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University of Cambridge: end your partnership with Caterpillar Inc. and BAE Systems!

We, the undersigned, call on the University of Cambridge to immediately terminate its partnership with Caterpillar Inc. and BAE Systems, as part of the [Cambridge Service Alliance](#). By maintaining this relationship, the University has made itself, and us, shamefully complicit in war crimes. These companies have been essential in enabling major violations of international law by the states of Israel, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.

On the 14th of May in Gaza, Israeli soldiers killed 62 Palestinians with live ammunition, wounding thousands of others, as they demonstrated for their internationally recognised rights (under [UN Resolution 194](#)) as refugees to return to their homes.

Israel has a long and brutal history of such violations of international humanitarian law in occupied Palestine. House demolitions, extrajudicial assassination of unarmed civilians, and settlement construction are all recognised as gross violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 ([Geneva IV](#)), which prohibits the destruction of property, murder, disproportionate use of force, and the forcible transfer of populations by the Occupying Power. Britain as a [signatory](#) of this treaty has an obligation to ensure respect for its implementation, especially in terms of grave breaches (war crimes) by other signatories. Israel's transfer of hundreds of thousands of its citizens as settlers into the West Bank are also [grave breaches](#) under [Geneva IV](#). These are all, under the International Criminal Court's (ICC) [statute](#), considered war crimes.

As highlighted by [Human Rights Watch](#), Caterpillar Inc. supplies the militarized D9 [bulldozers](#) used by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to demolish thousands of Palestinian homes, making way for Jewish-only settlements.

BAE Systems is central to British arms sales to Saudi Arabia, supplying the regime with the Tornado and Typhoon fighter jets which are used to indiscriminately bomb civilians in Yemen, [flattening schools](#) and hospitals, and destroying families.

They also [supply](#) hundreds of millions of pounds worth of military equipment, including fighter jets, to the Turkish state, whose recent assault on Afrin in Northern Syria saw the [indiscriminate shelling and bombing](#) of Kurdish civilians, killing more than 500 and displacing thousands, in the space of weeks. This followed the brutal massacres by Turkish government forces in 2016, of hundreds of civilians, enforced disappearances, torture, the displacement of up to half a million people, and the systematic destruction of housing in Kurdish towns and cities across southeastern Turkey such as [Cizre](#), Nusaybin and the Sur district of Diyarbakir, highlighted by the UN High Commission for Human Rights' in its [report](#). This destruction was significantly enabled by military equipment and technology directly obtained through recent contracts with BAE.

BAE also provides the targeting displays in F-16 fighters jets, which Israel had used extensively in its attack on Gaza in 2014, killing over 1400 Palestinian civilians, a third of them children.

The University of Cambridge maintains a close relationship with both BAE Systems and Caterpillar Inc. through the 'Cambridge Service Alliance'. Set up in 2010, the programme is dubbed "a unique global

alliance between leading businesses and universities”, working together to research innovation in the services sector. Vice Chancellor Stephen Toope sought to justify these partnerships, at an open meeting on Tuesday 15th May, by pointing out that they do not pertain directly to military equipment production.

This is not good enough. BAE Systems and Caterpillar Inc. supply essential products and services to the perpetrators of war crimes, facilitating the killing of thousands of Palestinian, Kurdish and Yemeni civilians. As members of the University of Cambridge, students and staff alike, we are deeply ashamed that our institution maintains such large and active links with corporate entities trading in mass murder and human misery. For as long as these links continue, Cambridge cannot fulfil its pretensions to being ethically responsible, or a social leader.

In 2005, over 170 Palestinian civil society groups [called](#) on us, citizens of conscience around the world, to boycott the Israeli state, and divest from those corporations complicit in violations of international law, in solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom, justice and equality. Kurdish activists have also recently begun to [call](#) on global civil society for boycotts, sanctions, and divestment from the Turkish state.

We demand that the University of Cambridge honour its ethical responsibilities by immediately terminating the participation of Caterpillar Inc. and BAE Systems in the Cambridge Service Alliance, and cease all institutional links with both companies until they end their role in such terrible violations of international law.

Signed,

University and college groups

Cambridge University Palestine Society
Cambridge University Kurdish Society
Cambridge University Middle East Society
Cambridge University Afghan Society
Cambridge University Pakistan Society
Cambridge University Amnesty International
Oxfam Cambridge University
Cambridge University Students' Union Women's Campaign
Cambridge University Students' Union BME Campaign
Cambridge University Students' Union LGBT+ Campaign
Cambridge University Students' Union Disabled Students' Campaign
Cambridge University Students' Union Class Act Campaign
FLY Girls of Cambridge
FUSE Cambridge
Decolonise Cambridge
Demilitarise Cambridge
Cambridge Zero Carbon Society
Cambridge Defend Education

Cambridge University Human Rights Law Society
Cambridge PEN
Cambridge SolidariTee
Cambridge Student Action for Refugees
Just Love Cambridge
Robinson Cut the Rent
King's Bunker
King's College Feminist Society
Emmanuel College Feminist Society
Churchill College Feminist Society
Jesus College Feminist Society
The Beard Society - Peterhouse Society and Platform for Feminist Discussion
Jo Cox Feminist Society, Pembroke College
Trinity Hall Feminist Forum
Cambridge Cut the Rent
Critical Theory & Practice Seminar Series
Preventing Prevent at Cambridge
Cambridge Marxist Society
Cambridge University Momentum Society
Cambridge University Vegan Society
Declarations: The Human Rights Podcast
Cambridge *Urbanism in the Global South* Working Group

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Jack Dixon, Librarian, History and Philosophy of Science
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Professor Patrick Keiller, Department of Architecture