

## **Complicity in Israeli apartheid, illegal military occupation, and the ongoing genocide in Gaza:**

### **A look at the institutions and corporations with which UPF collaborates**

*The Collective UPF in Solidarity with Palestine*

30 May 2024

**Background:** This document puts forth the reasons for which Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) should cut its ties with Israeli academic institutions and corporations complicit in Israeli apartheid and illegal military occupation, and the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

#### **Israeli Academic Institutions**

Below, we summarize some key examples<sup>1</sup> of the ways in which Israeli universities, as Israeli anthropologist Maya Wind (2024) articulates, “*are not independent of the Israeli security state but, rather, serve as an extension of its violence*” (p. 24). To this backdrop, and in this moment during which Israel enters the seventh month of its [genocidal campaign in Gaza](#), educational institutions across the world are called on to boycott Israeli universities and research centers. In light of the [CRUE's recent commitment](#) to “revise and, if needed, suspend collaboration agreements with Israeli universities and research centers that have not expressed a firm commitment to peace and compliance with international humanitarian law,” we focus here on the five academic institutions with which UPF has active collaborations: Tel Aviv University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Haifa University, Reichman University, and Bar Ilan University. UPF has academic exchange programs with the first four of these universities and it is participating in European projects with Hebrew University and Bar Ilan University. UPF is also involved in a European research project coordinated by an Israeli company, Enspire Science Ltd. Although we do not discuss that company here, we note this type of collaboration is also included in calls for an academic boycott because it helps to distract from Israel’s war crimes and apartheid while also significant funds from the European Union into the Israeli economy during the ongoing genocide.

The UPF community has made clear that it is our urgent moral obligation to cut ties with these institutions, and more than 450 faculty members, students, staff, and alumni have already signed a [letter](#) calling on the administration to do so, thereby acting in accordance with the university’s guiding principles and its history of defending peace and justice. Most of the information included below is directly taken from the book “*Towers of Ivory and Steel: How Israeli Universities Deny Palestinian Freedom*” (Verso Books, 2024), which can be downloaded for free [here](#) and includes an extensive list of references to substantiate these claims.

Maya Wind’s book does not cover statements and actions by Israeli universities since the invasion of Gaza began, but it is clear from news sources, from the universities’ own websites, and from their presidents’ own statements that their level of collusion has only increased. For example, the director of Bar-Ilan’s Center for Strategic Studies, who previously ran the national security doctrine department in the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs, was quoted in November

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that this is by no means an exhaustive description of the overwhelming links between these Israeli universities and the Israeli state, but is only meant to illustrate the pervasive collusion between them.

stating that “the leveling of Gaza ... poses an opportunity.” In a recent official university publication titled “[Herzliyan 2024: Swords of Iron Special Edition](#)”, Reichman University’s founding president writes: “Our steadfast belief in the future of our nation serves as our guiding light. (“Swords of Iron” is the Israel’s military’s official name for its invasion of Gaza; the publication features prominently at the top of Reichman University’s website (<https://www.runi.ac.il/en/>.)

Reichman’s current president previously served as the founding director of the university’s International Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT), which is discussed more in the table below. In the “Swords of Iron” publication, he explains how the university has mobilized to support the invasion of Gaza by creating 6 “situation rooms”, including:

1. A “Reservist Situation Room” dedicated to delivering donations to students, staff, and alumni currently serving in the Israeli military.
2. A “Hasbara Room” where international students actively engage in promoting and advocating for Israel on social media. Hasbara (הסברה) is the Hebrew word for “explanation” and is often described as propaganda aimed at international audiences. (See, for example, <https://www.972mag.com/hasbara-why-does-the-world-fail-to-understand-us/>.)

Much of this is also shown and described in a [video](#) at the top of the university’s main web page, which features student and faculty working side by side with armed Israeli soldiers.

The Hebrew University website currently shows an Israeli flag and a simple, clear statement of how the university positions itself: “WE ARE ONE.” Its president’s most recent [report](#) on the university’s accomplishments boasts that the university has made a direct contribution of 4.2B NIS to the state of Israel. A recent fundraising document lists ways in which the university has supported the Israeli military in Gaza including “Support on the ground” that includes providing “diverse logistics equipment to several military units”, as well as gathering and sending donations to the military. It also notes: “Our community members are also volunteering to create and translate information about the situation and to send to contacts abroad for informative and advocacy purposes.”

The presidents of Tel Aviv University, Hebrew University, and the University of Haifa and six other Israeli academic institutions have also written several letters since the Gaza invasion began, in which they have expressed concern over criticism of Israel around the world. They do not appear to have condemned in any way the Israeli military’s attacks on Gaza.

	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
Acting as outposts of the Israeli state and engaging in illegal annexation of Palestinian land/demographic “Judaization” projects	<p><i>“From the start, Israeli academia has been entangled in [the] territorial project of replacement [of the Palestinian population] central to Israeli state building.”</i> Maya Wind (2024)</p>				
		<p>Hebrew University was established as a comprehensive university and center for the formation of a new collective Jewish-Zionist identity and nation. After 1967, it expanded its Mt. Scopus campus into <b>occupied</b> East Jerusalem, <b>overlooking the newly occupied Palestinian neighborhoods below</b>. State and military leaders joined university administrators for the festive occasion, in which Hebrew University awarded the Israeli army’s Chief of Staff, Yitzhak Rabin, an honorary doctorate. The University Senate thanked Rabin for “returning the entirety of Jerusalem to the state of Israel and returning Mt. Scopus to Hebrew University.” Rabin, in turn, <b>commended the university on behalf of the Israeli military for the opportunity to stand at Mt. Scopus with the view of “our eternal capital.”</b></p>	<p><b>The University of Haifa anchored research and planning for what would become one of the key “Judaization” programs in the Galilee:</b> the mitspim project. Mitspim (lookouts) were nuclei of Jewish settlements built on strategically selected hilltops throughout the Galilee. They were designed to create “facts on the ground” and solidify control over Palestinian lands, while also serving new sites of surveillance for Jewish residents to monitor Palestinian land use and potential expansion.</p>	<p>The Reichman University campus is built on top of an old Israeli Air Force base. <b>Reichman University boasts of having once been a military base</b>, which is likely to have been complicit in the <i>Nakba</i>, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine.</p>	<p>Bar-Ilan established a campus in the occupied Palestinian territories in 1982 with the goal of expanding Israel’s (illegal) settlement project. That campus subsequently became Ariel University, which is discussed in Maya Wind’s book (pp. 74-79) for its role in seizing Palestinian territory in violation of international law.</p>

	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
Generation of state propaganda and distortion of international law	<p><i>“The use of academic spaces and fora to build state propaganda strategy, called hasbara, is common practice across Israeli universities.”</i> Maya Wind (2024)</p>				
	<p>Housed at Tel Aviv University, the INSS is Israel’s leading and most prestigious university-based think tank in the service of the state. <b>The institute maintains close ties with the Israeli government, military, and security state forces; the executive staff, and the majority of its fellows, have previously occupied high-ranking positions in the Israeli military.</b> The institute’s annual conference brings together senior policy-makers, influential Knesset members, and government and military. <b>Its flagship publication, the annual Strategic Assessment for Israel, is received by the Israeli president at an official ceremony each year. The INSS Law and</b></p>		<p>Faculty and graduate students at the University of Haifa have researched and published studies with the Ministry of Defense and the University’s Society for Applied Scientific Research. <b>These policy-oriented publications construct scholarly justifications for the expulsion, containment, and discrimination of Palestinian citizens, alongside exclusive and increased investment in Jewish settlements in the Galilee.</b> At the University of Haifa, the Comper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism plays another role in Israeli hasbara, primarily by mobilizing students. “Ambassadors Online,” a program initiated and led by center head and media studies professor Eli Avraham, <b>offers academic and “practical training” to cultivate student capabilities to become “unofficial ambassadors” and</b></p>		

	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
	<p>National Security Program explicitly advances legal scholarship to mitigate international criticism of Israel and support it in evading accountability. INSS journals articulate justifications for why the point of departure for Israeli doctrine is not international law.</p>		<p>leaders in Israel hasbara. As shown by previous syllabi, the course content includes lectures by University of Haifa faculty and deans, alongside members of the Israeli state hasbara apparatuses, including from the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The course final assignment was to create content for Israeli public diplomacy. When initially launched in 2012, "Ambassadors Online" was offered as an extracurricular activity. Today, it is an accredited course at the University of Haifa, which even offers select scholarships for participating students.</p>		
Development of weapons and security apparatus	<p><i>"Unlike in the United States where research is conducted at national labs, Israel has no such equivalent institutions ... Military R&amp;D in Israel would not exist without the universities. They carry out all the basic scientific investigation, which is then developed either by defense industries or the army."</i> Former Major General Professor Isaac Ben-Israel, former head of the Yuval Ne'eman Workshop at Tel Aviv University</p> <p><i>"Without us there would be no industry. The Israeli knowledge industry relies almost entirely on public-funded infrastructure and investment, which is funded by taxes, such as the military technological units, primarily Unit 8200, the defense industries such as IMI and Rafael, <b>academic research at universities</b> and budgets of the Chief Scientist."</i> Professor Isaiah Arkin, vice president of research and development at Hebrew University</p>				
	1. Yuval Ne'eman Workshop for Science, Technology, and Security, leads academic research with concrete	1. At the Hebrew University, Talpiot combines BSc in physics, computer science, and math. Under the auspices of the Administration for the Development of			Bar-Ilan works closely with Israel's notorious security agency (the Shin Bet, which has been condemned by the UN Committee Against Torture for its interrogation tactics), as well as with the Israeli military and arms industry, including cooperation in the

	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
	<p><b>applications for the security state, including cybersecurity, robotics, missiles, and guided weapons.</b> The workshop also holds a conference series at Tel Aviv University that includes members of the Israeli military and security agencies as well as Israeli and international military industries. <b>Its annual cybersecurity conference on campus is organized with the Israeli government and Israeli weapon expos and is intended to showcase technological innovations from Tel “Aviv University and Israeli military corporations.”</b></p> <p>2. Galim MSc program, where soldiers receive academic guidance from the Intelligence Corps to prepare for placement in</p>	<p><b>Weapons and Technological Infrastructure and the Israeli Air Force, the program fosters leadership in “technological research” for the maintenance and development of weapon systems for the Israeli military and the security establishment.</b> Most of the training takes place at the Air Force Command and Leadership School at Hebrew University’s Giv’at Ram Campus, but soldiers are also trained in military bases and security state facilities. <b>Following their graduation and training, Talpiot soldiers are integrated into units of the Israeli military and security state in leadership positions in areas of technological innovation and development. Talpiot soldiers play pivotal roles in the research and development sustaining Israeli military capabilities and in the sales of weapons in the global security market.</b></p> <p>2. Hebrew University’s commercialization company, Yissum (“application” in Hebrew), currently</p>			<p>development of AI technology used in unmanned combat vehicles.</p>

	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
	<p><b>technological units of the Israeli military and in the security forces.</b> Elite programs such as these offer directed academic training to soldiers to integrate them into R&amp;D for the Israeli military and military industries.</p> <p>3. Tel Aviv University also directly invests in weapon startups, including <a href="#">Xtend</a>, which created quadcopter drones with sniper guns, which have been used in Israel's latest assault on Gaza.</p>	<p><b>claims status as a global leader in technologies used for “home-land security.”</b> The US government invests millions of dollars annually in supporting Hebrew University’s “counter-terrorism” research and Yisum’s technologies acquisition. <b>Yisum also holds an agreement with Lockheed-Martin granting it the opportunity to acquire exclusive licenses for any invention or “acquire exclusive licenses for any invention or product resulting from joint applied research.”</b></p>			
<b>Structural collusion and partnerships with the IDF</b>	<p><i>“The boundaries are blurred between military training bases and Israeli university campuses”</i> Maya Wind (2024)</p> <p><i>“The University of Haifa is responsible for the academic training of the IDF’s command core for years to come, and we are proud to open our door to IDF forces and to be the academic home of the security forces. These dear people are working day and night for the security of the State of Israel and we will provide them with the highest level of educational content.”</i> Professor Ron Rubin, former president of the University of Haifa</p>				
	<p><b>Tel Aviv University, announced in July 2023 that it is embarking on yet another partnership with the Israeli military.</b> The university had won the Ministry of Defense bid to house the prestigious</p>	<p>Former National Police (INP) Service commissioner Roni Alsheich, after beginning his appointment in 2015, turned to Israeli criminologists for guidance. <b>Israel’s leading criminologists at Hebrew University immediately sent him a PowerPoint</b></p>	<p><b>The University of Haifa houses flagship programs through three Israeli military academies:</b> the National Security College, the Tactical Command College, and the Alon Command and Control College. Through the National Security</p>	<p>Reichman University guarantees preferential treatment to military students. <b>It annually reserves 10% of places for veterans who have served in elite combat units, also ensuring them less restrictive admission criteria and specific assistance during their studies . Various benefits are also reserved for students who come from or work for the war</b></p>	



	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
	<p>“Erez” BA program for officers in combat military units. The dual-major degree includes an academic program focused on military “areas of interest,” paired with another program in the humanities, social sciences, business, or engineering. <b>In the Erez program, the military explains, “military and academic training are intertwined,” wherein the cadets are transformed “from civilians to elite fighters.”</b> Accompanying the prestige—and substantial state funding—is a <b>fifty-three-page list of conditions from the Ministry of Defense agreement, which Tel Aviv University signed upon winning the bid. The soldiers will be in uniform and permitted to carry their military weapons to campus. They will study most courses alongside civilian</b></p>	<p><b>with hundreds of slides worth of research, which Alsheich claims were instrumental in shaping INP policies under his tenure. Together with criminologists from across academic institutions, Alsheich formed the first advisory academic forum to the police commissioner, with whom he worked closely. Hebrew University criminology faculty praised Alsheich for opening the INP’s doors to academia and working with their institute to continuously assess and refine Israeli police work.</b> The Institute of Criminology at Hebrew University was selected to be the “home department” of the INP. It runs an abbreviated BA program in criminology for law enforcement personnel that aims to translate officers’ studies into more effective practice “in the field.” The institute also runs a designated criminology program for station commanders and officers seeking promotion. At a 2023 cohort graduation, INP commanders highlighted the importance of academic training to honing the capacities of</p>	<p>College, the University of Haifa offers a tailored master’s degree in security theory for Israeli colonels and high-ranking members of Israeli security agencies. Though under the auspices of a public university, the National Security College is headed by an Israeli major-general, and all students are enrolled in the master’s program by the military and their respective security agencies, and cannot independently apply. <b>As explained by the Israeli military, these academic programs are designed to ensure uniformity and continuity in the training of Israeli commanders.</b> Through the Alon Command and Control College, the University of Haifa offers tailored master’s degrees in political science to army battalion commanders and air force squadron commanders, with a specialization in “military security.”</p>	<p><b>industries. Reichman University establishes military-related scholarships.</b></p> <p><b>It also houses “cutting-edge research institutes in Israel Defense.”</b> One of these institutes, the Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS), is deeply involved and rooted in the Israeli security sphere. <b>The Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) hosts the Herzliya Conference, a conference of Israeli military generals, intelligence officers, politicians and diplomats, and foreign dignitaries to discuss military and political developments in Israel.</b> Many of the participants actively take part in the brutal bombing, siege and genocide of the Gaza Strip, as well as the maintenance of the apartheid regime imposed on the Palestinian people.</p> <p>The university is also known for its “Institute for Counter Terrorism” (ICT) which is very close to the Israeli military and the Mossad, the Israeli secret services. <b>In particular, among those who have held, or hold, the position of member of the board of directors are the former Prime Minister and former Defense Minister Ehud Barak , the former army general Yishai Beer and the former head of Mossad Tamir Pardo.</b> Reichman University’s current president, Prof. Boaz Ganor, was the ICT’s</p>	



	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
	<p><b>students, except for their tailored nonacademic military courses—offered on campus and taught by senior military personnel—which also earn them credit toward their degree.</b> For the academic courses offered by the university to soldiers and civilians alike, the Ministry of Defense suggested a list of topics that they consider “integral” to “with military training and a Tel Aviv University degree, combat officers will go on to maintain Israeli military rule and a system of racial oppression over millions of Palestinians.</p>	<p>their officers. <b>Hebrew University</b> rector Tamir Sheafer responded in kind, affirming the university’s continued commitment to the INP and its pride at “the privilege that fell to us to contribute to your training.”</p> <p>In 2018, Hebrew University applied and won the bid to house the Israeli military Havatzalot program. <b>Havatzalot (lilies, in Hebrew) is an elite degree program offered to soldiers in the Intelligence Corps as part of their military training.</b> Soldiers selected by the military undergo basic training and then enroll in a specialized academic program that the military terms “academic training.” <b>The selection was celebrated by Hebrew University’s administration, despite the military tender’s long list of demands, which some faculty argued would compromise the institution’s academic freedom. The bid’s terms include far-reaching Israeli military intervention in the program’s content, structure, employees, and</b></p>		<p>founding director and served in that role for 30 years.</p>	

	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
		<p><b>infrastructure on campus.</b> Unconcerned about these requirements, Hebrew University President Asher Cohen declared: <b>“We are proud of winning [the bid], which is yet another testimony to the high academic level of the Hebrew University, which will henceforth be a partner in the academic and leadership aspects of training Intelligence Corps soldiers.”</b></p>			
<b>Oppression/repression of Palestinian faculty, students, and staff and restriction of academic freedoms in service of the state</b>	<p><i>“Not only have Palestinian students who are citizens of Israel been structurally marginalized and discriminated against, the universities often do the work of the state itself: they crack down on Palestinian student speech and organizations in the name of “security.”</i></p> <p>Nadia Abu El-Hajj (2024, introduction to Maya Wind’s book)</p>				
	<p>In 2017, when head of the far-right party HaBayit HaYehudi (The Jewish Home) Naftali Bennett became minister of education, he asked Asa Kasher, a professor of philosophy at Tel Aviv University who wrote the military “ethical code” for Israeli soldiers, to articulate such a code for faculty conduct. Kasher’s proposed guidelines for the “depoliticization” of</p>	<p>Hebrew University’s campus on Mt. Scopus is policed particularly vigilantly by the administration and campus security. Palestinian students describe in interviews how they are alienated by the university prohibitions on clothing and other items expressing their identity.</p> <p>The Hebrew University has put its dissenting faculty and students in danger multiple times. In 2018, during a campaign targeting Hebrew University cultural studies</p>	<p>The University of Haifa has a history of denying dorm applications by Palestinian students. Research by the students revealed why: military service constituted as much as 41 percent of eligibility criteria. Student organizers petitioned the Haifa Magistrate Court to remove military service as a criterion. The court ruled in their favor and acknowledged that the criterion discriminated against Palestinians, the majority of whom are not drafted into the</p>		

	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
	<p>universities contained instructions for campus activities, classroom lectures, publications, and faculty promotion. <b>The code included guidelines prohibiting faculty from “deviating from their syllabi and disciplines” in ways that might be interpreted by students as political speech.</b></p>	<p>professor Carola Hilfrich in 2018 by students in the military, the administration published a statement reiterating its institutional commitment to supporting the military. With Hebrew University refusing to publicly back her, Hilfrich became the target of an intensified popular media campaign and received a barrage of vitriol and threats, leading her to leave mid-semester for a hiatus. <b>In its response, the Hebrew University administration signaled that it valued loyalty to the military above the right of faculty to facilitate critical discussion about it in their classrooms.</b></p> <p>More recently, the Hebrew University has been accused of being responsible for the arrest and detention of Palestinian Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian through its persistent and public repression of her academic freedom. It appears that the university’s decision to temporarily suspend Prof. Shalhoub-Kevorkian for her public statements criticising Israel led directly to her arrest.</p>	<p>military. But the University of Haifa refused to accept the ruling and appealed, and in 2008 the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the university’s right to give preference to military veterans in dorms. <b>The preference given to Jewish-Israelis in university dorms exacerbates long-standing barriers for Palestinian students of access to campuses.</b></p> <p>The University of Haifa has a notorious reputation among Palestinian students for its severe repression of political expression on campus. Public activity on the Haifa campus is the most restricted of any Israeli institution and is subject to such strict regulations that it is practically prohibited. As of the latest regulations in 2022, students are permitted to hold protests at only a single outdoor designated space during two thirty-minute recesses on Mondays, and for a single thirty-minute recess on Wednesdays. Many of these restrictions are</p>		

	Tel Aviv University	Hebrew University	Haifa University	Reichman University	Bar Ilan University
			<p>implicitly or explicitly directed at Palestinian students The university curbs Palestinian organizing by selectively denying permits.</p> <p>A permanent exhibit at the University of Haifa continues to honor one of its founders, Abba Hushi, who likened educating Palestinians to “raising snakes.”</p>		

### Corporations

In addition to its collaboration with Israeli academic institutions, UPF also has agreement with corporations that are deeply complicit in Israeli apartheid and illegal military occupation, and the current genocide in Gaza. We note in particular ORACLE and HP, and we urge the university to cut its ties with these two companies.

**Oracle:** In the context of the cybersecurity chair [ARTEMISA](#), UPF collaborates with INCIBE, which is financed by technological giant ORACLE. INCIBE is [closely related to the Israeli military and security apparatus](#). ORACLE is the primary cloud data contractor of the State of Israel, including the [Israeli Defense Force](#), and has donated up to [25 million USD](#) to the [IDF](#) in recent years. Oracle's support for the Israeli military appears poised to grow even stronger. During a visit in late January, in the midst of the accelerating AI-powered genocide in Gaza, Oracles's CEO proudly stated, "We are here to help the government, the military and the Israeli economy." She met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to talk about opportunities in AI and cloud computing, and with Defense Minister Yoav Gallant to talk about how Oracle can provide security assistance to Israel." The ICC prosecutor has recently sought arrest warrants for both men for war crimes and crimes against humanity, charges that are likely to expend to include genocide as the ICC investigation progresses.

**HP Printing and Computing Solutions:** UPF is currently involved in a "Convenio de cooperación educativa" with HP Printing and Computing Solutions S.L.U for the implementation of internships in the 2023/24 academic year, for students of the School of Engineering. As several reports ([here](#) and [here](#)) have attested for years, HP technology offers the Israeli military complex registration and control services for the Palestinian population and the flow of people at the borders (Aviv system), as well as contracts with the police Israeli prison service and biometric databases for the Ministry of the Interior.