200 members is a [small but effective team](#) that both produces analysis and supports the organization's growth and development. A key building block in this team is Al-Shabaka's policy fellow program, now in its third year: Policy fellows not only contribute to the network's body of critical analysis but also ensure that it reaches policymakers and civil society. 2017 was a year of transition between outgoing US and Palestine Fellows Tareq Baconi and Nur Arafah and incoming fellows Zena Agha and Yara Hawari.

Al-Shabaka in Palestine...

Al-Shabaka established a presence in Palestine with the launch of its policy fellow program in 2015. [Nur Arafah](#) followed [Tariq Dana](#) in late 2015 and served as policy fellow through September 2017. She produced an authoritative analysis of the political economy – "[Long Overdue: Alternatives to the Paris Protocol](#)" – and supported a brief on the Palestinian "[Fight for Digital Rights](#)" that built on a roundtable on "[Digital Occupation](#)" organized with partner Heinrich Boell Stiftung and 7amleh.

Nur provided expertise and insights to

Palestinian officials, think tanks, and civil society, as well as to the international community. To cite just a few examples, she met with UK, French, Austrian, Swedish, European Union, US, and UN diplomats and participated in workshops organized by the Carnegie Endowment, the IMF, Taawon, PASSIA, Al Quds University, the Carter Center, and Who Profits.

Nur was called on to participate in international fora in Vienna and Madrid. She also joined the [Al-Shabaka panel](#) on 50 years of occupation held at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, DC, and organized by US Policy Fellow [Tareq Baconi](#), which included Al-Shabaka Policy Analyst [Noura Erakat](#) and was moderated by the Brookings Institution's Khaled Elgindy.

In addition, Nur authored several op-eds for international and national media, including for *The Guardian* on [Jerusalem](#), for Al-Jazeera on the [Palestinian economy](#) and on [Jerusalem](#), and for the [Carnegie Endowment](#) on the alienation of Palestinian youth. Her media interviews included BBC [TV](#) and [radio](#), among others.

[Yara Hawari](#) took over the role of Palestine Policy Fellow in September 2017 and



hit the ground running with a policy brief in November tackling the status of the Palestinian citizens of Israel and their experience of “[Apartheid from Within](#).” She engaged with experts and civil society during her work on the brief and organized a roundtable with AI-Shabaka partner [Masarat](#) to disseminate the findings. Yara followed this in early 2018 with a policy brief on how Palestinians resist “[Israel's Land Grabs](#)” on both sides of the Green Line.

Yara also quickly became a focal point for both the development and diplomatic communities in Jerusalem and Ramallah. She met with the Swiss and EU representations in Palestine, participated in a workshop on EU advocacy organized by the Belgian NGO Broederlijk Delen, made a presentation to the Association

for International Development Agencies (AIDA), and contributed to an UNRWA workshop in the UK. Yara has also been forging relationships with journalists in Palestine and is frequently called upon for commentary and interviews. She writes op-eds regularly for a variety of outlets including [Al-Jazeera](#), [Middle East Eye](#), and [Al Quds](#), among others.

Both Nur and Yara have organized gatherings of AI-Shabaka members in Palestine and facilitated meetings with diplomats, journalists, and think tanks.

... In the United States

Tareq Baconi's 2016 fellowship with AI-Shabaka continued through September 2017 during which time he consider-

ably expanded his and the organization's reach in Washington, DC, and New York City while also producing authoritative analysis. His policy brief on "[How Israel Uses Gas](#)" to enforce dependency and promote normalization garnered much attention: It was adapted into an Arabic op-ed for [Al-Akhbar](#) and featured in The Palestine Chronicle and the Alliance for Water Justice. Tareq also wrote op-eds for several mainstream media outlets, including [The Hill](#), [Al-Jazeera English](#), [The Guardian](#), and [The Nation](#).

Tareq met frequently with members of the policy community including representatives from the Carnegie Endowment, the Open Society Foundations (OSF), the Brookings Institution, the Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP), George Washington University, and the New America Foundation. In addition to organizing the panel on occupation cited above, Tareq spoke on [a panel on Gaza](#) hosted by the Middle East Institute. Tareq and Nadia Hijab spoke at the Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) national members' meeting in Chicago, with Tareq addressing a [keynote panel](#).

Soon after she began her fellowship in October 2017, [Zena Agha](#) was called upon to speak at various fora, including a [panel](#) on the future of Gaza at the Harvard Arab Weekend convened by Al-

Shabaka Policy Analyst [Randa Wahbe](#) and including Al-Shabaka Analysts Nour Joudah, Dina Omar, and Jihad Abusalim. She also spoke at an event organized by OSF in Washington, DC, on the possibility of annexation of the West Bank and facilitated a roundtable for UNRWA representatives at their New York offices.

Zena built on Tareq's outreach via follow-up meetings with representatives of the policy community, and in 2018 she opened new channels of engagement with Amnesty International USA, the Arab Center Washington DC, and the Center for American Progress. She continued to nurture Al-Shabaka's strong relationships with civil society partners such as the Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU), JVP, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, FMEP, and the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, and represented Al-Shabaka at events hosted by the United Nations, New York University, Columbia University, FMEP, Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine, the Palestine Center, and the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). She was also a point person in New York for several visiting staff from civil society organizations in Palestine, including Addameer, Defense for Children International - Palestine, and Al-Haq.

Zena's contributions to the media included articles in the [Progressive Post](#) and [The](#)

[Nation](#) (co-authored with Nadia Hijab), as well as discussions on Spectrum News and [BBC Newshour Extra](#), which also included Al-Shabaka analyst [Mouin Rabbani](#).

Tareq and Zena benefited greatly from a media training program organized by the IMEU, which focused on developing skills in TV appearances and media engagement. Both fellows, as well as others on the Al-Shabaka team, contributed to IMEU's rapid response team.

The Al-Shabaka team's efforts in Washington, DC, during 2017 laid the ground for an intensive policy and outreach week by Al-Shabaka's US and Palestine policy fellows that featured a breakfast briefing on Capitol Hill co-sponsored by Al-Shabaka, Amnesty International USA, and FMEP and facilitated by the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights. Zena and Yara spoke at the briefing alongside Amnesty's Raed Jarrar, and it was chaired by FMEP President Lara Friedman. Yara and Zena also presented current political analysis at a private roundtable at the Center for American Progress. During the course of that week, they were joined by Nadia Hijab to discuss [Reframing the Narrative](#) at a Palestine Center panel and [Palestine in Political Limbo](#) at a New America panel chaired by New America fellow [Zaha Hassan](#).

... In Europe

Nadia Hijab's strategic location in London enabled her to nurture partnerships with the policy community and civil society and to speak at various policy fora and civil society events in Europe and beyond. In the UK, Nadia joined several meetings to lay out Palestinian perspectives at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as well as at the Department for International Development, contributed to events organized by the European Council on Foreign Relations, spoke at a panel organized by Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East at the Labour Party's annual conference, addressed the Medical Aid for Palestinians' bi-annual dinner, and spoke at a major [Artists for Palestine](#) UK event to commemorate the Balfour centenary.

Nadia traveled frequently to the Arab world from her London base, making presentations at a Carnegie workshop in Amman (and contributing to the subsequent [publication](#), as did Nur Arafah, Tariq Dana, and Halla Shoaibi) as well as contributing to the work of the Palestinian think tank Masarat. In addition, Nadia traveled frequently to the US to nurture relationships with key partners and supporters, including many of those cited



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above. She made online presentations to JVP in addition to speaking at its conference, spoke at the [Arab Center Washington DC](#), and contributed to presentations for OSF.

Alaa Tartir's Geneva base enabled him to speak at public events and expert meetings throughout Europe as well as in the US and the Arab region. These included a lecture at the Georg-August-University (Göttingen, Germany), a talk at Sciences Po (Paris, France), and presentations at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy as well as the International Studies Association's Annual Convention in Baltimore, US. Alaa also briefed high-level policymakers in Paris on political and security issues in Palestine and presented his work on international aid to Norwegian policymakers. In addition, he spoke about the [EU Police Mission in the West Bank](#) at the [Belgrade Security Forum](#), and about resistance and authoritarianism at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) in Washington, DC.

Alaa briefed Palestinian policymakers and local and international civil society actors on the [militarization of Palestinian aid](#) and on [donor funding](#) to Palestine. He delivered public lectures on peace, resistance, and the one-state reality at the University of Copenhagen and Malmö University, and participated in an expert workshop

on the occupation at the University of Copenhagen. He also participated in an expert workshop on Europe and the occupation at the London School of Economics and in an expert workshop on Arab regional challenges associated with conflict organized by the ESCWA in Beirut.

... And in the Arab World

Since its establishment Al-Shabaka has worked to ensure its presence in the Arab world beyond Palestine. It has published all its content [in Arabic](#) as well as [in English](#) since it was launched and strives to ensure that at least half the members of the policy network are based in Palestine and the Arab region (see section 3 below).

It also established a program to develop and place network members' opinion pieces in pan-Arab media outlets including *Al-Akhbar*, *Al-Quds*, *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed*, *Al-Jazeera Arabic*, and *Maan*, among others (see section 4). This work has expanded Al-Shabaka's presence in the Arab world and introduced the organization's analysts to a new and larger audience. Al-Shabaka has also worked with those of its members whose first language is Arabic to translate and place their opinions and analysis in English-language outlets.

Looking ahead, Al-Shabaka intends to expand its policy fellow program to other



Arab countries, in particular Lebanon, Jordan, and Kuwait. It is important to do so because of the key role Al-Shabaka policy fellows currently play within the organization. They are well placed for outreach to the policy community, civil society, and the media in their specific locations, in addition to producing their own evidence-based analysis. The fellows are also able to provide support to network members as described above, and to communicate the status and views of the different parts of the Palestinian people and their interactions with the community to the rest of the

Al-Shabaka team. This enables the organization to produce holistic analysis that covers not just the Palestinians under occupation and in Israel, but throughout the diaspora.

“...these reconciliation talks represent the beginning of a dangerous stage in the history of the Palestinian national project—a project that will find itself increasingly sidelined.”

Dana El Kurd
writing in Foreign Affairs

3 A Network that Spans the Globe

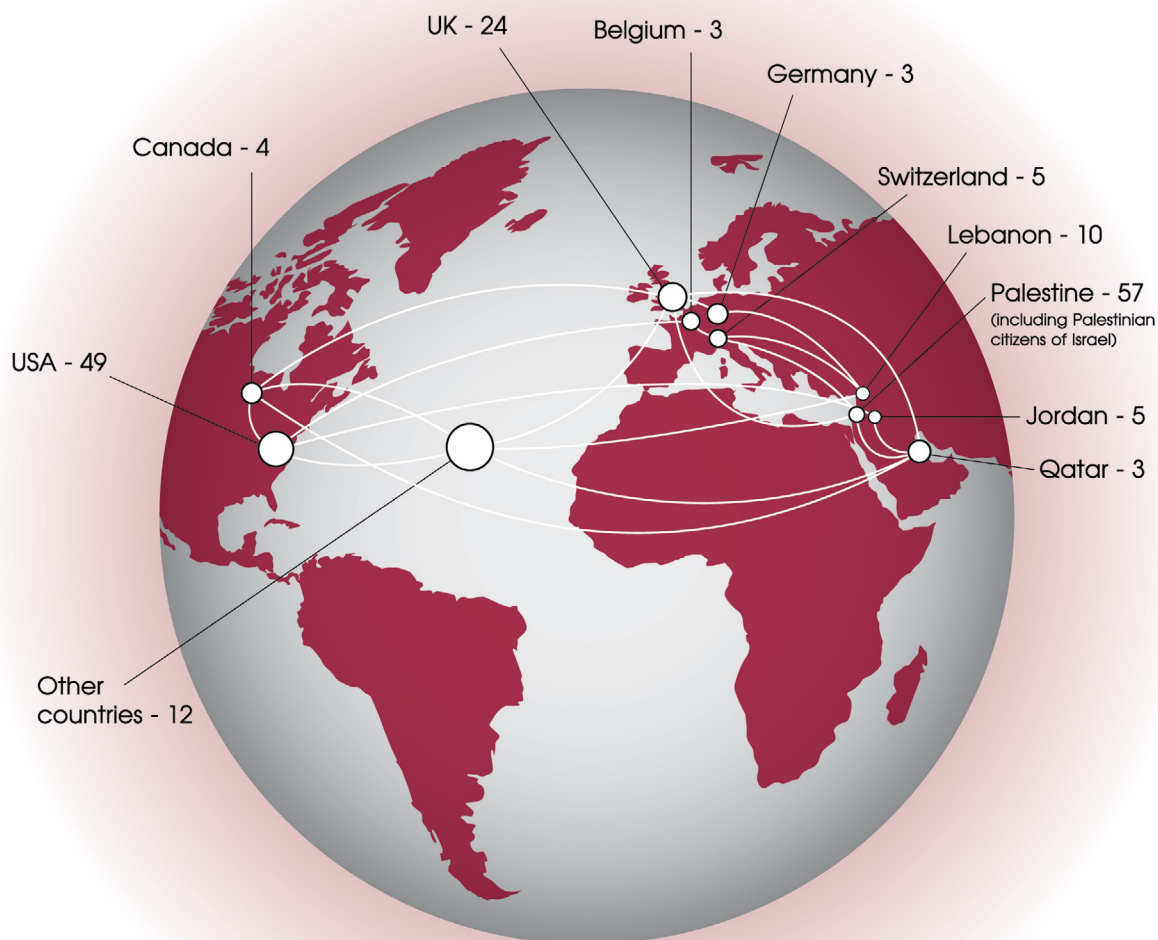
By the end of 2017, Al-Shabaka had 175 policy analysts in its network, a 12% increase from 2016. Many of its new members were younger analysts, which helps to provide a global platform for their talent as well as the opportunity to engage with established scholars. The network is expected to continue to grow in 2018 and we will, in addition, continue to strive for gender parity in the network. Currently, 45% of the members are women and 55% are men.

Al-Shabaka's network also expanded further across the globe in 2017, covering over 20 countries on six continents. Some 33% of members are located across historic Palestine while another 6% are

based in Lebanon. A further 28% are based in the US and 14% are in the UK. The rest are spread throughout Europe and the Arab world, and a few are in Australia and Latin America.

Our network members are concentrated in 12 core areas of expertise. Some 28% are experts in politics and negotiations, 24% in political advocacy, activism, and civil society, 18% in human rights, law, and international law, and 16% in economic development and political economy. To get a sense of the range of Al-Shabaka's reach and diversity, the analysis we published in 2017 was produced by 33 policy experts from 10 countries in 6 regions.

Our network of analysts



“ Had civil society been involved in consultations around the cybercrime bill from the beginning, a much stronger emphasis would have been placed on ... digital rights. ”

Nadim Nashif
writing in Deutsche Welle

During the course of 2017 and into 2018, Al-Shabaka continued to serve as a leading Palestinian policy voice across international media. During this time, we placed 80 [op-eds](#) in a range of outlets throughout the world, including 43 in English and 37 in Arabic. Our members' perspectives were featured through English and other Western language op-eds in [The Guardian](#), [Al-Jazeera English](#), [The Nation](#), [Foreign Affairs](#), [The Hill](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), and [HuffPost](#), among other publications. In Arabic, their analysis was showcased in [Al-Jazeera](#), [Al-Quds](#), [Al-Araby Al-Jadeed](#), [Al-Akhbar](#), and [Rai al-Youm](#).

Moreover, news sites and solidarity groups continued to use their own resources to translate Al-Shabaka content into other languages, such as [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Italian](#), and [German](#). Journalists likewise relied on the diverse expertise of our network analysts in over 70 pieces, including for [the BBC](#), [The Atlantic](#), [Bloomberg](#), and [Vice](#).

In addition to this array of news sources, over 20 of Al-Shabaka's original pieces of analysis were cited in 15 academic journals throughout the year. [The International Journal of Cultural Studies](#), [The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs](#),



[*Brown Journal of World Affairs*](#), [*Journal of Business Ethics*](#), and the [*New England Journal of Public Policy*](#) are just a few.

The organization's digital presence also grew substantially over 2017, with our annual website visits increasing by 7%, Al-Shabaka [Facebook](#) likes increasing by 17%, and [Twitter](#) followers increasing by 32%.

For the fifth consecutive year, Al-Shabaka also ranked among the "Best Think Tank Networks" in the [Global Go To Think Tank Index report](#), placing 36th out of 85 think tanks. Al-Shabaka surpassed more established institutions, such as the International Relations and Security Network (ISN) (Switzerland), CIDOB, Barcelona (Spain), and Transparency International (TI) (Germany). This year's placement was particularly notable as nearly 1,000 new think tanks were included in the Global Think Tank Database in 2017, now 7,000 strong. Al-Shabaka is one of only two think tanks in this year's Best Network category that specifically represents issues of concern to the Arab world.

Our growing presence in diverse media outlets, scholarly journals, and social media further position Al-Shabaka as the leading Palestinian policy voice

worldwide. Critically, our visibility through these fora also helps to center Palestinian perspectives within international discussions of Palestine, and to shape the public's understanding of Palestinian conditions and policies that impact their struggle for self-determination.



#36 in the world's "Best Think Tank Networks" category in the 2017 Global Go To Think Tank Index report

67% of Al-Shabaka original content was republished in a language other than English and Arabic



80 op-eds published in global media outlets



56% overall increase in website visits and social media following

Institution-Building and Our Valued Supporters

In 2017 we raised a total of \$266,000 from individuals and foundations and signed an agreement for a new two-year foundation grant of \$150,000 for 2018-19. We also diversified our sources of funding by making use of a crowdfunding campaign to help fund our planned policy lab, with welcome support from [BuildPalestine](#). This successfully raised \$21,000, exceeding our planned target.

We intend to further diversify funding sources as part of our efforts to promote sustainability. In this context, we are very grateful that the Palestinian artist Kamal Boullata is creating a deluxe edition silk-screen print especially for Al-Shabaka, which he will sign and number and which will support Al-Shabaka's fundraising efforts. It is scheduled to be completed in September 2018.

The contributions of the members of Al-Shabaka's network should also be highlighted. From the organization's founding through 2017, the network's policy analysts have contributed their briefs and commentaries pro bono, an affirmation of the dedication of the organization's volunteer base. Their

dedication and that of Al-Shabaka's staff has enabled us to achieve the results highlighted above with what is still a modest budget for a transnational network of such ambition.

The strength of our analysis and the growth of our reach positions us to attract more support and new partners in 2018 and reinforces our efforts to strengthen Palestinian policy voices. We thank all of our supporters and partners for their very kind contributions; they are listed below. By enabling us to sustain and develop the space for debate and analysis of alternative policies and strategies by Palestinians and their allies, every donation is a contribution to the noble quest for freedom, justice, and equality.

Major Donors

Abdel Mohsin Al-Qattan
John and Henrietta Goelet
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“**Hamas’s political document is closer to the two-state framework than the manifesto of Likud.**”

Tareq Baconi
writing in The Guardian

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