

November 9 2019

To the CEO of CeiiA, José Rui Felizardo

Dear Mr Felizardo:

The undersigned 32 European civil society groups and networks, representing over 100 organizations across at least 12 EU member states, which work in solidarity with the Palestinian people and with migrants are deeply concerned about the use by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) of Israeli drones to monitor and control migratory movements towards Europe.

We understand, and that is confirmed by information provided by the European Commission¹, that EMSA, together with the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA), currently has eight contracts for the use of drones (RPAS – Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems), including a € 59 million September 2018 contract with CEiiA (Centre of Engineering and Product Development). Also according to information from the European Commission, CeiiA's has the responsibility of subcontracting the Israeli company Elbit Systems to supply the Hermes 900 drone for this purpose. These drones are made available by EMSA to all EU member states and non member states, upon request.

Thus, we write to CEiiA as operator and official sub-contractor for the Hermes fleet of EMSA to assert our firm opposition to the use of Elbit Systems drones. Indeed, the Hermes drones were specifically developed for use by the Israeli military to keep the Gaza Strip under the inhuman siege it has been subjected to by Israel for over a dozen years. According to Human Rights Watch, these drones were actually used to deliberately target civilians in the Gaza Strip during the 2008-2009 massacres. Elbit Systems drones were also used to kill civilians in Lebanon in the 2006 Israeli war.²

Furthermore, Elbit Systems has developed technology for the Wall that Israel built in the occupied Palestinian West Bank territory, which the International Court of Justice considered unlawful, and is referenced in the production of white phosphorus bombs and cluster bombs.³

Israel has become one of the world's leading producers and exporters of «combat-tested» drones, meaning that equipment produced by Israeli military and security companies has been used, for example, in the occupation of the West Bank or the siege Gaza.

The financing of these companies with EU funds, directly or indirectly, and in particular through CEiiA, contributes to Israel's ability to commit war crimes and serious violations of human rights and international law. The use of military drones such as the Hermes 900 by EMSA and Frontex is part of a highly contested policy to militarize borders and migration policies.⁴

Contracts for the use of drones for surveillance by EU countries will be renewed this month. We urge CEiiA not to renew the contract for the use of Elbit Systems' killer drones, not to remain an accomplice of perpetrators of crimes against the Palestinian people.

For our part, we are committed to continue our efforts to ensure respect for human rights and an end to such projects within the framework of the European wide campaign against EU funding to the Israeli military and security complex⁵ and as part of campaigning against EU policies that deny the rights of migrant and refugee peoples.

We intend to publicize this letter, given the undeniable public interest of this matter, as well as the answer you may wish to address to us on the subject.

The Undersigned:

1 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2019-002454-ASW_EN.pdf

2 <http://www.stophthewall.org/downloads/pdf/Elbit-fc.pdf>

3 <https://whoprofits.org/company/elbit-systems/>

4 <https://www.tni.org/en/article/will-europe-use-israeli-drones-against-refugees>

5 <https://www.eccpalestine.org/Category/horizon-2020/>

1. Asamblea Antimilitarista Madrid, Spanish State
2. Association France-Palestine Solidarité (AFPS), France
3. Associazione Cultura e Libertá, Italy
4. BDS France
5. BDS Italy
6. BDZ Euskal Herria, Basque Country
7. BRICUP, Great Britain
8. Caravana Abriendo Fronteras, Madrid, Spanish State
9. Carovana Migranti, Italy
10. CGT (Confederación General del Trabajo), Spanish States
11. DocP, The Netherlands
12. DS/BDZ Iruñea, Basque Country
13. ECCP - European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, International
14. Gibanje za pravice Palestinecev, Slovenia
15. Internazionalistak Auzolanean, Basque Country
16. Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Ireland
17. Jewish Voice for a Just Peace in the Middle East - EJJP, Germany
18. BDS Berlin, Germany
19. L'Associazione Salaam Ragazzi dell'Olivio Comitato di Trieste onlus, Italy
20. Legal Center Lesvos, Greece
21. MPPM – Movimento pelos Direitos do Povo Palestino e a Paz no Médio Oriente (Portuguese Movement for the Rights of the Palestinian People and for Peace in the Middle East), Portugal
22. New Weapons Research Group onlus, Italy
23. Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK, Great Britain
24. RESCOP - Solidarity Network against the Occupation of Palestine (a platform of some 50 organizations tat work to build solidarity with the Palestinian cause in the Spanish State), Spanish State
25. Slovak Initiative for a Just Peace in the Middle East, Slovenia
26. Sodepaz, Spanish State
27. Stop Wapenhandel, The Netherlands
28. Transnatioal Institute, International
29. Transnational Migrants Platform – Europe, International
30. Urgence Palestine, Switzerland
31. War on Want, Great Britain
32. Women in Black, Vienna, Austria