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MAPPING LEIDEN UNIVERSITY'S TIES TO ISRAEL

ENDING COMPLICITY WITH APARTHEID,
OCCUPATION, AND GENOCIDE



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Executive summary

This report addresses a knowledge gap when it comes to ties between Leiden University (LU) and Israeli institutions, drawing on publicly accessible information. At the same time, this dossier follows PACBI (Palestinian Campaign for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel) guidelines. PACBI is primarily concerned with how different institutions including universities are complicit in the Israeli system of oppression, denying Palestinians basic rights guaranteed by international law. The PACBI guidelines do not prevent scholars in the Netherlands from working with Israeli individuals, as long as the collaboration does not encompass ties with the Israeli state and/or with complicit institutions. Accordingly, this report seeks to unravel the academic and financial complicity of Leiden University in Israel's system of oppression against Palestinians by investigating the extent to which there are 1) collaborative projects with Israeli institutional participation through programs financed by, for instance, Horizon Europe or the NWO; 2) institutional exchange programs with Israeli universities for students; 3) investments in Israeli and international companies complicit in Israel's grave violations of Palestinian human rights, mainly through university funds and pensions funds; and 4) procurement tenders and contracts for products or services with complicit companies.

This report starts with an exploration of ongoing EU-Horizon projects in the form of institutional partnerships between LU — including the Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC) — and Israeli institutions. Horizon Europe (2021-2027), similar to its predecessor, Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation, geared to stimulate EU science. The CORDIS database of the Research and Innovation community platform of the European Commission reveals that there are thirteen ongoing research projects, one of which is coordinated by the LUMC. None of these projects were mentioned in the FOI file released by Leiden University after a Dutch Court ordered Leiden University, along with other Dutch public universities, to further disclose their partnerships with Israeli institutions and companies, on 18 December 2023. All thirteen projects involve Israeli institutions known to be implicated in Israeli apartheid and the genocide of Palestinians. No Israeli institution (universities, companies, etc.) operates independently from the military and the state of Israel. All Israeli universities covering various academic disciplines - from technology to healthcare to archeology - have contributed for decades to the oppression of Palestinians and the status quo of an apartheid state. Some of these institutions are also based in the internationally-recognized occupied Palestinian territory and, therefore, violate international law. The total



contribution that Israeli institutions receive via the EU-Horizon route is €4,877,560.13. The total contribution LU and LUMC receive amounts to a total of €12,247,049.71 combined.

Leiden University currently works with two main partners for exchange programs in Israel: Tel Aviv University (TAU) and Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Both institutions work closely with the Israeli military, host programs for training soldiers, and serve as nodes of intelligence, military strategizing, and weapons development. As tools of settler colonialism, these universities contribute to the erasure of Palestinian history and violation of Palestinian rights through the production of 'innovative' legal scholarship that shields Israel from accountability under international law, archeological projects that entrench illegal settlements and apartheid, and increasing suppression and isolation of Palestinian staff and students. Additionally, through its collaboration with EIT Health, LUMC holds indirect ties with Israeli agritech firms that increasingly collaborate with Israeli military and security corporations for the use of military drones, and the use of occupied land as a laboratory for the testing and dumping of products.

When it comes to investments, more information is urgently needed, and LU is urged to further disclose their procedures and ties in this regard. Publicly available information about LU's investments is principally limited to the work of the Libertatis Ergo Holding (LEH). At least one of the recipients of LEH investment also receives funding from Schroders, a multinational asset manager with an Israeli branch that invests in companies producing military technology and weapons and provides loans to the Israeli military. It seems that the overwhelming majority of LU's portfolio investments are primarily active in the Dutch market. However, this does not exclude the possibility that LU's investment portfolio beyond this above-mentioned programme is much larger yet not publicly available.

More information is also needed when it comes to LU procurement tenders and contracts (for products or services) with companies complicit in serious human rights violations such as apartheid, prolonged military occupation and genocide. The [United Nations](#), the Israeli research group [Who Profits](#), and the [American Friends Service Committee](#) established lists of complicit business enterprises. One of these companies is Hewlett Packard (HP) Inc. Much of the hardware procured by LU comes from this American multinational information technology provider. Further research needs to be done on what LU's contract with HP Inc. entails, and the extent to which there are contracts with other companies on the above-mentioned lists. Apart from attention to sustainability, human rights and 'do no harm' concerns ought to be central to LU's procurement procedures.



The pressure and activism for academic boycott within LU and other Dutch universities is not a new phenomenon. As we are currently witnessing in the case of Palestine-related activism, activist organizations, civil society, and especially young students played a central role in intensifying the pressure on the Dutch government and public institutions to sever ties with South Africa and support the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s. This constitutes a historical precedent for how a movement for justice would eventually successfully force those in decision-making positions to agree to their demands of a full boycott. Notably, it is precisely this movement, often led by the youth, that was the real driving force behind the now popularly-celebrated idea that Dutch universities ‘were on the right side of history’ when it comes to South Africa.

In the 1970s, many Dutch universities adopted motions demanding that contacts with the apartheid state of South Africa and its scientific institutions be severed unless they were in support of the African National Congress (ANC). This was the culmination of tireless work by student organizers at almost all Dutch universities in the form of petitions, protests on campus, various boycott campaigns, and the organization of public debates. By the late 1970s, most Dutch universities had started severing ties slowly with South African educational institutions. LU would eventually make the decision in February of 1978 that all contacts with South African institutions, both on the institutional level as well as individual scientific collaborations, would be severed. It is worth noting that the Dutch government had also frozen the Cultural Accord with South Africa in 1977 and it was finally officially abandoned in 1981. Beyond the question of governmental mandate, Dutch universities were faced with a moral and ethical responsibility to respond to the South African case based on the demands of their internal and external communities. They were pressured to adhere to their commitment to human rights and academic freedom. This meant the enactment of these norms and values as binding and lived principles rather than as merely abstract guidelines safely tucked into statements of political neutrality, distancing, and passive condemnation.





Figure 1 - *Volkskrant*, 28 February 1978. Leiden University limits contact with South Africa.

More recently, the quick and rigorous actions taken in response to Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 show that – if there is political will – boycott is possible. Whereas the order for boycott came from above in this case, the lightning speed with which Dutch (and other European) universities, including Leiden University, cut ties with all Russian institutions, and in many cases also with individual scholars and artists, exposes the hypocrisy of the academic freedom argument. No Dutch university raised concerns about possible violations of academic freedom: on the contrary, academic boycott was implemented without objection. This included the termination of EU-Horizon projects, which were considered as institutional partnerships. An important contrast between the South African anti-apartheid boycott as well as the Russian Boycott is that the call of PACBI does not target individuals. It is solely directed towards collaborations with Israeli institutions due to their complicity in serious human rights violations.

Nederlandse samenvatting

Het doel van dit rapport is om meer duidelijkheid te verschaffen over de banden die de Universiteit Leiden (LU) heeft met Israëlische instellingen, op basis van publiek toegankelijke informatie. Dit dossier volgt de richtlijnen van de PACBI (Palestijnse Campagne voor Academische en Culturele Boycot van Israël). PACBI is gericht op de manieren waarop verschillende Israëlische instellingen, waaronder universiteiten, medeplichtig zijn aan het Israëlische systeem van onderdrukking. Hierdoor worden de fundamentele rechten van Palestijnen ontzegd die gegarandeerd zijn door het internationaal recht. De PACBI-richtlijnen weerhouden wetenschappers in Nederland er niet van om met Israëlische individuen samen te werken, zolang deze samenwerking geen institutionele banden betreft met de Israëlische staat en/of met medeplichtige instituties. Dit rapport brengt de academische en financiële medeplichtigheid van de Universiteit Leiden met het Israëlische systeem van onderdrukking in kaart, door te onderzoeken in hoeverre er sprake is van 1) samenwerkingsprojecten met Israëlische instituties via programma's die bijvoorbeeld worden gefinancierd door de Europese Unie (EU) via Horizon Europe of de Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (NWO); 2) institutionele uitwisselingsprogramma's met Israëlische universiteiten voor personeel en studenten; 3) investeringen in Israëlische maar ook internationale bedrijven die medeplichtig zijn aan de genoemde misstanden, voornamelijk via universiteitsfondsen en pensioenfondsen; en 4) aanbestedingen en contracten voor producten of diensten met medeplichtige bedrijven.

Het eerste deel van dit rapport bespreekt lopende EU-Horizon-projecten in de vorm van institutionele banden tussen LU – inclusief het Leids Universitair Medisch Centrum (LUMC) – en Israëlische instellingen. Horizon Europa (2021-2027) is, net als zijn voorganger Horizon 2020 (2014-2020), het belangrijkste financieringsprogramma van de EU voor onderzoek en innovatie, gericht op het stimuleren van wetenschap in de EU. Uit de CORDIS-database van het Research and Innovation community platform van de Europese Commissie blijkt dat er dertien onderzoeksprojecten lopen. Een van deze projecten wordt gecoördineerd door het LUMC. Geen van deze projecten is terug te vinden in het WOO-dossier dat door de Universiteit Leiden werd vrijgegeven, onder meer nadat de Nederlandse rechtbank de Universiteit Leiden, samen met andere Nederlandse universiteiten, op 18 december 2023, had bevolen hun partnerschappen met Israëlische instellingen en bedrijven openbaar te maken. Bij alle dertien projecten zijn Israëlische instellingen betrokken waarvan bekend is dat zij medeplichtig zijn aan de Israëlische apartheid en de genocide op de Palestijnen. Geen



enkele Israëlische instelling (universiteiten, bedrijven, enz.) opereert onafhankelijk van het leger en de staat van Israël. Alle Israëlische universiteiten en de verschillende academische disciplines binnen deze instellingen – van technologie en gezondheidszorg tot archeologie – dragen bij aan de onderdrukking van de Palestijnen en de status quo van een apartheidsstaat. Sommige instellingen waarmee LU een overeenkomst heeft zijn zelfs gevestigd in bezette gebieden en zijn daarmee direct in strijd met het internationaal recht. De totale bijdrage die Israëlische instellingen ontvangen via deze EU-Horizon-routes bedraagt € 4.877.560,13. De totale bijdrage die LU en LUMC ontvangen bedraagt in totaal € 12.247.049,71.

Momenteel zijn de twee belangrijkste partners van de Universiteit Leiden voor uitwisselingsprogramma's in Israël: Tel Aviv University (TAU) en de Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ). Beide universiteiten werken nauw samen met het Israëlische leger, organiseren programma's voor het trainen van soldaten en zijn een centraal punt voor inlichtingendiensten, militaire strategieën en wapenontwikkeling. Zij maken Israëlisch kolonialisme mogelijk, onder meer door bij te dragen aan het uitwissen van de Palestijnse geschiedenis en het verdoezelen van de schending van Palestijnse rechten. De productie van 'innovatieve' juridische wetenschappelijke kennis beschermt Israël tegen aansprakelijkheid onder het internationaal recht. Archeologische projecten verankeren illegale nederzettingen in bezette gebieden. Het beleid en de praktijk op deze universiteiten draagt ook bij aan almaar toenemende onderdrukking en isolatie van Palestijns personeel en studenten. Daarnaast onderhoudt het LUMC, door de samenwerking met EIT Health, indirecte banden met Israëlische agritech bedrijven. Dergelijke bedrijven werken steeds nauwer samen met Israëlische militaire en veiligheidsbedrijven, bijvoorbeeld voor het gebruik van militaire drones en van bezet land als laboratorium voor het testen van producten en het dumpen van afval.

Het derde hoofdstuk besteedt aandacht aan investeringen. Er is dringend meer informatie nodig over de universitaire reglementen en procedures op dit vlak binnen de Universiteit Leiden. De openbaar beschikbare informatie over de investeringen van LU beperkt zich tot het werk van de Libertatis Ergo Holding (LEH). Ten minste een van de ontvangers van LEH-investeringen ontvangt tevens financiering van Schroders. Deze multinationale vermogensbeheerder heeft een Israëlische tak die investeert in bedrijven die militaire technologie en wapens produceren, en leningen verstrekt aan het Israëlische leger. Het lijkt erop dat deze portefeuille voornamelijk beleggingen van LU in de Nederlandse markt omvat.



Aangezien deze informatie niet openbaar beschikbaar is, kan niet worden uitgesloten dat de investeringsportefeuille van LU omvangrijker is en meer banden met Israël omvat.

Meer informatie is ook nodig als het gaat om de aanbestedingen en contracten van LU (voor producten of diensten) met bedrijven die medeplichtig zijn aan ernstige mensenrechtenschendingen zoals apartheid, bezetting en genocide. De Verenigde Naties, de Israëlische onderzoeksgroep Who Profits en het American Friends Service Committee hebben elk lijsten opgesteld van medeplichtige bedrijven. Een van deze bedrijven is Hewlett Packard (HP) Inc. Een groot deel van de door LU aangeschafte hardware is afkomstig van deze Amerikaanse multinationale leverancier van informatietechnologie. Er moet verder onderzoek worden gedaan naar wat het contract van LU met HP Inc. inhoudt, en in hoeverre er andere contracten zijn met bedrijven die op bovengenoemde lijsten vermeld staan. Naast aandacht voor duurzaamheid zouden mensenrechten en 'do no harm'-overwegingen centraal moeten staan in de aanbestedingsprocedures van LU.

Activisme voor een academische boycot tegen apartheid binnen LU en andere Nederlandse universiteiten is geen nieuw fenomeen. Het vijfde en laatste hoofdstuk bespreekt voorbeelden van academische boycotts uit het verleden. Net zoals nu het geval is voor Palestina-gerelateerd activisme, speelden activistische organisaties en vooral jonge studenten een formatieve rol in het uitoefenen van druk op de Nederlandse regering en openbare instellingen om de banden met Zuid-Afrika te herzien en de anti-apartheidsbeweging te steunen. Deze beweging uit de jaren zeventig vormt een belangrijk historisch precedent voor de manier waarop universiteiten en andere publieke instanties uiteindelijk kunnen worden overtuigd om hun banden te verbreken met Israëlische instanties in de vorm van een volledige boycot. Het was juist deze beweging, geleid door de jeugd, die de drijvende kracht vormde achter het nu heersende idee dat Nederlandse universiteiten 'aan de goede kant van de geschiedenis stonden' als het gaat om apartheid in Zuid-Afrika.

In de jaren zeventig namen veel Nederlandse universiteiten moties aan waarin werd geëist om contacten met de apartheidstaat Zuid-Afrika en medeplichtige Zuid-Afrikaanse wetenschappelijke instellingen te verbreken en het Afrikaans Nationaal Congres (ANC) te steunen. Dit was het resultaat van onvermoeibaar werk van studenten aan vrijwel alle Nederlandse universiteiten in de vorm van petitie, protesten op de campus, diverse boycot campagnes en het organiseren van publieke debatten. Eind jaren zeventig begonnen de meeste Nederlandse universiteiten langzaam de banden met Zuid-Afrikaanse onderwijsinstellingen te verbreken. LU nam uiteindelijk in februari 1978 het besluit om



contacten met Zuid-Afrikaanse instellingen te stoppen die bijdroegen aan mensenrechtenschendingen. LU en andere Nederlandse universiteiten werden geconfronteerd met morele en ethische vraagstukken omtrent de apartheid in Zuid-Afrika en werden onder druk gezet om toewijding aan mensenrechten en academische vrijheid te tonen. Dit betekende dat de universitaire normen en waarden als bindende principes dienden te worden nageleefd, in plaats van weggestopt te worden in verklaringen van politieke neutraliteit en passieve veroordeling.

Recentelijk werden er snelle en rigoureuze acties ondernomen in reactie op de Russische agressie tegen Oekraïne in 2022. Dit laat zien dat - met politieke wil - een boycot mogelijk is. Nederlandse universiteiten, inclusief de Universiteit Leiden, en andere Europese universiteiten verbraken in een oogwenk hun banden met alle Russische universiteiten en in veel gevallen ook met individuen en artiesten. Deze bliksemsnelle actie mocht dan het gevolg zijn van een bevel van hogerhand, het legt ook de hypocrisie achter het argument van academische vrijheid bloot. Geen enkele Nederlandse universiteit uitte zorgen over mogelijke schendingen van de academische vrijheid: integendeel, de academische boycot werd zonder bezwaar doorgevoerd. De boycot omvatte onder meer de beëindiging van EU-Horizon-projecten, die als institutionele partnerschappen werden beschouwd. Een belangrijk contrast met zowel de Zuid-Afrikaanse anti-apartheid boycot als de Russische boycot is echter dat de oproep van PACBI niet op individuen is gericht. Het is uitsluitend gericht op samenwerking met Israëliëse instellingen die medeplichtig zijn aan grove mensenrechtenschendingen.



Introduction: How to read this document?

On 24 January 2022, the Rights Forum filed a Freedom of Information request¹ to all Dutch public universities on behalf of students and staff standing in solidarity with Palestine. This request was for disclosure of partnerships with institutions and companies complicit in violations of Palestinian rights, as well as partnership policies and ties to pro-Israeli organisations.² Dutch universities, including Leiden University (LU), complied in part, by providing documents about partnerships.³ The file that LU provided only comprised limited information on partnerships for exchange programs and a few past research projects. It did not mention other ongoing institutional ties, including research projects, that LU has with Israeli universities, institutes and companies that are complicit in Israel's apartheid, occupation and genocide.

On 26 January 2024, after the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel is 'committing acts and omissions...capable of falling within the provisions of the Genocide Convention,'⁴ staff of Leiden University demanded that LU immediately cut all ties with complicit Israeli institutions. LU's email response stated that they are a 'neutral' institution and that it is not their place to engage in 'politics.' On 10 May 2024, Students for Palestine Den Haag published their demands that Leiden University disclose and immediately end all ties to Israeli institutions and companies.⁵

Following brief negotiations with students and staff, LU agreed to disclose and evaluate their ties. However, what the University has disclosed to date is neither detailed nor complete. Furthermore, LU has failed to provide a timeline and a verification/monitoring mechanism for the process of evaluation of ties and its offer to form 'an expert committee' fails to meet basic standards of transparency and democratic procedures.

¹ In Dutch, this is called a WOO-request, previously known as a WOB request. The Open Government Act (WOO) has replaced the Government Information (Public Access) Act (WOB).

² The Rights Forum, 'WOB-verzoek aan Universiteit Leiden,' 24 January 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/TRF-wob-LU-24jan22>.

³ European Legal Support Centre (ELSC), 'New victory confirmed: 9 Dutch universities obliged to disclose information about human rights policies regarding Palestine,' 16 April 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ELSC-unis-disclose-16apr24>.

⁴ Reuters, 'ICJ ruling: Key takeaways from the court decision in Israel genocide case,' 26 January 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/Reuters-ICJ-israel-26jan24>.

⁵ Students for Palestine, 'Open letter to Leiden University,' 10 May 2024. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/studentsforpalestine/p/C635B5Slw2d/?hl=en&img_index=1.



Bearing in mind the University's ongoing efforts to obfuscate and delay, and its failure to engage with the substance of student and staff calls to end the University's complicity in Israeli apartheid, occupation, and perpetration of genocide against the Palestinian people, the objective of this document is threefold: 1) To provide a mapping of the current ties LU holds with Israeli and international companies that are complicit in apartheid, occupation and genocide, 2) to explain why these are problematic and 3) to look at historical precedents of breaking of institutional ties with institutions that are complicit in serious human rights violations.

Concerned readers might question why this report appears to 'single out' Israel, rather than also addressing LU's ties to other states with oppressive regimes and/or known human rights violations. The focus on the Israel stems from the ICJ's ruling on 26 January 2024, which states that Israel is plausibly committing a genocide.⁶ By modest current estimates, Israel has murdered 45,000 Palestinians in Gaza, among whom 15,000 children, and famine is rampant. All higher education facilities in Gaza have been destroyed, further adding to what Dr. Karma Nabulsi already described in 2009 as 'scholasticide.'⁷ In addition to the ICJ ruling, another compelling reason to target ties with Israel is to end Dutch institutions' longstanding complicity in aiding and abetting Israel's decades-long regime of settler colonialism and apartheid. This complicity poses a fundamental ethical – and arguably legal – duty to address Israel's grave violations of Palestinian rights and hold Israeli and Dutch institutions accountable.

Furthermore, the privileged status and exceptionalism granted to the state of Israel within European academia demands that there be extra scrutiny. Celebrated as 'liberal' and 'free,' Israeli universities are engaged in many research collaborations and exchange programs, internationally, in Europe, and specifically with Dutch universities. This becomes most evident with Horizon, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation. This comprises Horizon Europe (2021-2027) as well as research projects of Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) that are still ongoing. Currently, there are more than five hundred Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe-projects which involve Israeli institutions.⁸ There is no equivalent to this with any nation-state outside of the European continent. And yet, not only do some Israeli institutions operate on occupied land and/or are directly involved with Israel's military industrial complex,

⁶ ICJ, 'Summary of the Order of 26 January 2024,' 26 January 2024. Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203454>.

⁷ Ahmad, Ameer and Ed Vulliamy, 'In Gaza, the schools are dying too,' *The Guardian*, 10 January 2009. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/10/gaza-schools>.

⁸ See <https://cordis.europa.eu/datalab/visualisations/vis.php>.



but all Israeli public universities are in multiple ways complicit in sustaining Israel as an apartheid state that denies the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people.⁹ It is telling that no Israeli university has so far called for a ceasefire in Gaza.

This report does not use the term apartheid state lightly. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International as well as Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem all used the term apartheid in their reporting in 2021 and 2022, stating that Israel operates as an apartheid state.¹⁰ The often-lauded idea that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East is a myth. We cannot speak of a democracy when the Israeli state does not consider the lives and rights of Palestinians to be of value, whether as Israeli citizens, as subjects living under occupation, or as refugees in exile and denied their UN-stipulated right of return.

As early as 2004, the Palestinian Campaign for the Cultural and Academic Boycott of Israel (PACBI) formalized its call for boycott.¹¹ The call does not inherently target Israeli institutions, including universities, because they are Israeli, but because of direct or indirect involvement and complicity in apartheid, institutional discrimination, occupation and now genocide. PACBI calls for a general boycott of all Israeli universities. The seminal monograph of Maya Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel: How Israeli Universities Deny Palestinian Freedom*, demonstrates how Israeli universities have, from their inception, contributed to the structural oppression of Palestinians.¹² The most diverse academic disciplines - ranging from Computer Science and Civil Engineering, Law faculties, Archeology and Middle Eastern Studies - are involved in facilitating and legitimizing persecution, occupation, apartheid and genocide. All Israeli universities contribute to discrimination against non-Jewish students and staff and to the production of propaganda (hasbara) that serves to delegitimize criticism of the Israeli state.

⁹ Wind, Maya, *Towers of Ivory and Steel: How Israeli Universities Deny Palestinian Freedom*. Verso: London, New York, 2024.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, 'A threshold crossed: Israeli authorities and the crimes of apartheid and persecution,' 27 April 2021. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/HRW-israel-crimes-apartheid>; Amnesty International, 'Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: a cruel system of domination and a crime against humanity,' 1 February 2022. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/AmnestyIntl-israel-apartheid>; B'Tselem, 'A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid,' 12 January 2021. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/BTselem-this-is-apartheid>.

¹¹ PACBI was founded in 2004 to contribute to the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice, decolonisation and self-determination. 'The Palestinian Boycott, Divest and Sanction National Committee (BNC), including PACBI, is committed to freedom of expression as stipulated in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and as such rejects, on principle, boycotts of individuals based on their opinion or identity (such as citizenship, race, gender, or religion).' See <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi>. See also UN, 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,' 16 December 1966. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/UN-OHCHR-ICCPR>.

¹² See also: de Jong, Sjoerd, 'Interview – Maya Wind: "In Israël zijn de academische instellingen diep verwickeld in de repressie,"' *NRC*, 8 May 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/NRC-maya-wind-8may24>; Fuchs, Mella, 'Antropoloog Maya Wind: "Universiteiten in Israël staan in dienst van bezetting en apartheid,"' *Touw*, 13 May 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/Trouw-maya-wind-13may24>.

Academics and students who speak out against the Israeli system of oppression and its egregious crimes are often silenced and/or persecuted as in the recent case of Dr. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian¹³.

PACBI's guidelines provide a roadmap to address the institutional complicity of Israeli universities. PACBI's is a call for full boycott¹⁴ of Israeli institutions 'because of their direct and indirect structural involvement and/or complicity in institutional discrimination, apartheid, persecution, occupation, and now genocide.' This call unambiguously refrains from targeting individual Israeli academics, including those who are affiliated with these complicit institutions; it is not a boycott of individuals. Like the rest of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which PACBI contributed to founding in 2005, the boycotts that Palestinian civil society is calling for target complicity, not identity. No doubt having a research project canceled can be experienced as painful for all individuals working on those projects. But in the tradition of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and other indigenous movements, the goal remains unequivocally to hold Israeli universities accountable for sustaining a violent settler-colonial regime that dispossesses and subjugates Palestinians, and to seek a means to end our own complicity—in this case, that of Leiden University, the institution with which the authors of this report are affiliated.

Over the past week, the Executive Board of Leiden University has made important incremental steps in their approach to reassessing LU's ties to Israeli universities. LU's student exchange partnerships with Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University were initially said to be put on hold until further evaluation, and an ethics committee is to be established.¹⁵ At the same time, not only have the steps been hesitant, but LU's disclosures have all too often been partial. For instance, the Executive Board initially stated on 16 May 2024 that there were eight EU Horizon projects involving LU and Israeli Institutions.¹⁶ Only a day later, on 17 May, they changed these numbers, stating that there were eleven such projects.¹⁷ In fact, this report

¹³ Graham-Harrison, Emma and Quique Kierszenbaum, "'Political arrest' of Palestinian academics in Israel marks new civil liberties threat," *The Guardian*, 26 April 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/Guardian-arrest-nsk-26april24>.

¹⁴ Dutch Scholars for Palestine, 'Academic Boycott,' n.d. Available at: <https://www.dutchscholarsforpalestine.nl/academic-boycott>.

¹⁵ On 22 May 2024, the Executive Board further 'clarified' this, stating: 'For next semester, students already registered can start as normal. However, no new applications will be accepted within these institutional programmes until after the evaluation.' See <https://tinyurl.com/LU-protests-israel-22may24>.

¹⁶ Leiden University, 'Brief summary of our approach to ties with Israeli institutions,' 16 May 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/LU-approach-isr-ties-16may24>.

¹⁷ Leiden University, 'Our ties with Israeli universities,' 17 May 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/LU-ties-israeli-unis-17may24>.

reveals that the actual number of these projects is thirteen. The goal of this report is therefore to put forward essential information on the current state of affairs when it comes to LU's involvement with Israeli higher education institutions.

This report can be seen as a catalog or repository, containing crucial information on the different ties that Leiden University has and why these are problematic. The sources consulted include and go beyond the public CORDIS database, Maya Wind's in-depth archival and ethnographic research and the websites of relevant institutions. This report is also an ongoing process. It will be continuously update with potentially new resurfacing evidence. The report consists of five sections. First, collaborative projects with Israeli institutional participation through programs financed specifically through Horizon Europe are discussed. Second, we consider the structural partnerships represented by exchange programs with Israeli universities for LU students. The third and fourth sections examine LU's investments and procurement tenders and contracts for products or services with complicit companies. The fifth and final section of this report reviews the historical precedent of academic boycotts, validating the claim that cutting ties, when supported by evidence of complicity, is both possible and effective.



1. Ongoing EU-Horizon Research projects involving LU and Israeli Institutions

The CORDIS database¹⁸ of the Research and Innovation community platform of the European Commission¹⁹ shows **13** ongoing projects between Leiden University and/or Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC) and Israeli institutions as of May 2024. LUMC coordinates one of the projects with the Sheba Medical Centre of Israel. This project will end on 31 December 2024. A CORDIS booklet containing the Factsheets of these projects is available upon request. None of these projects were discussed in the Leiden - FOI file,²⁰ and while this information indeed is publicly available, it is not necessarily straightforward to find.

The total contribution Israeli institutions receive via this route is **€4,877,560.13**. The total contribution LU receives via this route (9 projects) is **€6,102,644.37**. The total contribution LUMC receives via this route (5 projects) is **€6,144,385.34**. The total contribution LU and LUMC receive combined is **€12,247,049.71**.

The table below outlines all the ongoing research projects involving LU, LUMC and Israeli institutions, the latter ranging from universities to companies working on counter-terrorism to the Ministry of Health of Israel. LUMC coordinates one of these research collaborations. The Sheba Medical Centre of Israel is involved in this project. Despite being a medical facility, Sheba Medical Centre openly displays its support for the Israeli military. This health facility was inaugurated in 1948 as Israel's first military facility to treat Israeli casualties of the *Nakba*, clearly linking it to the military. Additionally, the outcomes of medical research in Israel are not accessible for Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory. Similarly, Palestinians are almost always denied access to the health care system of the occupying power (see page 21 of this report).

The PACBI guidelines call for terminating Israeli institutional participation in collaborative projects. Here, we specifically examine LU's involvement in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects. When it comes to these ties, LU can take initiative in ending the participation of Israeli institutions for at least one of these projects. This is the RECOMB research project (#4) which is coordinated by LUMC. For the other 12 projects, we urge LU to put pressure on its research

¹⁸ See <https://cordis.europa.eu/>.

¹⁹ See https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/index_en/.

²⁰ As stated earlier, the disclosed information only comprises limited up to date information on partnerships for exchange programs. The three research projects discussed in the file have long ended.



partners, and the coordinator in particular, to discontinue Israeli institutional participation. If this proves impossible, then LU itself should cease its own participation in the shared projects.

Even though individual scholars might be carrying out the research for some of these programmes, the projects themselves are based on institutional collaboration. It is important to emphasize that ending institutional collaborations does not prevent individual scholars from finding other ways of working or publishing together so long as no complicit Israeli institution is involved. The purpose of following the PACBI call is to end LU's institutional involvement with any complicit Israeli institutional partner.

The following pages provide details about the 13 research collaborations that involve LU. These include keywords (as captured in the CORDIS database) by project, a breakdown of funds, and a brief explanation of the role of the specific Israeli institution(s) involved when it comes to the oppression of Palestinians through apartheid, prolonged military occupation, and grave human rights violations. The abstracts of the respective projects can be found in [the Appendix](#).



Table 1. 13 Horizon projects between Leiden University and Israeli Institutions

	Name Israeli Institution	EU-Horizon Topic(s)	Project	Duration	Israeli institution receives	Coordinated by an Israeli institution	Coordinated by LU or LUMC	LU received	LUMC received
1	BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY	Natural Sciences	TAILOR - Foundations of Trustworthy AI - Integrating Reasoning, Learning and Optimization	1 September 2020 - 31 August 2024	194,375.00	no	no	€356,750.00	€0.00
2	C.T.S - COUNTER TERRORISM SOLUTIONS LTD	Social Sciences	EU - GLOCTER European Glocal Counter-Terrorism	1 January 2024 - 31 December 2027	0.00	no	no	€274,370.40	€0.00
	Reichman University	Social Sciences		1 January 2024 - 31 December 2027	271,432.80	no	no	€0.00	€0.00
3	Ministry of Health (Israel)	Medical Sciences; Social Sciences	PARC - Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals	1 May 2022 - 30 April 2029	€130,181.25	no	no	€2,311,072.50	€0.00
4	Medical Research Infrastructure Development and Health Services fund by the Sheba Medical Cente (Israel)	Medical Sciences	RECOMB - Stem-cell based gene therapy for recombination deficient SCID	1 January 2018 - 31 December 2024	€57,500.00	no	yes	€0.00	€2,170,625.00
5	Ministry of Health (Israel)	Natural Sciences	EJPRD - European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases	1 January 2019 - 31 August 2024	€0.00	no	no	€0.00	€1,986,928.34
6	Philips Medical Systems Technologies LTD	Engineering and Technology; Medical Sciences; Natural Sciences	IMAGIO - Imaging and Advanced Guidance for Workflow Optimization in Interventional Oncology	1 May 2023 - 30 April 2027	€200,000.00	no	no	€0.00	€1,385,000.00
	Weizmann Institute of Science	Engineering and Technology			€18,750.00	no	no	€0.00	
7	Weizmann Institute of Science	Medical Sciences; Natural Sciences	ISIDORE - Integrated Services for Infectious Disease Outbreak Research	1 February 2022 - 31 July 2025	€7,972.33	no	no	€10,786.47	€2,182.00
8	Weizmann Institute of Science	Medical Sciences; Natural Sciences; Social Sciences	THRIVE - Tumor-Host Interactions in Liver Cancer of Childhood and Adults	1 December 2023 - 30 November 2028	€1,000,000.00	no	no	€0.00	€599,650.00
9	University of Haifa	Natural Sciences	Graphs Algebras - Operators Algebras that One Can See	1 January 2023 - 31 December 2026	€13,800.00	no	no	€87,400.00	€0.00
10	The Mofet Insitute - The School for the Research and Development of Programs in Teaching Training and Education at Colleges	Citizen science, open science	Building a European citizen science community	1 August 2022 - 31 July 2026	€56,500.00		no	€71,500.00	€0.00
11	BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY	Natural Sciences; Engineering and Technology	AquaPLAN - Aquatic Pollution from Light and Anthropogenic Noise: management of impacts on biodiversity	1 January 2024 - 31 December 2027	€330,451.25	no	no	€445,112.50	€0.00
12	AHVA DEAD SEE LABORATORIES LTD	Natural Sciences; Engineering and Technology	SSbD4chEM - Safe and Sustainable by Design Framework for the next generation of Chemical and Materials	1 January 2024 - 31 December 2027	€507,000.00	no	no	€456,075.00	€0.00
13	BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV	Natural Sciences; Engineering and Technology	Resilience - Pathways of resilience and evasion of tipping in ecosystems	1 April 2023 - 31 March 2029	€2,089,597.50	no	no	€2,089,597.50	€0.00
Total					€4,877,560.13			€6,102,644.37	€6,144,385.34

1. TAILOR - Foundations of Trustworthy AI - Integrating Reasoning, Learning and Optimization - AI systems made safe, transparent and reliable

Keywords: AI, Trustworthy AI, Learning, Optimisation, Reasoning

Coordinator: Linköping's University, Sweden.

Leiden University receives € 356,750.00

Bar-Ilan University receives € 194,375.00

Other Dutch partners: TU Eindhoven (€1,843,296.25), TU Delft (€109,500.00), TNO (€134,468.75), Philips (€103,620.00) and Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek (€103,620.00).

This project runs until August 2024.

Why is this partner problematic?

There are a great number of reasons why having a partnership with **Bar-Ilan University** is problematic, not least for its role in carrying out research for the Israeli military and security services. Together with Technion and Ben-Gurion, Bar-Ilan also runs the Bareket master's program -in data engineering, which trains soldiers in data science, coding and programming for military application.²¹ Its engineering faculty has run 'hackathons' together with the Israeli military²² and with Elbit Systems,²³ Israel's largest arms producer.

Bar-Ilan University also has played a key role in supporting and expanding illegal settlements, including the founding of what is now called Ariel University on illegally occupied West Bank land, with the explicit goal of promoting 'Judaization.'²⁴ And in similar fashion to the activities of other Israeli universities later discussed, Bar-Ilan's Archeology department holds strong linkages with Israeli settler movements. Dehumanizing settler-colonial tropes are used as justification for archeological excavations there, such as claiming Palestinian land in the village of Susiya to be 'totally empty,'²⁵. Similar collaboration between Bar-Ilan archeologists and settlers has transpired at the Khirbet al-Mazra'a excavation and on Palestinian village lands

²¹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 102.

²² Bar-Ilan University, 'The Faculty of Engineering's annual hackathon is almost here!', 21 May 2023. Available at: <https://engineering.biu.ac.il/en/node/11822>.

²³ Bar-Ilan University, 'Sign up for the Biothon, the biotech hackathon', 27 April 2023. Available at: <https://engineering.biu.ac.il/en/node/11810>.

²⁴ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 80.

²⁵ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 31-32.



in the occupied West Bank at Khirbet Jib'it and Khirbet Marajim in 2020, and in Kirbet Tibnah in 2022. There are also ongoing collaborations with the Israeli settler organization Elad in joint courses, excavations, and research.²⁶

There are several examples of Bar-Ilan faculty and leadership promoting violence against the Palestinian people: In the wake of Israel's Gaza offensive in 2014, Bar-Ilan Middle East Studies professor and former Lt. Col. Mordechai Keidar argued on Israeli radio that a Palestinian insurgent could only be deterred if 'his sister or mother will be raped.'²⁷ In 2017, Bar-Ilan's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies put out an advertisement on Facebook arguing for generating 'hopelessness' among Palestinians for this would result in a decline in terror: 'When hopeful, Terrorism increases.'²⁸

Finally, whereas the need to break ties with this and other Israeli institutions goes beyond the specificities of this project; an important addition needs to be made concerning projects working with AI (see also project #8 on [page 26 of this report](#)): 'reliable' AI-systems (notwithstanding their high error rate) developed at universities have been used by the Israeli army in Gaza to expand hasty authorization for bombing non-military targets,²⁹ to mark people including journalists as 'power targets' and to allow for 20 to a 100 civilian casualties as 'collateral damage' for hitting these so-called targets.³⁰

²⁶ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 36, 38.

²⁷ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 51.

²⁸ PACBI, 'Paid Facebook ad by Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center advocates increased "hopelessness" for Palestinians', 31 July 2017. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/bar-ilan-hopelessness>.

²⁹ Abraham, Yuval, "'A mass assassination factory": Inside Israel's calculated bombing of Gaza', *+972 Magazine*, 30 November 2023. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/mass-assassination-factory-israel-calculated-bombing-gaza/>.

³⁰ Abraham, Yuval, "'Lavender": The AI machine directing Israel's bombing spree in Gaza', *+972 Magazine*, 3 April 2024. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>.



2. EU-GLOCTER - European Glocal Counter-Terrorism - Innovative training in EU counterterrorism

Keywords: European Union, Counter-terrorism, European Security, International Security, Terrorism and Political Violence, Glocalism.

Coordinator: Dublin City University, Ireland.

Leiden University receives € 274,370.40

International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT)³¹ receives € 274,370.40

Reichman University receives € 271,432.80

Counter Terrorism Solutions LTD (CTS) – the ‘consulting arm’ of Reichman University’s International Institute for Counter-Terrorism – is also involved.

This project runs until 31 December 2027

Why is this partner problematic?

Reichman University, formerly known as the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya (IDC) is Israel’s only private university, but equally holds strong ties to the Israeli military intelligence community. The University was founded on a former army base, and 10 percent of its student admittance is set aside for veterans of elite combat units.³² More to the point, Reichman has a partnership with Israel’s largest weapons producer, Elbit Systems.³³ Elbit has provided armed drones, bombs designed for ‘densely populated urban warfare’ that contain 26,000 controlled fragments for ‘high kill probability,’ and 155mm artillery shells, among other weapons, for Israel’s Gaza genocide.³⁴

Correspondingly, representatives of Israel’s arms manufacturers frequently sit on the IDC’s management committee and are invited as speakers to their conferences. The annual Herzliya

³¹ The ICCT is ‘an independent think-and-do tank’ with links to LU’s Institute of Security and Global Affairs. See ICCT, ‘About,’ n.d. Available at: <https://www.icct.nl/about>.

³² PACBI, letter to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, ‘Respect the rule of law,’ 4 October 2012. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/PACBI-kaf-respect-rule-of-law>.

³³ Reichman University, ‘Industry Partners,’ n.d. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/Reichman-industry-partners>.

³⁴ AFSC, ‘Companies Profiting from the Gaza Genocide,’ 28 May 2024. Available at: <https://afsc.org/gaza-genocide-companies>.



Conference, for example, is very explicitly a forum where policy recommendations are formulated and where Israeli state, military and security leaders meet to shape policy decisions concerning maintaining Israeli apartheid and illegal occupation. In the 2023 conference, for instance, they discussed, among other topics, strengthening the Israeli military industries and combating the growing Palestine solidarity.³⁵

Similarly, Reichman University has established 'war rooms,' together with the Israeli government-linked anti-Palestinian lobby group Stand With Us, aimed at spreading pro-Israel propaganda on social media to whitewash Israel's crimes against Palestinians.³⁶ The University's founder, Uriel Reichman, was president of a military tribunal and in his public statements he often emphasizes Jewish supremacy over Palestinians.³⁷ To be sure, Reichman boasts of being ranked number one for treatment of reservist student soldiers during Israel's Gaza genocide.³⁸

The following screenshot of the University's webpage further exemplifies its involvement in Israel's military complex.

³⁵ Reichman University, 'Herzliya Conference 2023,' January 2023. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/Reichman-herzliya-conf-2023>.

³⁶ Reichman University, 'Students volunteer in IDC Herzliya's situation room to defend Israel on social media,' 16 May 2021. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/Reichman-IDC-herzliya-16may21>; StandWithUs, 'StandWithUs opens situation room amid escalation of Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians,' 12 May 2021. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/SWU-sitroom-12may21>; Jewish Voice for Peace, 'Documents prove "Creative Community for Peace" is front for right wing Israel lobby group "StandWithUs,"' 4 October 2018. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/JVP-ccp-swu-4oct18>.

³⁷ PACBI, letter to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 'Respect the rule of law,' 4 October 2012. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/PACBI-kaf-respect-rule-of-law>.

³⁸ See https://www.runi.ac.il/media/d2gp0qnw/ma-hci_2024_10.pdf



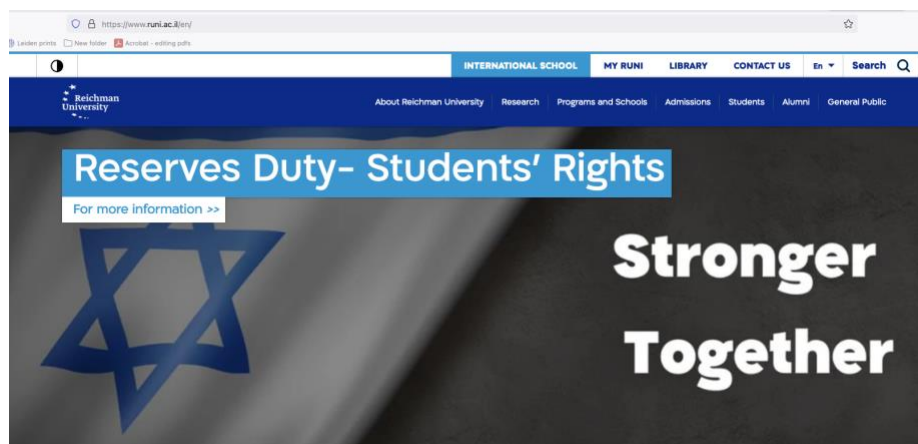


Figure 2 - Home page of Reichman University.³⁹ The university advertises support for students in the Reserve Military Force and students under the IDF Education Department. Accessed 20 May 2024.

3. PARC - Partnerships for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals

Keywords: Public Health, Crisis Management.

Coordinator: Agence Nationale de la Sécurité Sanitaire de l'Alimentation de l'Environnement et du Travail, France.

Leiden University receives € 2,311,072.50
Israeli Ministry of Health receives € 130,181.25

This project runs until 30 April 2029.

Why is this partner problematic?

Unlike the other Horizon projects in this section, PARC as well as project #5 directly involve the Israeli state, through a partnership with the **Ministry of Health**. This is problematic for a number of reasons, not least because the state's policies are furthering apartheid and genocide. Palestinian ('non-Jewish') citizens of Israel are structurally kept from applying for certain jobs in healthcare, tens of Bedouin-Palestinian villages in Israel are 'unrecognized' by

³⁹ See runi.ac.il/en/.

the state and therefore receive no or very little health services, and many bureaucratic rules also make it very difficult for non-Jewish Israelis to get adequate access to healthcare clinics in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods.

4. RECOMB - Stem-cell based gene therapy for recombination deficient SCID

Keywords: Gene Therapy, Immunology, Stem Cells, Graft versus Host Disease, Transplantation.

Coordinator: Leiden University Medical Centre.

Leiden University Medical Centre receives € 2,170,625.00
Sheba Medical Centre receives € 57,500

Runs until 31 December 2024

Why is this partner problematic?

Sheba Medical Centre was founded in 1948 (during the *Nakba*) as the first military hospital in Israel in order to treat Israeli casualties only.⁴⁰ Further information on Sheba Medical Centre needs to be obtained, but it is important that in similar fashion to all Israeli universities, Sheba Medical Centre actively portrays its support for Israeli war efforts, despite being a medical facility. Below is one screenshot from its website.

⁴⁰ Ro'i, Nathan, 'Lieut. Col. (Res.) Dr. Chaim Sheba,' in *IDF in Its Corps: Army and Security Encyclopedia* (in Hebrew). Vol. 12. Revivim Publishing, 1982, p. 107.



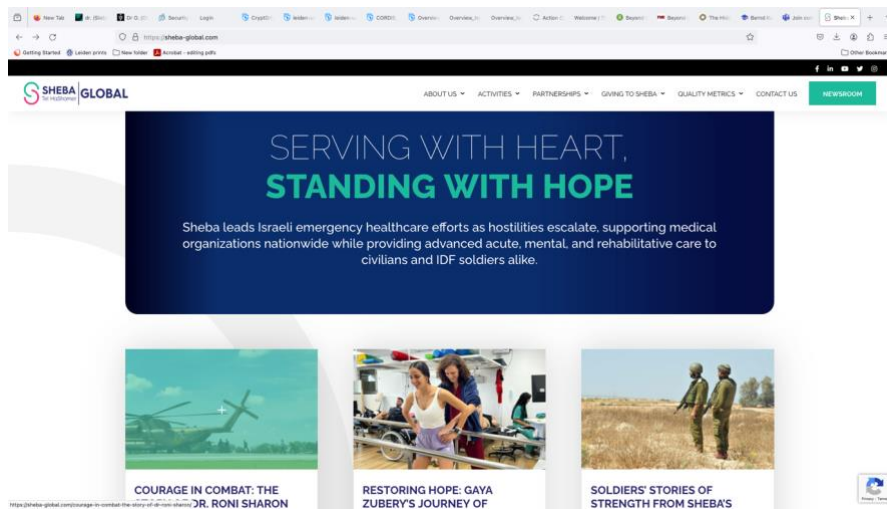


Figure 3. Homepage of Sheba Hospital.⁴¹ Much of its programs actively provide support to the army. Accessed 20 May 2024.

5. EJP RD - European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases - Sustainable ecosystem to improve the lives of rare disease patients

Keywords: Ecosystems.

Coordinator: Institut National de la Santé et de la recherche Médicale, France.

Leiden University Medical Centre receives € 1,986,928.34
Israel Ministry of Health receives € 475,815.63

This project runs until December 2024.

Why is this partner problematic?

[See page 21 of this report.](#)

⁴¹ See <https://sheba-global.com>.

6. IMAGIO - IMAGING AND ADVANCED GUIDANCE FOR WORKFLOW OPTIMIZATION IN INTERVENTIONAL ONCOLOGY

Keywords: Liver cancer, Lung cancer, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Immunotherapy, Ultrasound.

Coordinator: Philips Netherlands.

Leiden University Medical Centre receives € 1,385,000.00

Philips Medical Systems Technologies LTD (Israel) receives € 200,000.00

Weizman Institute of Science receives € 18,750.00

This project runs until 30 April 2027.

Why is this partner problematic?

Weizman Institute of Science is one of the three universities first established by the Zionist movement, prior to the founding of Israel, together with the Hebrew University and Technion in Haifa, with the goal of advancing technological and scientific developments of Israel as a Jewish state in historic Palestine. At their three campuses, the leading Zionist militia, the Haganah, established a Science corps, to research and refine military capabilities and to develop and manufacture weapons. Rafael and IAI – Israeli Aerospace Industries – two of Israel’s largest weapons producers, known for selling their weapons abroad as ‘battle proven’, were developed out of the infrastructures laid out by Technion and Weizman Institute of Science.⁴² Senior administrators and faculty have advocated for Israeli science as the basis of Israeli military power by developing experimental and particularly harmful advanced weaponry.⁴³ Weizman operates a high-tech science park – Kiryat Weizman – where it facilitates Israel’s weapon companies Rafael, Elbit, Elbit’s subsidiary EI-OP, etc. Its National Laboratory for the Development of Space Cameras works on technology for detecting targets photographed by drones developed by the Weizman Institute and Ben-Gurion University.⁴⁴ In 2021, Weizman Institute together with Tel Aviv University collaborated with the Israeli Antiquity

⁴² Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 13-15.

⁴³ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 91.

⁴⁴ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 109.



Authority to conduct research on scrolls excavated and illegally seized from the Occupied Palestinian Territory.⁴⁵

Philips Medical Systems Technologies LTD was established in 1998, as Israel-based subsidiary of Philips Netherlands. Philips Netherlands already became active in Israel in 1948, and considering this specific date, the extent to which this company has contributed to the normalization of a Zionist settler-colonial state needs to be further examined. In 2007, the company had over 700 employees in Israel and generated sales of over \$300 million.

7. ISIDORe Integrated Services for Infectious Disease Outbreak Research

Keywords: Infectious Diseases, Pandemics, Structural Biology.

Coordinated by: European Research Infrastructure on Highly Pathogenic Agents, Belgium.

Leiden University receives € 10,786.47

Leiden University Medical Centre receives € 2,182.00

Weizman Institute of Science receives € 7,972.33

This project runs until 31 July 2025

Why is this partner problematic?

The specifics on Weizman Institute of Science were discussed earlier as was the lack of adequate access to healthcare for many Palestinians, long before 7 October 2023.

8. THRIVE - TUMOUR-HOST INTERACTIONS IN LIVER CANCER OF CHILDHOOD AND ADULTS

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Liver Cancer, Mortality, Surgical Procedures, Microbiology.

Coordinated by: Fundació de Recerca Clinic Barcelona-Institut d'Investigacions Biomèdiques August PI Sunyer, Spain.

⁴⁵ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 30-31.



Leiden University Medical Centre receives € 599,650.00
Weizman Institute of Science receives € 1,000,000.00

This project runs until: 30 November 2028.

Why is this partner problematic?

The specifics on the Weizman Institute of Science are discussed above, as is the lack of adequate access to healthcare for many Palestinians. Long before 7 October 2023, moreover, humanitarian organizations reported on the problematic limited access to cancer treatment for people residing in Gaza.⁴⁶

This project, like project #1 ([see page 17 of this report](#)), also further warrants attention considering the misuse of AI in Israel's automated warfare.

9. GRAPH ALGEBRAS - Operator Algebras that One Can See

Keywords: Topology, Dynamical systems, Algebra, Operator Algebra, Geometry.

Coordinated by: Instytut Matematyczny Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Poland.

Leiden University receives € 87,400.00
University of Haifa receives € 13,800.00

This project runs until: 31 December 2026.

Why is this partner problematic?

The University of Haifa is directly implicated in the implementation and perpetuation of Israel's prolonged military occupation and system of apartheid against the Palestinian people, including support for grave violations of international humanitarian law. It is also deeply

⁴⁶ World Health Organization, 'Gaza patients' painful journey to cancer treatment', 4 February 2019. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/who-cancertreatment-gaza-2019>; World Health Organization, 'Additional treatment option available to cancer patients in Gaza amid tightening of access restrictions', *The Humanitarian Bulletin*, 2 June 2020. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/who-cancertreatment-gaza-2020>.



entwined with the Israeli security state and military machine. The establishment of the university in 1972 was part of a broader government ‘Judaization’ strategy to assert control over areas within Israel predominantly populated by Palestinian citizens of the state—in this case the Galilee region. Pursuits in fields such as archeology and Middle East studies have also been structurally mobilized in this aim, and countervailing histories and voices have been systematically suppressed.

In the case of archeology, the University of Haifa has cooperated with the Israeli military authority, or Civil Administration, of the Occupied Palestinian territory to confiscate Palestinian land and then plumb it in a single-minded focus on revealing a ‘Jewish history.’ In the process sedimentary layers containing artifacts of centuries of Arab and Muslim history have been systematically ignored—and worse, torn asunder. Archeological digs are pursued in the Jordan Valley and a mountain range near Nablus; the university also shares a joint dig with Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University at Ir David in occupied east Jerusalem, in clear violation of international law.⁴⁷

The University’s support for the suppression of the Palestinian past in favor of a sanitized, exclusively Zionist one has also extended to the field of history. Scholars at Israeli universities who dare to investigate past or present Israeli crimes against Palestinians, including those committed during the *Nakba* of 1948, in which some two-thirds of the indigenous Palestinian population was expelled by Zionist militias and later Israeli forces, have been isolated, defamed, and intimidated. This has included nearly all members of a small, brave group of ‘new historians’ that emerged in the 1980s and attempted to use newly declassified state documents in 1948 to set the historical record straight.

The experience of one such historian at the University of Haifa, Professor Ilan Pappé, along with that of his former MA student, Theodore Katz, is brutally illustrative of the costs of pursuing such scholarship in today’s Israel. When master’s research by Katz in 1998 confirmed earlier (but ignored) Palestinian research exposing a 1948 Israeli massacre of between 200-250 unarmed Palestinians at the villages of Tantura and Umm Zaynat near the current site of the university—followed by the imposition of imprisonment and forced labor on remaining men and teenage boys—Israeli veterans quickly filed a defamation lawsuit in response. In a pattern repeated across Israeli universities in such cases, the university quickly withdrew legal support and responsibility for Katz’s research, instead pressuring Katz to settle by signing a statement

⁴⁷ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 36.



withdrawing the allegations—a signature under duress that he disowned within hours. Despite the validity of his research being defended by his former professor, Ilan Pappé, the university rescinded Katz’s degree and allowed him to be subjected to a campaign of public humiliation and intimidation; Pappé himself also subsequently suffered isolation at the university and was subjected to disciplinary hearings calling for his dismissal for ‘violation of duties’ and ‘slander.’ The University only closed the case amid international outcry and campaigns; Pappé left the University and Israel in 2006 and is now at the University of Exeter in the UK.⁴⁸

Of the small group of ‘new historians’ that included Pappé as a member, all but one have been driven out of Israel, the exception being a former member of the group, Benny Morris, a professor at Ben-Gurion University, who has since disowned his earlier scholarly conclusions and become a firm subscriber to the Israeli national-colonial ideology. In the meantime, the government has reclassified hundreds of important documents originally drawn upon by these critical scholars, with less than half of one percent of the files in the Israeli Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archive currently available to the public.⁴⁹

The connection to Israel’s military occupation is also present through the university’s multiple and deep connections to Israel’s security establishment. The university hosted the military-tailored Havatzalot Middle East Studies program for 14 years before its transfer to Hebrew University in 2019,⁵⁰ and it continues to offer other such dedicated military-academic programs. The first of these, Atuda, is a country-wide specialized academic program for soldiers run by the Israeli military and Ministry of Defense in collaboration with weapons manufacturers and the Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure. The other three are institutions within the university that educate military leadership in service of the occupation and colonization of Palestine: The National Security College, the Tactical Command College, and the Alon Command and Control College.⁵¹

Through the Comper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism, the University of Haifa also participates in the creation and weaponized use of state propaganda (*hasbara*) in service of continuing the occupation of Palestine and defending Israel’s apartheid

⁴⁸ Pappé’s acclaimed historical research includes: *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oneworld: Oxford, 2006; *The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel*. Yale University Press: London, New Haven, 2011; and *A History of Modern Palestine*. Third edition. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2022.

⁴⁹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 110-116.

⁵⁰ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 52.

⁵¹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 94.



system. This includes the ‘Ambassadors Online’ program, which is designed to develop communication tools to repress the BDS movement in Israel and globally.⁵²

Finally, the University of Haifa’s treatment of Palestinian students demonstrates that it not only assists the Israeli government in the perpetuation of apartheid and occupation as an institution, but it also actively carries out discriminatory apartheid policies and practices against its own student body, combined with repression designed to reinforce this apartheid system.⁵³ Public activity on the Haifa campus is the most restricted of any Israeli institution, making it de facto prohibited, and thereby significantly discouraging Palestinian student expression and activism.⁵⁴ A permanent exhibit at the University meanwhile continues to honor one of the University’s founders, Abba Hushi, who compared educating Palestinians to ‘raising snakes.’⁵⁵

10. ECS - European Citizen Science

Key words: Citizen Science, Open Science.

Coordinated by: Verein der Europäischen Bürgerwissenschaften-ECSCA E.V., Germany.

Leiden University receives € 71,500.00

The Mofet Institute receives € 56,500.00

This project runs until 31 July 2026.

Why is this partner problematic?

The Mofet Institute, ‘the National Institute for Research and Development in Education’, connects programs across different Israeli educational institutions, working on teacher training, curriculum development, and advances in pedagogy for primary and secondary school teachers. In doing so, it also works with the Israeli Ministry of Education and other governmental agencies.⁵⁶ The Institute’s programs center on five areas of activity: a network to support teachers’ professional development, professional education programs, research,

⁵² Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 94.

⁵³ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 142, 146.

⁵⁴ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 149.

⁵⁵ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 138.

⁵⁶ The Mofet Institute, ‘About Us’, n.d. Available at: <https://eng.mofet.macam.ac.il/about-us/>.



‘national and international collaborations and networking’, and research and development on ‘technology and innovation in education.’⁵⁷

Whereas this Institute prides itself on advancing education, this starkly contrasts with the many Israeli violations of the right to education of millions of Palestinians living under military occupation, but also of those holding Israeli citizenship.⁵⁸ From Israel’s founding, Israeli universities have restrained and conditioned Palestinian enrollment, have curtailed Palestinian learning, and have been persistently collaborating with the Israeli government to repress Palestinian staff and students.⁵⁹ Palestinian school teachers have been long under surveillance by the Israeli security agency Shin Bet, who were screening and monitoring them.⁶⁰ From 1968, Palestinians living in Israel were allowed to attend higher education, but with the underlying understanding that women’s access to higher education would curtail Palestinian birth rate.⁶¹ Direct supervision by Israeli security agencies persisted: For instance, in 2017 it was found that the Ministry of Education was working with Shin Bet concerning the appointment of Palestinian teachers.⁶² In the south of Israel, Indigenous Bedouin Palestinians continue to face barriers to primary schools as these are inadequately equipped and do not have access to running water or electricity. Secondary education is inaccessible as there are no paved roads or access to public transportation.⁶³ In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, higher education is governed by the Israeli military, and faculty and students have been abducted, tortured and detained.⁶⁴ In Gaza, universities have been long under attack by aerial bombardment and suffocated under an illegal blockade.⁶⁵ At the time of writing, every single university in Gaza has been destroyed by the Israeli military. As of 28 March 2024, a total of 162 school buildings had been directly hit by the Israeli army,⁶⁶ indeed further exemplifying ‘scholasticide’ – the deliberate destruction of educational institutions.

⁵⁷ The Mofet Institute, ‘Academic Units and Programs’, n.d. Available at: <https://eng.mofet.macam.ac.il/academic-units-and-programs/>.

⁵⁸ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 15.

⁶⁰ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 147-148.

⁶¹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 148.

⁶² Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 149.

⁶³ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁴ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 16.

⁶⁵ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 17.

⁶⁶ American Near East Refugee Aid, ‘The right to education is under attack in Gaza’, 28 March 2024. Available at: <https://www.anera.org/blog/the-right-to-education-is-under-attack-in-gaza/>.



11. AquaPLAN - Aquatic Pollution from Light and Anthropogenic Noise: management of impacts on biodiversity

Keywords: Pollution, Ecosystems, Limnology.

Coordinated by: Università di Pisa, Italy.

Leiden University receives € 445,112.50
Bar-Ilan University receives € 330,451.25

This project runs until 31 December 2027.

Why is this partner problematic?

[See page 17 of this report.](#)

12. SSbD4Chem - Safe and Sustainable by Design framework for the next generation of Chemicals and Materials

Keywords: Composites, Textiles, Coating and Films, Civil Society, Sustainable Economy.

Coordinated by: Vlaamse Instelling voor Technologisch Onderzoek N.V., Belgium.

Leiden University receives € 456,075.00
Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories receives € 456,075.00

This project runs until 31 December 2027.

Why is this partner problematic?

Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories actively participates in the exploitation of occupied Palestinian land, in violation of international law. Up until 2016, the company was owned by two settlements, Mizpe Shalem and Qalya, and a holding company. Its factory and showroom were located in the Mizpe Shalem settlement.⁶⁷ Ahava's operations involved taking mud from

⁶⁷ Neuman, Efrat, 'From Israel with Ahava.' *Haaretz*, 31 January 2007. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/haaretz-ahava-31jan07>; BBC News, 'Concern over Israel settlement exports,' 5 November 2008. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7708244.stm>; Lynfield, Ben, 'EU to ban West Bank companies labelling their

the West Bank part of the Dead Sea to create its products and to conduct research. As the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem explains, 'Despite international law's prohibition on exploiting the natural resources of occupied territory', Ahava did precisely this.⁶⁸ Ahava's exploitation of occupied territory in contravention to international law was known to the government of the Netherlands. In a parliamentary proceeding in 2011, the Foreign Minister confirmed in response to a query from one MP that Ahava did not receive a specific tax exemption for products manufactured in Israel; the lack of the exemption came from the company's known status as operating in the occupied West Bank.⁶⁹

In 2016, Ahava was acquired by Fosun International, a Chinese conglomerate.⁷⁰ In that same year, Ahava opened a new factory outside of occupied Palestinian territory, consistent with its announcement that it would be moving the original factory. However, it is unclear whether Ahava actually ceased operations in the original site. In 2018, for example, one reporter who contacted Ahava learned that the factory on occupied territory was still operating and was, according to an Ahava employee, 'the only factory of Ahava.'⁷¹ Similarly, a query by a member of the European Parliament in 2018 revealed that the European Commission assessed that Ahava still did 'have operations in the settlement Mitzpeh Shalem, located in Occupied Territories' in addition to the new facility 'located within Israel's pre-1967 borders.'⁷² In addition, as of 2024, setting aside the question of the factory location, Ahava reportedly still had a store in a settlement on occupied Palestinian territory.⁷³

products "made in Israel," *The Independent*, 10 November 2015. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/indep-EU-madeinIsrael-10nov15>.

⁶⁸ B'Tselem, 'Dispossession and exploitation: Israel's policy in the Jordan Valley and Northern Dead Sea,' May 2011. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/israel-disposs-exploit-deadsea>.

⁶⁹ Staatssecretaris van Economische Zaken, Brief nr. 318, 'De situatie in het Midden-Oosten,' aan de Voorzitter van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 1 February 2010. Available at: <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-23432-318.pdf>.

⁷⁰ See Appelberg, Shelly, 'Chinese Conglomerate Buys Ahava Cosmetics for \$76 Million Amid BDS Concerns,' *Haaretz*, 7 April 2016. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/haaretz-ahava-7apr16>.

⁷¹ Cronin, David, 'Why is Europe still funding occupation profiteer Ahava?' *Electronic Intifada*, 14 September 2018. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ei-ahava-14sep18>.

⁷² EU Parliament, E-004770/18, 20 November 2018. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/EU-ahava-2018>.

⁷³ Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, 'Factsheet 243 - Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories Ltd,' May 2024. Available at: https://www.cjpme.org/fs_243. See also Who Profits, 'Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories,' 27 March 2023. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/WhoProfits-ahava-27mar23>.

13. RESILIENCE - Pathways of resilience and evasion of tipping in ecosystems

Keywords: Remote Sensing, Drones, Ecosystems, Mathematics, Climatic Changes.

Coordinated by: Utrecht University.

Leiden University receives € 2,089,597.50

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev receives € 2,528,125

This project lasts until 31 March 2029

Why is this partner problematic?

Aside from the fact that Israel's warfare and governmental practices are drastically damaging ecosystems, Ben-Gurion University has played a central role in Israel's 'Judaization' project when it comes to the Naqab region, which Israel calls the Negev, since the university's establishment there in 1967.⁷⁴ This consists of taking over Indigenous Palestinian Bedouin ancestral lands and advancing Jewish settlement expansion. Ben-Gurion University generates vital education, employment, and economic opportunities, but specifically for the Naqab's Jewish residents. These opportunities are explicitly not extended to Palestinian Bedouins who are citizens of the state. Moreover, the university works closely together with the Israeli military by offering tailored education to soldier-students and by working together with military units of information and communications technology and air force technologies. Plans call for an expansion of the campus to enable the absorption of thousands of new soldier-students; a brigadier general at the Ministry of Defense recently explained that locally based soldiers and their spouses will be encouraged to study at Ben-Gurion University to 'strengthen the ecosystem between the security apparatuses, academia, and the population in the Negev.' The university is also explicitly facilitating the move of a large campus of intelligence bases to the Naqab, which will require further seizing of Beodouin Palestinian lands and the eviction of thousands. This settlement project is in turn advanced by the university's Jewish Israeli student population, including the Ayalim initiative from Israeli military veterans to establish 22 university 'student villages.' Beginning at Ben-Gurion, Ayalim and sister organization Kedma

⁷⁴ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 77-81.



are working to extend these student-led 'Judaization' efforts to the Galilee, the occupied West Bank, along the Gaza border, and in 'mixed' Jewish-Palestinian cities across Israel.⁷⁵

Among the programs popular among student-soldiers is Ben-Gurion University's specialized accelerated BA program for fighter pilots, designed to complement their professional training, and the Brakim BSc to MSc program in data science for soldiers, after which they are incorporated into R&D projects in military-technological units and the security state.⁷⁶ The Gav-Yam Negev technological park at the edge of the Ben-Gurion campus, launched in cooperation with the Israeli military, is slated to be Israel's chief R&D center.⁷⁷ Ben-Gurion's commercialization company BGN Technologies operates joint research and cooperation with Rafael, Elbit, IAI, and Lockheed-Martin. Such collaboration is crucial to Israeli military industries.⁷⁸

As at other Israeli universities, staff who speak out critically at Ben-Gurion face going it alone. In response to nationalist critiques accusing some staff of 'anti-Zionist bias,' for example, the university senate passed a directive that faculty expressing their own 'political opinions' must refrain from mentioning their university by name.⁷⁹ As at other Israeli universities, Palestinian students who attempt to protest Israeli oppression at Ben-Gurion are met with violent repression.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 75-78.

⁷⁶ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 94.

⁷⁷ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 100.

⁷⁸ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 104.

⁷⁹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 115.

⁸⁰ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 149-154.



2. Partnerships for exchange programs and innovation

A. Exchange programs

Leiden University currently works with two main partners for exchange programs in Israel: Tel Aviv University (TAU) and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ). The Faculty of Humanities renewed its partnership agreement with TAU through the 2024-2025 academic year. The Leiden Law School extended its exchange program with TAU until August 2027 (involving 2 students each). HUJ is also a long-standing partner for exchange programs, which involve 4-6 LU students per year from the Humanities/International Studies and Political Science.

Why are these partners problematic?

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Like other Israeli Universities, HUJ and its academic staff have historically been and remain now more than ever deeply implicated and imbricated in the structural oppression and dispossession of Palestinians on numerous fronts, in intimate entanglement with the Israeli state, intelligence, security and military apparatus.

HUJ's complicity in and contributions to Zionist violence against Palestinians was already on display during the lead up to the 1948 war. The Haganah militia established a Science Corps with bases at HUJ, the Technion and the Weizmann Institute. These universities helped sustain the Haganah and other militias in carrying out the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the *Nakba*. Faculty and students developed and manufactured weapons, including bioweapons.⁸¹ Typhoid-dysentery bacteria were used in villages from which Zionists had already forcibly expelled Palestinians, to prevent their return and to poison water sources in residential areas in which the Palestinian population still held on.⁸²

HUJ has also spearheaded archeological excavations that dispossess Palestinians and literally demolish centuries of Palestinian history in the aim of selectively highlighting the

⁸¹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 22, 60.

⁸² Morris, Benny and Benjamin Z. Kedar, "'Cast thy bread': Israeli biological warfare during the 1948 War," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 59(5), 752–776, 2023. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2022.2122448>.

Jewish past. HUU's role relating to the Palestinian village of Susiya is but one example. After 1967, HUU expanded its campus into East Jerusalem. Its Institute of Archeology pioneered digs at Susiya in the occupied Palestinian territory in 1969 and 1971. After excavations expanded in 1983, Jewish settlers established a settlement adjacent to the digs. They named the settlement Susya and declared they were 'reclaiming' the Jewish presence. The Israeli military occupation recognized Susya as a national archeological site in 1986, expelling Palestinian residents of Susiya.⁸³

Dedicated Middle East Studies programs and campus infrastructure at HUU have been tailored to the needs and demands of the Israeli military. For example, in 2018 the University won the bid to house the Havatzalot program, an elite degree program offered to Intelligence Corps soldiers as part of their military training. To secure the bid, HUU had to meet enhanced military demands, including far-reaching military intervention regarding the program's content, structure, employees and campus infrastructure. HUU's administration celebrated this; few faculty dissented, and Palestinian student protest was ignored. Havatzalot students are housed, train, study and eat in a campus dorm designated as a 'closed military base.' Since the program's inception, there has been a surge in students in military uniform on campus. Palestinian students feel intimidated and unable to speak freely. Those who made a film in protest were attacked by right wing student groups and in the Knesset, and HUU demanded that the film be taken off the internet.⁸⁴

HUU's role in repressing Palestinians and maintaining the apartheid system and occupation also manifests in the training of staff of the national police and Shin Bet, the internal security service. HUU's criminology department touts itself as a pioneer in 'counterterror policing,' pushing 'field-proven' strategies which have been internationally condemned for violating Palestinian rights as an export product.⁸⁵

More directly, HUU itself has participated in the systematic and illegal expropriation of Palestinian village lands as part of a conscious national policy of 'Judaization'⁸⁶ and collaborated with Israeli settlers and the military and security apparatus in these endeavors. Its campus encroaches most directly upon the Palestinian community of al-Issawiyeh on the slopes of Mt. Scopus. In 1948, with the territory under UN mandate, Israel agreed with the

⁸³ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 23-38.

⁸⁴ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 48-56.

⁸⁵ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 45-46.

⁸⁶ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 66-68.



UN to allow residents to return but sabotaged this in practice. After the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, it came fully under Israeli rule. In recent years, sustained organizing among residents of al-Issawiyeh in response to ongoing Israeli oppression and land expropriation led to it being labeled an 'extremist village.' The village is regularly closed off, subjected to mass and arbitrary arrests of its inhabitants, including children, and the use of tear gas and other weapons. Repression further escalated in 2019, when the neighborhood became the set for a new Israeli reality prime time TV series about the Jerusalem police. Regular raids, checkpoints, ambushes, roadblocks, drone surveillance and patrols in full riot gear followed. In one case, police planted a weapon in the home of a resident so that it could later be 'discovered' on the TV program. When a young resident was shot and killed in June 2019, signs, posters, and flags hung in his memory were torn down. HUJ has consistently supported Israeli security forces' repression of al-Issawiyeh.⁸⁷

HUJ is implicated in apartheid and occupation in multiple other ways. This includes the illegal seizure of tens of thousands of Palestinian books, newspapers and journals and their housing in the National Library on HUJ's Giv'at Ram campus,⁸⁸ weapons systems development via HUJ's Talpiot program,⁸⁹ toleration of intimidation and silencing of critical voices in its own classrooms by students who are active-duty soldiers,⁹⁰ and the increasing isolation and suppression of Palestinian staff and students.⁹¹

Tel Aviv University (TAU)

TAU works closely with the Israeli military and constitutes a key site for military strategizing. Scholars and senior security state personnel working at TAU's Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) have been at the forefront of elaborating counterterror guidelines and innovative legal interpretations that shield Israel from accountability under international law.⁹² The stated mission of the INSS is to offer the Israeli government advice on issues central to the state's 'national security agenda.' This includes regularly formulating policy to 'incriminate', 'undermine', and 'sabotage' activists working for Palestinian rights, including covert intelligence action.⁹³

⁸⁷ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 69-70.

⁸⁸ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 63-64.

⁸⁹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 96.

⁹⁰ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 118.

⁹¹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 118, 136, 146.

⁹² Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, pp. 37-39.

⁹³ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 90.



Tel Aviv university played an important role in the creation of Israel's so-called 'Military Ethical Doctrine for Combating Terror,' part of a broader pattern of innovation in legal doctrine specifically designed to justify practices that violate international humanitarian law, including practices that have led to the disproportionate use of violence against Palestinian civilians and the devaluing of Palestinian lives.⁹⁴ In 2008, it was INSS analyst and IDF reserve Gabi Simoni who promoted Israel's specific approach to war, known as the Dahiya doctrine, which endorses the 'use of disproportionate force' extending to the destruction of 'economic interests,' 'centers of civilian power' and 'state infrastructure' with many civilian casualties, with the intention of achieving long lasting deterrence.⁹⁵ The Dahiya doctrine was 'designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population' in the 2008-9 war in Gaza, and is still being deployed in the ongoing genocidal campaign.⁹⁶

Since July 2023, Tel Aviv University has also hosted the 'Erez' program for military officers, based on state funding from the Ministry of Defense. This program is turning TAU into a military base, as soldiers carry uniforms and military weapons to campus, are taught by military personnel, and are trained to become 'elite fighters.'⁹⁷ This military presence is specifically tied to a list of conditions set by the Ministry of Defence, which require all faculty to conduct themselves in accordance with military restrictions and 'refrain from offensive statements toward the IDF soldiers studying at the institution.'⁹⁸

Middle East Studies at TAU is also closely linked to the Israeli military and security state. TAU's Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies serves as a node of intelligence expertise. It operates as a semi-secret enclave, with Palestinian citizens of Israel barred access.⁹⁹ Its monthly position papers are proudly deemed a 'toolbox' for Israel's political and security leadership.¹⁰⁰ In 2014, TAU Professor Asher Susser advocated that Israel pursue a policy of 'preemptive strikes' to communicate that 'if a red line is crossed, Israel will be the one to strike first and very forcefully, in the timing, place, and method of its choosing.'¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ See Kasher, Asa and Amos Yadlin, 'Military ethics of fighting terror: An Israeli perspective,' *Journal of Military Ethics*, 4(1), 3–32, 2005. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15027570510014642>.

⁹⁵ Simoni, Gabi, 'Disproportionate force: Israel's concept of response in light of the second Lebanon war,' *INSS Insight* 74(2), 2008. Available at: <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/disproportionate-force-israels-concept-of-response-in-light-of-the-second-lebanon-war/>

⁹⁶ UN Human Rights Council, 'Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict,' 25 September 2009. Available at: <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/a-hrc-12-48.pdf>

⁹⁷ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 3.

⁹⁹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁰ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 49.

¹⁰¹ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 51.



Tel Aviv University's School of Electrical Engineering runs the Galim MSc program that provides academic guidance to soldiers from the Intelligence Corps for later placement in tech units in the Israeli military and security forces, and offers directed academic training to integrate soldiers into R&D for the Israeli military and military industries.¹⁰² Its Yuval Ne'eman Workshop for Science, Technology and Security leads academic research with concrete applications for the security state, including robotics, missiles, and guided weapons. It also hosts a regular conference series, organized with the government and Israeli weapons expos, to showcase technological innovations. Tel Aviv University's Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology collaborates on R&D with Israeli weapons companies including IAI and Elbit.¹⁰³

Along with scholars at Hebrew University and the University of Haifa, scholars at TAU have participated in archeological digs in Palestinian neighborhoods in occupied East Jerusalem, including the Ir David site run by the Jewish settler organization Elad, whose declared mission is to 'Judaize' Palestinian East Jerusalem neighborhoods, thereby undermining UN-stipulated Palestinian rights there.¹⁰⁴

B. 'Innovation' Partnerships

In addition to participating in Horizon Projects, LUMC collaborates with EIT Health, which in turn works in partnership with the Israel Innovation Institute. The Institute collaborates with several Israeli Ministries and the Israel Innovation Authority to support the development of 'impact' technologies, including agritech and precision agriculture systems. These partnerships are problematic insofar as Israeli agritech firms increasingly collaborate with Israeli military and security corporations for the use of military drones, and the use of occupied land as a laboratory for the testing and dumping of products (e.g. poisonous pesticides). Furthermore, agritech companies support the deployment of precision agriculture techniques and 'smart irrigation' for illegal settlements in occupied territories. Nrgene and CropX, for example, work in collaboration with Israel Chemicals and Netafim which, through their participation in agricultural experiments conducted by settlement Research and Development

¹⁰² Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 96.

¹⁰³ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁴ Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, p. 37-38.



(R&D) centers, are testing products in occupied land and commercializing occupation-generated know-how.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Who Profits, 'Agribusiness as usual: Agricultural technology and the Israeli Occupation,' January 2020. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/agritech-israeli-occupation>.



3. Investment Ties

The publicly available information about Leiden University's investments is principally limited to the work of the Libertatis Ergo Holding B.V.¹⁰⁶ These are relatively small amounts of money distributed largely to Leiden- or at least Netherlands- based startups and companies - ranging from €70k start-up loans to €1 million investments. The overwhelming majority of these are primarily active in the Dutch market. However, this does not exclude the possibility that LU's investment portfolio outside of these programmes is larger and not publicly available. It is crucial for Leiden to present its community with a full overview of its investment portfolio and policy.

On the basis of the currently available information, there are a variety of policies university funds claim to adhere to. For example, the Leiden University Fund (LUF) has an 'asset management' policy that is committed to sustainability and adheres to an exclusion policy. Through the exclusion policy, LUF claims to 'avoid investments in companies that are active in the tobacco industry, controversial weapons, and other controversial activities, among others.'¹⁰⁷ This framework could be extended to other aspects of LU's portfolio management, including investment ties with institutions complicit in war crimes and crimes against humanity. Many funds, however, do not oversee or manage their own investments: they pay a 'vermogensbeheerder' (asset manager) for that purpose. Sustainability is often a guideline. Most are not transparent about their investments, as becomes evident in the discussion on Libertatis Ergo Holding.

Libertatis Ergo Holding (LEH) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of LU which invests in startup companies related to the university's activities¹⁰⁸ and works with many external investors. Upon examining the list of investors, partners, and investments on their publicly-accessible database, the following is noteworthy: Azafaros is one of the Leiden portfolio companies receiving LEH investment.¹⁰⁹ Significantly, Azafaros also receives funding from Schroders, a multinational asset management company¹¹⁰ which has an Israeli branch and delivers a broad range of investments to meet the needs of Israel's institutions. These include investment in

¹⁰⁶ Libertatis Ergo Holdings, 'About LEH,' n.d. Available at: <https://libertatisergo.com/about-us/>.

¹⁰⁷ Leiden University Fund, 'Asset management,' n.d. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/LUF-asset-management>.

¹⁰⁸ Libertatis Ergo Holdings, 'About LEH,' n.d. Available at: <https://libertatisergo.com/about-us/>.

¹⁰⁹ Leiden University, 'Azafaros is valorizing a library of compounds,' n.d. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/LU-science-azafaros>. See also <https://www.azafaros.com>.

¹¹⁰ See <https://www.schroders.com/en/global/individual>.



companies producing military technology and weapons, and loans to the Israeli military. Specifically, in 2017 Schrodgers held £917.6 million (which at the time of writing equates to roughly €1,080 million) in shares of military and technology companies that provide equipment to the Israeli military.¹¹¹

Table I: investments held in companies known to provide equipment to the Israeli military*

Investor	Total value of shareholdings
Aviva	£801.2 million
Barclays	£1,167.6 million
HSBC	£831.5 million
Investec	£389.4 million
Legal & General	£4,520.9 million
Prudential	£915.6 million
Schrodgers	£917.6 million
Standard Life	£1,304.2 million
Total	£10.8 billion

*Share values based on percentages available in the database, calculated against the total value.




Figure 4. Schrodgers' investments in the Israeli military¹¹²

Similarly, LEH invests in the company In Ovo, which holds a minority investment from Southern Israel Bridging Fund. SIBF has a number of investments across the Israeli economy,¹¹³ including SIXAI¹¹⁴, a company responsible for developing AI systems for Israeli arms manufacturer Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) that has been described by a Member of

¹¹¹ War on Want, 'Deadly Investments: UK bank complicity in Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people,' July 2017. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/deadlyinvest-complicity>.

¹¹² Source: War on Want, 'Deadly Investments,' p. 8.

¹¹³ See <https://sibf.vc>.

¹¹⁴ See <https://www.sixai.tech>.

the European Parliament as ‘one of the military technology pillars of the current genocide in Gaza.’¹¹⁵

There are also questions to be asked about Leiden Bioscience Park (LBP)’s complicity with war crimes, given its collaboration with Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands B.V. Under contracts with Lockheed Martin, Airbus developed specialized training software for the F-35 planes that are central to Israel’s military assault on Gaza.¹¹⁶ Significantly, the Dutch government has recently been ordered by court to stop providing F-35 parts to Israel after it found that ‘there is a clear risk that Israel’s F-35 fighter jets might be used in the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law.’¹¹⁷ In addition, Airbus has a long-standing collaboration with IAI in the context of the latter’s drone programme.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ EU parliamentary questions, *E-000771/2024*, 3 March 2024. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2024-000771_EN.html.

¹¹⁶ For an insight in the nature of the software see Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands, ‘Embedded training,’ n.d. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/airbusnl-embeddedtraining>; and The Squadron, ‘About the Squadron,’ n.d. Available at: <https://www.pilots.co.il/en/about-the-squadron/>.

¹¹⁷ De Rechtspraak, ‘The Netherlands has to stop the export of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel,’ 12 February 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/rechtspraak-f35-isr-12feb24>.

¹¹⁸ Reuters, ‘Israel Aerospace signs \$600 million drone deal with Airbus for Germany,’ 14 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN1JA0N1/>. McNeil, Harry, ‘German Heron TP takes flight, elevating Israeli collaboration,’ *Airforce Technology*, 15 May 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/de-isr-drone-collab-2024>. For a detailed study of the role of Israeli arms industries in the Netherlands, see StopWapenhandel, ‘TU Delft and the Israeli arms connection,’ 8 November 2023, <https://stopwapenhandel.org/tu-delft-and-the-israeli-arms-connection/>.



4. Procurement ties

Central to the demand to end academic and financial complicity of Leiden University to Israel's system of oppression against Palestinians is taking a critical look at the procurement tenders and contracts (for products or services) the university holds with companies complicit in serious human rights violations such as apartheid, occupation, and genocide.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) established a database of business enterprises involved in activities relating to illegal Israeli settlement and violation of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East-Jerusalem.¹¹⁹ This database, updated on 30 June 2023, lists 97 involved business enterprises. Furthermore, the Israeli research group Who Profits established a corporate database currently listing 464 companies,¹²⁰ and the American Friends Service Committee also established a list of companies.¹²¹

One of the companies in the database of Who Profits is Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE). HPE is formally a separate company from HP Inc. after the parent company spun both (and a third company) off. Both companies are considered complicit, through among other things, sharing the brand.¹²² This section of this American multinational information technology provider retains several occupation-related involvements, not least through its 'Aviv' system - the computerization system of Israel's Population registry and border crossings under Israeli control - and the provision of servers for this purpose. Although this system will be phased out by the end of 2026, following the takeover of these computerised systems by IBM, HPE will continue to provide services to the Israeli Police, Israel Prison Services and Israel's biometric database.¹²³

Adding a 'Do no harm' clause as well as providing guarantees that contracted companies are not involved in human rights violations should be central to Leiden's procurement policies. Whereas LU's procurement policies are increasingly paying attention to sustainability,¹²⁴ there

¹¹⁹ OHCHR, 'Database Pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution 31/36,' 30 June 2023. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/OHCHR-database-hrc3136>. For the full report, see <https://tinyurl.com/OHCHR-israeli-settlements-OPT>.

¹²⁰ Who Profits, 'The Israeli Occupation Industry – Company Database,' n.d. Available at: <https://www.whoprofits.org/companies/all>.

¹²¹ AFSC, 'Divesting for Palestinian Rights,' n.d. Available at: <https://afsc.org/divest>.

¹²² BDS, 'Corporate Splits and Brand Sharing: Who is accountable for human rights abuses?', 28 March 2018, <https://bdsmovement.net/news/corporate-splits-brand-sharing-who-accountable-human-rights-abuses>

¹²³ Who Profits, 'Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE),' n.d. Available at:

<https://www.whoprofits.org/companies/company/3774?hewlett-packard-enterprise-hpe>.

¹²⁴ Leiden University, 'Procurement,' n.d. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/LU-sustainable-procureinvest>.

is no human rights equivalent. Most of the hardware used by LU-staff are from HP Inc. Further research needs to be done in what LU's contract with HP entails, and the extent to which there are contracts with other companies on the above-mentioned lists.



5. Historical precedents

A) Academic Boycott and South Africa

March 21, 1960. The Sharpeville massacre, costing sixty-nine people their lives and causing many more injuries, became a turning point in South Africa's foreign relations, including those with the Netherlands. Despite the relatively positive Dutch stance towards South Africa and the normalization of relations in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, the dawn of the 1960s marked a significant shift in the anti-apartheid narrative within civil society and activist organizations, slowly ushering a new wave of resistance against the Dutch governmental and institutional ties to South Africa. The case for boycott against South Africa would be emboldened with the establishment of 'Comité Zuid-Afrika' (CZN), 'Boycott Outspan Actie' (BOA), and the 'Anti Apartheids Beweging Nederland' (AABN) among other initiatives. Students, academics, artists, workers, and many more would pressure for the boycott of South Africa. The role of these activist organizations, civil society, and especially young students in intensifying the pressure on the Dutch government and public institutions to sever ties with South Africa and support anti-apartheid movements constitutes a historical precedent for how a movement for justice would eventually successfully force those in question to agree to these demands. Without the pressure, dedication, and continuous struggle of this movement, the Dutch break with apartheid would have had a significantly different trajectory. Notably, it is precisely this movement, often led by the youth, that is the real driving force behind the now popularly celebrated idea that Dutch universities 'were on the right side of history.'

The case for academic boycott was a pivotal focus of this movement. Even before the adoption of the UN resolution calling all member states to suspend cultural and educational ties including the exchange of scientists, students, and academics with South Africa in 1980, Dutch students and academics either allied with anti-apartheid organizations or acting individually were urging and struggling for academic boycott. They worked closely with organizations such as the AABN in the 1970s and were vocal about their support for the African National Congress (ANC). In the 1970s, many Dutch universities and technical colleges adopted motions demanding that the contacts with the apartheid state of South Africa and its scientific institutions be severed unless these contacts were in support of the ANC. This led to a visit to the Netherlands by Dr. Zola Skweyiya from the scientific bureau of the ANC in March 1980. His visit of two weeks, 6-21 March 1980, was organized by the AABN. Dr. Skweyiya visited



the universities and technical colleges of Groningen, Enschede, Wageningen, Nijmegen, Delft, Utrecht, Leiden, the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) and the University of Amsterdam (UvA). This was the culmination of tireless work by student organizers at almost all Dutch universities in the form of petitions, protests on campus, various boycott campaigns, and the organization of public debates.

By the late 1970s, most Dutch universities began severing ties slowly with South African educational institutions, the first being the VU in 1974. At Leiden University, student organizers were equally active. The students protested the visit of Prof. E. Hamman, rector of the University of Pretoria, in 1976 given that he was representing an exclusively white university. They waved posters around with slogans such as: 'No racists on visit.' Leiden's University Council would finally make the decision in February of 1978 that all contacts with South African institutions both at the institutional level as well as individual scientific collaborations, would be severed unless they 'contribute to improvement and restoration of basic human rights in South Africa.' It is worth noting that the Dutch government had also frozen the Cultural Accord with South Africa in 1977, and it was finally officially abandoned in 1981. In the period in-between, cultural exchanges were still possible although financing and funding thereof under the Accord was no longer possible. This meant that protests and student activism on and off campus were still in motion. As such, BOA organized a large protest in November of 1978 against the visit of four white South African professors to a conference organized by Leiden Professor of Sociology and Culture, A.J. Kuper. Similarly, student organizers, staff, and BOA had pressured Leiden Professor A.R. Bakker against his participation in a conference in Cape Town.

It is evident that without the continuous pressure and coalition building between students, academics, and anti-apartheid organizations, Dutch universities, including Leiden University, would have not severed their ties with South Africa by the mid and late 1970s. Beyond the question of governmental mandate, Dutch universities were faced with a moral and ethical responsibility to respond to the South African case based on the demands of their internal and external communities. They were pressured to adhere to their commitment to human rights and academic freedom—an adherence that meant the enactment of these norms and values as binding and lived principles, rather than as merely abstract guidelines safely tucked into statements of political neutrality, distancing, and passive condemnation.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Muskens, Roeland, *Aan de goede kant: biografie van de Nederlandse anti-apartheidsbeweging 1960-1990*. Aspekt, 2014; Terblanche, Otto, 'Die Nederlandse kulturele boikot teen Suid-Afrika: 'n ontleding,' *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, 54(1), 37–55, 2014. Available at: <https://scielo.org.za/pdf/tvq/v54n1/03.pdf>; 'Webdossier



Figure 5. ‘Leiden Against Apartheid.’ Poster, ‘Nederlandse Affiches,’ International Institute of Social History, 1979.

“Nederland tegen apartheid,” Nederlands Instituut voor Zuidelijk Africa, International Institute for Social History (IISG) Amsterdam. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/archief-NL-against-apartheid>; ‘Universiteit wil beperkt contact met Zuid-Afrika,’ *De Volkskrant*, 28 February 1978; ‘Universiteitsraad keurt bezoek Zuidafrikaan af,’ *De Volkskrant*, 21 September 1976; ‘Demonstratie bij bezoek Zuidafrikaanse rector in Leiden,’ *De Waarheid*, 15 September 1976; ‘Enquete over bezoek aan Zuid-Afrika,’ *Leidsch Dagblad*, 20 September 1978; ‘BOA-protest bij universiteit,’ *Leidsch Dagblad*, 24 November 1978.

B) Academic Boycott and Russia

Two claims that have often been raised in the past months by university administrations to object to cutting ties are that many of the current funding models of research, particularly considering EU Horizon projects, are deeply interlinked, and cannot be terminated by individual institutions, and that any severing of ties with universities anywhere would hamper academic freedom and the free exchange of science and knowledge. The example of academic boycott of Russian institutions in response to the invasion in Ukraine in 2022, however, demonstrates that cutting ties is possible.

The lightning speed with which Dutch (and other European) universities, including Leiden University, cut ties with all Russian and Belarussian institutions, exposes the emptiness of the claims that funding models and concerns for academic freedom preclude boycott and divestment. And particularly regarding the latter, it is telling that no Dutch university objected to cutting ties in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the grounds that it would inexcusably violate academic freedom. Academic boycott was implemented without a single objection.

On 4 March 2022 - only eight days after Russia launched a military invasion against Ukraine- Dutch universities, universities of applied sciences, the Dutch research council (NWO) and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) acted upon the urgent appeal of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) to freeze all formal and institutional partnerships in education and research in Russia and Belarus. These were suspended immediately, meaning that activities encompassed by these partnerships ceased until further notice, no further financial transactions were made, and no further exchange of data and knowledge occurred.¹²⁶ Leiden University issued a statement and guidelines - similar to that of the Universities of the Netherlands (UNL) - on the same day.¹²⁷ These guidelines and restrictions remain in place.¹²⁸

Horizon projects with Russian institutions were treated as formal and institutional partnerships. Indeed, on 8 April, it was decided that all Russian public bodies or public related entities in ongoing Horizon 2020 projects were to be terminated through the adoption of EU sanctions

¹²⁶ Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), 'Nederlandse kennisinstellingen bevroren samenwerkingsverbanden met Rusland en Belarus,' 4 March 2022. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/UNL-rus-ukr-4mar22>.

¹²⁷ Leiden University, 'Dutch knowledge institutions suspend partnerships with Russia and Belarus,' 4 March 2022. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/LU-rus-ukr-4mar22>.

¹²⁸ Leiden University, 'War in Ukraine: Frequently Asked Questions,' n.d. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/LU-war-in-ukr-faq>.



package 5, which ‘prohibits the award and continued execution of public contracts and concessions with Russian nationals and entities or bodies established in Russia.’¹²⁹ This ban applied not only to their potential participation as beneficiaries, but to participation in any kind of role: beneficiaries, linked third parties/affiliated entities, subcontractors, in-kind contributors, international partners/associated partners, and third parties receiving financial support. Whereas it is hard to figure out how many projects were ongoing, a search of the Cordis database for ‘Russia’ and ‘Netherlands’ with a termination date after 1 January 2022 reveals that 77 projects involving Dutch and Russian partners have been terminated since then.

The quick, rigorous, and sustained actions in response to Russian aggression against Ukraine show that if there is political and institutional will, boycott – including the termination of institutional partnerships established via Horizon projects – is possible. Just like the South African anti-apartheid boycott, it demonstrates the contemporary feasibility of implementing boycott and cutting ties with institutions complicit in acts of aggression and gross human rights violations. An important contrast between these boycott measures, on the one hand, and the PACBI call, on the other hand, is that PACBI does not target individuals. It is solely directed towards collaborations with Israeli institutions. Similarly, PACBI, in line with the BDS movement as a whole, targets complicity, not identity.

¹²⁹ See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2022:111:FULL>; European Commission, ‘International cooperation with Russia in research and innovation,’ 8 April 2022. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/EU-rus-8apr22>.



Conclusion

On 26 January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled in a historic decision that Israel is plausibly committing genocide against Palestinians. By current conservative estimates, since October 2023, Israel has murdered 45.000 Palestinians in Gaza, among whom 15.000 children, is using famine and starvation as weapons of war, and has forcibly displaced over 1.7 million Palestinians.¹³⁰ Simultaneously, Israel continues to escalate its colonial violence, including settler violence, against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. There, an estimated 502 Palestinians have been killed since 7 October, by Israeli military forces and by Israeli settlers.¹³¹ Israel is also waging war on Palestinian education, and on an unprecedented scale: Israel's attacks have devastated children's education, systematically targeted students, academics, and cultural heritage institutions, and destroyed all higher education facilities in Gaza.

Since 2004, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) has called for a global boycott against Israeli universities. Following up on this call, this report aims to provide evidence of the academic and financial complicity of Leiden University in Israel's system of oppression against Palestinians, to strongly advocate for full disclosure and severance of all such ties and investments, to end its complicity and harm-doing and to contribute to bringing Israeli apartheid and occupation to an end.

Based on investigation of publicly available sources, the report documents that:

- 1) LU is a research partner in thirteen ongoing EU Horizon projects that involve Israeli institutions that are implicated in Israeli apartheid, occupation, and the genocide of Palestinians.
- 2) Leiden University currently works with two Israeli universities on exchange programs in Israel. Both these universities work closely with the Israeli military, host programs for training soldiers and serve as nodes of intelligence, military strategizing, and weapons development.

¹³⁰ Ahmad, Aameera and Ed Vulliamy, 'In Gaza, the schools are dying too,' *The Guardian*, 10 January 2009. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/10/gaza-schools>.

¹³¹ Al Jazeera, 'Israel kills more than 500 Palestinians in the West Bank since October 7,' 16 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/16/israel-kills-more-than-500-palestinians-in-the-west-bank-since-october-7>.



- 3) LUMC is involved in innovation partnerships with research institutes that fund Israeli agritech firms collaborating with Israeli military and security corporations.
- 4) The Leiden Bioscience Park hosts the Leiden branch of Airbus Defence and Space, a company that developed specialised training software for planes that are central to Israel's military assault on Gaza.
- 5) Much of the ICT hardware used by LU staff are from Hewlett Packard INC. Like Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), this company is considered complicit.¹³² HPE provides the computerization system of Israel's Population registry and border crossings under Israeli control.

To conclude, no Israeli entity, be it a university or corporation, operates independently from the state of Israel and its regime of settler-colonialism, apartheid, and military occupation. The call for disclosure and cutting institutional ties does not target Israeli individuals; it targets Israeli universities and other institutions because of their direct and indirect structural involvement and/or complicity in Israel's discrimination, apartheid, persecution, occupation, and now genocide. This call builds on the historical precedent of academic boycott against South Africa, which played a significant role in the shattering of apartheid institutions. Today, as then, the complicity of our university can and should be challenged to promote justice, freedom from oppression, equality and academic freedom that applies to all.

We urge Leiden University to acknowledge the problematic and detrimental nature of its ties to Israeli institutions and to cut these ties. As we find ourselves in a global movement in support of the Palestinian struggle and demands for freedom and dignity, universities have a crucial responsibility to end their complicity in war crimes and crimes against humanity and to stand on the right side of history by rejecting apartheid, occupation, and genocide. The momentum for ending universities' complicity has never been stronger than it is today. Multiple universities across the globe have cut their ties to Israeli institutions or have committed to doing so. Most notably, following 'the Conference of University Rectors (CRUE), all Spanish universities have 'committed to suspending collaborations with Israeli universities that are not in compliance with international humanitarian law.'¹³³ This was followed by the University of Barcelona's

¹³² BDS, 'Corporate splits and brand sharing: Who is accountable for human rights abuses?' 28 March 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/bds-hr-abuses-28mar18>.

¹³³ BDS Movement, '76 Universities in Spain suspend ties with complicit Israeli universities,' 10 May 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/bds-spain-unis-10may24>.



recent decision to immediately cut their ties with Tel Aviv University (TAU) and to urge the EU to exclude Israel from research programs like Horizon Europe.¹³⁴

In the United States and the United Kingdom, several universities are currently working towards or have pledged to divest from Israeli institutions.¹³⁵ Five Norwegian universities also ended their agreement with Israeli institutions.¹³⁶ In Belgium, the University of Ghent severed ties with three Israeli educational and research institutions over Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza. Here in the Netherlands, too, the first case of full academic boycott came when the Royal Academy of Arts, The Hague (Koninklijke Nederlands Kunstacademie KABK), severed its ties with the Israeli Bezalel Academy of Art & Design.¹³⁷

We urge Leiden University to follow suit. The evidence set out in this report underscores the urgent calls by LU's community of students and staff to address the University's complicity. As this report makes clear, should LU stick to the status quo, it is not being a neutral institution, but rather actively choosing to be an institution that sides with, supports, and maintains a system of apartheid and occupation, and facilitates genocide. Will Leiden University uphold its principle of Praesidium Libertatis (Bastion of Freedom)?

¹³⁴ PACBI / BDS Movement, 'University of Barcelona cuts ties with complicit companies and Israeli universities over Israel's Gaza genocide following student and faculty mobilisation, urges EU to exclude Israel from research programs,' Available at: <https://twitter.com/PACBI/status/1793918886036824346/photo/1>.

¹³⁵ BDS Movement, 'Universities are ending complicity Israeli apartheid and its Gaza genocide in numbers never seen before,' 19 May 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/bds-unis-endingcomplicity>.

¹³⁶ BDS Movement, 'Five Norwegian Universities cut ties with Israel over Gaza genocide,' 21 February 2024. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/bds-norway-unis-21feb24>.

¹³⁷ Royal Academy of Art (KABK), The Hague, 'Suspension of exchange partnerships,' 15 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.kabk.nl/en/news/suspension-of-exchange-partnership>.



Appendix

EU-HORIZON ABSTRACTS

1. TAILOR - Foundations of Trustworthy AI - Integrating Reasoning, Learning and Optimization - AI systems made safe, transparent and reliable

Abstract: Maximising opportunities and minimising risks associated with artificial intelligence (AI) requires a focus on human-centred trustworthy AI. This can be achieved by collaborations between research excellence centres with a technical focus on combining expertise in the areas of learning, optimisation and reasoning. Currently, this work is carried out by an isolated scientific community where research groups are working individually or in smaller networks. The EU-funded TAILOR project aims to bring these groups together in a single scientific network on the Foundations of Trustworthy AI, thereby reducing the fragmentation and increasing the joint AI research capacity of Europe, helping it to take the lead and advance the state-of-the-art in trustworthy AI. The four main instruments are a strategic roadmap, a basic research programme to address grand challenges, a connectivity fund for active dissemination, and network collaboration activities.

2. EU-GLOCTER - European Glocal Counter-Terrorism - Innovative training in EU counterterrorism

Abstract: Terrorism is considered one of the biggest security challenges for the European Union and its Member States. As a result, there is a vital requirement for knowledge and expertise that would enable the EU and its Member States to address the current terrorist threats effectively. The MSCA-funded EU-GLOCTER project aims to tackle terrorism in the EU and its Member States by analysing EU counterterrorism at local, global, and EU levels. Seven beneficiaries and 18 associated partners will collaborate to deliver a world-class PhD programme for 11 doctoral candidates. The programme involves world-leading social scientists from various disciplines, innovative think tanks, and industry partners. EU-GLOCTER promotes scientific excellence and technological innovation in counterterrorism.



3. PARC - Partnerships for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals

Abstract: PARC is an EU-wide research and innovation partnership programme to support EU and national chemical risk assessment and risk management bodies with new data, knowledge, methods, networks and skills to address current, emerging and novel chemical safety challenges. PARC will facilitate the transition to next generation risk assessment to better protect human health and the environment, in line with the Green Deals zero-pollution ambition for a toxic free environment and will be an enabler for the future EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. It builds in part on the work undertaken and experience acquired in past and on-going research and innovation actions but goes beyond by its vocation to establish an EU-wide risk assessment hub of excellence.

To contribute to several expected impacts of living and working in a health-promoting environment, PARC will organise the activities to reach three specific objectives:

- An EU-wide sustainable cross-disciplinary network to identify and agree on research and innovation needs and to support research uptake into regulatory chemical risk assessment.
- Joint EU research and innovation activities responding to identified priorities in support of current regulatory risk assessment processes for chemical substances and to emerging challenges.
- Strengthening existing capacities and building new transdisciplinary platforms to support chemical risk assessment.

The Partnership brings together Ministries and national public health and risk assessment agencies, as well as research organisations and academia from almost all of EU Member States. Representatives of Directorates-General of the EC and EU agencies involved in the monitoring of chemicals and the assessment of risks are also participating. PARC will meet the needs of risk assessment agencies to better anticipate emerging risks and respond to the challenges and priorities of the new European policies.

4. RECOMB - Stem-cell based gene therapy for recombination deficient SCID

Abstract: Gene therapy for rare inherited immune disorders has become a clinical reality. Especially for SCID, two major types of SCID (ADA-SCID, X-SCID) have been successfully treated by autologous stem cell-based gene therapy. However, for the most common group of SCID, the SCID underlying recombination defects, this has not yet occurred due to the higher complexities of the affected genes involved. The aim of the current proposal is to fill the unmet



medical need for the most common major category of SCID, recombination activating gene-1 (RAG-1) deficient SCID, by performing Stage I/II clinical trials using autologous hematopoietic stem cell-based gene therapy. To this end we will develop novel safety assays, pre-GMP and GMP lentiviral batches and design and conduct multicenter, multinational clinical trials with input from regulatory authorities such as EMA and patient advocacy groups. The trial will be conducted with phenotypic, molecular (integration sites, therapeutic gene expression) and functional readouts and should lead to effective treatment for > 70% of all SCID patients in Europe. RECOMB forms the logical extension of highly successful previous EU consortia that have made the EU global leader in gene therapy for orphan immune diseases.

5. EJP RD - European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases - Sustainable ecosystem to improve the lives of rare disease patients

Abstract: Rare diseases (RD) research remains fragmented throughout Europe, resulting in delays in diagnosis, fewer medicines, and reduced access to care. This research domain could greatly benefit from better coordination within and beyond Europe. The EU-co-funded EJP RD project (130 institutions, 35 countries) is developing an effective RD research ecosystem to address this issue. It improves the integration, effectiveness, and social impact of RD research by developing, demonstrating and promoting Europe/world-wide research, and sharing clinical data, resources, procedures, knowledge and expertise. It also carries out and further establishes an efficient financial support model for all RD research types coupled with accelerated exploitation of research results for the benefit of patients.

6. IMAGIO - IMAGING AND ADVANCED GUIDANCE FOR WORKFLOW OPTIMIZATION IN INTERVENTIONAL ONCOLOGY

Abstract: Advancing cancer care with minimally invasive techniques. Interventional oncology focuses on minimally invasive, image-guided procedures for the diagnosis, treatment, and palliative care of cancer patients. It is a rapidly emerging field that includes tumour ablation methods, image-guided biopsies and interventions for pain management or targeted drug delivery. Funded by the HORIZON programme, the IMAGIO project aims to develop multimodal care pathways for aggressive malignancies like liver and lung cancer, leveraging interventional imaging and therapy techniques. The project involves collaborations with research centres, industry, and patient organisations to accelerate the implementation of these minimally invasive technologies and transform healthcare, reducing treatment complications and patient hospitalisation.



7. ISIDORe Integrated Services for Infectious Disease Outbreak Research

Abstract: The ISIDORe consortium, made of the capacities of European ESFRI infrastructures and coordinated networks, proposes to assemble the largest and most diverse research and service providing instrument to study infectious diseases in Europe, from structural biology to clinical trials. Giving scientists access to the whole extent of our state-of-the-art facilities, cutting edge services, advanced equipment, and expertise, in an integrated way and with a common goal, will enable or accelerate the generation of new knowledge and intervention tools to ultimately help control SARS CoV 2 in particular, and epidemic prone pathogens in general, while avoiding fragmentation and duplication among European initiatives. Such a global and interdisciplinary approach is meant to allow the implementation of user projects that are larger, more ambitious and more impactful than the EU supported transnational activities that the consortium is used to run. Our proposition is ambitious but achievable in a timely fashion due to the relevance and previous experience of the partners that we have gathered and that have complementary fields of expertise, which addresses the need for an interdisciplinary effort. Leveraging all these existing strengths to develop synergies will create an additional value and enhance Europe capacity for controlling emerging or reemerging and epidemic infectious diseases, starting with the COVID 19 pandemic. Such a global and coordinated approach is consistent with the recommendations of the One Health concept and necessary to make significant contributions to solving complex societal problems like epidemics and pandemics.

8. THRIVE - TUMOUR-HOST INTERACTIONS IN LIVER CANCER OF CHILDHOOD AND ADULTS

Abstract: Liver cancer is a major health problem with ~1 million cases diagnosed each year (~90,000 cases/year in Europe), and it is the 3rd cause of cancer-related mortality worldwide. Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) in adults, and hepatoblastoma (HB) in children are considered poorly understood cancers. HCC is a difficult-to-cure cancer (curation rate ~ 30%) with poor outcome (median survival < 2 years in advanced stages), due to limited understanding of at-risk populations, resistance to therapies and lack of precision oncology. In HB, outcomes are hampered in one fourth of cases due disease progression after surgical intervention and adjuvant chemotherapy.

THRIVE aims to improve the outcome of both pediatric and adult liver cancer patients by understanding at-risk populations, tumour-host interactions, and by developing biomarkers for current therapies and novel, affordable treatments to overcome resistance. THRIVE brings



together a strong, multidisciplinary team -13 partners, from 8 countries- with complementary expertise to leverage cutting-edge technologies (single-cell RNASeq, spatial transcriptomics, microbiota analysis, artificial intelligence, mouse models and patient-derived organoids) and sectors (i.e academia, SMEs, hospitals, patient associations) and 15 patient cohorts (~6,700 samples).

THRIVE expects to: 1) Define molecular features of cancer predisposition and at-risk populations for development of liver cancer. 2) Develop a complete human liver cancer blueprint of tumour, immune, stromal cells and intra-tumoral microbiomes. 3) Identify AI-based and molecular markers of response to treatments. 4) Implement a preclinical drug testing platform for discovery of affordable therapies with high social impact. 5) Maximize the impact in European society by integrating SSH disciplines, delivering accessible and re-usable data and tools to support EU initiatives such as the UNCAN.eu platform, and by influencing policymakers and health professionals.

This action is part of the Cancer Mission cluster of projects on 'Understanding (tumour-host interactions).'

9. GRAPH ALGEBRAS - Operator Algebras that One Can See

Abstract: Using Graph C^* -algebras to explore connections between seemingly unrelated mathematical areas. Graph C^* -algebras are universal C^* -algebras constructed from a directed graph. The analysis of directed graphs, including higher-rank graphs or quantum graphs, enables mathematicians to visualise and explore these analytical objects in intuitive ways. Graph C^* -algebras serve as strikingly efficient models for key open problems in noncommutative geometry, topology, and C^* -dynamical systems. They also provide a focal point for the much-needed extension of the celebrated Elliott classification programme to non-simple C^* -algebras. Funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions project, the Graph Algebras project will use graph C^* -algebras to unify hitherto unconnected areas of mathematics. Bringing together around 70 researchers from across the EU and outside, Graph Algebras will also extend graph C^* -algebra applications to quantum computing.

10. ECS - European Citizen Science

Abstract: Building a European citizen science community. Growing a strong European citizen science community with access to open and FAIR data with open and FAIR tools is key for the EU-funded ECS project. It will carry out various activities including setting up a network of



ECS ambassadors and a European citizen science academy to build capacity and raise awareness. ECS will leverage the EU-Citizen. Science platform and Cos4Cloud to facilitate cooperation between ECS community members, who in turn will play an instrumental role in the design and creation of policy, strategic priorities, services, and training activities. Opportunities for ensuring inclusion will be determined, as will activities to engage researchers from diverse disciplines. Ultimately, ECS will propel forward Europe's role in global research and innovation.

11. AquaPLAN - Aquatic Pollution from Light and Anthropogenic Noise: management of impacts on biodiversity

Abstract: Mitigating light and noise pollution impacts on aquatic ecosystems. Light and noise pollution (LNP) significantly impacts global aquatic biodiversity in all ecosystems. While technologies and policies exist to mitigate these impacts, knowledge gaps remain. These gaps include understanding the combined occurrence and impact of LNP across ecosystems and identifying practical ways to implement abatement options. The EU-funded AquaPLAN project aims to study the impact of LNP on aquatic life and develop management strategies through interdisciplinary approaches. The project will review the impacts of LNP on aquatic biodiversity, assess stakeholder perceptions, quantify combined impacts, identify mechanisms, explore solutions, and establish an international network to mitigate the impacts of LNP on aquatic biodiversity.

12. SSbD4Chem - Safe and Sustainable by Design framework for the next generation of Chemicals and Materials

Abstract: SSbD4ChEM brings together stakeholders from industry, government, academia, and civil society to develop and promote best practices for safe and sustainable product and process design, through demonstration in 3 case studies. SSbD4Chem aims to meet the EU's strategic objectives for digital, enabling, and emerging technologies, sectors, and value chains by developing a comprehensive Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD) framework that uses new science-based approaches to identify and address potential hazards and risks, and innovative technologies to support the design of safer and more sustainable products and processes. SSbD4Chem objectives include: 1) SSbD framework to facilitate development of the next generation of chemicals and materials applicable to renewable composites in automotive value chain, PFAS-free coatings for textile and cellulose nanofibers as additive in cosmetics to replace plastic microbeads, 2) Development of efficient hazard screening tools



for alternative assessment of next generation chemicals/materials/products combining in silico tools and multicriteria analysis, 3) Advanced explorative ex-ante LCA method supported by molecular and data-driven modelling to fill data gaps for (novel) materials and chemicals, 4) Integration of chemical/(nano-)material characterization methods to assess products' environmental safety, quantify emissions to support occupational and consumer safety limits, 5) Development of alternative, in vitro models, as part of New Approach Methodologies for adequate exposure scenarios, 6) Harmonization and validation of analytical and toxicological methods for proposition to regulatory and standardization bodies to contribute to the development of new standards and facilitate market acceptance of SSbD4CheM project results, and 7) Enhance overall SSbD4CheM impact through stakeholder engagement, training, dissemination and exploitation and drive industrial innovation.

13. RESILIENCE - Pathways of resilience and evasion of tipping in ecosystems

Abstract: Shaping of tipping-prone ecosystems. Tipping points represent a crucial concern in the battle against climate change. These points emerge when damage to ecosystems surpasses a critical threshold, leading to profound and irreversible alterations. Human activities are often responsible for such damage, resulting in various impacts on the planet, including climate change. However, recent research has validated that stressed ecosystems tend to develop spatial patterns, such as vegetation, which significantly bolster their capacity to withstand tipping points and recover from damage. The ERC-funded Resilience project investigates how ecosystems' tipping points can be prevented through structural processes and spatial patterns. The project will integrate fields like ecology, mathematics and data science to foster a dynamic response to the threats posed by climate change.

