

# HORIZON EUROPE:

## FUNDING DEATH, DISPLACEMENT & DISCRIMINATION IN PALESTINE



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## Introduction

European Union research subsidies have been a crucial source of funding for Israeli academic institutions, businesses, and government agencies, including many military companies, that are deeply involved in human rights abuses and international law violations – including entities operating in, and profiting from, illegal Israeli settlements.

Concerns about EU taxpayer money going to Israeli businesses and institutions implicated in war crimes and human rights violations have been voiced by [Members of the European Parliament](#)<sup>1</sup>, and many European and Palestinian [civil society and human rights organisations](#)<sup>2</sup> for many years.

**The EU's stance *vis-à-vis* Israel's violations of international law and human rights abuses has been paradoxical and hypocritical;** while frequently expressing “deep concern” and “condemning” Israel's illegal settlements, it nevertheless has rendered itself complicit by funding the very same companies and institutions that carry out, or otherwise aid and abet, these unlawful activities.

## EU Complicity in Israel's Violations of International Law and Palestinian Rights

Israel is not a member of the EU but, following the signing of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, since 1995 Israeli applicants have had the same access to the EU research grants as EU members.

[Amnesty International](#)<sup>3</sup>, [Human Rights Watch](#)<sup>4</sup>, and Israel's leading human rights organisation, [B'Tselem](#)<sup>5</sup>, have all issued detailed reports finding Israel guilty of the crime of apartheid.

The EU has legal and moral obligations not to recognise Israeli sovereignty over the territories it has occupied since June 1967, not to further empower Israel's unlawful military occupation and its oppression of millions of Palestinians, and not to further undermine the Palestinian people's inalienable and universally-recognised human rights.

**Yet, through Horizon Europe funding, the EU is complicit with Israel's violations of International and Human Rights Law. This complicity manifests itself in three main ways:**

- By funding companies complicit in Israel's violations of Palestinian rights and discriminatory policies, including the Crime of Apartheid as defined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- By funding Israeli military companies accused of involvement with war crimes;
- By funding entities that are participating in Israel's colonisation and expansion of illegal settlements.

**It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the EU is thus complicit in the death, displacement and discrimination inflicted upon the Palestinian people by the State of Israel.**

Below we outline some of the most egregious examples of this complicity; but it should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list.

## I. Funding for Complicit Private Entities

### IBM Israel Ltd.

**Horizon Europe funding received: €5.11 Million**

In 2017 [IBM renewed the population registry database](#)<sup>6</sup> for the Israeli Population, Immigration and Borders Authority. This database includes data on all Palestinians between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea; those with Israeli citizenship, ‘residents’ in occupied East Jerusalem, and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

The main component of this database is Israel’s biometric population registry, which records and categorises people’s ethnic and religious identity. This then materialises in government issued ID cards which all residents are legally required to carry around with them.

The information compiled in the database is subsequently utilised by Israel for implementation of systematic discriminatory policies against Palestinians who are eligible for different rights under Israel’s apartheid system of control. The database, the ID system it powers, and the permits linked to these statuses are all tools used in the fragmentation of Palestinian society.

They define the legal jurisdiction Palestinians fall under (civilian vs. military law), and determine their participation in the political system (who can vote and stand for elected office), where they can live, work, travel, who they can marry, and their access to government services. Furthermore, since the database contains detailed information about the Gaza Strip’s population, including people’s addresses, it enables the Israeli military to target Palestinian civilians in Gaza more efficiently.

Thus, by systematically collecting data on Palestinians without their consent, IBM participates in the violation of their digital rights, whilst permitting the subsequent implementation of discriminatory policies and entrenching Israel’s apartheid regime. The illegal targeting of civilians in Israeli military strikes – war crimes - is also enabled by IBM technology. EU investment in projects undertaken by IBM means they are funding surveillance technology, which in turn entails complicity in the subsequent implementation of discriminatory and unfair policies.

### Red Hat

**Horizon Europe funding received: €3.24 Million**

IBM subsidiary Red Hat is [producing Openshift](#)<sup>7</sup>, an operational internet that aims to increase the Israeli Military’s effectiveness and lethality. Red Hat has expressed many times its [pride in aiding the Israeli military](#)<sup>8</sup>.

### Sightec Ltd.

**Horizon Europe funding received: €2.46 Million**

Sightec [provides](#)<sup>9</sup> drone analytics system to the **Israel Police**. The Israeli police force is not a ‘normal’ police force as most people commonly understand the term; significant sections of the police force are concerned with ensuring Palestinians remain occupied and denied their fundamental human and national rights. Thus it is in fact a colonial police force whose objective is ensuring the native population remains disempowered, subjugated, and colonised. Reinforcing this colonial mentality, the [headquarters](#)<sup>10</sup> of the Israel National Police is located in an illegal settlement in occupied and illegally annexed East Jerusalem, while there are [at least 38](#)<sup>11</sup> other police stations in illegal Israeli settlements.

In short, Sightec is complicit with an organization that, in [the words of](#)<sup>12</sup> Amnesty International, engages in “extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings, using ill treatment and torture (even against children), suppression of freedom of expression/association including through government surveillance, and excessive use of force against peaceful protesters.”

Sightec is also developing technology to make vehicles fully autonomous, and works closely with military drone manufacturer **Israeli Aerospace Industries** [to develop](#)<sup>13</sup> this technology.

It also [collaborates](#)<sup>14</sup> with the Israeli Ministry of Transport and the Israel Innovation Authority.

The **Israel Innovation Authority** can be considered complicit in the oppression of Palestinians, as testified to by its statements boasting that so-called ‘cyberwarfare’ is at [the forefront of Israel’s high tech industry](#)<sup>15</sup>, and celebrating its collaboration with the Israeli armed forces - the brutal enforcers of Israel’s discriminatory apartheid regime, its military occupation and annexations, and its policy of settlement expansion.

In addition to maintaining the ‘settler-only’ road networks in the occupied West Bank, the **Israeli Ministry of Transport’s** participation in the discrimination of Palestinians is exemplified by its operation of [segregated buses](#)<sup>16</sup> in illegally annexed East Jerusalem; supposedly to keep Palestinians safe from settler attacks, but in reality installed to satisfy the demands of racists who consider all Palestinians to be [a security risk](#)<sup>17</sup>.

Sightec’s collaboration with these institutions makes it complicit in Israel’s discriminatory permit system, restrictions of movement, racist and colonial policing, and the surveillance and securitisation of the Palestinian people as a whole.

Furthermore, the Horizon Europe project in which Sightec is a partner is entitled “GPS-free, beyond the visual line of sight navigation for logistics drones in urban environments”. The technology developed with these funds will inevitably be ‘tested’ on Palestinians and used as part of Israel’s system of surveillance and control over Palestinians.

## II. Funding for Complicit Public Entities

### Israel Aerospace Industries

#### Horizon Europe funding received: [€2.15 Million](#)

IAI is a military armaments, vehicle and military technology manufacturer that is wholly-owned by the Israeli state. Among other items, it produces drones, aircraft, missiles, avionics, and space-based systems for the Israeli military.

IAI’s drones are widely used during Israel’s military assaults on Gaza. Human Rights Watch has [documented](#)<sup>18</sup> the use of these drones to deliberately attack Palestinian civilians. Drones have also reportedly been used in military operations in the occupied West Bank, most notably in the case of a [drone firing a missile into Nablus](#)<sup>19</sup> in October 2022.

In the previous funding cycle FP7, IAI participated in the project OPARUS. [The Oparus project](#)<sup>20</sup> 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 into Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in 2009- [stated that](#)<sup>21</sup> “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 refuge.

Even though Israel only publicly admitted to using armed drones in Gaza during an IDF operation in August 2022, leaked reports throughout the 2010s show senior officials [admitting to using UAV's in bombardments of Gaza](#)<sup>22</sup>. The Israeli military justified their use by claiming that "[surgical armed drone strikes](#)"<sup>23</sup> would lead to fewer casualties in Gaza; over the past 15 years Palestinians have compiled significant evidence disproving this statement.

EU funding is thus being funneled to an entity that's *raison d' être* is to develop and produce technology for the killing, maiming and traumatizing of Palestinians; a protected people under international law.

## Technion Institute

**Horizon Europe funding received: [€33.08 Million](#)**

The Technion Institute is an Israeli public research university, and one of the many examples in Israeli academia that blur the civilian-military distinction. The Technion conducts a wide variety of research into technology and weapons used to advance Israel's settler colonial project. For example, its employees [developed](#)<sup>24</sup> the D9 remote-controlled bulldozer, widely deployed in the demolition of Palestinian homes and structures.

Destruction of homes and properties of an occupied people is a war crime. These [remote-controlled](#)<sup>25</sup> bulldozers are designed to perform such demolitions while shielding individual drivers from accountability, thereby reducing the chance that drivers will refuse to engage in these crimes.

Between 2008 and 2013 it had a research partnership with Israeli arms company Elbit Systems Ltd., which provides electronic detection devices used in the illegal Israeli Separation Wall in the West Bank, and has also developed and built drones for the Israeli military for combat use in occupied Palestine.

Furthermore, the Technion itself has manufactured technologies specifically to torment recalcitrant populations. The so-called '[Scream](#)'<sup>26</sup> is a 'non-lethal' acoustic system that "creates sound levels that are unbearable to humans at distances up to 100 meters"; this crowd-control weapon is mainly used to suppress unarmed Palestinian demonstrations. The Technion has essentially become an R&D wing of the Israeli military-industrial complex.

## Tel Aviv University

**Horizon Europe funding received: [€33.1 Million](#)**

Tel Aviv University plays an important role in shaping Israel's security doctrine. The Israeli military's ethical code was developed and maintained in [cooperation](#)<sup>27</sup> with professor emeritus Asa Kasher, former Chair of Professional Ethics and Philosophy of Practice. Kasher provided a complex academic [analysis](#)<sup>28</sup>, according to which the amount of harm to the civilian population during Operation Accountability (1993) was "legitimate and in the precise dosage." Over 90% of the casualties in the operation were civilians that the Israeli military attacked with the [stated](#)<sup>29</sup> purpose of terrorising the population in southern Lebanon, in order to induce a flow of refugees towards Beirut.

The university has conducted [more than 50](#)<sup>30</sup> joint research projects with the Israeli military.

Tel Aviv University also hosts the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) which hires retired military officers and maintains close ties with politicians and generals. The INSS prides itself in having developed [the Dahiya Doctrine](#)<sup>31</sup>, or doctrine of disproportionate force that advocates violent collective punishment of the civilian population. Widely adopted and employed by the Israeli military, the Dahiya Doctrine [calls for](#)<sup>32</sup>

“the destruction of the national [civilian] infrastructure, and intense suffering among the [civilian] population.” The former head of the National Security Council, Giora Eiland, writing on behalf of the INSS [stated that](#)<sup>33</sup> Israel must conduct wars by “destroying houses and infrastructure and causing suffering for hundreds of thousands.”

The university’s law department trains lawyers for the Military Advocate General, which engages in whitewashing war crimes and avoiding international monitoring mechanisms. One of the graduates of the academic reserve program is Prof. Gabriella Blum, who laid the groundwork for a legal authorisation of [extra-judicial assassinations](#)<sup>34</sup> as part of her work for the military.

Tel Aviv University is an important participant in Israel’s mechanisms of occupation and war at every level: shaping the military doctrine and the ethical code that permit the intentional targeting of civilians, developing technology that allows the execution of this doctrine as precisely as possible, and finally – providing legal defense against accusations of war crimes.

## Hebrew University of Jerusalem

### Horizon Europe funding received: €29.9 Million

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem maintains close ties with the Israeli military, and can be considered to be an academic wing of the armed forces. All Israeli military colleges and training facilities are under the academic auspices and responsibility of the Hebrew University. The university trains soldiers in science and technology, and even [hosts a military base](#)<sup>35</sup> on its campus. Via its deep links with the military, the university is directly complicit with Israel’s well-documented violations of international law and abuses of human rights.

Furthermore, the university’s Mount Scopus [campus](#)<sup>36</sup> and dormitories are [built on Palestinian land](#)<sup>37</sup> in East Jerusalem, which under international law recognises as being illegally annexed and under military occupation. By moving Israeli staff and students to work and live on occupied Palestinian land, the Hebrew University is in violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention which unambiguously prohibits such activities.

## Conclusion

The EU has both legal and moral obligations not to recognise Israeli sovereignty over occupied territories, not to further empower this military occupation, nor to aid Israel’s oppression of millions of Palestinians under a cruel system of Apartheid. The EU should not aid abuses that it would never tolerate on its own soil.

Yet it is clear that when it comes to Israel there is a serious incongruence between the high-minded words of EU officials, and the access to EU taxpayer money enjoyed by Israeli entities complicit in serious human rights abuses, international law violations and war crimes. This, on its own, is hypocritical in the extreme.

**But there is a double hypocrisy at play here; in March 2022 the EU [suspended all Russian entities](#)<sup>38</sup> from the current and future Horizon Europe programmes. This happened within *a fortnight* of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.**

Why then, when this year will see Israel’s occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories enter its 56<sup>th</sup> year, do we not see the same treatment for Israeli entities? At the very least, the EU should suspend complicit Israeli entities, such as those listed above, from the Horizon Europe programme.

**Until it does so, in gifting taxpayer money to such entities, the EU will itself remain complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people.**

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## NOTES

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