

## Biography - Ali Abu Awwad (Arabic:

علي أبو عواد, born 1972) is a Palestinian nonviolence activist and founder of the Taghyeer (Change) Palestinian National Nonviolence Movement. Taghyeer is dedicated to fostering Palestinian national nonviolent identity in action - through which communities, leaders and organizations come together to address social development needs and at the same time resist occupation.



The movement was launched by 3000 Palestinians gathered from across the West Bank in Jericho in September 2016. From 2002-9 Awwad toured the world together on behalf of Bereaved Families Forum with Robi Damelin, a Jewish woman whose son was killed by a Palestinian sniper -- to encourage dialogue and reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis. His life and work has been featured in two award-winning films, *Encounter Point* and *Forbidden Childhood*. In 2013, Awwad began developing the Karama (Dignity) Nonviolence Center on family-owned land near the Gush Etzion junction in Area C, West Bank.

Awwad was raised in a politically active refugee family, and followed in his mother's footsteps (she, a PLO regional leader, was beaten and humiliated by Israeli agents in front of Ali when he was young). During the first intifada Ali was arrested for stone throwing and refusing to give information against his mother. In 1993, after a 17-day joint hunger strike they managed to get permissions to see each other in their separate prisons. This success was a turning point in Awwad's realization that nonviolent action along Gandhian principles might be a better way to defend one's rights. With the Oslo accords, Awwad was released and served in Palestinian Authority security. He resigned in 1997 over the shame and contradiction of arresting Palestinians still under occupation. In 2000 as the violent second intifada raged, Ali was shot by a settler while changing a tire on a West Bank road. Sent to Saudi Arabia for treatment, he learned there that his beloved brother Youssef, trying to keep kids throwing stones away from an IDF unit, had been murdered at point blank range by an IDF soldier. It was from this loss, and the subsequent struggle with his political ideals and the rage in his heart, that Ali and his family found the Bereaved Parents Circle and the path to his activism was forged.