



EU AND ISRAEL

THE CASE OF COMPLICITY



European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine

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Photo from the Stop the Wall Campaign Norway.

EU research funds have been a very important source of funding for Israeli academics, corporations, and state institutions, among them several military companies and those involved in illegal Israeli settlements. Although Israel is not an EU country, since 1995 Israeli applicants have been able to access EU research funds on the same basis as EU member states through the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

For many years European and Palestinian civil society and human rights organisations have been raising concerns over EU taxpayers' money being channelled to Israeli companies and institutions accused of war crimes¹ and involved in violations of international law and human rights.

The European Union for years has been expressing “deep concerns” and “condemnations” over Israel’s “targeted killings” and illegal settlements – therefore should it be funding the very companies that sustain these unlawful activities?

1 www.hrw.org/report/2009/06/30/precisely-wrong/gaza-civilians-killed-israeli-drone-launched-missiles



Photo from the Stop the Wall Campaign Norway.

» HOW IS THE EU COMPLICIT IN ISRAEL'S VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PALESTINIAN RIGHTS?

I. MAINTAINING ISRAEL'S ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS

The EU funds **entities involved in illegal Israeli settlements and is therefore complicit with Israel's violations of international law and fundamental rights.** This not only violates EU obligation not to recognise nor to aid violations of peremptory norms of international law, but it violates the EU's guidelines on funding for activities and entities based in Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Israeli entities complicit in illegal settlements are receiving EU taxpayers' money in two main ways through EU Research Programs:

1. FUNDING FOR ENTITIES INVOLVED IN ILLEGAL ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

Although the European Union recognises Israeli settlements as illegal under the international law², it continues to fund entities involved in and operating there. These companies are not prohibited from participating in EU funded projects under the guidelines introduced in 2013³. This is because these guidelines allow an Israeli entity with operations inside illegal Israeli settlements to participate if it pledges that the research for which it is receiving funding does not take place in Occupied Palestinian Territory.

2 www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/01/18/fac-conclusions-mepp/

3 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/guidelines_on_the_eligibility_of_israeli_entities_and_their_activities_in_the_territories_occupied_by_israel_since_june_1967.pdf

Among the top 10 recipients of Horizon 2020 funding from Israel, are those most complicit in illegal Israeli settlements:

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY - one of the university's campuses has expanded onto Occupied Palestinian Territory in a confiscation of Palestinian land. Some of the university-owned student quarters are located in a settlement neighbourhood of Occupied Palestinian East Jerusalem. In addition, the Hebrew University maintains close ties with the Israeli military. All Israeli military colleges and training facilities are under the academic auspices and responsibility of the Hebrew University. The university trains soldiers in sciences and technology and hosts a military base on its campus. Through its deep links with the Israeli military, the university is directly complicit with violations of international law and abuses of human rights, including those that took place during the 2008-09 assault on Gaza.

» Total EU funding received by the Hebrew University from Horizon 2020: 123,6 million EUR⁴

TECHNION UNIVERSITY - The institute conducts a wide variety of research into technology and weapons used to oppress and attack Palestinians. For example, its employees developed the D9 remote-controlled bulldozer, widely deployed in the destruction of Palestinian homes. During 2008-2013 it had a research partnership with Elbit Systems Ltd., which provides electronic detection devices used in the illegal Israeli Wall in the West Bank, and has also supplied drones to the Israeli army for use in combat in the West Bank and Gaza. In 2008 it opened a centre for developing electro-optics in partnership with Elbit, one of the largest Israeli weapons companies.

» EU funding received by Technion University through Horizon 2020 - 89, 6 million EUR⁵

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY – hosts the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), which boasts of having developed the so-called Dahiya Doctrine, or doctrine of disproportionate force. Adopted by the Israeli military, the Dahiya Doctrine calls for “the destruction of the national [civilian] infrastructure, and intense suffering among the [civilian] population.” Tel-Aviv University is situated on the land of the destroyed Palestinian village Sheikh Muwanis. It has also conducted 55 research projects with the Israeli army.

» EU contribution to Tel Aviv University from Horizon 2020 - 117, 39 million EUR⁶

4 webgate.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/sense/app/a976d168-2023-41d8-acec-e77640154726/sheet/0c8af38b-b73c-4da2-ba41-73ea34ab7ac4/state/analysis/select/Country/Israel

5 Ibidem

6 Ibidem



Photo from the Stop the Wall Campaign Norway.

MEKOROT - the Israeli state water company, has monopoly control over all water sources in the occupied Palestinian territory and divers most of the water to illegal Israeli settlements, leaving Palestinians with chronic water shortages. UN reports have criticised Mekorot's role in Israeli violations of international law⁷. Despite that, the EU has been funding Mekorot for many years.

» During the last funding cycle of Horizon 2020 alone, Mekorot received almost 1 million EUR of European taxpayers' money⁸.

Another example is **MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS ISRAEL**. It is a full subsidiary of the giant electronics and telecommunication corporation Motorola Solutions. In 2005, the company won an Israeli Ministry of Defence's tender to provide virtual fences to Israeli settlements which refused to fence themselves. According to news reports, a Motorola radar detectors' system has been installed in some 47 illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. The system is also used in the Wall complex in the West Bank, in the wall around Gaza, and in military bases.

» Motorola Solutions Ltd participated in four Horizon 2020 projects, receiving 3. 52 million EUR of EU contribution.

In addition, recently the EU expanded a loan guarantee program with **Bank Leumi**, one of Israel's most prolific builders of settlements on occupied Palestinian land, to direct even more money to military-linked firms.

7 www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/FFM/FFMSettlements.pdf

8 <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/sense/app/a976d168-2023-41d8-acec-e77640154726/sheet/0c8af38b-b73c-4da2-ba41-73ea34ab7ac4/state/analysis/select/Country/Israel>

2. IN VIOLATION OF EU GUIDELINES - FUNDING FOR ACTIVITIES AND ENTITIES BASED IN OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

EU guidelines forbid grants for Israeli activities in territories occupied by Israel since June 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem)⁹. However, the case of the **GEO-CRADLE** project shows clearly that the EU is not implementing its legislation.

As part of the GEO-CRADLE project, Tel Aviv University – one of the project’s participants – provided data on soil samples (original data file) for a soil spectral library. Roughly **30% of the samples were from occupied Syrian Golan Heights and the Occupied Palestinian Territory**, many of which were near illegal Israeli settlements, including in the occupied Jordan Valley.

» Tel Aviv University received 130,625 EUR in EU funding for the project¹⁰.

In addition, the Geo-Cradle stakeholders database included the Eastern Israel R&D Center of Ariel University, located in the illegal Israeli settlement of Ariel in the occupied West Bank, and Golan Heights Winery, located in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

After a complaint was made by one of the project participants, the National Observatory of Athens (NOA), the Tel Aviv University simply replaced the soil samples from Occupied Territories by those coming from within 67’ borders. The soil sample data file was replaced on December 27, 2018.

The profiles for the Eastern Israel R&D Center of Ariel University and Golan Heights Winery were also removed from the project’s stakeholders database. However **numerous traces of their active participation in the project remain¹¹** on the Geo-Cradle website¹².

In the case of **GEO-CRADLE**, the EU showed not only reckless negligence in failing to properly monitor research projects receiving European funding but also a lack of accountability measures and financial consequences vis-a-vis institutions violating its guidelines.

The GEO-CRADLE project shows explicitly and very clearly that the EU failed to take many measures to ensure that international law was observed, and even that their insufficient regulations are effectively implemented. The European Commission doesn’t have an implementation mechanism to do so and is not doing its job in monitoring and excluding problematic entities and projects from being funded by European taxpayers’ money.

9 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/guidelines_on_the_eligibility_of_israeli_entities_and_their_activities_in_the_territories_occupied_by_israel_since_june_1967.pdf

10 <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/199450/factsheet/en>

11 Ariel University’s Eastern R&D Center is listed as a GeoCradle stakeholder in this project document, and this spreadsheet containing an inventory of in-situ instrumentation and regional networks. Prof Naftaly Goldshleger from Ariel University presented at a 2017.

12 Golan Heights Winery presented at a GeoCradle workshop on pilot activities in Limassol and is listed here and here as “End-users and key stakeholders engaged so far” in one of the pilot activities.

II. FUNDING ISRAELI MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

1. EU RESEARCH PROGRAMS

For years the EU has been funding Israeli military companies through its research programs. Though EU rules forbid funding for military technology, its guidelines on dual-use allow the development of military technology as long as the project itself is aimed at civilian use.

Dual-use is a constant feature of Israeli technology, as Isaac Ben-Israel, Chairman of the Israel Space Agency admitted: [“because we are a small country, if you build a small-satellite production line, say at IAI, it will be used for military and commercial purposes”](#)¹³.

EU representatives have previously conceded that the EU doesn't have the mechanisms and capacity to monitor how the technology developed for civilian purposes if further developed and converted by military companies after the program is finished – therefore channelling EU taxpayers' money to military companies accused of war crimes¹⁴ is highly problematic.

Israel uses military force and technology to maintain its system of military occupation and apartheid. Israel's violations of international law and war crimes during its frequent attacks on Palestinians are well documented. The United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry stated in March 2019¹⁵ that Israeli forces may have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity by using lethal military force against unarmed protesters in Gaza.

The two Israeli companies, the privately-owned **Elbit Systems** and the government-owned **Israel Aerospace Industries** are benefiting from European funding in the framework of their participation in research programs like Horizon 2020.

Elbit Systems is Israel's largest military and security company. It manufactures drones, white phosphorus, armed ground robots, aerial platforms, smart helmets, cluster bomb artillery (which is banned by international law) and tank visualisation systems used during major Israeli assaults on Gaza, in which thousands of civilians were killed. Elbit is currently involved in the Israeli Ministry of Defence project to construct an additional barrier around the Gaza Strip, fortifying the current fence that besieges the Palestinian residents of the strip. More recently, Israeli forces confirmed that they used a vehicle-mounted mortar system produced by Elbit to attack Palestinian protesters across the Gaza fence.

In addition, Elbit is one of the main providers of the electronic detection fence system for the West Bank apartheid Wall. Therefore, the company is included in the UN Human Rights Commissioner's list of companies that are violating international law by providing support for Israel's illegal settlement enterprise¹⁶.

13 <http://spacenews.com/qa-with-isaac-ben-israel-chairman-of-the-israel-space-agency/>

14 www.hrw.org/report/2009/06/30/precisely-wrong/gaza-civilians-killed-israeli-drone-launched-missiles

15 www.eccpalestine.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/A_HRC_40_74.CONFadvcopyPalestine.pdf

16 www.haaretz.com/israel-news/un-warned-150-companies-for-doing-business-in-settlements-1.5453996



Photo by BDS France.

Elbit showcases its new technology, marketing it as “battle-tested”¹⁷ – meaning that it has been used against the Palestinians. In this way, Elbit gets international contracts, for example by the European Maritime Safety Agency that currently leases Elbit drones and send their pictures to FRONTEX (European Border and Coast Guard Agency) to stop asylum seekers and immigrants from reaching Europe¹⁸.

Elbit Systems was involved in the FLYSEC as well as in the EUROSTARS projects among others, which are presented to Horizon 2020 as civilian projects, but are based on military technology which Elbit Systems developed for the Israeli military and which has been tested in the occupied Gaza Strip during Israeli attacks in the years 2008-2014¹⁹

» Elbit: participant in four Horizon 2020 projects; received almost 2 millions EUR of EU contribution²⁰

17 <http://elbitsystems.com/products/uas/hermes-450/>

18 www.statewatch.org/news/2019/sep/eu-frontex-drones.htm

19 www.eccpalestine.org/unlawful-participation-of-israeli-arms-companies-in-horizon-2020-exposed/

20 <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/sense/app/a976d168-2023-41d8-acec-e77640154726/sheet/0c8af38b-b73c-4da2-ba41-73ea34ab7ac4/state/analysis/select/Country/Israel>

ISRAEL AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES (IAI) – the second-largest Israeli military company and a major manufacturer of drones used by the Israeli military. Its drones are also widely used during Israel’s military assaults on Gaza and have been documented by Human Rights Watch as being used by the Israeli military to deliberately attack Palestinian civilians²¹. Israel Aerospace Industries is also a key partner in the construction of Israel’s illegal Wall.

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) is involved in the projects Safedrone or Respodrone among others, which like the Elbit Systems ones are presented as civilian projects but are based on converted military technology which has been tested in the OPT.

In the previous funding cycle FP7, IAI participated in the project OPARUS. The Oparus project has developed remote piloted aircraft, such as those provided by IAI for the military aggressions against Lebanon and Gaza, as well as thermal imaging technologies. Col. Desmond Travers, a member of the UN fact-finding mission on Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in 2009, has stated that « thermal imaging technologies are likely to have been used to identify high occupancy targets. Such targets arose when Palestinians fled to relatives or friends houses in areas of Gaza believed to be safe». According to UN reports and human rights groups, dozens of civilians have been killed by Israeli explosives fired on homes filled with people seeking refuge²².

» IAI participated in seven Horizon 2020 projects, receiving 7.35 million EUR of EU contribution²³.

Israeli military companies (public or private) work in direct connection with the Israeli military, providing the necessary equipment and weapons for illegal operations within the framework of Israeli military aggressions and Israeli colonisation of the occupied Palestinian territories. EU funding for these companies inherently fuels the Israeli capacity to sustain its war crimes and grave violations of human rights and international law.

In a RESPONDRONE project on using drones during disasters, worth around 8 million EUR, IAI is partnering with the Israeli Ministry of Defence, which received 138 625 EUR contribution from the EU as a project participant²⁴.

The Israeli Ministry of Defence is overseeing the Israeli Army responsible for the occupation of Palestine (West Bank and Gaza) and the bombing of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Sudan.

Another problematic Israeli institution receiving EU taxpayers’ money is the **Israeli Ministry of Public Security**, which includes the Israeli police, who are responsible for illegal detention. This Ministry practices routine torture and violence against Palestinian protesters, and its policies have been condemned by the UN and human rights organisations²⁵.

21 www.hrw.org/report/2009/06/30/precisely-wrong/gaza-civilians-killed-israeli-drone-launched-missiles

22 www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/48000/mde150152009en.pdf

23 Ibidem

24 <http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/222629/factsheet/en>

25 www.salon.com/2016/06/16/the_uns_damning_report_on_israel_and_torture_the_desperate_case_of_palestinian_youth_in_the_occupied_territory/, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2012/06/israel-injustice-and-secrecy-surrounding-administrative-detention/

The Ministry plays an active role in the illegal detention of thousands of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails²⁶. The presence of the headquarters of the Israeli National Police on occupied Palestinian territory in East Jerusalem constitutes a serious violation of international law²⁷. Israeli National Police participated in the LAW-Train project that aimed at unifying police interrogation methodologies. After concerns were raised by human rights organisations, two of the project's participants, the prestigious Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium and the Portuguese Ministry of Justice announced their withdrawal.

» The Israeli Ministry of Public Security participated in eleven Horizon 2020 projects, receiving over 1,7 million EUR of total EU contribution.

ISRAEL IN HORIZON 2020 - SUMMARY

Between 2007 and 2013, the EU has financed over 1500 research and development projects with Israeli participation. In Horizon 2020 Israel obtained grants for 1216 project proposals, amounting to 22,73% of all grants signed by all partner countries within the Horizon 2020 research program. In other words, Israel has secured the most funding from non-EU countries after Switzerland and Norway.

» The net EU Contribution to Israel from H2020 is 872 million EUR²⁸.

The amount of EU taxpayers' money received by Israel through Horizon 2020 is similar to that received through the previous FP7 program. In FP7, Israel participated in 1,626 signed agreements involving 1,984 Israeli participation for which they received a total of 876,839 million EUR²⁹. That means that over eight years Israel has received more than 1,7 billion of European taxpayers' money.

» WHAT ABOUT ETHICAL STANDARDS GOVERNING THE EU RESEARCH FUNDING?

When faced with the facts of EU funding being channelled to problematic entities, the EU points out at the independent evaluation of EU research proposals by ethical experts. The problem here is that these do not address the ethical standing of the researchers but only the ethical issues raised by the research project. So for example, as long as the project is not developing GM food or testing their goods on animals or humans, there's no case to answer where the participation of the Israeli war and settlement industry is concerned.³⁰

26 www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1536882016ENGLISH.pdf

27 www.ipsnews.net/2010/06/mideast-when-the-police-have-an-illegal-headquarters/

28 <http://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/sense/app/a976d168-2023-41d8-acec-e77640154726/sheet/0c8af38b-b73c->

29 <http://c.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm?pg=israel>

30 www.opendemocracy.net/en/how-eu-subsidises-israels-military-industrial-complex/

2. EU AGENCIES FUNDING TO ISRAELI MILITARY COMPANIES FRONTEX AND IAI

FRONTEXT AND ISRAELI AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

In the course of last year, Frontex, the EU border guard agency, tested military UAVs (drones) for maritime border surveillance in the Mediterranean Sea: the **Heron** from **Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)** and the Falco from Italian arms giant Leonardo (formerly Finmeccanica).

According to the contract award notice published by FRONTEX in January 2018, the IAI (Israel Aerospace Industry) got paid 4.75 million EUR for 600 hours of trial flights, winning the contract over two competitors from EU countries.

IAI's Heron drones have a notorious history of use against the Palestinians. Following Operation Cast Lead, Israel's assault on Gaza in late 2008 and early 2009, a Human Rights Watch investigation concluded that dozens of civilians were killed with missiles launched from drones. The Heron was identified as one of the main drones deployed in that offensive.

EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY AND ELBIT

In November 2018, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) has awarded Israeli military company Elbit Systems a two years contract to lease Hermes 900 drones. The contract has two single year option periods with a total value of 59 million EUR. The Hermes drones are to be used within the framework of the coast guard functions of the EU, which are performed in cooperation between EMSA, FRONTEX and EFCA.

Elbit's Hermes 900 is an attack drone with a [payload](#) of 350 kg. It was [deployed operationally for the first time](#) during Operation Protective Edge. The Hermes 900 is a larger and more advanced version of the Hermes 450 that was used by the Israeli army to deliberately target civilians in Gaza during Israel's 2008-2009 onslaught, according to Human Rights Watch. Elbit drones were also used to [kill civilians in Israel's war on Lebanon in 2006](#), including Red Cross workers, ambulance drivers and dozens of people fleeing their homes for refuge from relentless Israeli bombardment.

Using the Palestinian Territories as a testing ground, Israel has become a leading global producer and exporter of 'combat tested' drones. EU funding for these companies inherently fuels Israel's capacity to sustain its war crimes and grave violations of human rights and international law. It makes the EU and all of us complicit in those violations.

We have a responsibility to ensure that European public money is not spent on contracts with companies accused of being or known to be complicit in war crimes. The EU must stop using taxpayers' money to fund Israeli military companies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The EU should meet its legal obligations not to provide support to Israel's entities complicit in war crimes and violations of international law by:

- » Establishing a transparent and rigorous monitoring mechanism, in cooperation with OLAF (the European Anti-Fraud Office), to ensure that EU grant money is not used in the context of internationally illicit acts, violations of international law and humans rights abuses, such as the Israeli settlements. This mechanism has to include obligatory grant repayment or reduction, and ensuring cases will be appropriately prosecuted in the relevant courts for all projects including Israeli participation since the coming into force of the 2013 Guidelines;
- » Revising the guidelines taking into account the fungibility of EU grants and ensure that institutions and companies with operations or involved in Israel's illegal settlement enterprise are excluded per se from grants;
- » Excluding Israeli military companies from participating in EU research programs such as Horizon 2020 or future Horizon Europe and from contracting by EU Agencies because of the inherent dual-use of these projects that aid and assist Israel's military occupation, war crimes and other human rights violations;
- » Applying restrictive measures on Israel, including by suspending the Association Agreement, as a way to pressure Israel to comply with international law and end EU support for Israeli violations of international law.