Why Boycott Israeli Universities?

Second Edition, 2025

BRICUP

Why Boycott Israeli Universities?

Second Edition, 2025

An essential and informative summary of the academic boycott of Israel, why it's necessary and important. At a moment when Israel has targeted Palestinian educational institutions with such devastating consequences, it explains clearly how and why the academic boycott is a crucial part of attacking Israel's complicit academia and of supporting Palestinian education.

Ghada Karmi, author of *Return: A Palestinian Memoir* and *In Search of Fatima*

The case for boycotting Israeli universities rests on the undeniable part they play in maintaining Israel's unlawful occupation of the Palestinian territories. If there was ever an argument against an academic boycott, however, it was surely demolished by the genocidal campaign that Israel launched against the people of Gaza following the Hamas attack of 7 October 2023. Under these exceptional circumstances, Israeli universities can have no credible claim to immunity from sanctions. If there is one burning issue round which British academics should rally, it is defence of Palestinian universities. And if there was ever a time for action as opposed to words, now is that time. I therefore urge colleagues to obtain a copy of this pamphlet, to read it, and to lend their active support to the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine.

Avi Shlaim, Emeritus Professor of International Relations at Oxford University and author of *Memoirs of an Arab Jew* and *Genocide in Gaza: Israel's Long War on Palestine*

Suggested donation to BRICUP: £5

www.bricup.org.uk/donate-to-bricup

Why Boycott Israeli Universities?

Second Edition, 2025

Why Boycott Israeli Universities?
Second Edition

First published by BRICUP: British Committee for the Universities of Palestine, April 2025

First Edition, BRICUP © 2007
Second Edition, BRICUP © 2025

All rights reserved

BRICUP, London, WC1N 3XX, UK

ISBN (ebook): 978-1-83654-965-9
ISBN (paperback): 978-1-83654-982-6



British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Contents

List of figures 3
List of acronyms 5
Preface 6
Introduction 8
Chapter 1. Histories of Collusion and Resistance 13
Chapter 2. The Academic Boycott as a Tactic 19
Chapter 3. Reasons *Not* to Boycott? 24
Chapter 4. Israeli Universities 30
Chapter 5. Palestinian Universities: The West Bank 40
Chapter 6. Palestinian Universities: Gaza 45
Chapter 7. The Case for Boycott 51
Further Reading 54

List of figures

Fig. 1. Map of nations recognising the state of Palestine, 2024.
Source: Wikimedia Commons,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Countries_that_recognise_Palestine.png

Fig. 2. Palestine refugees making their way from Galilee in October-November 1948.
Photograph: Fred Csasznik. Source: Wikimedia Commons,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palestinian_refugees_(cropped).jpg

Fig. 3. Israel's Apartheid Wall, Al-Azariyeh (Bethany), 2021.
Photograph: Nadir Mauge.

Fig. 4. Graph of Palestinians v. Israelis killed, 1988 to October 2023.
Source: Visualising Palestine, https://visualizingpalestine.org/visual/timeline-of-violence-october-2023

Fig. 5. Palestinian children playing, Bethlehem, 2024.
Photograph: Nadir Mauge.

Fig. 6. Military Checkpoint in the Old City of Hebron, 2023.
Photograph: Ian McDonald.

Fig. 7. Israeli and Palestinian universities in December 2024.
Map commissioned by BRICUP.

Fig. 8. Arthur Balfour speaking at the opening ceremony of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, Jerusalem, 1925.
Photograph : Zoltan Kruger. Source: National Photo Collection of Israel,
https://gpophotoeng.gov.il/fotoweb/Grid.fwx?search=D10-091.jpg

Fig. 9. University of Haifa on Mount Carmel, 2010.
Source: Wikimedia Commons,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:University_of_Haifa,_Israel.jpg

Fig. 10. Tel Aviv University Buildings, 2011.
Source: Wikimedia Commons,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tel_Aviv-_University_buildings_(5890070701).jpg

Fig. 11. Birzeit University, 2020.
Source: Wikimedia Media Commons:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Birzeit_University_PIC.jpg

Fig. 12. The Islamic University of Gaza Administration Building, 2021.
Source: Wikimedia Media Commons:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:IUG_administration_building.jpg

Fig. 13. The Islamic University of Gaza after the Israeli bombardment in 2024.
Source: IHH International Humanitarian Relief Foundation Newsletter, 8 April 2024, https://ihh.org.tr/en/news/israel-bombs-the-islamic-university-of-gaza-2459

Fig. 14. Palestinian girls playing football beneath the apartheid wall, 2023.
Photograph: Ian McDonald.

List of acronyms

AAM	Anti-Apartheid Movement (UK)
AAU	Al-Azhar University
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
BDS	Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
BGU	Ben-Gurion University
BRICUP	British Committee for the Universities of Palestine
BRISMES	British Society for Middle Eastern Studies
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
HEMED	The Israeli Science Corps
IAI	Israel Aerospace Industries
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDF	Israeli Defence Force
INSS	Institute for National Security Studies (Tel-Aviv University)
IUG	Islamic University of Gaza
MIC	Military Industrial Complex (Israeli)
NIS	New Israeli Shekels (Israel's currency)
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories (Gaza and the West Bank)
PACBI	Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
QOU	Al-Quds Open University
UCAS	University College of Applied Sciences
UCU	University and College Union (UK)
UN	United Nations
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Preface

This booklet was written in 2024-25, at a moment when Israel's military onslaught on Gaza in response to Hamas's attack of 7 October 2023 had inflicted unprecedented devastation on the people of Gaza. According to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, by 23 January 2025 Israel had killed 58,340 people (including those presumed dead under the rubble), 51,951 of whom were civilians, 18,130 children and 11,850 women; injured 116,300; detained without due legal process 4,950; displaced 90% of the population; and destroyed or damaged 500,000 housing units, 529 schools, 3,050 industrial facilities and 861 mosques.

A year earlier, on 26 January 2024, the world's highest court, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), had determined that South Africa had made a plausible case that Israel was guilty of genocide. On the basis of this determination, the Court ordered Israel to stop committing the six war crimes identified with genocide: the mass killing of civilians; the inflicting of serious physical and mental harm; the imposing of inhuman living conditions; the use of starvation as a weapon; the imposition of an environment to prevent childbirth; and the public incitement to genocide.

Israel has ignored all six elements of the ICJ's order, instead intensifying its attacks on the people of Gaza. As a consequence, the major international human rights organisations unanimously affirmed that Israel's destruction of Palestinian life and infrastructure constitutes a genocide. Amnesty International, for example, published a report in December 2024 entitled, *'You Feel Like You are Subhuman'. Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza*, which concluded: 'Through its research findings and legal analysis, Amnesty International has found sufficient basis to conclude that Israel committed . . . prohibited acts under Articles II (a), (b) and (c) of the Genocide Convention, namely killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm and deliberately inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part.'

Fundamental to Israel's genocide has been the Israeli Defence Force's (IDF's) devastation of Palestinian university life in Gaza. According to UN reports published in April 2024, in little over one hundred days, the IDF destroyed 63% of university buildings in Gaza; killed 5,479 students, 261 teachers and 95 university professors; injured 7,819 students and 756 teachers; and in the process, it denied 90,000 Gazan university students access to education. The deliberate and systematic nature of Israel's onslaught led the UN to conclude that 'there is an intentional effort [by Israel] to comprehensively destroy the Palestinian education system, an action known as **scholasticide**.' Coined in 2009 by the Palestinian academic, Karma Nabulsi, 'scholasticide' describes Israel's ongoing attacks on Palestinian education, attacks dating back to the founding of the Israeli state

in 1948 but escalating from systematic destruction to total annihilation during Israel's 2023-25 onslaught on Gaza.

In responding to Israel's scholasticide in Gaza, this second edition of *Why Boycott Israeli Universities?* updates and amplifies the case for the academic boycott of Israeli universities. The booklet is published by the **British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP)**, an organisation of UK-based academics which was formed in 2005 to support two closely related Palestinian initiatives:

1. The **Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)** launched in 2004, which calls on international scholars to boycott Israeli academic institutions, and
2. The **Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS)** movement launched in 2005, which calls for boycotts, divestment and sanctions to bring pressure on Israel to recognise the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and to comply fully with international law.

In its twenty years of existence, BRICUP has campaigned in support of Palestinian universities, staff and students, and in opposition to Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands, its breaches of international human rights law, its refusal to honour UN resolutions or rulings of the ICJ and International Criminal Court (ICC), and its suppression of Palestinian academic freedoms.

Never has the urgency of BRICUP's case been greater, as political leaders in the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe continue to bank-roll Israel's genocide in Gaza, and the mainstream media outlets ignore, defend and justify Israel's war crimes.

Focusing on the fate of Palestinian higher education, *Why Boycott Israeli Universities?* argues that an academic boycott of Israel's universities is an effective, non-violent means of exerting pressure on Israel and its western backers to recognise the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and a peaceful future.

Introduction

Universities cherish academic freedom above all else. By jeopardising the free flow and exchange of ideas, academic boycotts appear to threaten this precious freedom. Unsurprisingly, the very idea of an academic boycott is therefore anathema to many individuals working at universities.

The South African anti-apartheid precedent

Only in the most exceptional cases have academic boycotts even been contemplated. One such case arose in relation to apartheid South Africa. In 1958, the African National Congress (ANC), the leading black South African anti-apartheid political party, issued its first call to boycott Pretoria's racist regime. A year later, the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) was founded, with the boycott of South African goods adopted as its principal strategy. In 1965, 496 British academics from 34 universities published an open letter expressing solidarity with anti-apartheid activists in South Africa. The efforts of academics in publicly denouncing apartheid undermined the legitimacy of the Pretoria regime, thus contributing to its isolation and ultimate downfall.

The comparison of Israeli rule to South African apartheid made by iconic leaders such as Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela has been endorsed in authoritative reports by the world's leading human rights organisations. The Human Rights Watch report, *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution* (2021) concludes:

> the Israeli government has demonstrated an intent to maintain the domination of Jewish Israelis over Palestinians. [That] intent has been coupled with systematic oppression of Palestinians and inhumane acts committed against them. When these three elements occur together, they amount to the crime of apartheid.

Amnesty International's report, *Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians* (2022), draws the same conclusion: 'Although Israel's system of apartheid manifests itself in different ways in the various areas under its effective control, it consistently has the same purpose of oppressing and dominating Palestinians for the benefit of Jewish Israelis, who are privileged under Israeli civil law regardless of where they reside.'

With Israeli rule identified with South African apartheid, certain successful anti-apartheid strategies have been adopted and adapted to advance the struggle for Palestinian rights and freedoms – pre-eminently the strategy of the boycott.

A Palestinian-led boycott

In the same spirit as the ANC in 1958, Palestinian academics and intellectuals on 6th July 2004 launched the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). The statement launching the campaign laid out the three elements of Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people: (1) Israel's denial of its ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their land that began with the Nakba [Catastrophe] of 1948; (2) Israel's post-1967 illegal occupation of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza; and (3) Israel's 'entrenched system of racial discrimination and segregation against the Palestinian citizens of Israel, which resembles the defunct apartheid system in South Africa.'

Noting that '[s]ince Israeli academic institutions and the vast majority of Israeli intellectuals and academics have either contributed directly to maintaining, defending or otherwise justifying the above forms of oppression, or have been complicit in them through their silence,' PACBI adopted the academic boycott as a non-violent means of exerting pressure on Israel to recognise and honour Palestinian rights and freedoms: 'We, Palestinian academics and intellectuals, call upon our colleagues in the international community to ***comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions*** as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel's occupation, colonization and system of apartheid.'

A year later, the PACBI call led to 170+ Palestinian civil society organisations launching the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which demanded that Israel recognise the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and comply fully with international law by:

1. ending its occupation and colonisation of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
2. recognising the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

Each of the three elements of the campaign appealed to different constituencies: 'Boycott' to individuals, including consumers and academics; 'Divestment' to companies and local councils; and 'Sanctions' to governments.

In the two decades since the launch of the BDS movement, none of the demands have been met, as Israel has continued to seize Palestinian land and to violate the freedoms of the Palestinian people. At the same time, Palestinians have continued to resist Israeli rule by a combination of

strategies – political negotiation, armed struggle, ideological contestation, cultural activism and intellectual critique. Of the strategies adopted, BDS has become increasingly significant. In *The Hundred Years War on Palestine* (2020), Rashid Khalidi criticises the in-fighting of the major Palestinian political parties, Fatah and Hamas, concluding that 'in recent decades civil society initiatives like the [BDS] movement and student activism have done more to further the Palestine cause than anything either of these two main factions has undertaken.'

Global support for Palestine

During the same period, however, global support for the Palestinian cause has surged, as the oppressive nature of the Israeli state has become impossible to ignore. Sympathy for Palestine is reflected most vividly in the growth in the number of countries recognising its claims to independent statehood: in 1988, 73 recognised the state of Palestine; by 2011, the number had increased to 122; and by the end of 2024, it had increased further to 146 of the 193 UN member states.

Global condemnation of Israel

In synchrony with this growing support for the Palestinian cause, global condemnation of Israeli rule has increased in scale and volume. A sharp rise in the outcry against Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people has been

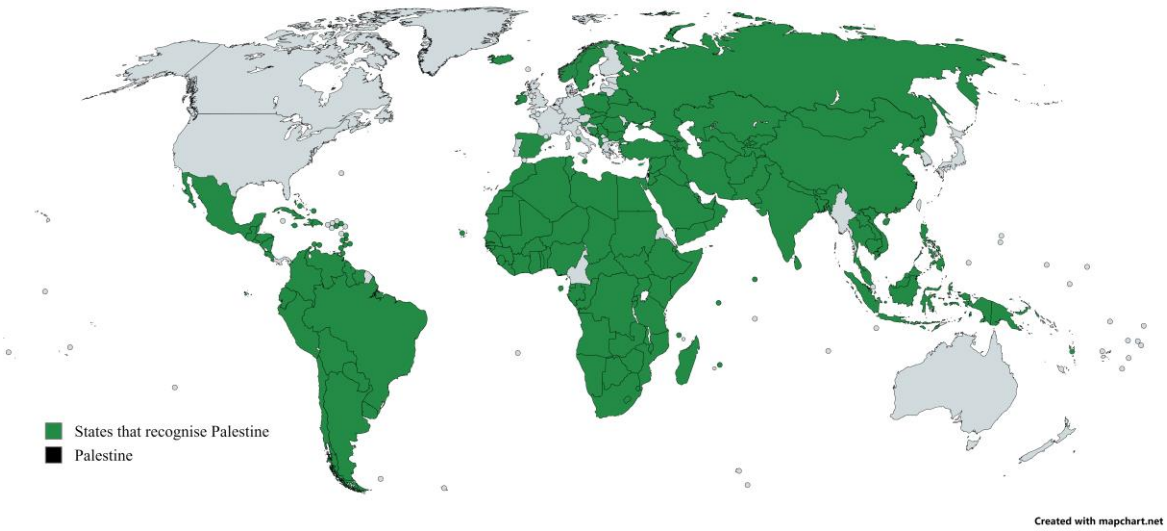


Fig. 1. Map of nations recognising the state of Palestine, 2024.

provoked by Israel's onslaught on Gaza since October 2023, with authoritative international institutions expressing their censure:

- **The International Court of Justice (ICJ)** in May 2024 found substantially in favour of South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza, concluding that 'some of the rights claimed by South Africa under the Genocide Convention and for which it was seeking protection were plausible, namely the right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide and related prohibited acts.'
- **The International Criminal Court (ICC)** in November 2024 announced the issue of warrants of arrest for Benjamin Netanyahu (Israel's prime minister), Yoav Gallant (Israel's then-minister of defence) and Mohammed Deif (Hamas military commander killed in an Israeli air strike) 'for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed from at least 8 October 2023 until at least 20 May 2024. [Each] bear criminal responsibility for the following crimes as co-perpetrators for committing the acts jointly with others: the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare; and the crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts.'
- **The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner** in November 2024 published an update on the situation in Gaza which concluded that '[c]ivilians, including children, women and men, have borne the brunt of the attacks, the "complete siege" and the various forms of continuing closure and blockade by the IDF of Gaza, through unprecedented levels of killings, death, injury, starvation, illness, disease, displacement, detention and destruction,' and ordered Israel to '[p]rioritize the realization of the human rights of Palestinians, including their rights to self-determination, equality and non-discrimination, and thereby ensure the rights of Palestinians and Israelis to live in security and peace.'
- **Human Rights Watch** in November 2024 published *'Hopeless, Starving, and Besieged'. Israel's Forced Displacement of Palestinians in Gaza*, noting that IDF military action had enforced the internal displacement of 1.9 million of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, concluding that 'the acts of unlawful displacement in Gaza were conducted through serious human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity.'

Conclusion

As an ever more critical world watches Israel's wholescale destruction of Palestinian life and infrastructure, how can an academic boycott contribute to halting this injustice?

This booklet provides answers, as it outlines the fundamental role played by Israeli universities in enforcing the Israeli apartheid state's oppression of Palestinians and sets out the case for supporting the academic boycott of Israeli universities.

Chapter 1. Histories of Collusion and Resistance

Introduction

Israeli universities have been integral to furthering Israel's political ends: the establishment of an exclusive ethno-nationalist Zionist state, and the elimination of Palestinians from the land of historic Palestine. These complementary ends have been assiduously served by Israel's universities, which have dedicated their abundant resources to providing the state with military, political and ideological support. The history of Israeli universities is a history of actively colluding with the Israeli state's deliberate and systematic seizure of Palestinian land and denial of Palestinian rights, including the right to an education.

In sharp contrast to the intimate symbiosis between Israel's universities and the state, Palestinian universities have been subjected to the Israeli state's unremitting hostility. Receiving but a fraction of the financial support given to Israeli universities, Palestinian universities have suffered innumerable assaults upon their freedom to teach and research, including the detentions and killings of staff and students, military raids, forced closures, and the repeated destruction of university infrastructure. Far from a record of acquiescence to such Israeli assaults, however, the history of Palestinian universities in the West Bank and Gaza demonstrates that they have always functioned as key sites of resistance to the Israeli state's expansionist project.

At all the key moments in the history of Palestine-Israel, Israeli and Palestinian universities have – in their very different ways – been deeply implicated in political events.

- During **The Nakba** ['Catastrophe'] of 1948, Zionist militias killed 15,000 Palestinians, drove 750,000 Palestinians from their land, and destroyed 531 Palestinian towns and villages – a project of settler-colonial occupation described in Ilan Pappé's definitive study, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006). Librarians and students from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem took advantage of the devastation inflicted on Palestinians during the Nakba to seize over 30,000 books from the homes and libraries of fleeing Palestinians, either destroying them or claiming them for the National Library of Israel and the Hebrew University. (Unless otherwise stated, all the numbers and statistics in this chapter are drawn from UN sources).
- In **The Six-Day War** of 1967, Israel expanded its boundaries, seizing control of Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria. As a result, large numbers of



Fig. 2. Palestine refugees making their way from Galilee in October-November 1948.

Palestinians fell under Israeli military occupation, notwithstanding the fact that Israel's claims to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) flouts international law. As part of its illegal land-grab, IDF forces seized The Palestinian Archaeological Museum in East Jerusalem, placing it under full Israeli control, and re-naming it the Rockefeller Archaeological Museum.

- During Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Israeli-backed Phalange militias killed 3,500 Palestinian civilians in the Beirut refugee camps of **Sabra and Shatila**. Also targeted during Israel's invasion was the Research Centre of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Beirut. Established in 1963, the Research Centre at its peak employed forty researchers and held an invaluable archive of books, articles, documents, microfilms, manuscripts, maps and photographs, most of which were seized as war booty by IDF soldiers when they ransacked the Centre in September 1982. In February 1983, a car bomb placed by the Israeli proxy terrorist group, the Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from Foreigners, destroyed the building that had housed the Centre, killing several Palestinians working there.

- In the **First Palestinian Intifada** ['Uprising', 'Shaking-off'] of 1987-93, Palestinians in the Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip sparked a fresh wave of resistance, which expanded to all of Palestine-Israel, and assumed many forms of civil opposition: protest marches, boycotts, strikes, and refusals to pay taxes. The resistance was met with repression, as the IDF killed at least 1,087 Palestinians, of whom 240 were children, and 100 Israeli civilians and 60 Israeli soldiers were killed. The military crackdown was accompanied by Israel shutting down all Palestinian universities for periods of between a few months and several years, with Birzeit University in the West Bank closed for four years.
- In the **Second Palestinian Intifada** (2000-05), Palestinians re-ignited their opposition to the occupation in September 2000 by protesting the Israeli leader Ariel Sharon's visit to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Second Intifada led to the deaths of approximately 3,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis, as well as 64 foreign nationals. Of the Palestinians killed, an interim 2004 report by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in Ramallah recorded that 194 were university students. IDF assaults on Palestinian universities during the Second Intifada included: the extensive destruction of property at Bethlehem University and Al-Najah National University (in December 2002), and the closure of Hebron University for six months and the Palestine Polytechnic University for three months (both from January 2003). In 2002, under the pretext of security, Israel unilaterally began the building of a wall to separate Palestinians in Israel from those in the Occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. For Palestinian students and staff in the occupied territories, the wall's many checkpoints exacerbated significantly their already fraught access to university campuses.
- In **Operation Cast Lead**, Israel invaded the Gaza Strip from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009, killing 1,417 Palestinians while suffering thirteen casualties. Israeli bombardments destroyed 46,000+ homes in Gaza, making 100,000+ people homeless. The Israeli attacks were supported by its universities, with senior academics from the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at Tel Aviv University publicly endorsing the **Dahiya Doctrine**, which insists that in any case of hostilities breaking out, 'the IDF will need to act immediately, decisively, and with force that is disproportionate to the enemy's actions and the threat it poses. Such a response aims at inflicting damage and meting out punishment to an extent that will demand long and expensive reconstruction processes.'
- In **Operation Protective Edge**, Israel invaded the Gaza Strip from 8 July – 26 August 2014, killing 2,251 Palestinians while suffering 73 casualties. One quarter of the Palestinian deaths were university students, with



Fig. 3. Israel's Apartheid Wall, Al-Azariyeh (Bethany), 2021.

4,000 students at Al-Azhar university losing their homes. Israeli airstrikes destroyed or inflicted damage on buildings at Al-Azhar University, the Arab College of Applied Sciences, the University of Palestine, the University College of Applied Science, Al-Quds Open University, the Palestine Technical College and the Islamic University of Gaza. Israel also imposed a blanket ban on all Gazan students hoping to leave Gaza to attend university – either elsewhere in Palestine-Israel or abroad.

- In response to the **Great March of Return**, the civilian demonstrations held in Gaza that began on 30 March 2018 and demanded an end to the blockade and the right of return for refugees, the IDF killed 214 Palestinians, including 46 children, and injured over 36,100, including 8,800 children. Palestinian universities, both in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank, were once again heavily targeted, as the IDF raided and closed down their campuses; destroyed their buildings, including laboratories and libraries; and tear-gassed, shot, and arrested their staff and students.

- The **Unity Intifada** was triggered on 10 May 2021 by the attempted eviction of six Palestinian families from their homes in occupied East Jerusalem, spreading to the West Bank and Gaza. By 21 May, the IDF had killed 256 Palestinians, including 66 children, with thirteen Israelis killed. Israeli airstrikes on Gaza destroyed or damaged 950 targeted buildings, including four hospitals, forty schools and four universities.



Fig. 4. Graph of Palestinians v. Israelis killed, 1988 to October 2023.

- Israel's military response to the Hamas attack and hostage-taking of 7 October 2023 enjoyed the unequivocal support of Israeli universities. The support included influential input on military strategy, notably in what has come to be known as the **Eiland Plan** (or **Generals' Plan**). Formulated in November 2023 by Major-General Giora Eiland, former head of the Israeli National Security Council and senior research associate at the Institute for National Security Studies (INNS) at Tel-Aviv University, the plan prescribes the following: 'The way to win the war faster and at a lower cost for us requires a system collapse on the other side and not the mere killing of more Hamas fighters. [W]e must not, absolutely must not adopt the American narrative that "permits" us to fight only against Hamas fighters. [The enemy] are not only Hamas fighters with weapons, but also all the "civilian" officials, including hospital administrators and school administrators, and also the entire Gaza population.'

Updating the numerical differential of Palestinian v. Israeli fatalities in the *1988 to November 2023 Timeline of Violence*, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) recorded that by 8 January 2025, the gulf between the two numbers had widened dramatically to 45,936 Palestinian fatalities v. 1,593 Israeli fatalities, a ratio of nearly 29 Palestinians killed to every one Israeli killed.

Chapter 2. The Academic Boycott as a Tactic

Introduction

PACBI's founding statement of 2004 explains that the boycott is an appeal from Palestinian academics to colleagues in the international community to boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions as an essential contribution to ending Israel's occupation, settler colonisation and system of apartheid. The call asks colleagues in the international community to undertake the following:

1. refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions;
2. advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli institutions at the national and international levels, including suspension of all forms of funding and subsidies to these institutions;
3. promote divestment and disinvestment from Israel by international academic institutions;
4. work toward the condemnation of Israeli policies by pressing for resolutions to be adopted by academic, professional and cultural associations and organizations; and
5. support Palestinian academic and cultural institutions directly without requiring them to partner with Israeli counterparts as an explicit or implicit condition for such support.

The academic boycott of Israel's universities is conceived and enacted as an **institutional** boycott, applying to *all* of Israel's universities, affiliated academic institutions, and departments, committees and institutions of higher education. Crucially, the boycott does not apply to academics employed at Israeli universities **in their individual capacities**: individual academics at Israeli universities are unaffected by the restrictions imposed by the boycott unless they have **themselves** been actively engaged in war crimes and genocide.

An international struggle

International backing for Israel, primarily from the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union, is essential to its denial of Palestinian rights and freedoms. Confining the struggle for Palestinian self-determination within Israel's borders is therefore inadequate; only international campaigns that challenge western governments' military,

diplomatic and ideological support for Israel can hope to exert meaningful pressure for change.

In an essay on BDS written in 2020 for the Institute of Palestine Studies, Omar Barghouti, a founding committee member of PACBI and co-founder of BDS, cites Martin Luther King Junior's axiom that 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere' as the basis of his argument that '[a]lmost every contemporary system of oppression can be maintained only by the conscious complicity of many other systems of oppression, from states to corporations to institutions. **Globalized oppression necessitates globalized resistance and solidarity** [bold added]. The BDS movement for Palestinian rights seeks to cut those global links of complicity to Israel's regime of colonial oppression as an essential first step toward securing Palestinian rights under international law.'

The practical implementation of the academic boycott

What does the academic boycott mean in practice? Specific actions pursued to support the boycott have included:

- no participation in Israeli-funded or Israeli-organised conferences and/or research projects;
- the suspension of all research grants to Israel from international funders;
- the suspension of all institutional-level collaborations with Israeli universities;
- the suspension of Israeli universities from international academic organisations;
- public statements from British universities and international academic organisations condemning Israel's illegal treatment of Palestinians and its many violations of international human rights law; and
- the refusal to support research publications funded and published by Israeli universities.

Have boycotts been effective in the past?

As collective actions undertaken by the powerless to challenge injustices perpetrated by the powerful, boycotting has been an effective non-violent strategy for bringing about political change:

- The British Abolitionist movement of the late eighteenth century encouraged consumers not to buy or use goods like sugar that were

produced by slaves in the West Indies. In two campaigns, the first in 1792-93 and the second in 1825-29, around 300,000 British consumers stopped purchasing sugar from slave plantations, leading to a significant drop in profits for the slave-owners, and thus contributing to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the emancipation of the slaves in 1834.

- In Ireland in the 1880s, Irish tenant farmers adopted the strategy of the boycott to protest high rents and land evictions. Seeking to abolish landlordism and to acquire ownership of the land they worked, the farmers ostracized a tyrannical British estate manager, Charles Cunningham Boycott, whose name became synonymous with their protest strategy. The boycott campaign contributed directly to the passing of legislation that enabled tenant farmers to become independent landowners.
- In Montgomery, Alabama, in the United States in 1955, Black American commuters organized a boycott to protest the racial segregation of the city's buses. Despite a vicious backlash from white vested interests, the boycott was successful, leading first to the District Court and then the Supreme Court ruling that Alabama's racial segregation laws for buses were unconstitutional.
- In Britain in 1959, the Anti-Apartheid Movement initiated the boycott of South African imports, expanding into sporting and cultural boycotts. By the 1980s, the boycott of apartheid South Africa had expanded into a vast global movement, with an especially damaging impact on South Africa's economy: in the 1980s, 55 British multinational companies disposed of their South African subsidiaries, increasing the pressure on the regime in the final decade of formal apartheid.

From boycotting slavery to boycotting Israel

What do the boycott movements of the past teach us? The most important lesson is that the powerful – British slave-owners/Irish landlords/racist American governors/South African apartheid rulers – have made major concessions when confronted by well-organised boycott campaigns enjoying mass support. Boycott campaigns inflict economic damage on the targeted regime; they challenge its legitimacy, contributing to its political isolation; and, crucially, they engage the participation of large numbers of individuals, who become a community of resistance unified in solidarity with the oppressed.

The BDS campaign against Israel has yet to succeed in pressurising the Israeli regime into honouring international human rights law or into

recognising Palestine's right to self-determination. The campaign has nevertheless gathered momentum in the last decade, as ever more organisations and individuals have added their support.

To name but a few:

- in 2011, the **University of Johannesburg in South Africa** severed links with Ben-Gurion University over its complicity in Israel's human rights violations;
- in 2012, the **Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Sydney University in Australia** undertook to boycott an exchange programme with the Hebrew University;
- in 2012, the **University and College Union (UCU) in the UK** adopted the policy to support the academic boycott by an overwhelming majority at its national congress;
- in 2013, the **Teachers' Union of Ireland** became the first teachers' union in Europe to endorse the Palestinian call for an academic boycott of Israel;
- in 2013, the **American Studies Association** began a boycott of Israeli education institutions;
- in 2014, the North American **Peace and Justice Studies Association** endorsed the BDS campaign;
- in 2014, the **Royal Institute of British Architects** voted to suspend the Israeli Association of United Architects from the International Union of Architects;
- in 2015, Britain's **National Union of Students** voted by 19-4 to align itself with the BDS movement;
- in 2019, the campaigning arm of the **British Society for Middle Eastern Studies** (BRISMES) endorsed the academic boycott of Israeli institutions;
- in 2021, the Middle East section of the **American Anthropological Association** voted by 157-11 to support the boycott of Israeli academic institutions;
- in May 2021, the **BDS website** summarised: 'Statements in support of Palestinian rights have been endorsed by more than 350 academic departments, programs, centres, unions and societies worldwide, and by 24,000 scholars, researchers, university staff, students and alumni in their individual capacities'; and

- in May 2024, **Ghent University in Belgium** voted to sever academic ties with Israeli universities on account of their close ties with the defence establishment, and consequent complicity with human rights violations.

Perhaps the most compelling call to increase international sanctions against Israel came on 24 October 2024, when over 2,000 Israeli citizens, many of them academics, signed an open letter published in *The Guardian*, appealing to the international community 'to intervene immediately and implement every possible sanction towards achieving an immediate ceasefire between Israel and its neighbors.' Noting that '[t]he lack of true international pressure, the continuation of arms supplies to Israel, economic and security partnerships and scientific and cultural collaborations, bring most Israelis to believe that Israel's policies enjoy international support,' the letter concludes with the plea: 'Please, for our futures and the futures of all of the residents of Israel and the region, save us from ourselves and use real pressure on Israel for an immediate ceasefire.'

That many university communities around the world have responded positively to their appeal was confirmed in February 2025, when Israel's Association of University Heads released a statement noting that since October 2023 academics at Israeli universities had reported about 500 cases of academic boycotts and difficulties with overseas institutions.

Chapter 3. Reasons *Not* to Boycott?

Introduction

In this chapter, the main arguments against boycotting Israel's universities are outlined and then refuted.

CLAIM: It is antisemitic to single out Israel for boycott. Many other countries in the world have repressive governments where torture is routine, and many other countries' governments have been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity. Why aren't boycotters targeting them? Isn't the boycott of Israel antisemitic?

REALITY: Calls for boycott are not exclusive to Israel and have been raised in relation to other countries such as Russia on account of its war crimes in Ukraine. But the focus of BRICUP is on supporting Palestinian universities, staff and students.

A boycott is a non-violent collective action to express disapproval and demand change. The academic boycott adds to the pressure of the wider BDS movement in civil society across the globe and targets Israeli institutions. It is not a boycott of individual Jewish academics. Indeed, many Jews condemn the actions of the Israeli government, and many Jewish academics support the academic boycott.

Israel presents itself to the world as a special case, 'the only democracy in the Middle East,' thus inviting judgement by the highest moral standards. Israel fails to meet such standards, and its failures have been highlighted repeatedly by UN resolutions condemning Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land and its human rights abuses inflicted upon the Palestinian people.

The UN's treatment of apartheid South Africa provides an instructive parallel. In 1974, the UN General Assembly suspended South Africa, only re-admitting it after its transition to democracy. An article published in *Middle East Eye* on 24 November 2024 reports that many senior scholars and practitioners of International Law, International Relations, Political Science, Conflict Studies and Genocide Studies have signed an open letter arguing that there is a stronger case for suspending Israel from the UN in 2024 than there was for suspending South Africa in 1974.

CLAIM: Many of those Israelis most critical of their government's policies towards the Occupied Territories are academics. It makes no sense to target them with a boycott.

REALITY: The authoritative study of Israeli universities, the Jewish-Israeli anthropologist Maya Wind's *Towers of Ivory and Steel* (2024), concludes that Israeli universities *as institutions* have long actively contributed to Palestinian oppression: 'Academic disciplines, degree programs, campus infrastructure, and research laboratories all service Israeli occupation and apartheid, while universities violate the rights of Palestinians to education, stifle critical scholarship, and violently repress student dissent.'

There are a small number of courageous individual Israeli academics who have raised their voices against Israeli repression of Palestinians. For example, in January 2024, when the University of Haifa suspended eight Palestinian students for alleged pro-Hamas social media posts, 25 professors from the University (including several Jewish-Israeli professors) petitioned the senior management to investigate and, if possible, to re-instate the students. In a report for *npr* on 25 January 2024, Jackie Northam interviewed one of the signatories, Asad Ghanem, a professor of comparative politics, who explained why he disagreed with the suspension of the students by the chairman of the University's board of directors: 'He thinks that the university should be part of the war situation, of the emergency situation, which is – I think that it's a mistake. The university should be part of thinking about ways of reconciliation and helping our students.'

The opposition between the pro-Zionist institutional leadership and the pro-ceasefire/pro-Palestine students and staff at the University of Haifa is replicated not only at all Israeli universities, but also at universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe. Alaa Hajyahia, a graduate of Tel-Aviv University and student at Yale University, identifies how senior university administrators in both Israel and the United States have enforced the Israeli state's policies by suppressing the freedom of speech of pro-Palestine students and staff. In an essay published in the *Third World Approaches to Law Review* (*TWALR*) on 21 July 2024, Hajayahia writes, 'In the classrooms of Tel Aviv and Yale, we spoke idealistically of justice, procedural and substantive due process, and human rights. In reality, I have witnessed the universities' casual indifference as these ideals are violated continually . . . . Oppression of Palestinians in Israel is echoed in oppression of Palestinians and Palestine solidarity in the US.'

It has never been easy for academics in Israel to be critical of their government and it has become even more difficult and fraught with risk as those voices are increasingly marginalised. All expressions of solidarity with Palestine are perceived and treated as an incitement to violence against Israelis. While Israeli students protesting the war and deaths in Gaza are policed brutally, far-right student protests in support of the war which incite racist violence go unpunished. Far from defending academic freedom, Israeli universities have thus actively stifled academic inquiry and scholarship.

CLAIM: An academic boycott goes against the highest value of academia, namely the free communication and exchange of information and ideas – academic freedom.

REALITY: Even conscientious opponents of boycotts recognise that no principle is inviolable or applicable in *all* cases. Under exceptional circumstances, the principle of academic freedom can be qualified or superseded by other principles – notably the principles of equality or liberty and the right to life.

The argument in favour of academic boycotts when appropriate has been reiterated in different contexts:

- in 1998, in response to Slobodan Milosevic's legislation abolishing the autonomy of Serbia's universities, more than fifty academics and many professional academic associations in Europe and North America immediately protested the new law, supporting the boycott of Serbian universities; and
- in 2022, when Vladimir Putin ordered the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many universities in Britain, Europe and the United States condemned the war, froze their partnerships with Russian universities, and committed to comprehensive boycotts of Russian academic institutions.

The circumstances in Serbia in 1998 and in Russia in 2022 were deemed 'exceptional', thus justifying academic boycotts. That Israel's onslaught on Gaza since 7 October 2023 constitutes an even clearer instance of 'exceptional' circumstances has been widely recognised. To note but one of the many major organisations to have taken this critical view of Israel's conduct, the **American Association of University Professors** in August 2024 abandoned its long-held opposition to academic boycotts.

Arguing that faculty members may choose to support boycotts seeking to advance the academic freedom and fundamental rights of colleagues and students who face violations of their rights, the Association adopted a revised policy: 'in such contexts [like Gaza], academic boycotts are not in themselves violations of academic freedom; rather, they can be considered legitimate tactical responses to conditions that are fundamentally incompatible with the mission of higher education.'

CLAIM: Academic boycotts may very occasionally be justified, as in the case of apartheid South Africa, but Israel's case is quite different to that of South Africa.

REALITY: The similarities between apartheid South Africa and present-day Israel are striking. Apartheid South Africa's constitutional bedrock was the Population Registration Act of 1950, which created four categories of citizens, 'White, Coloured, Bantu, and Asian'; Israel's constitutional order has recently been reinforced in *The Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People* of 2018, which confers rights on Jewish citizens which are not extended to Palestinians. Flouting established international legal norms, the *Basic Law* appeals not to universal rights and freedoms, but rather to the exclusive rights of 'the Jewish people': Article 1 asserts that 'Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people and they have an exclusive right to national self-determination in it,' and Article 7 prescribes that 'The State views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value and will act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation.' Palestinians – the two million within Israel's legal borders, the 5.5 million in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the 7.5 million in exile – are denied equivalent legal rights. In other words, neither apartheid South Africa nor apartheid Israel have constitutions founded on an equal citizenry in a unitary democratic state.



Fig. 5. Palestinian children playing, Bethlehem, 2024.

On the basis of the distinction between 'Jewish-Israeli' and 'Palestinian-Israeli' citizens enshrined in *The Basic Law*, Israel has forged legal and bureaucratic shackles that regulate Palestinians' lives in ways that closely resemble the apartheid laws which controlled all aspects of black South Africans' lives. Adalah, the human rights organisation and legal centre, has identified seventy laws on Israel's statute book that legislate the differential treatment of Jewish and Palestinian citizens. These include:

- Like Black South Africans under apartheid's Group Areas Act and Bantustan system, Palestinians have narrowly circumscribed access to **land ownership**: just 3% of Israel's land belongs to Palestinians (who make up 20% of the population); the Absentee Property Law of 1950 designated the inhabitants of the 531 Palestinian villages ethnically cleansed in the Nakba as 'internal refugees' or 'present absentees' with no property rights; and Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the Occupied West Bank are ever vulnerable to land seizures by Israeli settlers under the Planning and Building Law of 1965 and subsequent discriminatory legislation.



Fig. 6. Military Checkpoint in the Old City of Hebron, 2023.

- Like Black South Africans subjected to apartheid security legislation and police brutality, Palestinians have suffered extreme **police repression**, living under a permanent state of emergency, which Shin Bet, Israel's domestic security agency, has used to enforce – and often exceed – their sweeping powers of arrest and administrative detention to crush legitimate forms of Palestinian dissent and protest.
- Like Black South Africans driven into an inferior **education system** by the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and University Extension Act of 1959, Palestinians receive a significantly inferior education: in 2001, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) recorded that in the 2000-01 academic year, Israel's Ministry of Education invested a total annually of 534 New Israeli Shekels (NIS) on average per Palestinian student, compared with NIS 1,779 per Jewish student, a ratio of 1:3.2; and in the same year, a Human Rights Watch report identified Israel's systematic discrimination against Palestinian schools, which had bigger class sizes, fewer textbooks, inferior buildings, and a lack of kindergartens, remedial classes and provision for disabled students.
- Like Black South Africans, Palestinians suffer severe **socio-economic** disadvantages, with all indicators disclosing that Palestinian citizens have lower incomes, higher unemployment, poorer municipal infrastructure, shorter life expectancy, higher infant mortality, and greater levels of poverty and material deprivation.
- Like Black South Africans living under the notorious Pass Laws, Palestinians' **freedom of movement** is severely restricted, with Israeli military and police personnel overseeing a vast network of checkpoints, roadblocks and bureaucratic obstacles designed to corral Palestinians in narrowly circumscribed geographical zones.

There are, of course, differences between apartheid South Africa and Israel. Israel, for example, does not resort to the notorious 'petty apartheid' inflicted on Black South Africans; instead, beneath a veneer of 'visible equality', Israel enforces the systematic exclusion of Palestinians from land, political activity and access to resources.

Many prominent South Africans have emphasised the parallels between apartheid South Africa and Israel. In relation to South Africa's recent case before the ICJ charging Israel with the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Ronald Lamola, South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, explains that Israel's illegal occupation is 'similar to what we had gone through as a country. We have a moral obligation, more than any other country in the world, to stand up and say what Israel is doing is unlawful . . . having lived the experience of what Palestinians are currently experiencing.'

Chapter 4. Israeli Universities

Introduction

Universities reflect the deeply segregated nature of Palestinian-Israeli society: Israeli universities enjoy a plenitude of financial, political and infrastructural support in contrast to the hardships and obstacles Palestinian universities are compelled to negotiate.

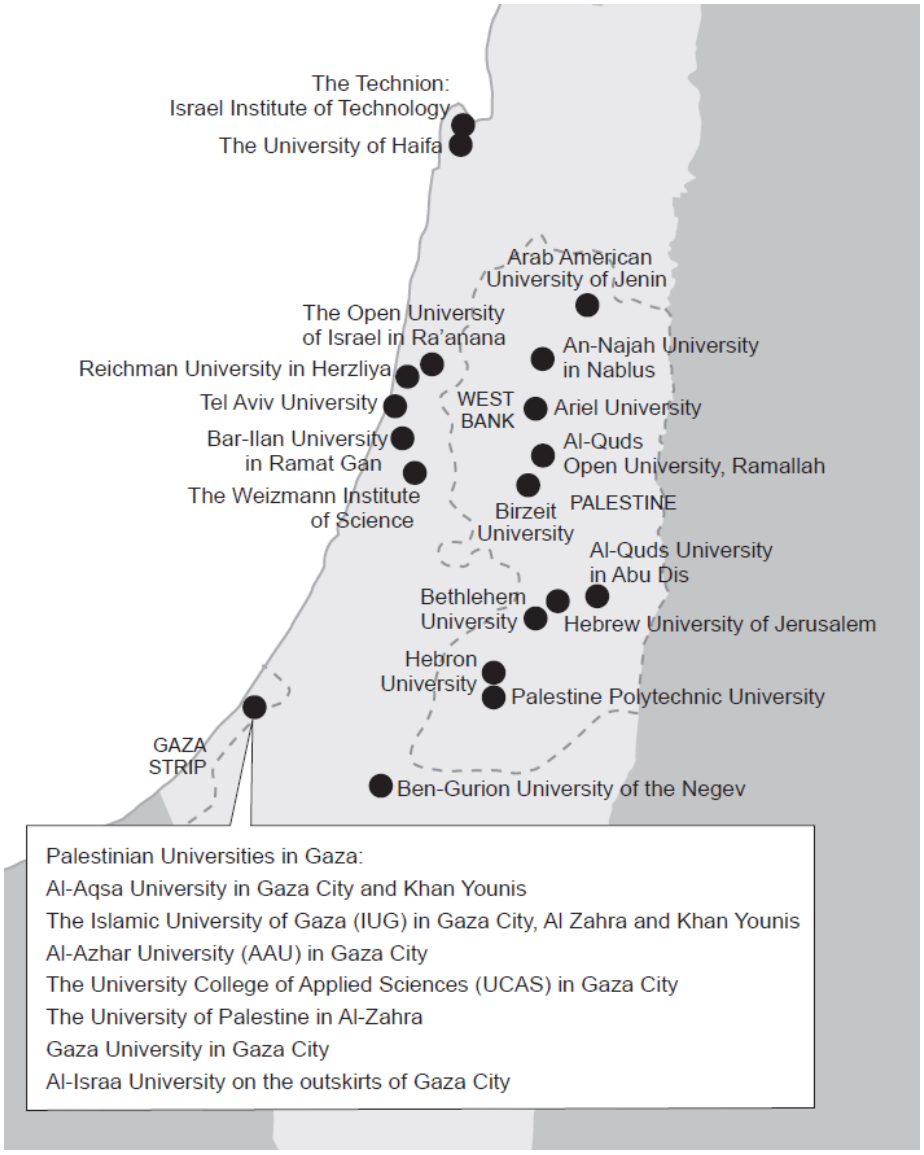


Fig. 7. Israeli and Palestinian universities in December 2024.

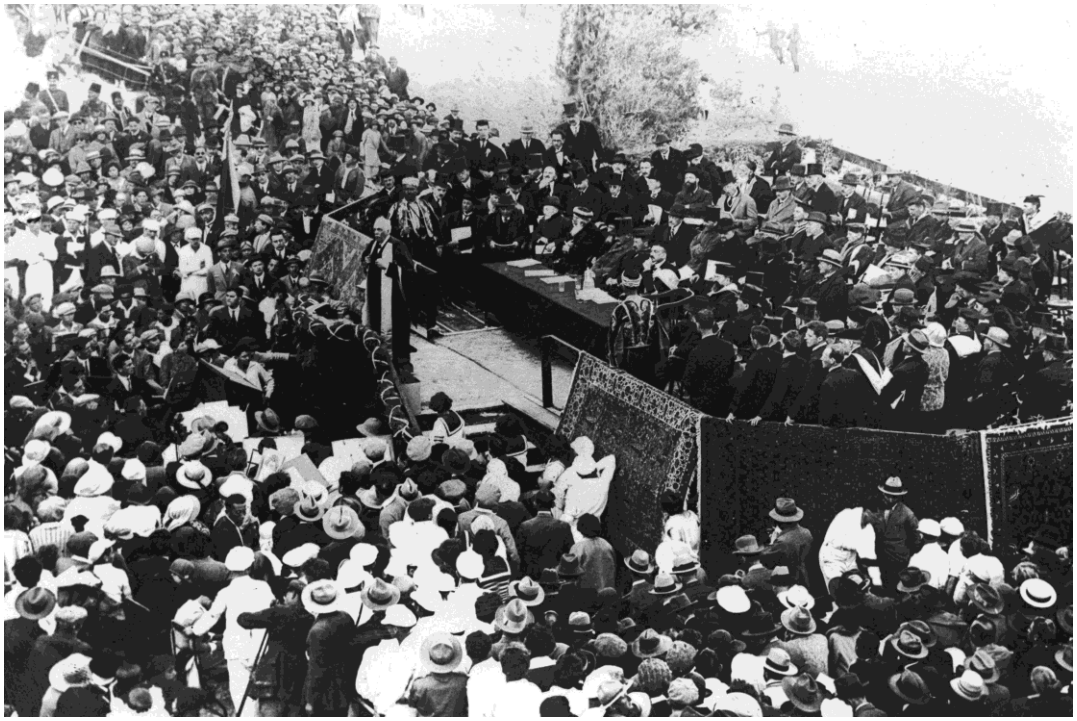


Fig. 8. Arthur Balfour speaking at the opening ceremony of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, Jerusalem, 1925.

The wandering soul of Israel

At the opening of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on 1 April 1925, Dr Chaim Weizmann, then-president of the World Zionist Organization, declared, 'In this university we have gone beyond restoration; we are creating . . . something which is to serve as symbol of a better future. In the university, the wandering soul of Israel will reach its haven.'

In the century since Weizmann's speech, Israel's universities have been integral to the Zionist dream of establishing Israel as an exclusive ethno-nationalist Jewish state – symbols of better futures and havens for the wandering (Jewish) soul of Israel, certainly, but for Palestinians, institutions of exclusion, subordination and oppression.

Israel has nine public universities and one private university (see Figure 7):

- **The Technion: Israel Institute of Technology** in Haifa (established 1924) has nineteen departments, sixty research centres, twelve affiliated hospitals and 14,000 students.

- **The Hebrew University** in Jerusalem (established 1925) has six campuses, seven faculties, five affiliated hospitals, one hundred research centres and 23,000 students.
- **The Weizmann Institute of Science** in Rehovot (established 1934) is a post-graduate university with 3,800 scientists, post-doctoral researchers, students and staff.
- **Bar-Ilan University** in Ramat Gan (established 1955) has nine faculties, 1,350 staff, and 20,000 students, with compulsory courses in Jewish Studies.
- **Tel Aviv University** (established 1956) has nine faculties, seventeen teaching hospitals, 106 departments and 30,000 students.
- **The University of Haifa** (established 1963, full accreditation 1972) has six faculties and 18,000 students.
- **Ben-Gurion University** in Beersheba (established 1969) has five faculties and 51 departments teaching 18,000 students.
- **The Open University of Israel** (established 1973) is a distance-education university with a main campus in Ra'anana, fifty study centres and 52,000+ students.
- **Ariel University** in the Occupied West Bank (established 1978, full accreditation 2012) has three faculties, 26 departments and 14,000 students.
- **Reichman University** in Herzliya, Tel-Aviv (formally accredited in 2021) is Israel's only private university, with nine faculties and 8,400 students.

All of Israel's universities have dedicated their unstinting efforts to promoting Israel's military, geo-political, ideological and cultural interests.

Servicing the state's military industrial complex

Israel's military industrial complex (MIC) is essential to its economy. In *An Army Like No Other: How the Israel Defense Forces Made a Nation* (2020), Haim Bresheeth-Zabner observes that the MIC supplies 'the components, systems, software, hardware, and (most importantly) skilled personnel' to Israel's high-tech industries; further, '[t]he MIC has become the major partner of Israeli academia, and universities could scarcely survive at the level they are used to without the deep collaboration of the IDF.'

The relationship between the MIC and universities is reciprocal, as Israeli universities have always played a crucial role in the development of warfare technology. HEMED, the Science Corps established at Israel's

universities, produced the typhoid-dysentery bacteria used in Haganah's 1948 Cast My Bread campaign to poison the water sources of Palestinian villages and towns.

In the 1950s, the state-owned arms manufacturers Rafael and Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI) used the well-resourced research centres at the Technion and Weizmann Institute to design tanks, aircraft, naval hardware and missiles for manufacture in Israel. The Department of Aeronautical Engineering at The Technion was opened in 1954 with the specific purpose of serving IAI's programme for building fighter jets and missiles.

A decade later, private arms manufacturing companies were set up to complement the work of Rafael and IAI. Elbit, Israel's leading private arms manufacturing company, was founded in 1966, swiftly becoming an essential provider of military hardware for the IDF. Elbit developed a close relationship with The Technion, to the extent that Michael Federman, the chair of Elbit in 2008, declared that 'The Technion is woven into Elbit's DNA.' Elbit's reach extends well beyond Israel's borders: it has arms factories in Bristol, Holyhead, Sleaford and Grantham in the UK, and many British organisations and educational institutions have investments in Elbit – in March 2025, pro-Palestine activists uncovered that Trinity College, Cambridge University, holds $78,089 in Elbit shares.

Much more than providing military technology and hardware for deployment against Palestinians, Israel's arms industry from its inception pursued profits by selling arms abroad, claiming that 'battle-testing' their products in 'The Palestine Laboratory' (the title of Antony Lowenstein's 2023 book on the subject) gave them a competitive edge. By 1986, Israel was already one of the world's top ten arms-exporters, with 10% of its workforce (140,000) employed in the arms industry, and its universities providing all the research and development.

The intimate symbiosis between Israel's military and its universities is ongoing: in 2019, Major-General Professor Isaac Ben-Israel of Tel-Aviv University stated, 'Military [Research and Development] would not exist without the universities. They carry out all the basic scientific investigation, which is then developed by defence industries or the army.'

In addition to researching-and-developing the weapons used by the IDF to control the Palestinian population, Israeli universities have always educated IDF soldiers to prepare and equip them to wage the warfare of occupation. All universities work closely with the IDF to provide specialised courses and degrees for soldiers and security personnel.

To name a few:

- **The Atuda programme** is a collaboration between the Ministry of Defence, the arms manufacturers and the Israeli universities which offers fifty bespoke degree programmes for IDF soldiers to study at universities across the sector.
- **Shin Bet**, which has faced many charges of torture, extra-judicial killings and illegal information-gathering, has worked closely with the University of Haifa, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Bar-Ilan University to develop and run degree programmes for Israeli students/soldiers.
- **Ben-Gurion University** (BGU) hosts the Homeland Security Institute, which has formal partnerships with the Ministry of Defence, Elbit, Rafael and IAI. Looking forward in 2019 to the opening of a new campus, Professor Daniel Chamovitz, BGU's university president, declared, 'the IDF's new tech campus is the harbinger of great developments which will bring thousands of outstanding soldiers to this base, many of whom will also complete degrees at BGU in parallel with their service.'
- **The Weizmann Institute of Science** offers tuition in military expertise, from a gap-year course for school-leavers to a Masters-level degree for IDF soldiers. The gap-year course promises to '[p]repare participants for their military service. Students become familiar with the nature and requirements of various IDF units, work on combat fitness, conducting tours, and develop their leadership skills.'

The blurring of the line between university education and military training means that Israeli campuses have taken on the role of supplementary military camps, effectively functioning as the academic arm of the Israeli security state.

Advancing settler-colonial occupation

Israel was built upon the seizure of Palestinian land and the attempted erasure of the Palestinian people – a twentieth-century variation on the settler-colonial histories of the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa.

In her report, *Anatomy of a Genocide* (March 2024), Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967, defines settler colonialism as 'a dynamic, structural process and a confluence of acts aimed at displacing and eliminating Indigenous groups, of which *genocidal extermination/*



Fig. 9. University of Haifa on Mount Carmel, 2010.

annihilation [italics in original] represents the peak.' Applying the definition to Palestine-Israel, Albanese concludes that Israel's Zionist project is a belated but ongoing instance of settler colonialism: 'In Palestine, displacing and erasing the Indigenous Arab presence has been an inevitable part of the forming of Israel as a "Jewish state".'

In a follow-up report, *Genocide as Colonial Erasure* (October 2024), Albanese declares that settler colonialism contravenes 'international humanitarian law, international human rights law, international criminal law and customary international law, in particular the Genocide Convention and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.' She concludes '**The current genocide is part of a century-long project of eliminatory settler-colonialism in Palestine, a stain on the international system and humanity, which must be ended, investigated and prosecuted**.' [bold in the original]

Israeli universities have played a fundamental role in Israel's settler-colonial expansion across Palestinian land, a process set in motion in the Nakba of 1948 and continued ever since. Universities have been planned and then constructed on sites carefully selected to maximise the impact of Israel's

geographical and demographic expansion into Palestinian territories. Examples abound:

- **The Hebrew University** on Mount Scopus in East Jerusalem was chosen in 1918 by its Zionist founders not only because of the surveillance advantages afforded by its hilltop location, but also because they saw its potential function as a rampart thrusting into the Palestinian neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. To this day, the Hebrew University permits the Israeli military to use its rooftops for the surveillance of Palestinians in the adjoining East Jerusalem suburb of al-Issawiya.
- **The University of Haifa** was founded in 1963 on the strategic heights of Mount Carmel in Galilee. Located deliberately in an area populated by a substantial Palestinian majority, only 40% of the 18,000 students today are Palestinian Israelis.
- **Ben-Gurion University** in Beersheba was founded in the Naqab (Negev) Desert in 1969 on the site of a Palestinian village of 5,000 which was seized and occupied by Israeli soldiers on 21 October 1948. Initially known as the University of the Negev, it was re-named Ben-Gurion University in 1973.
- **Ariel University** was founded in 1978 on the Palestinian hilltop village of Haris (re-named Ariel), illegally occupied land on the West Bank (see Figure 7). Conferred full academic accreditation in 2012 by Israel's Council of Higher Education, Ariel University teaches 14,000+ students, of whom only about 600 are Palestinian.

The spread of Israeli universities has always followed the settler-colonial logic of replacing Indigenous Palestinians with Jewish settlers. Serving Israel's complementary goals of strategic Jewish settlement and Palestinian land confiscation, they have functioned as settlement outposts, as repositories of stolen Palestinian books and cultural resources, and as highly militarised educational institutions dedicated to the expansion of Greater Israel.

Producing *hasbara* [state propaganda]

Israeli universities' support for the military repression of Palestinians and for the geographical-demographic expansion of Greater Israel is complemented by their many ideological campaigns to normalise the status quo, to discredit the Palestinian cause, and to neutralise critics of Israel. At the level of ideas, Israel wages a constant war, both within its borders and globally, against advocates of Palestinian rights and freedoms.

Israel's most prestigious university-based think-tank dedicated to the production and dissemination of *hasbara* is the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at the University of Tel-Aviv. Made up of senior university faculty, military advisers and experienced diplomats, the INSS publishes an annual *Strategic Assessment for Israel*, which explains its purpose as:

> to strengthen the national security of the State of Israel and help secure its future as a Jewish, democratic state . . . . Through its involvement in the public debate and its policy-oriented research, the INSS strives to identify policy opportunities for Israel and propose innovative solutions to current security challenges.

Characterising Palestinians as a constant threat to the 'Jewish, democratic state,' the INSS directs its intellectual labour towards traducing advocates for Palestine, notably (a) international institutions like the UN, the ICJ and ICC, which condemn Israel's treatment of Palestinians, (b) human rights organisations like Amnesty International which highlight Israel's many human rights violations, and (c) pro-Palestine campaigns like the BDS movement which seek to isolate Israel.

A second important institution producing *hasbara* is the Elizabeth and Tony Cowper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism at the University of Haifa. Committed to advancing the understanding of contemporary antisemitism, the Center identifies 'three pillars' – research, education and public policy. With courses training students to be 'Online Ambassadors' for Israel, research scholarships for the study of antisemitism, and commissioned reports such as 'Strategies to Combat the Academic Boycott of Israel,' the University president, Ron Rubin, claimed in 2019, 'The University of Haifa is at the forefront of the fight against [the Zionist conception of] Antisemitism and the boycott movement.'

In summary, through institutions like the INSS and the Cowper Center, universities promote Israel's image, refuting all criticisms of Israel, and suppressing any mention of how the military occupation and apartheid state structures devastate Palestinian lives.



Fig. 10. Tel Aviv University Buildings, 2011.

Discriminating against Palestinian students and faculty

In 1961, Uri Lubrani, the adviser to the Israeli prime minister on Arab Affairs, echoed the words of H. F. Verwoerd, chief architect of South African apartheid, when he reflected, 'Were there no Arab students perhaps it would be better. If they would remain hewers of wood perhaps it would be easier to contain them.'

Lubrani's educational vision for Arab Israelis has not been enforced, but Palestinians living within Israel's 1967 borders nonetheless remain significantly under-represented at Israel's universities. Palestinians make up about 20% of Israel's adult population, but according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2021, they only constituted 3.5% of academic staff at Israeli universities, and Palestinian students too were under-represented: they comprise 30% of the student-age population, but make up 16% of under-graduates, 11% of Masters students, and 8% of PhD students.

The numerical under-representation of Palestinians at Israeli universities is reinforced by the differential treatment they experience once they have gained admission. Day-to-day access to university campuses for

Palestinian students is obstructed by barriers that exempt entirely their Jewish-Israeli peers: walls, buffer zones, checkpoints, long commutes. Accommodation for Palestinian students is in short supply as university dormitories give preference to Jewish-Israeli students (and specifically to ex-IDF soldiers). Symbols of Zionism are ubiquitous on all campuses; any Palestinian iconography on public display is policed or censored by university authorities. The provision of spaces of worship on campuses is unequal, with often several synagogues for Jewish-Israeli students contrasting with the remote and inaccessible spaces available for Muslim and Christian students.

The most punitive restrictions Israeli university administrators impose on Palestinian students are those denying their freedom of speech and expression. Official commitments to 'equality, diversity and inclusion' have become standard gestures, with the Hebrew University, for example, even setting up a dedicated 'Diversity and Multiculturalism' unit. Such commitments, however, stop well short of protecting the right of Palestinian students and faculty to make the case publicly for a free Palestine. In *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, Maya Wind lists numerous examples of university authorities silencing Palestinian voices critical of Israel, concluding, 'From their entry into Israeli higher education, Palestinian students have been criminalised, policed and targeted by their universities in collusion with the state. Academic freedom in Israeli higher education does not apply to Palestinian students.'

Chapter 5. Palestinian Universities: The West Bank

Introduction

Up until 1948, most Palestinian students pursued their higher education at the leading universities in Beirut, Damascus, and Cairo, a pattern that continued up until the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. As the occupying power, Israel immediately imposed severe travel restrictions on Palestinians wishing to study abroad, restricting students to the relatively few higher education institutions within the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

In the 1950s, two-year colleges focused on teacher education, technical training and the liberal arts were established. These institutions expanded rapidly in the 1970s to meet the demand created by Israeli's imposition of travel restrictions, and the higher education sector grew further when Israel delegated (circumscribed) power to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank in 1994.

Universities play a vital educational, political, economic and symbolic role in the national life of all countries, but in the case of Palestine, that role has become even more important because of the crippling restrictions Israel imposes on all aspects of Palestinian existence. In *Boycott Theory and the Struggle for Palestine* (2023), Nick Riemer quotes the words of Gabi Barakami, the co-founder of Birzeit University, to encapsulate the value Palestinians attach to university education:

> Having a university was crucial if we were to resist the occupation. We would produce well-educated, confident graduates, proud of their Palestinian national identity and eager to contribute to the development of their homeland. Moreover, university life would create a haven for the practice of democracy in a situation of political oppression.

West Bank universities

There are eight Palestinian universities in the West Bank (see Figure 7):

- **Al-Quds University** in Abu Dis (established 1984) has four campuses, twelve faculties and 12,000 students.
- **Al-Quds Open University** in Ramallah (established 1991) has centres and campuses across the OPT, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and teaches 60,000+ students.



Fig. 11. Birzeit University, 2020.

- **An-Najah University** in Nablus (recognised as a university in 1977) has nineteen faculties and teaches 24,000+ students.
- **Bethlehem University** (established 1973) is Israel's only Catholic university, has six faculties, and teaches about 3,500 students.
- **Hebron University** (founded as an Islamic seminary in 1971, granted university status in 1980) has nine faculties and teaches about 11,000 students.
- **Birzeit University** (founded as a school in 1924, granted university status in 1975) has nine faculties teaching about 14,500 students up to PhD level.
- **Arab American University of Jenin** (established in 1995) was the first private university in Palestine, has twelve faculties and teaches about 11,000 students.
- **Palestine Polytechnic University** in Hebron (established in 1978) has five colleges and teaches about 4,650 students.

Challenges facing higher education in the Occupied West Bank

As the occupying power, Israel is obligated under international law to protect the right to education for Palestinians. However, the capacity of Palestinians to exercise their right to education has been compromised by Israel's systemic obstruction and suppression of Palestinian higher education.

Bureaucratic restrictions

Israel imposes extensive bureaucratic barriers that isolate Palestinian universities. These measures have severed connections with neighbouring universities in the Middle East. Since the Second Intifada in 2000, restrictions have ended ties between West Bank and Gaza universities, while further curtailing international exchanges. These barriers include:

- **Visa restrictions**: Over the last two decades, visa refusal and restrictions on travel for international faculty has increased. International cooperation and institutional development are routinely obstructed by visa delays and denials.
- **Caps on international enrolments**: Strict limits on the number of international students accepted annually to Palestinian universities have been imposed.

Physical restrictions

The Israeli occupation has also implemented physical barriers which constrain movement and access to university campuses. These include:

- **Travel barriers**: Israel regularly seals off targeted zones, sets up roadblocks and trenches, and closes roads leading to university campuses.
- **Checkpoints:** The checkpoints controlling the movement of all Palestinians, with their long queues and delays, often have an especially restrictive effect on students.

The travel barriers and checkpoints combine to make access to university campuses excessively difficult, and they also inhibit travel between universities. As a result, universities in the West Bank have been forced to become more insular, with fewer opportunities for academic exchange and collaboration an inevitable consequence.

Military raids and repression

Palestinian campuses in the West Bank are also routinely targets of Israeli military raids, which include:

- use of tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition;
- confiscation and destruction of university property; and
- detention and targeting of students for political affiliations or activism.

A particularly egregious example occurred in 2015, when the IDF converted the Palestine Technical University in Tulkarm into a temporary military base and shooting range, injuring 138 faculty and students during its occupation. Such military incursions serve to repress any activism on campus, often resulting in the arrest, detention and torture of students and faculty.

The Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association based in Ramallah publishes an *Annual Violations Report*, which always includes a chapter on student prisoners. The *Report* for 2022, for example, records that the IDF imprisoned 84 Palestinian students in the calendar year, concluding that the IDF's repressive practices 'aim at silencing Palestinian students and suppressing any form of their political life, as the occupation authorities violate students' right to education and participation in political and union life that is guaranteed in numerous international conventions, expressly the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.'

The Addameer annual reports also include lengthy and carefully documented chapters on 'Torture and Inhuman Treatment,' with students frequently numbered among the Palestinian victims of IDF maltreatment that contravenes the 1984 Geneva Convention against Torture.

Criminalisation of academic research

The IDF in the West Bank has also sought to criminalise academic and research centres. In 2021, for example, the Bisan Center for Research and Development in Ramallah was designated a 'terrorist group'. This designation cut the Bisan Center's access to research funding and prevented it from continuing with long-standing international research collaborations. As the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could find no evidence to corroborate the IDF charges against Bisan, and as international human rights groups protested vigorously on its behalf, the IDF acceded to pressure and withdrew the 'terrorist' designation, enabling Bisan to resume its international research programmes.

International advocacy and responses

As the example of restoring Bisan's research funding and collaborations indicates, international pressure can lead to the mitigation or reversal of Israeli policy towards Palestinian academia, research and education.

The growing momentum of the international academic boycott of Israeli universities has prompted certain Israeli university administrators to ask the head of the Israeli Committee of University Presidents to address Israeli restrictions on international faculty and students at Palestinian universities. Initially, the Committee declared the academic boycott a 'political matter' beyond its jurisdiction, but following sustained international condemnation, the presidents of Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University wrote to the Israeli Chief of Staff Benny Gantz in February 2022, imploring him not to provide the BDS movement 'with more ammunition against us.'

Such interventions, however, are exceptional, as Israeli university leaders collectively continue to support the comprehensive surveillance, control and systematic disruption of Palestinian higher education in the West Bank.

Chapter 6. Palestinian Universities: Gaza

The higher education sector in Gaza has grown rapidly in recent decades, from seven higher education institutions (universities and smaller colleges) in 1994 to 28 such institutions teaching 87,000 students in 2017.

The expansion of Gaza's university system has, however, been interrupted by frequent Israeli assaults on its infrastructure and personnel. These assaults are highlighted in Chapter 1, but it is worth reiterating just one of the most destructive instances: during the IDF's Operation Protective Edge in 2014, one quarter of the 2,251 Palestinians killed were university students, and Israeli airstrikes inflicted extensive damage on university infrastructure at all seven of Gaza's universities.

Although these attacks have slowed the progress of Gaza's higher education, curtailing opportunities for Gazan students, by 2023 seven universities were in full operation:

- **Al-Aqsa University** (established 1955), the first higher education institution in the Gaza Strip, was initially a teacher-training college, with campuses later built in Gaza City and Khan Younis as it expanded to eight faculties teaching 26,000 students up to Masters level;
- **The Islamic University of Gaza** (IUG) (established 1978) was founded by Hamas, expanding to eleven faculties and twenty research centres with 18,000 students, with campuses in Gaza City, Al Zahra and Khan Younis;
- **Al-Azhar University** (AAU) in Gaza City (established 1991) was founded by the Palestinian Authority (Fatah), growing from an initial two faculties and 725 students to twelve faculties and 17,000 students;
- **The University College of Applied Sciences** (UCAS) in Gaza City (established 1998) has eight faculties teaching 8,000 students;
- **The University of Palestine** in Al-Zahra (established 2005) has seven colleges in Khan Younis and Bei Lahiya with the capacity to teach 10,000 students;
- **Gaza University** in Gaza City (established 2007) has five faculties with 1,200 staff and 16,000 students; and
- **Al-Israa University** on the outskirts of Gaza City (established 2014) has 4,300 students, 65% of whom are women.

In addition, **Al-Quds Open University** has a branch campus in Gaza, and there are also several smaller universities and community colleges.



Fig. 12. The Islamic University of Gaza Administration Building, 2021.

The destruction of Gaza's universities

Israel's miliary response to the Hamas attack of 7 October 2023, framed as Israel exercising 'its right to defend itself', has involved the IDF carrying out a genocide on Gaza and its inhabitants. Under the pretext that Hamas was using the civilian population as 'human shields', and was concealing their military personnel and hardware in hospitals, schools, universities and other public and commercial buildings, Israel had by 23 January 2025 – according to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor – killed 58,340 people (including those presumed dead under the rubble), 51,951 of whom were civilians, 18,130 children and 11,850 women; injured 116,300; detained without due legal process 4,950; displaced 90% of the population; and destroyed or damaged 500,000 housing units, 529 schools, 3,050 industrial facilities and 861 mosques.

The genocide extended to Gaza's universities – their students, staff and infrastructure. The timeline of Israel's destruction of Gaza's universities is provided by The Academic Freedom Monitoring Project of The Scholars at Risk Network:

- On 10 October 2023, Israeli forces struck the **Islamic University of Gaza** with air to ground missiles, destroying several of the university's buildings.

- On 19 October 2023, Israeli forces destroyed the **University College of Applied Sciences** in Gaza City.
- Around 6 November 2023, Israeli air forces bombed the campus of **Al-Azhar University**, located south of Gaza City, destroying buildings.
- Around 15 November 2023, Israeli forces bombed the **Gaza branch of Al-Quds Open University**, destroying all of its buildings.
- Around 15 December 2023, the buildings of **Gaza University** were destroyed in Israeli bombardments.
- On 7 January 2024, Israeli forces severely damaged the **University College of Science and Technology**, located south of Khan Younis, in airstrikes.
- On 17 January 2024, the IDF detonated 300 landmines to destroy the **University of Palestine** campus in Al-Zahra.
- On 17 January 2024, Israeli military forces detonated hundreds of landmines inside of **Al-Israa University**, destroying it. Al-Israa was the last standing university in Gaza.

In summary, within one hundred days of the Hamas attack of 7 October 2023, Israel had destroyed all of Gaza's universities.

Closely co-ordinated with the targeting and destruction of Gaza's universities were the attacks on libraries, archives, museums and other cultural centres in Gaza. Noting that 'the erasure of Palestinian culture and history has long been an Israeli tactic of war and occupation, a means to further limit the self-determination of the Palestinian people,' an interim report *Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024* published by the organisation Librarians and Archivists with Palestine on 1 February 2024 recorded the destruction of two archives and rare book depositories, eight libraries and bookshops, four university libraries and eight museums, and the killing of six senior librarians and archivists.

Israel's deliberate and systematic attacks on Gaza's education system in 2023-25 represent by far the most brutal and extensive instance of Israeli scholasticide. The statistical details of the IDF's assault on Gazan universities are provided by a UN 'Reported Impact Snapshot' of 8 January 2025: between October 2023 and December 2024, the IDF killed 12,119 students and 498 educational staff, including 95 university professors; injured over 19,483 students and 2,603 educational staff; and destroyed 51 university buildings and extensively damaged 57 more. As a direct consequence, all 90,000 Gazan university students, as well as 658,000 school students, have been denied access to any formal education.



Fig. 13. The Islamic University of Gaza after the Israeli bombardment in 2024.

The response of Israel's universities

Individual members of staff at Israeli universities have spoken out against the IDF's assault on Gaza, invariably at great personal cost. For example, Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem signed an open letter on 23 October 2023 which declared, 'as academics and students who specialise in the study of children and childhood to call for the immediate cessation of the Western-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza and the egregious violation of Palestinian children's rights.' Following Shalhoub-Kevorkian adding her signature to the letter, the leadership of Hebrew University of Jerusalem sent her a letter denouncing her and pressuring her to resign. This letter was then leaked to the media, and Shalhoub-Kevorkian became the target of a public hate campaign.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem's efforts to suppress the freedom of speech of individuals like Shalhoub-Kevorkian have been repeated and reinforced by the senior managements of all Israeli universities. The leaders of Israel's universities have been unwavering in their support for Netanyahu's conduct of the onslaught on Gaza, repeating obediently the Israeli government's polemics, justifications and platitudes.

An open letter of 1 November 2023 signed by the presidents of all nine of Israel's public universities and addressed to 'Colleagues around the World' echoes *verbatim* Netanyahu's mantras of 'Israel's right to self-defence' and the charge that all Palestinian casualties are a consequence of Hamas using civilians as 'human shields'.

Seeking to correct 'an alarming [global] trend in which Israel, despite its right to self-defense, is mischaracterized as an oppressor,' the presidents frame the conflict in Gaza as a moral fable pitting Good (Israel) versus Evil (Hamas): 'While Israel uses its weapons to shield its citizens, Hamas uses its citizens as shields for its weapons—which it hides in hospitals, schools, and mosques.'

An exemplary document of *hasbara* in action, the presidents' open letter reveals perhaps even more by its silences. In its two pages, Palestinians are mentioned twice. First, the letter concedes that Israel exercising 'its right to defend itself . . . unfortunately results in the loss of innocent Palestinian lives.' Secondly, a distinction is drawn between 'Hamas' terrorist objectives and the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for statehood.'

What is nowhere mentioned in the letter is the IDF's annihilation of all of Gaza's universities and its killing of thousands of their students and staff.

As institutions, Israel's universities thus reinforce without qualification or equivocation the dictates of the Israeli state, a state built upon settler-colonial conquest and structured upon apartheid principles enforced by ethnic cleansing and what many authorities identify as genocide – a state which systematically thwarts Palestinian dreams of freedom.

Israel's future

On 19 January 2025, the Jewish-Israeli scholar and journalist, Gideon Levy, published an opinion piece in *Haaretz*, Israel's oldest newspaper, in which he attempted to capture the significance of Israel's onslaught on Gaza:

> The only war that resembled [the Gaza War of 2023-25] was the 1948 war that caused the Nakba, but the motivations behind that war were different. That was a war to establish a Jewish state; this is a war to establish a fascist state . . . . Israel has become a state that aspires to the killing and destruction of Arabs solely for the sake of killing and destroying Arabs . . . . Voices that were never before considered legitimate infiltrated politics and the media. Soon they were not only legitimate, they were the voice of the Israeli masses and also of the government and military . . . . Meanwhile, anti-war voices were silenced; even compassion and humanity were forbidden.

While Levy's relatively neutral characterisation of the Nakba of 1948 might be disputed, his position as an insider within Israeli society lends authority to his stark diagnosis of contemporary Israel. His pessimistic snapshot extends to Israel's universities, which have failed utterly to express 'compassion and humanity' for the thousands of Palestinian academics and students killed by IDF bombardments, let alone for the many more tens of thousands Palestinian civilians killed.

Chapter 7. The Case for Boycott

As this booklet demonstrates, all Israeli academic institutions are integral to the Israeli state's long-term project of Jewish settler-colonial expansion and the erasure of Palestinians from their land. As dedicated servants of the state, Israeli universities (1) sustain the military industrial complex by providing the research-and-development for Israel's arms industry and by training Israeli soldiers in the warfare of occupation; (2) function as sites of surveillance enforcing apartheid control and as ramparts of settler-colonial encroachment into long-established Palestinian communities; (3) serve as the praetorian guard of Israel's ideological war against pro-Palestine advocates and critics of the state of Israel, producing a constant flow of Zionist propaganda for internal and global consumption; and (4) discriminate systematically against Palestinian students and staff, denying Palestinians the academic freedoms enjoyed by Jewish-Israelis pursuing university studies.

During Israel's onslaught on Gaza in 2023-25, its university leaders not only remained silent as reports and images of the IDF's obliteration of Gaza's university system circulated globally, but they also went much further, stepping up their support for the state's expansionist violence in Gaza and the West Bank and doing everything within their powers to crush manifestations of pro-Palestinian sympathy or solidarity.

How should academics and students in Britain respond to Israel's destruction of Palestinian lives and livelihoods – including Palestinians' dreams of pursuing a university education?

Supporting the academic boycott of Israeli universities is an essential part of the answer.

There are two elements to the academic boycott:

First, the **individual commitment of scholars** to cut formal ties with Israeli institutions, which includes:

- not submitting papers to Israeli journals;
- not attending conferences in Israel or those funded by Israeli institutions or the Israeli state;
- not engaging in joint projects with Israeli institutions;
- not accepting Israeli research funding;
- not engaging with activities or organisations that normalise Israel's settler-colonial project; and
- not accepting any Israeli academic prizes or grants.

- As a contribution to the UK campaign for the boycott by individuals of Israeli institutions, BRICUP has produced the **Academic Commitment for Palestine** (https://academiccommitmentforpalestine.wordpress.com). All academics are urged to add their names to the Academic Commitment, and to encourage their colleagues to do likewise.

Second, the **institutional boycott** of Israeli institutions, which includes:

- the withdrawal from joint ventures with Israeli institutions;
- the termination of exchange programmes with Israeli institutions;
- the refusal to host Israeli scholars representing Israeli institutions or the Israeli state (as opposed to presenting research in their personal capacities); and
- the disinvestment from Israeli, local or international companies which are complicit in the seizure and occupation of Palestinian land, or which support Israel's apartheid rule over the Palestinian people.

To support the institutional boycott, the following steps are recommended:

1. form a **Palestine solidarity group** at your university made up of staff sympathetic to the academic boycott of Israeli universities with the aim of persuading the university to adopt the academic boycott as university policy;
2. in the **trade union branch** at your university (i) propose a motion to adopt the academic boycott as branch policy, (ii) circulate this booklet to all members of the branch, (iii) host open meetings to discuss the academic boycott, and (iv) urge the branch to make the institutional boycott an agenda item in industrial negotiations with university leaderships;
3. raise for discussion and then propose motions in **departments**, **schools** and **faculties** to adopt the academic boycott as policy;
4. raise for discussion with staff representatives and then propose motions to adopt the academic boycott as the policy of **academic boards** and **university senates**; and
5. raise for discussion and then propose motions to adopt the academic boycott as university policy with **boards of governors** and **university councils**.

BRICUP can offer advice on all these steps, especially in the framing of motions and in the negotiating of university procedures and structures. In addition, BRICUP can provide speakers (either online or in person), and can provide support and guidance in responding to the interventions of pro-Israel groups and individuals.

To join and support BRICUP, or to help finance our work by donations, visit our website, www.bricup.org.uk, or email us directly at info@bricup.org.uk.



Fig. 14. Palestinian girls playing football beneath the apartheid wall, 2023.

Further Reading

The Academic Boycott

Giroux, Henry A. (2025) 'Scholasticide: Waging war on education from Gaza to the West', *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies*, 24 (1): 1-16.

Golan-Agnon, Daphna (2020) *Teaching Palestine on an Israeli Campus: Unsettling Denial* (London: Anthem Press).

Landy, David, Ronit Lentin and Conor McCarthy (eds) (2020) *Enforcing Silence. Academic Freedom, Palestine and the Criticism of Israel* (London: Zed Books).

Lim, Audrea (ed.) (2012) *The Case for Sanctions Against Israel* (London: Verso).

Riemer, Nick (2023) *Boycott Theory and the Struggle for Palestine: Universities, Intellectualism and Liberation* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers).

Sheldon, Ruth (2016) *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics: Palestine-Israel in British Universities* (Manchester University Press).

Shlaim, Avi (2025), 'Scholasticide in Gaza', *Journal of the British Academy*, 13(1): a16

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

Palestine-Israel

Bresheeth-Zabner, Haim (2020) *An Army Like No Other. How the Israel Defense Forces Made a Nation* (London: Verso).

Erakat, Noura (2019) *Justice for Some. Law and the Question of Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

Hever, Shir (2017) *The Privatisation of Israeli Security* (London: Pluto).

Khalidi, Rashid (2020) *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine* (New York: Metropolitan Books).

Loewenstein, Antony (2023) *The Palestine Laboratory. How Israel Exports the Technology of Occupation around the World* (London: Verso).

Pappe, Ilan (2006) *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (London: Oneworld Publications).

Said, Edward (1979) *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage).

Weizmann, Eyal (2024) *Hollow Land. Israel's Architecture of Occupation,* Revd Ed. (London: Verso).

International Human Rights Organisations and International Courts

Amnesty International (2022) *Israel's Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime Against Humanity*. 1 February.

Amnesty International (2024), *'You Feel Like You are Subhuman'. Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza*, 5 December.

B'Tselem (2021) *A Regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is Apartheid*. January.

B'Tselem (2022) *Not a Vibrant Democracy. This is Apartheid*. October.

Human Rights Watch (2021) *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*. 27 April.

Human Rights Watch (2024), *'Hopeless, Starving, and Besieged'. Israel's Forced Displacement of Palestinians in Gaza*, 14 November.

International Court of Justice (2024) *Order passed on Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip*. 24 May.

United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner (2024) *Six-month Update Report on the Human Rights Situation in Gaza: 1 November 2023 to 30 April 2024*. 8 November.

Websites with Information on the Academic Boycott and Universities in Palestine-Israel

www.adalah.org/en	Adalah. The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel
www.addameer.org	Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
bdsmovement.net	Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign
www.bricup.org.uk	British Committee for the Universities of Palestine

www.btselem.org	B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories
electronicintifada.net	*The Electronic Intifada*
euromedmonitor.org/en	Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor
www.palestine-studies.org	Institute for Palestine Studies
librarianswithpalestine.org	Librarians and Archivists with Palestine
www.middleeasteye.net	*Middle East Eye*
mondoweiss.net	*Mondoweiss. News and Opinion about Palestine, Israel and the United States*
gisha.org/en	Gisha Legal Center for Freedom of Movement
www.pacbi.org	Palestinian Call for Academic and Cultural Boycott
palestinecampaign.org	Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC)
palestinecampaign.org/university-complicity-database	Database detailing UK universities' investments in companies complicit in Israeli violations of international law
scholarsagainstwar.org	Scholars Against the War on Palestine
www.scholarsatrisk.org	Scholars at Risk (Academic Freedom Monitoring Project)
www.un.org/unispal	United Nations. The Question of Palestine
visualizingpalestine.org	Visualizing Palestine
www.972mag.com	*+972 Magazine*