

Stronger With Immigrants



Confronting genocide in Gaza

Facing climate change in New Mexico

Supporting asylum seekers

pg. 6

pg. 7

pg. 9



CONTENTS

- 2 LETTER FROM OUR GENERAL SECRETARY
- 3 ALUMNI NEWS
- 4 UPDATES FROM AFSC
- **6** CONFRONTING GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE

An interview with Michael Merryman-Lotze, Just Peace global policy director.

7 UNITING TO FACE CLIMATE CHANGE IN NEW MEXICO

With support from AFSC, local farmers are learning to adapt to extreme weather by sharing traditional knowledge and innovative solutions.

9 STANDING STRONG WITH IMMIGRANTS

From Colorado to Costa Rica, everyday people are organizing to stop detention and deportation and keep families and communities together.

15 THE POWER OF GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING

AFSC volunteers are finding creative ways to mobilize their meetings, friends, and networks in support of our work for peace and justice around the globe.



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WHO WE ARE

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression.

Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light within each person, we nurture the seeds of change and the respect for human life to fundamentally transform our societies and institutions.

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COVER PHOTO

AFSC Immigrant Rights Organizer Itzel Hernandez in New Jersey.

Photo: Nathaniel Doubleday/AFSC









As an AFSC supporter, you are part of a broader movement of Quakers and allies in the U.S. and around the world. Standing on the shoulders of those who came before us, we are working together to realize the beloved community we all deserve.

Today, that means taking courageous stances alongside communities in their struggles for liberation. In Gaza, we deliver life-saving aid while amplifying calls for an immediate end to the genocide. In the U.S. and Latin America, we provide direct services to immigrants while challenging systems that deny them their rights. We also help farmers in New Mexico preserve traditional knowledge while becoming more resilient to climate change.

Each effort serves immediate needs while building toward systemic transformation. This is movement building in its truest form—the patient, persistent work of shifting power toward justice.

In the face of escalating violence and repression, communities across the globe refuse to be silenced. With an eye to the future, they are also preparing for what comes next. When windows of opportunity open, our movement will be ready to push them wide.

Your partnership and solidarity make that possible. Thank you for joining people across the globe who are organizing, resisting, and building collective power for meaningful and lasting change.



Janach

Joyce Ajlouny

GENERAL SECRETARY



Including a simple line in your estate plans can help ensure AFSC's future for years to come.

To learn more, download our estate planning kit at **afsc.org/estate**, email us at GiftPlanning@afsc.org or call Alyssa Chatten at 888-588-2372 ext. 2.

ALUMNI news





In the 1960s, James Neal Cavener worked for AFSC as the European director of overseas work camps. He recently published his memoir, recounting stories from his time in Paris to his work as a daily print ournalist.

staff member in San Francisco and a lifelong advocate for nonviolent action. In 1972, he took part in the "People's Blockade" of the USS Enterprise, an aircraft carrier bound for Vietnam. He also co-founded Nonviolent Peaceforce, an unarmed, paid civilian protection force that fosters dialogue

among parties in conflict.

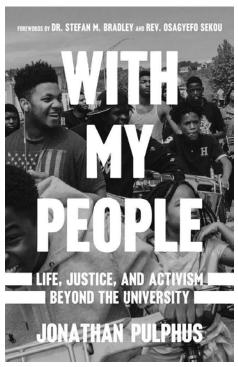
In March, David Hartsough passed away. David was a longtime AFSC



Brynne Crockett, former Twin Cities Healing Justice Program director, is the new in-arena host for the Lynx WNBA team. She energizes the crowd at the Target Center, using a mix of skills she has honed over the years, including community building, media, and entertainment.

of citizen diplomacy and peacemaking. During the Vietnam War, he traveled to Hanoi on behalf of AFSC to examine the needs of North Vietnamese civilians for medical supplies. Those journeys made him a respected source of information and a conduit between citizens and officials on both sides of the conflict.

Joe Elder passed away, leaving a legacy



Jonathan Pulphus, former program associate in St. Louis, has a new book, "With My People: Life, Justice, and Activism Beyond the University." The book explores how college students have protested systemic injustice and brought about community change.

Get Alumni Network updates and join our Facebook group!

Do you have news or stories to share? Email us at alumni@afsc.org



Tonya Histand PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Updates

FROM THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE



Participants in AFSC's Asia Youth for Action network. Photo: AFSC/Asia

ASIA

YOUNG LEADERS DRIVE CHANGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Across Southeast Asia, young people are often excluded from decision-making processes. Despite these challenges, many are stepping up as leaders in working for more just, peaceful communities. AFSC's Asia Young People for Action (AYA) supports them in their efforts. Young leaders have the opportunity to network and enhance nities in four countries. their organizing skills.

ing out against gender-based violence through online campaigns. In Lao People's Democratic Republic, they're mobilizing

youth to take nonviolent action against climate change. In Indonesia, they're improving accessibility for people with disabilities and meeting with government officials about environmental concerns. Over the past two years, 61 youth organizers have participated in AYA, reaching 20 commu-

Says AYA member Vanhthong Thork-In Cambodia, AYA members are speakhoualoua, "We want to help youth be brave, take responsibility for the environment, and think about sustainable development."

MORE: AFSC.ORG/AYA



Keang Pouy PROGRAM COORDINATOR CAMBODIA

Updates (CONT.)



AFSC staff in Michigan with cardboard cutouts of Commutations Project participants. *Photo: AFSC/Michigan*

MICHIGAN

SECOND CHANCES FOR WOMEN IN PRISON

Everyone deserves a second chance. But for many in prison, that opportunity never comes. Instead, the U.S. criminal legal system overly relies on life or long sentences.

AFSC's Michigan Criminal Justice Program works to change that. Rooted in our Quaker belief in the Light in all people, our work recognizes everyone's capacity to change.

One example is our Commutation Project. It pairs women serving long sentences with community volunteers. Through visits, phone calls, and letters, they learn from each other and work toward applying for commutation and release.

Two participants have had their commutation proposals advance to public hearings. Another participant, age 73, is now working toward her GED.

Participant Mary Lemons said her volunteer partner helped renew her faith in the outside world. Volunteers "see us as more than our mistakes and bad choices," she says.

Her volunteer partner, Mary Lynn Stevens, looks forward to the day they can see each other outside the prison walls. Mary will be a "wonderful neighbor," she says. "People will wonder, 'Why wasn't this terrific person here sooner?'"



Adalia Kirby
PROJECT COORDINATOR
ENDING LIFE AND LONG SENTENCES
MICHIGAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA

JUSTICE FOR ANASTASIO ROJAS

In May 2010, longtime San Diego resident Anastasio Hernandez Rojas was brutally beaten by over a dozen border agents as they were trying to deport him. By the time he arrived at the hospital, the 42-year-old father of five was brain dead. He died three days later.

AFSC has supported his family's quest for justice and accountability, advocating alongside them in their yearslong struggle. In 2022, Anastasio's widow and attorneys brought their case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. They argued that the United States' "use of force" laws violated international human rights standards.

Earlier this year, the commission ruled that border officials were responsible for Anastasio's death. They called for reopening the investigation and for sweeping reforms. That includes major changes to bring U.S. Customs and Border Protection's policies in line with international guidelines.

This is the first time the commission has ruled on a law enforcement killing on U.S. soil. We hope it leads to real accountability and systemic changes to prevent more deaths.



Pedro Rios
DIRECTOR
U.S.-MEXICO BORDER
PROGRAM

Confronting genocide in Gaza

An interview with

MICHAEL MERRYMAN-LOTZE JUST PEACE GLOBAL POLICY DIRECTOR



Q | Can you talk about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza that has escalated over the past two years?

For over 17 years, Palestinians in Gaza have lived under a brutal blockade imposed by Israel, restricting their rights, movement, and access to basic needs. Since October 2023, Israel has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced nearly the entire population, and destroyed most infrastructure.

Over the past two years, AFSC has provided humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, thanks to the dedication of our staff in Gaza and the generosity of our supporters. But Israel's restrictions on aid have meant that our team has often had to work with what little can be sourced locally.

The aid provided by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which was created by Israel in February 2025 and supported by the U.S., is inadequate to meet the massive need. It has been used as a fig leaf to continue restricting aid, and that has resulted in famine.

Since last year, AFSC and other organizations have been warning that we would reach a point of no return—a point where

people were starving to death. We hoped the international community would respond with pressure on Israel for a permanent ceasefire and access for humanitarian organizations. Instead, we've witnessed Israel intensify its blockade. As a result, more people are dying.

Q AFSC has worked in Palestine and Israel since 1948. How does that experience help us understand what we're seeing today?

Palestinians have long described the inequality they face as equivalent to apartheid. That reality is now recognized by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Israeli human rights organizations like B'Tselem. What we're seeing today is the culmination of decades of violence and oppression.

AFSC's work in Palestine and Israel has always been grounded in the Quaker testimonies of peace and equality. If we want to end the cycle of conflict, the world must recognize the situation of apartheid at its core. Politicians focus on a two-state solution as the answer. But real change requires equality and justice for Palestinians and Israelis, rather than simply partition.

Q | Are there any signs of progress toward that change?

Unfortunately, the situation has grown steadily worse. People have suffered enormously through famine and Israel's attacks. But in the U.S. and Europe, there are signs of change. There's been a significant shift in public opinion as people witness the starvation of Palestinians in Gaza. They're recognizing that this is genocide and that it's unacceptable. Earlier this year, 27 U.S. senators—a majority of Democrats—voted to restrict arms sales to Israel, twice as many as just a few months prior. In Europe, countries are starting to cut off arms exports to Israel and demanding change.

But these changes are not enough, and much work remains. To end this genocide, we all need to demand our leaders support a permanent ceasefire and humanitarian access. They must also call for accountability for injustices past and present, and fundamental changes that guarantee freedom and equal rights for Palestinians.

MORE:
AFSC.ORG/GAZACRISIS

IN NEW MEXICO, FARMERS UNITE TO FACE CLIMATE CHANGE

BY SAYRAH NAMASTE



For generations, New Mexico's farmers read the rhythms of the seasons. They could estimate temperatures and conditions for the coming months. That helped them determine when to plant their crops. But in recent years, climate change has shattered many of these age-old patterns.



"It's changed the schedules of everything," says farmer Alberto Romero, who has been growing organic fruits, vegetables, and mushrooms for over seven years. "We don't know when to expect the first frost. It's very hot when it shouldn't be, and we can't adapt fast enough to ever-changing conditions."

Alberto echoes what AFSC has been hearing from farmers across New Mexico. Throughout the state, farmers are confronting unprecedented climate challenges. Heat waves, drought, wildfires, and insect infestations—all threaten their livelihoods and food security.

Casey Holland has been farming for over 15 years. They, too, have seen this transformation firsthand. They are among many local farmers who rely on communal irrigation canals, or acequias, to water their crops. This traditional system of earthen ditches channels water from rivers to farms and homes.

But over the past decade, New Mexicans have faced extreme temperatures—sometimes over 100 degrees for days or even weeks. Seven years ago, drought dried up the canals. Farmers were left uncertain when they could use water from the acequia again.

"The acequia system has been around for several hundred years, and that hadn't happened before," Casey says.

FINDING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

For over 50 years, AFSC's New Mexico Program has provided vital support to local farmers. Today, much of our efforts focus on helping farmers work together to build resilience to climate change.

When climate disasters strike, this network can serve as a lifeline. Several farmers in our network experienced this when they lost most of their crops to record-breaking heat a couple of summers ago. Many were left without food and income. AFSC provided shade cloth to help farmers protect their remaining crops. We also connected newer farmers to experienced ones who showed them how to install it.

Beyond emergency assistance, we also offer workshops where farmers learn strategies for long-term resilience. At one workshop, farmers learned how to build a Johnson-Su bioreactor, a composting system that introduces beneficial fungi into the soil. Farmers have seen remarkable results. One reported a 50% increase in crop yield while using less water and labor.

Another important tool in building climate resilience is solar technology. By building 35 passive solar cold frames in recent years, we have enabled year-round growing for dozens of farmers. We've also helped farmers power their wells with solar energy instead of fossil fuels. And we solarized a commercial kitchen for an Indigenous-led nonprofit that teaches formerly incarcerated people to farm.

Climate adaptation involves more than new tools. It also means changing what people grow. Because of rising temperatures and droughts, growers can no longer plant the same fruit trees—including apples and peaches—that used to thrive in New Mexico. So we've connected farmers with others who specialize in trees better suited for current conditions, like goji and figs. We help farmers buy trees to start their orchards. In exchange, farmers document their growing experiences. They provide data on planting dates, flowering times, and harvest yields that inform our collective understanding of what works for our changing environment.

FARMERS HELPING FARMERS

Our work with farmers emphasizes collaboration over competition. Throughout the year, AFSC organizes opportunities for farmers to learn from each other. When local farmers faced grasshopper infestations, we provided them with insect netting and brought them together to share techniques on organic pest management. Indigenous farmers taught participants ancestral methods that have worked for generations.

"I really like the AFSC farmer gatherings when I can learn from other farmers how they are dealing with climate change," says Alberto. "We talk about the real challenges we are all facing."

As climate change intensifies, we're fostering a community-based food system that combines traditional wisdom with modern technology. While farmers can no longer read the seasons the way their ancestors did, they're finding a new way forward. By sharing knowledge and supporting each other, they're laying the foundation for thriving even in the face of a changing climate.





STRONGER WITH IMMERICANTS

mmigrants make our communities stronger. They are neighbors, workers, students, business owners, and friends. But today, immigrants are being detained and disappeared. Families and neighborhoods are being torn apart. Government raids are disrupting our communities and creating a culture of fear.

As a Quaker organization, AFSC believes in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. For decades, we've worked alongside immigrant communities. We're inspired every day by their courage and resilience—and the commitment of all who stand with them.

Here, AFSC staff describe what becomes possible when community members band together.

Every week, AFSC staff and volunteers gather outside the ICE facility in Miramar, Florida. They offer moral support, information, and other aid to people navigating the immigration system. PHOTO: ADAM BARKAN

QUAKER ACTION FALL 2025

ORGANIZING

to keep loved ones together in Colorado

BY JORDAN GARCIA

CO-DIRECTOR, COLORADO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PROGRAM

The call came into our 24-hour hotline on a Wednesday morning: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were conducting a raid at Denver's Cedar Run Apartments. The Colorado Rapid

Response Network quickly mobilized volunteers to the scene. Using bullhorns, our team called out to residents: You have the right to keep your doors closed! There's no warrant! You have the right not to say anything!

This is just one example of how we're protecting immigrant communities facing ICE raids. Here in Colorado, we have a strong immigrant rights movement led by the people most impacted by these issues. It includes congregations, community groups, and allies. AFSC is proud to have been a part of this movement for the past 70 years.

Today, the heart of our work is the Colorado Rapid Response Network. The network operates a 24/7 hotline where people can report suspected ICE activity. We rely entirely on volunteers who serve as dispatchers, confirmers, and legal observers. Our network of volunteers is now 4,500 strong.

AFSC staff train and onboard all dispatchers, who field calls all day long, sometimes up to 30 calls per hour. Volunteers are then sent to verify reports of ICE

activity. If we can confirm the report, we notify the community through Facebook as quickly as possible. Our efforts help filter out mistaken reports that might cause unnecessary panic.



A protest against immigrant detention in Aurora, Colorado. Photo: Gabriela Flora/AFSC

When volunteers witness an ICE raid, they are ready to support community members. We let them know about their rights, as we did at the Cedar Run Apartments complex. If a person is detained by ICE, we connect them to legal representation. If their family needs other kinds of support, we get them that

help-everything from food to rental assistance. Volunteers also accompany immigrants to court proceedings, providing transportation and interpretation services.

Across Colorado, we've helped hun-

dreds of immigrants prepare for encounters with ICE through Know Your Rights workshops led by members of AFSC's Not1More Deportation Table. The group is made up of immigrants and family members who have faced deportation. We also help people create emergency family safety plans in case a loved one is detained or deported.

Today, more people are volunteering than we have seen in years. Local and state officials are also taking bold action, thanks to community advocacy. The state legislature has introduced a bill to make schools, health care centers, and churches off-limits to ICE. And the Denver Public Schools system is taking steps to keep ICE off its campuses.

Each day, we collectively strengthen our network of immigrants and allies working together for justice. That morning at Cedar Run Apartments, our volunteers' bullhorns carried a clear message: When people unite, we can protect one another.

REPRESENTING

immigrants in New Jersey in unprecedented times

BY ALEXANDRA GONÇALVES PEÑA

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES, NEW JERSEY IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PROGRAM

Recently, our immigration attorneys here in New Jersey got incredible news: a mother and daughter we had been representing had just won their asylum case. In today's political climate, wins like this don't happen very often—which made the victory even more meaningful for one family seeking safety and refuge in the U.S.

For decades, AFSC has provided free legal representation to immigrants in New Jersey, handling over 2,000 cases each year. Moments like these remind me why we do this work.

Since the start of the Trump administration, we've seen a huge increase in arrests and detention. People who have lived in New Jersey for years are being arrested at routine ICE checkins. Two of my clients were arrested right in front of me when they went to an interview with ICE. Both women were transferred to a detention center in Louisiana without warning. This made it much harder for us to talk with them and for their families to stay in touch.

The Trump administration's plan Alis clear: make immigrants so scared that they give up their legal cases entirely.

AFSC is responding by adapting our approach. We're helping clients and families prepare for possible arrests, building rapid response networks, and working around the clock to get people released from

detention. With the two women I represent, we had made emergency plans with their families ahead of time, which helped us act fast. We were able to get court hearings and get them released within two weeks. Today,

AFSC Legal Assistant Blanca Molina in New Jersey. *Photo: Nathaniel Doubleday/AFSC*

they are safe at home with their families. But their struggle for permanent protection in the U.S. continues.

The need for free legal counsel for immigrants is huge. Last year, AFSC and

partner organizations in New Jersey could only help 42% of those detained in the state. At the same time, research has shown that immigrants with lawyers are 10.5 times more likely to win their cases.* And with

> more detention centers opening in the state, we know many more of our community members will be locked up and need representation.

> But that doesn't mean we'll ever give up. I tell our legal team: Do what

IMMIGRANTS WITH LAWYERS ARE 10.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO WIN THEIR CASES.

you can. Yes, we'll lose some cases, but we're also going to win. We're going to save lives. We're going to keep families together. Even helping one person makes a difference for years to come. It means one person gets to stay with their family, to help our communities, to make this a more compassionate society.

We're building a network of care that will outlast any administration. ■

SUPPORTING

migrants on their journeys in Latin America

BY MARCIA AGUILUZ SOTO

REGIONAL DIRECTOR, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Last April, I visited a place few outsiders had seen in months: Costa Rica's immigration detention center. I was part of a group representing the only organiza-

tions allowed inside the facility since February. That's when 200 migrants-including 80 childrenarrived on deportation flights from the United States.

These migrants weren't Latin Americans, but people from Afghanistan, Russia, Armenia, Iran, China, and other countries. Most had not been told where they were being taken. Many were separated from families still in the United States.

Sitting on the floor in 88-degree heat, we talked to 24 people from 13 countries, using Google Translate to communicate across eight languages. One woman typed into her phone: "In the U.S., we were locked in a room for more than 20 days. They mistreated us, handcuffed us, lied to us. We're trapped. We can't go back. Please help us."

When AFSC and our partners visited the detention center, we helped bring public attention to the plight of these migrants. Other organizations also pressured the government to uphold their rights. Our coordinated advocacy resulted in an important victory: the Costa Rican government granted temporary

humanitarian status permits to all who were detained. Authorities returned their documents and allowed them to move freely in the country.



A mother and child who were detained in Costa Rica after being deported from the U.S. Photo: Marcia Aguiluz Soto/AFSC

AFSC played a crucial role in securing their freedom and supporting their resettlement. We connected them with legal help, health care services, and other basic needs. We also helped secure safe housing for migrants, working with local Quakers who offered to host several migrant families.

Like many people around the world, these migrants face impossible situations

They can't return to their native countries because of persecution and violence. They have been denied their right to seek asylum in the U.S. Yet they face enormous

> barriers to building new lives elsewhere. They are stuck in a system that treats human beings as political pawns rather than people deserving of dignity and protection.

> Beyond our advocacy, AFSC provides humanitarian assistance to the dozens of migrants who arrive daily at Costa Rica's southern border. Working with local partners, we distribute food, water, and other aid. We provide information and resources to help migrants understand their rights. And we document the human rights violations they face during their journeys.

This humanitarian relief is essential, but it is not enough. We need systemic change that recognizes the humanity of all who seek

where migration is a choice, not a necessity. We must ensure that everyone has what they need to thrive, wherever they

safety. We must work for a world

choose to call home.

The power of grassroots fundraising

ach year, hundreds of Friends and other members of our dedicated community show up to support AFSC's work for peace and justice. They are part of our governance committees, Corporation, and Board of Directors. Many of these volunteers are also active fundraisers for AFSC. They're finding creative ways to mobilize their meetings, friends, and networks in support of our mission.

Today, this grassroots support is more critical than ever. "At a time of great threats to peace in the world as well as cutbacks in traditional funding sources, it's especially important to support the brave work of the AFSC in furtherance of justice and equity," says Stephanie Kanwit, a member of AFSC's Moment of Truth campaign committee.

These volunteer fundraisers are not only raising money. They are expanding AFSC's reach and deepening our community roots. Here are some ways that committed volunteers are building support for AFSC:

Gwynedd Friends Meeting, Pennsylvania

For almost 60 years, the Gwynedd Friends Meeting has hosted a flea market sale with proceeds benefiting AFSC. Former AFSC staff member Beth Binford originated the idea for the sale. What started as a simple swap table in the 1960s has since generated nearly \$500,000 for AFSC. Today, the sales are made possible by dedicated volunteers. The flea market is also hosted at area Quaker retirement centers like Kendal at Longwood and Crosslands.

Bob Sanders, New Hampshire

Bob decided to cycle 4,000 miles across the United States to raise awareness about Israel's ongoing violence in Gaza. Working with Not In Our Name NH, Bob's journey included collecting signatures for a petition and donations from communities on his route. In Milwaukee, AFSC Friends Liaison Mary Lord and the Milwaukee Friends Meeting hosted a benefit concert to coincide with his visit.

Will Rogers, North Carolina

As a new Corporation member, Will created a Facebook Fundraiser to mobilize his networks, inspiring friends and family to donate to AFSC's work. Each year, dozens of volunteers use social media to take advantage of this easy-to-use tool.

Stephanie Kanwit, Virginia

Stephanie has found innovative ways to connect her personal network with AFSC's efforts. She recently organized a Zoom gathering where friends could hear directly from AFSC's three directors on migration, healing justice, and economic justice. The event included breakout groups with indepth discussions and concluded with participants sharing ways to get involved with AFSC's ongoing campaigns.

Portland Friends Meeting, Maine

A few years ago, Portland Friends Meeting undertook a discernment process over how to use resources that had built up over time. Those resources included substantial gifts from members' estates. As a result, the meeting established a Shared Witness Fund for "work in the world." Last year, as the suffering in Gaza grew, one member made a Spirit-led call for the meeting to contribute \$75,000 from the fund to support AFSC's humanitarian relief efforts. The meeting approved.

"EVERYTHING WE DO THAT MAKES THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE WE DO IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS. EACH ACTION **MOVING THE WORLD TOWARD GOOD HAS A** RIPPLE EFFECT."

-AFSC CORPORATION MEMBER **SHANNON ISAACS**

These are just a few of the ways that volunteers are building support for AFSC's work for peace with justice. Thanks to everyone who has organized events, started fundraisers, and found other ways to connect their communities with our mission!

To learn more, contact us at DonorLiaisons@afsc.org.



Quaker action for a just world 1501 Cherry Street Philadelphia, PA 19102

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